

# A Noumenal Analysis of Consciousness

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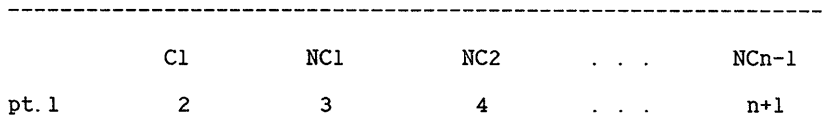
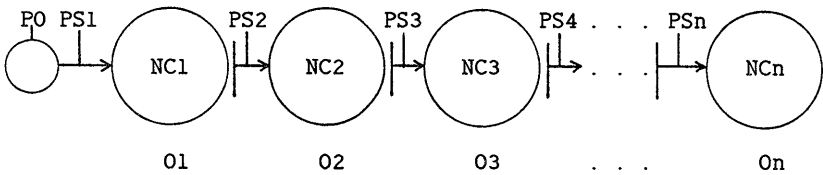
What is the relation between a sensation or more generally a conscious occurrence on the one hand and its neural correlate on the other? It is that of noumenon to phenomenon. The observations below, lamentably fragmentary, develop and defend this thesis.

To begin with, a noumenon is something X as X is, as opposed to X as X appears from this or that point of view in sense perception. A phenomenon is something X as X appears from a certain point of view in sense perception, or that appearance of X.

To say that two terms constitute a noumenon-phenomenon pair is to say that the latter, the alleged phenomenon, is the outcome of perceptual processing of the former, the alleged noumenon, by the organism in question.

A noumenon, then, may be said to appear. It appears in a phenomenon, and that phenomenon constitutes an appearance of it. It does not, of course, appear as noumenon.

Consider the following diagram:



PO is a physical object, event, or the like as the physicist describes it, PS1 is a physical stimulus, again as the physicist describes it, O1 is an

organism, human or otherwise, NC1 is the neural correlate of a conscious occurrence, and C1 is that conscious occurrence. PO, then, might be a range of hills and PS1 light reflected from it, or PO might be a cello and PS1 sound waves it emits, or PO might be a rose, or Hong Kong ("Fragrant Harbor" in Chinese), and PS1 odoriferous molecules it emits, etc. In any case, NC1 is an incidence or burst of neural firing which occurs in the brain of O1 in response to PS1.

A device produces a visual image of NC1 on a screen, and light from the screen, PS2, enters the eyes of O2 and thus gives rise to NC2, a burst of neural firing. And so on through NCn.

The part of the diagram above the broken horizontal line, then, shows that which appears to an objective observer with a detailed panoramic view such as that the reader may be supposed to enjoy. The part just below the line, on the other hand, shows that which (though not all that which) occurs or appears from the standpoint of the organism in question: thus, C1 from the standpoint of O1, NC1 from that of O2, and so on.

With reference to this diagram, then, let us consider a series of questions:

First, let O1 be a human being and O2 be a neurologist (no contrast intended). Granted that NC1 occurs or appears from the standpoint of O2, does it appear from that standpoint? O2 observes the workings of the brain of O1 with the aid of a device which shows NC1 on a screen. The answer, then, is yes. NC1 appears to O2 as a burst of neural firing in the brain of O1. It's not too much to say that he sees it there.

The standpoint of O2 with respect to NC1, then, constitutes a point of view. From that point of view, NC1 does not merely occur. Rather, it appears.

Does NC1 appear from the standpoint of O1? No, of course not. Unlike O2, O1 does not see a burst of neural firing.

Does the standpoint of O1, then, constitute a point of view on NC1? No, it doesn't. That which O1 perceives is PO or PS1, as for instance a cello, or simply a sound. O1, then, has a point of view on PO or PS1, but no point of view on NC1.

Does NC1 occur from the standpoint of O1? Here the answer is yes.

One who doubts this may perform the following experiment: Put a human subject, O1, in a dimly lit, quiet, featureless room, give him instructions to the effect that on hearing a bell he is to report whether anything occurs, train him by inducing, by means of electrodes, the neural correlates of various sensations, as for instance of flashes of light, sounds, and odors, and then induce the neural correlate, NC1, of an intense sensation, as for instance that of a boldly offensive odor. Surely he will report, perhaps quite emphatically, that something occurred.

From the standpoint of O1, then, NC1 occurs but does not appear. The implication is obvious: From the standpoint of O1, NC1 occurs as it is, that is, as noumenon.

If asked, moreover, O1 will report that what occurred is a sensation or conscious occurrence, as for instance an offensive odor, or perhaps a memory from his childhood. But that which occurs from his standpoint is, to repeat, NC1 as noumenon. Here too, then, the implication is obvious: The conscious occurrence, C1, is NC1, the burst of neural firing, as noumenon.

Let us note this as follows: C1=noumenal NC1, or for short, C1=nouNC1.

Let "PO/PS1" mean "PO or PS1." PO/PS1, then, appears to O1 in C1, which constitutes an appearance of it. In itself PO/PS1 is of course noumenal, like anything else. Likewise, NC1/PS2 appears to O2 in noumenal NC2, which constitutes an appearance of it, and so on.

There is of course a point of view from which PO/PS1 appears as such, not in C1—viz., that of the physicist. This point of view, however, is cognitive, not perceptual—fundamentally at any rate—and shall be left out of account here.

Phenomenal PO/PS1, then, is PO/PS1 as it appears to O1—that is to say, in C1. For clarity of exposition, however, it might be best to forgo "noumenal PO/PS1" in favor of "PO/PS1."

Phenomenal PO/PS1 is C1, which, to repeat, is noumenal NC1: phePO/PS1=C1=nouNC1. Thus, for instance, the physical sound the cello emits as O1 hears it (phenomenal PS1) is the sound he hears (C1) is the neural correlate of the sound he hears as noumenon (noumenal NC1).

Phenomenal NC1, which is to say NC1 the burst of neural firing as

it appears to O<sub>2</sub>, is noumenal NC<sub>2</sub>. That is, just as noumenal NC<sub>1</sub> is phenomenal PO/PS<sub>1</sub>—as for instance PS<sub>1</sub> the physical sound as it appears, in the auditory mode—noumenal NC<sub>2</sub> is NC<sub>1</sub> the burst of neural firing as it appears, in the visual mode. Similarly, phenomenal NC<sub>2</sub> is noumenal NC<sub>3</sub>, phenomenal NC<sub>3</sub> is noumenal NC<sub>4</sub>, and so on. Thus, phePO/PS<sub>1</sub>=nouNC<sub>1</sub>, pheNC<sub>1</sub>=nouNC<sub>2</sub>, pheNC<sub>2</sub>=nouNC<sub>3</sub> . . . pheNC<sub>n-1</sub>=nouNC<sub>n</sub>.

The fact that phePO/PS<sub>1</sub>=nouNC<sub>1</sub>, and so on, explains why it is natural to define a phenomenon as above: “something X as X appears from a certain point of view in sense perception, *or* that appearance of X.” Phenomenal PO/PS<sub>1</sub> is something X as X appears from a certain point of view in sense perception, and noumenal NC<sub>1</sub> is that appearance of X.

It is possible to recognize all the following: (1) noumenal C<sub>1</sub>, the conscious occurrence as such; (2) phenomenal C<sub>1</sub>, the conscious occurrence as it appears—viz., as a burst of neural firing; (3) noumenal NC<sub>1</sub>, the burst of neural firing as it is, not as it appears; and (4) phenomenal NC<sub>1</sub>, the burst of neural firing as it appears—that is, from the point of view of O<sub>2</sub> on O<sub>1</sub>. With reference to the part of the diagram which lies below the horizontal line, then, C<sub>1</sub> is noumenal at point 2, as C<sub>1</sub>, and phenomenal at point 3, as NC<sub>1</sub>. That is to say, noumenal C<sub>1</sub> is shown at point 2 as C<sub>1</sub>, and phenomenal C<sub>1</sub> at point 3 as NC<sub>1</sub>. Similarly, NC<sub>1</sub> is noumenal at point 2, as C<sub>1</sub>, and phenomenal at point 3, as NC<sub>1</sub>, or in other words noumenal NC<sub>1</sub> is shown at point 2 as C<sub>1</sub>, and phenomenal NC<sub>1</sub> at point 3 as NC<sub>1</sub>. C<sub>1</sub> or NC<sub>1</sub>, then, is noumenal or phenomenal depending on the point in the diagram which is in question. For clarity of exposition, however, it might be best to forgo “noumenal C<sub>1</sub>” in favor of “C<sub>1</sub>,” and “phenomenal C<sub>1</sub>” in favor of “NC<sub>1</sub>” or “phenomenal NC<sub>1</sub>,” as in the diagram.

To speak simply of NC<sub>1</sub>, as opposed to noumenal or phenomenal NC<sub>1</sub>, is to lay aside talk of noumena and phenomena and speak instead of the world we see around us. But this means that unmodified “NC<sub>1</sub>” is to be understood to denote phenomenal NC<sub>1</sub>.

In the following, the thesis that C<sub>1</sub> is noumenal from the standpoint of O<sub>1</sub>, that it is something X as X is, not as X appears, shall be called the noumenalist thesis, or for short the N-thesis. The thesis that C<sub>1</sub> is phenomenal from the point of view of O<sub>1</sub>, that it is something X as X

appears, shall be called the phenomenalist thesis, or for short the P-thesis. Either the N-thesis is true of the P-thesis is; there is no further alternative. From the standpoint of O1, either C1 is something X as X is, or it is something X as X appears. The falsity of the P-thesis, then, entails the truth of the N-thesis and vice versa.

One of the main arguments for the N-thesis lies in the fact that it is minimalist, whereas the P-thesis runs afoul of Ockham's razor. On the N-thesis, only two factors figure in the case: (1) C1, the burst of neural firing in the brain of O1 as it is not as it appears; and (2) NC1, that burst as it appears. On the P-thesis, in contrast, three factors figure: (1) C1, something X as X appears from the point of view of O1; (2) NC1, X as X appears from the point of view of O2; and (3) X—or more than three factors, if  $NC1 \neq X$ . But this "multiplication of entities" accomplishes nothing and hence goes "beyond necessity."

Here are two further arguments: Let PS1 consist in sound waves of a certain amplitude and frequency and C1 consist in sound of a certain loudness and pitch. Then C1 does not appear as sound of that loudness and pitch, for that which does so is PS1. If, however, C1 does not appear as sound of the loudness and pitch in question, then, clearly, it doesn't appear at all. C1, then, occurs but does not appear: it is noumenal.

Again, a field of blue might be the Montana sky in April, the Xianjiang sky in October, or something else not a sky at all. Clearly, at least potentially, the sensation in question is the medium, as it were, of indefinitely many different phenomena. Similarly for every other sensation. Sensation as such, then, does not represent. But this is to say that in itself it does not constitute the appearance of anything, and this in turn entails that it is noumenal, not phenomenal.

A question suggests itself: Let C1 be a sensation, as for instance a taste, as of wine. Then C1 has various sensory properties. If O1 has the requisite cognitive and expressive capacities, he will be able to describe those properties. On the present analysis of consciousness, however, C1 is noumenal from the standpoint of O1, and hence C1 does not appear to O1. How, then, is it possible that something which does not appear has sensory properties?

To put it differently, how is it that one can know what a sensation, as for instance one's twinge of pain, is like as noumenon, but cannot know what anything else is like as noumenon—where to know what something is like is to know in sensory terms?

The answer lies in the fact that sensation is the medium, the very stuff, of consciousness.

Consider an analogy—though like any other analogy it must be handled with care: An artist working in oils can show you what his paints are like, i. e., what the colors are, by pointing them out on his palette. It's not necessary for him to paint a picture of anything to show you and would in fact be pointless to do so. On the other hand, to show you what anything else is like, he must paint a picture (he can, of course, simply point out something in your surroundings, but this fact is dysanalogous, to be set aside). The picture, of course, is not the thing itself—is not the picturesque harbor, for instance—but rather the thing as it appears. The artist, then, can show you what his paints are like but not what anything else is like without painting anything because he is using those paints as his medium. Sensations, then, are analogous to the artist's paints: One can know what they are like as noumena but cannot know what anything else is like as noumenon because they are the medium of consciousness—that is, of the range of consciousness in question, whatever range that might be.

It is less than obvious that a conscious occurrence is noumenal. But why so?

There are, perhaps, several reasons. There is, to begin with, a train of thought which runs as follows: A noumenon is a "something I know not what," whereas a conscious occurrence—as for instance a sensation—is a "something I know very well what"; hence a conscious occurrence is not noumenal. This, however, fails, of course, as a riposte to the present analysis.

Again, in his article on the term "noumenon" in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Simon Blackburn writes:

On a different view [of Kant's metaphysics], the [noumenon-phenomenon] distinction merely reflects Kant's understanding that all knowledge is knowledge from a standpoint, so the noumenal is the

fraudulent idea of that which would be apprehended by a being with no point of view (265).

This train of thought entails, of course, that nothing is noumenal. "The idea of that which would be apprehended by a being with no point of view," however, is not entirely "fraudulent," for O1, to repeat, has no point of view of C1, yet "apprehends" C1 in the sense that if he has sufficient cognitive capacity and applies it, he knows what C1 is like.

Again, consider the term "mental phenomena" as applied to sensations, conscious states, and the like. Perhaps the reasoning is that the things in question occur, so it is fair to label them phenomena, and this is of course so provided that a phenomenon is understood to be simply something that occurs.

Consider too the expression "a phenomenal sound," for instance. A phenomenal sound is indeed phenomenal in one respect, viz., as a phenomenon, an appearance, of a physical object or sound, but it is noumenal in another, viz., as a sensation. The assertion "A phenomenal sound is noumenal," however, though quite true understood correctly, appears paradoxical if not absurd.

Then again, consider the following circumstance: There is no qualitative difference between a sensation or complex of sensations as such, and that same thing as an appearance of something. You look straight up at the blue Montana sky, for instance. Your entire visual field is filled with blue. There is no qualitative difference between this blue as a sensation and this blue as the Montana sky. The Montana sky, however, is phenomenal—it is something X as X appears—and thus it is easy to conclude that the sensation is too.

To turn very briefly to the question of intentionality, a professional cellist is with her neonate son. A cello sounds from a nearby room, out of sight. The cellist hears a cello, and the neonate hears a sound. Despite the grammatical parallel between "hears a cello" and "hears a sound," however, it cannot be said that the neonate hears something in the sense in which the cellist does. She hears something in that something appears to her—viz., a cello—whereas nothing appears to him. He hears neither a cello nor a physical sound, for he has no conception of either. He

“hears a sound” only in the sense that he has a sensation of a certain description though he has no inkling that he has it or that it is of that description, a sound. Her conscious state, then, entails a phenomenon, in the sense that a phenomenon, the cello as it appears to her, figures in it, whereas his does not entail any phenomenon but merely a noumenon. Her conscious state, however, is intentional precisely in that it entails a phenomenon, and his is not precisely in that it does not. But this suggests that to say that a conscious state is intentional is simply to say that it entails phenomena, not merely noumena—that is, where it is perception not cognition that is in question.

A conscious state which entails phenomena and hence is intentional, however, is noumenal no less than one which doesn't and hence isn't. It is not the cellist's conscious state but rather the cello which appears to her.

The cellist might indeed reflect on her conscious state. That is, she might introspect. The term “introspection,” however, is a misnomer. The cellist, O1, does not, again, perceive her conscious state, C1. Introspection is not a matter of looking in, but rather one of thinking about, not a matter of perception but rather one of cognition.

A conscious occurrence is a conscious noumenon. It is noumenal but figures in consciousness. It figures as a medium of phenomena, and for that matter as a medium of cognition.

The domain of the mental is the domain of conscious occurrences, conscious noumena. The domain of the physical, in contrast, is that of phenomena—i. e., it is the domain of that which appears in sense perception.

A doubt might well arise: According to the present analysis, when a neurologist observes a burst of neural firing NC1 in a brain, that which he observes is in itself C1, as for instance the fragrance of a rose. But is this possible? Is it possible that his *visual system* processes *the fragrance of a rose*, and that in consequence he observes *a burst of neural firing in a brain*? Isn't this preposterous? Doesn't it amount to a reductio of the analysis?

No, it isn't and it doesn't. The neurologist's subject, O1, puts his nose to a rose, and the outcome is NC1, a burst of neural firing, which, however,



as it occurs from his standpoint is the fragrance of a rose. In turn, the neurologist, O2, puts his eyes, as it were, to that which occurs in his subject's brain, viz., NC1 the just-mentioned burst of neural firing, and the outcome is NC2, which, however, as it occurs from his standpoint is the sight of a burst of neural firing. His visual system, then, does indeed process that which in itself, as noumenon, is the fragrance of a rose, and the upshot is indeed that he observes a burst of neural firing in a brain.

Usage, both everyday and technical, reflects the fact that a conscious occurrence is noumenal. We say, for instance, that the sky is blue, but that the sensation is of blue. Why? In the first case "blue" is an adjective, but in the second it is a noun: hence the "of." This reflects the fact that the sky is phenomenal and the sensation noumenal—though it falls far short, of course, of proving it. The adjective "blue" is used to say how something appears and the noun "blue" to say what something is.

There is a language of phenomena: "appears to be," "looks like," "sounds like," "tastes good," "smells funny," etc. In speaking of conscious occurrences, conscious noumena, however, theorists tend strongly to avoid it, as they should. Thomas Nagel's "what it is like," on the other hand, is appropriate.

The present analysis may be said to yield an identity theory, and not to yield one.

On the one hand, clearly, an object as it appears—a building, for instance—is that object, or at any rate this is so in the normal case. On the other hand, equally clearly, the appearance is one thing and the object another. A phenomenon is the noumenon of which it is a phenomenon as that noumenon appears, but is not that noumenon. A burst of neural firing which is the neural correlate of a sensation, then, is that sensation, which is noumenal, as it appears, but is not that sensation.

Is the sensation, then, identical to the burst of neural firing, or is it not? This question is illegitimate. The distinction between the sensation as it appears, as phenomenon, and the sensation as such, as noumenon, is legitimate, but the answer to the question of identity is different depending on whether it is the sensation as phenomenon or as noumenon that is intended.

On the present analysis, then, in one way, a conscious occurrence is

numerically identical to its neural correlate, and in another way it is numerically diverse from it:  $C1 = \text{phe}C1$  in that the latter is the former as the former appears, but  $C1 \neq \text{phe}C1$ , in that the latter is not the former as the former is.

To take a suggestion from P. F. Strawson, to say that an event does not occur in the one unitary objective world is to say that it doesn't occur at all. Anything that occurs, then, occurs in that world, or is identical to something that occurs there. Now a twinge of pain  $C1$ , for instance, occurs. As such, however, it does not occur in the one objective world. Hence it is identical to some event that does occur there. The only objective event to which it might be identical, however, is  $NC1$ , which is to say phenomenal  $NC1$ . Hence it is indeed the case that  $C1 = \text{phe}NC1$ .

On the other hand, consider the following chain of inference:

- (1)  $C1 = \text{nou}NC1$
- (2)  $\text{phe}NC1 = \text{nou}NC2$
- (3)  $\text{nou}NC1 \neq \text{nou}NC2$
- (4)  $\text{nou}NC1 \neq \text{phe}NC1$  (2, 3)
- (5)  $C1 \neq \text{phe}NC1$  (1, 4)

Just as  $\text{phe}NC1 \neq \text{phe}NC2$ ,  $\text{nou}NC1 \neq \text{nou}NC2$  and  $C1 \neq \text{phe}NC1$ . This, however, is straightforward numerical diversity. Hence it is indeed the case that  $C1 \neq \text{phe}NC1$ .

Phenomenal  $NC1$  is noumenal  $NC1$  as the latter appears. In one way, then, the noumenon-phenomenon relation entails numerical identity. But, as shown in the chain of inference just above (step 4),  $\text{nou}NC1 \neq \text{phe}NC1$ . In another way, then, the noumenon-phenomenon relation does not entail numerical identity. Again, the phenomenon is the noumenon as the noumenon appears, but is not the noumenon.

Let “ $\rightarrow$ ” mean “causes” or “gives rise to.” Then  $PS1 \rightarrow C1$ , or in other words  $PS1 \rightarrow \text{nou}NC1$ . It is also the case, however, that  $PS1 \rightarrow \text{phe}NC1$ . But  $C1 \neq \text{phe}NC1$ , or in other words  $\text{nou}NC1 \neq \text{phe}NC1$ . Is there a problem here?

No, there isn't. To assert that  $PS1 \rightarrow C1$  is to presuppose that the standpoint in the case is that of  $O1$ , whereas to assert that  $PS1 \rightarrow \text{phe}NC1$  is to presuppose that the standpoint is that of  $O2$ . Thus, given  $PS1$ , that

which occurs from the standpoint of O1 is C1, but that which occurs from the standpoint—appears from the point of view—of O2 is NC1.

Now consider the following chain of inference:

- (1)  $PS1 \rightarrow nouNC1$
- (2)  $C1 = nouNC1$
- (3)  $PS1 \rightarrow C1$  (1, 2)
- (4)  $PS2 \rightarrow nouNC2$
- (5)  $C2 = nouNC2$
- (6)  $PS2 \rightarrow C2$  (4, 5)
- (7)  $nouNC2 = pheNC1$
- (8)  $PS2 \rightarrow pheNC1$  (4, 7)

Lines 3 and 6 severally entail that something physical gives rise to something mental. So, though less clearly, do lines 1, 4, and 8. The justification for line 1 is that PS1 gives rise to NC1 and ipso facto to noumenal NC1, and similarly for line 4.

Is it possible in principle to infer the nature of a conscious occurrence from that of its neural correlate, and if not why not?

To do so is to infer the nature of noumenal NC1 from that of phenomenal NC1. Now in principle, it is indeed possible to arrive at a knowledge of the nature of noumenal NC1 given phenomenal NC1, but it is necessary to take the following step: Induce a duplicate of NC1 in your own brain—if this is impossible in that your brain happens to include no structure of the requisite type, attach a new lobe to make it possible—and note what occurs. (You could, of course, induce NC1 in the brain of another person instead and ask him to describe noumenal NC1, which is to say that which he experiences, but this comes down to the same thing and hence has no bearing on the argument.) It is impossible to dispense with this step in that noumenal NC1 occurs only from the standpoint of the organism in whose brain NC1 occurs. It follows, however, that an examination of NC1 as it appears does not suffice, and that no inference from the information it yields can possibly yield the information sought, for an inference from that information does not, of course, in any way entail the essential step. The answer, then, is no.

Here is a further argument to the same conclusion: To repeat,  $C1 =$

nouNC1 and pheNC1=nouNC2. To infer the nature of a conscious occurrence C1 from that of its neural correlate NC1, then, is to infer the nature of noumenal NC1 from that of noumenal NC2. It is, for instance, to infer the odor of Hong Kong from the sight of a burst of neural firing. It's obvious, however, that this is impossible—though with practice one might learn to “read” sensations from bursts of neural firing. The former, the odor, is the outcome of taking in the air of Hong Kong, and the latter, the sight of a burst of neural firing, the outcome of observing the workings of a brain. There is simply no connection here.

To determine whether a candidate neural correlate is indeed the neural correlate of a conscious occurrence—that is, of some conscious occurrence or other—it is necessary to take the step described above. If the candidate neural correlate is markedly incongruous with the structure of your brain, however, this might prove impossible.

To turn the question around, is it possible in principle to infer the nature of the neural correlate of a conscious occurrence from that of the conscious occurrence itself?

It is indeed possible to arrive at a knowledge of the nature of the neural correlate given a conscious occurrence C1, but it is necessary to take the following step: Examine the neural correlate, NC1, of C1 in the brain of O1. It is impossible to dispense with this step in that NC1 appears only from the point of view of O2 on O1. But it follows that an introspective examination of C1 does not suffice, and that no inference from the information it yields can possibly yield the information sought, for an inference from that information does not, of course, in any way entail the essential step. Here too, then, the answer is no.

Here is another argument, perhaps better, to the same conclusion: Within the domain here in question, that of perception as opposed to cognition, a sensation or more generally a conscious occurrence carries information about that, if anything, of which it is a phenomenon, an appearance, and about nothing else. In itself, it is like a dab of paint on the painter's palette in that it carries no information at all. It is not, however, a phenomenon of its neural correlate, but rather the noumenon of it, and hence carries no information about it.

To move to a quite different point, to speak in terms of a conscious agent and its behavior (“...the taste is foul, so the animal spits out the fruit”) is to speak in terms of conscious noumena—that is to say, insofar as consciousness figures in the case. In contrast, to speak in terms of physical mechanism (with reference to the same case: “... the afferent series of bursts of neural firing gives rise to the efferent series, which in turn causes these movements in the lungs, throat, and mouth”) is to speak entirely in terms phenomena. It is possible, however, to speak in terms of conscious noumena and cause-and-effect relations at once (“... the unpleasant, aversive character of the taste causes the animal to spit out the fruit”), in that it is possible to regard a conscious noumenon as a cause, which is so, again, in that  $C1 = pheC1$ .

In this example, that which appears—one series then another of neural firing, then movements in the lungs, throat, and mouth—is all that occurs. The foul taste occurs, to be sure, but it is identical to a burst of neural firing in the afferent series—to one at the end of the series, presumably—in that it is that burst as that burst is. There is no possibility, then, that the series of events described partly in terms of conscious noumena (as in “... the taste is foul, so the animal spits out the fruit”) and that described entirely in terms of phenomena (“... the afferent series of bursts of neural firing gives rise to the efferent series, which in turn causes these movements in the lungs, throat, and mouth”) might fail to match or mesh in some way, for there occurs only series of events.

Ralph Ellis mentions

a certain ‘phenomenological fallacy’ which consists of thinking that if I see a green thing, then there must be something green in my brain (*An Ontology of Consciousness*, 46).

This is indeed a fallacy. It is the fallacy of supposing that a conscious noumenon, as for instance a flash of green, appears as it is, not as it appears, which is of course nonsense. In fact it appears as it appears, as a burst of neural firing, not as it is.

To put it differently, the phenomenological fallacy is that of classifying a sensation or more generally a conscious occurrence as a phenomenon not a noumenon. If a conscious occurrence, a flash of green, for instance, is a

phenomenon, then, to speak absurdly, it appears in that phenomenon, as a flash of green. But this is to say that it appears as a flash of green from the point of view of O2 on O1, the point of view of a neurologist observing the workings of a brain.

The P-thesis, then, entails the phenomenological fallacy. This, of course, constitutes a strong argument against it and for the N-thesis.

John R. Searle writes:

Just as the liquidity of ... water is caused by the behavior of elements at the micro-level, and yet at the same time it is a feature realised in the system of micro-elements, so in exactly that sense of 'caused by' and 'realised in' mental phenomena are caused by processes going on in the brain at the neuronal or modular level, and at the same time they are realised in the very system that consists of neurons (*Minds, Brains and Science*, 22).

That which occurs in a brain on the macro-level, however, no less than that which occurs on the micro-level, is phenomenal: it is what appears from an objective point of view. Searle's theory, then, entails—or at any rate appears to entail—that O2 can literally see C1 in the brain of O1, not only as NC1, a burst of neural firing, on the micro-level, but also as C1—as, for instance, a flash of green, the sound of a cello, or the odor of Hong Kong—on the macro-level. But, leaving aside the question what it means to see a phenomenal sound or an odor, if not to see the neural correlate, which on Searle's theory consists in a burst of neural firing on the micro-level, this is to commit the phenomenological fallacy: A neurologist observes the workings of the brain of an organism as it experiences a flash of green, and what does he see there? On the micro-level, a burst of neural firing, and on the macro-level a flash of green.

No theory of consciousness which takes an objective point of view on an organism and fails to take into account that organism's own standpoint can possibly capture the consciousness of that organism. This point of view is that of O2 on O1. From it, noumenal NC1 appears, as a burst of neural firing, but it does not occur as noumenon. This point of view, then, does not capture noumenal NC1. But this is to say that it doesn't capture C1, for C1=nouNC1.

Searle's theory, for instance, takes the point of view of O2 on O1 and fails to take into account the standpoint of O1, and thus captures no more than that which figures in the case as phenomenon. Thus it fails to capture that which figures as noumenon. Hence it fails to capture the consciousness of O1.

Consciousness, then, consists in neural firing of certain descriptions—not, however, as it appears, which is to say not as neural firing, but rather as it is. To summarize with a slogan, consciousness is noumenal.