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Conscious Propositional Attitudes and Moral Responsibility

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Abstract

By drawing on empirical evidence, Matt King and Peter Carruthers (2012) have recently argued that there are no conscious propositional attitudes, such as decisions, and that this undermines moral responsibility. Neil Levy (2012, forthcoming) responds to King and Carruthers, and claims that their considerations needn't worry theorists of moral responsibility. I argue that Levy's response to King and Carruthers' challenge to moral responsibility is unsatisfactory. After that, I propose what I take to be a preferable way of dealing with their challenge. I offer an account of moral responsibility that ties responsibility to consciously deciding to do X, as opposed to a conscious decision to do X. On this account, even if there are no conscious decisions, moral responsibility won't be undermined.

Keywords

conscious propositional attitudes – moral responsibility – global workspace

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Introduction

Matt King and Peter Carruthers¹ have recently argued that there are no conscious propositional attitudes (PAs), such as judgments and decisions, and that this has important implications for our theorizing about moral responsibility. They hold that it is a common view that subjects are responsible only for those actions that are grounded in their conscious decisions. King and Carruthers contend that since there are good reasons to believe that conscious PAs, including conscious decisions, don't exist, this view of moral responsibility is undermined. They argue that moral philosophers need to search for a way of demarcating actions for which subjects are responsible from actions for which they are not responsible that doesn't rely on the assumption of conscious PAs.

In two papers, Neil Levy² responds to King and Carruthers' argument. He claims that, "nothing in the considerations they advance should give theorists of moral responsibility pause".³ He contends that

even if there are no conscious attitudes, nevertheless coming to be aware of the content of the propositional attitudes that cause our actions makes a difference to the moral status of those actions, a difference significant enough to distinguish between actions for which we are rightly held responsible and those for which we ought to be excused.⁴

In the following, my aim is twofold. I first argue that Levy's response to King and Carruthers' challenge to moral responsibility is unsatisfactory. After that, I propose what I take to be a preferable way of dealing with their challenge. I offer an account of moral responsibility that ties responsibility to consciously deciding to do X, as opposed to a conscious decision to do X. On this account, even if there are no conscious decisions, moral responsibility won't be undermined.

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- 1 M. King and P. Carruthers, 'Moral Responsibility and Consciousness', *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 9 (2012), pp. 200–228. P. Carruthers, 'How We Know Our Own Minds: The Relationship Between Mind-Reading and Metacognition', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 32 (2009), pp. 121–182; P. Carruthers, 'Introspection: Divided and Partly Eliminated', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 80 (2010), pp. 76–111; P. Carruthers, *The Opacity of Mind: An Integrative Theory of Self-Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
 - 2 N. Levy, 'A Role for Consciousness After All', *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 9 (2) (2012), pp. 255–264; N. Levy, 'Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes and Moral Responsibility', *Noûs* (forthcoming).
 - 3 Levy, 'A Role for Consciousness After All', p. 256.
 - 4 Levy, 'Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes and Moral Responsibility', pp. 1–2.

In section I, I start with an exposition of King and Carruthers' argument against conscious PAS and explain why they believe that, if conscious PAS didn't exist, moral responsibility would be undermined. I then introduce Levy's response to King and Carruthers before, in section III, critiquing his argument. In section IV, I offer my own argument against King and Carruthers' challenge to moral responsibility.

I The Case against Conscious PAS and Moral Responsibility

King and Carruthers⁵ maintain that we don't know our own PAS directly by introspection but only indirectly after a swift and unconscious process of self-interpretation that involves the same cognitive mechanism that we use to work out other people's mental states. To support this claim, they cite empirical evidence. For instance, in experimental settings, subjects have been found to unknowingly confabulate decisions for actions after the latter have occurred, and even though they didn't perform the actions themselves⁶ or voluntarily.⁷ Furthermore, it has been shown that interpretation of one's own body movements affects self-knowledge of attitudes. For example, when subjects nod their heads while listening to a message, they are more likely to think that they agree with the message.⁸

Based on these and many more findings,⁹ King and Carruthers hold that we self-ascribe PAS after interpretation of ourselves. The fact that we can be deceived about our own PAS and in some cases unknowingly confabulate them suggests that we don't have direct access to them. And given that it is interpretive cues to attitudes that are manipulated in the experiments mentioned, this indicates that we use these interpretive cues to self-ascribe PAS, King and Carruthers reason.

5 King and Carruthers, 'Moral Responsibility and Consciousness'. See also Carruthers, 'How We Know Our Own Minds: The Relationship Between Mindreading and Metacognition', Carruthers, 'Introspection: Divided and Partly Eliminated', and Carruthers, *The Opacity of Mind: An Integrative Theory of Self-Knowledge*.

6 D. Wegner and T. Wheatley, 'Apparent mental causation: Sources of the experience of will', *American Psychologist*, 54 (1999), pp. 480–491.

7 J. Brasil-Neto et al., 'Focal Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation and Response Bias in a Forced Choice Task', *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry*, 55 (1992), pp. 964–966.

8 P. Briñol and R. Petty, 'Overt Head Movements and Persuasion: A Self-Validation Analysis', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84 (2003), pp. 1123–39.

9 See chapter 11 of Carruthers, *The Opacity of Mind: An Integrative Theory of Self-Knowledge*.

They¹⁰ hold that the empirical evidence challenges the view that we have non-interpretive access to our own PAS and supports the proposal that self-knowledge of PAS involves turning the ‘mindreading faculty’ – the faculty that allows us to attribute mental states to others and predict their behaviour in terms of them – towards oneself. On this view, self-knowledge of PAS is as indirect as knowledge of other people’s mental states in that it involves interpretation. The only difference is that in one’s own case, the mindreading faculty can, in addition to using overt behaviour, also draw on a subject’s sensory, affective, and imagistic states (e.g. visual imagery or ‘inner speech’) that are all globally broadcast in the mind-brain. The mindreading faculty can take these states, just as one’s own overt behaviour, as input to work out one’s attitudes.¹¹

Carruthers¹² contends that this theory of self-knowledge is well supported by the evidence and has the advantage of being simpler than any theory assuming non-interpretive self-knowledge of PAS. The reason is that it doesn’t postulate two separate mechanisms for self- and other-knowledge of PAS but only one, the mindreading faculty. Given that the intuition of direct access to PAS is undermined by the self-interpretation and confabulation data, in the absence of an argument in support of the view that there is non-interpretive self-knowledge of PAS, we should thus endorse the self-interpretation based theory, Carruthers concludes.

But King and Carruthers argue that if our access to our own PAS is only interpretive, as the data suggests and this theory implies, then there are two important implications. First, the just mentioned account of self-knowledge of PAS, in conjunction with the two in their view most plausible accounts of consciousness, entails that there are no conscious PAS. The two approaches in question are the global workspace account¹³ and higher-order state theories.¹⁴

According to the global workspace theory, a state is conscious if it is in global workspace, that is, if it is available to various other judgment- and decision-forming systems, including the faculty that self-ascribes PAS. Since

10 See, in particular, Carruthers, *The Opacity of Mind: An Integrative Theory of Self-Knowledge*.

11 For more details and critical comments on Carruthers’ view of self-knowledge of PAS see also U. Peters, ‘Indirect Sensory Access Theory and Conscious Intentions’, *Philosophical Psychology* (forthcoming).

12 Carruthers, *The Opacity of Mind: An Integrative Theory of Self-Knowledge*.

13 See B. Baars, *A Cognitive Theory of Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); S. Dehaene and L. Naccache, ‘Towards a Cognitive Neuroscience of Consciousness: Basic Evidence and a Workspace Framework’, *Cognition* 79 (2001), pp. 1–37.

14 See, e.g., D. Rosenthal, *Consciousness and Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), and W. Lycan, *Consciousness and Experience* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

the evidence suggests that that faculty doesn't have direct access to PAS (for if it did, PAS would be knowable non-interpretively as any other states in global workspace, such as visual imagery or 'inner speech'), it follows, King and Carruthers hold, that PAS themselves aren't globally available and thus not conscious on the global workspace theory.

On the higher-order theory, on the other hand, a mental state is conscious if it is represented by a higher-order state (e.g., a higher-order thought¹⁵ or a higher-order perception¹⁶). King and Carruthers argue that higher-order theories in general are committed to the view that our access to our own PAS is different from the access we have to other people's mental states.¹⁷ Since the evidence suggests that this is not the case, on these theories, there are no conscious PAS either, King and Carruthers conclude.

In what follows, I shall not take issue with King and Carruthers' case against conscious PAS. What I want to focus on instead is the following second claim that they make. They hold that if conscious PAS don't exist, this would undermine a common conception of moral responsibility. King and Carruthers write that on this conception, "one doesn't consciously control one's choice of", for instance, "the red shoes over the blue, if that decision is unconscious".¹⁸ And if one doesn't consciously control one's action then one can't be held responsible for that action, as only decisions that are "consciously arrived at [...] are truly the subject's own".¹⁹ Thus, on this view of responsibility, if there are no conscious PAS including decisions then there is no consciously controlling one's choice, and a subject can't be held responsible for her actions. That is, if there are no conscious decisions, moral responsibility is undermined.

II Levy's Response

In response to King and Carruthers, Levy claims that, "nothing in the considerations" they advance "should give theorists of moral responsibility pause".²⁰ He emphasizes that, on King and Carruthers' account, even if there are no conscious PAS, we still "routinely and reliably become aware of the content of our propositional attitudes" after a process of interpretation of our own overt

15 Rosenthal, *Consciousness and Mind*.

16 Lycan, *Consciousness and Experience*.

17 King and Carruthers, 'Moral Responsibility and Consciousness', pp. 208–209.

18 *Ibid.* p. 224.

19 King and Carruthers, 'Moral Responsibility and Consciousness', p. 226.

20 Levy, 'A Role for Consciousness After All', p. 256.

behaviour or imagistic states (e.g., visual imagery or ‘inner speech’) that are globally broadcast.²¹

As an example of the contents that we become aware of in this way, Levy mentions “the content <that I desire to act thus-and-so>”.²² He holds that since we become aware of such contents by self-interpretation,

this content is globally broadcast via the mechanisms which make imagistic and perceptual content available to all consuming systems. Because this content is globally broadcast, it is available not only (once again) to the mind-reading system, but also to the decision-making and judgment-forming systems.²³

Levy holds that this ensures that the contents “are integrated with other personal level contents” and “guide a broad and integrated range of behaviour which reflects a correspondingly broad range of the agent’s attitudes”.²⁴ In his view, an agent’s consciousness of the content of his/her own attitude causes “the agent to pursue behaviours that are consistent with that attitude as well as with other personal-level concerns”.²⁵

Levy argues that this is directly relevant for moral responsibility. He illustrates his point by considering cases in which subjects are not aware of the contents of the attitudes that cause their actions and are hence not responsible for these actions. In the absence of awareness of the contents of one’s PAS and when self-attribution of PAS fails, for instance, in the case of a male patient with alien hand syndrome²⁶ whose hand suddenly hits out at his wife, the content of the representational state that underlies the alien-hand movements are encapsulated from other representations and not broadcast to other judgment- and decision-forming systems. Since this content isn’t available to judgment- and decision-making mechanisms, it isn’t open to the subject’s “assessments” of what he has a “reason to do”.²⁷ And as a result, the subject isn’t responsible for hitting his wife, Levy holds.

21 Levy, ‘A Role for Consciousness After All’, p. 262.

22 Ibid. p. 263.

23 Ibid. p. 262.

24 Levy, ‘Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes and Moral Responsibility’, p. 6.

25 Ibid.

26 For details on the Alien-Hand Syndrome see C. Marchetti, C., and S. Della Salla, ‘Disentangling the alien and anarchic hand’, *Cognitive Neuropsychiatry* 3 (1998), pp. 191–208.

27 Levy, ‘Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes and Moral Responsibility’, p. 8.

In contrast, in normal subjects who are able to become aware of the content of the PAS that cause their actions, the contents that the subjects are aware of are broadcast to a variety of judgment- and decision forming systems. This allows the subjects to assess them and control the states of affairs that are the intentional objects of these PAS, Levy maintains.²⁸ Since a subject's awareness of the contents of the PAS causing her action gives her the chance to change her PAS and control the behaviour they cause, the subject becomes morally responsible for the actions that her attitudes cause, Levy holds.

He concludes that even if King and Carruthers are right and conscious PAS don't exist, this doesn't undermine moral responsibility. For even if there are no conscious attitudes, "coming to be aware of the content of the propositional attitudes that cause our actions makes a difference to the moral status of those actions", and that difference, he holds, allows distinguishing "between actions for which we are rightly held responsible and those for which we ought to be excused".²⁹

III Critique of Levy's Response

Upon scrutiny, however, it turns out that Levy's proposal remains unsatisfactory. To see this, recall first that he accepts that we become aware of the content of our own PAS only after self-interpretation.³⁰ There are then two options: either this awareness of the content of PAS allows a subject *S* to change and control the behaviour that her attitudes cause or it doesn't. As it turns out, both options are problematic.

Suppose that the awareness of the content of her PAS does not allow *S* to still change her actions. If that were so, then it is not clear why she should be morally responsible for actions that are caused by attitudes that she is aware of. For if *S* doesn't gain the ability to control and change her actions once she is aware of the content of her attitudes then there is nothing in this awareness to tie her moral responsibility to, as her action would happen the way it does no matter whether or not she has this awareness. Indeed, even Levy's own view of moral responsibility relies on the assumption that *S* can control her actions. He holds that awareness of the content of an attitude allows for control of the action that the attitude causes. The view that awareness of the content of the attitude that causes one's action does not allow for control of the action that the attitude

28 Levy, 'A Role for Consciousness After All', p. 264.

29 Levy, 'Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes and Moral Responsibility', p. 1–2.

30 Levy, 'A Role for Consciousness After All', p. 262.

causes thus isn't an option for Levy and doesn't yield an account of moral responsibility.

Suppose, then, that awareness of the content of attitudes *does* allow for control of actions. The problem is that if *S* can still change and control her actions when she is aware of the content of her attitude, e.g., her decision to act thus-and-so then the content that she is aware of can't be that of the decision that causes her action. To see this point, we need to get clear on what decisions are.

Carruthers³¹ holds quite plausibly that there are certain conceptual constraints on decisions:

In the case of a decision to act here-and-now, the decision should issue in motor instructions without the intervention of any further practical reasoning. A decision is supposed to end the process of practical reasoning and to settle what I do (unless something goes awry with my motor system, of course).

Something similar is true of a decision to act in the future: this should settle that I act (unless something significant changes in the interim) and what act I shall perform. Any further reasoning in the future should be confined to the question of how to act.³²

So decisions end processes of reasoning and settle what to do.³³ However, this isn't the case with any content that one might be aware of, for such content is always susceptible to revisions by a subject's further reflection. As Levy writes also, contents that the subject is aware of and that are globally broadcast allow the subject to assess her attitudes and control her behaviour.³⁴ This presupposes that these contents are not of attitudes that end practical reasoning, settle what to do, and issue directly into behaviour. For they can still be the objects of further

31 Carruthers, 'How We Know Our Own Minds: The Relationship Between Mind-Reading and Metacognition'; Carruthers, *The Opacity of Mind: An Integrative Theory of Self-Knowledge*, p. 103ff. See also M. Bratman, *Intentions, plans, and practical reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), M. Bratman, *Faces of intention: Selected essays on intention and agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

32 Carruthers, 'How We Know Our Own Minds: The Relationship Between Mind-Reading and Metacognition', p. 133.

33 While this view of decisions might be challenged, it is common in the cognitive sciences, and I take it to be an advantage of the view of the connection between consciousness and moral responsibility that I offer below that it is in line with this account of decisions.

34 Levy, 'A Role for Consciousness After All', p. 262; Levy, 'Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes and Moral Responsibility', p. 6.

cognitive activity before the episode of reasoning is settled and behaviour initiated. Thus, if *S*'s awareness of the content of a decision does still allow her to change and control her action, it isn't awareness of the content of the particular decision that then causes *S*'s action. It is awareness of some other state. However, if that is so, then *S* again won't be responsible for her action, for she lacks the kind of awareness that is on Levy's view required for moral responsibility.

So either *S* can't, contra Levy, be 'aware of the content of the attitude that causes her action'; or she *can* be aware of the content of the attitude that causes her action, but then this awareness isn't enough for moral responsibility. Either way, Levy's proposal remains problematic.

The preceding point is in line with the view that *S* acquires awareness of the content of a decision leading to an action after the decision has been made and has become expressed in behavior or imagistic states. I assumed that this isn't sufficient for being morally responsible for an action.

However, Levy might argue in response that such *post-hoc* awareness can still help "distinguish between actions for which we are rightly held responsible and those for which we ought to be excused".³⁵ He could hold that it allows the subject to change (e.g., in the light of censure or social pressure) her disposition for that action in future situations. Since that is so, she is responsible for the action in those future situations, and should be excused for actions that are caused by attitudes of whose contents she hasn't previously become aware, or so Levy might argue.

But this view fails to explain the intuition that in normal cases a subject is already responsible for her action when she performs it for the first time. Tying responsibility to a subject's *post-hoc* awareness of the content of the attitude that cause her action won't explain this because in the case at hand, the subject doesn't yet have an awareness of that attitude content and disposition before the two become expressed in an action. So Levy's proposal would still be unable to tell us why the subject is responsible for her action in such cases.

Another problem with Levy's view has to do with his linking moral responsibility to awareness that has contents of the form, for instance, "<that I desire to act thus-and-so>".³⁶ As the content indicates, this is higher-order awareness: you are in a mental state that is about another mental state (e.g., a desire). Levy holds that this higher-order awareness enables us to "distinguish between actions for which we are rightly held responsible and those for which we ought to be excused".³⁷ Given this, on Levy's view, subjects that are unable to come to

35 Levy, 'Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes and Moral Responsibility', pp. 1–2.

36 Levy, 'A Role for Consciousness After All', p. 263.

37 Levy, 'Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes and Moral Responsibility', pp. 1–2.

know or be aware of their own attitude contents would then be excused for their actions. For example, it is well known that autistics have an impaired mindreading faculty – there is evidence suggesting that they lack higher-order awareness of others' and their own mental states.³⁸ On Levy's view, then, these subjects would be excused for their actions.

However, it seems clear that we would want to hold autistic subjects responsible for their behaviour when they do harm to others.³⁹ Levy's proposal on how to "distinguish between actions for which we are rightly held responsible and those for which we ought to be excused"⁴⁰ doesn't allow us to do this. His proposal thus doesn't allow us to draw that distinction in a satisfactory way. As a response to King and Carruthers' challenge, it remains wanting.

IV Meeting King and Carruthers' Challenge to Moral Responsibility

However, a different response is available. I shall argue that King and Carruthers conflate the act of consciously deciding to do *X* with a conscious decision to do *X*. Once the two are kept separate, it will become clear that even if there are no conscious decisions, this won't undermine moral responsibility.

Recall that King and Carruthers hold that it is a common view that only decisions that are "*consciously arrived at* [...]" are truly the subject's own⁴¹ and that one is morally responsible only for decisions that are consciously controlled. Further, "one doesn't *consciously control*", for instance, "one's choice of the red shoes over the blue, if that decision is unconscious".⁴² Given this, King and Carruthers claim that if there are no conscious PAS, moral responsibility is undermined.

As these quotes indicate, for King and Carruthers, assuming that one can consciously arrive at a decision and consciously control a choice commits one to the existence of conscious decisions. Furthermore, they hold that tying

38 W. Phillips et al., 'Understanding intention in normal development and in autism', *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 16 (1998), pp. 337–348; S. Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995); Carruthers, *The Opacity of Mind: An Integrative Theory of Self-Knowledge*.

39 Given their psychological condition, they might only be morally responsible in a diminished sense. Nonetheless, they are still held responsible to some extent. Levy's proposal doesn't allow us to explain why this is so.

40 Levy, 'Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes and Moral Responsibility', pp. 1–2.

41 King and Carruthers, 'Moral Responsibility and Consciousness', p. 226. Emphasis added.

42 Ibid. p. 224. Emphasis added.

moral responsibility to the ability to consciously arrive at and control one's decision is tying it to conscious decisions.

But this seems to conflate things. Consciously deciding – i.e., King and Carruthers' 'consciously controlling one's choice' or 'consciously arriving at a decision' – is not the same as a conscious decision: the former is an event, and the latter is the state that results from that event.⁴³

As it turns out, once we draw this distinction, even if there are no conscious decisions, this would still leave it open whether one can consciously control and arrive at one's decisions. If that is so, however, then we can respond to King and Carruthers' challenge to moral responsibility in the following way: since the view of moral responsibility that they are attacking need rely only on a subject's being able to consciously control and arrive at her decision, even if there are no conscious PAS, this view of moral responsibility is not undermined.

But how could one consciously arrive at decisions even if there are no conscious decisions? In a first approximation, it seems clear that we are able to form a decision after a process of conscious reflection on a particular issue. For instance, suppose a subject consciously considers reasons⁴⁴ for and against protecting whales then this might involve entertaining visual images (e.g., of whales, whale slaughter in the sea, Greenpeace, etc.), or auditory imagery (e.g., commenting on the decreasing number of whales, the threat of their extinction etc.) and undergoing a sense of dislike or disgust about the content of that imagery. Perhaps contents of other decisions or desires (e.g., not to harm animals), and judgments (e.g., that killing animals is wrong) that have been worked out interpretively will be broadcast and consciously entertained also. Presumably, after the reflection involving various imagistic states, reasons, etc., a decision with a particular content will be the result. For instance,

43 It might be argued that for Carruthers decisions are events, 'decidings', as it were. However, if that were so, note that the evidence that Carruthers cites in his writings against non-interpretive access to PAS and his case against conscious PAS only pertain to the *results* of those decidings: evidently, only after the decidings are completed can subjects report their decisions. Consequently, the evidence only supports the view that we lack non-interpretive access to the results of decidings. In conjunction with the global workspace account of higher-order state theories, this means at best that these states aren't conscious. There could still be conscious decidings.

44 King and Carruthers' argument against conscious PAS doesn't apply to conscious reasons, because a reason could just be a proposition that is entertained with no particular attitude attached. For it to become an attitude, e.g., a judgment, the proposition also needs to be taken to be true or false. Consciously entertaining reasons thus doesn't equate with consciously entertaining attitudes.

after reflection, the subject might come to form the decision to protect whales and sign a petition.

In this situation, while the decision itself may not be conscious, the subject is nonetheless still conscious *with* the process leading up to the decision *of* the contents in global workspace that are conscious. Consider visual perception. One can be visually conscious of a tomato, i.e., one can consciously see it, without being conscious of the seeing itself.⁴⁵ In such a situation, one would be conscious *with* the seeing of the tomato. I want to suggest that, similarly, one can be conscious with a decision-making process of the contents in global workspace that contribute to the decision while being unconscious of this process, and while the resulting decision itself remains unconscious. This would be a process of consciously deciding in the absence of a conscious decision.

The notion of consciously deciding allows for an account of moral responsibility since it involves the control over what one is aware of, i.e., one's mental contents (imagistic states, reasons, etc.). For instance, it is up to the subject which possible or actual scenarios she considers, which imagery to invoke, and which reasons to reflect on when forming a decision. Thus, even if neither the decision-forming process itself nor the resulting decision and its content are conscious, the subject still consciously controls the process leading up to the decision with a particular content. Hence she is responsible for the resulting decision and the action it causes.

The present proposal is that moral responsibility could be plausibly tied to consciously deciding, that is, to consciously entertaining contents and choosing which one to be motivated by. Consciously deciding, however, is at best necessary for responsibility. In order to be responsible for an action, a subject doesn't only need to be able to consciously entertain contents and choose which one to be motivated by; she also needs to be able to reason rationally, i.e., in a way that survives scrutiny by others and is justifiable before them. For the way she reasons will determine which scenarios, contents etc. she takes into consideration in consciously deciding for or against an action. Both the abilities to consciously decide and rationally reason together yield an account of moral responsibility that doesn't rely on the existence of conscious PAS.

Note that this response to King and Carruthers' challenge to moral responsibility is quite different from Levy's. Levy holds that, even if there were no conscious PAS, subjects could still be aware of the contents of the attitudes that cause their actions and thus be responsible for these actions. For the grounds

45 See also, e.g., G. Harman, 'The Intrinsic Quality of Experience', *Philosophical Perspectives* 4 (1990) pp. 31–52, and M. Tye *Ten Problems of Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1995).

mentioned in section III, this response to King and Carruthers' point remains unsatisfactory. The alternative that I have offered is that, even if there are no conscious attitudes, subjects can still be aware of the reasons for or against a proposition that becomes the content of the attitude that then causes their actions. Since the reasons for or against that proposition are clearly not identical with the proposition itself, the awareness of these reasons isn't awareness of the content of the attitude that causes a subject's action. This is where my view crucially differs from Levy's. Furthermore, since my proposal, unlike Levy's, doesn't tie responsibility to higher-order awareness of attitudes, but to first-order awareness of contents in global workspace and the ability to think rationally, it also avoids the problem outlined above with respect to the responsibility of autistic subjects. For there is evidence indicating that autistic subjects are able to engage in rational reasoning that involves first-order mental state,⁴⁶ even though they lack higher-order awareness.⁴⁷ Thus, to the extent that they are able to reason rationally, consciously entertain contents and chose by which ones to be motivated, they are responsible for their actions.

In sum, I have offered reasons against endorsing Levy's response to King and Carruthers' challenge to moral responsibility and provided a different reply it. I argued that King and Carruthers' considerations don't undermine moral responsibility, for they conflate consciously controlling and arriving at a decision to do *X* with the conscious decision to do *X* itself. They overlook that a subject might still consciously control and arrive at a decision even if the decision that results is itself unconscious. Given that moral responsibility is plausibly tied to how a subject arrives at her decisions, for instance, what she takes into consideration when making the decision, even if there are no conscious decisions, moral responsibility isn't threatened.⁴⁸

46 See, e.g., L. Mottron et al., 'The level and nature of autistic intelligence', *Psychological Science* 18 (2007), pp. 657–662.

47 W. Phillips et al., 'Understanding intention in normal development and in autism', *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 16 (1998), pp. 337–348; S. Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995); Carruthers, *The Opacity of Mind: An Integrative Theory of Self-Knowledge*.

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