

Dan Zahavi

## *Back to Brentano?*

**Abstract:** *For a couple of decades, higher-order theories of consciousness have enjoyed great popularity, but they have recently been met with growing dissatisfaction. Many have started to look elsewhere for viable alternatives, and within the last few years, quite a few have rediscovered Brentano. In this paper such a (neo-)Brentanian one-level account of consciousness will be outlined and discussed. It will be argued that it can contribute important insights to our understanding of the relation between consciousness and self-awareness, but it will also be argued that the account remains beset with some problems, and that it will ultimately make more sense to take a closer look at Sartre, Husserl, and Heidegger, if one is on the lookout for promising alternatives to the higher-order theories, than to return all the way to Brentano.*

### **I: The Rise and Fall of Higher-Order Theory**

It is customary to distinguish between two uses of the term 'conscious', a transitive and an intransitive use. On the one hand, we can speak of our being conscious of something, be it x, y, or z. On the other we can speak of our being conscious *simpliciter* (rather than non-conscious). For the past two or three decades, a dominant way to account for intransitive consciousness in cognitive science and analytical philosophy of mind has been by means of some kind of higher-order theory (cf. Armstrong, 1968; Rosenthal, 1986; Lycan, 1987; Carruthers, 1996; etc.). The distinction between conscious and non-conscious mental states has been taken to rest upon the presence or absence of a relevant meta-mental state. One way to illustrate the guiding idea is by comparing consciousness to a spotlight. Some mental states are illuminated; others do their work in the dark. Those that are illuminated are intransitively conscious, those that are not, are non-conscious. What makes a mental state conscious (illuminated) is the fact that it is taken as an object by a relevant higher-order state. It is the occurrence of the higher-order representation that makes us conscious of the first-order mental state. In short, a conscious state is a state we are conscious of,

Correspondence: Dan Zahavi, Danish National Research Foundation: Center for Subjectivity Research, University of Copenhagen, Købmagergade 46, DK-1150 Copenhagen K, Denmark  
Email: [zahavi@cfs.ku.dk](mailto:zahavi@cfs.ku.dk)

or as Rosenthal puts it, ‘the mental state’s being intransitively conscious simply consists in one’s being transitively conscious of it’ (Rosenthal, 1997, p. 739). Thus, intransitive consciousness is taken to be a non-intrinsic, relational property (Rosenthal, 1997, pp. 736–7), that is, a property that a mental state only has in so far as it stands in the relevant relation to something else.

There have generally been two ways of interpreting this. Either we become aware of being in the first-order mental state by means of some higher-order perception or monitoring (Armstrong, 1968; Lycan, 1997), or we become aware of it by means of some higher-order thought, that is, the state is conscious just in case we have a roughly contemporaneous thought to the effect *that* we are in that very state (Rosenthal, 1993a, p.199). Thus, the basic divide between the higher-order perception (HOP) and the higher-order thought (HOT) model has precisely been on the issue of whether the conscious-making meta-mental states are perception-like or thought-like in nature.<sup>1</sup> In both cases, however, consciousness has been taken to be a question of the mind directing its intentional aim upon its own states and operations. Self-directedness has been taken to be constitutive of (intransitive) consciousness, or to put it differently, higher-order theories have typically explained (intransitive) consciousness in terms of self-awareness.<sup>2</sup> As Van Gulick puts it, it is ‘the addition of the relevant meta-intentional self-awareness that transforms a nonconscious mental state into a conscious one’ (Van Gulick, 2000, p. 276).

For a period, the higher-order theories enjoyed great popularity, but in recent years they have been met with growing dissatisfaction (cf. Byrne, 1997; Siewert, 1998; Zahavi, 1999; Van Gulick, 2000; Thomasson, 2000; Baker, 2000; Lurz, 2003a; Kriegel, 2003a). The criticism has been multifaceted, but let me mention a few of the counter-arguments.

All higher-order models, be they of the HOT or the HOP variant, share common assumptions. One of the most frequently criticized is the idea that the relation between two otherwise non-conscious processes can make one of them conscious. Conscious states are not something that one simply has, like coins in one’s pocket. On the contrary, conscious states are characterized by having a subjective ‘feel’ to them, i.e., a certain phenomenal quality of ‘what it is like’ or what it ‘feels’ like to have them. According to the higher-order theories a certain mental state must stand in the right relation to a second-order thought or perception in order for it to manifest itself phenomenally. But it is quite unclear how a state without subjective or phenomenal qualities can be transformed into one with such qualities by the mere relational addition of a meta-state having the first-order state as its intentional object (cf. Van Gulick, 2000, p. 294).

One of the questions that a higher-order theory has to answer is the following: What is it that makes one mental state conscious of another mental state? For Rosenthal a ‘higher-order thought, B, is an awareness of the mental-state token, A, simply because A is the intentional object of B’ (Rosenthal, 1993b, p. 160).

[1] For an informative comparison of the HOT and HOP models, see Van Gulick (2000).

[2] In the following, I will not distinguish ‘self-consciousness’ and ‘self-awareness’, but rather use the two terms interchangeably.

Rosenthal readily admits, however, that the relation between the higher-order state and the first-order state is of a rather special kind. On the one hand, we only regard mental states as being conscious if we are conscious of them in some suitably unmediated way, namely non-inferentially. Otherwise, a non-conscious mental process would qualify as conscious, simply because we could infer that we would have to be in it (Rosenthal, 1997, p. 737). On the other hand, Rosenthal argues that for a mental state to be conscious, it is not sufficient that we are non-inferentially conscious of the state, we also have to be conscious of being *ourselves* in that very mental state. ‘Only if one’s thought is about one self as such, and not just about some one that happens to be one self, will the mental state be a conscious state’ (Rosenthal, 1997, p. 750, cf. p. 741).<sup>3</sup> To put it differently, it is not enough to explain how a certain state becomes conscious, the theory also has to explain how the state comes to be given as *my* state, as a state that *I* am in. Why? Because this first-personal givenness is an ineliminable part of what it means for a state to be conscious — it concerns the fact that a conscious mental state feels like something *for somebody* — and for a theory of consciousness to leave this aspect out is to leave something absolutely crucial out.

The decisive question, however, is whether the higher-order theories are capable of accounting for this feature in a satisfactory manner.

Rosenthal has argued that if one wishes to come up with a non-trivial and informative account of consciousness one must at any price avoid the claim that consciousness is an intrinsic property of our mental states. To call something intrinsic is, for Rosenthal, to imply that it is something unanalysable and mysterious, and consequently beyond the reach of scientific and theoreti cal study: ‘We would insist that being conscious is an intrinsic property of mental states only if we were convinced that it lacked articulated structure, and thus defied explanation’ (Rosenthal, 1993b, p.157). Although Rosenthal acknowledges that there is something intuitively appealing about taking consciousness to be an intrinsic property, he still thinks that this approach must be avoided since it will impede a naturalistic (and reductionistic) account, which seeks to explain consciousness by appeal to non-conscious mental states, and non-conscious mental states in non-mental terms (Rosenthal 1993b, p. 165; 1997, p. 735). But as Baker has recently pointed out, although Rosenthal’s account of consciousness requires a first-person perspective — a first-order mental state is to be conscious by being accompanied by a non-conscious higher-order state that only a being with a first-person perspective could have — his theory simply presupposes this first-person perspective, or to put it differently, ‘the first-person perspective that is required for the explanation of conscious states is itself left unexplained’ (Baker, 2000, p. 84).

This objection can be elaborated and amplified by means of some of the classical analyses of first-personal self-reference found in the writings of Castañeda, Perry, Shoemaker, and others. These analyses have purported to show that the types of self-reference available from a first-person perspective and from a

[3] In making this claim, Rosenthal explicitly refers to the work of Castañeda, Chisholm, Lewis, and Perry (Rosenthal, 1997, p. 750).

third-person perspective are utterly different. I can refer to a publicly available object by way of a proper name, a demonstrative, or a definite description, and occasionally this object happens to be myself. When I refer to myself in this way, that is, when I refer to myself from the third-person perspective, I am referring to myself in exactly the same way that I can refer to others, and others can refer to me (the only difference being that I am the one doing it, thus making the reference into a self-reference). But this type of objectifying self-reference is neither necessary nor sufficient if one is to be aware of oneself in the proper first-personal manner. In order for a perception of a sunset to be given as *my* perception, as a perception *I* am in or living through, it is not sufficient for me to know that Dan Zahavi or a 36-year old Dane is currently perceiving a sunset etc., since I can be in possession of knowledge that identifies me from a third-person perspective, and still fail to realize that I am the person in question. Since there is always a gap between grasping that a certain third-person description applies to a person, and grasping that I am that person, i.e., since there is no third-person description such that grasping that it fits a certain person guarantees that I realize that I am that person, first-personal self-reference can not be regarded as involving the identification of an object by any third-person description (Castañeda, 1967). Nor is such third-person identificatory knowledge necessary, since I can be in a state of complete amnesia and be ignorant of all those properties that would identify me from a third-person perspective, and still remain in possession of first-personal self-reference, still remain aware that this unpleasant experience is *mine*, and that it is *me* who is undergoing it.

Why is first-personal self-reference different from third-personal self-reference? A natural reply is that first-personal self-reference owes its uniqueness to the fact that we are acquainted with our own subjectivity in a way that differs radically from the way in which we are acquainted with objects. In first-personal self-reference one is not aware of oneself as an object that happens to be oneself, nor is one aware of oneself as one specific object rather than another. Rather, first-personal self-reference involves a non-objectifying self-acquaintance. It involves what has alternately been called 'self-reference without identification' (Shoemaker, 1968) and 'non-ascriptive reference to self' (Brook, 1994).

But why is it impossible to account for first-personal self-reference in terms of a successful object-identification. Why is self-awareness not a type of object-consciousness? Shoemaker has provided a classical argument. In order to identify some thing as one self one obviously has to hold some thing true of it that one already knows to be true of one self. This self-knowledge might in some cases be grounded on some further identification, but the supposition that every item of self-knowledge rests on identification leads to an infinite regress (Shoemaker, 1968, p. 561). This even holds true for self-identification obtained through introspection. That is, it will not do to claim that introspection is distinguished by the fact that its object has a property which immediately identifies it as being me, since no other self could possibly have it, namely the property of being the private and exclusive object of exactly my introspection. This explanation will not do, since I will be unable to identify an introspected self as myself by the fact that

it is introspectively observed by me unless I know it is the object of *my* introspection, i.e., unless I know that it is in fact *me* that undertakes this introspection, and this knowledge can not itself be based on identification if one is to avoid an infinite regress (Shoemaker, 1968, pp. 562–3). More generally, one can not account for the unique features of self-awareness by sticking to a traditional model of object-consciousness and then simply replacing the external object with an internal one. When one is aware of one's thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires, one does not seem to be given to oneself as an *object* at all (cf. Shoemaker, 1984, pp. 102–5).

Any convincing theory of consciousness has to account for the first-personal givenness of our conscious states, and has to respect the difference between our consciousness of a foreign object and our consciousness of ourselves. Any convincing theory of consciousness has to be able to explain the distinction between *intentionality*, which is characterized by an epistemic *difference* between the subject and the object of experience, and *self-consciousness*, which implies some form of *identity*. But this is precisely what the higher-order theory, which seeks to provide an extrinsic and relational account of consciousness, persistently fails to do (cf. Zahavi, 1999; 2002; 2003a).<sup>4</sup> Every higher-order theory operates with a duality. One mental state is taking another mental state as its object, and consequently we have to *distinguish* the two. Given that their relation is supposed to account for the *mineness* of the first-order state, i.e., for the fact that the conscious mental state is given as *my* state, as a state *I* am in, the process must somehow circumvent the division or difference between the two states and posit some kind of identity, namely that of belonging to the same mind or stream of consciousness. But how is that supposed to work? Just as I can not recognize something as mine unless I am already aware of myself, a non-conscious second-order mental state (that per definition lacks consciousness of itself) cannot recognize or identify a first-order mental state as belonging to the same mind as *itself*. To suggest that the second-order state might be furnished with the required self-intimacy by being taken as intentional object by a third-order mental state — and what other option does a higher-order theory have — would obviously generate an infinite regress.

[4] On some occasions, Rosenthal has explicitly argued that a higher-order thought might occur in the absence of the mental state it is purportedly about. He even writes that 'a case in which one has a higher-order thought along with the mental state it is about might well be subjectively indistinguishable from the case in which the higher-order thought occurs but not the mental state' (Rosenthal, 1997, p. 744). This might make Rosenthal's HOT position safe from the objection just outlined, but it also turns his theory into a rather strange type of higher-order theory. If one can have a higher-order thought about a first-order state even when the first-order state does not exist, consciousness is not really explained in terms of a relation between two different states, nor does it really make sense to say that intrinsic consciousness is a relational property, a property that the first-order state acquires if one is transitively conscious of it. In fact, since there can be phenomenal consciousness even in the absence of a first-order mental state, it looks as if the higher-order thought itself is sufficient for phenomenal consciousness (cf. Byrne, 1997, p. 123). But — to repeat — in that case, it seems rather doubtful that we are still dealing with a higher-order account of consciousness that takes consciousness to be a relational and non-intrinsic property.

## II: The Return of Brentano

The growing disenchantment with higher-order theories has made people look elsewhere for a viable alternative, and within the last couple of years quite a few have taken a closer look at Brentano (cf. Zahavi 1998; Thomasson, 2000; Hossack, 2002; Kriegel, 2003b,c).

Brentano's main contribution to the topic under discussion can be found in his *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (1874). According to Brentano, all mental states — or psychical phenomena, as he calls them — are characterized by their intentional directedness, they are all conscious of objects. But are they themselves also necessarily conscious, or should one rather admit the existence of non-conscious (or unconscious) psychical phenomena (Brentano, 1874, pp. 142–3)?

One of the traditional arguments in defence of the existence of *non-conscious* mental states insists that only the non-conscious can save us from a vicious infinite regress. If all occurrent mental states were conscious, in the sense of being taken as objects by an inner consciousness, and if this inner consciousness were itself conceived of as a new occurrent mental state, it itself would also have to be taken as an object by a further inner consciousness, and so forth *ad infinitum*. Furthermore, as Brentano points out, this would not be the only problem. If, say, the perception of a sunset were really the object of a higher-order awareness, the sunset would be given as an object twice (first as an object for the perception, and second as an object for the higher-order state). And in the third-order awareness of the second-order awareness of the perception of the sunset, we would have the sunset as object thrice, whereas the original perception would be given twice as object, and so forth. Thus, the regress would be of an exceedingly vicious kind, implying in addition to the simple infinite iteration a simultaneous complication of its single members. Since this consequence is absurd, that is, since it is absurd that even as simple an experience as the perception of a sunset should involve an infinite complex series of conscious states, one has to end the regress by accepting the existence of non-conscious intentional states (Brentano, 1874, p. 171).

Needless to say, this is precisely the position adopted by the defenders of the higher-order theory. For them the second-order perception or thought does not have to be conscious. This will only be the case, if it is accompanied by a (non-conscious) third-order thought or perception (cf. Rosenthal, 1997, p. 745).

In *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, however, Brentano rejects this 'solution'. He claims that it has an implication that is just as absurd as the position it seeks to avoid, the implication namely that consciousness can be accounted for in terms of the non-conscious. (It is worth emphasizing that the vicious infinite regress outlined at the end of section I cannot be avoided by means of the non-conscious; quite on the contrary). Obviously, Brentano also wants to avoid the infinite regress, however. How does he manage to pull off that trick? Brentano denies one of the crucial premises, and argues that the inner consciousness in question, rather than being a new mental state, is simply an internal feature of the primary experience. Thus, a mental state is conscious not by

being taken as an object by a further mental state, but by taking itself as object, and according to Brentano, this prevents any infinite regress from getting off the ground.

While seeing a sunset, I am aware of seeing it. What is the structure of my consciousness in this case, according to Brentano? I have a perception of the sunset, and an awareness of the perception, and consequently two objects: The sunset and the perception. Contrary to appearance, however, I do not have two different mental states. As Brentano points out, the perception of the sunset is united so intrinsically and intimately with the awareness of the perception of the sunset, that they only constitute one single psychological phenomenon. Their apparent separation is merely due to a conceptual differentiation:

In the same mental phenomenon in which the sound is present to our minds we simultaneously apprehend the mental phenomenon itself. What is more, we apprehend it in accordance with its dual nature insofar as it has the sound as content within it, and insofar as it has itself as content at the same time. We can say that the sound is the *primary object* of the act of hearing, and that the act of hearing itself is the *secondary object* (Brentano, 1874, pp. 179–80 [1973, pp. 127–8]).

Brentano consequently claims that every intentional experience has a double object, a primary and a secondary. In the case of the seeing of a sunset, the primary and thematic object is the sunset; the secondary and unthematic object is the seeing. Thus, it is important to emphasize that the focus of attention is on the primary object, and that our awareness of the mental state itself is normally secondary and incidental. In fact, according to Brentano, the experience is in principle incapable of observing itself thematically, it cannot take itself as its own primary object. Only in recollection, where one psychological act can take a preceding act as its primary object, can we pay attention to our own mental life (Brentano, 1874, pp. 41, 181).

How does Brentano's theory differ from the higher-order theories? At first sight the difference seems obvious. In contrast to the higher-order model that claims that consciousness is an extrinsic property of those mental states that have it, a property bestowed upon them from without by some further states, Brentano argues that the feature that makes a mental state conscious is located within the state itself; it is an intrinsic property of those mental states that have it.<sup>5</sup> But on closer inspection, this difference might conceal some striking similarities (cf. Kriegel, 2003c, pp. 486–9). Both the higher-order theories and Brentano's one-level theory construe consciousness in terms of self-awareness. In both cases, consciousness is taken to be a question of the mind directing its intentional aim upon its own states and operations. Moreover, both types of theory argue that conscious states involve two representational contents. In the case of a conscious perception of a sunset, there is an outward directed first-order content (that takes the sunset as its object), and an inward directed second-order content (that takes the perception as its object), and their only disagreement is over the question of

[5] And of course, one should distinguish the view that consciousness is intrinsic to those states that possess it from the more radical view that consciousness is intrinsic to all mental states (cf. Thomasson, 2000, p. 197).

whether there are two distinct mental states, each with its own representational content, or only one mental state with a twofold representational content. Thus, both types of the *ory* argue that for a state to be conscious means for it to be represented, and they only differ in whether it is represented by itself or by another state. To use Kriegel's notation:

A mental state  $M$  of a subject  $x$  at a time  $t$  is conscious only if  $x$  is aware of  $M$  at  $t$ .

Since awareness of an object involves a mental representation of that object, a mental state  $M$  is conscious if the subject has a mental state  $M^*$ , such that  $M^*$  represents the occurrence of  $M$ . The question is merely whether  $M = M^*$  or whether they are two different mental states (Kriegel, 2003b, pp. 107–8).

For Kriegel this structural similarity between the higher-order model and Brentano's one-level theory counts as an argument in favour of a (neo-) Brentanian account. If two theories are almost identical, but if one has the added advantage of being phenomenologically adequate (since it conceives of consciousness as an intrinsic property), it is the latter that wins the day (Kriegel, 2003c, p. 488). Not all neo-Brentanians agree with this appraisal, however. The close proximity between the two accounts could also be taken as an indication that both are problematic. Thomasson, for instance, concedes that although Brentano has been seen by some as an early defender of a higher-order take on consciousness (cf. Güzeldere, 1997, p. 789; Siewert, 1998, p. 358), he was in fact seeking to develop an alternative to the higher-order theories, an alternative that conceived of consciousness in terms of a one-level model. But as she then continues, the question is whether Brentano really succeeded in staying clear of the pitfalls of the higher-order view. Is it really consistent to defend a one-level account while at the same time claiming that each conscious state involves not only a primary awareness of its object but also a secondary awareness of itself, or does the latter claim turn Brentano's supposedly one-level theory into a higher-order theory in disguise (Thomasson, 2000, pp. 190–2, 199)?

According to Thomasson, it is misleading to speak as if consciousness involves an awareness *of* our mental states. To speak in such a manner suggests that in order to have conscious mental states we must be aware of them as objects (Thomasson, 2000, p. 200). Thus, it could be argued that Brentano's claim that every conscious intentional state takes two objects, a primary (external) object, and a secondary (internal) object, remains committed to a higher-order account of consciousness; it simply postulates it as being implicitly contained in every conscious state. 'It wants', as Thomas puts it, 'the benefits of a first order account of consciousness while illegitimately smuggling in a second order (higher order) view as well' (Thomas, 2003, p. 169).<sup>6</sup>

This danger is rather apparent in Kriegel's reconstruction of Brentano's theory. Although Kriegel admits that self-awareness has special features that

[6] Van Gulick has argued that it might be worthwhile trying to develop a higher-order theory that stresses the identity between the lower and the higher-order state (Van Gulick, 2000, p. 296). This proposal, which is considerably more attractive than the standard higher-order theory, might in fact remind one of Brentano's position. But it is also vulnerable to the same kind of objections.

distinguish it from other mental phenomena, he nevertheless speaks of it in terms of an intentional self-representation (Kriegel, 2003c, p. 497). But one thought that comes to mind is whether 'self-representation' is the right term, or whether it would not have been better to speak of self-presentation, self-presence, or self-manifestation.<sup>7</sup> Our acquaintance with our own experiences seems to have a presentational immediacy that is not easily captured by the term 'representation'. In fact, in most cases my experiences are present to me, rather than represented to me. There is no representational mediation. Moreover, to argue, as Kriegel does, that consciousness of an object involves a mental representation and that our mental states must therefore also be represented if we are to be conscious of them, strongly suggests that self-awareness is taken to be a species of object-consciousness. Kriegel is, as already mentioned, prepared to admit that there might be something special about self-awareness, and he therefore proposes that the self is represented as a subject and not as an object in self-awareness. But given the representational structure involved, what this means is supposedly that we in self-awareness is intentionally confronted with a rather peculiar kind of object, namely a subject. This reading is supported by the fact that Kriegel suggests that the special character of self-awareness might also be captured by saying that the gap between subject and object collapses, so that the self is represented both as subject and as object (Kriegel, 2003a, p. 19).<sup>8</sup> Thus, object-consciousness apparently remains the paradigm.

Is there a better way to capture Brentano's core insight? Thomasson's simple but ingenious suggestion is that we should adopt an adverbialist interpretation of the secondary awareness. We should construe the secondary awareness as a property of the primary act, and the best way to do so is by thinking of consciousness in adverbial terms. Rather than saying that our conscious mental states are in possession of a secondary awareness of themselves, rather than saying that there is a perception of an object, and in addition an awareness of the perception, it is better to say that we simply see, hear or feel consciously (Thomasson, 2000, p. 203). The decisive advantage of this phrasing is that it avoids interpreting the secondary awareness as a form of object-consciousness. This temptation will remain as long as we keep talking about conscious states as states we are conscious of. But what is gained by adding the adverb 'consciously'? As Thomasson points out, the difference between those mental states that remain non-conscious and those that make us consciously aware of (external) objects is that in the latter case objects seem a certain way to us. The difference between a non-conscious perception of a sunset, and a conscious perception of the sunset, is that there is something it is like to consciously perceive a sunset. So although my attention is on the object, the experience itself remains conscious. Not in the sense that I am

[7] At one point, Kriegel actually does use both of the latter terms (Kriegel, 2003a, p. 13). But he doesn't do so consistently, and he doesn't seem to realize that they both have quite different connotations from the term 'self-representation'.

[8] A rather similar idea has been defended by Fichte in 1797 (cf. Fichte, 1920, pp. 527–9) and criticized by Henrich (1966).

aware *of* it, but in the sense that there is some thing it is like to be in that state, it has phenomenal qualities (Thomasson, 2000, pp. 203–4).

In my view, Thomasson's adverbialist account has some decisive advantages over Brentano's own view. In fact, the question is whether we are still moving within a broadly conceived Brentanian framework, or whether we are rather faced with a new theory. Thomasson herself admits that the view she is proposing might look as if it is rather far removed from Brentano, since she is precisely discarding his idea of an 'inner consciousness'. But in her view, the idea of an inner consciousness, the idea that consciousness is based on an awareness of our own mental states as objects, was never central to Brentano to start with. Rather what is crucial to the Brentanian model is the idea that consciousness is an aspect of the mental state that possesses it, rather than something that is conferred upon it by a higher-order state, and this is precisely the idea that she is trying to develop (Thomasson, 2000, p. 204).

I disagree with this appraisal. First I take the distinction between the primary and the secondary object of consciousness as well as the idea that mental states are either non-conscious or given as objects to be integral features of Brentano's theory. And I think that if one jettisons these ideas, as one rightly should, one will also take leave of the Brentanian framework. And second, even more importantly, there is as little reason to designate every one-level account of consciousness as Brentanian or neo-Brentanian as there is to call every non-reductionistic theory of intentionality, Brentanian or neo-Brentanian.<sup>9</sup> This might perhaps have been defensible if Brentano's theory had been the only one-level game in town. But that is not the case, since a number of twentieth-century phenomenologists have defended a one-level account of consciousness much more unequivocally than Brentano.

In section IV, I will have more to say about the phenomenological alternatives, but let us first take another look at some of the recent attempts to develop a one-level account of consciousness.

### III: Consciousness and Self-consciousness

As we have just seen, Thomasson argues that there is some thing it is like to consciously perceive an object. This link between phenomenality and conscious intentionality has also recently been explored by Lurz in his criticism of the higher-order theories (Lurz, 2003a,b). Lurz's specific target is the higher-order thought theory. The HOT theory argues that the only way to be conscious of one's mental states is to be conscious of the fact *that* one has them. But as Lurz points out, this view confronts the HOT position with a rather uncomfortable dilemma when it comes to ascribing consciousness to animals and infants. It can claim that both groups lack the cognitive resources to entertain higher-order beliefs. And in that case, they must obviously also lack conscious mental states. This position has been explicitly defended by Carruthers. In his view, the

[9] Thus, I would personally take exception to being described myself as a recent defender of a neo-Brentanian account (Kriegel, 2003, p. 481).

subjective feel of experience presupposes a capacity for higher-order awareness, and as he continues, 'such self-awareness is a conceptually necessary condition for an organism to be a subject of phenomenal feelings, or for there to be anything that its experiences are like' (Carruthers, 1996, p. 152, cf. p. 154). To be more precise, Carruthers argues that in order to be able to think about your own thoughts and experiences you must be in possession of the concepts of thought and experience. Since such concepts get their significance from being embedded in a folk-psychological theory concerning the structure and functioning of the mind, what this ultimately means is that only creatures in possession of a theory of mind are capable of enjoying conscious experiences (Carruthers, 1996, p. 158; 2000, p. 194). In other words, creatures that lack a theory of mind — such as most animals, young infants, and supposedly autistic — will also lack conscious experiences. There is nothing it is like for them to feel pain or pleasure (Carruthers, 1998, p. 216; 2000, p. 203). Carruthers concedes that most of us believe that it must be like something to be a bat, a cat or a newborn baby, and that the experiences of these creatures have subjective feels to them, but he considers this common-sense belief to be quite groundless (Carruthers, 1996, p. 223).<sup>10</sup> But apart from being counterintuitive — and it is extremely counterintuitive to claim that there is nothing it is like for infants or animals to feel pain or pleasure — and apart from being vulnerable to the previously mentioned objections against the higher-order theories, Carruthers' conclusion is also confronted with the problem that quite a lot of animal and infant behaviour can be predicted and explained rather well by ascribing conscious mental states to the creatures in question (Lurz, 2003a). The other possibility, of course, is for the higher-order theorist to concede that even animals and infants are in possession of higher-order beliefs about their own mental states and that this makes them in possession of conscious mental states. But although it certainly seems plausible to ascribe conscious mental states, such as emotions or perceptual experiences, to infants and (some) animals, it seems quite implausible to claim that, say, cats and newborn babies are in possession of something as cognitively sophisticated as higher-order thoughts about their first-order mental states, i.e., it seems implausible to claim that they are aware of the fact *that* they are having mental states. Thus, we should not forget that the HOT theory — in contrast to the HOP theory — denies that we are *observationally* acquainted with our first-order mental states. And to claim that a cat in order to have conscious experiences must have thoughts about unobservable states occurring inside its own body is surely not a very attractive option (cf. Lurz, 2003a).

Lurz's own proposal is that a creature can be conscious of its thoughts and experiences by being conscious of *what* it thinks or experiences and that this does not entail that it has to be conscious of the fact *that* it thinks or has experiences (Lurz,

[10] Although Carruthers is in general quite unequivocal about denying conscious experiences to young infants (cf. Carruthers 1996, p. 221; 2000, pp. 202–3), he occasionally leaves a door open for a different conclusion. As he writes at one point, it might be that infants are capable of discriminating between their experiences (and hence capable of enjoying conscious experiences) even while still being incapable of conceptualizing them (Carruthers 1996, p. 222).

2003b, p. 24). When, say, an infant points at a doll and says ‘that is my doll’ she appears to say what she believes, and how should she be able to say that unless she was conscious of what she believes? But although the infant is conscious of *what* she believes, i.e., of what a particular belief of hers is about — and how could she be that if she were not conscious of the belief — it is not obvious that the infant is conscious of the fact *that* she believes something. The case is similar with (some) animals. A cat can be paying attention to movements in the bushes. But if it were completely unaware of what it was seeing, it would not be able to attend to what it was seeing. Insofar as it makes sense to say that the cat is paying attention to what it is seeing, it makes sense to say that it is conscious of what it is seeing. But that does not mean that the cat is conscious of the fact *that* it sees movements in the bushes. In being conscious of what it sees, the cat is simply conscious of what its visual state is about, and it is hard to understand how the cat could be conscious of this if it were not in some way conscious of the mental state itself (Lurz, 2003a; 2003b, p. 31–2).

In recent writings, Dretske has argued that we should call states conscious if they make us conscious of other things, and that we should not conclude that because the states are conscious, then we must also be conscious of them. In short, conscious mental states are states we are conscious with, not states we are conscious of (Dretske, 1995, pp. 100–1). But one problem with this view is that it gives us no means to distinguish between conscious and non-conscious intentional states, all of which make us directed at objects in environment. For Dretske they would all be conscious. Is Lurz committed to the same view? Is every state that is about something also a conscious state? No, rather Lurz’s account permits him to distinguish between the case where a subject is perceiving an object, the case where the subject is conscious of *what* she is perceiving, and the case where she is conscious of the fact *that* she is perceiving. A blindsight subject, for example, might (non-consciously) be perceiving something in the blind region of her visual field, as evinced from her performance on a forced-choice test, but she would not be conscious of what she was perceiving (Lurz, 2003b, pp. 232–5).

In short, Lurz’s proposal is that we can distinguish between two different ways of being acquainted with our own thoughts and experiences. We can be acquainted with them by being conscious that we have them, and we can be acquainted with them by being conscious of what our thoughts and experiences are about. Whereas the first type of self-acquaintance is a form of higher-order consciousness, the latter type is not. One advantage of this proposal is that it can avoid the dilemma confronting the HOT theory. It does not have to deny conscious states to animals, but neither does it have to argue that animals have higher-order thoughts about their own mental states. One problem with the proposal, however, is that Lurz apparently thinks that in order to be conscious of what our thoughts and experiences are about we also need to be conscious of the mental states themselves. But it is easy to amend his proposal by means of an adverbialist reformulation. We could stay clear of the idea that in order to have conscious mental states we must be aware of them as objects by saying that we

are conscious of what our thoughts and experiences are about when we consciously perceive or believe something.

How does this analysis relate to the idea that consciousness should be accounted for in terms of self-awareness? Does it support the idea that a conscious state differs from a non-conscious state precisely by entailing self-awareness? Yes, and rather neatly, in fact, although Lurz doesn't address the issue himself. The whole thrust of the argument is that for a state to be conscious is for the subject to be aware of what the state is about, and that this presupposes that the subject has direct experiential access to the mental state itself. But this is precisely what self-awareness — according to one classical definition — amounts to: Experiential access to one's own consciousness. Thus, to undergo a conscious experience (to taste coffee, to feel pain, to remember a past journey on the Rhine) necessarily means that there is something 'it is like' for the subject to have that experience. But insofar as there is something it is like for the subject to have the experience, the subject must in some way have access to the experience, must in some way be acquainted with the experience. Moreover, although conscious experiences differ from one another — what it is like to taste ice-cream, is different from what it is like to smell a bunch of roses or to admire a statue of Michelangelo — they also share certain features. One commonality is the quality of *mineness*, the fact that the experiences are characterized by a first-personal givenness. When I am aware of an occurrent pain, perception, or thought from the first-person perspective, the experience in question is given immediately, non-inferentially and non-criterially as *mine*. That is, the experience is given (at least tacitly) as an experience I am undergoing or living through. First-personal experience presents me with an immediate and non-observational access to myself. All of this suggests that we are dealing with a (minimal) form of self-awareness. This self-awareness is not something that only emerges the moment one scrutinizes one's experiences attentively, rather it is there the moment I consciously experience something. It does not exist apart from the experience, as an additional mental state. Rather, it is an intrinsic feature of the experience, and is not brought about by some kind of reflection or introspection or higher-order monitoring. Given this outlook, it is obvious that a discussion of self-awareness is of pertinence for an understanding of phenomenal consciousness. In fact, phenomenal consciousness must precisely be interpreted as entailing a primitive form for self-awareness (cf. Zahavi, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2003b).<sup>11</sup>

A rather similar view has recently been defended by Kriegel, who has introduced a distinction between *transitive* and *intransitive* self-consciousness.

[11] Let me fore stall a possible objection, namely that this definition of self-awareness is too broad and that it simply includes too much. That is, since it doesn't match our everyday notion of self-awareness (that tends to link the notion with our ability to recognize or identify our selves in a thematic way) the present use of the term is inappropriate. I don't think this objection carries a lot of weight. From a conceptual point of view, there are no intrinsic problems whatsoever in using the term 'self-awareness' to designate a situation where consciousness has access to or is being acquainted with itself. Moreover, it is a simple fact that many of the classical philosophical theories of self-awareness as well as the more recent contributions by such thinkers as Brentano, Husserl, Sartre, Henry, Henrich, Frank, etc. have exactly been discussions of this broad notion (cf. Zahavi, 1999).

Whereas transitive self-consciousness designates the situation where a subject is self-conscious of her thought that *p* (or of her perception of *x*), intransitive self-consciousness can be captured by saying that the subject is self-consciously thinking that *p* (or perceiving *x*).<sup>12</sup>

What is the difference between the two types of self-consciousness? Kriegel lists four differences, and claims that whereas the first type is introspective, rare, voluntary, and effortful, the second is none of these (Kriegel, 2003b, p. 104). But Kriegel also points to another relevant distinction. As he points out, in transitive self-consciousness the state of self-consciousness is numerically distinct from the thought that *p*, since the latter is the object of the former. Thus the state is self-conscious in virtue of the object it takes. In intransitive self-consciousness by contrast, the self-consciousness simply modifies the thought, it does not take it as an object, and one might therefore say that the state is self-conscious in virtue of the way it is had by the subject (Kriegel, 2004).

According to Kriegel, the latter type of self-consciousness, intransitive self-consciousness, captures one of the important senses of consciousness. We use the adjective 'conscious' to indicate the presence of intransitive self-consciousness. This is why Kriegel can claim that intransitive self-consciousness is a necessary condition for phenomenal consciousness. In fact, intransitive self-consciousness should be understood as an implicit type of self-consciousness that is shared by all our conscious mental states (Kriegel, 2003a, p. 20; 2003c, p. 478). Unless the mental state is intransitively self-conscious there is nothing it is like to be in the state, and therefore the state cannot be a phenomenally conscious state. Or to put it differently, a mental state that lacks intransitive self-consciousness is a non-conscious state (Kriegel, 2003b, pp. 103–6). As Kriegel writes, 'It is impossible to think or experience something consciously without thinking or experiencing it self-consciously, i.e., without being peripherally aware of thinking or experiencing it' (Kriegel, 2004).

Kriegel's distinction between transitive and intransitive self-consciousness bears a striking resemblance to the classical phenomenological distinction between reflective and pre-reflective self-awareness; a distinction I will return to in a moment. This similarity is also readily acknowledged by Kriegel (2004). But there is also a noticeable difference, which has to do with the fact that Kriegel — as we have already seen — ultimately persists in taking self-awareness as a species of object-consciousness.

To say that a subject has a mental state self-consciously is to say that the subject is implicitly or peripherally aware of her having the state, or of the state being her own. Thus, for Kriegel the distinction between intransitive and transitive self-consciousness can also be cashed out by means of the distinction between focal and peripheral awareness. We are confronted with transitive self-

[12] I find the locutions 'self-conscious of her thought that *p*' and 'self-consciously thinking that *p*' problematic, since they can easily be misunderstood. I think it would have been better if Kriegel had simply said that a subject is in possession of transitive self-consciousness when 'she is conscious of her thought that *p*' and in possession of intransitive self-consciousness when 'she is consciously thinking that *p*'.

consciousness when the subject is focally aware of being in a specific mental state, whereas we are dealing with intransitive self-consciousness when the subject is only peripherally aware of being in the mental state (Kriegel, 2004).

It is certainly quite appropriate to distinguish focal and peripheral modes of consciousness.<sup>13</sup> There is an obvious distinction to be made between my focal awareness of my computer, and my peripheral awareness of the myriad of objects surrounding it. We also need to dismiss any narrow conception of consciousness that equates consciousness with attention and claims that we are only conscious of that which we pay attention to. But the question is whether this distinction between focal and peripheral consciousness — a distinction between two types of object-consciousness — is pertinent when it comes to an understanding of the relation between the two types of self-consciousness. In a regular intentional experience, I am directed at and preoccupied with my intentional object. When I consciously perceive the computer, I do not ordinarily attend to myself and my perceptual experience. But although I lack a focal awareness of myself, and although I do not take my experience as a thematic object, I am still in possession of intransitive self-consciousness. I agree with this analysis, but I do not agree with the claim that intransitive self-consciousness entails that my experiences remain in the background as potential themes in precisely the same way as, say, the hum of the refrigerator. This would suggest that intransitive self-consciousness is a kind of peripheral, inattentive, *transitive* object-consciousness, but that cannot be right. As Husserl pointed out in 1906:

*One should not mistake the consciousness of the objective background [gegenständlichen Hintergrund] and consciousness understood in the sense of experiential being [Erlebtseins]. Lived-experiences as such do have their own being, but they are not objects of apperception (in this case we would end in an infinite regress). The background, however, is given to us objectively, it is constituted through a complex of apperceptive lived-experiences. We do not pay attention to these objects [...], but they are still given to us in a quite different manner than the mere lived-experiences themselves [...]. The attentional consciousness of the background and consciousness in the sense of mere experiential givenness must be completely distinguished (Husserl, 1984a, p. 252).*

The attempt to model intransitive self-consciousness on peripheral object-consciousness is misleading since it remains stuck in the subject-object model and is vulnerable to the arguments presented against the higher-order theories. A common line of thought is that our experiential life must either be given as an object or not be given at all, and that the only remaining question (and allowed variable) is whether it is given as an object focally or merely peripherally. But this line of thought is flawed, since it erroneously assumes that there is only one type of givenness or manifestation, namely object-givenness. But had that in fact been the case, real self-awareness would have been impossible. Object-consciousness necessarily entails an epistemic divide, a distinction between that which appears and that to whom it appears, between the object and the subject of experience. For something to be given as an object of experience is for it to differ

[13] For a classical account cf. Gurwitsch (1974).

from the subjective experience, that takes it as an object. This is one reason why object-consciousness is singularly unsuited as a model for understanding self-awareness. Another reason, which was already spelled out in section I, is that the attempt to construe self-awareness as a type of object-consciousness generates an infinite regress.

#### IV: Back to Phenomenology

In the following, I wish to call attention to some of the philosophical resources to be found in the phenomenological tradition. In particular, I wish to show that it contains a clear and sustained defence of a one-level account of consciousness that is free from the equivocations still to be found in Brentano.

Let us start by taking a look at a very early phenomenological appraisal of Brentano's theory of inner consciousness; an appraisal that can be found in the first edition of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* (1901).

How does Husserl assess Brentano's theory? Rather negatively, in fact. Husserl denies that there is any phenomenological evidence in support of the claim concerning the existence of a constant and continuous inner perception, and he consequently rejects Brentano's theory as a piece of construction (Husserl, 1984b, pp. 367, 759). There are two ways to interpret Husserl's criticism. In the one, Husserl is taking Brentano to be claiming that we are constantly thematically aware of our occurrent experiences. If this reading is correct, Husserl would be right in rejecting the thesis, but wrong in ascribing it to Brentano. As we have already seen, Brentano explicitly warns against taking inner consciousness as a kind of thematic observation (cf. Brentano, 1874, p. 181). The other possibility is that Husserl is criticizing Brentano for having held the view that we are constantly objectifying our own experiences. This criticism would be right on target, and there is no question that this is a view that Husserl rejects. In the First Investigation, Husserl writes that the sensations are originally simply lived through as moments of the experience; they are not objectified and taken as objects. This only happens in a subsequent psychological reflection (Husserl, 1984b, p.80). This assertion is then followed up in the Second Investigation, where we find the following significant observation:

That an appropriate train of sensations or images is *experienced*, and is in this sense conscious, does not and can not mean that this is the *object* of an act of consciousness, in the sense that a perception, a presentation or a judgment is directed upon it (Husserl, 1984b, p. 165 [2001, I, p. 273]).

Obviously the central word is the term 'conscious'. Husserl is denying that our sensations are a phenomenological nought. On the contrary, they are conscious, that is, experientially given, when they are lived through, and as he points out this givenness does not come about as the result of an objectification, does not come about because the sensations are taken as objects by an (internal) perception. The sensations are given, not as objects, but precisely as subjective experiences. The very same line of thought can be found in the Fifth Investigation. There Husserl writes that the intentional experiences themselves are lived

through and experienced (*erlebt*), but that they do not appear in an objectified manner, they are neither seen nor heard. They are conscious without being intentional objects (Husserl, 1984b, p. 399). This is not to deny that we can in fact direct our attention towards our experiences, and thereby take them as objects of an inner perception, but this only occurs the moment we reflect (p. 424).

In the light of these statements, the conclusion is rather easy to draw. In contrast to Brentano, Husserl does not seek to identify the givenness of our experiences with the givenness of objects. Husserl does not believe that our experiences are conscious by being taken as secondary *objects*. As he explicitly states in the Sixth Investigation: 'To be experienced is not to be made objective [Erlebtsein ist nicht Gegenständlichsein]' (Husserl, 1984b, p. 669 [2001, II, p. 279]). Thus, Husserl operates with a distinction between perceiving (*Wahrnehmen*) and experiencing (*Erleben*): prior to reflection one perceives the perceptual object, but one experiences (*erlebt*) the perception. Although I am not intentionally directed towards the perception (this only happens in the subsequent reflection, where the perception is thematized), the perception is not non-conscious but conscious, that is, pre-reflectively given.

In general, one should not overestimate the homogeneity of the phenomenological tradition. It is a tradition spanning many differences. But when it comes to the question concerning the relation between consciousness and self-consciousness, literally all of the major figures (Husserl, Scheler, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Henry, Ricoeur, etc.) reject the higher-order model and advocate some kind of one-level account.

The phenomenologist best known for advocating this view is Sartre, and since it would be impossible to cover all the different figures in detail, let me focus on him.

Sartre's account of the relationship between consciousness and self-awareness can primarily be found in three different texts: In his first philosophical publication *La transcendance de l'ego* from 1936, in his principal work *L'être et le néant* from 1943, and in an article from 1948 entitled 'Conscience de soi et connaissance de soi'.

According to Sartre consciousness is essentially characterized by intentionality. It is as such a consciousness *of* something. He also claims, however, that each and every intentional experience is characterized by self-awareness. Thus, Sartre takes self-awareness to constitute a necessary condition for being conscious of something. To consciously perceive a signpost, an ice-cream, or a comfortable chair without being aware of it, i.e., without having access to the experience in question, is for Sartre a manifest absurdity (Sartre, 1943, pp. 18, 20, 28; 1948, p. 62).

This line of thought is elaborated in the important introduction to *L'être et le néant*, where Sartre claims that an ontological analysis of intentionality leads to self-awareness since the *mode of being* of intentional consciousness is to be *for-itself* (*pour-soi*), that is, self-aware. An experience does not simply exist, it exists for itself, i.e., it is given to itself, and this self-givenness is not simply a quality added to the experience, a mere varnish, but on the contrary constitutes the very mode of being of the experience:

This self-consciousness we ought to consider not as a new consciousness, but as *the only mode of existence which is possible for a consciousness of some thing* (Sartre, 1943, p. 20 [1956, p. liv]).

Originally, my intentional experiences are not (possible) objects for consciousness, but (actual) modes of consciousness, and as such they are self-aware.

As we can see, Sartre emphasizes quite explicitly that the self-awareness in question is *not* a new consciousness. It is not something added to the experience, it is not an additional mental state, but rather an intrinsic feature of the experience. Thus, when he speaks of self-awareness as a permanent feature of consciousness, Sartre is not referring to what he calls reflective self-awareness. Reflection (or to use the more current name 'higher-order representation') is the process whereby consciousness directs its intentional aim at itself, thereby taking itself as its own object. But according to Sartre, this type of self-awareness is derived. It involves a subject-object split, and the attempt to account for self-awareness in such terms is for Sartre bound to fail. It either generates an infinite regress or accepts a non-conscious starting point, but Sartre considers both of these options to be unacceptable (Sartre, 1943, p. 19).

Sartre readily admits the existence of reflective self-consciousness. We can for instance reflect upon — and thereby be thematically conscious of — an occurring perception of a Swiss Army knife. In reflection we can distinguish the reflecting experience and the experience reflected-on. The first takes the latter as its object. But for Sartre both of these experiences are already self-conscious prior to reflection, and in both cases the self-awareness in question is of a non-reflective and non-positional kind, i.e., it does not have a reflective structure, and it does not posit that which it is aware of as an object (Sartre, 1936, pp. 28–9).<sup>14</sup> As Sartre writes: '[T]here is no infinite regress here, since a consciousness has no need at all of a reflecting consciousness in order to be conscious of itself. It simply does not posit itself as an object' (Sartre, 1936, p. 29 [1957, p. 45]). Thus, Sartre speaks of pre-reflective self-awareness as an immediate and non-cognitive 'relation' of the self to itself (Sartre, 1943, p. 19).

In other words, every positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself. If I count the cigarettes which are in that case, I have the impression of disclosing an objective property of this collection of cigarettes: *they are a dozen*. This property appears to my consciousness as a property existing in the world. It is very possible that I have no positional consciousness of counting them. Then I do not know myself as counting. [...] Yet at the moment when these cigarettes are revealed to me as a dozen, I have a non-thetic consciousness of my adding activity. If any one questioned me, indeed, if any one should ask, 'What are you doing there?' I should reply at once, 'I am counting.' This reply aims not only at the instantaneous consciousness which I can achieve by reflection but at those fleeting consciousnesses which have passed without being reflected-on, those which are forever non-reflected-on in my immediate past. Thus reflection has no kind of primacy over the consciousness reflected-on. It is not reflection which reveals the consciousness reflected-on to itself. Quite the contrary, it is the

[14] Whereas the early Sartre speaks of an irreflective or non-reflective self-awareness, he later increasingly opts for the term 'pre-reflective self-awareness'.

non-reflective consciousness which renders the reflection possible; there is a pre-reflective cogito which is the condition of the Cartesian cogito (Sartre, 1943, pp. 19–20 [1956, p. liii]).

If I am engaged in some conscious activity, such as the reading of a story, my attention is neither on myself nor on my activity of reading, but on the story. But if my reading is interrupted by someone asking me what I am doing, I reply immediately that I am (and have for some time been) reading; and the self-consciousness on the basis of which I answer the question is not something acquired at just that moment but a consciousness of myself which has been present to me all along.

When Sartre says that every positional consciousness of an object is simultaneously a non-positional consciousness of itself, it is essential to emphasize that this pre-reflective self-awareness is not to be understood as an intentional, objectifying, or epistemic act, and consequently neither to be interpreted as some kind of inner perception, nor more generally as a type of knowledge (Sartre, 1936, pp. 23–4, 66; 1943, p. 19). This implies that the self-awareness in question might very well be accompanied by a fundamental *lack of knowledge*. Although I cannot be unconscious of my present experience, I might very well ignore it in favour of its object, and this is of course the natural attitude. In my daily life I am absorbed by and preoccupied with projects and objects in the world. Thus, pervasive pre-reflective self-awareness is definitely not identical with total self-comprehension, but can rather be likened to a pre-comprehension, that allows for a subsequent reflection and thematization.

To put it differently, consciousness has two different modes of existence, a pre-reflective and a reflective. The first has priority since it can prevail independently of the latter, whereas reflective self-consciousness always presupposes pre-reflective self-consciousness. So to repeat, for Sartre pre-reflective self-awareness is not an addendum to, but a constitutive moment of the original intentional experience. The experience is aware of itself at the time of its occurrence. If I consciously see, remember, know, think, hope, feel or will something I am *eo ipso* aware of it.<sup>15</sup>

What about Thomasson's objection? Is it not inconsistent to claim on the one hand that we are aware of our thoughts and experiences when they are conscious and on the other that consciousness is not given to itself as an object

[15] As already indicated this view is shared by most of the other phenomenologists. To provide just one further example: In the early lecture course *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* from 1919/1920, Heidegger argues that one of the tasks of phenomenology is to disclose the non-objectifying and non-reflective self-understanding that belongs to experience as such (Heidegger, 1993, pp. 155–7). Thus, Heidegger clearly acknowledges the existence of a pre-reflective self-acquaintance that is part and parcel of experience. Any worldly experiencing involves a certain component of self-acquaintance and familiarity, any experiencing is characterized by the fact that 'I am always somehow acquainted with myself' (p. 251). And as Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes, this basic familiarity with oneself does not take the form of a reflective self-perception or a thematic self-observation, nor does it involve any kind of self-objectification. On the contrary, we are confronted with a process of lived self-acquaintance whose distinctive feature is its non-reflective character, and which must be understood as an immediate expression of life itself (pp. 159, 165, 257–8). For a more extensive account of Heidegger's position, cf. Zahavi 2003c.

pre-reflectively? In other words, doesn't Sartre commit the same mistake as Brentano? But Sartre has anticipated this objection. As he points out, it is only the necessity of syntax which has compelled him to write that we are pre-reflectively aware of our experiences and that there is a pre-reflective consciousness of self. (In French the term for self-consciousness — *conscience de soi* — literally means consciousness of self). Thus Sartre readily admits that the use of the 'of' (or 'de') is unfortunate since it suggests that self-consciousness is simply a subtype of object-consciousness, as if the manner in which we are aware of ourselves is structurally comparable to the manner in which we are aware of apples and clouds. We can not avoid the 'of', but in order to show that it is merely there in order to satisfy a grammatical requirement, Sartre places it inside parentheses, and frequently speaks of a 'conscience (de) soi' and of a 'conscience (de) plaisir' etc. (Sartre, 1943, p. 22; 1948, p. 62). Thus, although Sartre ultimately opts for another typographical solution than Thomasson's adverbialist proposal, his motivation for avoiding a phrasing that might misleadingly suggest that we in order to have conscious mental states must be aware of them as objects is precisely the same as hers.

Sartre's phenomenological account of self-awareness is far more complex and wide-ranging than suggested by this brief presentation. But hopefully it should already have become evident that Sartre's defence of a one-level account of consciousness is preferable to Brentano's. Whereas Brentano flirts with the higher-order account, Sartre's rejection is unequivocal.<sup>16</sup> Both share the view that self-awareness (or inner consciousness) differs from ordinary object-consciousness. The issue of controversy is over whether self-awareness is merely an extraordinary object-consciousness or not an object-consciousness at all. In contrast to Brentano, Sartre (and the other phenomenologists) thinks the latter, more radical, move is required. The fact that Sartre's analysis is furthermore integrated into and to be found in the context of an examination of a number of related issues, such as the nature of intentionality, embodiment, selfhood, temporality, attention, sociality, etc. should only count in its favour. Thus, as part of his analysis of the structure of consciousness Sartre also discusses — to mention just a few of the topics — (1) whether one should opt for an egological or non-egological account of consciousness, i.e., whether or not every episode of experiencing always involves a distinct subject of experience; (2) how to understand the temporality of the stream of consciousness; (3) whether pre-reflective

[16] This has unfortunately been overlooked by some of the few analytical philosophers who actually refer to Sartre. In *The Significance of Consciousness*, for instance, Siewert writes that Sartre argues that all consciousness is consciousness of itself, and he then claims that the argument presupposes Sartre's flawed identification of (a) an unconscious state, (b) a state that ignores itself, and (c) a state of which there is no consciousness (Siewert, 1998, p. 357). But as we have just seen, Sartre does not make such an identification. Siewert then continues his criticism by arguing that since Sartre is on the one hand claiming that all consciousness is consciousness of itself and on the other hand denying that this ubiquitous self-consciousness is reflective,thetic, positional, epistemic, and objectifying, his account is inconsistent, confused, extremely misleading, and totally unclear (Siewert, 1998, p. 360). Is this rather harsh judgement justified? I think not. When Sartre claims that all consciousness is consciousness of itself he means something quite specific, and it is only if one overlooks his quite explicit remarks concerning the problematic use of the proposition 'of' that one would be led to the idea that he was contradicting himself.

self-awareness is characterized by any internal differentiation or infrastructure; (4) to what extent self-awareness is always embodied and embedded; (5) how social interaction might change the structure of self-awareness; (6) whether reflection is able to disclose the structure of pre-reflective consciousness or whether it necessarily distorts its subject matter; (7) and to what extent self-awareness although not being itself a form of object-consciousness never the less presupposes the intentional encounter with the world.<sup>17</sup> Although some of Sartre's further findings and conclusions might be problematic, he is pointing to issues that should be taken into account by a theory of (self-)consciousness; issues that Brentano to a large extent remained silent about.

### V: Conclusion

Let me by way of conclusion briefly recapitulate the main line of thought. Intransitive consciousness should be accounted for in terms of self-awareness, i.e., a conscious mental state differs from a non-conscious mental state by entailing self-awareness. Given that the attempt to provide a relational, higher-order, account of this self-awareness has been unsuccessful, it makes better sense to opt for a one-level account. Some have suggested that Brentano's account in *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* might serve as a good starting point, and have then gone on to defend neo-Brentanian positions. In contrast, I have argued that a number of twentieth-century phenomenologists have defended a one-level account of consciousness more unequivocally than Brentano. And I would suggest that it would make considerably more sense to take a closer look at Sartre, Husserl, and Heidegger, if one is on the lookout for promising and worked out alternatives to the higher-order theories, than to return all the way to Brentano.<sup>18</sup>

### References

- Armstrong, D.M. (1968), *A Materialist Theory of the Mind* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).  
 Baker, L.R. (2000), *Persons and Bodies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).  
 Block, N., Flanagan, O. & Güzeldere, G. (ed. 1997), *The Nature of Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).  
 Brentano, F. (1874/1924), *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt I* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner).  
 Brentano, F. (1973), *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* tr. A. C. Rancurello, D. B. Terrell & L.L. McAlister (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).  
 Brook, A. (1994), *Kant and the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).  
 Byrne, A. (1997), 'Some like it HOT: Consciousness and higher-order thoughts', *Philosophical Studies*, **86**, pp. 103–29.  
 Carruthers, P. (1996), *Language, Thoughts and Consciousness. An Essay In Philosophical Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).  
 Carruthers, P. (1998), 'Natural theories of consciousness', *European Journal of Philosophy*, **6** (2), pp. 203–22.  
 Carruthers, P. (2000), *Phenomenal Consciousness. A Naturalistic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).  
 Castañeda, H.-N. (1967), 'The logic of self-knowledge,' *Nous*, **1**, pp. 9–22.  
 Dretske, F. (1995), *Naturalizing the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).  
 Fichte, J.G. (1797/1920), *Erste und Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner).

[17] For a more extensive account of Sartre's theory, cf. Zahavi (1999).

[18] Thanks to Galen Strawson and Uriah Kriegel for comments to an earlier version of the article. This study has been funded by the Danish National Research Foundation.

- Gurwitsch, A. (1974), *Das Bewußtseinsfeld* (Berlin: de Gruyter).
- Güzeldere, G. (1997), 'Is consciousness the perception of what passes in one's own mind?' in Block *et al.* (1997).
- Heidegger, M. (1993), *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (1919/1920). Gesamtausgabe Band 58. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann).
- Henrich, D. (1966), 'Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht', in *Subjektivität und Metaphysik. Festschrift für Wolfgang Cramer*, eds. D. Henrich & H. Wagner (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann), pp.188-232.
- Hossack, K. (2002), 'Self-knowledge and consciousness,' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, **102** (2), pp. 163–81.
- Husserl, E. (1984a), *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie*, Husserliana XXIV (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff).
- Husserl, E. (1984b), *Logische Untersuchungen II*, Husserliana XIX/1-2 (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff).
- Husserl, E. (2001), *Logical Investigations I-II* (London: Routledge).
- Kriegel, U. (2003a), 'Consciousness as sensory quality and as implicit self-awareness', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, **2**, pp.1-26.
- Kriegel, U. (2003b), 'Consciousness as intrasitive self-consciousness: Two views and an argument', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, **33** (1), pp. 103–32.
- Kriegel, U. (2003c), 'Consciousness, higher-order content, and the individuation of vehicles', *Synthese*, **134**, pp. 477–504.
- Kriegel, U. (2004), 'Consciousness and self-consciousness,' *Monist*, **87** (2), pp. 185–209.
- Lurz, R.W. (2003a), 'Neither HOT nor COLD: An alternative account of consciousness', *Psyche*, **9** (2), <http://psyche.cs.monash.edu.au/v9/psyche-9-01-lurz.html>.
- Lurz, R.W. (2003b), 'Advancing the debate between HOT and FO accounts of consciousness', *Journal of Philosophical Research*, **28**, pp. 23–44.
- Lycan, W.G. (1987), *Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).
- Lycan, W.G. (1997), 'Consciousness as internal monitoring', in Block *et al.* (1997).
- Rosenthal, D.M. (1986), 'Two concepts of consciousness', *Philosophical Studies*, **94** (3), pp. 329–59.
- Rosenthal, D.M. (1993a), 'Thinking that one thinks', in *Consciousness: Psychological and Philosophical Essays*, ed. M. Davies & G.W. Humphreys (Oxford: Blackwell).
- Rosenthal, D.M. (1993b), 'Higher-order thoughts and the appendage theory of consciousness', *Philosophical Psychology*, **6**, pp.155–66.
- Rosenthal, D.M. (1997), 'A theory of consciousness', in Block *et al.* (1997).
- Sartre, J.-P. (1936), *La transcendance de l'ego* (Paris: Vrin).
- Sartre, J.-P. (1957), *The Transcendence of the Ego*, tr. F. Williams & R. Kirkpatrick (New York: The Noonday Press).
- Sartre, J.-P. (1943/1976), *L'être et le néant* (Paris: Tel Gallimard).
- Sartre, J.-P. (1956), *Being and Nothingness*, tr. H.E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library).
- Sartre, J.-P. (1948), 'Conscience de soi et connaissance de soi', *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie*, **XLII**, 49–91.
- Shoemaker, S. (1968), 'Self-reference and Self-awareness', *The Journal of Philosophy*, **LXV**, pp. 556–79.
- Siewert, C.P. (1998), *The Significance of Consciousness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- Thomas, A. (2003), 'An adverbial theory of consciousness', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, **2**, pp. 161–85.
- Thomasson, A.L. (2000), 'After Brentano: A one-level theory of consciousness', *European Journal of Philosophy*, **8** (2), pp. 190–209.
- Van Gulick, R. (2000), 'Inward and upward: Reflection, introspection, and self-awareness', *Philosophical Topics*, **28** (2), pp. 275–305.
- Zahavi, D. (1998), 'Brentano and Husserl on self-awareness', *Etudes Phénoménologiques*, **27–28**, pp. 127–68.
- Zahavi, D. (1999), *Self-awareness and Alterity. A Phenomenological Investigation* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press).
- Zahavi, D. (2002), 'First-person thoughts and embodied self-awareness. Some reflections on the relation between recent analytical philosophy and phenomenology', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, **1**, pp. 7–26.
- Zahavi, D. (2003a), 'Phenomenology of Self,' in *The Self in Neuroscience and Psychiatry*, ed. T. Kircher & A. David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Zahavi, D. (2003b), 'Innertime-consciousness and pre-reflective self-awareness', in *The New Husserl: A Critical Reader*, ed. D. Welton (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press).
- Zahavi, D. (2003c), 'How to investigate subjectivity: Heidegger and Natort on reflection', *Continental Philosophy Review*, **36** (2), pp. 155–76.