

Brentano's theory of consciousness revisited. Reply to my critics**

I am grateful to the respondents for the time and effort they have put into their comments on my paper on Brentano's theory of consciousness. Since many comments overlap, I will group them by theme and respond to the objections by clarifying certain aspects of my paper and by providing new elements in support of my reading of Brentano. First, I will justify the topic of my study in light of the various theories of mind that one can identify with the philosophy of Brentano. Second, I will summarize the main aspects of Rosenthal's HOT theory, which constitutes the background of my study. I will then discuss what since Chisholm has been called "Brentano's thesis," which many commentators defend in light of the two theses that I attribute to Brentano early in the target paper. In the fourth section, I will discuss several objections raised against my reconstruction of Brentano and his principle of the unity of consciousness. The main hypothesis that I developed in the last sections of the target article is that the later Brentano's introduction of the concept of mental agent aims at solving two main problems left pending in his 1874 *Psychology*. The first relates to the substrate of the modes of consciousness and of the complex mental state internally perceived. The second issue pertains to the status of the concomitant consciousness and to the second general thesis on consciousness: that all mental states are conscious. My hypothesis is that, to clarify the status of the *Mitbewußtsein* and to adequately answer the question: "What is it for a mental state to be conscious?," the later Brentano uses the concept of mental agent and conceives of consciousness as implicit and intransitive self-awareness.

The context. Brentano and contemporary philosophy of mind

This study focuses on the theory of consciousness that Franz Brentano develops in the second book of his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874) and also accounts for the later changes to his theory in his posthumously

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** I wish to thank André Leclerc for his kind invitation to participate in this disputatio and Maxwell Ramstead for his careful linguistic revision of my paper.

published lectures and manuscripts.¹ My goal was to revisit Brentano's theory in light of divergent interpretations and understandings both in Brentano studies and in contemporary philosophy of mind. My starting point is the higher-order thoughts (HOT) theory of consciousness developed by the American philosopher David Rosenthal which, as I have shown in the target paper, has many affinities with Brentano's theory of consciousness. Rosenthal himself has repeatedly stressed the value of Brentano's contribution to the philosophy of mind,² and despite his disagreement with several aspects of Brentano's views on consciousness, he nevertheless considers that Brentano's theory shares much with his own.

G. Fréchette, P. Bernier, and A. Leclerc seem to have understood the purpose of my study differently when they complain that I did not consider several other options in contemporary philosophy of mind, options which, they believe, have more affinities with Brentano's view on consciousness than does Rosenthal's theory. To my knowledge, in addition to HOT theory and Kriegel's self-representational theory, which I also discussed in the target paper, there are at least three other theories of consciousness in contemporary philosophy that can be identified more or less explicitly with Brentano's. The first is the adverbial theory of consciousness, which dates back to the work of D. W. Smith (1986) and which has been recently advocated by A. Thomasson (2000, 2006) and A. Thomas (2003). In a nutshell, the adverbial theory maintains that awareness of one's mental state is expressed as an adverb in sentences such as "I present *consciously*," "I judge *consciously*," etc. We find the second option in the work of Tim Crane in philosophy of mind, particularly in his recent book *Aspects of Psychologism*, in which he associates "Brentano's thesis" (intentionality as the mark of the mental) to a (weak) form of intentionalism according to which "the nature of a conscious mental state is determined by its intentionality" (CRANE, 2013, p. 150; 2001, p. VII). Finally, Brentano's philosophy of mind is also associated to what U. Kriegel has recently called "The Phenomenal Intentionality Program" according to which "phenomenal intentionality is the intentionality a mental state exhibits purely in virtue of its phenomenal character". (KRIEGEL, 2013a; 2013b) This program is based on two theses that Kriegel also attributes to Brentano: intentionality is the mark of the mental, and all mentality is conscious (KRIEGEL, 2013b, p. 438).

All these options have the merit of showing the relevance of Brentano's theory of consciousness in light of current debates in philosophy of mind and they are based on solid knowledge of Brentano's writings. This is the case with Leclerc's intentionalism, on which he bases his commentary. There are many

¹ I use here the abbreviation "*Psychology*" to refer to the English translation of Brentano's *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* and "*Schriften I*" for the German edition of this book by Ontos (see the bibliography).

² Rosenthal repeatedly comments Brentano's theses on consciousness in his works. (see ROSENTHAL, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011).

forms of intentionalism in philosophy of mind; the most radical calls for the reduction of consciousness to an intentional relation. But the form of intentionalism advocated by Leclerc is much weaker, since he recognizes the irreducibility of the two main characteristics that Brentano attributes to the mind (no consciousness without intentionality and vice versa), though Leclerc affirms the primacy of the intentional over the conscious. As we shall see, Brentano's theory differs from intentionalism or representationalism in that it assumes that an act as simple as hearing a sound involves several mental states that belong to multilayered classes standing in relations of dependence to one another. Hence the importance granted to the problem of the unity of consciousness in Brentano's descriptive psychology.

The fact that different theories can be identified with Brentano's philosophy clearly testifies that his theory of consciousness is open to interpretation. And indeed, my critics are aware that we also find quite different interpretations in Brentano studies, which range from "a neo-Brentanian theory of pre-reflective self-awareness" (BRANDL, 2013) to different versions of higher-order theories of consciousness.³ I admit in the target paper that there are substantial differences between Brentano's and Rosenthal's theories, and I tried to show that Brentano's theory avoids several objections raised against HOT theory (GULICK, 2000). Nevertheless, beyond the differences and similarities that exist between these two theories of consciousness, Rosenthal's theory provides us with an appropriate theoretical framework for the reconstruction of the ins and outs of Brentano's theory of consciousness. I propose to clarify this point in the next three sections by summarizing, in the first, the main features of Rosenthal's HOT theory of consciousness, and by comparing it, in the second and third sections, to Brentano's theory.

HOT theory's main characteristics and the background

Rosenthal distinguishes two main traditions at the root of current trends in philosophy of mind, i.e., the Cartesian and the Aristotelian traditions. To each tradition corresponds a conception of the mind, and each can be characterized by using two key concepts of the philosophy of mind, namely intentionality and consciousness. The mind is defined in the Cartesian tradition by consciousness, while Aristotelianism favours intentionality (1990, p. 735). Rosenthal (1986, p. 332, 335-336) claims that the conception of mind advocated in these two traditions determines their respective conception of consciousness.

³ Fréchette even casts doubt on the number and relevance of references to the theories of higher order of consciousness in Brentano studies. Yet this rapprochement is at the heart of numerous well-known studies that I mentioned in the target paper, the most important in this regard being those from Caston (2002), Zahavi (2004, 2006) and more recently Gennaro (2012).

Rosenthal further distinguishes two notions of consciousness: state consciousness and what he calls "creature consciousness," i.e., the consciousness of an organism or a subject. Attributed to a state, the predicate "is conscious" simply refers to the property of a mental state of being conscious. The notion of creature consciousness designates a property of the agent herself, one that varies as a function of whether, e.g., she is awake or in a coma. Cartesianism seeks to answer the question: "What it is for a creature to be conscious?" while the main question raised by Aristotelianism is: "What it is for a mental state to be conscious?" A third important distinction is that between two different uses of the attribute "is conscious": an intransitive one, which does not require a direct object (such as being conscious or unconscious, to be anxious, cheerful or excited, etc.) and a transitive one, which requires a direct object (e. g. being aware of the noise, etc.). Transitive consciousness is another name for intentional consciousness and refers to the relation that an agent bears to something other than herself. In its intransitive use, "is conscious" refers to a monadic predicate that stands for a non-relational property (ROSENTHAL, 1990, p. 737). To this distinction between transitive and intransitive uses of "is conscious" there corresponds a distinction between two types of properties that are attributable to a mental state: intrinsic and extrinsic properties. This distinction finds its linguistic expression in the distinction just made between transitive and intransitive uses of this predicate. When construed as a monadic predicate, it refers to an intrinsic property; when used as a relation, it designates an extrinsic property. In Rosenthal own terms:

A property is intrinsic if something's having it does not consist, even in part, in that thing's bearing some relation to something else. If being conscious is at least partly relational, a mental state could be conscious only if the relevant relation held between the state and some other thing. (ROSENTHAL, 1990, p. 736).

In an Aristotelian conception of the psychical, where consciousness is not essential to mental states, consciousness is considered an extrinsic property.

With the help of these four distinctions, one can provide an explicit definition of both traditional conceptions of consciousness. For Cartesianism, consciousness is an intrinsic, intransitive and non-relational property of mind, while for Aristotelianism, on the contrary, consciousness is defined as an extrinsic and transitive property of a mental state (ROSENTHAL, 1990, p. 737). Moreover, in conceiving of consciousness as an intransitive and intrinsic property of the person or creature, Cartesianism presupposes that the subject is aware of all his thoughts or all the contents of his mental states.⁴ That is why,

⁴ In support of his diagnosis, Rosenthal quotes a passage from Descartes' *Meditations* (fourth replies), in which Descartes claims that "aucune pensée ne peut exister en nous sans que nous en soyons conscients au moment même qu'elle existe en nous" (Descartes, *Quatrièmes Réponses*, *Œuvres de Descartes*, édition

according to Rosenthal, Cartesianism deprives us of the ability to provide a non-circular explanation of consciousness by conflating two distinct questions: that of "a state's being conscious" and that of "one's being conscious of that state" (ROSENTHAL, 1997, p. 735; 2009, p. 4; 1986, p. 337). Methodologically, Rosenthal's theory proceeds in reverse order to Cartesianism, in that it considers that our answering the question: "What it is for a mental state to be conscious?" is a prerequisite to answering the question of creature consciousness. What is specific to Rosenthal's theory is the idea that the consciousness of a state mainly depends on the intentional relation between a HOT and the initial state it is targeting. According to Rosenthal:

We are conscious of something, on this model, when we have a thought about it. So a mental state will be conscious if it is accompanied by a thought about that state. [...] The core of the theory then, is that a mental state is a conscious state when, and only when, it is accompanied by a suitable HOT. (ROSENTHAL, 1990, p. 741).

A HOT is a purely intentional state which, contrary to a HOP (higher order perception) in D. Armstrong's model, has no qualitative property. (Rosenthal, 2005, p. 105) Its two main proprieties are its propositional content and its assertoric mode or attitude. The propositional content that accompanies a state of pain, for example, takes the following form: "I now have (or feel) a pain in my stomach". This thought must have an assertoric mode because to make the target state conscious, one must posit the existence of that state and, more precisely, posit that one is in this state (ROSENTHAL, 1991: 31; 2009, p. 2). A sensory state that is not accompanied by a HOT cannot be considered a pain because, as we said, this sensory quality does not pre-exist the thought that we have. Finally, as I have shown in the target paper, higher order thoughts are numerically distinct from the lower order, generally unconscious states towards which they are directed (ROSENTHAL, 1997, p. 742).

Now, even if one admits that the thought accompanying the initial state makes that initial state conscious, we can still ask what it is for a mental state to be conscious at all. For, to attribute consciousness to a mental state, it is necessary to presuppose that one is oneself in the target state because, as P. Alvez pointed out, the mental state, taken for itself, cannot be said to be aware of anything. In other words, conscious states are those mental states that are one's own. I can only be aware of my own stomach pain, and not of someone else's. Being transitively conscious of the target state is a relation that a creature bears to that state. The higher order thought must therefore be about the fact that one is oneself in that mental state (ROSENTHAL, 2002, p. 658; 1997,

de Ch. Adam et P. Tannery, v. VII, Paris, J. Vrin, 1964-1965, p. 246; on Brentano's debt to Descartes' philosophy, see D. Fisette, 2015).

p. 738, 740-741; 1986, p. 344). The content of a HOT, then, could tentatively be formulated in the following way: "I am now in a state of fear, anxiety, etc.; I am now feeling pain". Hence the principle of transitivity, which Rosenthal formulates as follows: "the view that a state's being conscious consists in one's being conscious of that state" (ROSENTHAL, 2009, p. 4; 2005, p. 4).

In her commentary, Perez points out that Rosenthal's theory is but one possible version of higher order (HO) theory of consciousness in general, and wonders if Brentano's theory has not more in common with another version of HO developed recently by P. Carruthers. The latter is actually a version that differs from Rosenthal's HOT theory in that the target state is not an actual but a potential state which is conscious "by virtue of being *disposed* to give rise to a higher-order thought". According to Carruthers' dispositionalist HOT theory of consciousness,

a conscious mental event *M*, of mine, is one that is disposed to cause an activated belief (generally a non-conscious one) that I have *M*, and to cause it non-inferentially (CARRUTHERS, 2007, p. 13).

Although Brentano admits of unconscious dispositions in his *Psychology*, they play no role in his theory of consciousness. In this regard, Brentano agrees with Rosenthal that the initial state, that is, the primary object (e.g., my hearing of a song), has to be the *actual* object of inner perception.

Brentano's theory of consciousness and HOT

Brentano's commentators are divided as to whether the conception of mind that he defends in his *Psychology* makes him a Cartesian or an Aristotelian.⁵ According to the received view (mainstream at least since R. Chisholm), Brentano's key concept is intentionality, a concept that he had the merit of reintroducing into the vocabulary of contemporary philosophy. Hence, "Brentano's thesis" (so-called) which, as I have already noted, is the common starting point of Leclerc, Fréchette, Bernier, and intentionalist theories of consciousness. And indeed, several passages in Brentano's work during his Vienna period seem to support this interpretation. For example, early in the second chapter of his *Psychology*, Brentano denounces the ambiguity of the term "consciousness" and uses it to designate the property of a mental state's being about an intentional object (*SCHRIFTEN I*, p. 119).

I prefer to use it [the term consciousness] as synonymous with "mental phenomenon," or "mental act". For, [...] the term "consciousness," since

⁵ Notice that in some of his works, Rosenthal also associates Brentano with the Cartesian camp (ROSENTHAL, 1990, p. 746-747; 1991, p. 30; 1993, p. 211-212; 2004, p. 30 f.; 2009, p. 4).

it refers to an object which consciousness is conscious of, seems to be appropriate to characterize mental phenomena precisely in terms of its distinguishing characteristic, i.e., the property of the intentional in-existence of an object, for which we lack a word in common usage. (*PSYCHOLOGY*, p. 78-79).

We find a similar remark in *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*:

The common feature of everything psychical consists in what has been called by a very unfortunate and ambiguous term, consciousness; i.e., in a subject-attitude; in what has been termed an *intentional* relation to something which, though perhaps not real, is none the less an inner object of perception (*innerlich gegenständig gegeben*). (BRENTANO, 1902, p. 12).

However, a closer examination of the chapters of his *Psychology* devoted to consciousness reveals that consciousness and intentionality, although coextensive, stand for two distinct properties of mental states. These two properties correspond to the two theses that I attribute to Brentano at the very beginning of my paper: every psychical phenomenon is consciousness of something (*Bewußtsein*) and every mental phenomenon is conscious (*bewußt*).⁶ I argued that Brentano's theory of primary and secondary objects aims at articulating these two main theses.

Rosenthal clearly saw that, in emphasizing state consciousness (in the second thesis) over creature consciousness and in conceiving of consciousness as an (intrinsic) property of mental states, Brentano occupies a position in between the Cartesians and the Aristotelians. Rosenthal (2009, p. 2) maintains that the originality of Brentano's theory over the tradition of Descartes and Locke rests on the idea that every mental state is conscious (thesis II)⁷ and on the explanation he provides "both of what it is for states to be conscious and of why, as he held, all mental states are conscious". (ROSENTHAL, 2009, p. 2) This interpretation complements his theory of primary and secondary objects, in which mental phenomena are understood as secondary "objects" that are in principle the only ones that can be internally perceived in the first edition of Brentano's *Psychology*. The study of this thesis is the main subject of the second book of Brentano's *Psychology*, and at the outset, he opposes this thesis to the hypothesis of unconscious mental states, which is one of the main postulates of Rosenthal's theory of higher order thoughts.

⁶ At the very beginning of his lecture on descriptive psychology, Anton Marty explicitly refers to these two theses in order to characterize Brentano's conception of the mental in his descriptive psychology. (MARTY, 2011, p. 9).

⁷ Rosenthal says later in this article that "it was rare until Brentano's time to describe mental states as conscious at all. Even though Descartes and Locke were plainly writing about the property we describe as a state's being conscious, they did not say that our mental states are all conscious, but rather that we are conscious of all our mental states". (ROSENTHAL, 2009, p. 4).

Fréchette and Bernier have misgivings with regard to the distinction between these two theses. Fréchette wrongly accuses me of advocating the thesis that "Brentano's account of consciousness makes consciousness a relational (or transitive) feature of the mind," while Bernier does not see why consciousness in Brentano cannot be both transitive, as required by the first thesis, and intransitive, in the sense that the predicate "is aware" would be a monadic predicate designating an intrinsic and non-relational property of mental states. In fact, Bernier claims that "there is simply no contradiction in claiming that the predicate is conscious can be used both transitively to say of a subject that she is conscious of something and intransitively to talk of a mental state by virtue of which the subject is conscious of something". Of course, there is no contradiction if the predicate is used transitively in relation to a *mental state* and intransitively in relation to a *creature*. However, in the passage of my paper to which Bernier refers in that context, I say only that these two uses of the predicate in question cannot be applied simultaneously to one and the same isolated *state*. Leclerc also questions this dual use of the predicate "is aware" and wonders in what sense consciousness of the secondary object can be described as intransitive and intrinsic because, according to Leclerc, "having an object" is part of the *definiens* of what we call "intentionality".

These objections raise an important question about the interpretation of Brentano's second thesis on consciousness, namely that of the status of the concomitant awareness, about which he repeatedly says in his *Psychology* that it accompanies each and every mental state. The difficulty arises from the interpretation of a mental state's being conscious in terms of its being an object of consciousness. This difficulty stands out clearly in the famous passage of Brentano's *Psychology*, in which he wrote:

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*. Temporally they both occur at the same time, but in the nature of the case, the sound is prior. [...] The act of hearing appears to be directed toward sound in the most proper sense of the term, and because of this it seems to apprehend itself incidentally (*nebenbei*) and as something additional (*als Zugabe*). (*PSYCHOLOGY*, p. 198).⁸

The terms *nebenbei* (incidentally) and especially *Zugabe* (additional) suggest that the concomitant awareness that accompanies the presentation of the sound is something extrinsic to hearing and merely constitutes an additive, like cream or sugar added to coffee: and in this sense, the concomitant

⁸ Compare this passage with the following excerpt from his lectures on descriptive psychology: "Every consciousness, upon whatever object it is primarily directed, is concomitantly directed upon itself (*geht nebenher auf sich selbst*). In the presenting of the colour hence simultaneously a presenting of this presenting. Aristotle already [emphasizes] that the psychical phenomenon contains the consciousness of itself". (BRENTANO, 1995, p. 25).

awareness would be imposed from without on a mental state, just as in Rosenthal's theory, the content of the higher order thought makes the target state conscious. This hypothesis cannot be rejected out of hand when one takes into account certain aspects of Brentano's psychology that are presupposed in his theory of consciousness. I have in mind the rapprochement, which Brentano makes in his *Psychology* (p. 22, 70), between concomitant consciousness and inner perception, the latter of which is defined there as a judgment, i.e., as an attitude (*Stellungsnahme*) and as cognition. Several commentators of Brentano, especially Leclerc and M. Textor (2013b), maintain that the concomitant consciousness in Brentano is a judgment, more specifically an immediately evident cognition of the primary object. Textor correctly argues that, although judgment in Brentano is assertoric and has a function similar to that of a HOT, namely the function to posit the existence of the primary object, it remains that internal perception is not a categorical judgment, but rather an immediate and evident existential judgment. (*SCHRIFTEN I*, p. 161-163) This is what Textor calls the Dual Relation Thesis (DRT):

every mental phenomenon M is primarily directed upon an object other than M and secondarily (concomitantly) upon M itself in a way that yields knowledge of M. (2013b, p. 446).

DRT emphasizes the epistemic function of internal perception and amounts to reducing consciousness to a kind of cognition. DRT seems to presuppose that the judicative mode underlying the epistemic function of internal perception is the only mode by which *consciousness* relates to its objects. But there are reasons to believe that Brentano distinguishes the epistemic functions of consciousness from the non-epistemic ones.

First, in a footnote to the title of the first chapter, "Inner Consciousness," Brentano explicitly distinguishes inner consciousness from internal perception: "Just as we call the perception of a mental activity which is actually present in us "inner perception," we here call the consciousness which is directed upon it "inner consciousness". (*PSYCHOLOGY*, 1995, p. 68).

Second, at the very beginning of the third chapter of the second book of his *Psychology*, after having established that every mental act is accompanied by a concomitant consciousness, i.e., that in hearing a sound, for example, the presentation of that sound is always accompanied by a consciousness of itself, Brentano says that mental phenomena are the modes or ways by which consciousness enters into relation with its objects. (*Psychology*, p. 107) This implies that judgment is only one of the three possible modes by which one becomes aware of an object: representational, judicative and emotional. The mode of relation to the object that includes only a presentation is the poorest and merely consists in the fact that the object is present to consciousness. The other two modes suppose the active stance of consciousness with regard to its

objects. They are characterized by the opposition, in the intentional relation of judgment and emotions to their respective objects, between ascent or affirmation and negation in the case of judgments, and love and hate in the case of emotions. Internal consciousness therefore has an extension broader than internal perception, understood as judgment (in its epistemic function), since it applies equally to all classes of mental states, including to that of presentations.

Third, according to one of the principles at the basis of Brentano's classification of acts, the class of presentations is not only the simplest of acts, but is also ontologically independent of the class of judgments. This means that the presentation of the presentation of the sound or the consciousness that accompanies this presentation is not necessarily a cognition. In this regard, remember that Brentano clearly distinguishes the hierarchical relation between the three classes of acts from that between primary and secondary objects. For, in the first case, the relation of foundation between the first class and the other two leads to a one-sided (*einseitig*) dependence of judgments and emotions on the class of presentations, which is in principle autonomous with regard to the two remaining classes. However, between the consciousness of the primary object and the consciousness of the secondary object, there is a bilateral (*gegenseitig*) relation of dependence, in the sense that both *relata* are mutually dependent. This bilateral dependence is a presupposition of the two general theses on consciousness. (BRENTANO 1954, p. 226-227).

Finally, in his Vienna lectures on descriptive psychology, Brentano provides further information about his analyses on consciousness in his *Psychology* and introduces some distinctions that seem to argue in favour of the distinction between the epistemic and the non-epistemic senses of consciousness. I am thinking especially of the distinction between implicit awareness (or consciousness broadly understood) and explicit awareness (consciousness in the narrow sense), the latter of which is closely associated with the central concept of noticing (*Bemerken*) in these lectures. Brentano first applies this distinction to the external perception of a primary object and argues that, not only can one implicitly see or hear something that one does not explicitly see, but that to be explicitly aware of experiencing something, one must be implicitly aware of it (BRENTANO 1995, p. 36-37). Explicit consciousness or secondary consciousness is called in these lectures a noticing (*Bemerken*) (BRENTANO 1995, p. 36-37), which roughly corresponds to the epistemic mode of consciousness in Brentano's *Psychology*. Brentano also applies this distinction to self-awareness and we shall see that explicit awareness seems to presuppose a form of reflection in Brentano's later writings.

Nevertheless, I recognize that the judicative mode of consciousness is the one that Brentano emphasizes in his *Psychology* and in several other writings because of its epistemic function. But for the reasons I just mentioned, this

epistemic function is distinct from its psychological function. That is why, I believe, DRT leaves completely open the status of these modes of consciousness or the concomitant awareness that is supposed to accompany the primary object. This problem stands out clearly in Brentano's response to the question raised by thesis II, i.e., "What it is for a mental state to be conscious?" Brentano's response in his *Psychology* is simply that my hearing the sound is object of consciousness, which is not only circular but also vulnerable to the objection of the "consciousness of" trap raised against HOT theory. Brentano's response has also been challenged by Leclerc in his commentary, where he questions the nature of the mode of consciousness at work in relation to the secondary object. If, as he suggested, this relation were intentional, then the secondary object could be reduced to the initial presentation of the primary object and the secondary consciousness would stand in an intentional relation to the presentation of the primary object. However, as Brentano clearly saw, this option would lead to an infinite regress:

As I have already emphasized in my *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, however, for the secondary object of mental activity one does not have to think of any particular one of these references, as for example the reference to the primary object. It is easy to see that this would lead to an infinite regress, for there would have to be a third reference, which would have the secondary reference as object, a fourth, which would have the additional third one as object, and so on. (*PSYCHOLOGY*, p. 215).

The later Brentano has made substantial changes to his conception of secondary objects and we shall see that these changes go hand in hand with the abandonment of the concept of concomitant consciousness in favour of that of self-awareness.

My reconstruction of Brentano's theory and the principle of the unity of consciousness

Now, in spite of numerous parallels that can be drawn between the theory of consciousness developed by Brentano in his *Psychology* and Rosenthal's HOT theory, there are important differences as well, which I have stressed in the target paper. The two main differences pertain to two postulates of HOT theory of consciousness, namely that of unconscious mental states and the "distinctness assumption," i.e., that the target state and HOT are two numerically separate states. Brentano discusses these two assumptions in connection with his second thesis on consciousness, which is exposed to objections of infinite regress well-known since Aristotle. For, when one denies that the presentation that accompanies the hearing of the sound is unconscious, as most higher order theories of consciousness hold, it seems that we are then forced to admit

an infinite number of mental phenomena. I have argued in the target paper that Brentano's answer to this objection is that the presentation of the sound and the presentation of the presentation of the sound are one and the same state that has two objects, a primary and a secondary object. There are no unconscious presentations in the field of our experience, nor can there be (*PSYCHOLOGY*, p. 81), and the objection of infinite regression is not an argument against his theory, because the series of acts ends with the second term. (*PSYCHOLOGY*, p. 100).

The key to Brentano's solution to the problem of regression (*Psychology*, p. 98) lies ultimately in the idea of a special connection (*eigentümliche Verwebung*) between the primary and secondary objects and it raises once again the question of the nature of this relation. I tried to show that, for Brentano, the consciousness of the primary object and the consciousness of the secondary object are metaphysical parts, or what Brentano called in his *Psychology* "divisives," of a single unitary phenomenon, and they are part of one and the same reality. Hence the principle of the unity of consciousness, which Brentano already evokes in the first chapter of Book II of his *Psychology* in response to the question why the many mental phenomena that are involved in the simplest acts appear to consciousness not as an aggregate or bundle of dispersed elements, but as a unitary reality. It is in this context that Brentano uses his theory of wholes and parts, and conceives of mental phenomena as "parts of one single phenomenon (*Teilphänomene*) in which they are contained, as one single and unified thing". (*PSYCHOLOGY*, p. 74) This principle is not intended to eliminate the complexity of mental acts in favour of simplicity, but aims rather at warranting that what is internally perceived is a unitary whole. The principle of the unity of consciousness also asserts that all mental states involved in this complex act are also perceived simultaneously. (*PSYCHOLOGY*, p. 171; *Schriften* I, p. 182-183; 1995, p. 125-126).

All respondents seem to agree with my reconstruction of this aspect of Brentano's theory, and de Carvalho provides further useful information on other aspects of Brentano's psychology that are involved in his theory of consciousness. Most objections pertain to the relation that I have established between the principle of the unity of consciousness and the mental substance in Brentano's revised theory, which I will later discuss. In his contribution to this *disputatio*, B. Leclercq examines the nature of the dependence relations involved in Brentano's ontological solution to the problem of the unity of consciousness. He claims that the relations that Brentano establishes between the distinct parts of a complex unitary mental act require a richer ontology than the one developed by Brentano in his *Psychology*, and that this ontology has been developed by his student Husserl and formalized recently by G. Null (2007). Bruno Leclercq emphasizes the distinction between two classes of relations of dependence: the first class is "relative dependence," which obtains

between two interdependent parts of a whole, where one of the parts is “more fundamental” than the other; the second class of dependence is said to be “weaker” than the first because it only supposes that relations of dependence obtain independently of the founded-founding relations that hold among the parts. Leclercq argues that the class of relative dependence could help establish the priority of consciousness over intentionality. Yet, even if one agrees with Leclercq’s proposal, it is difficult to see how this distinction could contribute to the problem of the unity of *consciousness*. Be that as it may, all I needed in order to underpin Brentano’s ontological solution to this problem during his Vienna period were the bilateral distinctional parts in the proper sense, i.e., that primary and secondary objects are mutually inseparable. But Leclercq certainly knows that the later Brentano developed a sophisticated theory of relations, to which he made several changes during his career. (CHRUDZIMSKI & SMITH, 2004). As we shall see, these changes are important for Brentano’s revised theory consciousness.

Maria Gonzalez and Mariana Broens discuss Brentano’s principle of the unity of consciousness through what I have called in the target paper the problem of complexity, i.e., the problem of unifying within inner consciousness the entire complex of elements involved in the constitution of our mental life. The original but complicated solution they propose to this problem involves a combination of information theory (Dretske), ecological psychology, and Complex Systems Theory (CST). One of the properties of CST that seems relevant to account for the unity of consciousness is self-organization, which is understood here “as a process through which new forms of organization emerge solely from the dynamic interaction amongst elements”. They argue that “both primary and secondary objects of consciousness can be understood as having the same informational nature” and that the unity of consciousness can be accounted for “from the informational perspective enriched by Complex Systems Theory”. And this presupposes, in turn, that Brentano’s theory of primary and secondary objects can be accounted for in terms of information (and meaning), which they conceive of along ecological lines, i.e., as ecological “invariant features of the world” including affordances, niches, etc. In this perspective, “meaningful information emerges in consciousness as a result of the agent’s adaptive interaction with the environment”.

Gonzalez and Broens’ proposal raises the issue of whether Brentano’s theory of primary and secondary objects is compatible with this ecological worldview. They are aware that their proposal is based on a conception of mind which is known for its anti-representationalism and the question arises as to how it fits in not only with Brentano’s psychology but with his metaphysics as well. Pedro Alvez has raised a similar question in his criticism of Brentano’s principle of the unity of consciousness, but unlike Gonzalez and Broens, he argues that one must choose between the two conflicting options. For he

conceives of the "soul" as "patterns of high organization of bodily organisms" and maintains that this view represents an antidote to Brentano's Cartesian dualism and an alternative to his representationalist conception of the mind. Although I am sympathetic to Gonzalez-Broens' overall perspective in their paper, I must also acknowledge with Alvez that their proposal raises insuperable difficulties in light of the objections that Husserl and several of Brentano's followers have raised against his descriptive psychology. Alvez's diagnosis is based on Brentano's internalism and mentalism, and he argues that this form of representationalism is simply inconsistent with the role assigned to the environment and the body in later phenomenology and in ecological psychology. The burden of proof lies therefore with Gonzalez and Broans. As for the solution they propose to the problem of complexity, it all depends on the type of relations that are involved in the emergence of these forms of organization. This is not the place to discuss that difficult issue. Nevertheless, let me remind the reader that several of Brentano's students were strongly interested by this issue in their work on Gestalt psychology, which in turn is one of the sources of Gibson's ecological psychology.

Self consciousness and the mentally active agent

Most objections raised by Perez and especially by Bernier and Fréchette relate to the last two sections of the target paper, in which I assess the implications of the changes in Brentano's philosophy for his theory of consciousness. The main hypothesis that I developed in these two sections is that his taking into account the concept of psychical agent aimed to solve two major problems left open in his 1874 *Psychology*. The first issue pertains to the question of the substrate of the modes of consciousness and of the complex psychical act as internally perceived. The hypothesis that there is such a substrate has raised numerous objections, which I will discuss in the last section. The second problem, which I discussed in the previous section, is related to the status of the concomitant consciousness and to the second general thesis on consciousness (that every mental state is conscious). For, as I have repeatedly stressed in my contribution to this volume, to the question of what it is for a mental state to be conscious, Brentano responded in his *Psychology* by saying that it is the secondary object of a concomitant consciousness that accompanies the initial state, understood as its primary object. The predicate "is conscious" is therefore not an intrinsic property of mental states, as Bernier and Fréchette claimed in their commentaries, because for Brentano the consciousness of mental state depends upon the *Mitbewußtsein* that takes them as objects. My hypothesis is that to clarify the status of the accompanying awareness and to adequately answer the question: "What it is for a mental state to be conscious?," the later Brentano resorts to the concept

of mentally active agent and conceives of consciousness as implicit and intransitive self-awareness.

Fréchette strongly disagrees with this hypothesis and proposes his own intentionalist-unilevelist interpretation of Brentano, which can be summarized by the thesis that "Brentano shares with Rosenthal the assumption that state consciousness is a primitive fact, and that it explains creature consciousness". We shall see that Rosenthal and Brentano claim that a correct definition of consciousness involves both state and creature consciousness. In any case, Fréchette does not admit that the introduction of a psychical agent into the later Brentano's philosophy changes anything about his theory of consciousness: "After all," Fréchette adds, "instead of talking about 'consciousness', and preferring 'mental agent' or 'mental activity', the basis of Brentano's account remains, at bottom, unchanged in his later view". In other words, the only difference that he sees between consciousness and mental agent is a mere *façon de parler*. Fréchette's main argument is based on his own exegesis of Brentano and his strategy consists in casting doubt on the authenticity of those writings of Brentano (namely *Religion und Philosophie*) that I quoted to support my hypothesis. This is clear from his interpretation of the well-known 1911 passage, to which many Brentano scholars usually refer in order to explain the important modifications to which Brentano's views on consciousness were subject after 1874. (TEXTOR, 2013b, p. 479-480). In this passage, Brentano maintains that the secondary object is no longer a mental state being about itself (*in parergo*) as a secondary object, as he held in his *Psychology*, but rather the mentally active subject that includes the primary and secondary object:

As I have already emphasized in my *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, however, for the secondary object of mental activity one does not have to think of any particular one of these references, as for example the reference to the primary object. It is easy to see that this would lead to an infinite regress, for there would have to be a third reference, which would have the secondary reference as object, a fourth, which would have the additional third one as object, and so on. The secondary object is not a reference but a mental activity, or, more strictly speaking, the mentally active subject, in which the secondary reference is included along with the primary one. (*PSYCHOLOGY*, p. 215; *SCHRIFTEN I*, p. 395).

According to Fréchette, whereas in 1874, Brentano claimed that "every conscious act contains a primary and a secondary object," he maintained in 1911 that "the mentally active subject includes both the primary reference (my seeing red) and the secondary reference (my being conscious of seeing red)". Fréchette does not seem to realize that "my being conscious of seeing red," which presupposes that it is the *creature* that is conscious of the primary object, is quite different from *state* consciousness and also from the idea that the predicate "is conscious" is intrinsic to the state of seeing red. For, if we take Fréchette's formulation at face value, Brentano would have shifted from

Aristotelianism (state-consciousness) to Cartesianism (creature consciousness). And what is worse, he accuses me of advocating the idea that consciousness in the work of the later Brentano requires that he “introduces level (3) to address these issues,” as is necessary in HOT theory. While it is true to say that I claim that Brentano recognizes in 1911 that a response to the question: “What makes a mental state conscious?” must necessarily take into account the creature or the mental agent, I also claim that Brentano avoids the drawbacks associated with creature consciousness by conceiving of consciousness in terms of self-consciousness. Brentano can thus preserve his second thesis on consciousness (that any mental state is conscious) while providing an explanation that, as can be shown in the excerpt from the appendix, is different from the 1874 explanation, where it was understood as a mere (secondary) “object” of a *Mitbewußtsein*. In any case, one can hardly deny that for the later Brentano one of the main conditions imposed to thesis II (that all mental states are conscious) is that the mental agent be conscious of it. And this requirement can be considered a clarification of the obscure notion of concomitant consciousness that was supposed to accompany the initial state (e.g., the hearing of a sound) in Brentano's first edition of his *Psychology*. Fréchette therefore minimizes the extent of the modifications, which are mentioned in the passage of the appendix and which can be observed in several of Brentano's later writings. I shall now comment on these briefly.

I am thinking of Brentano's writings gathered under the title *The Theory of Categories* (1981), which he wrote during the last ten years of his life and which seem to corroborate the passages of *Religion und Philosophie* that I used in the target paper. We find further illuminating remarks about the connection between the concepts of psychical agent, which he construes as a mental substance, and self-awareness defined as “a cognition (*Kenntnis*) which pertains to that which has the cognition” (BRENTANO, 1981, p. 116). But this definition has to be nuanced by means of the distinction between implicit and explicit consciousness that Brentano introduced in his lecture on descriptive psychology, which I used above in my discussion of the Dual Relation Thesis.⁹ Brentano also associates the distinction between implicit and explicit consciousness to that between broad and narrow consciousness or to that between blind and distinct consciousness, which is closely related to the central concept of noticing (*Bemerken*) in these lectures. Implicit and indistinct consciousness characterizes primary consciousness, while explicit and distinct consciousness is understood as secondary consciousness. Brentano first applies this distinction to the external perception of a primary object, arguing that one can see or hear (implicitly) something that one does not (explicitly)

⁹ See K. Mulligan (2004) for a discussion of these distinctions in Brentano's lectures on psychognosy.

perceive. In *The Theory of Categories*, Brentano uses the case of the hearing of a chord in order to exemplify this distinction:

If one hears a chord and distinguishes the notes which are contained in it, then one has a distinct awareness of the fact that he hears it. But if one does not distinguish the particular notes, then one has only an indistinct awareness of them. In such a case, he does hear them together and he is aware of the whole which is this hearing and to which the hearing of each of the particular notes belongs; but he does not hear the whole in such a way that he distinguishes each of its parts. Particular hearings of particular notes are contained in the whole and he does not distinguish them. (BRENTANO, 1981, p. 117).

But this case, like that of the lark that I use in the target paper, only concerns the (primary) consciousness of the primary object. In another passage of his *Theory of Categories*, Brentano also uses this distinction in his analysis of self-awareness by taking the example of pain:

Self-awareness, too, is sometimes distinct and sometimes indistinct. If a person feels a pain, then he is aware of himself as one that feels the pain. But perhaps he does not distinguish the substance, which here feels pain, from the accident by means of which the substance appears to him. It may well be that animals have only an indistinct self-awareness. But in the case of man, the substance which thinks in him [*die in ihm denkt*], and experiences, judges, loves and hates, can be brought to awareness as a result of the frequent change of its accidents; the indistinct awareness is then replaced by a distinct awareness of the subject. One then grasps this substance as that which permanently underlies this change and which gives unity to its manifold character [*als das, was bleibend ihrem Wechsel und einheitlich ihrer Mannigfaltigkeit unterliegt*]. (BRENTANO, 1981, p. 117).

As in the case of the hearing of a chord, one has to presuppose that the subject is aware of the fact that he hears it, and in the case of pain, that she is aware of being in that state. Although Brentano does not admit of unconscious mental states, he assumes here that explicit self-consciousness presupposes implicit self-awareness, and so confirms the thesis of his lectures on descriptive psychology, to wit, that one cannot be explicitly aware of being in this state (pain) unless one is implicitly aware of it (BRENTANO 1981, p. 34). This implicit self-awareness is not reflexive; it does not require, as Brentano says (1981, p. 123), the participation of the will. It is therefore pre-reflective, i.e., an awareness that one has before explicitly reflecting on one's experience, and it is intrinsic.

6 Brentano and the principle of transitivity

Bernier's detailed commentary provides useful insights in Brentano's theory of consciousness from the perspective of contemporary philosophy of mind. He takes for granted my interpretation of the later Brentano's theory of

consciousness in terms of pre-reflective and intransitive self-consciousness, and claims that Brentano's revised theory can be understood along the lines of a one-level representationalist theory of consciousness. To quote Bernier:

The mental agent would stand in a representational, and hence intentional, relation both to the primary object and to the secondary object, namely herself, or herself mentally acting. According to such an interpretation, however, the mental agent could no longer be a "unified real being" since it would only be "intentionally existent", like the primary object.

Bernier's point of departure rests on the mereological interpretation of the relation between primary and secondary objects that I formulated in the target paper, and he rightly points out that this formulation primarily holds for Brentano's early theory of consciousness but not necessarily for the revised theory. He then proposes several formulations of Brentano's revised theory which take into account the function of the mentally active subject. According to Bernier, the following statement captures the gist of the later Brentano's theory as I presented it in the target paper:

4*. For any state M of a subject S, M is a mental state of S iff M is conscious, where M is conscious iff M is an act of S such that by M-ing S represents a primary object O, and S is non-intentionally, directly aware of herself and of her M-ing.

Bernier further argues that even if Brentano's theory so understood has the virtue of accounting for the phenomenal subjective character of conscious states, it still carries "an ontological burden" (the mental substance) which is not necessary to a Brentanian or neo-Brentanian theory of consciousness. He then proposes several variants of an ontologically neural theory of consciousness and concludes, that while these versions depart significantly from Brentano's theory as formulated in 4*, "these views can still be called Brentanian, or neo-Brentanian, in the important sense that they all correspond to what has been called 'one-state views' in the literature".

Bernier might be right to say that Brentano's philosophy conveys numerous metaphysical presuppositions from the naturalistic standpoint adopted by most contemporary philosophers of mind, including Bernier himself, but as Leclerc rightly pointed out, this is not an argument to discard Brentano's theory of mind as a whole. For Brentano's psychological concern in referring to a mental agent in the revised theory, first and foremost, was to account for the conscious character of a mental state, and this concern is distinct from Brentano's ontological considerations on the mental substance. I shall return to the ontological issue in the next section. As for Bernier's statement 4*, it seems to presuppose that Brentano advocates a Cartesian conception of the mind and commits himself to creature consciousness. Again,

Brentano's revised theory does not involve a shift from state to creature consciousness and he neither conflates nor confuses these two concepts. Nevertheless, this raises the question how the reference to a subject makes it possible to answer the initial question pertaining to what makes a mental state conscious. In this regard, Bernier's first version of statement 4 seems more relevant for that purpose because the thesis that figures in the antecedent of the conditional rests on conscious mental states whereas this is not the case in 4*, which is oriented towards the condition for being a mental state simpliciter. Second, statement 4* does not account for the fact that M is a complex state which includes the relation to the primary and secondary objects, as Brentano makes clear in the 1911 excerpt that I quoted above. Third, to account for the idea that the mentally active agent is conscious of being in that complex state, the formulation that Bernier proposes of the consequent of the conditional, a formulation in terms of the subject being "non-intentionally, directly aware of herself and of her M-ing," has to be modified. For, the subject does not experience herself in the same way that she is conscious of the primary object; rather, she is aware of being in that complex state, which includes both the primary and the secondary object. Nevertheless, I agree with Bernier that the mereological definition that I proposed in statement 3, which was only meant to account for the ontological structure of the complex state, has to be completed in order to account for the subject's awareness of being in that complex state.

Now, Bernier and Perez have rightly pointed out that the main issue is whether or not Brentano's revised theory of consciousness implements Rosenthal's transitivity principle (TP). As Bernier rightly remarked, my position on that issue in the target paper is "a bit unstable," mainly because of my formulation of this principle using the terms "conscious of " and my transitive use of the predicate "is conscious," neither of which are to be confused with TP. We find a clear formulation of TP in the introduction to Rosenthal's book *Consciousness and Mind*, where he repeatedly insists on the importance of this principle for HO theories of consciousness in general. This formulation of TP is broad enough to accommodate several versions of higher order theories of consciousness. TP: Mental states are conscious only if one is in some way conscious of it (2005, p. 4; 2009, p. 4).

This principle states the conditions for a mental state to be conscious and it involves the idea that the predicate "is conscious" is attributable to a mental state only if the subject is somehow conscious of that state. Rosenthal claims that this principle is common to all HO theories, which mainly differ in the way they implement this principle. We saw how HOT theory implements this principle by accounting for the for-me-ness of lower-order states. It consists in the thesis that having a HOT that one is in some state consists in being conscious of oneself as being in that state. (2005, p. 6) Rosenthal also believes that higher order thoughts are unconscious in that we usually do not notice

that we are in those states. That is why he resorts to third-order thoughts, by which the subject *explicitly* becomes aware of the content of the state she is in. (ROSENTHAL, 1990, p. 742) Since Brentano denies the very idea of unconscious mental states, the question remains whether his revised theory implements TP.

Perez and Bernier adopt contradictory positions on this issue. Bernier claims that if statement 4 discussed above is correct, then Brentano's revised theory implements TP. But even if we agree with Bernier that the general condition that a state must satisfy to be conscious is that the subject "be non-intentionally, directly aware of herself and of her mental act," this doesn't explain how Brentano's theory is supposed to implement TP. Perez, on the other hand, raises doubts as to whether the very idea of consciousness in Brentano is compatible with TP, insofar as Brentano's revised theory does not satisfy the main conditions generally imposed on HO theories, namely the distinctness assumption and the postulate of unconscious mental states. In particular, she asks whether Brentano's notion of implicit consciousness is vulnerable to the main arguments raised against HOT theory that she discusses in her commentary. She seems to believe that the only way out is through the adoption of a pre-reflective first order theory of phenomenal consciousness. As I said above, I don't think that first-orderness is an issue in the interpretation of Brentano's theory of consciousness because unlike a one level or a one state view, the content of an elementary experience such as the vision of a colour is complex and multi-layered in Brentano's account.

One of the main issues raised by the objections directed against most HO theories is whether (self-) consciousness pre-exists psychical acts such as the presentation of a sound. This question underlies Alvez's and Perez's discussion of D. Armstrong's distracted driver case. Alvez argues against Brentano that the truck driver case, far from being marginal, is paradigmatic of the way we behave most of the time. He further claims that unconscious mental states are the most important part of our mental lives and "that there are also mental states that cannot be conscious states at all". This last claim is difficult to justify from Brentano's empirical standpoint. For, even if Brentano would grant that a mental state could forever remain implicit, he would not accept that a mental state could not be potentially raised to consciousness. In the target paper, I used a similar case from Brentano's lecture on descriptive psychology to illustrate the distinction between implicit and explicit consciousness, i.e., the two ways that a mental state can be an object of consciousness. I have argued that this distinction, like the one between marginal and focal consciousness, allows us to account for the truck driver case without resorting to the unconscious. For one can experience something like a lark in the visual field or the notes of a chord in the hearing of a musical piece without being explicitly and distinctly conscious of it. But unlike Alvez's hypothesis of unconscious mental states or contents, Brentano would say that

for a state to be a mental state, it has to be somehow experienced or be a datum of the agent's experience.¹⁰

Be that as it may, the question whether Brentano's theory of consciousness implements Rosenthal's TP presupposes that this principle constitutes an adequate criterion to identify a HO theory and to discriminate the latter from non-HO theories. For to take the creature into account in this formulation still does not explain the role of self-awareness in the agent's experiencing the primary object.¹¹ It only shows that:

- A mental state is conscious iff the mentally active subject is somehow conscious of that state.

I think we need more to account for self-consciousness. For this formulation does not seem to take into account the fact that mental states are the agent's own, i.e., in Brentano's terms, that the initial presentation is not merely a state but a state that the subject is in. Moreover, we have to account for Brentano's important remark in the 1911 passage, that what the secondary consciousness stands in relation to is not an object as such, but rather the mental agent, in which both the intentional object and the state are included. I take it that Brentano means that the hearing of a sound is the state the agent is in and that a state is conscious only if she is conscious of being in that state. In short, an adequate response to the question: "What makes a state conscious?" could be formulated along the following lines:

- A mental state is conscious iff one is aware of oneself as being in that (intentional) state.

¹⁰ André Leclerc discusses similar cases in his commentary, but he adopts a position diametrically opposed to those advocated by Alvez and Perez, who argue that the solution to the majority of these problems requires the adoption of phenomenal consciousness. According to Leclerc, the theoretical framework that Brentano established in the first edition of his *Psychology* provides all the necessary elements to address these problems, provided that Brentano be interpreted from an intentionalist perspective. Among the problems typical of representationalist theories of mind, Leclerc mentioned the cases of pain and of several mental states, such as anxiety or moods, to which many philosophers refuse to attribute intentional properties, because they believe that they are objectless states which are not about anything. In the case of pain, I think Brentano would agree with Leclerc that they are intentional states, as confirmed by Brentano in the extensive discussion he devoted to this question in his *Psychology* (p. 62-69) and in his polemic with Stumpf on the status of pleasure and pain. (FISETTE, 2013b). Brentano believes that cases like pain fall under the class of emotions, which, like any intentional state, intentionally in-exist. Leclerc takes the example of the phantom limb as a case of non-conceptual and sensorial experience and argues that, like states with conceptual content, a pain can be about something which does not exist. But Leclerc's argument presupposes that an itch felt by somebody in a non-existing part of one's body is nevertheless the intentional object of his pain. This presupposition is questionable because the localisation of pain in one's body part does not necessarily account for the aboutness or directedness of a state of pain. For one can be in a state of pain without being able to localise the source. What is then the object of pain?

¹¹ Caston also believes that the solution to the problem of consciousness presupposes creature consciousness, i.e., "our perceiving that we perceive"; "It is not, therefore, mental states like perceptions that are aware, strictly speaking, but rather the animals themselves who have these mental states". (CASTON, 2002, p. 769).

This formulation seems to be consistent with Brentano's conception of self-consciousness in his final writings, namely in the passages of his *Theory of Categories* that I quoted above, where he formulates his conception of self-consciousness by using the distinction between implicit and explicit consciousness. But unlike de Carvalho, who claims, after Brandl (2013), that the idea of self-consciousness is already in the first edition of Brentano's *Psychology*, in the next section, I will explain why the concept of a self does not play any role in the 1874 theory of consciousness.

The later Brentano on substance and accident

Let us now discuss the second part of the overall hypothesis that I stated above, according to which the introduction of the notion of mental agent in Brentano's revised theory of consciousness is associated not only to changes in his conception of substance and accidents, but also to his solution to the problem of the substrate of the modes of consciousness, which he left pending in his *Psychology*. Fréchette attaches great importance to this issue, if I consider his numerous objections to this aspect of my target paper, which says very little about the ontological status of the self and the mental substance. In fact, this issue was not essential to my overall argument on Brentano's later theory of consciousness, and that is why this aspect of the target paper was very sketchy. However, the question remains whether, after the reist turn, the immaterialist conception of the soul, which Brentano contrasts with Aristotle's alleged semi-materialism, has anything to do with the modifications brought to his theory of consciousness. I will try to meet Fréchette's objections and provide further textual information on the most important points.

First, Fréchette claims that "nothing in the text used by Fisette [the excerpt from *Religion und Philosophie* on Aristotle's semi-materialism] is actually referable to Brentano's 'late position', since it is composed of and/or inspired by numerous texts by Brentano (and Marty) belonging to different unidentified periods". It is true that Brentano's writings published in *Religion und Philosophie* are undated, and like many of Brentano's later writings published by O. Kraus, A. Kastil and F. Mayer-Hillebrand, that piece is not entirely reliable given the editorial policy adopted by Marty's students in their editions of Brentano's writings. (FISETTE, 2013a). Nevertheless, Fréchette should know that I could have used several other manuscripts where Brentano criticizes Aristotle's semi-materialism, namely *Vom Dasein Gottes* (1980, p. 424 f.) and above all Brentano's manuscripts published in *The Theory of Categories* that I quote above and that undoubtedly belong to Brentano's final period (1907-1917). Fréchette is right to say that Brentano's metaphysical position on substance changed several times over the years (CHRUDZIMSKI, 2004), but I take for granted that Brentano's conversion to an immaterialist conception of substance

occurred during the later period of his philosophical activity. Moreover, these manuscripts have been authenticated and used by several Brentano scholars, namely by Antonelli in the introduction to his recent edition of Brentano's *Psychology* (SCHRIFTEN, p. LXXX) and by S. Krantz (1988) in reference to Brentano's later criticism of Aristotle.

Fréchette further claims that "Brentano never doubted that there is a substrate to our conscious mental states. This substrate is called the soul". Here again, Brentano would disagree, as is clear from the position he defended in his *Psychology* and even as early as 1869, in his paper "Auguste Comte und die positive Philosophie". Brentano criticizes Aristotle for conveying metaphysical presuppositions in a number of his doctrines, notably in that of substance and accidents.¹² Brentano raises the same objection at the very beginning of his *Psychology*, when he compares the Aristotelian conception of psychology as a science of the soul to the one defining it as the science of mental phenomena. Brentano criticizes Aristotle for conceiving of the object of psychology, that is, the soul, as a substance, and of psychical phenomena as its accidents or its essential properties. Brentano argues that, from an empirical point of view, this is nothing but a metaphysical postulate, i.e., a fiction, which, because it is not (and cannot be) an object of experience or an object accessible to internal consciousness, consequently cannot constitute the object of psychology. Hence the alternative conception, based on a "psychology without a soul," i.e., a psychology free of metaphysical presuppositions. (FISETTE, 2014b) It is probably for the same reason that Brentano, in the conclusion to his analysis of the unity of consciousness, deliberately left open the question of the substrate and individuality of mental states, arguing that the unity of consciousness and the unity of the conscious self are two distinct things:

Finally, the unity of consciousness does not imply that the mental phenomena which we ordinarily refer to as our past mental activities, were parts of the same real thing that encompasses our present mental phenomena. [...] It remains an open question, then, for the moment, whether the continued existence of the self is the persistence of one and the same unitary reality or simply a succession of different realities linked together in such a way that, so to speak, each subsequent reality takes the place of the reality which preceded it. (*PSYCHOLOGY*, p. 129-130).

In this regard, Brentano's lecture on descriptive psychology marks a return to Aristotle and to a psychology understood as an ontology of the soul.

¹² F. Brentano (1968, p. 132): "Aristotle who, despite being a theist, is not a theological thinker (in the erroneous sense), despite depending on metaphysical conceptions in a number of his doctrines, such as those of potency and act, of substance of accident, etc.—this, even his greatest admirer cannot deny. He is nevertheless already a positive researcher by his character. Up until him, there is an order similar to the one Comte determines in a general manner. Consequently, we should have expected a refinement and more perfect development of the positive spirit".

(BRENTANO, 1995, p. 155) The "*letzteinheitliche Subjekt*" in *Religion und Philosophie* (p. 227), the self, is then considered an individual substance whose moments or properties are mental states. In his *Theory of Categories*, Brentano maintains that the mental substance is not a mere a priori postulate but an object of experience insofar as "each of us is conscious of himself as being a determinate individual and as being the one individual substance that underlies all our psychical activities" (BRENTANO, 1981, p. 121).

Fréchette once again misunderstands my position when he says that "the immortality, or even the existence of the soul, was a condition for the unity of consciousness". Fréchette claims instead that Brentano's point is "that the unity of consciousness is what *makes* a being (a creature) conscious". I must say that I cannot understand how this principle of the unity "of consciousness" could possibly make a state or a human creature "conscious". In the target paper, I argued that this principle was intended to solve the problem of complexity, i.e., the problem of why the various phenomena that are involved in the simplest acts appear to consciousness not as an aggregate of scattered elements, but as a unitary reality. The other condition that is associated with this principle is the simultaneity condition, according to which one must be aware that this multiplicity of elements belongs to one and the same reality. In this sense, the simultaneity condition is to the consciousness of the unitary phenomenon, what the ontological condition of membership to one and the same reality is to the object internally perceived. However, this principle does not address the question of what makes a mental state or a creature conscious. Bernier also errs when he says: "The mental agent, however, is supposed to be what plays the role of unifying the diverse parts of the mental states". As I said, Brentano's adoption of the concept of self-awareness as well as his taking into account the experience of the subject call into question neither the validity of his theory of primary and secondary objects nor the central function of the principle of the unity of consciousness in his overall conception of the mind. As the real substrate of all modes of consciousness, the mental substance is the seat of the unity of consciousness, but it is not its unifying principle.

This is confirmed by Brentano's remarks on Aristotle's semi-materialism. In a passage of *The Theory of Categories*, Brentano first explains why he characterizes Aristotle's position on substance as semi-materialistic:

I have said that our self appears to us as a mental substance. I now add that it appears to us as a pure mental substance. It does not appear, say, as a substance which is mental with respect to one part and which is corporeal, and thus extended in three dimensions, with respect to another part. I emphasize this expressly, for the contrary has been asserted by important philosophers - for example, by Aristotle in ancient times and by many present-day thinkers who have been influenced by his opinion. (BRENTANO, 1981, p. 121-122).

The purely mental substance entails that the subject underlying the mental states is an immaterial substance, insofar as it is neither part of the body nor of the brain, and is free of any spatial properties. (BRENTANO, 1954, p. 226) Aristotle, on the other hand, can be considered a semi-materialist (or semi-immaterialist), insofar as he conceived of the soul "as a composition of corporeal and un-corporeal parts" and attributed "to the different parts of our sensory perceptions and desires different parts of the corporeal subject". (BRENTANO, 1954, p. 224).

The next question raised by Fréchette pertains to the connection between the unity of consciousness and Brentano's *letzteinheitliche Subject*. Fréchette sees no link because he believes that Brentano's view on substance "doesn't play any role in the phenomenological fact of the unity of consciousness". It is true that this principle is distinct from Brentano's metaphysical views on substance, but there is nevertheless a connection. Indeed, one of Brentano's arguments against Aristotle's semi-materialism rests on the fact that Aristotle's conception of substance infringes the principle of the unity of consciousness. Brentano is categorical on this point, as shown in this passage from *Religion und Philosophie* (BRENTANO, 1954, p. 227, 224):

[Aristotle] doubly infringes the secured fact of the unity of consciousness. First by conceiving the soul as a composition of corporeal and uncorporeal parts. Second, by attributing to the different parts of our sensory perceptions and desires different parts of the corporeal subject.

I cannot examine in details Brentano's argument. Nonetheless, this passage makes it clear that this principle presupposes a conception of the soul as an immaterial substance. I see another connection between the mentally active subject and the principle of the unity of consciousness, more specifically, in the requirement of simultaneity, according to which the phenomena involved in the activity of the subject should appear to consciousness as a unitary reality. For, in Brentano's revised theory of consciousness, the simultaneous consciousness (*gleichzeitige Gesamtbewußtsein*) is the whole whose parts are the ultimate unitary subject's (*letzteinheitliche Subject*) own mental states (BRENTANO, 1954, p. 225, 227). It follows that the unitary consciousness of the whole is a self-consciousness and the whole is the self who is himself distinctly or indistinctly apperceived through his own parts, as we have seen above, and as confirmed in another passage of Brentano's *Theory of Categories*:

And if he thinks or senses indistinctly, then the self is comprised in a larger complex which is at least apperceived as a whole, even if not in respect to its relevant particular parts. In such a case one has a confused self-awareness with no distinction of the relevant particular psychical activities. (1981, p. 123).

Fréchette might be right to say that the justification of the principle of the unity of consciousness is based on internal perception and not on the mental substance. However, the content of what is internally perceived in the later Brentano always involves the self.

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