

UNDERSTANDING SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

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Thesis Abstract

Çağlan Çınar Dilek, “Understanding Self-Consciousness”

The aim of this thesis is to understand the nature of *self-consciousness* by examining *self* and *consciousness*. Taking Strawson’s *sense of Self* as an inner mental entity as a starting point, I discuss if agency and personality should not be seen as essential features of sense of Self. After presenting Zahavi’s notion of *selfhood* as the pre-reflective experiential dimension, which is intrinsic to experience, we also see that it is the formal condition for experience. The implausibility of *non-egological* theories, taking experience without a subject, is shown and Zahavi’s thought that we are always pre-reflectively self-conscious is explained. Zahavi thinks that selfhood and consciousness cannot be contributed by external acts, as in *Higher-Order Theories*. He also has the view that the self cannot be grasped through any attempt to objectify self. Self-consciousness can be known directly from ordinary experience of the world. I examine whether Zahavi’s approach can handle unconsciousness and whether a minimal self-consciousness explain human self-consciousness, in the light of the empirical studies on blind sight and human infants.

I don’t think that self-consciousness can be explained through minimal self-consciousness, and I emphasize the effect of objectification, which creates a self, which is a different entity from the whole person. Mentality is important to achieve such an objectification, and in creating a self, which can be self-conscious. Lewis’ distinction between the machinery of self and Me is introduced, to show that a minimum sense of Self is not preliminary to full self-consciousness. I present questions this thesis leaves for further work.

Tez Özeti

Çağlan Çınar Dilek, “Benlik-bilincini Anlamak”

Bu tezin amacı, *benlik* ve *bilinci* inceleyerek *benlik-bilincinin* doğasını anlamaktır. Strawson’ın dahili bir zihinsel varlık olan *benlik algısını* başlangıç noktası olarak alarak vekilliğin ve kişiliğin benlik algısının özsel özellikleri olarak alınmaması mı gerektiğini tartışıyorum. Zahavi’nin düşünüm-öncesi deneyimsel bir boyut olan ve deneyime içsel olan *benlik* kavramını sunduktan sonra, bunun deneyim için biçimsel bir koşul da olduğunu da görüyoruz. Deneyimi öznesiz ele alan egolojik-olmayan teorilerin mantıksızlığı gösterilmekte ve Zahavi’nin bizim her zaman düşünüm-öncesi bir ben-bilincine sahip olduğumuza dair görüşü açıklanmaktadır. Zahavi, benliğin ve bilincin *Yüksek-Dereceden Teoriler*’de olduğu gibi harici süreçlerle oluşturulamayacağını söyler. Benliğin onu nesneleştiren herhangi bir çabayla kavranamayacağı görüşüne de sahiptir. Benlik-bilinci bizim dünya deneyimimizden doğrudan bilinebilir. Zahavi’nin bilinçdışını nasıl ele aldığını ve minimal benlik anlayışının insan benlik-bilincine bir açıklama olup olamayacağını *kör bakış* (blind sight) ve bebekler üzerine empirik çalışmalar ışığında incelediğim.

Benlik-bilincinin minimal benlik-bilinci üzerinden açıklanamayacağını düşünüyorum ve kişiden farklı bir şey olan bir benliği yaratmada nesneleştirmenin etkisini vurguluyorum. Zihinsellik bu tarz bir nesneleştirmeye ulaşmakta ve benlik-bilincine sahip bir benlik yaratmakta önemlidir. Lewis’in *benlik makinesi* ve *Ben* arasında yaptığı ayrım sunulacak ve minimal benlik algısının tam bir benlik-bilincinin başlangıcı olmadığı gösterilecek. İlerki çalışmalar için sorular sunulacak.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Self-consciousness is a complex phenomenon, constituted by two semantically ambiguous and ontologically difficult-to-grasp notions, which have different aspects and coming in degrees such that we have many supposed explanations which deal with different notions of self and conscious experience and which reach conclusions according to their notions. Different disciplines not only give self and consciousness different meanings, but also produce drastically different theories both about the physical correlates of the notions, and about the nature, function and the role of self-consciousness. Although self-consciousness, self and consciousness are highly debated notions between and within disciplines, normal human beings (at least in western culture) seem to have no problem in understanding and everyday usage. In common sense these notions are rarely questioned, up until to the point at which the problems, as constructed in philosophy, need to be confronted, such that we get surprised by the mystery we have ourselves created. That does not mean that there is no problem of self¹ or consciousness, where we can see it through the popularity of these notions in our daily life, in addition to popularity existing in philosophy throughout its history, through the selling rates of books concerning the nature of self and consciousness. While the works on self is attractive about digging the mysteries of the nature of ourselves, the studies on consciousness seem to dig the mystery of

¹ Olson claims that there is no problem of self, but only other problems which can be understood by an investigation of these notions in themselves. Olson, Eric T. "There Is No Problem of the Self", *Models of the Self*. Edited by Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear" (Charlottesville, VA: Imprint, 1999)

our subjectivity, often related with the power of consciousness and its relation with the universe.

Looking to the semantical correspondence of our usage of these notions, we uncontroversially use the notions I, me, my, your, herself, mine, aware, conscious; although we rarely use self-consciousness. The semantical construction of these notions is not always the same among languages. To give just an example, there is no special noun for self-consciousness in Turkish, although there are different nouns for self (*benlik*) and consciousness (*bilinç*). In French, self-consciousness is used in the form of “consciousness of self” (*conscience de soi*), a usage Sartre doesn’t like as it implies a special relation between self and consciousness.² Self is also used in two different ways in Turkish, *benlik* and *kendi*, where the former corresponds to I-ness, and the latter as emphasizes the reflective property, which can be used with many verbs or nouns, without implying the existence of a notion of Self as in human beings, which is the same in English.

My aim is not to make inferences from linguistic usage to reach philosophical conclusions, but these differences of usages can be used to show two important things about the nature of self-consciousness: Firstly, it might be the case that we do not need a notion of self-consciousness, independently of Self and consciousness, or other terms like self-awareness might be more practical, which might cause theoretical happiness.³ Secondly, it reveals two different, although not mutually exclusive, properties of self-consciousness. Firstly, self-consciousness involves the notion of Self as a separate entity, at least as a theoretically independent and founded

² Self-consciousness has a reflexive nature, which is established with the usage of self in English. But if you use it in way it is used in French, it means consciousness of self, which gives rather the idea that self-consciousness is only conscious of self, which might mean consciousness of the entity Self.

notion. Secondly, self-consciousness involves “self” as reflexive, which is a combining form and cannot be used in itself, attaching the reflexive property to the word it is used with, so that self-consciousness in this sense means consciousness with a specific relation. Of course the latter usage might be included in the notion of Self⁴, but this needs discussion, if the Self is also a Self having a reflective relation to itself or not, in the former case staying closer to self-consciousness. This shows that self-consciousness can be understood as a notion of Self or as a kind of consciousness, a distinction that is parallel to but not the same as the former distinction, again not being really independent of one other.

My main aim in this project is to strike on a path towards answering the Question “What is the nature of self-consciousness,”⁵ using the same question Strawson uses in his inquiry on Self, and I will focus mainly on Self and partly on consciousness, as candidates for explaining self-consciousness. In this way, I will look to the understanding of Self present in Zahavi and Strawson, where Zahavi explains self-consciousness through selfhood, and Strawson emphasizes Self as a mental entity, which views might be taken as a good starting point for understanding the nature of self-consciousness.

The aim is admittedly ambitious, and it will be sufficient for me to take a step in the right direction: to propose a primitive framework to structure the problem, and maybe a little more, by trying to understand how we should approach self-

³ The term is borrowed from Strawson. Galen Strawson, *Selves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 109

⁴ I will generally use “Self” by writing its first initial with capital letters, to distinguish it from “self” as a reflexive notion. I will continue with this usage also in Chapter 2, because Strawson uses it in this way with the same aim. I won’t get into such a distinction in the next chapters, as there isn’t such an usage in Zahavi, except in the cases I want to emphasize Self as an entity

⁵ Galen Strawson “The Self”, *Models of the Self*. Edited by Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear (Charlottesville, VA : Imprint Academic, 2009)

consciousness. I will necessarily exclude some important constitutive factors of self-consciousness such as social factors, language and other psychological skills developing in correlation with self-consciousness, and maybe giving rise to 'I'. However, I believe that the core of the problem lies in the relation between self, consciousness and self-consciousness.

In the remaining part of the chapter, I will talk about different usages of one of our constitutive terms, consciousness, while saving the discussion on different understandings of self for the second and third chapter as these will be more intrinsic to the discussion there. Then, I will introduce some of the terms, which are used instead of, or in close relation to, self-consciousness, and self, to better understand the phenomenological picture of self-consciousness, about which I will talk throughout the thesis. Although I don't have the aim to make categorizations of all the related notions, showing the distinctions between the notions is crucial for our study, even if the differences are of little nuances.

In the second chapter, I will present Strawson's understanding of Self, which is distinguished from sense of Self for ontological reasons. However, Strawson sees a phenomenological study of Self as prior to an ontological study, so that our phenomenological description will also determine the ontological status of Self. I will present Strawson's phenomenological method, which he calls cognitive phenomenology, taking the sense of Self not only as a sensational and emotional entity, but as a cognitive element structuring our experience.

I will then present his investigation of sense of Self, where he tries to find out the essential features of the sense of Self. First he describes the human sense of self, which is the answer to the local phenomenological question, and then he tries to reach necessary conditions for a sense of Self, by eliminating the unnecessary

features of sense of Self, which is the answer to his general phenomenological question. This method is named the Whittling Argument, and he reaches the conclusion that the Self is essentially a single mental entity, which is a thing different from the whole human being. I will present his views to show why he doesn't include agency, personality and diachronical singularity as the essential features of human sense of Self, while making some comments on his arguments. Lastly, I will present the resulting Pearl View, according to which we are like pearls on a string coming one after another and living in the present time, and transferring all of its Self to the next pearl so that no change is felt by the last pearl, although it exists in the present moment. This is the result of not taking diachronical singularity as an essential feature of the sense of Self, which presents an interesting picture of our presence in the world, and it should be understood through the view that we are mainly things, to which one might probably add the feature conscious.

In the third chapter, we will look to phenomenologists, instead of an analytic philosopher doing phenomenology (in his terms), and I present and analyze Zahavi's notion of selfhood, which is very fundamental to construct a theory of self-consciousness. I will show Zahavi's selfhood as an intrinsic element to experience, and it makes it possible to know that I am having my experiences, enabling me to be pre-reflective self-conscious. Non-egological⁶ views will be presented and Zahavi's argument that anonymous experiences are implausible and experiences are always for someone will be presented. Seemingly non-egological views in Sartre and Husserl will also be presented, which Zahavi tries to interpret as egological theories, as having a different concept of self. This is important because Zahavi believes that there is no real egological view in phenomenology. Then, the second feature of

selfhood will be presented, that it is the formal condition of experience, as a replacement for Kant's self as a pure identity pole. Showing the self also from this perspective is important, because otherwise one might argue that self is only present with the given experience and one can say that with the every given experience a new self occurs, which is blocked by showing that the self is an act-transcendent entity, not in the sense of being distinct from experiences, but by making them possible.

In the fourth chapter, I will talk about self-consciousness in phenomenology, which is actually not a distinct discussion in itself, but dependent on self. Self-consciousness will be presented as the self-manifestation of the pre-reflective self, which is self-conscious before any reflection and is the very reason so that we self can reflect on itself. The character of the pre-reflective self will be shown: that it is a subject which cannot be taken as an object, and because it is an experiential dimension, it is distorted with reflection, so that it is not possible for one to be self-conscious through an act of reflection or introspection. Then we will look to the attempts to construct a method with which we can conceive the pre-reflective self with different kinds of reflection, or through attention or reconstruction. Zahavi will say that none of these works, if one takes the self as an object, if one tries to reflect on oneself or try to construct it through conceptual tools, which distort its nature. It will be concluded that self can be conceived only through living it, and this means only pre-reflectively, which is the reason that everyone stands in a special relation to himself and to his experiences. The features of self-consciousness in the phenomenological picture will be better understood in a discussion in which I have opposed it to Higher Order Theories, especially Rosenthal's Higher Order Thought

⁶ The view that the experiences are not for subjects.

Theory, which explains consciousness and self-consciousness in terms of state consciousness through an act of reflection which happens between two unconscious mental states. We will see why for Zahavi consciousness cannot be understood through reflection and why consciousness (and self-consciousness, which are not really different in Zahavi) cannot be given to a mental state from outside, which is against the idea that it is intrinsic to experience. Lastly, I will look to the Self-Representational Theories, if the phenomenological account can be presented through a Self-Representational Theory, which explains self-consciousness through a reflection-like act one mental state has toward itself. Zahavi will show that a Self-Representational view is not able to account for self-consciousness, insofar as it accounts for it through reflection. It should not be thought that consciousness is a property, which can be given to an experience, as if an experience without consciousness is possible, where being conscious also enables one to be self-conscious.

In the fifth chapter, I will get into a critique of the phenomenological account as by Zahavi, where I will mainly examine three issues. Firstly, I will discuss if we can really understand self-consciousness through the experiential pre-reflective self, by also giving a place to studies by Rochat done on infants, presenting the view that infants have a sense of Self much more developed than we have thought so far, which might be taken as a support for Zahavi's view of experiential self-consciousness. Secondly, unconsciousness will be presented as a problem for the phenomenological account, as it doesn't really explain consciousness and it seems that the phenomenological account takes consciousness for granted. Blind sight studies will also be showed as a counter example to Zahavi. In relation to this criticism, we will thirdly ask if phenomenological account is an explanation at all.

Zahavi will answer the second and third questions by saying that phenomenological account is not explanatory in the sense of explaining the transition from unconsciousness to consciousness, but rather it has the claim that whenever there is conscious experience, it is intrinsic to experience, and that it has a subject, which pre-reflectively self-conscious. He will show that his account can better describe the phenomenon of consciousness also in terms of being compatible with scientific findings, whereas Zahavi is not denying unconsciousness, but just criticizes a special understanding of the unconscious. About the critique of the phenomenological account, we will question if the sense of Self and self-consciousness in infants can be really taken as self-consciousness and we will question if Zahavi's self is really what we take as self and his self-consciousness what we take as self-consciousness. One might really not be opposing Zahavi but just disagree with him about what to understand from these notions. I will conclude that chapter by showing that there is too much emphasis on self as an experiential dimension of self in Zahavi, while an objectified self and explicit self-consciousness might be taken as human self-consciousness.

In the last chapter, I will reconstruct the problem of self-consciousness by dividing it into four problems and showing the way to go through these questions. I will emphasize what Strawson says that we are really having a sense of Self as distinct from the person who we are, and I will present Lewis' distinction between machinery of self and Me, where we might not see ourselves as the minimal Self as in Zahavi, which might be related with Lewis' machinery of self. I will say that we need to care for the development of self-consciousness, because determining the necessary conditions for development self-consciousness and determining the essential elements of the already developed self-consciousness might differ. In this

sense mentality might characterize our sense of Self but not be taken as the developmental cause, although it has an important effect on the constitution of a sense of Self which is detached from the body and objectified enabling oneself to see oneself as an object in the world through a objective point of view. This might be taken as a cause of self-consciousness, which takes a developed sense of Self as the cause of self-consciousness, which might also be taken as a way to understand self-consciousness, not as a reflexivity, but as a self-manifestation of a developed Self. Although I agree with Zahavi about self-manifestation, that the core self constitutes our sense of Self experientially, it is no so clear, a that minimal sense of self can be developmentally and descriptively essential for self-consciousness.

Different Usages of Consciousness

Kriegel says that consciousness can be used in different senses by referring to differing things. It can be applied to species, individuals and mental states; correspondingly when we say that respectively 1) Orangutans are conscious, but worms are not; 2) Ezgi is conscious while Warren is unconscious, because he is in a coma, and 3) Çağlan is having a conscious thought about the philosophical problem of self-consciousness, while he has an auditory sensation of the workers outside. Kriegel calls these three different senses species consciousness, creature consciousness and state consciousness.⁷ One can analyze one type of consciousness with the help of another one, so that we can decide if a species is conscious by looking to a member of it, and we can decide if a creature is conscious by

⁷ Uriah Kriegel, "Philosophical Theories of Consciousness: Contemporary Western Perspectives", *The Cambridge Handbook of Consciousness* Edited by Philip David Zelazo et al. (Avenue of the Americas, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 35

questioning if it has conscious mental states. It might be claimed that state consciousness is the fundamental form of consciousness,⁸ but it is also maybe the most debatable. In addition to the Freudian unconscious, in which we have unconscious desires and beliefs, it is also open to debate if one can call a perception conscious, of which one is not explicitly conscious but which affects the behavior of the organism in a way showing the creature has knowledge of it.⁹ Ned Block's concept of consciousness as *access consciousness* is relevant in this sense, that a state's being conscious is determined by "its availability for use and guidance by the organism."¹⁰ This is actually an explanation of consciousness, rather than pointing to a different usage, but is still useful to show that consciousness can be understood from different aspects. In addition to such debates in understanding state consciousness, we can also have tacit beliefs, which we entertain only when the time comes. They can be taken as conscious or unconscious beliefs, which Kriegel calls *availability consciousness*¹¹ similar to Block's access consciousness.

Rosenthal distinguishes mainly between *creature consciousness* and *state consciousness*, by merging the first two categories in Kriegel. He has another distinction: "The property of a state's being conscious is different from that of a creature's being conscious".¹² That does not mean that these are not dependent and one can imply another, but we need to come up with different explanations, which is

⁸ Kriegel, *Philosophical*, p. 36

⁹ For example blind sight and split-brain patients

¹⁰ Van Gulick, Robert. "Consciousness", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Edward N. Zalta. Available [online]: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/consciousness/>> [20 September 2011]

¹¹ Kriegel, *Philosophical*, p.36

theoretically important for me. We are conscious of mental states, whereas mental states become conscious through being reflected upon from a higher-order mental state. Not going into his theory of Higher-Order Thought at this point, it is enough for us to present two further usages of consciousness, putting creature consciousness to one side, namely *transitive* and *intransitive* consciousness; The former usage is at work when we speak of our being conscious of something, whereas mental states of which we are conscious, are conscious in the intransitive sense of the notion. Whereas in the former there is an object of consciousness, there is no object of consciousness in intransitive consciousness. And the things become more complex if we add creature consciousness to the schema, so that the subject x becomes conscious of a state y or a second-order state might make the first-order state conscious. It is important to note that while we become conscious by being conscious of an object, the higher-order state does not become conscious by making the first-order state conscious. Gennaro points to the same distinction by presenting the term in three ways as he abstract noun consciousness, the one-place predicate "...is conscious" and the two-place predicate "...is conscious of..."¹³ For Rosenthal, state consciousness is the real problematic issue, that which is the property making a mental state conscious.

Consciousness is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon. The range of conscious creatures is wide; it is hard to state the limits, but there is the natural tendency to take the creatures who are able to sense as conscious, and the more there is *sensibility* the more conscious is the creature seen. Leaving aside other creatures, in the human

¹² David M. Rosenthal, "A Theory of Consciousness" in *The Nature of Consciousness*. Edited by Ned Block, Owen Flanagan and Güven Güzeldere, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 730

case, we can take it as the position of being awake (note that this is far superior to being sensible) , in contrast to dreamless sleeping. According to Armstrong “if there is mental activity occurring in the mind, then that mind is not totally unconscious.”¹⁴ This is the first stage and is called *minimal consciousness* in his hierarchy of consciousness, contrasted to total unconsciousness. Rosenthal finds this kind of consciousness not mysterious at all, because we “all know (it) as being awake and sentient, so that there is no mystery about it at all.”¹⁵ Armstrong’s second category is *perceptual consciousness*, that whenever we are perceiving, we are conscious in a degree, while it is not the case the other way around. The third and the highest category is *introspective consciousness*, which is “perception-like awareness of current states and activities of our own mind.”¹⁶ It “gives rise to the notion of self”¹⁷ and is “nearly essential for event-memory...memory of the past as past”.¹⁸ The long-distance truck driver who is driving his truck while consciously thinking of something else is having perceptual consciousness but not introspective consciousness in this sense.¹⁹ Such a categorization is interesting as Armstrong relates introspective consciousness with self and defines minimal consciousness as the negation of total unconsciousness. It should be noted that actually Armstrong does not see consciousness as equal to mentality, which view he attaches to

¹³ Rocco J. Gennaro, *Consciousness and Self-Consciousness*. (Philadelphia, PA, USA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1996), p. 3

¹⁴ David Armstrong, “What is Consciousness”, *The Nature of Consciousness*. Edited by Ned Block, Owen Flanagan and Güven Güzeldere. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997), pp. 721-728

¹⁵ Rosenthal, *Theory*, p. 730

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 724

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 724

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 728

Descartes, and rather he takes consciousness as the cream of mentality.²⁰ Rosenthal would agree with Armstrong by opposing Descartes' view of equating consciousness and mentality, because such a characterization prevents informative explanation. By taking consciousness as a primitive, intrinsic and unanalyzable property, it also creates a mystery. This point will be relevant for Zahavi, as Rosenthal accuses him of presenting views lacking explanatory power, as Zahavi takes consciousness and selfhood as intrinsic to experience²¹.

Having gone through some main major terminological distinctions about consciousness, I will also point out an important feature of consciousness, which constitutes the basis of the hottest debates and which is most relevant for us:

phenomenal consciousness. Phenomenal consciousness is not the same as qualitative consciousness, so that it is not to be explained through showing different qualities involved in conscious experience, like auditory or visual sensation, emotion etc. Phenomenal consciousness is “applied to the overall structure of experience and involves far more than sensory qualia. The phenomenal structure of consciousness also encompasses much of the spatial, temporal and conceptual organization of our experience of the world and of ourselves as agents in it.”²² It includes more than sense data and there is a subjectivity in a phenomenal conscious experience: “Every phenomenally conscious state, be it a perception, an emotion, a recollection, an abstract belief, and so forth, has a certain subjective character, a certain phenomenal quality, corresponding to what it is like to live through or undergo that state. This is

¹⁹ Rosenthal, Theory, p. 728

²⁰ Ibid, p. 721

²¹ Ibid, p. 736

²² Van Gulick, Consciousness, section 2.2

what makes the mental state in question phenomenally conscious.”²³ This subjectivity is not one among other qualities, but it makes a phenomenal conscious state specific to the person undergoing the experience, special to him, given only to him, the full essence of which cannot be understood objectively or intersubjectively; “...fully comprehending them requires adopting a certain point of view”²⁴. For this reason, phenomenal consciousness is seen as nearly as identical to experience. “P-consciousness is experience. P-conscious properties are experiential ones. P-conscious states are experiential, that is, a state is P-conscious if it has experiential properties. The totalities of the experiential properties of a state are “what-it-is-like” to have it.”²⁵ So, we see that self is closely related with phenomenal consciousness and it is important to understand the relation of self to phenomenal consciousness. It is a different approach if we take a qualitative property among others, a different view in distinction to phenomenal consciousness.

Phenomenal consciousness is distinguished from self-consciousness sometimes, by taking the latter as the “organism’s capacity for second-order characterization”²⁶, which is closely related with the theory of mind, if one can be self-conscious in this way without being able to apply a theory of mind or not. We

²³ Evan Thompson and Dan Zahavi, “Philosophical Issues: Phenomenology”, *The Cambridge Handbook of Consciousness*. Edited by Philip David Zelazo et al. (Avenue of the Americas, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 7

²⁴ Michael Tye, “Philosophical Problems of Consciousness”, *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*. Edited by Max Velmans and Susan Schneider. (Garsington Road, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 26

²⁵ Güven Güzeldere, *The Many Faces of Consciousness: A Field Guide in The Nature of Consciousness*, *The Nature of Consciousness*. Edited by Ned Block, Owen Flanagan and Güven Güzeldere, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997),

²⁶ Colian Allen and Mark Bekoff, “Animal Consciousness”, *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*. Edited by Max Velmans and Susan Schneider. (Garsington Road, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 56

will not make such a presupposition and look for a minimal self-consciousness, by considering the possibility that being phenomenally conscious might meet the criteria to be counted as self-conscious.

I will accept the distinction between state consciousness and creature consciousness, instead of the characterization in Kriegel. His categorization might help in investigating consciousness (and self-consciousness and self) empirically, but in that that case we might need a broader categorization. We might investigate creature consciousness 1) by comparing different species and determining species consciousness (and making a hierarchy of consciousness starting from non-conscious to fully self-conscious - parallel to a phylogenetic study) through 1a) looking to the similarly developed members among different species and through 1b) looking to the best members of species; 2) by comparing differently developed members in the same species - looking to development of self-consciousness from infancy to adulthood (an ontogenetic study); and 3) by looking to the self-consciousness in individuals with psychological disorders. We can examine self-consciousness 1) by looking to the mental states of a healthy self-conscious adult, to discriminate between conscious and unconscious states, and to discriminate between self-conscious modes and the modes where the patient is not showing a sense of self, if there is such a case; 2) by looking to mental states in individuals with psychological disorders, supposedly taken to destroy self-consciousness and sense of self, to search for what is left in them, as having a conscious mental state, as having a kind of self-consciousness and sense of self, so that one might distinguish different degrees of self-consciousness; 3) by looking to mental states in supposedly not self-conscious organism, an aim parallel to that in 2. Of course there is still the question if state consciousness and creature consciousness should be treated differently, but there is

the obvious reason to differentiate them, that there are self-conscious organisms which are seemingly having some kind of unconscious experiences.

On Related Notions

Self-knowledge

I have the tendency not to take self-consciousness essentially as a kind of self-knowledge. As Zahavi says, being in an intimate relation with oneself does not guarantee superior knowledge of oneself in comparison to others or objective methods; our self-knowledge might be even inferior. Thus, we will not take these issues as highly correlative.

Self-awareness

I see self-consciousness more as a type of consciousness, which is a kind of subjective mode of being, a way to perceive the world, whereas I do find that kind of meaning in self-awareness. Thus, when talking about our general being in the world as self-conscious beings, I find it more proper to use the term self-consciousness and not use self-awareness in any sense; but in other parts of the thesis, I will take self-awareness and self-consciousness as equal and use them interchangeably, because it is used in such a way by their writers, and I will leave their usage untouched. Especially in discussions about animals, their authors prefer the term self-awareness.

Self-recognition

Self-recognition is about the specific time when one recognizes oneself, the “Aha! It’s Me!” kind of feeling one get when one realizes that a representation, image, sound belongs to one or is identical to one.

Selfhood

Selfhood is the term used by Zahavi, instead of self or sense of Self, which are not different for him. It has a close relationship with ipseity, subjectivity and first-person perspective. The reason for this usage will be understood in Chapter 3

Ipeity

Ipeity is a term, which Zahavi borrows from Sartre. It means for-me-ness or mineness. With ipseity you know that an experience belongs to you; it is yours, it is for you.

First-person Perspective

The special perspective through which one looks to the world. Closely related to consciousness, as the world appears to you through your first-person perspective. It also implies subjectivity, because as you have first-person perspective, your experience is subjective.

Subjectivity

Your experience is subjective, in the sense that it is special to you. The idea is that it has a subjective phenomenal character that makes it your experience. It might be used specifically to mean that an experience is such an experience to be lived by one subject, thus not being intersubjectively transferable to another subject and to be experienced in the same way.

Ego

It is a notion between self and person, and generally used to refer to the notion of self, which is created by the subject through reflection and higher-order representation. It might be taken as the conception a fully self-conscious being has of itself. It is a term the meaning of which might change to an important degree depending on the user of that term. We will see its usage in Sartre in Chapter 3.

What-it-is-likeness

It is the whole experience, the phenomenal consciousness. In the phenomenological account we will say that there is no what-it-is-like-ness in itself without a subject, but we will rather say that there is always what-it-is-like-for-me (someone). Different usages will be explained through the text, as this is an important part of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

SENSE OF SELF IN STRAWSON

Method²⁷

In this chapter, I will go through Strawson's inquiry with the aim of determining the essential conditions of sense of Self in general, starting from the sense of Self in human beings. It is a long way to come to self though, as Strawson also distinguishes between Self and sense of Self, and takes the question, if Self requires sense of Self, as an independent one. It is an ontological task to determine the ontological status of Self and I will not get into it, and also not to all these questions, but I believe it is helpful to go through Strawson's distinctions. I will start with Strawson's method and his distinction between Self and sense of Self, and afterwards I will continue with his inquiry on sense of Self.

Strawson makes a phenomenological inquiry to determine the necessary and sufficient conditions for the sense of Self, which is also the most suitable method, even if we have an ontological aim, where metaphysics is taken as "the general study of how things are or can be or must be", and phenomenology as "the study of the character of experience in all its sensory and cognitive richness".²⁸ Caring about phenomenological study is more than a preference actually, it is a necessity, as Strawson tries to equate sense of Self with Self with his Equivalence claim: (E1) If

²⁷ While talking about Strawson's views, I will write "Self" in Self-experience, sense of Self and Self with its initial letter being written as a capital letter, to emphasize it is about the specific notion of Self, as it is said in the production chapter. Other usage of "self" will be showed by writing it in small letters, which also means that self-consciousness does not necessarily mean "Self".

there is such a thing as the self, then some sense of Self is an accurate representation of something that exists, and (E2): If some sense of Self is an accurate representation of something that exists, then there is such a thing as the self. The first claim means that nothing can count as a Self, if it does not possess all the qualities determined by a sense of Self, although it may have other additional features, and its aim is to rule out metaphysical claims about selves that are not able to respect the conditions on counting as a Self as revealed by the phenomenological question. The latter claim means that nothing can fail to count as a Self, if it possesses all the properties that feature in the sense of Self as determined by a phenomenological question, although it may lack other qualities (which are postulated by a metaphysical claim in itself to count as an entity). This claim gives a sufficient condition on qualifying for the title self, determined by phenomenological investigation.²⁹ According to Strawson, two possible oppositions are blocked with the given claims: Firstly, one will not be able to answer to the question “Is there such a thing as the self as “Yes, there is (or may be), but we have (or may have) no understanding of its ultimate nature”. Secondly, one will not be able to give the answer to the same question as “Well, there is something of which the sense of the self is an accurate representation, but it does not follow that there is any such thing as the self.”³⁰ In conclusion, “there is a strong phenomenological constraint on any acceptable answer to the metaphysical question which can be expressed by saying that the factual question “Is there such a thing as

²⁸ Galen Strawson, *Selves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 1.

²⁹ Strawson, *The Self*, p. 5; Strawson, *Selves*, p. 55-57

³⁰ Strawson, *The Self*, p. 6

the mental self?” is equivalent to the question “Is any (genuine) sense of the self an accurate representation of anything that exists?”³¹

We need to look to the phenomenological investigation then. It should be noted that a phenomenological inquiry does not have to be a mere description of human self-consciousness, without having an explanatory power of the phenomenon and without the power to characterize self-consciousness or self in general. Thus, Strawson divides his phenomenological inquiry about the nature of Self into two, by asking a local and a general phenomenological question³². With the local question one can describe the human sense of the Self and with the general question investigate the minimal case of sense of Self, i.e., the minimum conditions for a sense of Self, which can be experienced by any being (beyond 1 beings), which can still be called sense of Self. It is clear, that our aim is to reach for a general sense of Self, independent of Self-experience in human beings, so that we need to answer the general phenomenological question, while our starting point is the local phenomenological question. So, Strawson starts by describing ordinary human Self-experience by presenting what are the properties defining the human sense of Self, and with the Whittling Argument, he “aims to work out the root form of Self-experience by whittling away as many of the elements of ordinary human Self-experience as possible. Given that the list of elements of ordinary human Self-experience omits nothing essential to Self-experience the only remaining question is whether it includes anything inessential.”³³ It should be noted that Strawson has the presupposition that we can generalize the sense of Self in human beings, saying that

³¹ Strawson, *The Self*, p. 5, 6 ; Strawson, *Selves*, p. 54,55

³² While the local Question is “What is the nature of the human sense of Self?”, the general phenomenological question is “What is the nature of the sense of Self?” Strawson, *The Self*, p. 6

“aspects of sense of the self that are of principal concern, when it comes to the philosophical problem of the self, are very basic. They are situated below any level of plausible cultural variation.”³⁴

Strawson uses different terms like “Self-experience” and “Possession of Self”, in place of sense of Self, which do not have any difference in meaning, but seeing all these terms together at this point might give the reader a better understanding of what Strawson has in mind, while talking about sense of Self³⁵, that he understands sense of Self as essentially cognitive, rather than affective:

It is the cognitive phenomenology of the sense of the self that is fundamentally in question, i.e. the conceptual structure of the sense of the self, the structure of the sense of the self considered (as far as possible) independently of any emotional aspects that it may have. The cognitive phenomenology of the self is bound up with the affective phenomenology of the self in complicated ways, but emotional or affective aspects of the sense of the self will be of concern, only in so far as emotions shape or weight conceptions.³⁶

With cognitive phenomenology, Strawson emphasizes the Self as an experience determining/structuring element, saving the sense of Self from its image as the occurrent sensory experience only. According to Strawson, the phenomenological term Self-experience is likely to mislead, as many analytic philosophers take phenomenology as “restricted to the study of non-cognitive mental goings-on, as merely sensory experiences and feelings in so far as these things can be and are considered just in respect of their entirely non-cognitive felt character”. But that is not the study considered by Strawson, as we talk about a phenomenological study of

³³ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 160

³⁴ Strawson, *The Self*, p. 2

³⁵ I will use these terms interchangeably, and no difference will be meant, unless specified.

³⁶ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 36

Self-experience. Phenomenology, taken as the “general study of the character of experience or what-it-is-likeness, is as much cognitive as it is sensory”,³⁷ and it is also not restricted to the occurrent mental goings-on. Rather it “is also, and crucially, concerned with elements like Self, elements that structure and are exemplarily revealed in the occurrent experiential phenomena they inform but can be considered independently of any particular phenomenological occurrences.”³⁸ So, cognitive phenomenology is after the content of this element Self, and this is meant when we talk about sense of Self, not restricted to the sensory or emotional sense as felt at that moment. It is a term for a certain kind of essentially cognitively informed experience; “experience informed by the notion-concept, conception, idea, posit, mental element cognitively loaded feeling-Self”.³⁹

So far for the methodological details. We will now look to Strawson’s sense of Self and see how he phenomenologically inquires into this element Self, that is “active in Self-experience and that gives it its distinctive character.”⁴⁰

Sense of Self

Strawson proposes eight properties for a human sense of self and tries to find which are the essential conditions for a genuine sense of self : It is a sense of (1) a thing, (2) a mental thing, (3) a single thing that is single both synchronically considered and (4) diachronically considered, (5) ontically distinct from all other things, (6) a subject of experience, a conscious feeler and thinker, (7) an agent, and (8) a thing that has a

³⁷ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 38

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 106

³⁹ *Ibid*

certain character or personality.⁴¹ He thinks starting with a loose list is suitable for his purposes, to provide a framework to show the structure of the problem, although with the possibility of not being able to end up with necessary and sufficient conditions. He starts his inquiry by saying that everything in the list except the sixth property can be opposed and ends up with the conclusion that any genuine sense of self must involve a conception of Self as a (3) synchronously single and (2) mental (1) thing, that is (5) distinct from all other things and (6) a subject of experience, which means an exclusion of the properties diachronic singleness, agency and personality (4,7 and 8). As Strawson takes the sixth property as a conscious subject, he prefers to include this property only as subject in his resulting list, because he thinks that the decision should be after investigating the relationship between self and self-consciousness.

These are the conditions for a general sense of Self, which means that they are to meant to be applied to beings beyond human beings, as an answer to the general phenomenological question. The left out properties might be absent in certain human cases,⁴² while generally being present⁴³ in the human sense of Self, but they might not be present in a genuine sense of Self, so that they are not essential for a Self-experience to occur.

I will now present his views on some of the properties presented above, namely personality, agency and diachronic and synchronic singularity. It should be noted that our main focus will be mentality, which Strawson takes as essential for a

⁴⁰ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 1

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 3

⁴² Galen Strawson, "The Self and the Sesmet", *Models of the Self*, Edited by Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear, (Charlottesville, VA : Imprint Academic, 2009), p. 492

sense of Self, so that these views should be read accordingly by the reader, while also having the general phenomenological question in mind, instead of trying prove that these notions are necessary for the constitution of the human sense of Self.

Personality

Strawson takes personality as a phenomenological fact of human Self-experience, that our self is figured as having a character of personality. We take our personalities as a matter of how we are. I also believe that Strawson rightly presents how we understand ourselves, indeed we take what-it-is-likeness as having a certain character, which constituted an experience's subjective quality of what-it-is-like-for-me. But for Strawson, a sense of Self without personality is imaginable, that

[...] one can apprehend oneself as a mental subject or mental presence - a thing of a kind that has thoughts, beliefs, preferences, and so on - without any particular awareness of oneself as having any particular personality. One can experience oneself as being in certain moods subject to certain emotions, without having any particular awareness of oneself as having personality.⁴⁴

Strawson believes that one should not confuse sense of Self with someone's sense of self, referring to something with "particular identity in the sense of a distinctive-unique-character". Rather, what he means with Self-experience is "simply having a sense of oneself as a mental subject or mental presence or mental someone, and even if this can involve having a sense of oneself as having personality",⁴⁵ but it doesn't need to involve a personality.

⁴³ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 94

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 96

⁴⁵ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 94

It seems that for Strawson, although human Self-experience necessarily turns out to be a notion involving a particular personality, we should not take Self-experience in general to include personality in general. For him, Self-experience has nothing special to do with having a sense of “who one is.”⁴⁶

Strawson tries to support his view with giving examples from human Self-experience, that we are even sometimes experiencing ourselves, however temporarily, as a “kind of bare locus of consciousness - not just as detached, neutral, and unengaged, but as void of personality, stripped of particular of character, a mere (cognitive) point of view”⁴⁷, which does not have to be a pathological situation. He gives examples from Nagel’s objective self, as “involving lack of any sense of having a particular point of view”. Strawson says that while Nagel says that “there isn’t any sense of being anything in particular, he doesn’t mean there isn’t any sense of being a locus of consciousness at all.”⁴⁸ He also considers pathological forms to support his view, that one can experience depersonalization, although one nevertheless retains his mental existence being a locus of consciousness. And although one can oppose to this that we generally view ourselves as having personalities and thus personality is constitutive and foundational for Self-experience, he cannot accept this because he cannot see why we cannot imagine a purely cognitive subject of experience.

Strawson’s points are not that powerful and it is questionable that even if we can experience a purely cognitive presence, why we should not take it as a sense of Self, which involves personality. He says that Self is the cognitive element constructing our experience, so that it seems to me that one can consider ones

⁴⁶ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 94

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 182

experience as an Self-experience with a special personality, which does not have to be involving dense emotions or sensations. As we have taken Self as a cognitive element relevant for phenomenology, we might take a cognitive presence as a presence with personality. As we can describe sense of Self as a pure cognitive element as still a sense of Self, we can also describe personality in that way, meaning that we a presence with pure cognitive point of view as personality, although minimally.

Strawson is trying to figure out the essential components of ordinary human Self-experience, and he does not take personality essential to such an experience, which is minimally a pure mental presence, and we should read Strawson in this way, in this aim to reach a minimum Self-experience.

Agency

Strawson says that agency has a secure place among our features describing ordinary human Self-experience, that we experience ourselves as agents, and he agrees with views emphasizing that we are having Self-experience through acting, and that will, volition and agency are indispensable parts of our sense of Self.

There is indeed much emphasis on this issue, that how we become Selves in a way, by acting toward the world.⁴⁹ Agency has also been taken as fundamental in infant studies, and the view is that the infant constitutes his sense of Self through learning his power by acting and influencing the world, which is the reason why they

⁴⁸ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 193

⁴⁹ See Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, "Phenomenology and Agency: Methodological and Theoretical Issues in Strawson's *The Self*", *Models of the Self*. Edited by Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear (Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic, 2009), p. 231-253

constantly interact with the things repeatedly, by throwing them, breaking them etc.⁵⁰ So the view that the agency is fundamental for Self is orthodox in philosophy, especially in phenomenology and psychology. Even in psychological cases, where the patient is not able to move, “the richness and wealth of these (experiences where they were agents) cannot be disregarded,”⁵¹ and it cannot be denied that their self is constituted through agency, and the fact that they cannot use it now does not change the case that agency was the constitutive feature of their sense of Self.

Strawson is also not really against Fichte claiming that the Self “exists by positing itself and that it is at once the agent and the product of action, the active and what the activity brings about...I am expresses an Act”.⁵² I will leave what Strawson thinks about the case in which action and thought are intentional and the debate about agency is a wide topic, but what is important for us is that Strawson points to weaker claims about the relationship between agency and Self and points again to the possibility of a sense of Self without agency. He does “not find any incoherence in the idea of a Pure Observer, in a motionless, cognitively well-equipped, highly receptive, self-conscious, rational, subtle creature that is well informed about its surroundings and has, perhaps, a full and vivid sense of itself as an observer, although it has no capacity for any sort of intentional action, or even any conception of the possibility of intentional action.”⁵³ He does not care if it is naturally possible that such kind of creature can evolve or not, but he points to the possibility that a conscious thought might exist without an experience of (intentional) agency, that we

⁵⁰ See Philippe Rochat, *The Infants World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), (kindle version), chapter 2

⁵¹ Johnstone, *Phenomenology*, p. 238

⁵² Strawson, *Selves*, p. 93

can think of such a Self-experience. We don't have to take thought as action, intentional action or action performed for a reason and we might imagine such a possibility if we can think about our presence of thoughts more carefully. He thinks that "most of our thoughts just happen and are not actions." He does not deny that human presence involves agency and it is constituted through agency, but tries to show that we generally experience ourselves like independent of our actions, as if we are different than the whole person doing the action. And this is not like we are pilots in ships controlling our bodies, "but our experience of ourselves as inner mental subjects is constantly to hand, alongside our experience of ourselves as whole human beings."⁵⁴ This is not meant to be a Cartesian dualism or an idea against the view that we are embodied and embedded beings, but Strawson just shows that Self-experience is essentially a pure cognitive presence, which does not have to involve agency as it does not have to involve personality.

Strawson's main phenomenological emphasis is to show that agency is not that essential on spontaneity of actions and on our sense as if I (as a whole) am acting in such a way that I (as inner mental activity) am not really controlling my actions (as the actions of the whole person). Not in the way that I am not deciding them, but in the way that I am separated from this process of agency. He uses examples of Libet's studies showing that we are conscious of our actions after we start the action process in support for this feeling. He does not try to show this to conclude that we are not agents of our actions, but to say that

The experience one has of being the author or origin of one's decision or choice is mistaken only in so far as it may not be oneself considered narrowly as the conscious I present in the moment of the conscious experience of making the choice or decision that actually makes the

⁵³ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 197

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 189

choice or decision. The choice or decision is...no less one's own for occurring outside consciousness (it is certainly no one else's). It flows from oneself, from one's character and outlook, from what one is, mentally.⁵⁵

If one takes the presence of Self as existing in a short present time, where I am conscious, I am in that sense not the agent but the mental inner conscious presence, which constitutes the sense of Self⁵⁶, which is again an emphasis on the Self-experience as a isolated mental entity mainly and showing that it is possible to imagine.

Synchronic and Diachronic Singularity

Strawson maintains that the human (mental) self exists synchronically as a single thing at a given time, where he takes synchronically as “an experientially unitary or unbroken or hiatus-free period of thought or experience”, a time period where no gap breaks the conscious experience of the self, whereas this is not necessarily true for diachronic singularity, that I need not be a diachronically single thing through time. And there is the third claim, that singularity of oneself is essentially grounded in one's mental nature alone.⁵⁷

For Strawson, singularity means indivisible singularity, in contrast to a group or unity. It is single not in the sense that a group of things are single, but in the sense that one cannot be divided into two, as Strawson tries to show that one is not a sense

⁵⁵ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 196

⁵⁶ Lewis' view that my bodily self realizes the action while I am not playing a role in making the action, is similar here. See ch. 4 for discussion of Lewis distinction between bodily self and (the idea of) Me. See Michael Lewis, “Myself and me”, *Self-awareness in Animals and Infants: Developmental Perspectives*. Edited by Sue Taylor Parker, Robert W. Mitchell and Maria L. Boccia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 20-35

⁵⁷ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 8

of Self single in a principle of unity. According to the principle of unity, an atom counts as a single thing relative to one principle of unity, and it counts as many things relative to other principles of unity - those that discern subatomic particles.

This is not the case for singularity of Self since it cannot be seen as relative.

Presupposing that mental self has non-mental being as well as mental being, "the fact remains that it is thought of as having singleness in its mental being in a way that is independent of any singleness that it may have in its non-mental being. In this sense it is taken to be single just as something mental."⁵⁸

Strawson presents his views through some thought experiments. Firstly, supposing that someone fully convinces me that my current mental life with all its characteristics, which all constitute my current sense of a single self, depends on the activity of three spatially separated brains in three different bodies, I would not also be convinced that I am three persons. This knowledge would not annihilate my normal sense of mental singleness, but I would be rather surprised to have three brains - "I, the single thing or person that I am."⁵⁹ It might be replied that in such an experience, I have the experience of a single body, which is the real cause of my mental singleness, while the thought experiment should be taken as including a three-bodies experiences. Strawson says against this claim that it doesn't matter, and even in such a case one we would have a single mental self while receiving information from three bodies.

Turning to diachronic singularity, supposing that someone convinces me that my diachronic singularity depends for its existence on the successive existence of a series of numerically distinct brains or neuronal entities, this would not also

⁵⁸ Strawson, *The Self*, p. 9

⁵⁹ Kant in Strawson, *The Self*, p. 10

undermine my sense of Self as diachronically singular. Strawson influenced by Kant to construct his thought experiments:

An elastic ball which strikes another similar ball in a straight line communicates to the latter its entire motion, and therefore its entire state. If, in analogy with such bodies, we postulate substances such that the one communicates representations to the other together with consciousness of them, we can conceive a whole series of substances of which the first transmits its state to the second, the second its own state with that of the preceding substance to the third, and (so on). The last substance would then be conscious of all the states previously changed substances as being its own states, because they would have been transferred to it together with consciousness of them.⁶⁰

Strawson wants to show with Kant that our experience of the diachronic singleness of the mental self (which is a phenomenological fact) does not guarantee that I am (or the mental self is) in fact a diachronically single substance. He further adds that even if I believed that the existence of my mental self did not involve the existence of a diachronically single substance, this would not undermine my experience of the synchronical singularity of my mental self. Thus, multiplicity of non-mental being cannot determine my mental singleness, as it is seen both in the diachronically and synchronical examples, which is Strawson's third claim: "...singularity of the mental self is conceived of as being essentially grounded in its mental nature alone."⁶¹

If we try to imagine changes from the other side, by preserving non-mental singularity and taking the mental things as a variable, the result is different, according to Strawson. If we imagine of self-conscious I-thoughts, occurring in the same brain one at a time, which do not have any awareness of the previous I-thought, and where no thought stands in a relation to another, we cannot say that there is a single thinker. As non-mental multiplicity could not overrule mental singularity in

⁶⁰ Kant in Strawson, *the Self* p. 11

⁶¹ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 11

previous examples, existence of non-mental singularity cannot overrule mental multiplicity here.

Strawson presents a third thought example: If we think of a single brain which is the site of three experiential phenomena occurring at the same time (just as in the case where there were three brained bodies with a single mental individual), can we say that there is one single mental subject? Strawson says that it is clearly not the case, but there is a multiplicity of Selves, in spite of non-mental singleness. So, should we say that there are multiple subjects?

Strawson says that the natural response is saying that this is indeed the case, although it is very difficult to claim in the human case, because reaching conclusions about the number of subjects through multiplicity in contents is not proper; and although it seems that human beings can only genuinely entertain one conscious thought at a time, it is not an a priori truth about conscious thinking in general. And if we reflect, we cannot really observe any point in our mental life, which shows such unconnectedness between experiences, showing that I am not diachronically single.

This is the case for a human sense of Self, which should not be generalized as an essential fact about sense of Self in general. Strawson has already showed that diachronical singularity is not a necessity, but only a phenomenological truth about the human sense of Self, so that we cannot supply a secure point for diachronically singularity, while we can take synchronical singularity as a secure element essential for a sense of Self. We will first talk about synchronical singularity and then about diachronically singularity.

Strawson says that we might have multiple or fragmentary experiences but this cannot affect our conception of ourselves as synchronically single. As any

synchronically multiple subject at the present moment will have to be an episode of explicitly self-conscious thought, and as there is a crucial (or trivial?) respect in which no such episode could be experience of the mental self as synchronically multiple, “whenever there is a self-conscious thought, mental self must be experienced as single, for the space of that thought.”⁶² It is against the nature of a mental sense of Self to have multiple perspectives: “any explicitly self-conscious experience has to present as an experience from one single point of view.”⁶³ Thus, we cannot conceive of multiplicity of self from within. If there are experiences showing the multiplicity of subjects, then either there are multiple selves and one mental self is among these different selves, or the mental Self is so complex, but their experiences do not point to different selves.

Strawson has showed through thought experiments, that although we seem to feel ourselves as diachronically singular, if would make a mental non-mental distinction, our phenomenological sense of continuity would not guarantee that we were diachronically single in terms of non-mental substance. Strawson also thinks that diachronical singleness is not a necessary condition for a sense of Self. Actually he even thinks that it is not the case that the way we have a sense of Self that is really diachronically singular. Strawson describes his trains of thought as “constantly broken by detours - byblows - fissures -white noise”⁶⁴ ; and even when there is a stable succession of content, “reflection reveals gaps and fading, disappearances and recommencements”.⁶⁵ Thus, he finds his fundamental experience of consciousness as

⁶² Strawson, *Selves*, p. 12

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 13

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 18

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 17

“one of repeated returns into consciousness from a state of complete, if momentary, unconsciousness”⁶⁶ so that he describes his case as “consciousness is continually restarting.”⁶⁷ There are not only distortions of observation and artifacts of reflection, but “awareness of radical disjunction sometimes surfaces spontaneously and unlooked for.”⁶⁸ He says that our sense of Self as continuous entity lacks some direct phenomenological warrant in the moment-to-moment nature of our thought processes. Our continuity is always attained through other sources, through “massive constancies and developmental coherencies of content”⁶⁹ connecting experiences through time and through short time memory, “across all the jumps and breaks of flow.”⁷⁰ One can see through reflection that the continuity and coherencies are not characteristics of one’s consciousness and the mental self is not something uninterrupted and continuous throughout the time.

Strawson’s denial of diachronic singularity should be understood in the sentence that “constancies and steadiness of development in the contents of one’s consciousness may seem like fundamental characteristics of the operation of one’s consciousness, although they are not.”⁷¹ As Strawson takes the sense of Self as the inner mental, which is conscious (and I believe there is a kind of equalization between his sense of Self and conscious thinking), he excludes any exterior thing in this sense as not being an operation of Self. The memories and the continuous awareness of the body are not to be taken as diachronical singularity. If we also take the

⁶⁶ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 19

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 19

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 19

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 19

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.19

thought experiments into account, that mental is taken as the only source of guarantee for both synchronical and diachronical singularity, this is not surpassing. But it leads us to a picture where we need to take the Now-existing (which he defines as hiatus-free period, a time period without interruption) conscious self, as the sense of Self, so that diachronical singularity is naturally excluded from our list for necessary conditions for sense of Self, while synchronical singularity necessarily has taken itself a secure place. Thus, Strawson's insistence of taking mentality as its foundation leads to these conclusions.

Pearl View

After Strawson gives the necessity of synchronical singularity while dismissing diachronical singularity, and taking personality and agency as not crucial for a sense of self, he presents his *Pearl* view, taking his name from pearl-like distinct selves existing one after another on a string.⁷² Each Self is taken as an individual thing, having distinct existence, existing for considerably different lengths of time, as long as they are conscious. Theoretically, a conscious being can exist for the whole of its existence, as far as it is conscious, but as "the basic form of our consciousness is that of gappy series of eruptions of consciousness from a substrate of apparent non-consciousness"⁷³, this is not possible for us. Strawson tries to account for a mental self, which is existing in so far as there is a moment of uninterrupted consciousness, but at the same being as real as any physical thing. Its thingness, taken together with its distinctness, accounts mainly for a secure ontological place in a materialistic

⁷¹ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 19

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 20

framework, but Strawson's picture is important for us mostly in his claim, that the Self is not taken as equal to the "whole human" being or person. "...I experience myself to be when I'm apprehending myself specifically as a self, i.e. as a subject of experience that isn't the same thing as the whole human being that I am, something whose persistence conditions or identity conditions are not necessarily the same as the whole person."⁷⁴

This is the main definition of sense of Self, a subject of experience that is not the same thing as a human being considered as a whole, and I believe that this was also the premise Strawson had in mind, before making this inquiry. We can see that in his attempts to eliminate other properties, like personality, agency and diachronically singularity. He had eliminated personality, by saying that pure cognitive presence without character is possible, while he eliminated agency, by showing the cases where we might feel separated from our actions and decisions, as if we were not deciding the act and perform this act by ourself. But if you take yourself from the starting point as the mental self, the conscious I, which is existing right now with this thought, then it is impossible for you to decide to act, because the starting point of the action are not explicitly conscious, you would necessarily be late to act. It would be impossible for you to exist chronically, because conscious thought goes off and comes again.

I am not so sure if the following is a deficit for Strawson's theory, because he might use that as a support for his theory. But why are we taking the self as mainly the inner mental state that is conscious? It is worth noting that he tries to account for consciousness through a different account and he did not also include a proof for the

⁷³ Strawson, Selves, p.21

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 77

relation between self and consciousness, even no relationship between explicit consciousness (in the sense of being self-consciousness) and lower forms of consciousness. He argues the relationship between self-consciousness and self through a whole argument in his book *Selves*, and he asks the questions if self-consciousness is necessary for sense of Self and if sense of Self is necessary for Self-consciousness, but it seems that he is committed to the idea of taking sense of Self as the conscious thought in the first place, at least sometimes. But it is a minor criticism and we should be fair to him and say that it is not always presupposed, and what is really presupposed is a “mental subject as distinct from the whole human being”, and he justifies the mentality of the Self in many places, so that we should take his sense of Self essentially as such, but without forgetting its close relationship to conscious thought.

Strawson is influenced from Kant’s view about motion, but he also does not have the kind of Self in Kant, which persists change and acting like an identity pole, while the experiences change. Rather, his Self is a temporal entity, open to change, and our relying on memory makes such a sense of continuity possible. If Strawson had taken the memory as part of the mind, would that change his decision memory isn’t a part of his Self (and that it is not essential for Self)? Maybe, if he would take himself not so detached, he would not reach to such a conclusion. It seems that he makes a distinction, seemingly not between and mind, but between the internal mental subject, having (conscious) thoughts, and the whole person.

“One can be fully aware of the fact that one has long-term continuity as a living human being, without ipso facto having any significant sense of the mental self or subject of experience as something that has long-term continuity...having little or no interest in or commitment to the idea that the I who is not thinking has

any past or future.”⁷⁵ Is it a matter of metaphysical commitment? It seems so, it seems like a metaphysical commitment, supported by phenomenological description, so that Strawson really believes that we have a sense of Self as existing in the conscious thinking, but a commitment, which does not make a difference. It is a commitment, because Strawson says that he does not see his old self or his future self as himself, when he talks about the lecture he is going to give in two months, He feels anxiety, because it is hardwired in his body, “biologically grounded and autonomous in such a way that it persists as something immediately felt even though it is not supported by any emotionally backed sense on the part of Me.”⁷⁶ But it will not be him, he says, in two months, so that he does not take himself in two months as himself now, neither he looks to his memories happening to himself.

Does Strawson’s commitment makes a difference? Maybe morally, and I hope that he will not think in that way, but experientially there is no difference, except being a little bit detached from yourself, which will result in being a mental subject with less sense of agency and personality. Otherwise, just as saying that sense of Self is not essentially an agent does not take our power of agency, so that we do not believe in free will and that we are deciding for actions and make them happen; just as saying that personality is not an essential element for our sense of Self does not make us subjects without character; saying that sense of Self is not diachronically singular does not destroy its past and future. I think that this is again part of the main project to accomplish for a minimum notion of a sense of Self, and in this sense Strawson tries to establish a sense of Self, which can only exist now, as long as there is conscious thinking. Maybe, all of these are parts of an attempt to give

⁷⁵ Strawson, *The Self*, p. 14

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 16

the possibility of a non-human sense of Self, because if we take agency, personality and diachronic singularity (and body probably, as we take the sense of Self as mental. Maybe a body will be necessary for mentality to occur, but I think that Strawson would not see mentality dependent on a certain body), then we have the possibility to create a sense of Self, just for a period of time, on other mediums than human body. It is a speculation, but such a characterization gives rise to this.

Leaving the issues if Strawson is right about the sense of Self (as an answer to the general phenomenological problem) and if it does make a practical difference, we should keep looking to see he if he is doing a right description of the human phenomena in question. Strawson claims that his sense of Self is also essentially only synchronically single, mental and not necessarily involving agency and personality. He says, for example, that people have different degrees of memory, and while “many things can encourage or obstruct a sense of the mental self as something that has long-term diachronic continuity...neither inconsistency nor poor memory is necessary for the episodic experience of life”,⁷⁷ again emphasizing synchronical unity. He agrees with Updike, that he has in his life always the feeling that he is just beginning. Like Hume, Strawson also explains the continuity of the Self through memory.⁷⁸ But that means old memories are not given to you in the same way as the experiences are given to you now. There is indeed a experiential difference but does it mean that you don't have the sense of these feelings as yours, and the subject of these memories as you? These are all consequences of taking the Self dependent on the present time period, and taking the Self different from the whole human being.

⁷⁷ Strawson, *The Self*, p. 15

⁷⁸ Talia Mae Betcher, *Berkeley and Hume on Self-Consciousness*, Available [online]:<<http://www.calstatela.edu/faculty/tbetch/Berkeley%20and%20Hume%20on%20Self%20and%20Self-Consciousness.pdf>> [21 September 2011], p. 217

Is Strawson's theory of Pearl plausible? One cannot deny that we use memory to refer to our past self and a problem in our memory causes loss of sense of Self for a period of time; but can we interpret this kind of dependence of self on memory by claiming that the Self is not diachronically single? I believe that the case of amnesia is the best example to look to this relation, through its different forms. In *retrograde amnesia* the patient loses access to his experiences prior to the injury or the onset of a disease. This loss can amount to years, so that a fifty years old man can think of himself as twenty years old.⁷⁹ Strawson does not treat amnesia, but we might suppose that, he would take it as loss of selves present in that time period. It is actually not so hard for him to accept such a conclusion, as he takes normal experience as selves always restarting.⁸⁰ His thought is again similar to Hume, saying "it (self) keeps slipping from mere consciousness into self-consciousness and out again"⁸¹ and opposed to William James, if we attribute to him the view that thinking always continues, with his metaphor stream of consciousness.⁸² *Anterograde amnesia* can also be suitably used for Strawson in this direction, as the self exists in so far as the conscious thinking is going on, and at the point the thought is broken, the Self goes out of existence. "...the long term continuity of the self in the nature of moment-to-moment consciousness, it is derived indirectly from other sources - the massive constancies and developmental coherencies of content that often link up

⁸⁰ Strawson, *The Self*, p. 18

⁸¹ Hume in Strawson, *The Self*, p. 17

⁸² Strawson writes in another paper that William James also holds the view that there are many short-lived selves. See Galen Strawson, "The Self and the Sesmet", *Models of the Self*, Edited by Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear (Charlottesville, VA : Imprint Academic, 2009), p. 485. We can in any case say that for William James, sense of the Self is diachronically single: "even where there is a time-gap the consciousness after it feels as if it belonged together with the consciousness before it, as another part the same self". William James, *Stream of Consciousness* (Cleveland & New York, 1892) Available [online]: <<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/James/jimmy11.htm>> (21 September 2011)

experiences through time, and by courtesy of short-term memory, across all the jumps and breaks of flow.”⁸³ Strawson would say that with our ability to put ourselves in narratives, and through saving events about the world and ourselves to Long-Term Memory, we can construct a kind of singleness, which is still not a single thing, both ontologically and, also as it is sensed by ourselves if we really be careful about our experiences.

Strawson takes the experience-structuring element Self as his foundation for constructive phenomenology, but in the end we have a view, which substitutes the feeling with thought. I think that just as Strawson accuses analytic philosophers of limiting phenomenology to sense data, his phenomenology cares too much for the cognitive side, creating a sense of Self devoid of feeling, personality and agency. What we have in hand as a minimal Self has no first-person perspective but No-One’s perspective, no subjectivity in terms of feelings, emotions and mood, but a what-it-is-like-to-be a thinking mental thing.

Also, I do not see how Strawson’s idea of his experience-structuring element of Self fits in the general picture, which is not necessarily in occurrent goings to life in his theory. He mainly focuses on conscious thinking and as he does not take the old selves not as himself, we can rightly ask about his claims about cognitive phenomenology, the object of which is the Self, as the experience-structuring element which is not only present experience but it is also the object of investigation as far as it structures our experiences. We might suppose that he would take pure cognitive elements as continuous, so that even if one take oneself as existing in the present time period, he would have the previous conscious thoughts, (and probably beliefs in this way) in the same experiential givenness as it was lived in the past,

⁸³ Strawson, *The Self*, p. 17

although this is not the case for emotions, feelings and other sensory properties. I speculate that this would make a continuous sense of Self with the minimal conditions also possible to be realized, as thought carries on, and these are given to the subject in the same experiential density.

Personality is especially important in this sense, that we can take personality as this experience-structuring element. Even in the cases where Strawson says that there is lack of character, it is not so clear if a subject could ever be in such a position. As personality is a third person concept, one might say that a subject might be interpreted as having a personality, while it does experience in this way, but it should be thought more clearly, what a subject without character and without agency would be like.

As I tried to show between Strawson's thoughts, my main view is that Strawson starts with the premise that the self is a subject of experience that is "not the same thing as a human being considered as a whole", which helps him to eliminate the given properties and reach a mental self, which is a (conscious) subject, synchronically single. This is not false, as I share Strawson's general phenomenological descriptions, that I feel as if I am something different from the whole person, but especially his views about diachronically singularity is questionable, because one does not feel the same way about past experiences. One might think that one's experiences are given to oneself in a special way, which is the orthodox view in phenomenology, as we will see. So, Strawson's phenomenological description about past experiences might differ from other descriptions, and he might be looking for something that doesn't exist, if he is looking for experiential qualities with a degree of density, which is not comparable to the present experience he is living. If their phenomenal experiences were the same, the past experience would be

the present experience; or if I would be the same as the past me, that would prevent change, which is something not so present in Strawson. There is no unchanging self as a substance in Strawson, but neither a self, which undergoes change. Rather, there is a self, which is constantly restarting, and constantly coming to existence in a new form, where the change is obtained through the whole person and the interaction between the present self and the whole person. But in such a picture, the self stands as an outcome, as if we could create a Self-experience, if the necessary conditions could be realized, and maybe this is Strawson's thought.

As a last point, there is also a difference between necessary conditions for something to exist, and necessary conditions for something to be developed. Strawson finds the necessary conditions for a sense of Self to be in existence, but take away all the conditions, which might be responsible for the development of a sense of Self. Thus, the existence conditions of a self, after having developed thus far might be seen as a possible idea, but then it should be questioned if we can take such an idea as the minimal conditions for a sense of Self to occur.

I find Strawson's study on a sense of Self valuable, including his conclusions, I find a sense of Self as a mental thing different from the whole human essential for the occurrence of self-consciousness, at least correlative to the occurrence of self-consciousness. I will talk about this in the last chapter, while I will now continue with Zahavi's selfhood, or sense of Self from a purely phenomenological perspective, rather than from a phenomenological perspective of an analytic philosopher.

CHAPTER 3

SELFHOOD IN PHENOMENOLOGY

We will go through Zahavi's concept of selfhood, which is part of his general study on self, self-consciousness and experience. By presenting selfhood which is intrinsic to the experience and it's always experientially given with the experience, there would no need for any extrinsic act to account for its presence. At the same time, through presenting it as a formal condition for experience as a replacement of the Kantian pure identity pole, he aims to account for the independency of self from occurrent experience, so that its presence is not determined by the actual presence of experience. Also, taking selfhood as pre-reflective consciousness and emphasizing how it manifests itself, an account of self-consciousness without reflection is aimed at.

Through his double-sided treatment of self, taking it both as selfhood, the intrinsic property of our experience, and as the formal condition, being a replacement for Kant's pure identity pole, he wants to accomplish two main missions: Firstly, presenting a self, which is not to be distinguished from the experience, and which is self-manifesting, so that there would be no need for an exterior act to make an experience subjective and self-conscious; and secondly, establishing the persistence of self through different experiences.

The view he defends takes its roots from phenomenologists like Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. This does not show that he shows what they have in common nor does he agrees with all they say, rather, starting from their views about self and consciousness, he presents some views about selfhood and self-

consciousness, while also claiming they have basic agreements, which are still important for a theory of self-consciousness.

Selfhood

For Zahavi, self is understood as selfhood, and similarly subject of experience as subjectivity of experience, which are seen as more proper usages for these notions, because these notions are intrinsic to our experience. The first step will be showing that selfhood exists, but as Zahavi does not have an ontological problem of self, we will need to show that selfhood is always present in our experience, although in different degrees, and thus might be analyzed through different ways. It is not the case that Zahavi does not care about the ontological status of Self, but rather there is no Self except the Self-experience. We will still need to account for the existence of this experiential property, by opposing theories denying self.

I will start with Hume, just as any discussion about a No-Self theory starts with him:⁸⁴ Can we really not find any self if we look to our experiences? Looking for the Self among perceptions doesn't make any sense for Zahavi, because there is always a subjective element in our experiences, which we cannot really deny. Using a Cartesian argument, if you are looking for a self and ask where it is, then there is the looking one, which is doing the reflection, and the Self should be found there. Hume was looking in the wrong place actually⁸⁵, when he was reflecting and trying to find the Self among his sensations, and naturally he could not find it there, because self is essentially not something to be found through normal reflection;

⁸⁴ I am not evaluating Hume's conception of self but rather I will only quote him to use it as a counterargument to egological accounts.

“...from the fact that the self is not an object of experience it does not follow that it is non-experiential.”⁸⁶

The Phenomenological idea focuses on the element in our experiences, which makes them our experiences. Ipseity is the term Sartre uses in this sense, which means for-me-ness and mine-ness, and it is used to point to the subjective element in our experiences, which makes them belong to us, which makes the experiences lived for-me. I live my experiences from a *first-person perspective*, and my experiences are given “to me”, given “immediately, non-inferentially and non-criterially as mine”.⁸⁷ There is something-it-is-like, something-it-feels-like to have an experience for any kind of experience, and this what-it-is-like-to-be cannot be anonymous, but rather it is something-it-is-like-for-me. This mineness has a special nature, so that we do not possess experiences as we possess a car, neither it is the negation of not-yours (or not as the negation of “not-me”)⁸⁸. “It doesn’t refer to a specific content of experience, to a specific what, but to the unique mode of givenness of how of experience.”⁸⁹ Every experience is personally given to me, making it an indubitable fact that I am going through the experience, and “anybody who denies the mineness or for-me-ness of experiences simply fails to recognize an

⁸⁵ Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), p. 126

⁸⁶ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 126. We will look why it is not an object of reflection in more detail in chapter 2 and 3.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 124

⁸⁸ Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *Phenomenological Mind* (Madison Ave, New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), p. 50. It is not denied that such a formulation of mine-ness might form the basis of self-other differentiation

⁸⁹ Gallagher and Zahavi, *Phenomenological*, p. 50

essential constitutive aspect of experience.”⁹⁰ And to point up this fact is actually not a big finding, but only taking subjectivity seriously.

Anonymous experience is not possible, but every experience is given to someone. There is a distinctive way experiential episodes present themselves to the subject whose episodes they are. “Experiential episodes have, to use Searle’s terminology, a first-person ontology from the start, i.e. even before the subject acquires the conceptual and linguistic skills to classify them as his own.”⁹¹ This does not mean that we need to find a Self distinct from and beyond the experience. We do not have to see the Self as distinct from the experience as Berkeley did, nor the subject and the experience in a subject-act relationship, where the experience is of the subject.⁹² It is also clear that self is not to be found in sensations; and it is not an idea taken from our experience either, thus, it is not only a bundle of experiences. The substitution of “subject of experience” with “subjectivity shows it clearly that selfhood as subjectivity is intrinsic to experience, which ceases to exist as an experience, if it does not contain subjectivity.

It is important to show that in the phenomenological account experience is essentially conscious, without which one cannot really understand what selfhood is necessarily involved in experience. There is a close relationship between phenomenal consciousness and selfhood, as selfhood is the most important phenomenal quality, which makes a conscious experience special to me, through which only I can really know what-it-is-like to live that experience, which is equal to what-it-is-like-to-be-the subject undergoing that experience. Even if you are

⁹⁰ Gallagher and Zahavi, *Phenomenological*, p. 50

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 51

⁹² I am using Betcher’s interpretation of Berkeley. Betcher, *Berkeley*, p. 199-206

given the same phenomenal qualities of an experience, it is not possible for you to really undergo the experience in its whole phenomenal qualities, because that experience is given to you, and my experience is given to me. Thus, we cannot take experiences as anonymous, as if two qualitatively identical experiences can be given to two distinct persons and they could undergo the same experience, with the only difference that these experiences have different subjects. It is not the case that “one of these experiences is this experience, occurring in this particular mental life, and the other is that experience, occurring in that particular mental life.”⁹³ Rather, while my experience is given to me in a first-personal mode, it is not the case for the other experience.⁹⁴ To reiterate, these phenomenal qualities are for a subject, never independent of it, and the key altogether form the what-its-likeness of an experience as phenomenal consciousness.

As self is not really distinguishable from consciousness, they need to be treated together. Moreover, self is not just self, and consciousness is not really different from self-consciousness: Self is at the same time self-awareness, because it is self-manifesting; and consciousness is to an important extent self-consciousness, which should be taken with the idea that self-consciousness is not essentially the reflective, introspective act. There are different degrees of self-consciousness and different forms of self (that self can be treated from different aspects, like social self, narrative self etc), but basically consciousness and selfhood are found in experience. These notions are not really independent, but most of the times the

⁹³ Parfit in Dan Zahavi, “Self and Consciousness”, *Exploring the Self: Advances in Consciousness Research*. Edited by Dan Zahavi, (Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000), p. 62

⁹⁴ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p.127

difference lies in the nuances, and the distinctions are made mostly for theoretical reasons.⁹⁵

I want to point up two criticisms of such a view, which one might think of immediately after seeing such a connection between experience and consciousness, and selfhood and consciousness. Firstly, one might oppose the premise that our experience is always conscious and after adding the claim that self and consciousness are not really indistinguishable, it might be concluded that self is not existing when there is no conscious experience. Thus, one can claim that Self or selfhood is only present in conscious experience, if not only in self-conscious experience, which is not the default case for human beings. Secondly, one can maintain the view that self is constantly changing, or there is always a new self with every new experience, because selfhood is given through experience and because it is intrinsic to it, which is similar to Strawson's view. Zahavi answers the first objection by trying to show the crucial relation between consciousness and experience, how we are really pre-reflectively conscious, and the second objection by presenting the other side of his notion of self, that it is act-transcendent.⁹⁶

We need a short introduction to the notion of pre-reflective consciousness, to connect it with ipseity, which makes an experience belong to me, so that we say there is a self in experience.⁹⁷ I am always pre-reflectively conscious of my experiences that these experiences belong to me. This does not mean that I am always fully self-conscious, or I have always an explicit self-experience, but as far

⁹⁵ The reader should not think that there is a loose treatment of the concepts in my thesis. One should stick to the definitions of notions in the introduction, whereas trying to get the grasp of the connections between these notions in the phenomenological account, also by thinking of the common points of these notions.

⁹⁶ Zahavi's characterization of self in this way will be examined in p. 60

as I know I am undergoing that experience and as far as I am able to reflect afterwards, we cannot really say that the self is not present or I am not self-conscious prior to reflection. Phenomenologists ask: If I was not pre-reflectively self-conscious, how would I later reflect on my experience? Pre-reflective consciousness enables you to report after an event or action afterwards, about what you have done and who the subject of the experiences was. After I am driving a car, while I am thinking about something else, I do not have any problem to report that I was driving, so that I am pre-consciously aware both of my action and also that I was doing the action, which means I was pre-reflectively conscious and self was there; I was there.

Egological and Non-egological Accounts

The problem about self is not so easy to dismiss, and the hottest debates are also within phenomenology, as in Sartre's and Husserl's seemingly non-egological views, although Zahavi does not find these views as having crucial disagreements with his account, but rather some different usages of terms in Sartre and some misunderstandings by Husserl, which are corrected by himself afterwards.

The distinction between egological and non-egological comes from Gurwitsch. According to an egological theory, an experience is constituted of three elements: the object, the experience and the subject. When I watch a movie, I am "not only intentionally directed at the movie, nor merely aware of the movie watched, (but) I am also aware that it is being watched by me."⁹⁸ Accordingly, "it is

⁹⁷ Particular relationship between pre-reflective consciousness and self-consciousness will be treated in chapter 3.

a conceptual and experiential truth that any episode of experiencing necessarily includes a subject of experience.”⁹⁹ A non-egological theory, which we can take as a no-ownership view, would deny that every experience is for a subject¹⁰⁰. There is no reference to a subject of experience, but there is an awareness of the watching of the movie. This distinction is similar to a discussion about Descartes’ conclusion to his existence through “Cogito Ergo Sum”, if I can conclude from “there is thinking” to “there is thinking being”. “I exist” is a further inference, from “there is a thinking being” to “I am that thinking being,” but a non-egological theory omits any such inferences from “there is thinking” taking the mental states to be without subjects. I believe that we can say that Zahavi has a Cartesian approach against non-egological theories, without seeing the steps from the “thinking” to “thinking being” and “I” as inferences, but as occurring at the same time. “Mine” is already given in the experience (in this case in thought) so to speak, so that we can securely say “I am thinking” instead of “there is thinking,” and such a self-awareness is not inferential, but immediate and direct. Not all phenomenologists seem to think in the same way, as Sartre and Husserl have different views.

Husserl’s understanding of consciousness and the ego

Husserl thinks that the notion consciousness is equivocal and he distinguishes between three types of consciousness: “ (i) Consciousness as the entire phenomenological being of the spiritual ego, (ii) Consciousness as the inner

⁹⁸ Zahavi, *Self*, p. 56

⁹⁹ Shoemaker in Zahavi, *Self*, p. 56

¹⁰⁰ Zahavi, *Self*, p. 56

awareness of one's own psychic experiences and (iii) Consciousness as a comprehensive designation for mental acts and intentional experiences of all sorts”¹⁰¹.

We can say that the latter notion is similar to transitive consciousness, while the former is similar to intransitive consciousness.¹⁰² The first notion takes consciousness as the unity, in the place of a self in its broadest sense, as if taking it like an entity (it is not uncommon that self-consciousness is used instead of self in the philosophical literature)¹⁰³, while denying that there is a “pure-identical ego-pole shared by all experiences and which conditions their unity.”¹⁰⁴ He uses these notions to touch upon different issues, (1) The unity/totality of the stream of consciousness, (2) inner consciousness or self-awareness, and (3) intentionality. The task is to clarify all these issues and investigate their relationships, where the first one will be important for us at this point.

Husserl talks of the ego in two senses, firstly as the empirical person, to which we might assign intersubjectively accessible properties, and secondly as the totality of experiences, where the ego is not a distinct bearer of experiences. If one uses the first notion of the ego, this might have some metaphysical implications, that self is postulated as a different entity for the experience. Thus, having used the ego firstly in the former sense, Husserl later tried to avoid any ego-metaphysics, and he avoided any talk about the ego as the bearer of the experiences, and rather tried

¹⁰¹ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 32

¹⁰² I am not claiming full correspondence with the given definitions of transitive consciousness and intransitive consciousness in the introduction

¹⁰³ See G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 110-119

¹⁰⁴ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 32

to use it only as the stream of consciousness, to be able to describe experiences in their purity.¹⁰⁵

Sartre's non-egological theory

Sartre, influenced by Husserl, tried to continue with the non-egological approach in the meant sense. Before presenting Sartre's view, I will again point up the bad image of reflection in the eyes of phenomenologists, to understand Sartre's efforts, which is the reason why he doesn't include the ego when we are world-directed. As we have already mentioned, the self is generally explained through its non-reflective position in the lived experience, and special emphasis is placed on pre-reflective consciousness, because reflection and any kind of objectification is taken as having a distorting effect on the lived self, which makes its understanding and knowledge impossible.

Sartre presents his views about our experience as being non-egological, by questioning the necessity, possibility and actuality of the ego. Firstly, the ego is "superfluous,"¹⁰⁶ if we take it as a principle of individuation and as a transcendent principle of unification, because our experiences are per se individuated and unified. A correct account of time-consciousness would also show that it is unnecessary.¹⁰⁷ Secondly, it is also not possible for an ego to be a part of consciousness (conscious experience), because while consciousness is transient, self-given and self-manifesting (remember the analogy that consciousness is like a window, through which we look to the world, so that it is a first-person perspective not to be found),

¹⁰⁵ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 33

¹⁰⁶ Zahavi, *Self*, p. 57

the ego is opaque, and its nature is to be unearthed gradually. Thus, the ego cannot be part of the conscious experience (note the identity of experience and consciousness). Thirdly, a correct description will show that there is no ego present in our experience when we are directed to the world, and it only comes out if we distract ourselves from the world and look inwards, which brings a distorted ego up to the ground. What Sartre means is our everyday experience, that we forget ourselves, when we are involved in doing an activity, like reading a book. There is no awareness of the ego, while I am pre-reflectively aware of the reading, as I am absorbed in reading. Thus, Sartre's position can also be seen as an implication of the criticisms of the Cartesian "cogito," claiming that there is only "awareness of the chair" but not "I am aware of this chair." So, we are pre-reflectively aware of our acts, but this structure does not contain the ego as defined, and as long as we are absorbed in the experience, it will not appear. And even when we reflect, we will not get "I-consciousness", which is the lived self, but only "consciousness of I", where one investigates the self as if it is an Other.¹⁰⁸

For Zahavi, we need to operate with a more basic notion of self, namely ipseity, instead of the ego in Sartre. Firstly, if we go through Husserl's different notions of consciousness, we can interpret him as saying that the second notion of consciousness, consciousness as the inner-awareness of our mental states (the pre-reflective consciousness and the ipseity which accounts for our ownership of the experiences), is prior to the first notion of consciousness (the totality of the stream of consciousness), because we would not know that there was a stream of consciousness if we did not have the direct access to our own experiences.

¹⁰⁷ See chapter 3 for a short presentation of Husserl's time-consciousness

Secondly, he also shows that Husserl later himself acknowledged that having such a non-egological problem is problematic, however we take it. Zahavi points to the problems Husserl has encountered in explaining intersubjectivity. I am directly perceiving the pain of the child who has fallen on the ground, or the anger of the driver,¹⁰⁹ to whose car I have crashed with my car, but that doesn't mean I confuse their pain with mine; rather I can clearly discriminate my feelings from the feelings of the other. Thus, at the ground of every experience lies the core idea of the self, which cannot be denied, and a non-egological theory is not really possible, if one means with it that experiences are anonymous. According to Zahavi, Husserl ended up with equating the first-personal mode of givenness, self-awareness, and a certain basic sense of egocentricity or ipseity by seeing the implausible consequences resulting from a non-egological theory.

The case with Sartre is not that he really has a very different view from Zahavi. Zahavi also accepts the lack of self-thematization and lack of explicit kind of understanding that "this experience is mine", but this does not mean that experiences are anonymous in terms of indistinguishability and indifferentiatedness, which might result with the existence of the same experience in two different persons, if the conditions are arranged, but this is not (even theoretically) possible.¹¹⁰

Sartre's conception of the cogito in non-egological terms isn't right, and a conception of thinking like "somebody perceives a chair" (as in Merleau-Ponty, maybe Strawson would agree by looking to past perception of chair) is also wrong.

¹⁰⁸ Zahavi, *Self*, p. 56-58; Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 32-34; Dan Zahavi, *Self-Awareness and Alterity: A Phenomenological Investigation*, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999), p. 146

¹⁰⁹ One of the views seen as a solution for the problem of understanding of others is claiming that experiences are anonymous and thus transferable between persons.

Sartre takes the ego as “a personal self with habits, character traits, persisting convictions etc.”¹¹¹ However this is not the only way, and Zahavi says that Sartre made the mistake of taking the ego in a different sense, and then claiming to have a non-egological theory, by showing its defects. But if we are to talk about the ego, it is terminologically more plausible to take it as the core self, the ipseity and we should not claim to have a non-egological theory, which is characterized as a non-ownership view.¹¹² His impression that Sartre’s mistake is terminological comes from Sartre’s later writings, where Sartre says writes that it is “not the ego, which personalizes consciousness, it is consciousness which by means of its fundamental self-givenness or selfhood allows the ego to appear.”¹¹³ This view is compatible with the phenomenological account Zahavi presents, that Sartre does not deny the existence of the ego, if we take it as ipseity. But Sartre takes the ego in a meaning similar to the person, as a kind of objective representation of ourselves, which only occurs when we reflect to ourselves. Thus, such an ego comes secondary to non-reflective ipseity, because ipseity makes the existence of the ego possible. So, ego is seen as a reflective consciousness, and this means that Sartre denies the existence of an explicitly self-conscious entity, while we are directed to the world.

One might argue that such an emphasis on selfhood is trivial in the end, because it does not make much difference, as Zahavi himself acknowledges, but he still feels the need to present these distinctions, because he sees such an effort

¹¹⁰ Zahavi, *Self*, p. 62

¹¹¹ Zahavi, *Self-awareness*, p. 141

¹¹² Zahavi, *Self*, p. 61

¹¹³ Zahavi, *Self*, p. 64

necessary, as long as there are anonymity views, non-egological accounts or No-Self theories.

We need to say that he is right, because there are still theorists trying to show non-existence of the Self, like Metzinger, who is very popular with his view that Self is an illusion nowadays.¹¹⁴ I am not so sure if Zahavi's view make much difference except terminology, in some discussions, but these discussions are important to get a better understanding of the phenomenological accounts of self.

There is one more point left unconsidered, the reason why Henrich and Poohast prefer to use a non-egological theory, while accepting general phenomenological views: "If one conceives of the ego qua subject of experience as something which has the experience, one obviously makes a distinction between ego and the experience. They are not identical. In this case, however, it is difficult to understand why the ego's awareness of the experience should count as a case of self-awareness."¹¹⁵ Thus, they have the view that experience should be egoless and anonymous. Should we take self-awareness as an awareness, which an experience has of itself? Zahavi would definitely not allow such a conclusion. If we take self-consciousness as consciousness an experience has of itself, then it is not for a subject and implies the existence of mental states without subjects, and thus it should be denied, according to the reasons we have argued so far. Also, although Zahavi constantly points to the intrinsicity of selfhood to experience, he does not want to equate self with experience or a mental state, as we have seen in Husserl's notion of consciousness as the stream of consciousness. The reasons for this lie in the worry about unwanted implications in intersubjectivity (that an experience could

¹¹⁴ Thomas Metzinger, *The Ego Tunnel: The Science of The Mind and The Myth of The Self* (New York: Basic Book, 2009), pp. 1-20

in theory be transferred to another person exactly) and in the attempt to account for persistence of the self through time, instead of tying it to the experience, which makes it dependent on the existence of the contingent experience. Thus, he complements his understanding of self as selfhood, which is intrinsic to experience and exists prior to reflection, with the self as the core self.

The core self

Zahavi says that there are different forms of self, which do not have to conflict with each other. In this sense, it does not make sense to oppose the social self, for example, and to deny that the social factors play a very important role for the development of self. Nor do we need to oppose the narrative self, which is involved in the view that we understand ourselves through situating ourselves into a narrative, so that we become a character in the story. But it doesn't make sense to claim that the narrative concept of self is more fundamental, or being engaged in social interaction or language is more fundamental for the development of self. In this sense Zahavi believes that the phenomenological One-Level Account of selfhood is more fundamental to account for self-awareness, which describes our givenness to ourselves in the most proper way, and is complementary to other accounts. But he believes that there is one account, which is crucial for his understanding of self, for which his self is a replacement, and this is the Kantian self as a pure identity-pole.

Zahavi presents the Kantian self, founded upon the distinction between identical self and manifold of changing experiences (notion of self as a substance

¹¹⁵ Zahavi, *Self*, p. 56-57

which never changes while experiences come and go, and notion of self which is changing with the ongoing experiences). All of our experiences have one thing in common, that they are lived by the same self, which remains the same through time. So, Kant's self is taken as a principle of identity, above the stream of changing experiences, giving unity and coherence to experiences. According to such a view, similarly, every experience is lived for a certain subject; and it cannot be given as an object of experience (as the in phenomenological account), but rather it is the condition of possibility for (united and coherent) experience. We cannot know ourselves as an object, which we must presuppose to know any object; and even if we could know it, then that would not be a self anymore.¹¹⁶

Zahavi takes his view to be similar, because he also examines the structure of experience, to understand what a self is. It is a function, and it is given; and to know oneself, one needs to direct its attention to outwards, to live in the first-personal mode, just as we perceive the world through a given structure in Kant. It is a minimal and formal notion. We can add these similarities the emphasis on the appearance of the world to the subject, that it persists through change, that it is minimal and very formal. There is the difference that in Zahavi the self is not something beyond the experiences but "a feature or function of its givenness." So, Zahavi believes that phenomenological understanding will replace the Kantian self, with situating the self better in experience, by integrating it to experience. This self as an experiential dimension is called the core self from Zahavi.

The most important part of such a view is that it can account (with the help of an account of time-consciousness) for the persistence of self, i.e. diachronic singularity, but it does not really explain, how our self develops. Our very

¹¹⁶ Zahavi, *Self* p. 104

perspective towards the world constantly changes, so that he really needs to explain, why the self is the same, and what is the same except its formal structure. If we take it as a formal condition, how should we understand that it changes? Through being filled with different content while the condition remains the same, does the structure change? And why do we take the whole structure of mind as the self? It seems that Zahavi thinks that self-consciousness is understanding your structure of your experience. The self is not the mind, but rather how the mind manifests itself, which constitutes our experience of the world, and thus ourselves.

As Zahavi takes such a self prior to ego, or to reflective self-awareness, we can understand what he means, if we think of his notion of self as the very possibility of experience; but of course not prior to experience or independent of it. This kind of self is the precondition of appearance of the world, and if we go in a Kantian fashion, we can say that the world is not the condition of the possibility of the self, but the self is the condition of the possibility of the world. But such a self is a very powerful idea and it becomes the condition for everything, at least for the every kind of experience. It is so fundamental, that we might question if it is really the condition of self-awareness and sense of Self . It might even not be seen as an explanation; as it makes every experience possible, it is questionable if it is responsible for our self-experience. But it is doubtful if Zahavi takes his self as such. Going back from this meta-description of the experience of the world, we will now look to more specific descriptions of the phenomenology, and we will investigate self-consciousness.

CHAPTER 4

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IN PHENOMENOLOGY

In the phenomenological account, the most important feature of self-consciousness is that it is non-reflective, or in other words, pre-reflectively present. Self becomes self-conscious through self-manifestation, which means through being directed to the world; through its relationship with the world. We can reflect on our acts and on ourselves as subjects of actions but that comes afterwards, after already being self-conscious.

Why we don't become self-conscious by reflection in the first place is explained through the pre-reflective awareness of self of itself but also through showing that reflection is not a proper method to reveal the true nature of the self, in the sense of showing its subjectivity in the original experiential form. In the phenomenological account, reflection distorts the nature of the lived self, created a distorted version of it, as being thematic and conceptual. Now I will at look how reflection distorts the original self, and how philosophers tried to deal with the issue of reflection. Although they are against reflection for self-consciousness, they nonetheless accept reflective consciousness as a secondary act of self-knowledge in the end, which is still important with its modifying character.

Reflection and Alterity

Zahavi's main claim is that pre-reflective self-consciousness is prior to any reflective kind of self-consciousness. Beyond the reasons that reflective self-consciousness is a thematized and articulated kind of self-consciousness, that pre-reflective self-consciousness reveals the true nature of subjectivity, priority of pre-reflective self-consciousness is established through a seemingly trivial but important fact: "In order to explain the occurrence of reflection...it is necessary that what is to be disclosed and thematized is (unthematically) present, otherwise, there would be nothing to motivate and call forth the act of reflection."¹¹⁷ We need to be pre-reflectively self-conscious to be reflectively self-conscious, there must be a self-experience, so that we can reflect on that self-experience afterwards. Thus, as Husserl says: "reflection is initiated in order to bring the primary intentional act into focus,"¹¹⁸ and as it distorts the pre-reflective self, it cannot reveal the self in its lived form, and it cannot be taken as a genuine self-consciousness. So, is there a way to reveal the self as it is experienced?

Natorp suggests a method of reconstruction. According to him, experience is a relation between a subject and object, and if we reflect on ourselves, we necessarily take ourselves as objects and "we kill the subjectivity in order to dissect it."¹¹⁹ "This life of the soul on display"¹²⁰ can never be the result of the dissection, because it is not original and subjective anymore. We have seen that this view is

¹¹⁷ Zahavi, *Subjectivity* p. 53

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 53

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 76

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 76

present in Husserl, Zahavi, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. But how should we understand the subjectivity then? Natorp's suggestion is reconstruction, which is constituted through a process of purification. We need to neutralize the effects of reflection, by putting the detached things together, and restoring the experiences to their original state."¹²¹ But Zahavi says that this is not really a solution, because this reconstruction is a construction in the end, and it involves a theoretical and objectifying procedure. Thus, it is not possible to reach the immediacy of the lived experience through such a procedure.¹²²

Sartre approaches the problem by distinguishing pure and impure reflection: While the impure reflection is the reflective self-consciousness we have talked of so far, which creates a duality, and is a type of knowledge and gives rise to the psychic unity ego, the pure reflection is "pure thematization of the reflected-on. It articulates the phenomena, without contaminating them with interpretive overlays, in a manner that remains true to their pre-reflective structures."¹²³ We do not learn anything new with such a reflection, which also should not be a surprise, as this is the aim, to reach the original selfhood.

Leaving aside the problem that Sartre does not really explain how we establish such a reflection, there is a more interesting problem, that what phenomenologists take as self-consciousness is seemingly very different from what we normally understand of it. We do indeed take self-consciousness as the reflective, introspective act, and we take the self as the ego which is created through objectification, how Sartre takes the ego. We do not then say that this ego is not the

¹²¹ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 76

¹²² *Ibid* p. 78

¹²³ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 87

real self, while this seems to be the case in Zahavi, although the situation is a little bit complicated in phenomenology in general. But it is clear that there is a distinction between the objectively and reflectively created self and the experientially original self.

We have seen that Sartre attempted to show a structure of self-consciousness, which does not distort the selfhood by revealing its subjectivity, only its subjectivity, and nothing new. But if we does not learn anything new, should we take this as self-consciousness? Again, in our everyday life, we use self-consciousness mostly in two respects, in addition to the categorizations we made in the Introduction: One is self-conscious, if he acts as such in the present moment; and one is self-conscious, in the sense of learning something new about his mental states, behavior, beliefs, feelings etc. Phenomenological approaches try to explain the first aspect of self-consciousness, and the answer lies in self-manifestation, that we are self-consciously in our every act, in the sense of knowing what we are doing and that we are the subjects of our actions. If a more detailed structure is needed, it will be found in a proper theory of time-consciousness, showing how we experience time and how we go through time as we are self-aware, showing our moment-to-moment experience. Husserl's time-consciousness is an example in this sense, where we act through time in a structure of retention-primal impression-protection, where retention is the component providing us with a consciousness of the just-elapsed phase of the object (allowing us to be aware of the phase as it sinks into past), primal impression is the now-phase, and protection is the component intending the phase of the object to occur.¹²⁴ Primal impression is a now-phase which does not appear in isolation but with retention and protection, so that we have

a kind of extended now-phase, a wide temporal space of lived presence, being aware of the past, present and future at the same time, which allows us to go through time self-consciously, conscious of the near past, narrowly present and near future. Such an account enables us an explanation of pre-reflective self-consciousness of our presence in now, without the need of reflection to be self-conscious of our present existence. The rivals to the phenomenological account in this case are the Higher-Order Accounts and Self-Representational accounts, which try to explain our present self-consciousness either through a reflection of another mental state on the first-order mental state, or through a reflexive mechanism of a mental state, so that the mental state reflects on itself or on the subject of the experience.¹²⁵ The problem of self is complementary to such studies, to explain the lived subjectivity, and of course the explanation of the development of subjectivity, which is rarely explained by any of these theories, leaving aside that it is accepted that language and interaction with the Other helps us to develop it.

Phenomenologists see the second aspect of self-consciousness as reaching the lived experience of the past in its originality, or ideally to living it again in its originality. The self as it was present is the aim, which should not be that hard, since the memories are given through the same shared manner across time. This approach is apparently in contrast to Strawson's view, that he sees the past self as an Other, and he thinks that he gets the knowledge about it just through memory, which he sees as external to the Self, which is the error Husserl points out, the erroneous assumption that the unity of mind is due to contiguity between two experiences,

¹²⁴ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 56

¹²⁵ These theories will be discussed in this chapter

thinking as it this makes them part of the same subjectivity.¹²⁶ The difference seems to lie between seeing the remembering as thinking of something as an object or representing it, which is given to the same subjectivity (present in the past and now) to oneself, where Husserl would prefer the latter as the actual case. “It does not make sense to say that I remember x without remembering it as having been experienced by me, nor can I remember a past event and be in doubt about whether I am the one who originally experienced it.”¹²⁷

Another option to explain our consciousness is attention, to be conscious of our present (or past) self and the experienced lived through. It does not mean that attention is non-objectifying or doesn't distort its object: “to pay attention to something is...to modify one's first-level experience or activity.” But attention is still very important for Husserl; it is “the ego as a principle focus,” in addition to “ego as a field,” which is more like the pre-reflective consciousness as a formal structure to live the world.¹²⁸ Husserl also characterizes the ego as a “pole or center of action and affection,”¹²⁹ that the ego is present where it is acting on and affecting an object, having an effect on the world. Our normal situation at the present moment is that we both have consciousness as a field and consciousness as the center of action. This means that we have an intentional act in which we are attentively directed at an object, and we have horizontal awareness of the objects' surroundings. Such a picture explains our consciousness in the present moment, how we can direct our attention, at the same time being aware of other surrounding things. For Husserl, the explicit I-consciousness is only present when we focus on something, when we

¹²⁶ Zahavi, *Self-awareness* p. 145

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 145

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 146

are in the actionality mode. “The ego lives in the cogito-acts, they are carried out by the ego,” and Husserl therefore describes attention as an ego-ray (Ichstrahl).”¹³⁰ The exact translation of it is actually “I-ray,” which might be interpreted by saying that “I” is present at the place where the focus is directed.

Such characterizations show that phenomenologists do not actually disagree much with Strawson, or philosophers taking self as existing whenever there is conscious thought, or an attention. It shows that the problem is more about what to take self and what to count as self-consciousness, for which the phenomenologists have a different conception, taking the experiential pre-reflective awareness of ourselves doing the action and undergoing the experience as self-consciousness, and they give too much emphasis on lived experience, on the non-extrinsic and pure subjectivity.

What is this I, of the existence of which both Husserl and Strawson give similar phenomenological descriptions, that I am present when there is an explicit thinking, or attention? This is a special way of existing, although not pure. Maybe it is in the nature of self-consciousness, in the nature of acting as a self-conscious Self, to be in a changed mode other than pre-reflective consciousness, to be distorted, not being as pure as the pre-reflective self-consciousness, as it is the only way for it to come at that stage, to be constituted. This is also emphasized by Husserl and Sartre, that modification and change does not necessarily mean distortion in a sense of being second-rate (in the sense of being less important and valuable than pre-reflective self), but modification can also be taken as transformation: “reflection

¹²⁹ Zahavi, *Self-awareness*, p. 146

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 147

acquires a new mode of being; it becomes accentuated.”¹³¹ “...this articulation is not necessarily imposed from without; is not necessarily foreign to the experience in question. Thus, rather than representing a distortion, it may constitute a consummation of the experience.”¹³² So, it might be the case that we modify the experience (and thus the lived self) through reflection, we create a self-fission; and we also change the originality of experience in attention, but this does not mean that reflection is untrustworthy¹³³, as Zahavi says. We indeed take it away from its original environment, as “perceiving an object is always to perceive a object situated in a perceptual field,”¹³⁴ and whenever we pay attention to something, we single it out from its surroundings”. We take away from the original experience of its naivete and spontaneity, but this is a fruitful experience. It is a transcendence for Husserl, as we acquire a new mode of being in attention, reflection is a precondition for self-critical deliberation.

Against Reflective and Reflexive Theories of Consciousness

To complement our study, I find it crucial to oppose the phenomenological account with Higher-Order Theories and Self-Representational Theories, to understand our moment-to-moment self-consciousness. I prefer to call Higher-Order Theories Reflective Theories of Consciousness, because they explain consciousness through a reflective act, while I have called Self-Representation Theories of Consciousness as

¹³¹ Husserl in Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 88

¹³² Merleau-Ponty in Zahavi, *Self-awareness*, p. 146

¹³³ Zahavi, *Subjectivity* p. 90

¹³⁴ *Ibid* p. 90

Reflexive Theories of Consciousness, because they explain consciousness basically through its feature of reflexivity, that one is conscious, if one can be aware of oneself as being in that state, and this is explained through a reflexive act.

I will not get into the details of these theories, but I only want to compare these with the phenomenological One-Level Account, on the main grounds of disagreement. Higher-Order Theories are important for us, because they explain consciousness, self-consciousness and subjectivity through higher-order mental states; and Self-Representational Theories will be important for us, because they explain self-consciousness through a One-Level Account, in terms of reflexivity, but working still with reflection. We will oppose Rosenthal's Higher Order Thought theory with Zahavi's views, while we will try to understand if the phenomenological view can be constructed in an analytical form as a Self-Representational Theory, by looking to Brentano. It should be noted that there is a place for reflection in the framework of phenomenological approach, but only as explicit reflective consciousness, while Higher Order Theories explain also first-consciousness through reflection, which should not be forgotten to understand the differences between the theories.

Higher-Order Theories

Rosenthal's main motivation is to construct a theory of consciousness in a naturalistic framework, which means being able to account for phenomenal consciousness through the relationships between unconscious mental states, as unconsciousness is taken as the default case for objects in the world, at least at lower levels of organisms.

For Rosenthal, creature consciousness is not a mysterious phenomenon, but rather a state of being awake, while state consciousness waits for an explanation.¹³⁵; and this should be done by a mechanism explaining state consciousness through something else, not making it intrinsic to that state. Such an approach is necessary, if we want to explain consciousness through a relational structure, taking consciousness as extrinsic to mental states. Rosenthal says that if we have a theory taking consciousness as an intrinsic property to experience, this theory is not informative, and we don't have any explanation.

The main claim of the Higher-Order Theory is that the states' intransitive consciousness is established from a higher-order thought, which transitively makes the reflected state conscious. The reflecting mental state does not need to be conscious, and it is unconscious. It is actually better for the theory that it is not conscious, as otherwise consciousness would be an intrinsic property of that state. The second-order state makes the first one conscious, but it makes the first-order state only conscious, not self-conscious. To be self-conscious creatures (in terms of creature consciousness), and to have a conscious second-order state (in terms of state consciousness), a third-order state is needed to reflect on it. In this way, the second-order state also becomes conscious, and we are self-conscious. The third-order state does not need to be conscious, because the theory allows for the mental state to be intransitively unconscious, while making another one transitively conscious. What we are looking for is intransitive consciousness, and this is established through unconscious mental states, which have power to make other mental states conscious.

¹³⁵ Rosenthal, p. 730

One important point is that a second-order mental state accompanies the first-order mental state, whenever the mental state is to be conscious. I believe that this gives rise to the theoretical possibility that we have only conscious mental states, which brings Higher-Order Theory closer to One-Level Account. Zahavi also points up Rosenthal's statement that "when a mental state is conscious, it is not simply that we are conscious of the state, we are conscious of being in that state",¹³⁶ which might be interpreted as saying that to be conscious is to be conscious of oneself having an experience, which might again make Higher-Order Theory a kind of One-Level Account.

Zahavi has further criticisms to Rosenthal, not surprisingly, because Rosenthal explains phenomenal consciousness through an act of reflection, which is intolerable for a phenomenologist. Having talked so much about the distorting effect of reflection, one can hardly expect a phenomenologist to accept such a view. But there are further reasons, why Zahavi finds HOT theory implausible. Firstly, Zahavi attacks Rosenthal using the argument of infinite regress, which argument is originally used about consciousness by Sartre. This argument, like it is used to show the existence of God in Cosmological Arguments, is used to show that we cannot really explain consciousness through a higher-order account, where the property of consciousness is transitional and transferable from one state to another. The arguments goes as such: If we say that a mental state takes its consciousness from being reflected upon from a second-order state, than we need to go further and account for consciousness of third-order mental state. So far there is no problem for Rosenthal. But we need to go further to account for the consciousness of a third-order mental state, and then we either need to go ad infinitum to account for the

¹³⁶ Rosenthal, p. 741

consciousness of the next-order mental state, or we need to stop by an unconscious higher-order state. It does not make sense that an unconscious state is able to make another state conscious, as it does not give what it lacks, thus, the higher-order mental state must be also conscious, the regress must stop somewhere with a conscious higher-order state. If this is the case, then we have many higher-order states, which is unnecessary, it is more plausible to take one level mental states as conscious, conscious by themselves.

One can object that phenomenologists also accept reflection to explain reflective self-consciousness so that there is not so much difference, but the difference between two theories is more fundamental. Firstly, in Rosenthal's account, consciousness is a transitive property (there is transitive and intransitive consciousness, but intransitive consciousness is established through transitive consciousness, so that transitivity is more fundamental for a HOT theory), established through a relation, not to be found in the state, while in Zahavi's account it is intransitive and it is intrinsic to mental state. Secondly, in Rosenthal, consciousness is a created notion. As we have two unconscious mental states, one becomes conscious, which is established through a relation, but not by a conscious state, because the higher-order state giving rise to consciousness is itself unconscious. But for Zahavi, one cannot be conscious of something, if there wasn't any consciousness before (before the act of reflection). "Reflection is not an act sui generis"¹³⁷ in phenomenology. Reflection is only used to establish for explicit self-consciousness, and this is done by reflection on the pre-reflectively self-conscious self, not an unconscious experience, while in HOT, it is clear that consciousness is given to the mental state, which does not have it normally. Note that there is only

attention in Husserl's account, and it is accepted that the I exists where there is reflection in a sense. But Zahavi takes it as different usages of self, where one is the pre-reflectively self-conscious self, and the other a kind of ego, in a similar usage to Sartre maybe, which is created after reflection, and does not correspond to I as the core experiential self.

There is an ontological difference, or you may call it a fundamental difference in terms of the frameworks they are situated in, between the two theories. As Zahavi takes consciousness as a property to be found in the universe, as a more basic property, Rosenthal takes it as a more complex, later emergent property, which is normally not found in the world, but should be constructed through lower level processes instead, namely through the interaction between unconscious states. Taking consciousness as basic property is against the naturalist framework, in which Rosenthal wants to construct an explanatory theory. Also if consciousness is intrinsic to the mental state, it does not count as an explanation, because such a theory is not informative. But for Zahavi, it is equally unacceptable to say that an unconscious state can give rise to consciousness, which is for him an intrinsic feature. Your experience is either conscious or not, and it is not the case that consciousness is a property to be gained or lost as consciousness and experience are merged. As consciousness is a mode you are in, that you are perceiving the world through it, it is not possible that such a property can be acquire exteranally.

Why is the second-order thought B directed at the first-order mental state A?¹³⁸, Zahavi asks. Rosenthal himself acknowledges that their relation it a little bit unusual, that we are directly and non-inferentially aware of the states, and that for a

¹³⁷ Zahavi, Subjectivity p. 56

mental state it is not enough that you are conscious of it, rather you need to be conscious of being in that state. “Only if one’s thought is about oneself as such, and not just someone that happens to be oneself, will the mental state be a conscious state. Otherwise it might turn out in any particular case that the state was a state of somebody else instead.”¹³⁹ Thus, it seems as an arbitrary and unsuitable solution to say that consciousness, which is a within property, is established through such a mediated process. We don’t really take mental states of other people as our conscious mental states, through our mental states reflecting on them. When I am aware of a mental state, I do not make any inference, nor I am referring to myself externally, which is a possibility within a HOT theory.

Another important problem is about attaching subjectivity to the self. How can you attach subjectivity to a mental state? Is there nothing-it-is-like to be an animal, if he is not able to have higher-order states? Does Rosenthal explain what-it-is-likeness through the presence of a second-order mental state? For Zahavi, this seems absurd from common sense. There is no explicit mentioning in Rosenthal’s paper how subjectivity, as the subject of the experience, is established, but he does not deny that there is something-it-is-like to be a cat. He says that establishing higher-order thoughts does not require language, complex concepts or theory of mind, so that the case that they are conscious is secured. This shows then, he has the tendency to explain what-it-is-likeness through second-order mental states.

I believe that the real problem with the HOT theory is that it does not really explain creature consciousness. He explains state consciousness but he takes it for

¹³⁸ Dan Zahavi and Josef Parnas, “Phonemal Consciousness and Self-awareness: A Phenomenological Critique of Representational Theory”, *The Models of the Self*. Edited by Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear (Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic, 2009), p. 260

¹³⁹ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 114

granted that creature consciousness is not a mysterious thing and it is mainly being sentient and awake. But as he explains consciousness of our mental states while saying we are conscious as creatures, takes he for granted that we always have first-order conscious states? If the answer is yes, then what is the work of the second-order state? It seemed that Rosenthal was explaining consciousness in animals also through the presence of a second-order mental state. If the answers this question negatively, then one should ask how a creature can be conscious while not possessing conscious mental states.

We must say that HOT is a little bit non-economical in terms of explaining a phenomenon through a rather complex process, but is not really absurd. For Rosenthal, the reason why consciousness is immediate and direct is that the second-order mental states are accompanying the first-order mental states. I believe that for Rosenthal it is not possible for a second-order theory or third-order theory to take an externally mediated mental state and make it conscious, even if theoretically, because firstly the connections between the first-order and second-order theories should be established. We can take second-order mental states to always be connected to first-order mental states, and waiting to be activated, so making the first-order mental states conscious. It also makes sense of our passivity of being conscious, that we do not really control or direct the higher-order mental state to make the unconscious mental state conscious, but mental states might activate the passive connections and make us conscious through second-order states. And the other advantage of such an interpretation of the theory is that it can account for the possibility of unconscious mental states, while it is not so easy to handle unconsciousness in the phenomenological account. This was an interpretation for me and I am not so sure if Rosenthal fully agrees or if his theory is such that we can

call it as a HOT theory or not, but I just wanted to show that it is not necessarily an absurd theory.

Actually there are more radical theories, which deny that there is something-it-is-like-to-be a self undergoing an experience, if there is no higher order thought, with the claim that higher-order 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 has such a view, and he explains the phenomenal consciousness and what-its-likeness by availability to the subject through higher-order thoughts, which require a theory of mind, and only through such a communication can one really be self-conscious, so that there is a conscious self and there is something-it-is-like-to-undergo his experience. Only if we can represent ourselves and our experiences in a way to be able to make the discrimination between the appearance and the reality (is-seems distinction), that the pain belongs privately to me, but to no one else, and that my experience of red is a representation of the real experience red, can we really be subjects.¹⁴⁰

I will deal with his theory in detail but I just presented such a view because it raises important questions: If we cannot really distinguish between the reality and the representation of it, and thus cannot distinguish the appearance of the world to us from the real world, can we be subjects of experiences in terms of there is something-it-is-like-to-be-us in that situation? It is interesting that while phenomenologists try to look for pure subjectivity, and for the appearance of the world in its pure form; and while they try to omit any kind of explicit and conceptual self-awareness, Higher-Order Theories try to establish subjectivity

¹⁴⁰ Peter Carruthers, *Phenomenal Consciousness: A Naturalistic Theory* (Portchaster, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 256-317

through reflection, conceptual thinking and theory of mind, the things which are seen as objective methods for phenomenologists, not suitable to understand the subjectivity of self.

Brentano's Self-representational Theory of Consciousness

Can we construct a positive theory of the phenomenological account, which can account for self-consciousness, in terms how it is possible to be self-conscious, while we are also conscious of the world? Self-Representational Accounts are candidates for this job, as they are One-Level Accounts. So, I will just give Zahavi's view about Brentano's self-representational theory, to get an idea of Zahavi's approach towards a theory, which constructs self-manifestation through a self-representational account, in the same mental state, in distinction from the Higher Order Thoughts.

For Brentano every intentional experience has a double object, where the former is the object of the intentional conscious action, and the latter the act itself. So, if I see a bird, the former object of my consciousness is the bird, whereas the second object is the act of seeing.

The crucial point in such a picture is that I do not have one, rather than two distinct mental states: My perception of the bird is "united so intrinsically and intimately with the consciousness of the perception of the bird, that they only constitute one single psychical phenomenon,"¹⁴¹ where the distinction is only theoretical.

¹⁴¹ Zahavi, Subjectivity, p. 48

For Zahavi, we can see that it is a One-Level Theory with Higher-Order Properties, which differs only by seeing the process of self-consciousness as one united mental state. According to him, the problem in Brentano's account is that it still tries to explain intransitive consciousness through a transitive kind of self-consciousness, as a question of the mind directing its intentional aim upon its own states and operations, with the only difference being that these two states are included in the same state. Self-consciousness is explained by an emphasis on its special reflexivity, and this is done through showing that self-consciousness is a specific kind of object consciousness.

For Husserl, however you construct your mechanism of self-consciousness, you cannot rightly explain a self-conscious self by taking it as an object, because it is non-objectifying. It does not make much difference if the self-conscious making reflection is made from an exterior state, or from an interior state to the whole mental state or from the subject itself. This is the reason why Husserl prefers to use the term pre-reflective self-consciousness, as there isn't any kind of reflection, either exterior, or interior, or reflexive. His supposition is that we should stop taking self-consciousness as an object consciousness, as a consciousness with an intentional structure. Thus, pre-reflective self-consciousness is an exception to the claim that every consciousness is intentional, which is one of the main slogans of phenomenology.¹⁴²

After such a radical move, can we end up with a phenomenological Self-Representational Account compatible with Zahavi's views ? It doesn't seem possible, as it is in the nature of Self-Representational Accounts , that they explain

¹⁴² Dan Zahavi, "Two Takes on a One Level Account of Consciousness", *Psyche* 12, No. 2 (May 2006), Available [online]: <http://theassc.org/files/assc/2639.pdf>, pp. 1-10

self-consciousness through double representation and account for self-consciousness through some kind of reflective act from the subject to itself, to the act of being conscious, or to the act as a whole. It is the nature of Self-Representational Theory that it emphasizes reflexivity of self-consciousness, which is not the case for Zahavi's phenomenological One-Level Account. Also, it is claimed for Zahavi that Self-Consciousness doesn't fulfill the most important criteria, that self-consciousness cannot be taken as an object-consciousness, and thus, pre-reflectively self-conscious self cannot be taken as an object. We have already talked about the reason why it is not possible to reflect on self, which is doomed to be pre-reflective, and this is both his very possibility to exist as self-conscious and also the impossibility to be grasped as an object.

It seems that one can only give a positive phenomenological account of self-consciousness through a proper description of time-consciousness, or one should deny the criteria that self-consciousness is essentially non-reflective and non-objectifying. Of course it is possible to explain our pre-reflectively self-conscious state through explaining perception, which is also done recently mostly by phenomenologists, going into the direction which Merleau-Ponty showed by presenting his idea that all consciousness is perceptual consciousness¹⁴³. These are still positive accounts and make sense, if one does not take self-consciousness as a phenomenon to be explained in itself, independent of our experiences. As Zahavi says: "to be self-aware is not to interrupt the experiential interaction with the world in order to turn the gaze inward, on the contrary, self-awareness is always the self-awareness of a world-immersed self. The self is present to itself precisely and

¹⁴³ Maurice Merleau Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (Madison Ave, New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), pp. 112-171

indeed only when worldly engaged”¹⁴⁴ Such an approach is also what Gallagher thinks, who investigates self, as it is involved in a context, by doing a meaningful action, or as it perceives something, but not in isolation: “one finds only incomplete or distorted aspects of self in isolated or decontextualized movements, in physical mechanisms or functions that can be dissociated with Strawsonian pearls.”¹⁴⁵

We have seen that there are no real differences between self, consciousness and self-consciousness in the phenomenological account, as they are constitutive parts of experience, where we can still try to make some distinctions for theoretical reasons. Self is seen as an experiential dimension, and as a kind of formal principle making the (conscious) experience possible. More than the classical problem that subject cannot be taken as an object, this is the reason, why it cannot really be grasped, as it is the frame, the first-person perspective, through which we perceive the world. Thus, this self cannot be understood through a reflection or a similar method, because we are always living through this perspective, even when we make the reflection, so that it is always at the side of the position of the subject. Self is taken as the selfhood, because it is not really a substance, of which there are experiences, or a distinct thing, nevertheless, we should not take it as a property, as an adjective ontologically dependent on the experience, or just a bundle of experiences. Although there is mention in Husserl of taking ego as the sum of experiences, this is only one characterization among others, and Zahavi claims that the self as he presents it is experientially prior to all characterization, all of which depend for their existence to a pre-reflective self. In this sense, he doesn't think that Husserl or Sartre would be disagreeing with him.

¹⁴⁴ Zahavi, *Subjectivity*, p. 127

There are no causal explanations why there is consciousness, and why our experience is conscious, because he is not interested to establish the existence of conscious experience in a framework, where its non-existence is taken as the default condition. In terms of its definition among other notions, consciousness is phenomenal consciousness, and it stays closer to our experience in totality, as the conscious experience we are experiencing. Consciousness is also equal to pre-reflective consciousness, in its non-distorted original form, as it is lived. It is also equal to self-consciousness, meaning that it manifests itself through pre-reflective consciousness. Sartre says: “pre-reflective consciousness is self-consciousness”. This does not mean that different degrees of consciousness or self are denied. But if we take self-consciousness as the consciousness, which self has of itself (although Sartre and Zahavi try not to use of- relation for consciousness), it is already present in our pre-reflective consciousness; it is given in our pre-reflective consciousness, it already manifests itself in our conscious experience. If I am conscious of a pain, I am also conscious of myself, because by experiencing the pain, I know that it happens to me, that it belongs to me. When I perceive a car, the car is already situated in reference to me, which is the case in any kind of my action and perception. That’s why, Merleau-Ponty says that “all consciousness is perceptual consciousness”. So, if I am looking for self-consciousness, isn’t it the one that I am looking for? Looking for a different kind of self-consciousness is not really consciousness of myself. Because, real self-consciousness includes the self as an experiential dimension, and this can only be established by being the subject of that experience and experiencing through that specific perspective.

¹⁴⁵ Shaun Gallagher and A. J. Marcel, “The Self in Contextualized Action”, *The Models of the Self*. Edited by Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear (Charlottesville, VA : Imprint Academic, 2009), p. 297

Self-knowledge and self-consciousness must be distinguished, because they do not have the same structure. Self-consciousness cannot be taken as a kind of knowledge, because we don't know ourselves as we know the objects in the world. We cannot know ourselves as if it is an Other, which is a necessary implication, if we try to put self-consciousness as self-knowledge. Thus, self-knowledge, if it can be taken as a knowledge, is only possible if we live through the experience, or if we have already lived the experience (a phenomenologist doesn't take the past self as a problem, i.e. I can easily accept that it is me who has lived that experience in the past, although the experiential density of that memory is not that dense as the present experience). It is not a kind of identity relation between two objects, which would result with self-fissure.

Although Husserl is famous as taking consciousness to be intentional, and as building his views on this notion, self-consciousness is not intentional, if we accept Zahavi's interpretation of Husserl. This is a little bit tricky. Our consciousness is always directed to the world, it is "of" things. But if we try to reach to self-consciousness through taking "self" or the "conscious activity" as an object, directing the conscious experience to itself, this will not work. We cannot be self-conscious in this way, and in this sense such kind of supposedly self-consciousness does not lead to self-consciousness as such, not to the pre-reflective self-consciousness. This is the error of Higher-Order Theories or Brentano's Self-Representational Theory. And one can clearly see why Higher-Order Theories are so implausible for Zahavi, because they try to explain this very internal experiential dimension, the ground condition for experience, through a different act (be it an

internal or external state), as if there could be experience without consciousness and subject.¹⁴⁶

Going back to questions of Strawson, we can thus say that self is necessary and sufficient for self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is not something new, but it is just the self-manifestation of self, which happen with every conscious act. Saying it from the other direction is not false, but it is not a proper premise, because it does not make sense to talk about self-consciousness without self, as the other direction is at least possible. Note that self-consciousness, taken as self's being conscious of itself, comes theoretically after self. But it does not make sense to talk about the non-existence of self, while there is self-consciousness. It is important to see that self-consciousness is essentially not reflexive, actually there is no reflexivity in such a kind of self-consciousness, and that's why I am saying self-manifestation. There is neither a distinction between Self and sense of Self, so that there is no question of what is the entity corresponding to Self-experience.

¹⁴⁶ The problem of unconsciousness in phenomenological account will be presented in Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

A CRITIQUE OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

The Phenomenological Account is not without problems. Firstly, by emphasizing pre-reflective self-consciousness too much, which is in the end a minimal self, it is questionable if one can really explain what is essential in self-consciousness. Secondly, by taking consciousness to be so fundamental, it is questionable if there is a place for unconsciousness in the phenomenological picture, and if it can explain unconsciousness and the difference between unconscious and conscious experiences. And thirdly, it is questionable if what we have is an explanation at all. Before going into these criticisms, I will present shortly Rochat's studies on infants, showing that they have a minimal kind of self-awareness just after the birth. I believe that this is relevant for Zahavi, about which we can say a few words. These will be quick sketches, which will be helpful for us in our criticism and also in my construction of the problem thereafter. When I will come to unconsciousness, I will also present the case called blind sight, because Zahavi himself uses these studies to show that his account is not affected by the findings of blind sight experiments.

Self-awareness in Infants

A minimal account of self-consciousness seems to be supported by recent data of developmental studies on infants, which challenge the old psychological views of newborn infants that their experiences are states of "confusion, unrelatedness,

undifferentiation, or fusion of the infant in regard to the environment.”¹⁴⁷ But contrary to William James, who thinks that infants at birth show no signs of being able to discriminate between self- and non-self-stimulation, or Freud, claiming that infants manifest biological impulses of Id and act towards immediate pleasure, rather than manifesting a sign of (Ego) Me¹⁴⁸, Rochat’s experiments show that right after birth the infants have the ability to differentiate between self- and nonself-simulation.¹⁴⁹ They have unified perception of the world, being able to have intermodal perception (using information gained by one system use by another system), opposing the view of Piaget that new-born infants have independently working sense-modalities and thus could not pick up different sense information as belonging to themselves, or perceive their body parts as belonging to themselves. They are capable of proprioception, and their actions are not reflex-like or stimulus-dependent, but include volition.¹⁵⁰ They are aware of their own affectivity, that they know that their body is animated and that they have an effect on the world; and it is clear to them that their body is one differentiated entity from other things.¹⁵¹

Furthermore, infants are also able recognize their own visual perspective (the online image on TV of their visual experience) and able to distinguish it from an observer’s perspective, and also from a non-possible perspective at 5 months of age, so that Rochat claims that the infants can suggest how their experience should be

¹⁴⁷ Philippe Rochat, *The Infants World* (Cambridge, Massachussets: Harvard University Press, 2004), (kindle version), location 373. As it is an kindle e-book and it doesn’t have page numbers, I will show the quotations through location numbers, which I will shorten as “loc.”

¹⁴⁸ Rochat, *Infants*, loc. 365

¹⁴⁹ They are able to discriminate someones hand touching their mouth and their own had which is to be touched to their mouth. Rochat, *Infants*, loc. 493

¹⁵⁰ Rochat, *Infants*, loc. 493

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, loc. 597

like. They are also able to match their kinesthetic action with visual action¹⁵², and they seem to be aware of the power of their body, through learning their self-efficacy and self-efficiency and affectivity of their body in the world.¹⁵³

Maybe one might say that we don't need to show the experimental proofs for all these facts, which can be observed by everyone raising a child, but sometimes it is helpful to remind ourselves of some seemingly trivial facts, when trying to develop a philosophical theory.

In any event, one might reply that these are very fundamental notions, like learning, which is present nearly in all organisms, and proprioception and volition are also very fundamental for many organisms, and although infants might be showing quantitatively higher levels and more variability of these abilities, these should still count qualitatively the same. But this is the question actually, if one can explain self-consciousness with such basic notions or not, although one might not find proper answers to this question, because we cannot isolate many factors in the development of an organism. But this should not prevent us to from asking if such minimal abilities are preliminary to self-consciousness, or if we should take self-consciousness as fundamentally different, and having different constitutive factors.

What phenomenologists say about minimal self-consciousness might correspond to basic features as such. Merleau-Ponty shows how we are always able to situate ourselves in our perceptions, and how we are acting by taking ourselves as the only reference point. This might be interpreted as an act-including self-

¹⁵² Infants can discriminate between their foot in black socks from similar foot in black cook, with the only difference that the image is not synchronous with their action. Rochat, *Infants* loc. 557

¹⁵³ It is showed through operant conditioning experiments that infants are "capable of being actively involved in learning and are sensitive to the connection between what they do (head turn) and what is happening in the environment" or through pointing to their learning ability. Rochat, *Infants*, loc. 755-683.

consciousness: “When I say that an object is on a table, I always mentally put myself either in the table or in the object, and I apply to them a category which theoretically fits the relationship of my body to external objects.”¹⁵⁴ So, there is no objective space but bodily space, no perception of space without the awareness of my place.

Kinesthetic behavior acts accordingly, through our awareness of our body parts, through our spatial position in relation to other objects. Zahavi also points out that through ipseity I surely know that I am the subject of my experiences, which is similar to the infant knowing its own perspective, its own body parts and its own actions. But needless to say, we take the infants not to be self-conscious as we are, and Zahavi knows that, but he nonetheless claims that the core self is prior to any understanding of such self-consciousness. Thus, if we take these as corresponding to what Zahavi means, at least partly, then we need to say that these are necessary for self-consciousness, and we would need to say that these play the essential role for self-consciousness. The developmental way to examine this is going through the forming of self-consciousness, and to see if it is a development of these features or of other features. And note that this is also philosophically crucial, if we are looking for the essential properties of our sense of Self and self-consciousness, or if we are looking for their necessary (and sufficient) conditions. For example, one might take awareness of self-effectivity and volition as a primitive form of agency. Strawson is especially interested in the development of children. When he discusses what kind of notion of Self-experience should he appreciate, while doing his analysis about the relationship between Self-experience and self-consciousness, he contrasts his high-end notion of Self-experience, which does not come with every conscious experience, with the Damasian low-end notion of Self-experience, which says that all

¹⁵⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, p. 117

evolved conscious experience incorporates Self-experience, and Strawson then points up our inability to determine the dividing line between our Self-experience and the Self-experience in infants and animals.

Could there be a true continuum of cases? The question arises forcefully when we consider the cognitive development of children. On the one hand, there is pressure to think that there must be some sort of sudden passage, of the sort imagined by Kant, as young Karl passes from feeling himself to thinking himself. On the other hand, Wittgenstein's remark that light dawns gradually over the whole seems apposite... There is in any case a real question about the character of the internal phenomenology of the developing child.¹⁵⁵

In a similar fashion, Rochat asks "how infants eventually develop an awareness of themselves as recognizable entities from the early intermodal sense of the body and self-efficacy" and tries to understand "the origins of an ability to perceive oneself not only as a differentiated entity that perceives and acts, but also as an object of reflection and recognition (the conceptual self)... the idea and specification of me"¹⁵⁶, and examines the changes the infant undergoes by having experiences with mirrors, by exploring their own bodies, by exploring themselves as agents by constantly trying to have effects on objects in the world, by becoming objects of an audience, by understanding others and by using the knowledge they get about the world in general on themselves."¹⁵⁷ The important thing is, Rochat investigates all of these, by trying to understand the "mechanisms underlying the objectification of self."¹⁵⁸

Zahavi would not say anything about the role of social factors on our development of self; actually social understanding and intersubjectivity is a crucial

¹⁵⁵ Strawson, *Selves*, p. 210

¹⁵⁶ Rochat, *Infants*, loc. 791

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, loc. 800

topic in phenomenology, which is investigated with subjectivity under one roof. Husserl thinks of the process of self-alienation positively, and he says that personhood is constituted intersubjectively, and that sometimes one needs to approach oneself as an Other. Reflection and Objectification is valuable in so far as they give rise to a new self, rather than the original self, but this is the reason why it is valuable, instead of copying the already existing self. But again, he would be against the idea that these factors are the real constitutive causes of self-consciousness, as if “I” appeared through objectification, or language (as in a narrative theory of self), without considering the experiential self.¹⁵⁹ I believe that he would take the self essentially as a development of lower level mechanisms of selfhood, and although he emphasizes the role of other persons and the Other-ing method one uses towards oneself, he still thinks that this minimum selfhood is prior to the later developed objective person.

Going back to our questions, which I have sketched out as problems with a phenomenological view, I will now look to the second one, that we should approach unconsciousness. It is important for a theory about consciousness or unconsciousness to get a of with dealing with unconsciousness.

¹⁵⁸ Rochat, loc. 780

¹⁵⁹ Zahavi, Subjectivity, pp. 113,114

Unconsciousness

Any theory of consciousness should find a way of dealing with unconsciousness.¹⁶⁰ I don't want to say unconscious experience, because it seems as a paradoxical claim to start with, but it is clear that there is unconscious processing in ourselves going on all the time. We unconsciously perceive all kinds of sensory stimuli and are able to do very complex tasks. Also, we know that we use the information, which is attained unconsciously but shows itself in our behavior. We unconsciously learn, and subliminal effects on our behavior are not to be underestimated. We unconsciously form beliefs, and have unknown motivations as in the Freudian unconscious, about which we might become conscious just after an action or through introspection, and it is not uncommon with to come up with solutions through unconscious processes, as creativity is also seen as the result of intensive background thinking about a certain phenomenon, which just pops into your mind after some time, like physicist Loe Szilard who could come up with the basic ideas of a nuclear energy just when he was crossing the street.¹⁶¹

Mentioning these, even superficially, is helpful, because these are important for a theory of consciousness, which should deal with unconscious processes. Thus, the question is if such facts about the human nature would challenge Zahavi's view, that we are always pre-reflectively conscious, that there is always mine-ness in the experience. We can also ask, if these cases supports Strawson's view that I am essentially a pure cognitive point of view.

¹⁶⁰ One at least needs to show why there is no unconsciousness and what the difference between seemingly unconscious processes and conscious processes are.

¹⁶¹ Susan J. Blackmore, *Consciousness: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). pp. p. 272

Blind sight

Blind sight is an extreme case of neglected perception , where the patient sees, although he is unaware that he is seeing.¹⁶² Interestingly, Zahavi and Gallagher felt the need to defend their views against blind sight, because these cases are used by Higher-Order Theories to support their theories.¹⁶³

Higher Order Theories' claim is that the blind sight patient has a non-conscious mental state, and this is the same mental state as the non-conscious mental state of a healthy human being, where the problem of the former is that he lacks a higher-order thought (or a higher-order perception as in Armstrong's Higher Order Perception theory), which makes us aware of the non-conscious state. Rosenthal even claims that a non-conscious mental state has distinctive qualitative properties, which give their what-it-is-likeness, and we can only experience these when we have a higher-order thought directed to that state. Another unacceptable conclusion of such an approach for a phenomenological approach is that there is nothing intrinsic to the mental state directed to the visual stimulus, which makes it conscious rather than non-conscious.

Gallagher and Zahavi oppose this view, by asking if the mental state in question is the same in both situations, and asking why the subject cannot "simply

¹⁶² The phenomenon of blind sight has been famous with a study on the patient D.W, who experienced partial blindness after a portion of his visual cortex is removed by surgery, that he could not see the objects placed in his blind area, or at least this was his claim. But after experiments done by Weiskrantz, it has been observed that the patient could locate the stimuli in the frontal plane, he could differentiate orientation of lines, he could guess if a shown circle was horizontally lined or vertically lined, and he was also doing other various things showing he has perceived right, whereas he was always claiming that he could not see anything. Blackmore, *Consciousness*, pp. 263-265; Gallagher and Zahavi, *Phenomenological*, pp. 57-60

¹⁶³ Gallagher and Zahavi, *Phenomenological*, p. 57

direct a HOT at it and make it conscious.”¹⁶⁴ The patient indeed tries to direct a higher-order thought on that state but cannot be successful by making it conscious. Thus, Zahavi and Gallagher conclude that there should be something special about the non-conscious mental sensory state that prevents higher-order access to it, something differentiating it from a conscious sensory state, other than HOT.

Actually, I think that a Higher-Order Theory can survive such objections as they take the higher-order states normally accompanying the first-order mental states. It might be thus argued that the higher-order state is normally passive, but activated only in conscious states, which activation is missing in a blind sight subject. One can take the second-order state as having a non-contingent relationship with the first-order mental state, maybe even constituting one mental state together, rather than taking the second-order state as extrinsic to first-order state (as it is in Self-Representational Theories), so that it stands closer to a Self-Representational Theory. But in any case, such views are also not be accepted by phenomenologists, as the consciousness is still taken as an extrinsic property. The main problem is that consciousness is explained through our access to the state as in Ned Block’s access consciousness.¹⁶⁵

But a distinction should be noted, that as Rosenthal claims that a non-conscious state has a specific phenomenal quality (this means that this state is phenomenally conscious, but only lacks the subjective character of selfhood, which makes it special for a subject), Block claims that phenomenal character is established through access, so that a blind sight patient has access consciousness in some way but he doesn’t have phenomenal consciousness. In any event, both alternatives causes problems for the phenomenological view, because we either have a subjectless phenomenal

¹⁶⁴ Gallagher and Zahavi, *Phenomenological*, p. 58

¹⁶⁵ See Introduction for a definition of access consciousness.

consciousness, or a state the phenomenal quality of which is given through our access to it.

For Gallagher and Zahavi, these are unacceptable, as we have showed through the thesis, but are also not real objections against their theory. Firstly, “the account of pre-reflective self-consciousness was never meant to provide a causal account of what makes a mental state conscious.” This seems disappointing at the first sight, because understanding the nature of self-consciousness seems to go through an explanation of it, but what they mean is different:

...it is not the case that there are mental states waiting to become conscious, and requiring only the addition of pre-reflective self-consciousness. Rather, the account of pre-reflective self-consciousness is a description of a constitutive aspect of a conscious mental state. If a mental state is conscious, that mental state will involve a pre-reflective self-consciousness. So the claim is not that if we simply add a pre-reflective self-consciousness to the non-conscious mental state it will suddenly become conscious.¹⁶⁶

At this point I will return to our third problem, if the phenomenological account is an explanation of self-consciousness at all, as it does not give an explanation of self-consciousness. It isn't an explanation, if we want to explain why a state is unconscious, because the phenomenological theory does not explain why a state is conscious, but is an explanation by explaining consciousness as something which doesn't need explanation for its existence.

We should not forget that something which might cause a problem in one framework might not cause a problem in the other one. The questions which are asked might differ in different paradigms, and it seems to me that phenomenology is founded upon such a worldview that there is really no problem of the existence of consciousness. Is it a disadvantage? Not really, because equally one might say that

the naturalistic approach also takes it for granted that consciousness is a complex phenomenon and not to be found at the lower level, not one of the basic principles of the universe, although this view is being challenged by many physicists. Thus, Zahavi also accuses Rosenthal of trying to make a theory of consciousness compatible with the naturalistic framework, which is founded upon many unquestioned presuppositions, like their view of consciousness' place in nature and what counts as an explanation. But according to Zahavi phenomenology presents a better picture of consciousness, self and self-consciousness, by giving phenomenal analyses, without really sticking to presupposed premises or to a specific ontological framework. In this sense, the phenomenological account is not only description, but also explanation. There is a related problem between Zahavi and Metzinger, who has the slogan-like claim that self is an illusion. His basic claim is that consciousness is the appearance of the world, and we are actually representations in this appearance, where consciousness situates you in this virtual world. So, our body is a reality machine, showing what is real, so that all of the phenomenal qualities of the world belong to our experience, rather than the world, presenting a representationalist view. And we, as being unaware that what we experience is not the real world but just the appearance of it, are like Plato's captives taking the shadows as reality. We are normally unaware that we are also representations in this virtual world, until being a self-conscious being, which enables us to experience ourselves as selves in this world, which is actually also a representation. Thus, in addition to the appearance of the world a self also appears, but we should actually understand from this that we are also representations in this virtual world. In conclusion, we are also illusions and

¹⁶⁶ Gallagher and Zahavi, *Phenomenological*, p. 60

normally no one is living in this Ego Tunnel, towards which a world appears to us.¹⁶⁷

Keeping it short, Zahavi accuses Metzinger of sticking to a specific notion of self:

Granted that this is true, why does Metzinger adopt a no-self doctrine, why does he take the self to be an illusion? Why does he not rather argue like Churchland, who writes, “The brain makes us think that we have a self. Does that mean that the self I think I am is not real? No, it is as real as any activity of the brain. It does mean, however, that one’s self is not an ethereal bit of “soul stuff.”¹⁶⁸

Metzinger is committed to a classical conception of self as an unchanging and independent substance which could exist all by itself in isolation from the rest of the world, and by showing that this is not the case, he shows that there is no self. But the notion of self is equivocal and used very differently among philosophers and psychologists; and one can actually think of a self in the phenomenological way, which gives a better description of the phenomenon.¹⁶⁹

In our topic of unconsciousness, Gallagher and Zahavi also claim that they do not just better describe self-consciousness and the sense of Self, but they are also better by explaining the neuroscience of blindsight: “the most reasonable explanation of the blindsight subject’s lack of visual experience is likely to be found on the neuronal level rather than on the level of higher-order thought.”¹⁷⁰ In our case, the subject has experienced a damage in an area, which is essential for the generation of visual consciousness. Thus, Gallagher and Zahavi claim, we don’t really have visual experience, while the other brain areas are continuing to process visual information and to function to inform subject’s motor behaviors and his guesses, pointing to all of our unconscious processes. And although we might not know about all our mental

¹⁶⁷ Metzinger, *Ego*, pp. 1-20

¹⁶⁸ Dan Zahavi, “Being Someone”, *Psyche* 11, No: 5, (June 2005), p. 8

¹⁶⁹ Zahavi, *Someone*, p.8

processes, this doesn't change the fact that if there is a conscious experience in my mind, it is totally transparent to me, so that I know it from within.

One should distinguish between the claim that our consciousness is characterized by an immediate self-awareness and self-luminosity, and the claim that consciousness is characterized by total self-awareness. One can easily accept the first and reject the latter, i.e one can argue in favor of the existence of a pervasive self-awareness and still take self-comprehension to be an infinite task.¹⁷¹

Saying that there are many mental processes in our mental life of which we are not attended to, that we are not fallible, that our actions are motivated by previous experiences of which we are no longer conscious, that our present experience has aspects and in depth-structures which we cannot know or experience through direct comprehension or even through reflection and that our experiences might be conditioned by neurophysiological processes to which we have no first-person access is one thing and saying that we are currently having experiences such as perceptions, thoughts, feelings, etc., of which we have no consciousness is another, which are not mutually exclusive.

It is absurd to think of ourselves as normally living in a cloud of countless unconscious beliefs, as if these were "like a fish in a sea which only occasionally surface"¹⁷², and we have the belief consciously only when it pops out and thought of explicitly. It is equally absurd to conceive of one constantly thinking about facts about life, oneself, or about ones general attitude towards others. So, there is more to the subjectivity than the actual experience, and it is appropriate to think of hatred, for example, as a transcendent unity, as a matrix that organizes and relates a number of actual experiences to each other" and to give a dispositional account of our habits,

¹⁷⁰ Gallagher and Zahavi, *Phenomenological*, p. 60

¹⁷¹ Zahavi, *Alterity*, p. 211

interests and convictions. What he is against is not unconscious, but simply a special reifying interpretation of it, to locate unconscious on the surface level, by attaching it to perceptions, wishes, beliefs and feelings, as being fully covered intentional acts.¹⁷³

We should also not take dreamless sleep as unconscious in the sense of meaning negation of subjectivity, it is not nothing and thus not non-existence, but rather a “complete non-differentiation,” a sameness without difference, the zero limit of conscious vitality.”¹⁷⁴ It is only unconscious in the sense that no intentional action takes place, but it is still undifferentiated experience.

Under this unhappiness with a Freudian kind of unconsciousness lies the phenomenological idea that the self manifests itself and it is better to try to understand how it reveals it, instead of trying to rely on reflection or introspection, to find out the motivations under my behavior. We are aware of our emotions and feelings not through thematic reflection, but they show themselves by affecting my behavior directly, which I experience directly with a first-personal experience. Although it is a more sensory feeling, Sartre explains the manifestation of our pain in such a way: If I have read a book and my eyes are tired, I know that I am in pain not with introspection, rather I know because the pain manifests itself as vision-in-pain, manifesting itself in my vision, prohibiting me from reading more.

Unconsciousness deserves its name by its property of being subjective, but not objective, and it manifests itself through the first-person perspective, in whatever form of experience. So, reflection should not be taken as the primary mode of reflection and it should not be hoped that it can uncover the deepest layers of subjectivity, rather, the problem of unconsciousness can be solved through an

¹⁷² Zahavi, *Alterity*, p. 211

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 212

analysis of lived present, under a phenomenological study of the unconsciousness, according to Husserl.¹⁷⁵

Conclusion

We have seen the uneasiness with the notion of unconsciousness in general and with introspection as a proper way to understand ourselves. The aim of phenomenology is to exclude a specific understanding of unconsciousness from our general framework (just like the other aim, which is excluding a specific notion of self-consciousness) so that the need to explain the fundamental transition from unconscious to conscious experience is removed, and the experiential transparency of self is established.

I believe that both Strawson and Zahavi create a core notion of Self, so that all the conclusions necessarily follow this definition. As Strawson starts with a mental self, which is a pure cognizer, Zahavi starts with pre-reflective self-conscious self, which is an experiential dimension of experience. By the nature of Strawson's self, we leave the features like personality, diachronic singularity and agency, while Zahavi easily saves his selfhood from reflection, objectification and anything which can block its contact with experiences. Because Strawson's sense of Self is pure thought, or the cognitive element structuring an experience, it cannot be dependent on non-cognitive experiences, Zahavi's selfhood is secure because by nature it cannot become an object, and because one cannot really grasp the subjectivity of another in its first-personal givenness. In this sense, their selves are principles.

¹⁷⁴ Zahavi, *Alterity*, p. 208

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 208

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: RESTRUCTURING THE PROBLEM

Can we explain self-consciousness through what we have said so far? Is it enough to emphasize original subjectivity and explain self-consciousness as self-manifestation, and give importance to the minimal form of selfhood? Let's try to structure the problem again, and try to establish the connections and see what is left to say about self-consciousness.

The problem of self-consciousness is spread into different parts. Firstly, any theory of self-consciousness should have something to say about the development of self-consciousness. It is a fact that it is a learned thing, and it is developmentally established. This is a trivial fact but we know that an infant not properly cared for, who does not get into social interaction and learn to speak, cannot develop a sense of Self and he is not self-conscious in the sense we are. It is not easy to picture the development and decide which one of the factors play greater role, which might be unnatural and arbitrary, but I find such an attempt necessary to determine the essential conditions for a minimum genuine¹⁷⁶ sense of Self, as far as it is possible, which was mainly the task of Strawson. In this sense, a relevant question should be this: Is the minimal sense of Self essential for the development of human sense of Self and full self-consciousness?

Strawson also asks this question, and then asks the question from the other way around: Is self-consciousness necessary for a sense of Self? He tries to first

¹⁷⁶ Minimal but having the general properties of our fully developed sense of Self; supposing of course that there is no more developed sense of Self .

establish the minimum sense of Self with his Whittling Argument, by first presenting all the features of the human sense of Self, whittling away all the unessential conditions, so that he reaches a minimum sense of Self, as an answer to the general phenomenological question, which was basically our topic in Chapter 2. The other part of his inquiry, which we haven't talked, consists of a Building Argument, that is building the core conditions for a genuine self-consciousness. Strawson at the same time tries to answer the two questions, if self-consciousness is necessary for a sense of Self, and vice versa. This is such a hard job, because on the both sides of the relation lie variables, and while we don't know the nature of either one, it is not so clear, if we can investigate the nature of both notions. Maybe it is better, because one can check both sides as one moves on, and see what kind of sense of Self is relevant for self-consciousness, and see what kind of self-consciousness is effective for a sense of Self. Developmentally, it is harder to understand their relations, which requires finding out which of them exists temporally earlier, where common sense says that Self occurs earlier. (However, if we distinguish the machine self and Me, then one might say that Me occurs after acquiring the ability of self-consciousness.)

Such a distinction doesn't make much sense for Zahavi, who cannot take them separately, but there are lots of supporters for this idea, while, for example, seeing animals and infants as having Selves, it is assumed that they are not self-conscious, which occurs later.¹⁷⁷ But one should not leave out the other option quickly, because maybe thought that the ability of self-consciousness can give rise to a sense of Self. I will say why, after introducing the latter problem.

Secondly, we have the problem about present self-consciousness: What does it mean to live self-consciously? What-it-is-like-to-be self-conscious and how should

we approach its nature? Do I have a constant reflexivity toward myself and my on-going experience? This means that self-consciousness is essentially something having a reflexive relation to itself, rather than essentially a sense of of Self, although the distinction can only be made theoretically. Thus, if we emphasize the first feature of self-consciousness, we should give an account of self-consciousness through a Self-Representative or Higher-Order Account, which illuminates the nature of this reflexivity and how is our moment-to-moment self-conscious experience possible? If we emphasize the latter feature, the Self, then we will not necessarily explain this feature of self-consciousness, but one might rather try to explain how one is aware of one's experiences, how one directs his attention etc. Of course, one can use Higher-Order Theories for such a job, but what I want to emphasize is a different thing. If you care about reflexivity, self-consciousness is taken as a kind of circularity, with the need of reflection. That's why the Mirror Recognition Test's are so popular. Self-consciousness is explained through the animal's confrontation with itself, as if something miraculous would happen at that moment, and a concept of Me would occur in the animal and he would start to act differently from that time on. However, for Zahavi, it is not much of a problem. He is interested in time-consciousness, which can be taken as an explanation of one's present self-consciousness, but as he generally takes self-consciousness as self-manifestation, the Self becomes self-conscious not through reflection, but through being in relation with the world, which is seemingly a linear act. Strawson also cares about sense of Self, but this doesn't mean that he doesn't find reflexivity as a problem. He talks of full self-consciousness as "figuring oneself expressly as oneself"¹⁷⁸, where it is not enough for one "to be

¹⁷⁷ See Lewis, *Myself*, pp. 1-10

¹⁷⁸ Strawson, *Selves*, loc. 1761

aware of oneself or one's features", but one should be able to be aware of oneself and also be aware that self is himself. However it is clear that reflexivity doesn't mean that you just see your image in mirror, as Strawson says, but you should take it as your body. So, it is reflexivity, as if one can have two selves at a time and relate them together, or one can simply take self-consciousness as an ability of reflection with developed sense of Self, which are the alternatives to be decided.

Going back to the first problem, now it is clear why self-consciousness might be taken prior to self. One can take the ability to reflect on oneself, which I have called reflexivity, as the essential cause leading to a developed Self. In this case, a properly developed Self, after acquiring this ability through some methods (which might be taken as language, mirrors and inter-subjectivity), can develop to a higher degree of self-consciousness.

I have a tendency to have such kind of a view, which emphasizes the role of objectification and reflection to "create" a self-conscious self. This is against Zahavi's idea in the sense that self-consciousness is taken as the ability to multiply oneself, to create a representation of itself, in a narration, in language through using different names, or through mirrors, which all help one to create a self. This means that one is essentially an objective self, because it has all the features Zahavi denies for an experiential and subjective self.

I don't think anyone would be surprised to hear that objectification creates the self, but it should be stated because there is the tendency in developmental psychology and phenomenology to overestimate the sense of Self in animals and infants, so that their minimal sense of Self is taken as the preliminary notion for the sense of Self we have as adult human beings., but "any view which doesn't make a distinction between this machinery of self and me, or between knowing and knowing

I know, will lead to a great confusion.”¹⁷⁹ What Zahavi takes for a minimal self is similar to Lewis’ machinery of self, where the latter includes the features self-other discrimination and conservation of self across time and place. There is indeed a great emphasis on self-other discrimination in infants, but Lewis says that these two features are so fundamental for living beings that they are part of any complex system, being present from T-cells to human beings.¹⁸⁰ The former of these beings also needs to recognize and differentiate itself from a foreign proteins, so that it can be said that it is self-aware. Lewis says that any organism can respond the same way to the similar occurrences, while adapting to them, as in habituation, so that they can learn. And also for one to be able to reach to something, one needs to act as if there is an other in time-space. Lewis’ claim is that such features are built into the biological machinery and machine of self, which is constituted from these features, does not lead to the idea of Me.

I also believe that the minimum sense of self cannot be taken as the developmental condition for the sense of self and but rather objectification will be taken as an essential cause of self-consciousness developmentally, but not a cause of the existence of self-consciousness after it is developed. As we are self-conscious beings, we don’t need t reflect on ourselves to be self-conscious, but self-consciousness comes by itself, as our general way of being. In this way, it isn’t necessarily excluding the idea of self-manifestation in Zahavi, because once you are self-conscious, you are living through that way.

Thirdly, there is the general problem of subjectivity in an objective world, or consciousness in a materialistic framework, if these notions are taken in their

¹⁷⁹ Lewis, *Myself*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 22

broadest meanings. This might seem a question for physics or popular science (everyone seems to be interested in quantum physics and its relationship with consciousness nowadays), where consciousness and subjectivity should be understood through determining their place in nature. Physics and ontology can look for the place of these things in the world, which then should be compared with the findings of developmental psychology and evolutionary biology, to determine if the complex conscious organisms evolve or develop from lower conscious forms. Proper philosophical analysis might be helpful to make proper categorizations, although the difference between quantitative difference and qualitative difference between different degrees of consciousness is harder to decide for philosophy, without having established criteria as in empirical sciences.

Fourthly, state consciousness should be investigated, independent of our view if a default mental state should be taken as conscious or not. It is a fact that there are different degrees of awareness, and these should be investigated, again with a proper categorization, which seems to be a major problem in philosophy, a disagreement on what to call a conscious and a self-conscious mental state. This can be done best by comparing different species, especially human beings and great apes, and monkeys, which seem to have three different levels of self-conscious forms (in terms of creature consciousness), and especially the way the orangutans and chimpanzees live their subjectivity might give us some ideas of dividing lines.¹⁸¹ I am also curious about the difference between the pre-reflective consciousness of a monkey, orangutan and human being¹⁸²; if being self-conscious or not changes the way we

¹⁸¹ There are lots of psychological comparisons, but a study about phenomenal consciousness focusing on developmental psychology might find interesting ideas.

¹⁸² Monkeys cannot recognize themselves on mirrors while orangutans and human can do. See

experience our subjectivity on a pre-reflective level¹⁸³, where the answer is probably no, if we go in the phenomenological fashion and say that if there is self-consciousness, it is found within the experience, it is lived as such, but it is not the case that an experience is made self-conscious. It would also be the reason why we are always self-conscious, which shows that self-consciousness is essentially a sense of Self and it is established through creating a self-conscious sense of self, for which, but, a minimal sense of self is developmentally not necessary.

Sue Taylor Parker, Robert W. Mitchell and Maria L. Boccia, "Expanding Dimensions of The Self: Through The Looking Glass and Beyond", *Self-awareness in Animals and Humans: Developmental Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 1-20

¹⁸³ A curiosity which Nagel would have.

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