

**OLIVI ON CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE:
THE PHENOMENOLOGY, METAPHYSICS, AND EPISTEMOLOGY OF MIND'S REFLEXIVITY**
SUSAN BROWER-TOLAND

ABSTRACT: The theory of mind that medieval philosophers inherit from Augustine is predicated on the thesis that the human mind is essentially self-reflexive. This paper examines Peter John Olivi's (1248-1298) distinctive development of this traditional Augustinian thesis. The aim of the paper is three-fold. The first is to establish that Olivi's theory of reflexive awareness amounts to a theory of phenomenal consciousness. The second is to show that, despite appearances, Olivi rejects a higher-order analysis of consciousness in favor of a same-order theory. The third and final is to show that, on his view, consciousness is both self-intimating and infallible.

The theory of mind that medieval philosophers inherit from Augustine is predicated on the thesis that the human mind, in its nature and in its functioning, bears the image of the divine trinity. This thesis, which Augustine develops at length in the latter books of his *De Trinitate*, has at its core a picture of human intellect and human thought as essentially self-reflexive. Indeed, on the Augustinian picture, this self-reflexivity is the very locus of mind's trinitarian structure. And this is because, on Augustine's view, the human mind (*mens*) is such that it bears a three-fold relation to itself: "it always remembers itself, always understands itself, and always loves itself".¹ Among Augustine's medieval successors (as among current commentators) there is no consensus regarding either the proper interpretation of this thesis, or even the details of the cognitive theory attendant on (or required for) it. Even so, medieval philosophers accept the basic Augustinian thesis about the reflexivity of the mind and, likewise, generally agree that—whatever else it involves—such reflexivity entails that the mind (or intellect, or rational soul)² is such that it is aware of itself and (at least some of) its occurrent states. Indeed, because self-knowledge of this sort comes to be taken as essential to a proper account of the mind as the *imago Dei*, such knowledge comes to figure among the basic *explananda* in later medieval cognitive theory.³

¹ See, e.g., *De Trinitate* 14.9. This thesis is the conclusion at which Augustine arrives at end of book 10 of *De Trinitate* (see 10.18). However, he returns to it and further expounds it in book 14. English citations of *De Trinitate* are from Augustine, *The Trinity*, ed. J. E. Rotelle, tr. E. Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991). For further discussion of this thesis see Charles Brittain, "Intellectual Self-Knowledge," in E. Bermon and G. O'Daly (eds.), *Le De Trinitate de saint Augustin exégèse, logique et noétique* (Paris: Vrin, 2012), 322-39; Gerard O' Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 209-11. A brief précis of the whole of *De Trinitate* can be found in Mary Clark, "De Trinitate," in E. Stump and N. Kretzmann (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 91-102.

² Although, strictly speaking, these terms are not equivalent, the differences in their meanings are not salient here. In fact, Olivi himself often uses them interchangeably (see, for example, passage A below). In what follows, therefore, I shall move freely between them (and related adjectives).

³ To be sure, Augustine's *De Trinitate* is not the only source of influence on medieval discussions of self-knowledge. Other influential treatments include Aristotle's discussion of intellectual self-knowledge in *De Anima* (III.2 and 4), relevant portions of the *Liber de*

For the same reason, questions concerning the precise nature and scope of the mind's access to itself are widely discussed throughout the later medieval period. How does the mind reflexively cognize itself? Does such self-cognition depend on representational or inferential processes? Is awareness of one's states to be explained by the introduction of numerically distinct, higher-order acts of inner-awareness? Does reflexive-awareness extend to all one's subjective states—both dispositional and occurrent, sensory and intellective?⁴ Medieval discussions of these (and related) questions serve as one of the primary contexts for medieval theorizing about the nature of consciousness. Admittedly, to characterize medieval interest in mind's reflexivity in this way is to frame it in a terminology that, while familiar to us, is foreign to their own discussions.⁵ Still, the phenomena targeted in medieval treatments of mental reflexivity shares a great deal in common with what, in contemporary philosophy, goes under the heading of 'phenomenal consciousness'. What is more, the analyses medieval philosophers develop to account for mental reflexivity often bear a striking resemblance to those found in contemporary discussions of phenomenal consciousness. Or so it seems to me.

I cannot, in the space of a single paper, undertake to fully substantiate these broad remarks about the connections between medieval accounts of mind's reflexivity and contemporary discussions of consciousness. Nonetheless, I propose to make *some* progress on that project by taking a closer look at the treatment these issues receive in the work of one particularly influential late-medieval philosopher, Peter John Olivi (1248-

causis, as well as Avicenna's treatment of self-awareness in his *Liber de anima*. It is fair to say, however, that Augustine's *De Trinitate* is particularly authoritative—a fact which owes, no doubt, to the theological significance of his thesis about mind's reflexivity. For further discussion of the influence of Augustine's *De Trinitate* on later medieval philosophical psychology see Pekka Kärkkäinen, "Interpretations of the Psychological Analogy from Aquinas to Biel," in P. Kärkkäinen (ed.), *Trinitarian Theology in the Medieval West* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 2007), 256-79; John O'Callaghan, "Imago Dei: a Test Case for St. Thomas's Augustinianism," in M. Dauphinais, B. David, and M. Levering (eds.), *Aquinas the Augustinian* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 100-44; Edward Booth, "Saint Thomas Aquinas's Critique of Saint Augustine's Conceptions of the Image of God in the Human Soul," in J. Brachtendorf (ed.), *Gott und sein Bild: Augustins De Trinitate im Spiegel gegenwärtiger Forschung* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000), 219-40; and Burkhard Mojsisch, "Dietrich von Freiberg: ein originelle Rezipient der *Mens-* und *Cogitatio*-Theorie Augustinus," in J. Brachtendorf (ed.), *Gott und sein Bild: Augustins De Trinitate im Spiegel gegenwärtiger Forschung* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000), 241-48.

⁴ For an overview of medieval discussions of these issues see my "Self-Knowledge, Self-Consciousness, and Reflexivity," in R. Friedmann and M. Pickave (eds.) *Companion to Cognitive Theory in the Later Middle Ages* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, forthcoming).

⁵ Indeed, to my knowledge, medieval philosophers have no single Latin expression corresponding to our own term 'consciousness'. I do, however, think their usage of the term '*experior*' often expresses a kind of awareness that contemporary philosophers would associate with phenomenal consciousness. For a discussion of the history and etymology of the contemporary notion of 'consciousness' see the introductory essay in S. Heinämaa, V. Lähteenmäki, and P. Remeseds (eds.), *Consciousness: From Perception to Reflection in the History of Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007).

1298).⁶ In what follows, therefore, I trace the details of Olivi's account of the nature of reflexive awareness.⁷ I begin by identifying the various phenomena Olivi associates with mind's self-reflexivity (Section I). Here I argue that there are clear connections between his understanding of the phenomenological character of reflexive awareness and that associated with our own notion of 'phenomenal consciousness'. With these connections in mind, I then turn, in the remainder of the paper to his analysis of the metaphysical structure (Section II) and the epistemological status (Section III) of phenomenally conscious states.

1. Olivi on the Phenomena of Reflexivity: Consciousness and Subjectivity

In contemporary discussions, theories of "consciousness" often address very different sorts of mental phenomena. Much the same is true of medieval discussions of mind's reflexivity. Thus, despite widespread medieval acceptance of the thesis that mind or rational soul is self-reflexive, there is little or no consensus about the nature or proper characterization of the phenomena entailed by such reflexivity. For the same reason, any comparison between medieval discussions of reflexivity and contemporary discussions of consciousness requires clarity about the mental phenomena under consideration in both contexts. I want to begin, therefore, by getting clearer about the various types of psychological phenomena Olivi associates with the self-

⁶ For details about Olivi's biography and historical context see David Burr, "The Persecution of Peter Olivi," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 66 (1976) 3-98 and David Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the Usus Pauper Controversy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989). For an overview of Olivi's philosophical writings and distinctive positions see François-Xavier Putallaz, "Peter Olivi," in J. Garcia and T. Noone (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) and Robert Pasnau, "Peter John Olivi," in E. N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)* <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/olivi/>>. Finally, for a survey of Augustine's influence on Olivi see Juhana Toivanen, "Peter John Olivi," in W. Otten (ed.), *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

⁷ It is widely acknowledged that self-reflexivity is a prominent theme in Olivi's philosophy of mind; it runs through his treatment of the senses, the intellect, and even—indeed, especially—his theory of the will. For Olivi's account of reflexivity in the faculty of will see Mikko Yrjönsuuri, "Free Will and Self-Control in Peter Olivi," in H. Lagerlund and M. Yrjönsuuri (eds.), *Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes* (Dordrecht : Kluwer, 2002), 99-128. For reflexivity at the level of sense cognition see Juhana Toivanen, *Animal Consciousness: Peter Olivi on Cognitive Functions of the Sensitive Soul* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Jyväskylä, 2009) and Juhana Toivanen, "Perceptual Self-Awareness in Seneca, Augustine, and Olivi," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, forthcoming. Because of the emphasis Olivi places on reflexivity in his philosophical psychology he's more explicit than most regarding how he understands its central features—most notably its phenomenology. For the same reason, his account of reflexivity is particularly useful as a point of comparison to contemporary discussions of phenomenal consciousness.

reflexivity of the rational soul.⁸

Olivi, like most of his contemporaries, takes for granted that the reflexivity that characterizes the mind entails self-knowledge of two kinds, namely, (1) knowledge of itself and (2) knowledge of its own occurrent acts.⁹ Whereas, self-knowledge of the first sort involves reflexive awareness of oneself (or of one's own mind) knowledge of the second sort is reflexive awareness of a particular event or state that occurs within oneself. Although Olivi takes there to be a close connection between these two kinds of self-knowledge, it will be important to mark the difference between them. In what follows, therefore, I speak of the former as 'subject-reflexive' since it involves knowledge or awareness of oneself as the subject of thought; I speak of the latter as 'state-reflexive' since it is knowledge or awareness of a given state occurring within oneself.

a. Subject-reflexive Self-Knowledge: Nature and Types:

Olivi identifies a variety of different types of reflexive awareness associated with each of these two broad categories of self-knowledge. In connection with subject-reflexive knowledge for example, he distinguishes between (1a) a quasi-perceptual or experiential mode of knowing one's own mind or soul, and (1b) a conceptual or quidditive knowledge regarding the nature of a mind or rational soul in general.¹⁰

⁸ Olivi does not suppose that reflexive awareness is unique to intellectual faculties. Indeed, he's quite explicit that even in the case of non-human animals there is a minimal (*semiplene*) form of self-reflexive awareness associated with sensory cognition. In the case of humans, however, he holds reflexive awareness (even of sensory states) owes ultimately to the intellect. See below, nn. 12 and 23.

⁹ In calling the intellect's knowledge of itself "self-knowledge", I do not mean to commit myself to the view that Olivi identifies the human person (i.e., that to which the first person pronoun refers) exclusively with the rational soul. Indeed, I suspect this is not the case. However, because Olivi's account of the metaphysics of human beings—and, in particular, his account of the soul, its parts, and their various relations to the body—is extremely complicated, and because nothing in my discussion requires taking a stand on these matters, I set them to one side. Detailed treatment of Olivi's account of the soul and its relation to the body can be found in Robert Pasnau, "Olivi on the Metaphysics of the Soul," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997) 109-32. For discussion of Olivi's notion of self and self-hood, see Mikko Yrjönsuuri, "Locating the Self Within the Soul—Thirteenth-Century Discussions," in P. Remes and J. Sihvola (eds.), *Ancient Philosophy of the Self* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 225-41 and Mikko Yrjönsuuri, "Types of Self-Awareness in Medieval Thought," in V. Hirvonen, T.J. Holopainen and M. Tuominen (eds.), *Mind and Modality: Studies in the History of Philosophy in Honor of Simo Knuuttila* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 153-69; Sylvain Piron, "L'expérience subjective selon Pierre de Jean Olivi," in O. Boulnois (ed.), *Généalogies du sujet: de saint Anselme à Malebranche* (Paris: Vrin, 2007), 43-54.

¹⁰ This distinction is not unique to Olivi. Aquinas, to take just one example, draws a similar distinction in his treatment of self-knowledge at *De veritate* 10.8c and *Summa theologiae* I.87.1c. (Interestingly, despite the fact that Olivi is clearly aware (and critical) of Aquinas's discussion, he fails to note that Aquinas marks the very same sort of distinction—a failure which vitiates much of his critique of Aquinas's views.) Very likely, the distinction has its source in *De Trinitate* 10, where Augustine—as part of a solution to a paradox of self-inquiry—distinguishes between two kinds of self-knowledge: (i) mind's subjective

The following passage, which contains Olivi's most explicit and most detailed characterization of each of these two modes of subject-reflexive knowledge, is worth quoting at length:

[A] It should be recognized that the soul [*anima*] knows (or can know) itself in two ways. The first (1a) is in the manner of an experiential perception—similar, in a way, to touch [*per modum sensus experimentalis et quasi tactualis*]. In this way, the soul senses with complete certainty that it exists, lives, thinks, wills, sees, hears, and moves the body and likewise concerning other acts of which it knows and senses itself to be the principle and subject. And this is so inasmuch as there is no object and no act that it can occurrently know or consider without it always thereupon knowing and sensing itself to be the subject of the very act by which it knows and considers that thing. Accordingly, in its act of thinking, it always shapes the force of this proposition: 'I know this' or 'I opine this' or 'I have a doubt about this'. And the soul has this knowledge of itself through the immediate inward turn of its intellectual gaze [*per immediatam conversionem sui intellectualis aspectus*] upon itself and upon its acts. Indeed, so long as one is vigilant in use of free choice of the will, it remains always and continually turned inward upon the soul. Nevertheless, because the essential characteristics and properties of the soul are not sufficiently clear to everyone, they must be distinguished and studied. Thus, although the mind [*mens*] senses and feels itself immediately through itself, it does not, nevertheless, know its nature by *genera* and *differentia* so as to distinguish it from all other things by the *genera* and *differentia* of those other things. ... The second way (1b) of knowing itself is via discursive reasoning. Through this reasoning it investigates the *genus* and *differentia*, which it does not know by means of the first way of knowing itself. ... [In this reasoning process] it begins first from those things that it grasps about itself through the first way of knowing and holds these as primary, infallible, and indubitable principles—for example, that it is a living thing, and that it is the principle and subject of all the aforementioned acts.¹¹

awareness of its own existence and occurrent activities and (ii) its knowledge of the nature of minds in general. For further discussion of the relationship between Olivi and Aquinas's views on mind's knowledge of itself see François-Xavier Putallaz, *La connaissance de soi au XIIIe siècle: de Matthieu d'Aquasparta à Thierry de Freiberg* (Vrin: Paris, 1991), ch. 2, and Christian Rode, "Der Begriff der inneren Erfahrung bei Petrus Johannis Olivi," *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 13 (2008) 123-41. For an illuminating discussion of Augustine's account of the mind's search for itself in *De Trinitate*, see Gareth Matthews, "Augustine on Mind's Search for Itself," *Faith and Philosophy* 20 (2003) 415-29.

¹¹ *Summa* II, q. 76 (III, 146-47). The critical edition of Olivi's question-commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard is published in several volumes. My discussion draws from several questions from book two of this work, which is published in *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum [=Summa II]*, ed. B. Jansen (Florence: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1922-26).

As this passage makes clear, on Olivi's view, these two modes of subject-reflexive awareness differ both in their content and in the means by which they come to be possessed. Thus, in the first case, (1a) the mind's awareness of itself is both *de se* (that is, *essentially* and *exclusively* self-directed) and utterly immediate. As Olivi explains, one is directly acquainted with oneself as the "principle and subject" of one's various mental states (e.g., thinking and willing) and bodily activities (e.g. seeing and hearing).¹² Although this sort of subject-reflexive knowledge is characteristic of the mind or rational soul, Olivi relies on metaphors involving sensory modes of awareness to illuminate its nature. Such metaphors are, I take it, intended to illustrate both the immediacy as well as the non-conceptual, non-propositional nature of such knowledge.¹³ Indeed, as his remarks in text A make clear, this sort of experiential subject-reflexive knowledge lacks any sort of conceptual or cognitive structure: "the mind *senses* and *feels* itself immediately through itself". The mind is, in other words, aware of *itself* via direct experience of its occurrent thoughts and activities. For clarity, in what follows, I refer to this first type of awareness as 'experiential' subject-reflexive awareness.

By contrast with this immediate and *experiential* awareness of one's self or mind, subject-reflexive knowledge of the second type, (1b), is

¹² That subject-reflexive awareness includes awareness of oneself as the subject of both sensory as well as intellective states is something to which Olivi calls attention in a number of other contexts as well. In all such contexts Olivi explains the existence and unitary nature of the soul's subject-reflexive awareness as a function of its intellective power. Cf. *Summa* II, q. 51 (II, 122): "We sense within ourselves, through intimate and perfectly certain experience, that the sensory part is restrained, ruled, and directed by the superior [intellective] part as something intimately implanted in its nature. Its being implanted at the root of our superior part (because that is the root of our subsisting part) is sensed to such an extent that the superior part itself intimately senses and declares that the acts of the sensory part are its own. Thus it says, 'it is I who understands, sees, and eats'." In general, Olivi seems appeals to the highest power in the soul (e.g., the common sense in non-rational animals, the intellect in humans) as the source of the unity of its subject-reflexive awareness. For further discussion of this point see Juhana Toivanen, "Peter Olivi on Internal Senses," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15, 3 (2007): 427-454. See also passage D and n. 23 below.

¹³ Olivi's use of sensory metaphors in passage A to characterize intellect's self-reflexive awareness is typical. See, for example the passage cited from q. 51 in n. 12 just above as well as the text cited in passage B below. Similar language can be found in his discussion at *Summa* II, q. 74 (III, 126): "cum quis sentit se scire et videre et amare, ipse sentit tunc identitatem et, ut sic loquar, suitatem sui ipsius, in quantum cognitum et in quantum suppositum activum, ad se ipsum hoc advertentem et sentientem." Likewise, the comparison to a tactual modality of awareness is repeated elsewhere. Olivi's inclination to compare the intellect's reflexive awareness to the sense modality of touch is not surprising since, on his view, the sense of touch is itself a self-reflexive mode of awareness. See Mikko Yrjönsuuri, "Perceiving One's Own Body," in S. Knuutila and P. Kärkkäinen (eds.), *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 101-16 and Toivanen, *Animal Consciousness*, 299-308. In a passage from Olivi's *Impugnatio quorundam articulorum Arnaldi Galliardi [= Impugnatio]*, he characterizes the intellect's experiential subject-reflexive awareness not only in terms of a "tactual mode" of awareness, but also as a kind of "very bleary-eyed, obscure" sort of vision. (*Noster enim apprehendit se et substantiam mentis nostre quasi per modum tactus, aut quasi per modum visus valde lippiet caliginosi...*) See *Impugnatio* 19.16.

distinctly conceptual or thought-like in nature. It is, as Olivi characterizes it, intellectual knowledge of the very nature of the mind itself—its “essential character and properties” (or *genus* and *differentia*). Acquiring such knowledge requires both “discursive reasoning” and “investigation”. One begins, Olivi claims, from experiential awareness of one’s own mind and, *via* rational investigation, eventually arrives at knowledge of the *quiddity* or the very definition of mind.¹⁴ Unlike the first sort of subject-reflexive self-knowledge, this quidditive self-knowledge is neither direct (since it is mediated by conceptual and inferential processes) nor exclusively self-directed. Its content applies to minds in general—not just one’s own. In this sense, quidditive self-knowledge is a type of access one has to one’s mind *via* a description or definition of minds in general. Although not distinctively first-personal in nature, Olivi, nevertheless, counts this as a type of subject-reflexive self-knowledge since to know the essence or quiddity of mind in general is to know the very nature of *one’s own* mind.

b. State-Reflexive Self-Knowledge: Nature and Types

When it comes to *state*-reflexive self-knowledge, it is more difficult to find a single passage in which Olivi explicitly considers the character and types of knowledge mind has of its own states. We may begin, however, by considering what passage A above already suggests about Olivi’s views on the nature of state-reflexive knowledge.

For starters, it is clear that Olivi takes for granted not only that we possess knowledge or awareness of a wide range of our occurrent states, but also that such *state*-reflexive awareness is always accompanied by experiential *subject*-reflexive awareness. As we have already noted, he holds that it is precisely in virtue of being aware of one’s occurrent mental states that one is immediately, subjectively aware of one’s own mind. Thus, in passage A, he insists “there is no object and no act that it can occurrently know or consider without it always thereupon knowing and sensing itself to be the subject of the very act by which it knows and considers that thing”. On his view, then, state-reflexive self-knowledge—*whatever* form it takes—is such that it always includes, constitutively as we’ll see, subject-reflexive awareness of this sort. This is something Olivi emphasizes in a variety of contexts, but his remarks in the following passage are representative in this regard:

[B] I never apprehend my acts (for example, acts of seeing, speaking, and so on) except by apprehending myself seeing, hearing, thinking, and so on. And, it would seem that, in the natural order, an

¹⁴ Following Augustine, Olivi holds the mind’s search for *quiddative* self-knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the nature of one’s mind) presupposes that it already knows itself in some way. Thus, for example, in *De Trinitate* 10.6, Augustine argues that: “Since the mind, in seeking what mind is, knows that it is seeking itself, it follows that it knows that it is itself a mind.”

apprehension of the subject itself is prior to this apprehension. And for this reason when we want to convey these states to others, we do so in a way that presupposes a subject by saying “I think this” or “I see this” (and so on with other cases). ... For we apprehend our acts only as being predicated or attributed to us. Indeed, when we apprehend our acts by a certain inner and quasi-experiential awareness, we distinguish between the acts themselves and the substance on which they depend and in which they exist. Thus, we are perceptibly aware that these acts are derived from and dependent on a substance and not the other way around, [for we perceive] that the substance is fixed and permanent in itself, whereas the acts are continuously in the making.¹⁵

Here, Olivi begins by arguing for the connection between state- and subject-reflexive awareness by appealing to the phenomenology of his own experience: “I never apprehend my acts (for example, acts of seeing, speaking, and so on) except by apprehending *myself* seeing, hearing, cognizing, and so on.” As further evidence for subject-reflexive character of state-reflexive awareness, Olivi points to the fact that we can and do report the occurrence of our mental states using first-person attributions: “I think this”, “I see that”. And, while Olivi thinks that our subjective experience of our states is such that we can distinguish phenomenologically between the mental act and our soul as its subject, nevertheless, awareness of the former never occurs without some implicit awareness of the latter. Indeed, the subject-reflexive, or first-personal character of state-reflexive awareness is a feature that characterizes even our experience of sensory activities and states. And this is because, as he explains, “the superior part itself intimately senses and declares that the acts of the [lower] sensory part are its own. Thus it says, ‘it is I who understands, sees, and eats’.”¹⁶

Olivi’s insistence on the connection between state-reflexive and subjective subject-reflexive awareness owes, ultimately, to his views about the nature of the mind itself. Olivi holds, as a metaphysical thesis, that the mind is a power whose very nature is characterized by a kind of permanent self-orientation or self-directedness. Thus, in a number of places, Olivi describes the mind as “always and continually turned inward” and, hence, as the ever-present object of its own “reflexive” or “inwardly turned” regard. This innate metaphysical or structural self-reflexivity is, on Olivi’s view, both distinct from and prior to episodic acts of subject- and state-reflexive awareness. That it is distinct is evident not only from his emphasis on its being a fixed, or permanent feature of the

¹⁵ *Impugnatio* 19.11. See also Olivi, *Summa* II, q. 59 (II, 540): “It is a natural apprehension by which, through reason, I apprehend myself seeing and sensing just as, through reason, I apprehend myself understanding and willing, and do so in such a way that through reason I apprehend and sense that it is the same one who sees and understands, namely, me. This sense would be false, unless these actions were truly from the same subject which is called ‘I.’”

¹⁶ *Summa* II, q. 51 (II, 122).

mind as such, but also from the fact that, unlike subject- and state-reflexive awareness, such structural reflexivity does not, by itself, constitute any kind of experienced, or *phenomenal*, self-awareness.¹⁷ Rather, it is a non-cognitive feature of the mind that grounds or explains its capacity for occurrent acts of phenomenal self-awareness. Thus, Olivi claims in passage A above, for example, that the soul's experiential subject-reflexive awareness arises "through the immediate inward turn of its intellectual gaze on itself".¹⁸ Elsewhere, he claims that acts of state- and subject-reflexive awareness in general are "*caused* by the ever-recurrent actuality of the intellect's [orientation] toward itself and its knowing."¹⁹

¹⁷ If structural reflexivity amounted to phenomenally or consciously experienced self-awareness, each person would at all times be directly aware of her own soul. But I can find no evidence that Olivi thinks this is the case. What is more, his account of the two types of subject reflexive awareness seems to rule it out. After all, in that passage, Olivi allows for only two types of subject-reflexive awareness, experiential and quidditive. But neither of these two modes of subject-reflexive awareness constitutes an innate, permanent, phenomenally conscious grasp of one's self or soul.

¹⁸ Olivi habitually characterizes the mind's innate self-reflexivity as a function of the self-directedness of its "gaze" or "regard" (*aspectus*). This way of speaking might seem to vitiate my contention that the mind's permanent or structural self-directedness is not a type of *awareness*. It is important to keep in mind, however, what Olivi refers to as '*aspectus*' of a cognitive power is distinct from the *act* of such a power. Hence, the mere self-directedness of the soul's *gaze* does not by itself entail the existence of an *act* of self-cognition. (Interestingly, there are even contexts in which Olivi characterizes the directedness of the *aspectus* as "hidden" or unconscious. For example, in the course discussing angelic communication, he speaks at one point of a cognitive power's possessing an "unnoticed directedness" (*occulta conversia*). See his *Quaestio de locutionibus angelorum* ed. S. Piron, *Oliviana* 1 (2003) § 32, <<http://oliviana.reues.org/document18.html>>.) Indeed, in general Olivi thinks that directing of the focus (or the attention) of a given cognitive power is a necessary condition for the production of its act. For discussion of the role of attention in Olivi's account of intentionality in general see Dominik Perler, *Théories de l'intentionnalité au moyen âge* (Paris: Vrin, 2003) 44-75; and José Filipe Silva and Juhana Toivanen, "The Active Nature of the Soul in Sense Perception: Robert Kilwardby and Peter Olivi," *Vivarium* 48 (2010) 245-78.

¹⁹ *Summa* II, q. 76 (III, 149). More precisely, what Olivi claims in the passage from which this line is taken is that *both* the soul's habitual self-knowledge *as well as* its occurrent acts of self-knowledge arise through the essence of the mind as a self-reflexive power. Olivi is particularly concerned to establish that mind's capacity self-reflexive awareness is not to be identified as a mere disposition (or a habitual form of) self-knowledge. Rather, he argues this capacity is part of very nature or essence of the mind itself: "Licet autem habitualis notia sui sit eius accidens inseparabile...non tamen aestimo quod sit necessaria ad producendum actum sciendi se, sed potius habitus praedictus causetur ex redundantia actualitate intellectus ad se et sua sciendum." His insistence on this point is significant in light of the broader issues he is addressing in the context of q. 76. This question is addressed to a broader debate over whether the soul knows itself through species or through its own essence. The claim that intellect's innate, essential reflexivity is the causal source of its occurrent and habitual self-knowledge is central to his defense of the latter of these two positions. For a survey of this debate over the nature and source of the soul's knowledge of itself see Putallaz, *La Connaissance*; Cyrille Michon, "Ego Intelligo (lapidem). Deux conceptions de la réflexion au Moyen Age," in O. Boulnois (ed.), *Généalogies du sujet: de saint Anselme à Malebranche* (Paris: Vrin, 2007), 114-47; and Therese S. Cory, *Aquinas on Human Self-Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), ch. 1.

There are two respects in which mind's permanent, structural reflexivity grounds or explains its episodic acts of phenomenal reflexivity. First, Olivi holds that it entails the mind's state-reflexive awareness. In fact, on his view, the mind's innate self-directedness guarantees the ubiquity of state-reflexive awareness. Thus, according to Olivi, if I think about (desire, or perceive) something, my thought (desire, or perception) will register in phenomenal awareness. And this is because, as Olivi sees it, if the mind is essentially reflexively directed toward *itself*, it must be reflexively directed upon anything that occurs in itself. Consider his remarks in the following passage (which is embedded in a larger context to which we will have occasion to return later—see passage J below):

[C] A power that is reflexively directed on itself can see everything that presently arises and exists in itself at the moment [it arises and exists]. Both from itself, and given the very fact that it is turned toward itself, this power is turned toward all those things that exist or arise in it.²⁰

According to Olivi, for cognitive power to be essentially self-reflexive is for it to be structured in such a way that it falls within the scope its own potential *field of view* (what Olivi refers to as its *aspectus*). Such self-directedness entails that when the cognitive power is actualized in cognition—that is, in actually cognizing a given object—its act of cognizing will yield awareness not only of the *object* thus cognized, but also of the act of cognizing it.

In addition to explaining the existence and ubiquity of state-reflexive awareness, the mind's structural reflexivity also explains why reflexive awareness of one's states always involves awareness of oneself as its subject. Olivi seem to think that, because state-reflexive awareness arises out of the soul's structural self-directedness, awareness of its states must also include their self-attribution. Thus, to be aware of a given states is to be aware of it as *one's own*—as a state of *oneself*. For this reason, Olivi insists (in passage B) that “we apprehend our acts only as being predicated or attributed *to us*” and, likewise, (in passage A) that the soul “in its act of thinking, always shapes something with the force of this proposition: ‘I know this’ or ‘I think this’.” On his view, the reflexive structure of the mind accounts for the first-person or subject-reflexive phenomenal structure of its state-reflexive awareness.

What the foregoing shows, then, is that, for Olivi, experiential subject-reflexive awareness is a constitutive feature of *any* kind of state-reflexive awareness. The two simply cannot be separated. Awareness of one's occurrent states of thinking, or desiring, or perceiving something *just is* a kind of awareness of *oneself*—namely, as thinking about, desiring, or

²⁰ *Summa* II, q. 79 (III, 159-160).

perceiving that thing. Or, to put it otherwise, it is awareness of these states as states *of oneself*.

That said, it must be emphasized that Olivi does recognize different types or levels of state-reflexive awareness. As I noted earlier, there is no single passage in which Olivi expressly or systematically distinguishes among the different ways in which mind knows its own states. Nevertheless, he does implicitly presuppose and rely on such distinctions in a variety of contexts. As a case in point, consider the following passage:

[D] All (or, many) of the [soul's] powers are very frequently (indeed, almost always) engaged in their acts. Thus, often when I see, I simultaneously hear, smell, touch, and taste. At the same time, alongside each of these [acts], there is also the common sense running about discerning among these various faculties and among their objects. Thus, at that very same moment, I am aware, through the intellect, of all of these acts and their objects. Likewise, at that same time, I am also aware (or I can be aware) that I am intellectually aware of them [...] And, with respect to all of these acts, I am always aware of these acts as mine. As a result, I always apprehend myself as the subject of these acts. Therefore, the intellect apprehends, simultaneously, a whole plurality of acts as well as their objects.²¹

In the broader context from which this passage is taken, Olivi is attempting to establish the possibility of the simultaneous occurrence of a plurality of acts in a single power (a view that was hotly debated in his day).²² In the passage itself, Olivi identifies various sorts of psychological acts or states that he thinks can occur at the same time. Interestingly, on his list of simultaneously occurring acts are *two* distinct kinds of (intellective) state-reflexive awareness; one of which he thinks accompanies any occurrent state (including sensory states), whereas the other only sometimes does. Here, again, is the relevant distinction:

... I am [2a] aware, through the intellect, of all of these acts [viz., seeing, hearing, smelling, etc.] and their objects. Likewise, at that same time, I am [2b] also aware (or I can be aware) that I am intellectually aware of them.

It should be clear that the first of these two kinds of state-reflexive awareness, (2a), is just the ubiquitous first-person state-reflexive awareness that Olivi thinks is entailed by mind's structural reflexivity. Thus, what he has in mind by it is roughly this: for any occurrent states–

²¹ *Summa* II, Q. 37 (I, 659).

²² For discussion of this debate among later medieval thinkers, see Russell Friedman, "On the Trail of a Philosophical Debate: Durandus of St.-Pourçain vs. Thomas Wylton on Simultaneous Acts in the Intellect," in S. Brown, T. Dewender, and T. Kobusch (eds.), *Philosophical Debates at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 433-61.

e.g., my simultaneously seeing and touching some object, the pen in my hand, say—I will be aware not only of the *object* of such states (namely, the pen) but also, at some level, of *my seeing and touching* it. Thus, even when attention is explicitly directed outward at some external object, as it is when I am seeing and touching the pen, I am nonetheless at some level aware of my seeing and feeling it.²³

Olivi then goes on to call attention to the fact that, *in addition* to this, I can also become focally aware of my inner acts or states so as to make them explicit objects of cognition. In order to contrast this second sort of state-reflexive awareness (namely, 2b) with the first sort (namely, 2a) let us refer to the former as ‘pre-reflective’ awareness and to the latter as ‘reflective’ or ‘introspective’ awareness. One of the differences between the two is that whereas the first sort is ubiquitous, the second is not. On the contrary, Olivi thinks that introspective awareness is a type of state-reflexive awareness of which we are capable, but not necessarily always exercising. Interestingly, however, as passage D makes clear, he does think that both sorts of state-reflexive awareness can occur simultaneously. That is, Olivi seems to think that I can, for example, experience seeing and feeling the pen and at the same time (introspectively) attend to my experience of seeing and feeling it.²⁴

Similarly, I think it is this same basic distinction—that is, between pre-reflective versus introspective type of state-reflexive awareness—that Olivi has in mind when he distinguishes between the following two sorts of state-reflexive knowledge:

[E] ...just as my knowing that the sun exists is one act of knowing, and my knowing myself to know this is another, so also it is one act to assert “the sun exists”, and another to assert “I know that the sun exists”. The first [act of assertion] is based on the first act of

²³ Although Olivi insists (in passage D and elsewhere) that (i) we are conscious of sensory states and (ii) that our consciousness of them owes to the intellective faculty, it is not, nevertheless, altogether clear precisely *how* he understands the role of intellect in rendering such states conscious. He claims, for example, that “it is by one power that we say inside ourselves, ‘the same I who understands, also wills and sees,’ namely, the intellective power. By apprehending its own subject and its own acts, as well as the acts of other powers, it is able to say this. But it is able to bring this about even though it is not the case that it is the whole subject and even though it is not the case that it elicits the acts of the other powers.” (*Summa* II, q. 54 (II, 241)) Thus, even if acts of sensory perception belong to different faculties or powers than acts of thinking and willing, the rational soul’s reflexive awareness of all of these acts (and of itself as their subject) is explained by the reflexivity of the intellective power. His point, I take it, is that the reflexive capacity of the whole derives from the reflexive capacity of its chief (or highest) part. Thus, the rational soul (or perhaps even the soul/body composite—whatever is the referent of the first-person pronoun ‘I’) is capable of self-reflexive awareness (of itself and of its states) in virtue of its possession of a self-reflexive power (namely, the intellect).

²⁴ But he clearly does not presuppose that the co-occurrence of these two types of awareness is ubiquitous. Or, in any case, Olivi seems willing to recognize the possibility that one is not always introspectively aware of one’s inner states.

knowing, the second based on the second along with the first. But the second act of knowing (which is closely related to the mode set out in a preceding question) includes in itself a plurality of acts of knowing: (i) the act by which I know myself, (ii) the act by which I know the knowing of the sun, and (iii) the act by which I know myself to be the subject of that act. Although perhaps in this case the third is not really distinct from the second.²⁵

Here, Olivi marks the distinction between the two types of state-reflexive awareness—namely, pre-reflective vs. reflective—by calling attention to a difference in their object.²⁶ In the case of the first type, the object of awareness is something external to the knower—in Olivi’s example, the sun (or the sun’s existence or presence); in the second case, the object of awareness is a state of the knower herself—namely, her knowledge or awareness of the sun. Although, in the former case, the act of knowledge is directed at something external (viz., the sun), the subject is, nevertheless, pre-reflectively aware of her knowledge since she is able to express it when she asserts: “the sun exists”.²⁷ By contrast, in the latter case, the subject is introspectively aware of her *knowing* the sun’s existence. Hence her assertion of this fact: “I know the sun exists.” In both cases, moreover, it is clear that state-reflexive knowledge includes subject-reflexivity as well. In the pre-reflective case, the subject experiences herself as knowing the sun; in the introspective case, she experiences herself as knowing her knowledge of the sun. The inseparability of these two types of knowledge is no surprise, of course, since as we have already noted state-reflexive awareness is always given as a first-personal or subject-reflexive experience.

c. State-Reflexivity as Self- or Subjective Consciousness

As the foregoing makes clear, Olivi recognizes various types of both subject-reflexive and state-reflexive self-knowledge. They are not, however, all equally fundamental. Experiential subject-reflexive awareness is, for example, more fundamental than quidditive; pre-reflective state-reflexive awareness is more fundamental than introspective. Indeed, in both cases, the latter form of self-knowledge depends on (or derives from) the former. On Olivi’s view, moreover, the most fundamental types of subject- and state- reflexive awareness, while conceptually distinct are mutually entailing. To be reflexively aware of a given state is to be aware of it as *one’s own*—that is, as a state of oneself. Again, experiential subject-reflexive awareness is nothing other than acquaintance with oneself as “the principle and subject” of one’s states. This is a point that we have seen Olivi emphasize repeatedly. As

²⁵ *Summa* II, q. 79 (III, 165).

²⁶ This distinction, between pre-reflective and reflective or introspective awareness of what one knows is evident throughout Olivi’s discussion in q. 79. I will return to Olivi’s discussion in q. 79 presently.

²⁷ Elsewhere in the same discussion, Olivi claims that asserting ‘the sun exists’ is equivalent to ‘I know the sun exists’. See *Summa* II, q. 79 (III, 167).

he says (in passage D): “I am aware...of all of [my] acts and their objects. ... [and] I am always aware that these are my acts”; or again (in passage A) “there is no object and no act that [the soul] can occurrently know or consider without it always thereupon knowing and sensing itself to be the subject”.

Thus, while Olivi allows (in text B above, for example) that one can, in some sense, distinguish between oneself (or one’s mind) and states thereof, nevertheless, at the phenomenal level, state-reflexive and experiential subject-reflexive awareness are inseparable. They occur as two aspects of a single conscious experience. Indeed, there is, to my knowledge, no evidence that Olivi thinks awareness of oneself (or one’s mind) ever occurs independently of awareness of some occurrent state. Like Hume, who famously argues “I never catch myself without a perception”, Olivi appears to deny that one ever cognizes—or, “catches”—one’s self or soul independently of awareness of one’s occurrent states.²⁸ It is not surprising, therefore, that the phenomenon Olivi identifies most centrally and fundamentally with the reflexivity of the human mind is one’s subjective (or subject-reflexive), pre-reflective awareness of one’s occurrent states.

If this is right, however, there is good reason for thinking that phenomenon Olivi targets in connection with mind’s self-reflexivity shares much in common with that targeted in contemporary discussions of consciousness. To be sure, contemporary philosophers recognize a wide range of so-called ‘conscious’ phenomena, and there is a great deal of disagreement about which is most fundamental or most central. Even so, there is significant overlap between the kind of self- and state-reflexivity that Olivi fixes on and the mode of awareness nowadays associated with *phenomenally conscious states*.

Admittedly, current treatments of phenomenal consciousness are very often focused around qualia—that is, the purely qualitative features associated with phenomenally conscious states. And it is not obvious that anything in Olivi’s discussion bears on current discussions of qualia. Typically, qualitative character is associated with the “what it’s like” or the “feel” of our mental or intentional states. (To take a few standard examples: the *bluish character* of my visual experience of the sky, or the particular *sharpness* or *pulsing feel* of my headache.) So understood, it is fairly clear, I think, that Olivi’s notion of reflexivity is *not* an approximation of the contemporary notion of qualitative character.²⁹

²⁸ See David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* (I,IV,vi). Unlike Hume, however, Olivi does not infer from this that one does not, therefore, catch oneself *with* an occurrent state. In being aware of one’s states, one is aware of oneself being in that state—and this, for Olivi, amounts to a kind of self-awareness.

²⁹ This is not to say that Olivi would reject the notion that our states have what we call ‘qualitative character’. But he certainly does not single out this feature of conscious experience for explicit consideration. By contrast, his account of the phenomenal

But, it is also widely acknowledged that there may be more to phenomenal consciousness, more to our experience of our mental states, than qualitative character. Thus, philosophers from Franz Brentano to Colin McGinn have called attention to the self-conscious or subjective character of phenomenally conscious states. The core idea here is just that phenomenally conscious states are states one is aware of oneself as being in. Conscious experiences have, as Colin McGinn puts it, a kind of “Janus-faced” character. Not only do they direct their subject outward to the external world, but they also present a subjective face to their subject. On McGinn’s view, therefore, phenomenally conscious states “involve presence to a subject, and hence a subjective point of view. Remove the inward looking face and you remove something integral—what the world *seems* like to the subject”.³⁰

Inasmuch as conscious experiences are *present* to a subject, we may say they are states of which a subject is *aware*. And inasmuch their presence is *to a subject* they possess a kind of “for-me-ness” where this entails implicit awareness of oneself as their subject. This for-me-ness quality features prominently (though not uncontroversially) among the phenomena targeted in current discussions of phenomenal consciousness.³¹ To take just a few examples from the recent literature:³²

character of reflexive awareness focuses rather on its first-personal or subjective character. It is not clear to me, moreover, that among medieval philosophers in general we can find anything approximating our contemporary notion of qualia. A *possible* exception to this rule might be Peter Auriol who, in defending his (notorious and controversial) notion of “apparent being” (*esse apparens*), is quite expressly concerned with need to explain *the way things appear* in cognition. And he seems to think that this feature of cognition cannot be explained merely by explaining the intentional or representational features of cognitive states. See Auriol’s *Scriptum super primum Sententiarum*, dist. 35, a. 1.

³⁰ Colin McGinn, “Consciousness and Content,” in N. Block, O. Flanagan, and G. Güzeldere (eds.), *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 300.

³¹ To be sure, the thesis that phenomenal consciousness is or entails self-consciousness or subjectivity (or even that the latter pair of concepts are mutually entailing) is quite controversial. Even so, inasmuch as there are a number of contemporary proponents of such a view it is fair to say that Olivi’s theory of mind’s reflexive awareness counts as a theory of phenomenal consciousness. (Contemporary discussion and defense of this sort of view include: Uriah Kriegel, *Subjective Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Uriah Kriegel, “Consciousness and Self-Consciousness,” *The Monist* 87 (2004) 185-209; Uriah Kriegel, “Consciousness as Intransitive Self-Consciousness: Two Views and an Argument,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 33 (2003) 103-32; Tim Bayne, “Self-Consciousness and the Unity of Consciousness,” *The Monist* 87 (2004) 224-41; Dan Zahavi, “Self and Consciousness,” in D. Zahavi (ed.), *Exploring the Self: Philosophical and Psychopathological Perspectives on Self-Experience* (Amsterdam: J Benjamins, 2000) 55-74; Owen Flanagan, *Consciousness Reconsidered* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); Rocco Genarro, “Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, and Episodic Memory,” *Philosophical Psychology* 5 (1992) 333-47.) Since there is no universally accepted characterization of the phenomenology associated with phenomenal consciousness there is, likewise, no single criteria for specifying what constitutes a theory of phenomenal consciousness (or when an theory has been given that captures all the relevant phenomena). For my purposes, then, it is sufficient to establish that the phenomena Olivi’s

- [G] Let's take my current visual experience as I gaze upon my red diskette case, lying by my side on the computer table. I'm having an experience with a complex qualitative character, one component of which is the color I perceive. Let's dub this the aspect of my experience its "reddish" character. There are two important dimensions to my having this reddish experience. First, as mentioned above, there is something it's like for me to have this experience. Not only is it a matter of some state (my experience) having some feature (being reddish) but, being an experience, its being reddish is "for me," a way it's like *for me* in a way that being red is like nothing for—in fact is not in any way "for"—my diskette case. Let's call this the *subjectivity* of conscious experience. Nagel (1974) himself emphasized this feature by noting that conscious experience involves our having a 'point of view'. The second important dimension of experiences that requires explanation is qualitative character itself. Subjectivity is the phenomenon of there being something it's like *for me* to see the red diskette case. Qualitative character concerns the "what" it's like for me: reddish or greenish, painful and pleasurable, and the like.³³
- [H] The other component of phenomenal consciousness [in addition to its qualitative character] is subjective character: the *for-me-ness* of conscious experiences. What is this *for-me-ness*? On the view I want to take it is a form of awareness. In virtue of being aware of my experience of the blue sky, there is something it is like for me to have that experience.³⁴
- [I] However, there is more to experience than the fact that what it is like to perceive a black triangle is subjectively distinct from what it is like to perceive a red circle (cf. Nagel 1974). ... all of these phenomenal experiences involve a reference to a subject of experience. In perceiving or imagining an object consciously one is aware of the object as appearing in a determinate manner to oneself. ... One reason these experiences are said to be subjective is because they are characterized by a subjective mode of existence, in the sense that they necessarily feel like something *for somebody*. Our

theory targets overlap significantly with that targeted by theories prominent in contemporary discussions of phenomenal consciousness.

³² This first-personal aspect of phenomenal consciousness gets particular emphasis from those within the phenomenological tradition. For an overview, see Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, "Phenomenological Approaches to Self-Consciousness," in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition)* <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/self-consciousness-phenomenological/>>.

³³ Joseph Levine, *Purple Haze: The Puzzle of Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 6-7.

³⁴ Kriegel, *Subjective Consciousness*, 47.

experiential life can consequently be said to entail a primitive form of self-referentiality or for-me-ness.³⁵

As should be clear, the phenomenon targeted in these passages—namely, an awareness of one’s occupying one’s mental states—is precisely the sort of phenomenon that Olivi singles out in his characterization of reflexive awareness. Insofar as we find in Olivi a theory of *this* sort of phenomenon, we find what can fairly be characterized as a theory of (‘subjective’ or ‘self-’) consciousness.

2. Olivi on the Metaphysics of Reflexivity: A One-Level Theory of Consciousness

To this point, I have been focusing on Olivi’s understanding of the phenomenology of reflexive awareness. I have argued, moreover, that his notion of state-reflexive awareness is central in this understanding and corresponds directly to what we nowadays term ‘phenomenal consciousness’. I now want to turn from questions about the phenomenology of state-reflexive awareness to questions about its proper analysis. Nowadays, those who think that phenomenal consciousness is or entails subjective-awareness can be roughly divided according to whether they accept a two-level or one-level theory. Thus, according to two-level—or “higher-order”—theories of consciousness, one’s awareness of a given state owes to that state serving as the object for a distinct, higher-order state. By contrast, on one-level—or “same-order”—theories, awareness of a given states owes to some intrinsic feature of the state itself. In this section of the paper, I want to consider whether Olivi’s analysis of state-reflexive awareness yields a one- or two-level theory of consciousness.

To anticipate, I argue that Olivi is committed to a one-level analysis. It is worth saying, however, that while I think we can glean Olivi’s views on this matter from what he does say in the texts, he rarely addresses the issue head-on. What is more, in one of the (perhaps the only?) contexts in which he does consider questions about the analysis of state-reflexive awareness, he does not make explicit *which type* of state-reflexive awareness is under consideration (i.e., pre-reflective or introspective).

The text I have in mind, and on which my discussion shall hereafter focus, is q. 79 of his commentary on *Book II* of Lombard’s *Sentences*. As we’ll see, Olivi’s discussion in this question suggests, on the face of it, a commitment to a higher-order theory of consciousness. In fact, commentators have taken his remarks in this context as evidence for just such an interpretation.³⁶ But, as careful attention to the details of his

³⁵ Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* (London: Routledge, 2008), 49-50.

³⁶ See Christian Rode, “Peter of John Olivi on Representation and Self-Representation,” *Quaestio: Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* 10 (2010) 155-66. Christopher Martin, while not expressly interested in Olivi’s theory of consciousness, nevertheless, seems to

argument in several key passages shows (see texts J and K below), Olivi is, in fact, committed to *rejecting* a higher-order account of consciousness. Establishing this claim will require clarity both about what sort of state-reflexive awareness is at issue in this context, and where exactly the key passages occur in the overall (and rather complicated) dialectical structure of the question as a whole. Before turning to details of the text, therefore, I begin with some general remarks about the topic and general structure of q. 79 itself.

In q. 79 Olivi considers whether a given (intellective) state can take itself as its object.³⁷ As the ensuing discussion makes clear, the issue at stake is that of explaining state-reflexive awareness.³⁸ Olivi takes as given that we do possess knowledge regarding our current mental states. The issue, then, is to explain this. Does one's knowledge or awareness of a given state come by way of an act numerically distinct from, and directed upon it? Or can an act be directed upon, and thus include awareness of, itself? Olivi associates a negative answer to this latter question with Augustine. As he says, "the opinion of Augustine" is that "one and the same act of knowing *cannot* take itself as an object".³⁹ Olivi himself, however, is ambivalent about the correct answer and, so, after first advocating for the Augustinian line and carefully rebutting all arguments that suggest that an act *can* be directed upon itself, he reconsiders. In fact, he goes on to advance the opposite view, and endeavors to refute all the preliminary arguments in favor of the Augustinian line. At the end of the discussion, he confesses that "it is not easy to judge which of these opinions is more likely true"⁴⁰ and, so, ultimately sides with authority, that is, with Augustine.

That Olivi ultimately takes the Augustinian side—adopting the view that reflexive awareness of one's states comes by way of a numerically distinct, higher-order act of awareness—might, at least on the face of it, suggest that he adopts a higher-order theory of consciousness. It is clear, in any case, that he is adopting a higher-order analysis of *whatever*

presuppose that Olivi is committed to a higher-order analysis. See his "Self-Knowledge and Cognitive Ascent: Thomas Aquinas and Peter Olivi on the KK-Thesis," in H. Laugerland (ed.), *Forming the Mind: Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007) 93-108. On Martin's interpretation, Olivi's notion of (pre-reflective) state-reflexive awareness is a matter of the subject standing in the relation of knowing to her first-order (or world-directed) acts of cognitive awareness.

³⁷ Olivi's own, more elaborate, statement of the question runs as follows: "Can an act of knowledge or love have itself for its object? For example, when I know myself to know or to love, or when I will myself to love, is the act that is designated using the infinitive the same as that which is designated using the indicative?" *Summa* II, q. 79 (III, 158).

³⁸ Although Olivi uses the terms 'knowledge' and 'knowing' (*scientia/scire*) throughout his discussion, the context makes clear that he's using these terms generically to indicate *intellective* awareness in general. Their usage is not indicative of any attempt on his part to single out a type of intellective awareness with any special epistemic status (other than that associated with all forms of intellective cognition).

³⁹ *Summa* II, q. 79 (III, 163).

⁴⁰ *Summa* II, q. 79 (III, 169).

type of state-reflexive awareness is at issue in this question. It is less clear, however, that the type of state-reflexive awareness at issue is that associated with ordinary, pre-reflective consciousness. In fact, as I read it, the kind of state-reflexive knowledge under discussion in q. 79 is *not* phenomenal consciousness but introspection. Thus, while Olivi is claiming that introspective awareness of one's states comes by way of numerically distinct, higher-order acts of awareness, nothing follows from this about his analysis of ordinary phenomenal consciousness (i.e., pre-reflective, state-reflexive awareness). Indeed, to the extent that Olivi's discussion in q. 79 does bear on the nature of our non-introspective experience of our states, it suggests a one-level analysis.

The best evidence for this reading comes from a passage in which Olivi is defending the Augustinian view (i.e., the view that an act never takes itself as object) against what he clearly takes to be a particularly worrisome objection. The objection in question charges that the Augustinian view must be rejected on the grounds that it leads to an infinite regress in higher-order states. Although the statement of the objection is rather lengthy, it is worth quoting in its entirety.⁴¹

[J] If [A₂] the act by which I know my knowing of the sun differs from [A₁] the act of knowing the sun itself, and likewise if [A₃] the act by which I know the act of knowing by which I know the act of knowing the sun differs from [A₂] the reflexive knowing of the knowing of the sun, and so on into infinity, then, it is impossible that a person actually knows, or could know, every act of knowing that he currently has—unless, of course, he has an infinity of acts. After all, the final act of knowing by which the mind gazes on the preceding act of knowing could not itself actually be known unless it were to know itself or unless, in addition to it, there were some further act of knowing—but then it would not be final. [...] Hence, either one must grant that there is no *final* act of knowing...or that, if there is a final act, then it cannot actually be known. [...] But it does not seem true that...there could exist some act of knowing in me that I could not know. For, a power reflexively directed on itself can see everything that presently arises and exists in itself at the moment [it arises and exists]. Both from itself, and from the very fact that it is turned toward itself, this power is turned toward all those things which exist or arise in it—much as the gaze of the eye, by the very fact that it is turned toward the wall and toward the surrounding air, is by that fact turned toward those things which arise visibly or pass through it. Moreover, if I do not know the final act, I cannot enumerate the number of my reflective acts. But that is contrary to experience, and contrary to Augustine...⁴²

⁴¹ As I indicated earlier, this is larger discussion within which passage C is imbedded.

⁴² *Summa* II, q. 79 (III, 159-160).

Although Olivi's statement of the argument is not particularly felicitous, nevertheless, its central line of reasoning is fairly straightforward.

The argument takes its start from the assumption that the mind's state-reflexive knowledge extends to *all* its occurrent acts or states. Since this assumption figures importantly in the discussion to come, let us refer to it as the 'ubiquity principle'.⁴³ Now, if a given mental act cannot take itself as object, as the Augustinian claims, knowledge of a given mental act, A_1 , will require the introduction of a numerically distinct, higher-order act, A_2 —one which takes A_1 as its object. Of course, if the mind knows *all* of its acts, as the ubiquity principle requires, it will know A_2 . But, again, if a mental act cannot take itself as an object, then knowledge of A_2 will require the introduction of a further, higher-order state, A_3 , and so on. Hence the regress. As the objector points out, the only recourse for the Augustinian is either to deny the ubiquity principle or to bite the bullet and allow an infinite series of higher-order mental states. Insofar as neither option looks very attractive, the opponent concludes that we should instead reject the Augustinian line in favor of the view that a given mental act or state *can* take itself as object.

So much for the objection. Of more interest for present purposes is Olivi's response to it. In this connection, I want to advance two claims. First, that Olivi's response to the regress argument makes clear that the type of state-reflexive awareness at issue in q. 79 is introspective (rather than pre-reflective) in nature and, hence, when he defends the Augustinian view, he is defending a higher-order theory of introspective knowledge, not a higher-order theory of phenomenal consciousness.⁴⁴ The second claim is this: to the extent that Olivi's response to the regress argument does bear on his views about consciousness it suggests a one-level theory.

Here is what Olivi says by way of reply to the regress argument:

K] It should be said that the final act of knowing, which follows as many reflections as the intellect is capable of, cannot be known by a further [act of] reflection. But this does not occur because of a defect in its knowability, but rather because of a defect of the power for producing a final reflective act simultaneous with those preceding it. Nonetheless, concerning any act of knowing, a person can be said to be certain and can know that act with certainty. Not just because he has certain knowledge of it in habit, but also

⁴³ Not surprisingly, the motivation for assumption comes from the—now familiar—point from passage C above regarding the structural reflexivity of the mind: "A power reflexively directed on itself can see in everything that presently arises and exists in itself".

⁴⁴ There are, however, a plenty of medieval thinkers who do develop higher-order theories. William Ockham, for example, holds that consciousness is a matter of higher-order perception. For discussion of his views and their place within broader medieval debates about consciousness see my "Medieval Approaches to Consciousness: Ockham and Chatton," *Philosopher's Imprint* 12 (2012) 1-29.

because certitude about the act is contained in some way in certitude about its object. For being certain of the one necessarily and infallibly implies the truth of the other. ... Moreover, to the extent that an act of knowing proceeds from the intellect as something actually structured for knowing [*actualiter coordinato ad scire*] what proceeds from it, to that same extent it can be said that it knows that very act of knowing—namely, because the intellect generates and contains it [i.e., its act] in the manner of something both able to be known and productive of knowing. But what is further added is not true, namely, that a power reflexively directed on itself can see whatever arises in itself only if its reflection is such that it actually regards all such things as objects. For although the power is turned toward the act which it brings about (as cause to its effect), nevertheless, it does not follow from this that it is turned toward it as toward an object it is actually able to think of or does think of.⁴⁵

As this passage makes clear, Olivi concedes that there can be only a finite number of simultaneously occurring mental acts and, hence, that “the final act” in any series of higher-order states, as such, “cannot be known”. As he says: “the final act of knowing, which follows as many reflections as the intellect is capable of, cannot be known by a further [act of] reflection.” Thus, Olivi’s response to the regress argument essentially involves denying its starting assumption—namely, the ubiquity principle. But note: if the kind of state-reflexive knowledge or awareness at issue here were that associated with ordinary (pre-reflective) consciousness, this would be an *extraordinary* concession for Olivi to make. Indeed, it would contradict what he says elsewhere about state-reflexive awareness. While it may be commonplace among contemporary philosophers to allow that we are completely unconscious of some (indeed, perhaps a great many) of our occurrent states—this is not the view Olivi endorses. As I have argued, Olivi is committed to the view that consciousness of some sort is ubiquitous: insofar as mind is reflexively directed on itself, it is *always* (pre-reflectively) aware of its occurrent states. He does not, however, suppose that introspective awareness is likewise ubiquitous. In fact, as we have seen (e.g., passage D above), Olivi holds while that we may be able to introspect our states, we do not always do so. In light of this, it is natural to read his rejection of the ubiquity principle as rejection of the claim that we possess *introspective* knowledge regarding all our states—a reading which is consistent with what he says about both pre-reflective and introspective awareness elsewhere.⁴⁶ If this is the right reading of the passage, however, it should be clear that the kind of state-reflexive knowledge at issue in q. 79 is not consciousness, but introspection. Hence, to the extent that Olivi’s is defending a higher-order or two-level theory of state-reflexive awareness in this context, it is a higher-order theory of

⁴⁵ *Summa* II, q. 79 (III, 164).

⁴⁶ See passage D above, for example.

introspection that he defends, not a higher-order theory of consciousness as such.

This is not to say, however, that q. 79 reveals nothing about Olivi's analysis of consciousness itself. In fact, I think his remarks in this very passage (namely, passage K) demonstrate that, when it comes to pre-reflective state-reflexive awareness, Olivi is committed to a same-order or one-level theory. To see this, notice that when Olivi concedes to his opponent that some acts "cannot be known" by the mind, he immediately goes on to qualify this concession in a significant way. He insists that while not all of our acts are (or even can be) taken as objects for further higher-order states (on pain of regress), nevertheless, it does not follow that such acts are not known *in any way*. Consider, for example, what he says mid-way through text K:

Moreover, to the extent that an act of knowing proceeds from the intellect as something actually structured for knowing [*actualiter coordinato ad scire*] what proceeds from it, to that same extent it can be said that it knows that very act of knowing—namely, because the intellect generates and contains it [i.e., its act] in the manner of something both able to be known and productive of knowing.

Here, Olivi expresses his agreement with his opponent that the intellect, as a reflexive power, is oriented toward its own states in such a way that it is always aware of the acts that proceed from or arise within itself. But then (toward the end of the passage) he denies is that this sort of reflexive knowledge or awareness entails any *higher-order* awareness of such acts. As he says in last line, "although the power is turned toward the act which it brings about" it does not follow from this that the power is "turned toward it as toward an object that it actually can think of or does think of." Here again, it seems to me the best way to understand these remarks is to read them in light of our distinction between two kinds of state-reflexive awareness: pre-reflective consciousness vs. introspective awareness of one's states. Read this way, we can see that while Olivi does think that the latter, introspective variety of state-reflexive awareness requires the introduction of a numerically distinct higher-order state; he denies this is the case when it comes to pre-reflective awareness of one's states. Indeed, he insists to the contrary that we can know or be aware of a given state even in the absence of any further, higher-order state that relates to it as its object. And this just reinforces the conclusion that he rejects a higher-order theory of consciousness.

But, then, if consciousness of one's states is not to be explained by appeal to a relation such states bear to other, higher-order states, what does explain it? One obvious way to respond to this question—an approach frequently taken by contemporary advocates of one-level theories—is to argue that conscious states are conscious in virtue of

some representational (or intentional) relation they bear to themselves.⁴⁷ This is just to say that states are conscious in virtue of taking themselves as object.⁴⁸ Although Olivi's rejection of a higher-order analysis might seem to imply his acceptance of just such a view, I think it is clear that his discussion in q. 79 precludes it.⁴⁹ To be sure, Olivi does explicitly entertain the possibility that intellective states can take themselves as object, but he entertains this possibility as an analysis of *introspective* knowledge, not consciousness. What is more, when it comes to pre-reflective awareness of one's states, Olivi rejects not only the idea that such awareness owes to a state's serving as object for some higher-order state, but also and more generally that it owes to that state serving as an intentional *object* of any sort. This, I take it, is the point of his remark in passage K, when he says that it is "not true that a power reflexively directed on itself can see whatever arises in itself only if its reflection is such that it actually regards all such things as objects." Hence, even if our subjective states *can* (and, in cases of introspection, do) function as intentional objects of numerically distinct acts of awareness, nevertheless, our being conscious of them does not require this. Hence, consciousness is not, apparently, to be explained by appeal to any sort of *act-object* relation or structure—whether higher- or same-order.

But if consciousness is not to be explained on an act-object model of awareness, what remains? One further interpretive possibility is to read Olivi as defending something like an adverbial theory of consciousness. On this reading, consciousness would be an intrinsic, unstructured feature of intellective acts or states such that one's subjective experience of a given state is a matter of her having or occupying that state *in a*

⁴⁷ On this view, conscious states are conscious in virtue of their possession of some kind of higher-order self-referential content. Historically, Brentano is the thinker most frequently associated with this sort of view. (See Amie Thomasson, "After Brentano: A One-Level Theory of Consciousness," *European Journal of Philosophy* 8 (2000) 190-209 and Dan Zahavi, "Back to Brentano?" *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 11 (2004) 66-87). The view has, however, also been attributed to both Aristotle and even to Locke. (For its attribution to Aristotle see Victor Caston "Aristotle on Consciousness," *Mind* 111 (2002) 751-815, it is attributed to Locke by Angela Coventry and Uriah Kriegel in "Locke on Consciousness," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 25 (2008) 221-42). Current proponents a same-order approach to consciousness include Uriah Kriegel, Rocco Gennaro, and Robert Van Gulick. See, for example, Kriegel, *Subjective Consciousness*, and Uriah Kriegel and Kenneth Williford (eds.), *Self-Representational Approaches to Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

⁴⁸ Thus, on such a view, conscious intentional states (say, my consciously seeing the pen in my hand) will often have two intentional objects: a primary, external object (namely, the pen) and a secondary, inner object (namely, itself).

⁴⁹ Putallaz seems attracted to some such a reading of Olivi. As he interprets Olivi, pre-reflective consciousness is an internal feature of conscious states (and so not a matter of higher-order awareness) and is such that it involves some kind of self-referring, intentional (indeed, universal, or conceptual) content. In fact, it is in this latter respect that Putallaz locates the principle difference between Aquinas and Olivi's conception of pre-reflective consciousness. See his discussion of the two-fold or "double aspect" of Olivi's notion pre-reflective awareness in *La Connaissance*, 96 ff.

certain way.⁵⁰ For example, my conscious experience of seeing the pen owes to the fact that the act of seeing itself occurs in a *subjective*, or *conscious way*. Inasmuch as consciousness turns out, on the adverbialist view, to be a non-relational feature of conscious states, attributing such a view to Olivi would certainly explain his unwillingness to characterize (pre-reflective) state-reflexive awareness in terms of any sort of act-object relation.⁵¹ Even so, I think we must resist this interpretation as well. To be sure, Olivi does reject the notion that consciousness is to be explained in terms of a state's holding the object-place in some intentional, or act-object relation, but it does not follow from this that he rejects a relational analysis *tout court*. In fact, as I read Olivi, consciousness does turn out to be kind of relation: namely, one that holds between the mind or intellect, on the one hand, and its subjective states on the other. Consider, for example, his remarks in the following passage:

[L] Every act of knowing includes a relation on the part of the act to its subject—not merely [a relation] as to a subject but also as to something known, since no one knows anything unless he knows himself knowing it (and included in this is knowing himself existing and knowing himself existing as one knowing).⁵²

The central claim of this passage is by now familiar: Olivi is once again calling attention to the fact that all acts of intellect (i.e., “acts of knowing”) are both subject and state-reflexive in character. What is particularly noteworthy in his remarks here, however, is that he analyzes such reflexive awareness as a type of relation—namely, one that holds between the subject and the act itself. The question, of course, is what exactly the nature of this relation is. Olivi tells us only that it is a relation “not merely as to a subject but as to something known”.⁵³ To be sure, such remarks do not, by themselves, go very far toward clarifying matters. Yet, taken in conjunction with what we have seen so far, and in particular both (i) Olivi's insistence that we experience our mental acts or states, and (ii) his steadfast refusal to construe such experience in terms of any *act-object* model of awareness, it is natural, I think, to take his remarks here as a way of calling attention to a distinctive, sui-generis mode of access the

⁵⁰ This sort of approach to consciousness is developed and defended by a number of thinkers in the phenomenological tradition. See David W. Smith, “The Structure of (Self-) Consciousness,” *Topoi* 3 (1986) 73-85; Zahavi, “Back to Brentano?,” 81-85. As Thomasson describes the view, consciousness of some act is “ontologically, something like a property of the first act—a way the first act is, rather than an independent act of its own.” (“After Brentano,” 203).

⁵¹ It is not clear to me, however, how this account is supposed to yield an analysis that explain or fits the target phenomena. How could an intrinsic, unstructured feature of some act explain *my* being *aware-of* that act?

⁵² *Summa* II, q. 103 (III, 236).

⁵³ Insofar as occurrent acts or states are episodic, medieval philosophers typically identify them with accidental forms inhering in the soul as their subject (typically, forms in the Aristotelian category of quality). Thus, I take it, when Olivi characterizes the relation in terms of it being “as to a subject”, he's referring to the fact that a given act relates to the soul as a subject of inherence. The relation it bears to the soul “as something known” is it, by contrast, its presence to the soul as something subjectively experienced.

soul has to its own subjective states. Indeed, that Olivi takes the mode of awareness in question to be *sui generis* is suggested precisely by the fact that the relation in question is, on his view, *categorically different* from the kind of access or awareness relation a subject bears to the objects of ordinary intentional or representational states.⁵⁴ On this way of reading him, then, consciousness turns out to be a primitively subjective mode of access or awareness—the kind he is at pains to characterize throughout his writings in terms of its distinctive first-personal, experiential quality.

If this is the right way to read Olivi, the theory of consciousness he holds clearly does qualify as a one-level theory. Consciousness of one's subjective states is not a function of those states serving as objects for some further, higher-order acts of awareness. Nor is it an unstructured monadic property or adverbial feature of them. Rather, consciousness is a special, *sui-generis* relation that a subject (or rational soul) bears to its own states: a primitive kind of subjective access. In this regard, then, Olivi can be understood as drawing a distinction between two irreducibly distinct types of awareness: one the one hand, there's the sort of awareness one has of objects *via* her occurrent acts or states (e.g., my awareness of, say, *the pen*) and, on the other hand, the sort of awareness one has *of* her occurrent acts themselves (e.g., my awareness *of seeing* the pen). Each type of awareness, moreover, is a distinct type of relation: the former, an act-object relation; the latter, a subject-act relation. And, clearly, on Olivi's analysis, ordinary conscious experience includes both. Thus, my consciously seeing the pen in my hand involves (i) my having an act of visual awareness, one that takes the pen as its object, and (ii) my subjective experience of this visual awareness, one that takes my seeing the pen as its terminus or relatum.

3. Olivi on the Epistemology of Reflexivity: Consciousness and the Infallibility of Self-Knowledge

I have now explained what I take to be Olivi's account of both the phenomenology and proper analysis of reflexive awareness. As it turns out, however, Olivi's particular understanding of the phenomenal character and ontological structure of state-reflexive knowledge is motivated by his broader commitment to Augustinian views about the epistemology of self-knowledge in general.

Augustine's thesis about the mind's self-reflexivity is, at bottom, a theological thesis. It is a thesis about the essential and ultimately trinitarian structure of the human mind. As Augustine sees it, however, this thesis carries important epistemological implications. In particular, it entails that self-knowledge is epistemically distinctive in a number of ways—most notably in its being more secure or more certain than

⁵⁴ Perhaps there is here something akin to Husserl's distinction between perceiving and experiencing. See Zahavi, "Back to Brentano?," 82. See also Dan Zahavi, *Self-Awareness and Alterity: A Phenomenological Investigation* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999).

knowledge of anything else.⁵⁵ As Augustine famously remarks: “What is more present to thought than what is present to mind, and what is more present to the mind than the mind itself?”⁵⁶ Olivi clearly takes this part of the Augustinian legacy seriously. Thus, echoing Augustine, he claims “our mind... immediately sees itself as its inmost and most immediate object”.⁵⁷ Accordingly, he holds that the nature of mind’s access to itself is such that knowledge regarding not only itself but also its subjective states is utterly certain. Thus, for example, when it comes to knowledge of oneself, Olivi claims, “a person knows that he exists and lives so infallibly that he is unable to be in doubt about this”.⁵⁸ Likewise, when it comes to the extent and nature of our knowledge of our mental states, Olivi is equally sanguine. On his view, “we possess superlative knowledge and experience of what it is to understand, what it is to will, and what it is to believe”.⁵⁹ Not surprisingly, moreover, Olivi takes these two types of self-knowledge to be intimately connected. Indeed, it appears that certainty about the former—that is, about our own existence—is ultimately grounded or included in the security of our experience of the latter, namely, our subjective states. As he explains,

M] no one is certain in knowledge of something unless he knows himself to know it—that is, unless he knows that he is the very one who knows it. But certitude concerning the subject [of one’s states] runs universally through the apprehension of each one of our acts.⁶⁰

When it comes to the epistemology of self-knowledge, therefore, state-reflexive awareness plays a foundational role. And this is because (i) subject-reflexive awareness is included constitutively in state-reflexive awareness and (ii) state-reflexive awareness itself is utterly secure, epistemically speaking. As he claims (in passage K above): “concerning any act of knowing, one can be said to be certain and can know it with certainty”,

⁵⁵ Augustine holds that this is so both for subject-reflexive and state-reflexive self-knowledge of ourselves. Thus, he thinks that we know the proposition ‘I exist’ with utter certainty, and he also maintains that knowledge of our own states is among the few examples of knowledge that proves immune to skeptical doubt. See Gareth Matthews, *Augustine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), chs. 2 and 5, and Gareth Matthews, *Thought’s Ego in Augustine and Descartes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992) for further discussion of these issues in Augustine.

⁵⁶ *De Trinitate* 10.10. See also 10.5, and 10.16. The certainty of self-knowledge is crucial to Augustine’s overarching project in this work. As he makes clear in Book 8, the doctrine of the trinity is, of necessity, an article of faith, but in order to ensure that our “faith is not fabricated” such faith must be secured or anchored in something we know. On his view, our faith in the trinity is anchored in what we know and experience of our own minds, since it is in the human mind that the image of the trinity is located.

⁵⁷ *Impugnatio* 19.5.

⁵⁸ *Impugnatio* 19.11. Cf. *Impugnatio*, 19.10: “We know most certainly and intimately that we exist.”

⁵⁹ *Impugnatio*, 19.11

⁶⁰ *Impugnatio*, 19.11. See also passages A and L above.

Olivi's commitment to a broadly Augustinian account of the epistemology of reflexive awareness drives much of Olivi's theory of consciousness and self-knowledge. This is clearest, I think, in the case of his account of the nature of introspective knowledge. To see this, let us return briefly to his account of introspective (state-reflexive) knowledge in q. 79. Recall that the question at issue in this context has to do with whether a given mental act or state can take itself as object. As we have now seen, a negative answer to this question amounts to two-level, or higher-order, account of introspective knowledge whereas an affirmative answer yields a same-order theory. It is perhaps to Olivi's credit that he ultimately comes down on the side of a negative answer, since a one-level theory of introspection looks rather implausible phenomenologically. After all, on such a view, mental states turn out to be such that they are not only always subjectively experienced by their subject, but they are also—at all times—introspectively known to her as well. And this is because on such a view both pre-reflective and introspective awareness are entailed by the occurrence of the state itself. In siding with the higher-order theory, however, Olivi explicitly allows that we lack introspective knowledge for at least some of our states.

And yet, as we have seen, Olivi does take the same-order theory seriously. In fact, he defends it at length and, were it not for the authority of Augustine, he might very well have come down in favor of it. This is somewhat surprising both because, as just noted, the view is implausible, *prima facie*, and also because this sort of view was widely rejected in Olivi's day. That said, we can, I think, begin to make sense of the appeal of such a view for Olivi if we consider it in the context of his commitments to an Augustinian account of the epistemology of self-knowledge.⁶¹ After all, whatever else may be said for it, the one-level theory of introspection easily accommodates the pristine epistemic status accorded to self-knowledge on the Augustinian picture. That this is the case is clear, first, from the fact that on the one-level model of introspection mental states turn out to be self-intimating—that is to say, they are such that, necessarily, being in a given mental state entails knowing this very fact. Thus, on the one-level theory of introspection, whenever a subject is thinking of something, she thereby inevitably forms an introspective judgment to the effect that she has just such thought. What is more, such judgments are guaranteed to be both indubitable and infallible. After all, it is not possible for the subject to doubt the truth of her introspective judgment if that judgment coincides with conscious experience of the very state she attributes to herself. Likewise, it is not possible for her self-attributing judgment to be false if the judgment in question contains or includes the state she attributes to herself. It is, I think, the fact that the one-level analysis of introspective knowledge

⁶¹ This is not to say that epistemic considerations are the only features that render this sort of view attractive to Olivi. Indeed, it seems clear that his commitment to the reflexive character of acts of will is playing an important role here too. For more on Olivi's views about reflexivity in connection with acts of willing, see Yrjönsuuri, "Free Will and Self-Control," 100-3 and 118-23.

secures such a robust privilege for self-knowledge that explains Olivi's willingness to defend (even if not, ultimately, to endorse) such a view.⁶²

While Olivi eventually rejects the one-level theory of introspection, it is worth noting that his account of phenomenal consciousness nevertheless preserves—albeit in slightly weakened form—much of the epistemic profile associated with it. His insistence on the ubiquity of (pre-reflective) consciousness, for example, entails that mental states are, in an important sense, still self-intimating. While it is not the case (as it is on the one-level theory of introspection) that merely being in a mental state suffices for one's forming a self-attributing judgment regarding that state, it does, nevertheless, suffice for *some form of awareness* of it—namely, the sort that constitutes one's conscious experience of it. And even if, on Olivi's final view, being in a mental state is not sufficient for the actual possession of infallible introspective knowledge of that state, nevertheless, it is sufficient for one's *being able* to have such knowledge. After all, on his analysis, consciousness is a very special type of access to one's states—access that not only grounds, but also guarantees our *ability* to attend to and to judge indubitably and infallibly about our subjective states. This is clear, for example, from the fact that even when Olivi is forced to admit—on threat of regress—that there are states which one cannot actually introspect (say, the final state in a higher-order series), he insists nonetheless that *with respect to any such state* “one can be said to be certain and can know it with certainty”. His insistence on this point owes, I believe, to the fact that he takes consciousness as a kind of privileged access. Thus, the “certainty” Olivi ascribes even to states that are not introspectively known owes to the fact that they occur consciously. Since consciousness serves as the grounds for introspective judgments, it follows that whether or not a subject actually introspects a given state, her access to that state is such that she “can know it with certainty”. Whether or not a subject *actually* forms any introspective judgment is, therefore, (epistemically) irrelevant. Either way, the epistemic grounds for such a judgment remain the same. As Olivi himself puts it (in passage K), the mind's access to its states is such that its states are by nature “productive of [introspective] knowing”.⁶³

To the extent that an act of knowing proceeds from the intellect as something actually structured for knowing what proceeds from it, to that same extent it can be said that it knows that very act of knowing—namely, because the intellect generates and contains it

⁶² The importance of such epistemic considerations in shaping Olivi's analysis of reflexive awareness is even more clear in his debate with those who hold that the soul's awareness of itself is in some way mediated by intelligible species or phantasms. Olivi insists that such a view fails precisely because it fails to preserve the certainty traditionally associated with self-knowledge. See *Impugnatio* 19 *passim*.

⁶³ I am grateful to Scott MacDonald for calling my attention to the way in which Olivi's remarks here illuminate precisely this feature of his view.

[i.e., its act] in the manner of something both able to be known and productive of knowing (*scibilem et scivitum*).

It is no doubt for this same reason that Olivi claims (in the last lines of passage A) that consciousness—that is, one’s experiential, subject-/state-reflexive awareness—yields “primary, infallible, and indubitable principles” for more introspective varieties of self-knowledge.

In the end, therefore, it is clear that Olivi’s commitment to the privileged status of self-knowledge illuminates—and, indeed, partly motivates—his specific views about the nature and structure of state-reflexive awareness. Such a commitment not only explains his attraction to the controversial, one-level analysis of introspection but also, I believe, ultimately motivates his account of consciousness as a sui-generis type of access to one’s subjective states—one meditated neither by representation nor inferential processes. At the end of the day, it is this access that anchors the certainty associated with self-knowledge in general—both experiential and *quiddative* forms of subject-reflexive knowledge as well as introspective and non-introspective forms of state-reflexive awareness.

4. Conclusion

Although Olivi’s treatment of these issues forms just one part of a much longer tradition of medieval reflection on the nature of mind’s self-reflexivity, his account serves to illustrate the way in which questions about mind’s reflexivity provide an important context for theorizing about the nature of self-knowledge in general and consciousness in particular. What is more, attention to the details of Olivi’s discussion helps to clarify some of the connections that can (and cannot) be drawn between medieval theories of self-reflexivity and contemporary theories of consciousness. As we have seen, the core phenomenon at stake in Olivi’s theory of reflexivity—namely, the subjective or self-conscious character of experience—overlaps with that targeted in a number of current theories of phenomenal consciousness. Still, insofar as contemporary notions of *quale* or qualitative character have no obvious correlate in his account of reflexive awareness, we must resist any unqualified assimilation of his notion of reflexivity to the current notion of consciousness.

Again, we have also seen that because Olivi, like other medieval philosophers, admits various types of reflexive awareness, a proper understanding of his theory of consciousness and its relationship to contemporary theories requires that we pay attention to which among these various modes of awareness is at issue at any given point in his discussion. Thus, whereas higher-order and even same-order or self-representationalist analyses of consciousness are widely accepted among philosophers today, we can now see that Olivi rejects such

analyses.⁶⁴ Although he does endorse a higher-order approach to *introspective* knowledge, and even entertains adopting a same-order account of introspection, nonetheless, phenomenal consciousness, for him, is distinct from (and presupposed by) such introspective awareness. Indeed, on his analysis, consciousness is distinct from all other forms of awareness. Hence, on his view, it cannot be explained or analyzed in terms of any other, more familiar, form of intentional or representational awareness—whether higher- or same-order in nature.

Finally, as the discussion of Olivi helps us to see, even if debates about self-reflexivity are a natural place to look for medieval treatments of consciousness, discussions of such reflexivity include much else besides. At bottom, the traditional thesis that the mind is self-reflexive in nature is a thesis about the essential character of the mind as such. It is in the course of exploring the broader implications of this thesis (metaphysical, theological, epistemological, and phenomenological) that questions relating to consciousness often come to the fore. Even so, self-consciousness is but one among many philosophical and theological themes associated with the traditional thesis about the reflexivity of mind.⁶⁵

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⁶⁴ In this regard, however, he is not representative of medieval approaches generally. There are a number of medieval thinkers who quite explicitly develop and defend higher order theories. See n. 44 above.

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