**The 'of' of Intentionality and the 'of' of Acquaintance**

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**I. Introduction and Terminology**

The term ‘consciousness’ is of course notoriously ambiguous. One key distinction is between *state* and *creature* consciousness (Rosenthal 1993, 2005). We sometimes speak of an individual mental state, such as a pain or perception, as conscious. On the other hand, we also often speak of organisms or creatures as conscious, such as when we say that dogs are conscious. Creature consciousness is also simply meant to refer to the fact that an organism is awake, as opposed to sleeping or in a coma. Most contemporary theories of consciousness are aimed at explaining state consciousness, that is, explaining what makes a mental *state* a conscious mental state. Perhaps the most fundamental and commonly used notion of ‘conscious’ among philosophers is captured by Thomas Nagel’s famous “what it is like” sense (Nagel 1974). When I am in a conscious mental state, there is “something it is like” for me to be in that state from the first-person point of view. When I am, for example, smelling a rose or having a conscious visual experience, there is something it “seems” or “feels” like from my perspective. There is also something it is like to be a conscious creature whereas there is nothing it is like to be a table or tree.[[1]](#endnote-1)

In Gennaro (2002), I argued that Sartre’s theory of consciousness and his belief that consciousness entails self-consciousness can be fruitfully understood against the background of the so-called "higher-order thought (HOT) theory of consciousness" which, in turn, sheds light on the structure of conscious mental states and Sartre’s theory of (self-) consciousness. Another goal of that paper was, following Wider (1997), to show how Sartre’s view can be understood from a contemporary analytic perspective. The HOT theory of consciousness says that what makes a mental state conscious is the presence of a HOT directed at the mental state. These HOTs are typically themselves unconscious unless one is engaged in “reflection” or “introspection” in which case the HOT is itself conscious and accompanied by a yet higher-order thought (Rosenthal 2005, Gennaro 2012). So when a conscious mental state is a first-order world-directed state the higher-order thought (HOT) is *not* itself conscious; otherwise, circularity and an infinite regress would follow. When the HOT is itself conscious, there is a yet higher-order (or third-order) thought directed at the second-order state. In this case, we have *introspection* which involves a *conscious* HOT directed at a mental state. When one introspects, one's attention is directed back into one's mind.

Following Husserl, Sartre urges that “all consciousness... is consciousness of something” (1956, pp. 11, 23). The key point here is the essentially intentional aspect of consciousness. But Sartre also distinguishes between *positional* (or thetic) consciousness and *non-positional* (or non-thetic) consciousness. According to Sartre, an act of consciousness is “positional” when it asserts the existence of its object. Obviously related to the intentional nature of consciousness, the idea is that when one’s conscious attention is focused on something else, one “posits” the existence of an intentional object. On the other hand, one merely has “non-positional” consciousness of “anything that falls within one’s field of awareness but to which one is not now paying attention” (Wider 1997, p. 41). It is a kind of ubiquitous background “self-awareness.” Every act of consciousness, Sartre argues, has both a positional and non-positional aspect. It is the latter which is more important for and relevant to this chapter. Further, Sartre distinguishes between *reflective* and *prereflective* consciousness. The former is the positional consciousness of consciousness, such as when one introspects a mental state, whereas the latter is the non-positional consciousness of consciousness.

It is also worth first noting here that my 2002 paper pre-dated much of the more fruitful and recent work by Uriah Kriegel (2003, 2006, 2009), who has defended a related “self-representational theory of consciousness,” and other relevant work by Rowlands (2001, 2003, 2013), Zahavi (2004, 2005), Thomas (2003), Thomasson (2000) and others which have affinities to the theories found in Sartre (1956, 1957) and Brentano (1874/1973). The purpose of this paper is to elaborate further on these matters and especially to delve more deeply into the Sartrean notion of “prereflective consciousness” in light of recent work on theories of consciousness. Overall, I will argue that it is still best to construe the non-positional and prereflective “self-awareness” as representational and unconscious, as opposed to some weaker form of “intentionality” or some kind of “acquaintance.” For the purposes of this paper, I’ll treat ‘intentional’ as interchangeable with ‘representational.’

In the remainder of this paper, I first provide (in section II) some further background on Sartre’s theory of consciousness and prereflective self-awareness, especially with respect to how it might be favorably compared to my own version of HOT theory. In section III, I critically examine a few initial attempts to understand the ‘acquaintance’ relation and to link it with Sartre’s notion of prereflective self-awareness. In section IV, I briefly address a related problem often raised against HOT theory, namely, the problem of misrepresentation. In section V, I critique several further attempts to explain the acquaintance relation and argue that they are inadequate. In section VI, I critically evaluate Hellie’s (2007) argument favoring acquaintance theory of higher-order theories. In section VII, I argue that the move to “adverbialism” fails to save acquaintance theory and should also be rejected on other grounds. In section VIII I offer some brief concluding remarks. Overall, I argue that many of the properties association with prereflective non-positional consciousness or self-awareness can be best accommodated by a version of HOT theory.

**II. Sartre, HOT theory, and Pre-reflective (Non-positional) Self-awareness**

In Gennaro (2002), I argued in great detail that Sartre’s theory of consciousness could be helpfully understood as a version of HOT theory, especially one which is closer to my own. Unlike Rosenthal who holds that the (unconscious) HOT is *entirely distinct* from its target, I had previously argued that first-order conscious states are better construed as complex states with two parts: a mental state-part directed at the world (M) and an unconscious “metapsychological thought” (MET) part directed at M. This is what I have called the “wide intrinsicality view” (WIV) such that consciousness is indeed an intrinsic aspect of conscious states and thus such states should be individuated widely (Gennaro 1996, 2006, 2012). It is, we might say, an intrinsic version of HOT theory. Nonetheless, during “reflection” or “introspection,” there is a *conscious* HOT (or MET) directed at a mental state. In this case, there is a greater “gap” between the MET and its object. The conscious MET is entirely distinct from its target mental state.

With regard to Sartre, it is worth noting first that he, much like HOT theorists and others, noticed a potentially troubling infinite regress problem. However, instead of responding in like manner by holding that the “self-awareness” in question is normally unconscious, he says the following:

All reflecting consciousness is, indeed, in itself unreflected, and a new act of the third degree is necessary in order to posit it. Moreover, there is no infinite regress here, since a consciousness has no need at all of a reflecting consciousness in order to be conscious of itself. It simply does not posit itself as an object. (Sartre 1957, p. 45)

Sartre also puts it as follows:

Either we stop at any one term of the series – the known, the knower known, the knower known by the knower, etc. In this case the totality of the phenomenon falls into the unknown; that is, we always bump up against a non-conscious reflection and a final term. Or else we affirm the necessity of an infinite regress (*idea ideae ideae*, etc.), which is absurd....Are we obliged after all to introduce the law of this [knower-known] dyad into consciousness? Consciousness of self is not dual. If we wish to avoid an infinite regress, there must be an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself. (Sartre 1956, p. 12)

What are we to make of these passages? First, we must keep in mind that Sartre is often taken as rejecting unconscious mental states though some commentators have questioned the notion that Sartre denied the existence of *all* unconscious mentality (see Gennaro 2002, pp. 299-305, for some discussion). Thus, we might suppose that the option open to the HOT theorist to avoid an infinite regress, i.e. by invoking *unconscious* self-awareness, is not open to Sartre. But Sartre seems to think that by treating conscious states as including non-positional self-awareness, an infinite regress can still be avoided. I am not convinced by this but won’t quibble with it here (but see Gennaro 2002, pp. 305-308). Sartre is of course correct that if one were to suppose that conscious states required *reflective* (positional) conscious states directed at first-order conscious states, then an infinite regress would certainly follow. But neither Sartre nor HOT theory is committed to such a claim. In any case, it is also worth noting up front that Sartre obviously did not share the reductionist motivations found in many current representationalists (including myself).[[2]](#endnote-2)

Second, we can see that Sartre is recognizing that when there is “reflecting” (i.e. introspective) consciousness, there must be “a new act of the third degree...” This is reminiscent of the HOT theorist’s contention that a third-order state is necessary for introspection. But there is no infinite regress because “a consciousness has no need of a reflecting consciousness in order to be conscious of itself” which can be taken as meaning “conscious mental states need not have a reflective (or introspective) state directed at it in order to be self-conscious.” The idea that a conscious mental state need not be accompanied by introspection is, once again, certainly the view of any HOT theorist. One can, for example, have an outer directed conscious mental state of a table without being introspectively conscious of one’s own perception. After all, one’s conscious attention cannot be directed both at the table and at one’s own mental state at the same time (though we may often switch back and forth).

But Sartre must still also account for the non-positional self-awareness in pre-reflective consciousness. He holds that “every positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself...” (Sartre 1956, p. 13). In the first quoted passage above, Sartre is making the point that such non-positional consciousness of itself “does not posit itself as an object.” “This [non-positional] self-consciousness we ought to consider not as a new consciousness.... [it is] a quality of the positional consciousness” (Sartre 1956, p. 14). Sartre says “Consciousness (of) pleasure is *constitutive* of the pleasure as the very mode of its own existence” (Sartre 1956, p. 14, emphasis added). So Sartre is recognizing, as he did in attempting to avoid the infinite regress, that non-positional self-consciousness is really part of a first-order conscious state. It is ‘constitutive’ of the first-order conscious state. “We understand now why the first consciousness of consciousness is not positional; it is because it is one with the consciousness of which it is consciousness” (Sartre 1956, pp. 13-14).

I argued in Gennaro 2002 that this is tantamount to holding the WIV (or something very close to it in structure) such that non-positional self-awareness is part of the conscious mental state. This self-awareness is not entirely separate from the mental state it is directed at, and this is why Sartre says that it “does not posit an object.” So despite Sartre’s claim that all consciousness is consciousness of something, he is apparently saying that, when it comes to such non-positional self-consciousness, it does not really posit an object, or at least not a *distinct* object. This is also why Sartre feels the need to explain that he uses the ‘of’[*de*] in parentheses merely out of “grammatical necessity” when speaking of non-positional self-consciousness (of) self. Sartre tells us that “when I am aware of a chair, I am non-reflectively conscious of my awareness. But when I deliberately think of my awareness, this is a totally new consciousness; and here only am I explicitly positing my awareness or myself as an object of reflection. The pre-reflective cogito is a non-positional self-consciousness” (Sartre 1956, p. xi).

But why not just call such meta-psychological implicit awareness an “unconscious thought (or self-awareness)”? Sartre’s reluctance to call the “non-positional awareness” in pre-reflective consciousness an “unconscious thought” is perhaps again partly due to his apparent rejection of the first-order unconscious. However, I suggested that we could interpret (or reasonably modify) Sartre’s view as being committed to the existence of unconscious METs. As we shall see, it is difficult to understand it any other way.

Reflection or introspection is, however, “an operation of the second degree...performed by a[n act of] consciousness directed upon consciousness, a consciousness which takes consciousness as an object” (Sartre 1957, p. 44). Thus, the higher-order (i.e. second-order) reflecting consciousness “posits” a lower-order consciousness. In these cases, we might call the higher-order state “the reflecting consciousness” and the lower-order state “the reflected-on.” And so reflection, for both Sartre and the WIV, involves a reflecting consciousness directed at an inner reflected-on object (i.e. mental state). So “...the reflecting consciousness posits the consciousness reflected-on, as its object” (Sartre 1956, pp. 12-13).[[3]](#endnote-3)

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Thus, to summarize, it is clear that Sartre views ‘non-positional self-awareness’ as a form of self-consciousness since he believed that first-order outer-directed conscious states are also self-conscious states. Like a HOT theorist, however, he also recognized a yet higher-order form of self-consciousness which he called ‘reflection’ (instead of ‘introspection’). So when one is in a first-order conscious mental state, one has a (complex) state such that one is positionally aware of an outer object but also non-positionally aware of that awareness. When one is in a second-order reflective state, one has a (complex) higher-order conscious ‘reflecting’ state directed at (or positionally aware of) a first-order ‘reflected-on’ state of consciousness (see Figure 1).

The main differences between my view and Sartre’s are (1) to the extent that Sartre rejects *all* unconscious mental states (and can somehow still avoid an infinite regress), his non-positional self-awareness could obviously not be *un*conscious; and (2) assuming that Sartre or others can make sense of some kind of ‘acquaintance’ relation between such self-awareness and conscious states, that would differ from my view that it can best be understood to be a more robust intentional or representational relation.

**III. Pre-reflective Self-awareness and Acquaintance: A First Pass**

Now the notion that such prereflective self-awareness (i.e. prereflective awareness *of* conscious states) can be fruitfully explained in terms of some kind of “acquaintance” relation to our conscious states has been suggested by some authors, perhaps even as an alternative to a standard higher-order representational view (Hellie 2007). So a key question is: does the ‘of’ of acquaintance fare better than the ‘of’ of intentionality or representation in trying to understand prereflective self-awareness? For all of us who do believe that some kind of self-awareness accompanies all first-order conscious states, it is crucial to address this issue.

But there are numerous problems with this approach. It is worth emphasizing at the outset that the notion of ‘acquaintance’ at work cannot be the same notion that Russell (1910/1929, 1912/1997) famously employed for several reasons. This can help to limit the potential for confusion. First, much of Russell’s concern was about knowledge of *outer* objects or features of the world, not self-awareness in any sense. He was primarily concerned to distinguish knowledge by acquaintance from knowledge by description (Russell 1910/1929) where the former is a kind of immediate (or direct) experience of objects or things and the latter is knowledge *that* something is the case (or some kind of factual knowledge). One feature of acquaintance with X is that we are directly aware of X without any intermediary process of inference. Second, even if one turned knowledge by acquaintance inward to one’s own mental states, it wouldn’t appear to be at the right level, i.e. at the prereflective level. Rather, it would seem to enter at the level of ‘introspection’ or ‘reflection,’ as opposed to a more intimate self-awareness of first-order conscious states. That is, when I consciously turn my attention to my own mental states, I might be said to be acquainted with my conscious states, but then they are very clearly objects of my higher-order conscious thoughts. As we have seen, even Sartre concedes that we can have reflective consciousness which is “positional,” that is, which posits a distinct object.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, to the extent that it one wishes to invoke acquaintance with our conscious states as having some sort of special epistemic status or even implying infallible knowledge of our mental states, this seems mistaken both as a matter of fact and as the proper interpretation of Russell’s view (Wishon 2012). Gertler (2011, especially chapter four) discusses this so-called “acquaintance theory of self-knowledge” as involving introspection of events in our minds. But she clearly recognizes that “acquaintance theorists are not generally committed to infallibility or omniscience” though introspection “can be more epistemically secure than other empirical judgments” (Gertler 2011, p. 96). “The core of any acquaintance theory is the idea that some introspective knowledge involves acquaintance,” (Gertler 2011, p. 96) as opposed for example to “inner-sense” accounts of introspective self-knowledge. HOT and other theorists might of course allow for some notion of ‘acquaintance’ with our conscious states even with regard to introspection but just because the relation seems direct (i.e. without inference), it doesn’t follow that it really is the way it appears or that it is infallible. Once again, the discussion at hand is clearly taking place at the introspective or reflective level, not at the prereflective level. The issue remains as to how we should characterize the prereflective self-awareness that accompanies conscious states.[[4]](#endnote-4)

In any case, it still remains the case that ‘acquaintance’ is often described is as a kind of *relation*, e.g. a relation between a subject and a conscious state and/or a relation between self-awareness (not introspective) and a conscious state. If it is not meant to be relational at all, then the onus is on the acquaintance theorist to explain it. As I briefly sketched in the previous section, my own way of explaining the prereflective awareness in question is that it is unconscious representational self-awareness (the “ubiquitous self-awareness”) that accompanies all conscious states, along the lines suggested by HOT theory. However, I also hold, unlike Rosenthal and others, that it is best to construe such awareness as part of an overall complex conscious state. So, according to my WIV, we have two parts of a single conscious state with one part *directed at* (“aware of”) the other. In short, we have a complex conscious mental state with an *inner intrinsic relation between parts*. There is thus a kind of “self-referential” or “self-representational” or “self-reflexive” element to conscious states. But given that there is still a relational aspect, it is best to treat it also as intentional and representational.

Some have tried to cash out the notion of prereflective self-awareness in terms of a ubiquitous (conscious) “peripheral” self-awareness which accompanies all of our first-order focal conscious states (Kriegel 2003, 2006, 2009). Not all conscious “directedness” is attentive, and so perhaps I have mistakenly restricted conscious directedness to that which we are consciously focused on. If this is right, then a first-order conscious state can be both attentively outer-directed and inattentively inner-directed. I argue against this view at length (Gennaro 2008, Gennaro 2012, chapter five). For example, although it is surely true that there are degrees of conscious attention, it seems to me that the clearest example of genuine “inattentive” consciousness are outer-directed awareness in one’s peripheral visual field. But this obviously does not show that any such inattentional consciousness is *self-directed* when there is outer-directed consciousness, let alone at the very same time. Also, what is the evidence for such self-directed inattentional consciousness? It is presumably based on phenomenological considerations but I confess that I do not find such ubiquitous inattentive self-directed “consciousness” in my experience, which should presumably show up in a clear Nagelian sense if it is based on phenomenological observation. Except when I am introspecting, conscious experience is so completely outer directed that I deny we have such peripheral self-directed consciousness when in first-order conscious states. It does not seem to me that I am consciously aware (in any sense) of my own *experience* when I am, say, consciously attending to a movie or to the task of building a bookcase. Even some who are otherwise very sympathetic to Sartre’s overall view and a generally phenomenological approach also find it difficult to believe that prereflective (inattentional) self-awareness accompanies conscious states (Siewart 1998, Zahavi 2004) or at least that *all* conscious states involve such self-awareness (Smith 2004). And none of these authors are otherwise sympathetic to HOT theory or reductionist approaches to consciousness.

Interestingly, there has also been a noticeable shift in emphasis to talk of parts and wholes in Kriegel’s later work (e.g. Kriegel 2006, 2009). He had even previously said for example that that “the mental state yielded by that integration may not actually represent itself . . . . At most, we can say that one part of it represents another part” (Kriegel 2005, p. 48). But Kriegel later explicitly explains that only an *indirect self-representation* is applicable to conscious states (2009, 215–226). This comes in the context of Kriegel’s attempt to make sense of a self-representational view within a naturalistic framework, but it is also much more like the WIV in structure, the main difference being that he thinks that prereflective self-awareness is itself (peripherally) conscious. As we shall see later, Kriegel also rejects the notion that the relation between his peripheral inattentive self-directed consciousness and conscious states is best understood in terms of “acquaintance.”

**IV. An aside on misrepresentation**

One related difficulty that arises in this context for any HOT theorist (and any acquaintance view, for that matter) is what to say about the possibility of misrepresentation between a conscious mental state (M) and an unconscious HOT. For example, there might seem to be a more immediate epistemic relation between them even on HOT theory especially in light of the implicit “self-reference” in the HOT. This element of self-reference might then seem to rule out the kind of *misrepresentation* that is frequently raised as an objection to HOT theory. But how can one have a representational relation without the possibility of misrepresentation? The main example of misrepresentation used in Gennaro (2012) comes from the following hypothetical case from Levine (2001):

Suppose I am looking at my red diskette case, and therefore my visual system is in state R. According to HO, this is not sufficient for my having a conscious experience of red. It’s also necessary that I occupy a higher-order state, say HR, which represents my being in state R, and thus constitutes my being aware of having the reddish visual experience. . . . Suppose because of some neural misfiring (or whatever), I go into higher-order state HG, rather than HR. HG is the state whose representation content is that I’m having a greenish experience, what I normally have when in state G. The question is, what is the nature of my conscious experience in this case? My visual system is in state R, the normal response to red, but my higher-order state is HG, the normal response to being in state G, itself the normal response to green. Is my consciousness of the reddish or greenish variety? (Levine 2001, p. 108)

So the question is: In such a hypothetical case, what “is it like for the subject”? The higher-order content is green whereas the first-order content is red. Levine initially points out that we should reject the following two possible answers:

Option 1: The resulting conscious experience is of a *greenish* sort.

Option 2: The resulting conscious experience is of a *reddish* sort.

I agree with Levine on these two options. The main problem is that one wonders what the point of having both states, on HOT theory, if only one of them determines the (color of the) conscious experience. Rosenthal, however, continues to favor option 1 which I think is much more problematic. Somehow the higher-order representation alone is what matters. But doesn’t this defeat the purpose of HOT theory which is supposed to explain state consciousness in terms of the relation between two states? This problem reappears in so-called “targetless” or “empty HOT” cases where there is no lower-order state at all (Gennaro 2012, pp. 59-70). But how could a lone *unconscious* thought result in a conscious state?

So instead I favor a third option and argue that the self-reference and complexity of conscious states in the WIV rules out this kind of misrepresentation such that neither color experience would result in such a case. If there isn’t a “match” (that is, an accurate representation) between a HOT concept and the content of a lower-order state, then it seems perfectly appropriate for the HOT theorist to hold that something like this third option is a legitimate possibility. After all, this is an abnormal case where applying the HOT theory could not be expected to result in a normal conscious state. If specific brain lesions are involved, perhaps the subject would experience a loss of color vision (achromatopsia) with respect to the diskette case perception. On the WIV, if the proper interconnectedness between M and MET is absent, then there will be no resulting conscious state. If a MET is misrepresenting M (or if there is no M at all), then what would otherwise be the entire complex conscious state does not exist and thus cannot be conscious.

On the neural level, much the same seems reasonable, since, for example, there may be some overlapping parts of feedforward and feedback loops that extend from M to MET or vice versa. Edelman and others have argued that feedback loops (or reentrant pathways) in the neural circuitry of the brain are essential for conscious awareness (Edelman and Tononi 2000a, 2000b). It is well-known that forward-projecting neurons are matched by an equal or greater number of back-projecting neurons. The brain structures involved in these loops seem to resemble the structure of at least some form of HOT theory such that lower-order and higher-order states are combining to produce conscious states. More specifically, such evidence seems to support the WIV because of the intimate and essential interrelationship between the “higher” and “lower” areas of the brain involved. There is mutual interaction between the relevant neuronal levels (see Gennaro 2012, chapters four and nine for more on the neural realization of my theory).

So am I saying that misrepresentations cannot occur or that there is some kind of infallibility at work between MET and M? In one sense, yes, but I also point out how the following two claims are really two sides of the same coin (Gennaro 2012, p. 64):

(1) There is no resulting conscious state when a misrepresentation does occur, and

(2) Misrepresentations cannot occur.

I am unsure which is preferable but either one seems plausible to me, especially if we think of (2) as:

(2′) Misrepresentations cannot occur between M and MET *and still result in a conscious state*.

Once again, we must be careful not to conflate any kind of infallibility in outer-directed conscious states with allegedly infallible introspective knowledge. In the WIV, it is possible to separate the higher-order (complex) conscious state from its target mental state in cases of *introspection*. This is as it should be and does indeed allow for the possibility of error and misrepresentation. Thus, for example, I may mistakenly consciously think that I am angry when I am really jealous, I may be wrong about why I am sad, and so on. The WIV properly accommodates the anti-Cartesian view that one can be mistaken about what mental state one is in, at least in the sense that when one *introspects* a mental state one may be mistaken about what state one is really in. There is more of a “gap” in this case. However, this is very different from holding that the relationship between M and MET within an outer-directed conscious state is similarly fallible. There is indeed a kind of infallibility *between M and MET* according to the WIV, but this is not a problem. The impossibility of error in this case is merely *within* the complex conscious state and is certainly not one that holds between one’s conscious state and an outer object.[[5]](#endnote-5)

**V. More on Acquaintance and Pre-reflective Self-awareness**

Let us return the problem of trying to make sense of acquaintance. First, one might suppose that there must be a causal connection between a conscious state and any kind of ubiquitous self-awareness. But, as Kriegel rightly points out, the causal relation is antireflexive, and so we can, at best, make sense of such a relation only by invoking talk of one part of a complex state directed at another part. The WIV can clearly accommodate the notion of a causal relation between M and MET combining to produce a conscious mental state (as described above in neural terms perhaps). Notice, however, that there is still no “pure self-reference,” that is, no conscious (brain) state (or state-part) that is literally directed at itself. This kind of self-reference is ruled out if we take the requisite notion of “self-reflexive” conscious states too literally.[[6]](#endnote-6)

But now if we suppose that the self-awareness or self-reflexivity in question involves a causal relation, then we are faced with a different potential problem. It is made vivid by Buras (2009), who argues that if some mental states are reflexive, then “it spells trouble for causal theories of mental content” (p. 117) which hold that mental states acquire their content by standing in appropriate causal relations to objects and properties in the world (see Gennaro 2012, pp. 33-36). That is, if we allow for truly reflexive intentional content as in some literal “pure self-reference,” then causal theories of mental content must be wrong because causal relations are “irreflexive.” But Buras has at most shown that intentional reflexivity is inconsistent with causal theories of mental content. Even if we grant this, I suggest that we ought to reject the notion that a mental state can literally be directed at itself, which is not really the case for the WIV or Kriegel’s view. Buras does mention that an alternative strategy would be to allow for some sort of nonrepresentational awareness (or “acquaintance”) between M and MET, as opposed to a standard representational relation. Such acquaintance relations would presumably be understood as somehow “closer” than the representational relation and thus can also help to avoid the problem of misrepresentation (and perhaps other problems). But Buras does not really in the end wish to argue for or offer a theory of acquaintance.

Janzen (2008), on the other hand, takes Kriegel to task for mischaracterizing some authors in the phenomenological tradition, such as Husserl and Sartre, by insinuating that they would not agree with Kriegel’s way of describing the relation between M and MET (Janzen 2008, p. 116n30). But I agree with Kriegel (2009, pp. 106–113, 205–208) and Buras (2009, pp. 119–121) that this strategy is at best trading one difficult problem for an even deeper puzzle, namely, just how to understand the allegedly intimate and nonrepresentational “awareness of” relation between MET and M. Finally, it is even more difficult to understand such “acquaintance relations” within the context of a reductionist approach. So I agree with Kriegel in opposition to any “acquaintance” alternative. I am still not sure what to make of this “sui generis” alternative. Indeed, acquaintance is often taken to be unanalyzable and simple in which case it is difficult to see how it could usefully explain *anything*, let alone the nature of conscious states.[[7]](#endnote-7)

Shear (2009) challenges Zahavi’s (2005) arguments for the view that all conscious experience involves self-consciousness, that is, a kind of “for-me-ness” or “mineness” internal to conscious experience. I won’t evaluate his entire critique of Zahavi’s arguments, but Shear rightly points out that “…when it comes time to offer a *positive* description of this consciousness, we are told, for example, that it is a ‘subtle background presence’” (Shear 2009, p. 103, emphasis added). I have also argued that, for example, Kriegel also uses a number of vague and mysterious characterizations of “peripheral self-awareness” such as “subtle awareness of having M,” “implicit awareness of M,” “dim self-awareness . . .humming in the background of our stream of consciousness,” and “minimal self-awareness” (Kriegel 2003, pp. 104-105). It is still not clear to me that Kriegel’s peripheral self-awareness is conscious in any phenomenological sense. So I suggest that the difficulties faced by those who hold that prereflective self-awareness is conscious (in any sense) can easily be avoided by thinking of such self-awareness as unconscious HOTs (or METs). Nonetheless, much of what Zahavi says could be acceptable to Shear if he recognized the alternative WIV. That is, Zahavi’s arguments for the ubiquity of self-awareness can be accommodated by unconscious METs in a way that can avoid the worries raised by Shear.

In other work discussing Henrich and Frank, Zahavi (2007) also recognizes how unsatisfying invoking ‘acquaintance’ can be. Zahavi explains that they acknowledge that pre-reflective, irrelational self-awareness is characterized by internal differentiation and complexity, but they “never offer a more detailed analysis of this complex structure. That is, when it comes to a positive description of the structure of original pre-reflective self-awareness they are remarkably silent, either claiming in turn that it is unanalysable, or that the unity of its complex structure is incomprehensible. This is hardly satisfactory” (Zahavi 2007, p. 281).[[8]](#endnote-8)

Preyer (2012) also discusses “what Heinrich has called subjectivity is…the *primary self-consciousness* we are acquainted with immediately…” (p. 196) but it is also not “higher-order” in the sense of being a distinct state or extrinsic to the first-order conscious state (p. 196). To this extent, I agree with Preyer against standard HOT theories. However, I disagree that it is better thin think of such acquaintance as somehow not representational. Partly for this reason, I think of the WIV as a modified version of HOT theory. The other reason, again, is that I think it is best to construe the self-awareness in question as unconscious.

Strawson (2013) nicely illustrates, in a very upfront and honest way, just what a struggle it can be to offer a positive account of the notion that all conscious awareness (A) involves awareness of A. Strawson, no friend of HOT theory, ultimately concedes that we should not give up the relationality claim in describing prereflective self-awareness or ‘acquaintance.’ He doesn’t see how genuine “reflexivity” or “self-reference” cannot involve genuine “relationality.” So he is willing to allow, *contra* Sartre, that the ‘of’ in non-positional self-awareness is metaphysically correct and not merely some unhappy grammatical obligation. I agree. Like Zahavi and others, Strawson also seems willing to concede that non-positional self-awareness does not show up in the phenomenology.[[9]](#endnote-9)

**VI. Hellie’s Argument**

With the above analysis in place, I will now turn to examine Hellie’s (2007) paper in more depth. He thinks the “correct view…is that consciousness consists of a bearing a nonintentional relation of awareness [NIRA] to a *diversity* of mental features, some intentional, some not” (p. 290). He thinks that his view has a “trio of advantages over Higher-Order Intentionalism” (p. 299), such as HOT theory, but I am very puzzled as to why he thinks so.

The first alleged “advantage” is supposed to be that there is “a reason for reductively-minded naturalists to prefer Acquaintance Theory [AT] to Higher-Order Intentionalism [HOI]” in the sense that “the latter involves intentional relations and the former doesn’t. Maybe intentional relations can be reduced, maybe they can’t; but introducing them into the mix raises a prima facie difficulty for reductivism” (Hellie 2007, p. 299).

But surely representationalists and reductionists, such as HOT theorists, believe and argue at length for the view that intentional relations can be reduced and that consciousness can be reduced to intentionality. Indeed, this is the overall strategy for virtually all representationalists. One need not even be a representationalist on consciousness to recognize how much work has been done to give a naturalistic account of intentionality. Hellie may not be satisfied with them or extant HOI theories of consciousness, but how is introducing intentional relations a difficulty for reductivism *especially in comparison with* the rather mysterious “nonintentional acquaintance relation” discussed earlier? If Hellie is merely stating that he thinks all such HOI attempts don’t (or can’t) work, then that is a different argument but it is somewhat question begging as it stands. Further, how could AT possibly be “preferred” by “reductively-minded naturalists”? Indeed, as we have seen, there is normally a clear non-reductivist strain in AT, not to mention that some acquaintance theorists describe the acquaintance relation as unanalyzable. So introducing NIRA into a theory of consciousness is surely at least as problematic as introducing intentional relations of awareness (IRA). Very little seems understood about the former. Much like some of the other authors mentioned earlier, Hellie offers little by way of a positive account of the acquaintance relation.

Second, Hellie thinks that “Acquaintance Theory arguably is the view of common sense….To have pain and to feel pain are one and the same….More generally, it seems an article of common sense that no mental state can have phenomenal character K unless the subject is somehow aware of (or ‘‘feels’’) its instance of K; and that if a subject is aware of, in the relevant way, an instance of K, the subject’s mental state has K as its phenomenal character—there cannot be phenomenal illusions of the sort Higher-Order Intentionalism predicts” (p. 299)

There are several responses one might offer here: (a) As was discussed earlier, if Hellie has in mind the introspective or reflective level, then he is off the mark in terms of what we are concerned with here, namely, the prereflective level. Recall that even Russellian acquaintance was never meant to imply infallibility. Moreover, if we are at the introspective level, virtually all HOI theorists have argued that one could be mistaken about being in pain. (b) Hellie’s claim that it is “an article of common sense that no mental state can have phenomenal character K unless the subject is somehow aware of (or ‘‘feels’’) its instance of K” is not a problem for HOI as such. Indeed, it sounds very much like the “transitivity principle” often used by HOT theorists, namely, that a conscious state is a state whose subject is, in some way, aware of being in it (Rosenthal 2005). I agree that this is “common sense.” (More below.) (c) Hellie is mistaken that it then follows that “there cannot be phenomenal illusions of the sort Higher-Order Intentionalism predicts.” If we are again at the introspective level, then there is enough of a gap to allow for the possibility of being mistaken about the object of introspection. Now if Hellie does have in mind the prereflective level, then he may have more of a point. I agree that the problem of misrepresentation is an important one facing intentionalists and HOT theorists. However, as I explained in section IV, it is possible for a HOI theorist to accommodate the notion that misrepresentations (and illusions) cannot occur at this level. Once again, I differ with Rosenthal on this matter.

Hellie’s “third advantage” mainly says that “a number of concerns about the view that consciousness-of is a form of awareness either misfire unless it is an IRA, or are much more easily rebutted if it is a NIRA. To the extent that one finds the view attractive but the concerns worrisome, one has reason to endorse the Acquaintance Theory” (p. 299). But this is more of a conclusion than a third separate argument or alleged “advantage” for AT. If I am right about the above two alleged advantages, then he should withdraw this one as well.

Hellie then addresses a number of arguments in favor of HOI and argues that they are “powerless” to discriminate between HOI and AT (pp. 302-306), such as two of Rosenthal’s arguments (pp. 303-304). One involves his rationale for favoring HOT theory to higher-order perception (HOP) theory and the other has to do with why positing HOTs can explain how it is that we can report our mental states.

I am willing to concede at least for the sake of argument that those arguments don’t automatically force one to conclude that AT has been ruled out and thus that one must opt for HOI, but the onus is surely still on AT to offer a much more positive alternative account. As we have seen, this is no easy task. Rosenthal’s arguments are also not necessarily intended to argue against *all* other alternative views. Again, he seems to have higher-order perception (HOP) theory in mind when he rejects the notion that we somehow “sense” the mental states that we are aware of being in. He is there mainly concerned with showing that HOT theory is superior to HOP theory.[[10]](#endnote-10) Further, there are other arguments that might be used to make the case for HOI (more on this in the next section). Indeed, some other arguments for HOI may not rule out all other theories (Lycan 2001) such as a self-representationalist alternative. That is why a HOT theorist ought to argue against this view more specifically and directly, as I have done briefly in section III and at length in Gennaro (2012, chapter five). No argument or two is likely to be able to eliminate all other competing theories.

Finally, Hellie says he will then “assess arguments powerful enough to make the needed discriminations. First, an explanation argument due to the Intentionalists Byrne (2001) and Thau (2002) which collapse into an argument from illusions of phenomenal character. This second argument cuts both ways: if there can be such illusions, the Higher-Order Intentionalist wins; if not, the Acquaintance Theorist wins. Given the difficulty in assessing the prima facie case for or against such illusions, I turn to a third argument from explanatory priority, which makes a very strong case for Acquaintance Theory” (p. 306).

I won’t enter into a detailed discussion of his first two arguments especially since Hellie himself basically reduces them in the end to the problem of “illusions” (or, we might say, “misrepresentation”). Assuming he is right about that, we already have the readymade reply from earlier: if we are at the introspective level, virtually all HOI theorists will acknowledge that we can be mistaken about our introspective states. But this is not very controversial and recall that even those who invoke Russellian acquaintance do not take it to be infallible. On the other hand, if Hellie does have in mind the prereflective level, then he may have a stronger argument. However, as I explained in section V, it is possible for a HOI theorist to accommodate the notion that misrepresentations (and illusions) cannot occur at this level. Further, it is not necessarily the case that “if there can be such illusions, the Higher-Order Intentionalist wins; if not, the Acquaintance Theorist wins.” My reply to the problem of misrepresentation allows for HOI to win *and* that there are no such illusions (“misrepresentations”) at the prereflective level (that is, between MET and M). This is far different from the possibility of illusions both at the introspective level and between any conscious state and the outer world.

Hellie explains that “according to the Acquaintance Theorist, consciousness-of is acquaintance, a NIRA. Since acquaintance is nonintentional, if one’s experience has phenomenal character F, it is F. There cannot be illusions in acquaintance, according to the Acquaintance Theorist” (p. 310). But, once again, we have no positive account of this allegedly more intimate acquaintance relation which, according to Hellie, cannot result in illusions. Interestingly, he actually says that “whether there can be illusions in acquaintance is the subject of considerable debate. I am on the side of those who refuse to accept such a possibility” (p. 310). But it seems to me that he still has in mind some sort of introspective level. For example, he mentions the interesting phenomenon of “dental fear” to support his view: “when the dentist informs the nervous patient he hadn’t started drilling yet and the patient says ‘ah, so I didn’t feel pain after all,’ this reveals in my view either that there is more to pain than a phenomenal character or that dentistry patients are easily shamed into behaving solicitously” (p. 310). But surely a good part of this process involves introspection and even some reporting on the patient’s own mental state. Even prior to when the patient initially reports the dental pain, there is a significant period of anticipation accompanied by introspective thoughts about being in pain. Intense and fearful introspection might even *cause* a patient to confuse fear with a pain or represent oneself as being in pain when there is no pain. Introspection can even *create* a lower-order conscious state. I can surely, via introspection, cause myself to have a strong desire for lasagna if I think about the taste for long enough.[[11]](#endnote-11)

Hellie’s third argument for AT is called the “argument from explanatory priority” (p. 310). He examines two strategies for explaining the following “necessary truths” (pp. 310-311):

**NIRA ↔ PC**: Bearing a NIRA to an F is always accompanied by (but might, for certain NIRAs, not always accompany) a certain characteristic phenomenal character.

**IRA ↔ PC**: Bearing an IRA to an F always accompanies, and is accompanied by, the phenomenal character characteristic of bearing its broadening to an F.

“An IRA-first strategy takes the IRA and its characteristic features as primitive, and declares its broadening to be that IRA *plus*” and the “NIRA-first strategy takes the NIRA and its characteristic features as primitive, and declares its narrowing to be a functionally-defined state: to be in the narrowing of a NIRA is to be in some ‘‘realizer’’ state which is from the subject’s perspective like being in the NIRA” (Hellie 2007, p. 311).

I do not see why he thinks that the NIRA-first strategy is better off than the IRA-first strategy with respect to explanatory priority. What is the “primitive” on the NIRA view? Well, it almost seems just to *be* phenomenal character: “to be acquainted with an instance of Kness *is just to be* in some state with the phenomenal character K. That is, if the NIRA-first strategy is correct, phenomenal character *explains* acquaintance” (Hellie 2007, p. 312). Hellie concedes that “no fact can explain itself” but there seems to me to be a sense in which this is precisely what the NIRA account offers, that is, some form of consciousness (phenomenal character) explaining (state) consciousness. Granted that NIRA is still supposed to be a *relation* (mysterious as it is) so we don’t quite have an absurd form of self-explanation, but we still apparently have phenomenal character explaining acquaintance with our mental states. This order of priority is problematic regardless of one’s views about the possibility of explaining consciousness, but it is obviously even more problematic if one wishes to offer a reductionist account via IRA.

On the other hand, the IRA-strategy holds out promise for explaining state consciousness (and phenomenal character) in terms of IRAs between (unconscious) mental states. To be sure, there is much that needs to be spelled out for any representationalist, but it is clearly mistaken to say that “we have no idea what the *plus* is for any broadening of any IRA” (pp. 311-312). Numerous efforts have been made by representationalist to fill out the “plus” including many of the authors that Hellie cites. Once again, Rosenthal (2005) and myself (2012) have gone into great depth as to how to explain state consciousness in terms of HOTs or METs. Intentionality or representation is indeed primitive in explaining state consciousness and phenomenal character. For the above reasons, then, I disagree with Hellie when he says that “rather than facts about phenomenal character being explained by facts about a certain sort of intentionality…the truth of the matter is that facts about this sort of intentionality [IRA] are rather explained by facts about phenomenal character” (p. 313). Further, Hellie does little to advance the issue regarding the *structure* of conscious states along the lines discussed earlier in this paper. If Sartre’s “prereflective” consciousness is just a kind of (conscious) NIRA, then we just revert back to the problems described in previous sections.

Hellie does not properly recognize representational theories of consciousness (first-order, higher-order, whatever). He seems baffled as to how a representationalist might even *attempt* to explain how certain kinds of intentionality could give rise to consciousness when others don’t. Instead he concludes: “Intentionalism promised to leave us with one unsolved problem in the philosophy of mind where there were previously two. It doesn’t do this. Intentionality is all over the place in the world, including: the intentionality of organismal processes, as when an acorn is growing into a mighty oak,…the intentionality of dynamical processes, which proceed so as to minimize the use of energy….The Intentionalist is thus left with the problem of explaining why certain varieties of intentionality give rise to consciousness when others don’t. A healthy pessimism about the prospects of such an approach leaves one suspicious that the Intentionalist can only explain consciousness in terms of conscious intentionality” (p. 315).

Perhaps this shows that one’s prior view about the prospects for a reductionistic explanation of consciousness is really what drives authors on both sides. Moreover, one might think that ‘representation’ or ‘intentionality’ is all over the place in the world but that ‘intentionality’ (understood as something *mental*) is clearly not everywhere. Most of us think there are important differences between a *mental* representation (= intentionality) and any other kind of representation, such as in tree rings and photographs. In order to possess genuine (mental) intentionality, one option is to hold that a creature or object in question must have complex-enough behavior such that simple mechanistic explanations are not sufficient to explain its behavior. More positively, we might demand that creatures display a significant degree of inferential integration (or “promiscuity”) among their intentional states (Stich 1978). The contents of, say, beliefs and desires are interconnected in various ways and acquire their content within a web or network of mental states. Absurd implications can also be blocked by recognizing that, for example, stomachs and rivers do not meet the criterion above, namely, that there is no significant degree of inferential connections among it states and that attributing intentionality to stomachs or rivers or tree rings does not add any explanatory value to a purely mechanistic account.[[12]](#endnote-12) In any case, Hellie has unfairly ignored numerous detailed attempts to give a representationalist theory of consciousnees.

**VII. Adverbialism to the rescue?**

Finally, some authors have sought refuge in “adverbialism” as a way of understanding the acquaintance relation or, better, as a way to avoid commitment to *distinct objects* of such self-awareness (Thomas 2003, unpublished; Rowlands 2001, 2003, 2013). This was also a strategy used by some to avoid ontological commitment to troublesome non-physical “sense data.” Rowlands explains that “when I have experiences, I have them *minely*. Their mine-ness is an adverbial modification of the act [of consciousness] rather than a property of an object of that act” (Rowlands 2013, p. 535). Thomas (2003, unpublished) similarly holds that we should give priority to the whole person when trying to explain consciousness. Consciousness is mainly a feature of organisms rather than mental states. So, for example, to experience green is not to have a mental *act of awareness* that takes a green *object* as its target, but it is rather a way of “experiencing greenly” or “being appeared to greenly.” The central idea, then, seems to be that creature or person-level consciousness is somehow ontologically prior to state consciousness. The acquaintance relation, if there is one, is between a person and a conscious state.

But, first, any theory of consciousness should still be able to answer the question: What makes a mental *state* a conscious mental state? A HOT theorist presents a theory of state consciousness and a way to explain the difference between unconscious and conscious mental states. If pushed further, this is also where the HOT theorist typically relies on the intuitive claim that has come to be known as the Transitivity Principle (TP). One motivation for HOT theory is the desire is precisely to explain what differentiates conscious and unconscious mental states:

(TP) A conscious state is a state whose subject is, in some way, aware of being in it (Rosenthal 2005).

Thus, when one has a conscious state, one is aware of being in that state. For example, if I am having a conscious desire, I am aware of having that desire. Conversely, the idea that I could be having a conscious state while totally unaware of being in that state seems very odd. A mental state of which the subject is completely unaware is clearly an unconscious state. For example, I would not be aware of having a subliminal perception, and thus it is an unconscious perception. I view TP primarily as an *a priori* or conceptual truth about the nature of conscious states (see Gennaro 2012, pp. 28-29 for some discussion).

Adverbialism, as far as I can see, does nothing to explain (or even try to explain) state consciousness. It passes the buck to creature consciousness without really offering an account of that either. What then makes a *creature* conscious? Perhaps it is simply that conscious creatures have conscious states but this is more of a definition than an explanation of state or creature consciousness. At least HOT theory also offers a positive and fairly detailed theory about state consciousness. I suppose that one might reasonably argue that even TP mentions (or presupposes) a “subject” in explaining state consciousness. It is not clear to me that TP assumes the existence of conscious subjects, but again it may just be true that state and creature consciousness normally go hand in hand such that any conscious mental state is possessed by a conscious creature.

However, it does seem possible to be state conscious and not creature conscious. For example, if one suppose (reasonably, I think) that vivid dreams are conscious mental states then we would seem to have a case of state consciousness without creature consciousness. Perhaps the same might be said of some hypnotic states. On the other hand, if we suppose that sleepwalkers do not have conscious mental states, perhaps they can be rightly described as creature conscious but not state conscious. The same might be said about the philosopher’s hypothetical zombie. In any case, it remains unclear to me what adverbialism *explains* that HOT theory or related representational theories of consciousness cannot explain, especially with respect to state consciousness and the nature of prereflective self-awareness.

Let me close by mentioning another related and compelling rationale for HOT theory and the TP (based on Rosenthal 2004, p. 24). We might reason as follows: Even a non-HOT theorist might still agree with HOT theory as an account of introspection or reflection, namely, that it involves a conscious thought about a mental state. This seems to be a fairly common sense definition of introspection. It also seems reasonable for anyone to hold that when a mental state is unconscious, there is no HOT at all. But then it stands to reason that there should be something “in between” those two cases, that is, when one has a first-order conscious state. So what is in between no HOT at all and a conscious HOT? The clear answer is an unconscious HOT, which is precisely what HOT theory says. Moreover, this explains what happens when there is a transition from a first-order conscious state to an introspective state, that is, an unconscious HOT becomes conscious. Indeed, perhaps this transition can also be understood in evolutionary terms and, in particular, the evolution of the brain and mental capacity.

Finally, it cannot be emphasized enough just how interconnected some views are on both sides of this issue. Sartre and Brentano did not apparently even think there were unconscious mental states and neither desired to offer a reductionist account of conscious states. It is no surprise that many today in that phenomenological tradition, such as Zahavi, Siewart, Hellie, Janzen, and Smith, also tend to be anti-reductionist. Since HOT theory is reductionist at least in mentalistic terms, it should be no surprise that they also reject HOT theory and any reductionist representationalist view. On the other hand, those of us who desire to provide a reductionist account of state consciousness are naturally more likely to find representationalist approaches more attractive. I think there are good methodological reasons to aim for a reductionist theory of consciousness (Gennaro 2012, chapter two), but it would be silly to pretend that these views aren’t mutually supporting and interconnected. Those who are anti-reductionist will then be more likely to embrace some notion of ‘acquaintance’ in accounting for conscious states. I hope I have shown, however, that one can usefully bring together Sartre’s theory and a reductionist version of HOT theory in an effort to make sense of ubiquitous prereflective self-awareness.

**VIII. Conclusion**

Thus, on my view, many of the properties association with prereflective non-positional consciousness or self-awareness can be accommodated by a version of HOT theory. According to the WIV, for example, conscious states are intrinsic, relational, self-referential, analyzable, and complex. There is also a very immediate and intimate relationship between METs and Ms. However, the key difference from standard interpretations of Sartre’s theory is that METs are unconscious and representational and so are not states of ‘acquaintance’ as normally defined. Attempts to characterize the ‘acquaintance’ relation in a positive way are rare; instead, we are usually told what it is *not*, such as nonrepresentational, non-positional, and so on. Thus, prereflective non-positional self-awareness is best understood as representational and unconscious. Overall, though, Sartre’s theory of consciousness and the structure of conscious states on the WIV have much in common (recall figure 1).

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1. There are also a cluster of other expressions and terms related to Nagel’s sense, for example, philosophers sometimes refer to conscious states as “phenomenal states” having qualitative properties called “qualia,” which are perhaps best understood as the felt properties or qualities of conscious states. I’ll avoid these terms for the most part. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. I argue independently for these motives in Gennaro 2012, chapter two, but won’t defend them here. It seems at least *more difficult* to avoid an infinite regress if one thinks that the prereflective (non-positional) awareness is itself conscious in some sense. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. In Gennaro 2002, I bolster this line of comparison with additional references to major secondary sources on Sartre’s theory, such as Catalano 1974, Morris 1975, and Busch 1990. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. See also Gertler 2012 for a nice related discussion on this topic. Chalmers (2010, especially 285-294) also utilizes a notion of ‘acquaintance’ in an effort to account for a rather special and intimate epistemic relation between a subject and a phenomenal property – such as an instance of phenomenal greenness – though he also stops short of claiming that the resulting phenomenal beliefs are thereby infallibly justified by a subject’s acquaintance with that phenomenal property. “What is central is...that whenever a subject has a phenomenal property, the subject is acquainted with that phenomenal property” (Chalmers 2010, p. 287). See also Hasan and Fumerton 2014 for additional background in Russell’s initial distinction and for more on the pros and cons regarding the notion of ‘acquaintance’ especially in more recent work in epistemology. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. There is much more on misrepresentation and related matters in Gennaro 2012 (especially pp. 59-70, 96-100, 158-160, and 179-180). See also Gennaro 2013 in response to commentaries by Van Gulick, Weisberg, and Seager as part of a *Journal of Consciousness Studies* book symposium on Gennaro 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. For more on my critique of what I called “pure self-referentialism,” see Gennaro 2012, pp. 104-116. This view is probably closest to Brentano’s actual position but he is also committed to rejecting the existence of unconscious mental states. Kriegel seems to have held this view in some of his earlier work. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Another important and difficult issue arises when some put forward the idea that ‘acquaintance’ in nonconceptual. Recall that Sartre even calls it “non-cognitive” by which he does not seem to mean “non-mental.” Sartre says that there must be an immediate, *non-cognitive* relation of the self to itself” (Sartre 1956, p. 12, emphasis added). I also disagree with Sartre here because I defend conceptualism and because HOTs are composed of concepts. See Gennaro 2012, especially chapter six. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. The same might be said of Montague (2012) who thinks that “conscious awareness always involves – constitutively involves – some sort of awareness of that very awareness” (p. 76). But what exactly is “some sort of awareness of that very awareness”? We are really never told. Moreover, if it is itself also conscious, then the infinite regress (and circularity) rears its ugly head. If it is not conscious, then how does the view differ from HOT theory or, especially, the WIV. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. So now how exactly does the relationship between two unconscious state-parts result in a conscious state? My answer to this and a related ‘hard problem’ objection can be found in Gennaro 2012, chapter four. The key lies in the way that concepts are applied in HOTs. But, again, anyone who doesn’t wish to pursue a reductionist strategy will likely never think that the hard problem can be solved in any way. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. See also Rosenthal 2004, Lycan 2004, and Gennaro 2012, pp. 49-53, for much more on this family squabble. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. For more on my take on this dental fear and pain case, see Gennaro 2012, pp. 68-70. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. For more on the relationship between consciousness and intentionality, see Gennaro 2012, pp. 21-27. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)