

## The Case for Intrinsic Theory: III. Intrinsic Inner Awareness and the Problem of Straightforward Objectivation

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Aron Gurwitsch, phenomenologist and intrinsic theorist of consciousness, contends that every objectivating mental act necessarily involves inner awareness; whenever an objectivating act occurs, it is an intentional object of unmediated apprehension. Moreover, inner awareness is literally intrinsic to every objectivating mental act, a part of its very own individual structure. Gurwitsch further argues that inner awareness is a merely concomitant part of that structure, taking place at the margin of the particular objectivating act, for the reason that the content of inner awareness is not relevant to the content of the thematic process at the core of the act. However, Gurwitsch assigns an essential function to inner awareness by virtue of its content; namely, it helps to constitute the respective objectivating act as a unitary phenomenon over time. Perhaps, therefore, theoretically relegating inner awareness to the margin of an objectivating act amounts merely to an effort to allow for straightforward objectivation without falling into inconsistency. That is, some objectivating acts seem not to include inner awareness and, presumably, this would be explained by reference to intrinsic inner awareness that is no more than concomitant, as opposed to its being interwoven with outer awareness taking place in the central area of an objectivating act.

Referring, for example, to “the problem of consciousness” (cf. Natsoulas, 1981), psychologists frequently imply that consciousness is scientifically understandable as a unitary phenomenon. However, there are more kinds of consciousness than just one; see Dewey (1906), Husserl (1900/1970, p. 535), Lewis (1967, Ch. 8), Natsoulas (1978, 1983), and Barlow’s (1980, 1987) contrasting position. In the present series of articles, I do not argue the latter point, but I restrict my efforts largely to a single one of a number of kinds of

consciousness. My general topic is the dimension of mental life that *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989; henceforth, the "OED") picks out in its fourth subentry under *consciousness*. Accordingly, I use the term *consciousness*<sub>4</sub> to refer to

that property which some mental-occurrence instances possess wherein there takes place an immediate occurrent awareness of them.

However, the OED states that consciousness in the fourth sense is a "condition and concomitant of all thought, feeling, and volition." With this, the compilers would seem to be ascribing the property of *consciousness*<sub>4</sub> not only, as I do, to some mental-occurrence instances, but to every one of them. This difference in views regarding mental-occurrence instances has been an issue for some time in both philosophy and psychology. Let me just mention, for now, Sigmund Freud (1915/1957) and his teacher Franz Brentano (1911/1973), specifically their taking opposite positions regarding the reality of mental-occurrence instances which are not objects of immediate occurrent awareness (cf. Searle, 1989, 1992).

Depending on which kind of theory of *consciousness*<sub>4</sub> turns out to be true, this immediate awareness transpires either (a) closely upon the occasion of a mental-occurrence instance (e.g., James, 1890/1950; Skinner, 1976) or (b) as an intrinsic part of the mental-occurrence instance's very own existence, that is, a part of its internal structure (e.g., Brentano, 1911/1973; Woodruff Smith, 1986, 1989). Be that as it may, I call the immediate awareness of a mental-occurrence instance, which defines *consciousness*<sub>4</sub>, "inner awareness"; and any mental-occurrence instance is described as "*conscious*<sub>4</sub>," rather than "*nonconscious*<sub>4</sub>," if (and only if) the respective individual has inner awareness of it.

A *nonconscious*<sub>4</sub> mental-occurrence instance may also possess *consciousness*, but in a different sense. Although inner awareness of a *nonconscious*<sub>4</sub> mental-occurrence instance is of course absent, a *nonconscious*<sub>4</sub> mental-occurrence instance may give awareness of something else. Regarding this important point, the reader may want to consult certain articles of mine on the concept of *consciousness*<sub>3</sub>, also known as "the awareness meaning" of *consciousness* (Natsoulas, 1992b, 1995). See also (a) Edmund Husserl's (1900/1970) discussion of his third concept of *consciousness*, which, as he states, "ranges over the same phenomenological field as the concept of 'mental act'" (p. 552), and (b) the fourth section of William James's (1890/1950) famous chapter on the stream of *consciousness*, which bears the title "*Human Thought Appears to Deal with Objects Independent of Itself; That Is, It Is Cognitive, or Possesses the Function of Knowing.*"

Inner awareness is “immediate,” that is, unmediated psychologically. As brought out at the start of the present series (Natsoulas, 1996b), the “immediacy” of inner awareness amounts to the absence of mental mediation, in a mental-occurrence instance’s being conscious<sub>4</sub>, by any occurrent awareness other than the inner awareness itself, which may be — if intrinsic theory is correct (Husserl, 1913/1983, pp. 79–80) — bodily included in the mental-occurrence instance itself, that is, in the very intentional object of the inner awareness. See (a) Natsoulas (1993) for further discussion of the kind of mediation that must be absent in order for inner awareness to be considered as instantiated; and (b) Rosenthal (1993) for a different view, which allows for a kind of (nonconscious<sub>4</sub>) mental mediation of inner awareness.

As part of the explicit definition of the fourth concept of consciousness, the compilers of the OED untypically put to use a quotation: “The recognition by the thinking subject of its own acts or affections.” Of course, quotations illustrating usage appear everywhere in the OED, but rarely are they used to explicitly define a word. In the present unusual case, it happens to be an intrinsic theorist of consciousness<sub>4</sub> who is providing part of the OED’s fourth definition of *consciousness* (Hamilton, 1895; see Bowen, 1863).

According to William Hamilton, inner awareness is not distinct from the mental-occurrence instance of which we have the inner awareness (cf. McDowell, 1994). Hamilton states,

In an act of knowledge, my attention may be principally attracted either to the object known, or to myself as the subject knowing; and, in the latter case, although no new element be added to the act, the condition involved in it, — *I know that I know*, becomes the primary and prominent matter of consideration. (Bowen, 1863, p. 128)

For Hamilton, attention determines which part of a mental-occurrence instance receives emphasis, as it were. Across mental-occurrence instances, attention is distributed variously between the object of awareness and the subject of awareness (cf. Chafe, 1994, p. 31). However, this emphasis does not affect the (constant) fact that a conscious<sub>4</sub> mental-occurrence instance is also its own object. According to Hamilton, the “I know that I know” is present in, is intrinsic to, every act of knowledge, whichever part of the act, its object or subject, receives the greater emphasis of attention in the particular instance.

What grounds have Hamilton and other intrinsic theorists in support of the truth of intrinsic theory? The present series of articles consists of an effort to make explicit, comprehensively, the *positive* case in support of the intrinsic kind of account of consciousness<sub>4</sub>. Throughout this series, deficiencies believed to characterize other, competing kinds of conceptions of consciousness<sub>4</sub> draw little mention generally, with occasional exceptions,

whereas intrinsic accounts are closely examined. For justification of this approach, see the section titled "Purpose of the Present Series" (Natsoulas, 1996b).

The preceding article of this series is largely concerned with the phenomenologist Aron Gurwitsch's conception of consciousness<sub>4</sub> (Natsoulas, 1996c).<sup>1</sup> Discussion of that intrinsic account continues in the present article, after I briefly summarize what the preceding article brings out straightforwardly concerning the Gurwitsch (1950/1985) account. However, the following summary does not include quotations, page references, or arguments defending my interpretations of Gurwitsch. These can be found in the section with the title "A Phenomenologist's Account of Consciousness<sub>4</sub>" (Natsoulas, 1996c, pp. 375–384).

The preceding article also contains three concluding categories of comment regarding Gurwitsch's conception of consciousness<sub>4</sub>, as well as a promise to return to these comments because they cannot be properly developed in the space remaining. After the summary section below, I return to them here, specifically to the following point:

Useful for casting light on Gurwitsch's version of intrinsic theory [is] the impression of his having partially capitulated to certain critics of intrinsic theory, namely to those who imply that we have firsthand knowledge regarding what, for example, straightforward perceptual experience is like. (Natsoulas, 1996c, p. 385)

As I point out in that article, an intrinsic theorist may deny, without self-contradiction, that we have any such firsthand knowledge. However, the intrinsic theorist Gurwitsch cannot do so, because inner awareness has, in Gurwitsch's view, a crucial role to play in the integration together of the successive phases of the temporal phenomenon that every act of consciousness is. This is explained after the following summary, in the section titled "Relevancy of the Very Highest Order."

### **Intrinsic, Necessary, and Concomitant**

1. Gurwitsch holds that all objectivating mental acts, that is, all mental acts that are outer awarenesses, actual or seeming awarenesses of something lying externally to them, are intrinsically conscious<sub>4</sub> as well. That is, each

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<sup>1</sup>Accessible sources describing relevant aspects of philosophical phenomenology, specifically the Husserlian variety on which Gurwitsch draws, include Føllesdal (1974, 1982), Levinas (1973), Mohanty (1995), and the two volumes edited respectively by Dreyfus (1982) and Smith and Woodruff Smith (1995). See also Sellars (1978; Clark, 1982), for a major analytic philosopher's rapprochement with phenomenology.

objectivating act bodily includes awareness of the particular outer awareness that it is.

2. In arguing for the intrinsicalness of this inner awareness, Gurwitsch calls "absurd" the claim that nonconscious<sub>4</sub> objectivating acts also take place. These would be, *per impossibile*, objectivating acts of which their owner has no awareness. Evidently, there is supposed to be something about, some property of, any outer awareness that necessarily brings along with it inner awareness of that outer awareness.

3. The responsible property would seem to be a property of the objectivating act's internal structure. Gurwitsch holds that an objectivating act conveys inner awareness of itself, and that its so doing is a necessary, a priori condition of an objectivating act's existence. Moreover, it seems clear that Gurwitsch also is saying and implying, respectively, the following two points:

- (a) that the primary, outer awareness constituting an objectivating act has "interwoven" (his word) with it, perforce, inner awareness of this outer awareness; and
- (b) that an objectivating act's presenting its respective outer object must be an awareness not only of this object but, in addition, *the object's being presented in the act*.

4. However, contradicting in fact both of the above points, Gurwitsch quite explicitly states that the awareness of the primary object of an objectivating act is *completely unaffected by that (somehow) necessary awareness of the act's secondary object*. Gurwitsch's consciousness<sub>4</sub> requirement for all objectivating acts must be explained otherwise, it would seem, than along the lines intimated by paragraph number three above. Evidently, the explanation does not lie, as it would seem, in something that is necessarily involved within the "thematic activity" itself of being aware of the primary object.

5. Inner awareness is both a by-product and a part of any objectivating act, both produced by the latter and included in it. One is tempted to say that the inner awareness of an objectivating act is, according to Gurwitsch, an "intrinsic appendage" of the act (see later). Although inner awareness is not a separate objectivating act, it is as though it were not a part of the objectivating act that includes the object of the inner awareness. Although outer awareness and inner awareness of it occur simultaneously, inner awareness is supposed, nevertheless, to be "aroused" by the outer awareness which inner awareness apprehends.

#### Other Conceptions of Consciousness<sub>4</sub>

To speak as I do of intrinsic theory of consciousness<sub>4</sub> is not to speak of a particular theory, but of a kind of theory of inner awareness, a kind of theory of the unmediated access that we all have — except for the totally "mind-

blind," if such there be — to some<sup>2</sup> of our own mental-occurrence instances. Gurwitsch's understanding of consciousness<sub>4</sub> as intrinsic, necessary, and concomitant stands in contrast to other conceptions of consciousness<sub>4</sub> that equally qualify for the appellation "intrinsic theory."

Not to speak here of important contrasts with appendage theories (e.g., Armstrong, 1968, 1984; James, 1890/1950; Nelkin, 1994a, 1994b; Rosenthal, 1986, 1993) and mental-eye theories (of the same phenomenon, e.g., Locke, 1706/1975; Humphrey, 1987; critiqued by Ryle, 1949). Instead, see Natsoulas (1992a, 1995–1996) for a critique respectively of David M. Rosenthal's and James's appendage accounts of consciousness<sub>4</sub>. Natsoulas (1993) contains comments on the differences between appendage, intrinsic, and mental-eye conceptions of consciousness<sub>4</sub> (cf. Dulany, 1991). Also, see Margaret Atherton (1983/1992) on John Locke's consciousness, and my response to her claims (Natsoulas, 1994b). My use of "mind-blind" in the preceding paragraph is meant to refer to a hypothetical general condition that would be analogous to "blindsight." Certain brain-damaged people are partially blindsighted: they seem to have, corresponding to certain parts of their momentary field of view, only nonconscious<sub>4</sub> visual perceptual awarenesses (Weiskrantz, 1993). Donald O. Hebb (1968, 1969, 1972, 1982) argues in effect that we are all mind-blind — which means that we have no inner awareness of any of our mental-occurrence instances (cf. James, 1890/1950, pp. 304–305).

For certain other intrinsic accounts of consciousness<sub>4</sub>, other than Gurwitsch's (e.g., Woodruff Smith, 1986, 1989), (a) inner awareness is always intrinsic but it is not necessary. That is, mental acts take place, even objectivating mental acts, that do not include any awareness of themselves at all. Also, for other intrinsic accounts, (b) inner awareness is indeed, as Gurwitsch himself states at one point, "interwoven" with the outer awareness involved in a conscious<sub>4</sub> objectivating act. Accordingly, consciousness<sub>4</sub> is actually a primary<sup>3</sup> awareness despite its not taking place as a separate act from the act that is its object.

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<sup>2</sup>As the preceding summary section states, Gurwitsch rules out nonconscious<sub>4</sub> objectivating acts as "absurd." In the second article of the present series (Natsoulas, 1996c, p. 380–381), it is brought out that two other intrinsic theorists of consciousness<sub>4</sub> — Franz Brentano (1911/1974) and Sigmund Freud (e.g., 1938/1964) — consider the positing of nonconscious<sub>4</sub> objectivating acts not to be absurd. I agree, and take the matter a step further than Freud does: many mental-occurrence instances are nonconscious<sub>4</sub> although they are neither unconscious or preconscious in Freud's sense. For discussion of Freud's derived consciousness, and the contrast with his intrinsic consciousness, see Natsoulas (1985).

<sup>3</sup>It will be objected that no instance of consciousness<sub>4</sub> can qualify as a "primary awareness," for the reason that any inner awareness is, by definition, an (unmediated) awareness of a mental-occurrence instance — which may be itself a primary awareness. The sense in which, to the contrary, intrinsic inner awareness may be a primary awareness is developed gradually in the present series.

The latter kind of intrinsic conception of consciousness<sub>4</sub> comes naturally to mind when one encounters Gurwitsch's claim of a necessary connection between (a) the occurrence of a mental representation of a musical note and (b) the individual's having inner awareness of that representation. Thus, Gurwitsch (1950/1985) writes,

In the case of the representation of a note there is but one psychic phenomenon, which, however, is of such a nature as to present us at once with both the note heard and the awareness of the hearing of the note. *The representation of the note is so intimately connected and so inextricably interwoven with the awareness of the representation that the former by its very existence contributes to the existence of the latter.* The self-awareness of an act is then implied in this act as an intrinsic component. (pp. 3–4; emphasis added)

It is *by its very existence* that the representation of a note contributes to the occurrence of inner awareness of that representation. Moreover, one's representation and one's inner awareness of the representation are not two, but a single, unitary occurrence. The representation is itself such — namely, inextricably interwoven with the awareness of it — as makes it correct to say that *the respective instance of inner awareness is an ingredient of the representation.* Within the latter occurrence, neither of the two components follows upon the other, nor do the two components occur alongside each other.

From the same intrinsic perspective, one can also say that the representation is an ingredient of the awareness of it, no less so than vice versa. As John McDowell (1994) states, “The object of this awareness is nothing over and above the awareness itself” (p. 120; cf. p. 21). Regarding McDowell's view, see the section titled “A Recent Intrinsic Account” (Natsoulas, 1996b).

### Gurwitsch's Relegation of Intrinsic Inner Awareness to the Margin of Every Objectivating Mental Act

Thus, at one point, “interwoven” — rather than “concomitant” — appears to be Gurwitsch's view of inner awareness. However, as brought out in the preceding article of the present series (see the subsection “Consciousness<sub>4</sub> as Intrinsic Concomitant Awareness”), Gurwitsch quickly gives expression to his actual, contrary view: to the effect that inner awareness accompanies outer awareness in a way that would seem to be incompatible with their being interwoven.

Thus, Gurwitsch explicitly distinguishes the primary object (or “theme”) of an objectivating act; and he claims that the respective outer awareness (of the primary object), which is a component of the objectivating act, completely ignores, so to speak, itself and whatever it is accomplishing with respect to its object. This move of Gurwitsch's is a little puzzling. After the

first very different step, why does his account, although still qualifying as intrinsic, begin to resemble an appendage account of inner awareness?

Why does Gurwitsch fail to put to work, instead, his notion of the mutual interweaving of those two aspects of an objectivating mental act, the inner awareness and the outer awareness? Let me proffer a conjecture in reply to this question, a conjecture however that helps to move the general discussion of intrinsic theory along. I believe that a certain problem — “the problem of straightforward objectivation,” as I call it — is responsible for Gurwitsch’s insistence on the marginal role of inner awareness in the objectivating act which it makes conscious.<sup>4</sup>

Gurwitsch does not mention this problem, but its implicit role in determining Gurwitsch’s conception of inner awareness is suggested by his emphasis on the relative isolation — in the central area of an objectivating act — of the outer awareness which crucially constitutes that act.

### *The Field of Consciousness*

Before I get to straightforward objectivation and its apparent influence on Gurwitsch’s thought concerning consciousness,<sup>4</sup> let me describe his view of the internal organization individually of objectivating acts. Gurwitsch conceives of the pulses of mentality that comprise James’s (1890/1950) famous stream of thought<sup>4</sup> as being complex structures of awareness. Each pulse comprises within itself several distinct acts of awareness, each with its own distinct content.

I should say “at least several” in the preceding sentence because Gurwitsch (1950/1985) emphasizes, “There are no limits on the marginal data which may be co-present with a theme at any moment in our conscious life” (p. xliii). [The latter is the first sentence of his Introduction.] And in every case, however many awarenesses may happen to be co-present in a single objectivating act, all the concomitant contents are separate from the content belonging to the outer awareness which lies at the core of each objectivating pulse of consciousness.

James (1890/1950) holds, in contrast, that — except for abnormal cases in which two streams of consciousness are simultaneously taking place within a single person — there is at most only one unified experience, with a single often very complex mental content, present in any individual at any point in time.

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<sup>4</sup>Or consciousness. When James speaks of “the stream,” his sense of consciousness corresponds to Husserl’s (1900/1970) identification of one of three concepts of consciousness: “Consciousness as the entire, real (*reelle*) phenomenological being of the empirical ego, as the interweaving of psychic experiences in the unified stream of consciousness” (p. 535).



Each of the basic durational components of the stream, according to Gurwitsch, possesses three parts: (a) a central area, (b) an inner field around this area, and (c) a marginal area. The latter part is external to the first two, although it is said to belong no less than they do to the intrinsic structure of the identical component of the stream. Inner awarenesses (and other concomitant awarenesses)<sup>5</sup> are supposed to take place in the outer field or margin.

The following is how, in another book, Gurwitsch (1953/1964) defines the three domains that constitute every field of consciousness:

The first domain is the *theme*, that which engrosses the mind of the experiencing subject, or as it is often expressed, which stands in the "focus of his attention." Second is the *thematic field*, defined as the totality of those data, co-present with the theme, which are experienced as materially relevant or pertinent to the theme and form the background or horizon out of which the theme emerges at the center. The third includes data which, though co-present with, have no relevancy to, the theme and comprise in their totality what we propose to call the *margin*. (p. 4)

#### *Segregated Inner Awareness*

The awarenesses taking place in the margin of an objectivating act are supposed not to be "relevant" to the theme (or primary object) of that act; and, it is for this reason (to be further explained), according to Gurwitsch, that these marginal awarenesses do not affect how one is aware of the theme.

A marginal awareness is, therefore, not integrated with the outer awareness which takes place in the central area of the respective objectivating act; instead, Gurwitsch describes the marginal awareness as "co-present" with the outer awareness.

Thus, an intentional object of a marginal awareness is not a part of the data that belong to the thematic field of the respective objectivating act; the thematic, outer awareness does not apprehend, in relation to each other, both a marginal object and the respective thematic object.

Whereas both these awarenesses are part of the identical mental act, they are nevertheless distinct mental acts (with distinct contents). An inner awareness is like a separate state that transpires simultaneously alongside the state of consciousness that is its object. But it is not exactly like a separate state. For Gurwitsch (1950/1985), the inner awareness which is directed on a particular objectivating act "arises not only alongside but also out of th[at] act" (p. 4).

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<sup>5</sup>For example, the bodily self-awareness that James (1890/1950, pp. 242–243) holds (and Gurwitsch agrees) to pervade, without exception, the entire stream of consciousness is located by Gurwitsch in the marginal area of each basic durational component of the stream, right along with the inner awareness directed on the act itself.

Intrinsic inner awareness should be carefully distinguished from a related posit of Gurwitsch's: a distinct, subsequent objectivating act that may have for its thematic, or primary object, the same object as an intrinsic inner awareness does. Although a "reflective objectivating act," as I call it, may or may not occur in any particular case, whenever such an act does occur, it has another objectivating act as its theme; that is, the target act is at the "focus of attention" and "engrosses the mind." In contrast, whenever awareness directed on an objectivating act is exclusively intrinsic to the latter act, the objectivating act cannot be the attentional focus.

Gurwitsch (1950/1985, p. 6) emphasizes the following point: what pertains to (extrinsic) acts of reflection (i.e., reflective objectivating acts) should not be "foisted into" (intrinsic) inner awareness. In this connection, Gurwitsch mentions the unexceptional pervasiveness of inner awareness throughout the stream of consciousness; in contrast, whether a reflective objectivating act takes place, directed on any part of the stream, is supposed to be, always, a matter of choice.

With reference to reflection, Gurwitsch speaks also of a change in "attitude" whereby, or wherein, thematic activity withdraws from the object of outer awareness and comes to bear on the objectivating act itself (contrast Gibson, 1979/1986, pp. 195 and 286, on the experiential effects of adopting an introspective attitude). In Gurwitsch's view, we choose to reflect on our objectivating acts, but we have inner awareness of them in any case, simply by means of and in their own very occurrence — whatever may happen to be at the time our "epistemological posture" (O'Shaughnessy, 1972, 1986) or our general frame of mind (Glicksohn, 1993).

Why does Gurwitsch isolate intrinsic inner awareness from the thematic activity determining the core content of an objectivating act? On the one hand, he considers intrinsic inner awareness to be crucial for the existence of any objectivating mental act — I must specify his reasons for holding so, as is the purpose of the present series of articles. But, on the other hand, Gurwitsch insists that the content of outer awareness includes nothing at all that has reference to the objectivating act itself.

There is some truth to the latter claim, in my view. I believe nonconscious<sub>4</sub> objectivating mental acts do take place quite commonly. Indeed, I should think that my view of some outer awarenesses as being completely unaffected by inner awareness could be judged as being more internally consistent than Gurwitsch's view is. For I consider it dubious that inner awareness is necessary, as Gurwitsch argues (see next), to the formation of an objectivating act qua temporal phenomenon.

### Relevancy of the Very Highest Order

What are Gurwitsch's grounds for holding that inner awareness — which, in his view, partially constitutes every objectivating act — is always marginal? Why is the content of inner awareness held not to be integrated with the theme; that is, why is this content not a part of the thematic field within which the theme resides?

Gurwitsch's answer speaks of (a) the relevancy to the theme of the data that comprise the thematic field and (b) the irrelevancy to the theme of the data comprising the content of marginal awareness. He defines "relevancy" as denoting "relations between experienced objects (considered as they are experienced) on account of their material contents" (Gurwitsch, 1953/1964, p. 342).

Yet, Gurwitsch's own approach assigns to inner awareness, I suggest, relevancy of the very highest order. It does so as follows:

- (a) All acts of consciousness, all basic durational components of the stream, are considered individually to be temporal phenomena and experienced as such.
- (b) We have inner awareness of each act of consciousness as a durational unit and as passing through phases within that duration.<sup>6</sup>
- (c) This awareness must be, according to Gurwitsch, intrinsic to the act in order for it to perform an essential function assigned to it by Gurwitsch, namely, the function of constituting the objectivating act as a unitary temporal phenomenon.

Thus, Gurwitsch (1950/1985) states,

The act is experienced as a unit growing in time with no cleavages between its phases; its unitary character is experienced at every moment. Consequently, each of the succeeding phases must include elements which represent, or, better, express its connectedness and intrinsic relatedness with other phases. And these elements must be conceived of as essential ingredients and not accessory facts of the phase under consideration. (p. 7)

In the absence of these intrinsic reflective ingredients, the mental act would not, as it does, develop over time; instead, it would amount to a mere succession of unconnected events. Clearly, in Gurwitsch's own view, it is not true that the relation among the awarenesses that simultaneously make up a unitary objectivating act "consists only in these [awarenesses] happening to occur together" (p. xlv).

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<sup>6</sup>I do not include the details of Gurwitsch's analysis, which relies not only on inner awareness but also on "retentions" and "protentions." These are like inner awarenesses and have for their objects preceding and subsequent phases of the act.

Thus, we have what amounts to an argument — whether one considers it strong or weak — in favor of the intrinsicness of inner awareness. Gurwitsch is suggesting *that how an act of consciousness is organized depends on inner awareness and the latter's taking place intrinsically to the act*. What might be called extrinsic inner awarenesses, in the form of distinct objectivating acts (acts of reflection), are not capable of performing the same organizing function.

It seems that a certain kind of awareness at the margin of an objectivating act — an awareness possessing content that purportedly lacks relevance to the content of the thematic, or outer, awareness — is essential, nevertheless, to the objectivating act because of this marginal awareness's specific effects or contribution to the thematic process per se. This supposedly marginal awareness, which takes place inevitably and automatically, is necessary to an objectivating act's being the outer awareness that it is. The equivalent cannot be accomplished voluntarily: not by means of acts of reflection performed and directed on the same objectivating act. The latter claim would seem to show that Gurwitsch is not in a theoretical position to construe truly distinct contents as adequate for the job that he believes must be accomplished in order that objectivating acts may exist. There must be a special relation between the content of the inner awareness and the content of the outer awareness that together make up, together with other awarenesses, a particular objectivating act.

An inner awareness, occurring as part of the structure of an objectivating act, helps to give to the objectivating act, according to Gurwitsch, its character as a temporal phenomenon, that is, a unitary phenomenon which develops as it occurs, passing through a continuous succession of different phases. Thus, inner awareness is not a mere "by-product" (Gurwitsch, 1950/1985, p. 4) of the objectivating act to which the inner awareness belongs and which "arouses" the inner awareness. Rather, an objectivating act is as it is partly because it contains, albeit marginally, inner awarenesses of itself.

Gurwitsch's positing this constitutive function of inner awareness would seem to bestow on inner awareness a relevancy of the highest order. Surely, there is an inconsistency between inner awareness's constitutive function and Gurwitsch's other important claim: the nonrelevance of all marginal data to the theme of an objectivating act. For it is the *content* of inner awareness that is supposed to contribute to the function of temporally integrating the sequence of phases making up the respective objectivating act. Thus, Gurwitsch (1950/1985) states in part,

We are aware of the fact that the theme dealt with now is the same as that which we were dealing a moment ago and that our present dealing is an uninterrupted continuation of our previous dealing. Awareness of an act as enduring proves thus to be at the same time awareness of the identity of the theme of this act. (p. 9)

However, I do not pursue here Gurwitsch's insistence that the phases of a mental act must be objects of inner awareness in order for them to be integrated with each other as phases of a unitary mental act. Rather, my intention is to address Gurwitsch's thesis of thematic independence: that, despite the above, the content of outer awareness is unaffected by the content of the inner awareness intrinsic to the very same act.

Again, I want to suggest, albeit in greater detail, that Gurwitsch puts forward the general claim of mutually independent intrinsic contents partly because of, as I call it, the problem of straightforward objectivation. Quite clearly, an ulterior reason, such as the latter, must be playing a role, since Gurwitsch believes as well that, in the absence of intrinsic inner awareness, one could not be aware of the intentional object of outer awareness as a unitary existent over time.

### The Problem of Straightforward Objectivation

As both the preceding article of this series and the present article bring out, Gurwitsch holds (a) that we have inner awareness of each and every one of our objectivating acts. And, for the reasons already given, Gurwitsch claims (b) that inner awareness is an essential ingredient of each such act. However, in all cases where an objectivating act is conscious,<sup>4</sup> Gurwitsch ascribes (c) a separate, distinct content to the inner awareness involved, notwithstanding (d) the high degree of thematic relevance that, as emphasized in the preceding subsection, Gurwitsch also implicitly assigns to inner awareness. At the same time, Gurwitsch would seem to want to introduce, as well, (e) a category of straightforward objectivating acts which resemble and include the perceptual acts that Husserl (1925/1977) characterizes as follows in a volume of his published lectures:

If we are experiencing in a straightforwardly noticing manner and are looking purely at what is and is such and such in space, everything which comes to be laid hold of in this manner offers itself just as pertaining to spatial things, the shape as the shape of the thing, a quality pertaining to it in movement and rest, in change and permanence; likewise also, color as spreading over the spatial figure and thereby over the thing itself, qualifying what is objective in space. Nothing at all subjective falls within our mental sphere of vision. Thus, nothing concerning the entire subjective aspect of modes of givenness, about which we spoke earlier, and which doubtlessly does already affect this pure perceptual thing and its pure intuitive objectivity with a plethora of distinctions. (p. 116; cf. Delius, 1981; Gibson, 1966, 1979/1986; contrast Henle, 1974, 1977; Russell, 1927, 1948, 1959; Yates, 1985)

In the case of such straightforward objectivating acts as Husserl describes above, Husserl's firsthand apprehensions of these objectivating acts — that is, those occurrences or features of occurrences by means of which he is able to tell how these objectivating acts are made up — clearly do not appear to

him to be part of the acts themselves that are apprehended. Husserl writes of these straightforward perceptual acts as though he witnesses their occurrence and properties from a perspective external to them.

For, in accordance with Husserl's characterization of straightforward perceptual acts, their properties which he is observing do not include the occurrence of any intrinsic inner awareness at all. These objectivating acts are, so to speak, purely outer; they are in all respects outwardly directed — notwithstanding the fact, Husserl quickly adds, that some of them will turn out to be “merely subjectively laden.”

That is to say, some objectivating acts are exclusively outwardly directed and yet, although they possess the property of intentionality, they do not actually have an intentional object, inner or outer (see Natsoulas, 1994a; cf. Searle, 1982). They are only as though they possess such an object. Like the straightforward objectivating acts that do have an object, these hallucinatory acts do not apprehend any of their own properties (cf. Gibson, 1970, 1979/1986, p. 256).

Certainly, hallucinatory objectivating acts are a strong temptation for the theorist; they invite the interpretation of their being less (or more) than straightforward. One wants to say, “If their intentional object is not external to them, then it must be internal to them.” Some hallucinatory objectivating acts are, without a doubt, other than straightforward. Indeed, perhaps the great majority of them are conscious<sub>4</sub> — because hallucinatory acts tend to be disturbing or at least interesting and, consequently, they are commonly interrogated, as it were. One wants to know, for example, whether one actually is hearing what one seems to be hearing. But, quite obviously, this is no good argument against the straightforward hallucinatory acts adverted to by Husserl, against their existence as well.

Needless to say, Husserl is not implying that the above perceptual acts and hallucinatory acts possess intrinsic inner awareness which is unbeknownst to him. His description of those straightforward acts is supposed to be an accurate one with respect to their essential character, what these acts are really like.

It becomes clear as Husserl proceeds that the above characterization of straightforward objectivating acts is based on, in Husserl's view, his undergoing distinct acts of reflection (i.e., reflective objectivating acts). These acts are said to involve retentions of the respective straightforward acts that are the objects of reflection. The reflective objectivating acts apprehend properties that are instantiated by the target acts, none of which is grasped by the latter acts themselves. Husserl assumes, it would seem, that one can have retentions of mental properties that, when these properties were instantiated, one had no awareness of them at all (contrast Natsoulas, 1996a).

In this context, Husserl is giving some indication of being an appendage theorist of consciousness,<sup>4</sup> at least with regard to how one directly apprehends straightforward objectivating acts and finds out what they are like firsthand.<sup>7</sup> But Gurwitsch, whose account is the present topic, insists that all objectivating acts, not excepting the kind described above by Husserl, involve inner awareness in their very structure. There are supposed to be no exceptions to this rule of consciousness; not even straightforward objectivating acts escape the requirement of intrinsic inner awareness. Recall from the preceding article of this series that Gurwitsch (1950/1985) called inner awareness “a necessary condition for the existence of [any objectivating] act” (p. 5).

Perhaps the reason Gurwitsch considers intrinsic inner awareness to be always marginal — and, therefore, as possessing separate content from the content produced by the thematic activity — is in order to solve the problem of straightforward objectivation: *How can objectivation of the kind which takes place in the straightforward perceptual or hallucinatory acts described by Husserl take place given the ubiquity, according to Gurwitsch, of intrinsic inner awareness?*

Gurwitsch’s hidden reasoning may be that the mutual separation of contents (thematic versus marginal) makes it possible for an objectivating act to seem as though it were free of everything subjective, including the intrinsic inner awareness which is, in Gurwitsch’s view, perforce a part of it. Thus, I see Gurwitsch as going too far theoretically — in order that he might accommodate straightforward objectivating acts. That is, he treats of every objectivating act, therefore, as though intrinsic awareness of it were marginal to the act and involved separate content.

Now, I do agree that we often undergo straightforward objectivating mental acts wherein the content produced by the thematic process is completely unaffected by any inner awareness, intrinsic or extrinsic. However, in so agreeing, I have in mind the kind of mental acts that would be properly described as Husserl describes certain perceptual and hallucinatory acts in the above quotation. Not, instead, as Gurwitsch would describe them, that is, with inner awareness necessarily active at their margin in every instance, giving awareness of them and even constituting them temporally.

In the case of straightforward perceptual objectivating acts, among other straightforward kinds of acts that would fit Husserl’s above description or

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<sup>7</sup>Husserl (1913/1983) expresses an intrinsic understanding of consciousness<sub>4</sub> so clearly that the present series of articles begins with a quoted passage from him, which includes the following sentence: “In the case of [experience] directed to something immanent . . . [experience and experienced] form essentially an unmediated unity, that of a single concrete cogitatio” (p. 79). Husserl’s conception of inner awareness is considered later in this series of articles.

another one much like it, I suggest, contrary to Gurwitsch, *that such acts involve no inner awareness at all, whether marginal or otherwise*. Instead, in my view, we know of the occurrence of such acts of ours much as other people do whenever they know of the occurrence of mental acts in us. In James's (1890/1950, p. 221) terms, we ourselves too, although they are ours, can only have "knowledge-about" such acts; we do not have "knowledge of acquaintance" of them — any more than other people have the latter kind of knowledge of any of our mental-occurrence instances. See how James, in his famous chapter on the stream of consciousness, describes Peter's and Paul's access to one another's states of consciousness, as contrasted to the access they possess to their own states of consciousness.

However, in the above quoted passage, Husserl is supposed to be describing certain perceptual acts on a firsthand basis, although he seems to be suggesting, at the same time, that there is an absence of all intrinsic inner awareness of them when they occur. If, in the case of straightforward objectivation, nothing subjective, nothing at all of that kind, falls within our mental sphere of vision, as Husserl states, then Husserl's description — on an evidently firsthand basis — must actually be a description of something else, a different kind of objectivating act than he is suggesting.

Thus, I contradict Husserl's claim of direct access to the contents as such of straightforward acts. Rather, I agree with him when he says, "When living in the cogito we are not conscious of the cogitatio itself as an intentional Object" (Husserl, 1913/1983, p. 78). We simply "live in the cogito" whenever we are undergoing merely one or more straightforward objectivating acts. Husserl's purported description of the contents of straightforward perceptual acts above reflects, of course, his having had in his time inner awareness of many perceptual acts. However, I suggest that the acts of which we do have inner awareness — including those which Husserl is in fact describing above on a firsthand basis, though he purports to be describing straightforward perceptual acts — are not in any instance genuinely straightforward.

How could they be straightforward, in the sense that Husserl describes, and yet be known to him as they apparently are? I am reminded of the claims of mystics and others concerning a complete lack of awareness of anything more than X (e.g., God, nature, light) during certain altered states, yet they manage to provide, anyway, richly detailed descriptions of their experience of X and how they felt at the time.

An appendage theorist (e.g., Rosenthal, 1993) would say in response to my question — how they could be straightforward — that it is by means of other objectivating acts, directed upon those perceptual acts, that Husserl has inner awareness of the perceptual acts that he is describing above. This would be, according to an appendage view, how Husserl finds these acts to be completely lacking, in themselves, of inner awareness, or of any awareness



directed on them. However, this is not the place to review my objections to appendage theory (see Natsoulas, 1992a, 1993, 1995–1996). Instead, let me conclude with the following point concerning Gurwitsch's intrinsic account of consciousness<sub>4</sub>.

Although Gurwitsch allows for such distinct reflective objectivating acts in terms of which an appendage theorist would explain Husserl's reports, Gurwitsch does not allow for objectivating acts sans inner awareness in their margin. Therefore, it would seem that any reflective objectivating act that occurs must reveal its object (i.e., the target objectivating act) as involving intrinsic inner awareness. In fact, Gurwitsch (1950/1985) states, "In a certain sense, reflection consists in the 'thematization' of that inner awareness which the act now grasped carried with it before it came to be grasped" (p. 5).

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