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**The Same-Order Monitoring
Theory of Consciousness**

Second Version

Abstract

Monitoring approaches to consciousness claim that a mental state is conscious when it is suitably monitored. Higher-order monitoring theory makes the monitoring state and the monitored state logically independent. Same-order monitoring theory claims a constitutive, non-contingent connection between the monitoring state and the monitored state. In this paper, I articulate different versions of the same-order monitoring theory and argue for its supremacy over the higher-order monitoring theory.

Keywords

consciousness, higher-order theories, same-order theories, self-representation

1. Introduction

One of the promising approaches to the problem of consciousness has been the Higher-Order Monitoring Theory of Consciousness. According to the Higher-Order Monitoring Theory, what it is like to be in a conscious state, and there being anything it is like to be in it, are determined by the way the state is represented to the subject. Thus a mental state M of a subject S is conscious iff S has another mental state, M^* , such that M^* is an appropriate representation of M (Armstrong 1968, 1981; Lycan 1996, 2001; Mellor 1978; Rosenthal 1986, 1990, 2002, 2005).

Typically, the conscious state and its representation are construed as logically independent of each other: M could occur in the absence of M^* , and vice versa. Recently, however, several philosophers have developed a Higher-Order Monitoring theory with a twist. The twist is that M and M^* entertain some kind of *constitutive relation*, or *internal relation*, or some other *non-contingent* relation, such that they are *not* logically independent of each other. For want of a better term, I will call this the *Same-Order Monitoring Theory of Consciousness*.¹ For the sake of clarity, I will reserve the name “Higher-Order Monitoring” to the standard version that insists on the logical independence of M and M^* .

1

This label was devised, independently, by Brook (Ms), Kriegel (2002), and Lurz (2003). It no doubt characterizes some of the accounts

of consciousness I have in mind better than others, but it is the best generic label I could find.

Versions of the Same-Order Monitoring Theory can be found in recent writings by Brook and Raymond (2006 Ch. 5), Carruthers (2000 Ch. 9), Caston (2002), Gennaro (1996 Ch. 2, 2002, 2004b), Hossack (2002, 2003), Kobes (1995), Kriegel (2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2005), Lehrer (1996a, 1996b, 1997: Ch. 7, 2002, 2004), Lurz (2003a, 2003b, 2004), Natsoulas (1993a, 1996a, 1996b, 1999, 2004), Sanford (1984), Van Gulick (2001, 2004, 2006), and Williford (2003, 2006). Despite this surprising number of proponents, there has not been among philosophers of mind an explicit awareness of the emerging appeal of this new and distinctive approach to consciousness – at least not *as such*, i.e., *as a new and distinctive approach*.

In this paper, I will first expound and then propound the Same-Order Monitoring Theory (SOMT). The paper accordingly divides in two. §2 attempts to articulate the basic idea behind SOMT and formulate its most plausible version. §3 argues the superiority of SOMT over the Higher-Order Monitoring Theory (HOMT), by developing two major difficulties for HOMT that do not apply to SOMT.²

Naturally, the concerns of the present paper will be of interest primarily to those who have at least *some* trust in the monitoring approach to consciousness – that is, in the idea that conscious states are conscious in virtue of being suitably represented – and who find at least *some* merit in standard HOMT. But I hope that the discussion of the subtler developments of the approach will interest also those with no sympathy for it, if only because doing away with the monitoring approach to consciousness would presumably require squaring off with its best version. It is therefore worthwhile to consider what the best version is.

2. The Same-Order Monitoring Theory

HOMT and SOMT agree that the presence of a higher-order representation of M is a *necessary* condition for M's being conscious. The standard argument for this goes something like this (see Lycan 2001):³

1. Mental states the subject is completely unaware of are unconscious states; so,
2. If a mental state M of a subject S is conscious, then S must be aware of M; but,
3. Awareness of something involves a representation of it; therefore,
4. If M is conscious, then S must have a representation of M.

It is clear, however, that the presence of a higher-order representation is not a *sufficient* condition for M's being conscious.⁴ This is why the monitoring approach appeals to the notion of an “appropriate” or “suitable” higher-order representation: even though the presence of a higher-order representation is not a sufficient condition for M's being conscious, the presence of an *appropriate* higher-order representation *is*. The question is what makes a given higher-order representation “appropriate” in the relevant sense.

This is where versions of the monitoring approach differ. There are several dimensions along which they might contrast with each other. Perhaps the most widely acknowledged distinction is between versions that construe the higher-order representation as perception-like and versions that construe it as thought-like. Thus, according to Rosenthal, a higher-order representation is appropriate only if it is a thought, whereas according to Armstrong and Lycan, it must be a quasi-perceptual state. This distinction leads to a contrast

between Higher-Order Thought (HOT) Theory and Higher-Order Perception (HOP) Theory.

There is a more fundamental contrast in the vicinity, however, namely between construing a conscious state and its representation as logically independent, in the manner of HOMT, and construing them as logically dependent, in the manner of SOMT. According to SOMT, one of the requirements on an “appropriate” higher-order representation of M is that it bear some constitutive relation, some logical connection, to M; HOMT rejects this requirement.⁵ By way of introducing such a requirement, Kobes (1995: 294) writes:

“[Let us introduce] a token constituency requirement: the first-order mental state or event must, at the time that it is conscious, be a constituent part of the HOT [higher-order thought] event token.”

In similar vein, Van Gulick (2001: 295) writes:

“Although both HOP and HOT theorists assume distinctness or nonidentity [of the monitored state and the monitoring state]... one could try to develop the higher-order view in a way that rejected or at least weakened that assumption...”

Let us make this contrast explicit by formulating the two competing accounts as follows (where a constitutive relation is a non-contingent one):

(HOMT) For any mental state M of a subject S, M is conscious iff there is a mental state M*, such that (i) S is in M*, (ii) M* is an appropriate representation of M, and (iii) there is *no* constitutive relation between M and M*.

(SOMT) For any mental state M of a subject S, M is conscious iff there is a mental state M*, such that (i) S is in M*, (ii) M* is an appropriate representation of M, and (iii) there *is* a constitutive relation between M and M*.

SOMT postulates an internal, non-contingent relation between S’s conscious state and her awareness of her conscious state. HOMT construes these two as completely logically independent.

2

In the literature on consciousness one can find a great number of arguments directed against HOMT: Aquila (1990), Byrne (1997), Caston (2002), Dretske (1993, 1995), Goldman (1993), Guzeldere (1995), Kriegel (2003a), Levine (2001), Lurz (2003a, 2003b), Moran (2001), Natsoulas (1993), Neander (1998), Rey (1988), and Seager (1999) develop some of them. Some of these arguments may apply to SOMT as well, though some of them clearly do not.

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Both premises 1 and 3 can certainly be denied. In particular, Dretske (1993) argues that a mental state’s status as conscious does not require that its subject be aware of it. I will not discuss this issue here, as it is tangential to the main concern of the paper. For a defense of the notion that the subject necessarily has an awareness of her conscious states, see Lycan 1996, Kriegel 2004.

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The standard example of a mental state that is higher-order represented but is still non-conscious involves a person who learns of a repressed emotion or belief through therapy and comes to represent to herself that she has the repressed emotion or belief in question, without the repressed state becoming thereby conscious. So the repressed state can remain unconscious despite being (higher-order) represented. This issue will be discussed more fully in §4.

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The way I frame the distinction between SOMT and HOMT, the “constitutive relation requirement” is not suggested to be the *only* requirement on an appropriate higher-order representation. That is, an “appropriate” higher-order representation may be required to exhibit other features, beyond the requirement of being constitutively related to the conscious state. However, most versions of SOMT would probably see this as the key requirement for an appropriate higher-order representation.

Different constitutive relations define different versions of SOMT.⁶ The strongest constitutive relation is of course *identity*. Accordingly, the strongest version of SOMT holds that M is identical with its higher-order representation. This means, in effect, that M represents *itself*.⁷ The view can be formulated as follows:

(SOMT₁) For any mental state M and any subject S, such that S is in M, M is conscious iff there is an M*, such that (i) S is in M*, (ii) M* is an appropriate representation of M, and (iii) M = M*.

Which is equivalent to:

(SOMT₁') For any mental state M, M is conscious iff M is an appropriate representation of itself.⁸

This sort of view has been recently defended by Caston (2002), Kriegel (2003a), Hossack (2002, 2003), Williford (2003, 2006), Brook (Ms), Raymont (Ms), and Brook and Raymont (2006).⁹

The main problem facing SOMT₁ is how to account for the alleged ability of conscious states to represent themselves. Claiming that they just do is not enough. We must understand *how* this is possible. Preferably, our understanding of how this is possible would be continuous with familiar naturalistic accounts of mental representation. This last requirement is particularly problematic for SOMT₁: there may be principled barriers to a reconciliation of self-representation with naturalist accounts of mental representation. Very roughly, this is because naturalist accounts require a causal relation between the representation and the represented, whereas there can be no causal relation between a mental state and itself.¹⁰

A different version of SOMT appeals to the *part-whole* relation, also a constitutive relation. (That it is a constitutive relation can be seen from the fact that some philosophers – e.g., Armstrong (1978), Lewis (1991) – conceive of it in terms of *partial identity*.) On this view, for a mental state to be conscious, it is not sufficient that the subject be aware of it; the subject's awareness of it must be *part of* that very same mental state. A view of this sort is defended by Gennaro (1996: Ch. 2, 2002, 2004), Van Gulick (2001, 2004, 2006), and Kriegel (2002, 2003b, 2005). It may be formulated as follows:

(SOMT₂) For any mental state M and any subject S, such that S is in M, M is conscious iff there is an M*, such that (i) S is in M*, (ii) M* is an appropriate representation of M, and (iii) M* is a (proper) *part of* M.

The relevant notion of parthood here is not spatial or temporal, but *logical*.¹¹ There are two immediate problems with SOMT₂. One is that the notion of logical parthood must be explicated, and in such a way that it would be clear how it might apply to such entities as *states*. The other is that the appeal to a part-whole relationship in lieu of identity does not seem to further the prospects naturalistic understanding.

As for the first problem, there are complicated questions surrounding the explication of the notion of logical parthood, questions to which justice cannot be done here.¹² But a relevant example may suffice to illustrate the nature of logical parthood and its application to mental states. When I am *glad* that the weather is nice, I necessarily also *believe* that the weather is nice; it is impossible to be glad that the weather is nice without believing that this is so. But my belief that the weather is nice is not an extra mental act, which occurs *in addition to* my gladness. Rather, the belief is somehow *inherent in*, or *built into*, the gladness. In other words, my belief is *part of* my gladness, in a logi-

cal sense of “part of”. So my believing that the weather is nice is a *logical part* of my being glad that the weather is nice.¹³ Likewise, according to SOMT₂, one’s awareness of one’s conscious state is a *logical part* of that state. When I have a conscious experience of blue, I am aware of my conscious experience. But the awareness is not an extra mental act, which occurs *in addition to* the experience. Rather, the awareness is *inherent in* – it is *built into* – the experience. It is in this sense, then, that M* is claimed in SOMT₂ to be a logical (proper) part of M.

As for the second problem, it would seem that the concerns about naturalistic understanding persist. Recall that the problem with SOMT₁ was that it was unclear how a mental state could bear a genuine causal relation to itself. But it is no clearer how a mental state could bear a genuine causal relation to one of its logical parts. Just as my being glad that the weather is nice does not and cannot bear a causal relation to its belief component, so my bluish experience cannot bear a causal relation to its inner-awareness component.

In search of a version of SOMT that might accommodate naturalistic semantics, let us examine a few other versions of SOMT in the vicinity. In the above formulation of SOMT₂, it is explicitly required that M* be a *proper* part of M. This is intended to ensure that SOMT₂ be exclusive of SOMT₁.¹⁴ But it is

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In the remainder of this section, I articulate several specific versions of SOMT. The main purpose is not to evaluate these versions, but to try and articulate the conceptual foundations of this still under-discussed approach to consciousness. Hopefully, this will thereby give the reader a clearer sense of the sort of account of consciousness offered by SOMT.

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There is one sense in which, once M is a representation of itself, it is not really a *higher-order* representation, since it is a first-order state. But in another sense, it still is a higher-order representation, since what it represents is a representation. This is, I take it, but a verbal difference, with no metaphysical significance. I will continue to use the term “higher-order representation” in this sort of context, but everything I will have to say can be said without this term.

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We must keep in mind, however, that M’s representation of itself has to be appropriate in other ways as well, in case the constitutive relation requirement is not the only requirement on appropriate higher-order representations. A similar point applies to the formulation of SOMT₂ and SOMT₃ later in the text.

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More traditionally, this view was developed and defended by Brentano (1874) and probably also by Aristotle (see Caston 2002).

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For more specific development of this line of objection, see Levine 2001: Ch. 6; Kriegel 2005.

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It is clear that the part-whole relation between M and M* would not be (or at least not primarily) a spatial or temporal part-whole relation. Moreover, it is *not* clear how such a relation would apply to states, as opposed to individual objects.

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For discussion of the logical part-whole relation, see Lewis (1991), Paul (2002), Simons (1987), Smith and Mulligan (1983), and Mulligan and Smith (1985). A full discussion of it will take us too far afield, but it may be worthwhile to just state the logical properties of the relation of proper parthood: it is anti-reflexive (*x* cannot be a part of itself), anti-symmetrical (if *x* is a proper part of *y*, then *y* is not a proper part of *x*), and transitive (if *x* is a proper part of *y* and *y* is proper part of *z*, then *x* is a proper part of *z*). The relation of parthood (construed as covering improper parthood as well), by contrast, is a-reflexive, a-symmetrical, and transitive.

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Examples of this sort are provided by Smith (1994: Ch. 3).

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I am here working with the traditional notion of parthood, where *x* can be said to be a part of *y* even if there is no part of *y* that is not a part of *x*. In that case, *x* is an improper part of *y*, where this is more or less the same as *x*’s being identical with *y*.

significant that a version of SOMT can be formulated that would remain silent on whether M^* is a proper or improper part of M , thus covering both $SOMT_1$ and $SOMT_2$. This version would be formulated as follows:

($SOMT_3$) For any mental state M and any subject S , such that S is in M , M is conscious iff there is an M^* , such that (i) S is in M^* , (ii) M^* is an appropriate representation of M , and (iii) M^* is a (proper or improper) part of M .

When M^* is a *proper* part of M , $SOMT_3$ accords with $SOMT_2$; when it is an *improper* part, $SOMT_3$ accords with $SOMT_1$. But $SOMT_3$ allows both structures to be involved in conscious states.

A disjunctive claim such as $SOMT_3$ is always *safer* than a non-disjunctive one, in the sense that it is less likely to come out false. At the same time, the disjunctive nature of $SOMT_3$ seems to be a liability in the present context. For “consciousness” appears to be a natural kind term. If so, there should be an underlying unity in the phenomenon – something that ensures that the class of conscious states exhibits a strong homogeneity, and at a reasonable level of abstraction. $SOMT_3$ seems unfit to accommodate this underlying homogeneity. Nonetheless, taking account of $SOMT_3$ may help us see more clearly the logical geography of SOMT.

A close neighbor of $SOMT_2$, and one which has a greater chance of handling the issue of naturalistic understanding satisfactorily, is the idea that for M to be conscious is for it to have *two* parts, such that one represents the other. The view may be formulated as follows:

($SOMT_4$) For any mental state M and any subject S , such that S is in M , M is conscious iff there are M^* and M^\diamond , such that (i) S is in M^* and S is in M^\diamond , (ii) M^* is a (proper) part of M , (iii) M^\diamond is a (proper) part of M , and (iv) M^* is an appropriate representation of M^\diamond .

The idea here is, in a way, that the conscious state involves a “mereological sum” of the monitoring state and the monitored state. (Again, the relevant notion of mereology is that of *logical* mereology, not spatial or temporal mereology.¹⁵) This is to be distinguished from HOMT, in which the conscious state is identified with the monitored state solely.¹⁶

Before addressing the advantages and disadvantages of $SOMT_4$, let me again point out a disjunctive version of SOMT that covers both $SOMT_4$ and $SOMT_2$, by remaining silent on whether M^\diamond is a proper or improper part of M :

($SOMT_5$) For any mental state M and any subject S , such that S is in M , M is conscious iff there are M^* and M^\diamond , such that (i) S is in M^* and S is in M^\diamond , (ii) M^* is a (proper) part of M , (iii) M^\diamond is a (proper or improper) part of M , and (iv) M^* is a representation of M^\diamond .

When M^\diamond is a *proper* part of M , $SOMT_5$ accords with $SOMT_4$; when it is an *improper* part, $SOMT_5$ accords with $SOMT_2$. But $SOMT_5$ itself allows for both structures to be involved in conscious states. $SOMT_5$ faces, however, the same problem $SOMT_3$ faced: its disjunctive nature is a liability in the present context.

Let us return to $SOMT_4$, then. There is a certain promise in it, inasmuch as the appeal to two separate logical parts may make room for a causal relation holding between them, and therefore to compatibility with naturalistic accounts of mental representation. It might be objected that causal relations cannot hold among logical parts of the same particular any more than between the particular and itself. And indeed there seems to be something problematic about the idea of a causal relation between two logical parts of one and the

same particular. Yet there are cases that are naturally described in just that way. Consider a hard boiled egg. It is natural to think of the egg's hardness and its boiledness as logical parts of it, and yet the former is causally related to the latter: the egg is a hard egg *because* it is boiled egg (in a causal sense of "because").¹⁷

The problem with $SOMT_4$ is that it appears to be only superficially, perhaps even just *verbally*, different from HOMT. All it requires for consciousness is the compresence of a monitored state and a monitoring state. The only difference from HOMT is that it calls "conscious state" not just the monitored state but the compound of both states.

Another possible view in the same ballpark is that the conscious state is a part of the awareness of it, rather than the other way round. This view may be formulated as follows:

($SOMT_6$) For any mental state M and subject S, such that S is in M, M is conscious iff there is an M^* , such that (i) S is in M^* , (ii) M^* is a representation of M, and (iii) M is a (proper part) of M^* .

$SOMT_6$ appears to be defended by Kobes (1995) and Fumerton (in conversation).¹⁸

$SOMT_6$ strikes me as quite implausible in a relatively plain and *prima facie* way. It simply appears to be unmotivated. The phenomenological facts about conscious experience do not suggest that the experience is normally part of the awareness of it, but the converse.¹⁹ Moreover, if $SOMT_6$ were correct, our whole conscious life would be conducted at the second floor, as it were, since the overall conscious state would be a second-order state.

It is worth noting that it is possible to formulate an umbrella view that would cover all the previous ones in a disjunctive manner. This would be done by liberally allowing both M^* and M^\diamond to be either a proper or an improper part of M:

($SOMT_7$) For any mental state M and any subject S, such that S is in M, M is conscious iff there are M^* and M^\diamond , such that (i) S is in M^* and S is in M^\diamond , (ii) M^* is a (proper or improper) part of M, (iii) M^\diamond is a (proper or improper) part of M, and (iv) M^* is a representation of M^\diamond .

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Mereology is the theory of parts and wholes, or the part-whole relation. If the notion of a logical part-whole relation is accepted, so should the notion of logical mereology. For the legitimacy of the notion of logical mereology, see especially Paul (2002).

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Perhaps the clearest proponent of this sort of view is Gennaro (1996, 2002). He writes (1996: 23): "We can understand consciousness as involving the property of 'accompanied by a MET [meta-psychological thought]'... But we might individuate conscious states 'widely,' i.e., in a way that treats consciousness as an intrinsic property of those states. On this account, the MET is part of the conscious state. I will call it the 'wide intrinsicity view,' or WIV."

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I thank Amie Thomasson for raising this objection to $SOMT_4$, and Keith Lehrer for offer-

ing the rejoinder. I was fortunate to be present to record the proceedings.

18

Thanks to Paul Raymont, for pointing out to me that Kobes' account is really a version of $SOMT_6$, and to Richard Fumerton, for making the case that this is a plausible view worth pausing to articulate. François Recanati (in conversation) also expressed sympathy for this sort of view.

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At least, this is the case with normal conscious experiences, where the focal center of attention is on an external object, not an internal state of the subject. When one has an introspective, focal awareness of one's internal state, the phenomenology might be captured fairly in terms of the structure suggested in $SOMT_6$. But this is not the case with regular, non-introspective conscious experience.

SOMT₇ allows four different structures to qualify as conscious states: where both M^* and M^\diamond are proper parts of M (as in SOMT₄); where both are improper parts of M (as in SOMT₁); where M^* is a proper part and M^\diamond an improper part of M (as in SOMT₂); and where M^* is an improper and M^\diamond a proper part of M (as in SOMT₆).

Because SOMT₇ covers all the other versions as special cases, we may refer to it as *generic SOMT*. Its advantage is that it is less likely to turn out to be false than any other version of SOMT, since it is, in a way, a disjunction of all these versions. Its disadvantage, however, is in its logical weakness or permissiveness: it allows many very different structures to qualify as conscious states. Such heterogeneity most certainly fails to capture the underlying unity among all conscious states.

Of all the versions of SOMT we have considered thus far, the most promising was SOMT₄. But, as we saw, it is in essence only superficially different from HOMET. The discussion thus far might be taken to suggest that there is no distinctive advantage to SOMT over HOMET. However, as I will now try to show, there are certain modifications we might make to SOMT₄ that would make it more substantively different from HOMET, while retaining its distinctive advantages over other versions of SOMT.

First, it is worth noting that one way SOMT₄ (and hence SOMT₅) could play out is as follows: the subject is (indirectly) aware of her whole conscious state *by* (or *in virtue of*) being aware (directly) of a part of it. Just as a perception (or for that matter a painting) can represent a cabinet *by* (or *in virtue of*) representing the cabinet's front door, so a higher-order representation can represent a mental state *by* representing a part of it. In this way, M^* may represent the whole of M by representing the "other" part of M . This may be formulated as a specific version of SOMT₄.²⁰

(SOMT₈) For any mental state M and any subject S , such that S is in M , M is conscious iff there are M^* and M^\diamond , such that (i) S is in M^* and S is in M^\diamond , (ii) M^* is a (proper) part of M , (iii) M^\diamond is a (proper) part of M , and (iv) M^* represents M by representing M^\diamond .

SOMT₈ is more clearly substantially different from HOMET than SOMT₄ is.

This version of SOMT does accrue a new set of problems, however. First, the distinction between direct and indirect representation requires explication. Secondly, it is unclear in what way the notion of indirect representation is supposed to apply to states and events (as opposed, again, to concrete particulars).²¹ Thirdly, it is unclear what the fact of the matter is that distinguishes a direct representation of M^\diamond that serves as the basis for indirect representation of M from direct representation of M^\diamond that does not so serve. Fourthly, one may worry that what is indirectly represented is not strictly given in consciousness, and so the indirect content (if you will) of M^* is irrelevant to the structure of a conscious experience *as such*.²²

Another, perhaps better way to deal with the main problem facing SOMT₄ may be the following. There are two different ways M^* and M^\diamond may be conjoined to make up a single mental state, rather than two numerically distinct states. According to Gennaro's (1996 Ch. 2, 2002) "Wide Intrinsicity View", what makes them two parts of a single mental state is simply our decision to treat them as such. There is no psychologically real relation between them that unites them into a single, cohesive mental state. By contrast, according to Van Gulick's (2001, 2004) "Higher-Order Global States" account and my "Cross-order integration" model (see Kriegel 2002, 2003b, 2005, Forthcoming), what makes M^* and M^\diamond two parts of a single state is the fact that they

are integrated and unified through a psychologically real cognitive process of information integration.²³ So a conscious state arises, on this view, when a mental state (M^\diamond) and the subject's awareness of it are integrated into a single unity through the relevant sort of cognitive process.

One way to capture the ontological difference between these two versions of $SOMT_4$ is through the mereological distinction between *complexes* and (mere) *sums* (Simons 1987: Ch. 9). A complex is a sum whose parts are essentially interconnected, or bound, in a certain way. The interconnection between these parts is an existence condition of the complex, but not of the sum.²⁴ Thus, a molecule is a complex of atoms rather than a sum of atoms, since for the atoms to constitute a molecule they *must* be interconnected in a certain way. So while for a sum to go out of existence, it is necessary that one of its parts go out of existence, this is not the case with a complex. A complex can go out of existence even when its parts persist, provided that the relationship or connection among them is destroyed.²⁵ More generally, for any whole W comprised of components C_1, \dots, C_n , W is a mere sum iff W 's failure to persist entails a C_i 's failure to persist, and W is a complex iff its failure to persist does *not* entail a C_i 's failure to persist.

Gennaro's view seems to construe M as a mere *sum* of M^* and M^\diamond , whereas Van Gulick's and mine appear to construe it as a *complex* whose parts are M^* and M^\diamond .²⁶ This is because the latter view requires that there be a specific

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Note that it is also a version of $SOMT_2$.

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I would like to thank Dan Zahavi for pressing me on this latter issue.

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I would like to thank Paul Raymont for pointing this out to me.

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Cognitive processes of integration are not unfamiliar. At the personal level, there is the conscious inference in accordance with "conjunction introduction", as when one consciously infers that the wall is white and rectangular from one's beliefs that the wall is white and that the wall is rectangular. At the sub-personal level, there is the widely discussed process of *binding*, as when the brain binds information from the visual cortex and from the auditory cortex to form a single, unified visuo-auditory representation of the color and sound of the same distal stimulus, say a car. On Van Gulick's and Kriegel's view, what makes M^* and M^\diamond parts of a single mental state is the fact that they are integrated into a single mental state through a cognitive process of this type. The process in question is probably different from either feature binding or conscious inference in accordance with conjunction introduction. But there is no reason to think that these are the only processes of integration employed by our cognitive system. Any process in which two separate mental states or contents are unified in such a way that they are superseded by a single mental state or content that encompasses both will qualify as a process of cogni-

tive integration. (For a specific discussion of how such information integration may work out at the implementational level, see especially Kriegel 2007.)

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An example of a complex is the state of Hawaii (to be distinguished from the geographical location Hawaii). The state is not merely a sum of the seven islands making up Hawaii. It is also a matter of their political interconnection as answering to the same State government. If that government dissolved permanently, the state Hawaii would go out of existence, even though all its parts would persist.

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The notion of a complex-making relation, as opposed to a mere sum, is similar to Levey's (1997) notion of "principles of composition". According to Levey, objects are not just sums of disparate parts, but the parts put together in accordance with a *principle of composition*.

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At least this is how I understand Gennaro's and Van Gulick's views as they appear in print. It is quite possible that I am misinterpreting one or both of them. My primary interest, however, is in the views themselves, not so much in the exegesis of Gennaro and Van Gulick's work. In particular, some passages in Gennaro's work may suggest that he is more of a complex theorist than a sum theorist (see especially Gennaro 1996: 29–30). More explicitly, in response to the present paper, Gennaro (this volume) argues that his view is a complex, rather than sum, one.

relationship between M^* and M^\diamond for them to constitute a conscious state, namely, the relation effected by their cognitive integration. M^* and M^\diamond would fail to constitute a conscious state if this relationship failed to hold (or to be instantiated). There is no such provision in Gennaro's view: all it takes for M to exist is for M^* and M^\diamond to exist. This contrast can be captured through the following pair of theses:

(SOMT₉) For any mental state M and any subject S , such that S is in M , M is conscious iff there are M^* and M^\diamond , such that (i) S is in M^* and S is in M^\diamond , (ii) M^* is a (proper) part of M , (iii) M^\diamond is a (proper) part of M , (iv) M^* is a representation of M^\diamond , and (v) M is a mere *sum* of M^* and M^\diamond .

(SOMT₁₀) For any mental state M and any subject S , such that S is in M , M is conscious iff there are M^* and M^\diamond , such that (i) S is in M^* and S is in M^\diamond , (ii) M^* is a (proper) part of M , (iii) M^\diamond is a (proper) part of M , (iv) M^* is a representation of M^\diamond , and (v) M is a *complex* of M^* and M^\diamond .

These are two ontologically distinct versions of SOMT₄ (and hence of SOMT₅). The point I wish to press here is that SOMT₁₀ is substantially, not merely verbally, different from HOMT. If the monitored and monitoring states are not unified through a psychologically real process, then other things being equal S is in a conscious state according to HOMT but not according to SOMT₁₀.

The two views are also *empirically* distinguishable. Presumably, that two states are unified through a *psychologically real* process should make a difference to the causal powers of the whole they comprise – something that would not happen if the monitored and monitoring states are simply “summed up”.²⁷ Thus the difference should be empirically testable (see Kriegel Forthcoming for more on this).

I belabor this distinction because, unlike SOMT₉, SOMT₁₀ clearly presents a genuine – that is, substantive rather than verbal – alternative to HOMT, one that at the same time does not appeal to the problematic notion of self-representation. The problem with SOMT₉ is that there is a sense in which it retains the logical independence (postulated in HOMT) between the monitoring state and the monitored state, since it construes M^* and M^\diamond as completely independent of each other. This problem is overcome in SOMT₁₀, since the latter posits an essential connection between the two.^{28,29}

SOMT₁₀ does still appeal to the problematic notion of logical part. But although the notion is difficult to analyze, it is not so difficult to illustrate, as we saw in the case of believing and being glad. That illustration suggests that there is a viable notion of logical parthood that does apply to mental states; it is just that explicating this notion is not easy. I suggest that we consider this material for future investigation, proceeding now on the assumption that the notion of logical parthood is sound.

Elsewhere, I have argued in greater detail for a view of consciousness that can be ontologically cast as a version of SOMT₁₀ (see Kriegel 2002, 2003b, 2005). One thing that makes SOMT₁₀ preferable to SOMT₉ (beyond the fact that it is more clearly *substantially* different from HOMT), is that some possible cases of unconscious states appear to satisfy the condition laid out in SOMT₉. Consider, for instance, Siewert's (1998 Ch. 3) *spontaneous reflective blindsighter*, who can prompt herself to form judgments about what she blinds sees, as well as reflective, second-order judgments about those judgments.³⁰

Such a person may have an unconscious perceptual state accompanied by a second-order judgment about it. We can ascribe to such a person a state that is the sum of a first-order perceptual state and a second-order judgment about it, in accordance with $SOMT_9$, even though we cannot ascribe to her a conscious perceptual state. What we also cannot ascribe to her, however, is a *complex* made of the perceptual state and the second-order judgment.³¹ The perceptual state and the second-order representation of it are not integrated through a cognitive process in such a way as to make the person's awareness of her perceptual state internal to that perceptual state.³²

It may be objected that $SOMT_9$ is not really a coherent position, since despite characterizing M as a mere sum of M^* and M^\diamond , it does postulate an essential relationship between them, namely, the relation of representation that M^* bears to M^\diamond . The objection is that a view such as Gennaro's in fact construes M as a complex, not a mere sum. However, the representational relation M^* bear to M^\diamond is essential to the identity of M^* : M^* would not be the state that it is if it did not represent M^\diamond . So if M^* did not bear the representational relation to M^\diamond , it would go out of existence. It would then fail to be the case that M 's two parts continue to exist but M itself ceased to exist – as is required for M to qualify as a complex and not a mere sum.³³

This brings into sharper focus the relationship R that has to hold among the parts of a whole in order to make the whole a complex rather than a mere sum.

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I am indebted to Paul Raymont for the crucial point concerning the difference in causal powers (or functional role).

28

In a way, $SOMT_{10}$ goes a step beyond generic $SOMT$, in that it construes as constitutive not only the relation between M^* and M but also between M^* and M^\diamond . The result, then, is a web of constitutive interrelations among M , M^* , and M^\diamond .

29

Moreover, $SOMT_{10}$ may help provide a fact of the matter to distinguish direct representation of a part that serves as a basis for indirect representation of the whole and one that does not. When the whole in question is a mere sum, (direct) representation of its part does not constitute (indirect) representation of it. When the whole is a complex, (direct) representation of its part does constitute (indirect) representation of it. If a cabinet could be a mere sum of its door and its frame, without the two being necessarily connected in a certain way, then representation of the door could not constitute also a representation of the whole cabinet. But since the door and the frame must be connected in a specific way in order for their whole to function in the way a cabinet does, representation of the door can double as representation of the larger unit of which the door is a part. (This may at least provide a necessary condition on doubling as indirect representation of the whole.)

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My thanks to Terry Horgan for pointing me to this example.

31

As Siewert notes – though not in so many words – we *can* ascribe to her a complex of the first-order judgment and the second-order judgment; but we still cannot ascribe to her a complex of the first-order perceptual state and the second-order judgment.

32

Gennaro's particular version of $SOMT_9$ is a bit more complicated and compounds other implausibilities. Thus, according to Gennaro M^* is an *unconscious part* of the conscious state that M is. This is doubly implausible. First, although mental states are bearers of the property of being conscious, it is not clear in what sense state-parts can be said to be conscious or unconscious; and second, even if there was a sense in which state-parts could be said to be conscious, presumably what would make a state-part conscious is that it is part of a conscious state – so the notion of an unconscious part of a conscious state would be contradictory.

33

A similar objection may be that Gennaro's view, in order to be at all plausible, must require that M^* and M^\diamond be roughly simultaneous and occur in the same subject's head, but such relations would make his view a complex view rather than a sum view. In response, it may be claimed that temporal and spatial relations are not substantive enough to be complex-making.

For R to be a complex-making relation, R must be (i) an existence and identity condition of the whole, but (ii) neither an existence condition nor an identity condition of any of the parts.³⁴ The relation between M^* and M^\diamond postulated in Van Gulick's account and mine is of this sort, the one postulated in Gennaro's is not.

Before closing, let me note that $SOMT_8$ and $SOMT_{10}$ are perfectly compatible, and perhaps even "reinforcing." Therefore, they can be conjoined to generate an even more specific version of $SOMT_4$:

($SOMT^{11}$) For any mental state M and any subject S, such that S is in M, M is conscious iff there are M^* and M^\diamond , such that (i) S is in M^* and S is in M^\diamond , (ii) M^* is a (proper) part of M, (iii) M^\diamond is a (proper) part of M, (iv) M^* represents M by representing M^\diamond , and (v) M is a complex of M^* and M^\diamond .

Given the plausibility of $SOMT_{10}$, it appears that if the special problems attending $SOMT_8$ could somehow be neutralized, $SOMT_{11}$ would be a promising account of the ontology of conscious experience.

There are other versions of SOMT that I have not discussed at all and that do not fit comfortably into the framework I have presented in this section (hence into any of $SOMT_1 - SOMT_{11}$). In particular, Carruthers (2000: Ch. 9) and Lurz (2003a, 2003b) have developed versions of SOMT that offer genuine and credible alternatives to the versions discussed above.³⁵ But I will not discuss their views here. My hope is that the above discussion is sufficient to bring out the special character of the kind of account envisioned by a Same-Order Monitoring approach to consciousness. I now turn to the task of arguing that SOMT has resources to deal with problems that are fatal, or at least critical, to the viability of the more traditional HOMT.

3. SOMT over HOMT

In this section, I pursue two lines of argument that attempt to establish the superiority of SOMT over HOMT. The first concerns the ability to account for the immediacy of our awareness of our concurrent conscious experiences. The second concerns the relational character of consciousness under HOMT.

Immediacy

In §2, I noted that representation of M is a *necessary* condition for M's being conscious, because conscious states are states the subject is aware of, and awareness of something involves representation of it. I also noted that a higher-order representation of M is not a *sufficient* condition for M's being conscious, because some mental states the subject is aware of (and hence represents) are not conscious. This is why we must appeal to an "appropriate" higher-order representation of M.

From what has already been said, it is clear that some mental states the subject is aware of are conscious and some are unconscious. The question is what makes the difference between an awareness of M that guarantees M's being conscious and an awareness that does *not*. One intuitively plausible suggestion would be that awareness of M makes M conscious if it is *immediate* awareness, and that it fails to make M conscious if it is not immediate. Thus, if S is of reflective disposition, she may infer that she must be distressed or anxious about something, on the basis of how unfocused and unproductive she has been, or how lightly she has been sleeping recently. But even if S re-

ally is distressed or anxious about something (e.g., a looming banquet with the in-laws), S's newfound awareness of it would not make the distress or anxiety conscious in the relevant sense. The reason is that the awareness lacks the requisite immediacy, being as it is mediated by reflection and inference.

So one requirement on an "appropriate" representation of M is that it make S not just aware of M, but aware of M with the requisite immediacy. The problem is that HOMT appears to fail this requirement (see also Goldman 1993, Natsoulas 1993, Kobes 1995, Moran 2001).

Suppose S has a conscious perception of a tree. According to HOMT, the perception, M, is conscious because S has another mental state, M*, which is an appropriate higher-order representation of M. Now, surely M normally has a role in the causal process leading up to the formation of M*. Just as the tree normally has a central role in the causal process leading up to the perception of it, so the perception itself normally has a central role in the causal process leading up to the higher-order representation of it. Arguably, M* would not be a representation of M if that were not the case. This means that the formation of M* is not exactly simultaneous with the formation of M. Rather, there is some sort of (temporally extended) causal process starting with M and ending in the formation of M*. ³⁶ This process *mediates*, in effect, the formation of M*. This, it might be argued, poses a problem for HOMT. For it appears to imply that S's awareness of her perception of the tree is mediated by the causal process in question, and is therefore *not* immediate.

David Rosenthal (1993) addresses this problem. But before I examine Rosenthal's treatment, let me note his admission that the problem does not even arise for a view such as SOMT. Rosenthal writes (1993: 157; italics mine):

"One way to answer the question about immediacy is just to stipulate that one's being [aware] of a conscious mental state is *internal to* that state itself. Immediacy is thus guaranteed. Our being [aware] of the state would be a *part or aspect of* the state itself, so nothing could mediate between the state and one's being [aware] of it."

The phrases "internal to" and "part or aspect of" can be understood along the lines of SOMT₁ and/or SOMT₂. They are certainly consistent with the generic SOMT₇. Since on all these versions of SOMT what makes S aware of M is M itself or a (logical) part of M, there is no causal process that mediates the formation of S's awareness of M: M *comes with* the awareness of it, if you will. The problem evaporates.

Thus generic SOMT₇ handles the problem in a relatively straightforward way. M[∅] would normally have a causal role in the process leading up to the formation of M*. But until M* is formed, the conscious state M does not exist yet.

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If we take into account the point raised in the previous endnote, we must also require (iii) that R not be a merely temporal or spatial relation.

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According to Carruthers, M* is somehow inherent in M in virtue of the fact that it is part of M's inferential role in S's cognitive system that it is disposed to bring about the occurrence of an M*-type state. This inferential role determines the content of M, therefore M* is a determinant of M's content. According to Lurz, M* represents not M itself, but rather

M's content. It is the fact that M not only represents what it does, but is also accompanied by a representation of what it represents, that makes M conscious. Lurz explicitly calls his view "Same-Order Monitoring".

36

There are places where Rosenthal claims explicitly that there is normally *no* causal connection between M and M* (e.g., Rosenthal 1990: 744). These comments are sporadic and unmotivated, however. The resulting HOMT is, if anything, less plausible than it should be (see Kobes 1995).

M comes into existence only upon the completion of the causal process leading up to the formation of M^* . Once M comes into existence, it already envelops within it M^\diamond and M^* ; no further causal process is required. So M itself does not play a causal role in the process leading up to the formation of M^* . For M does not exist before M^* does. Thus once S enters the conscious state M, S's awareness of M^\diamond – and, on SOMT⁸ and SOMT¹¹, M – is not mediated in any way. In other words, once M comes into existence, no further process is needed that would mediate the formation of M^* . The awareness constituted by M^* is therefore immediate.

It appears, then, that SOMT faces no serious difficulty regarding the immediacy of our awareness of our conscious states. But Rosenthal claims that HOMT can account for this immediacy as well. According to Rosenthal, what is required for S's awareness of M to be immediate is not that the formation of M^* be unmediated, but rather that it *seem* unmediated to S. Or perhaps even more minimally, the formation of M^* must not seem mediated to S. As long as it does not seem to S that the formation of M^* is mediated, her awareness of M will be immediate. (Note that the way I am using the terms “immediate” and “unmediated,” the two are *not* synonymous, at least as applied to awareness. An awareness that is immediate may not be unmediated, as when an awareness is mediated by processes of which the subject is unaware, as we will presently see.)

There are two ways the formation of M^* may not seem mediated to S. One is when the formation of M^* *really is* unmediated. Another is when the formation of M^* is mediated, but the processes by which it is mediated are processes of which S is completely unaware. If S is completely unaware of the processes that mediate the formation of M^* , M^* 's formation will seem unmediated to her, or at least it will not seem mediated to her. This latter way the formation of M^* may not seem mediated to S is the one appealed to by Rosenthal. Rosenthal's claim is that while it is true that the formation of M^* is mediated by a causal process – presumably one starting with M and ending in the formation of M^* – the subject is completely unaware of this process, and therefore her awareness of M is immediate, in that it does not seem mediated to her.

To meet the requirement of immediacy, Rosenthal therefore claims that an “appropriate” higher-order representation must be *non-inferential*, where this means that the higher-order representation is not formed though a conscious inference. For such a *conscious* inference would be a mediating process of which the subject *would be* aware (since it is conscious).³⁷ In other words, where P is the process leading from M to the formation of M^* , M is conscious just in case P is unconscious; when P is conscious, M is unconscious.

(Note that the way Rosenthal uses the terms, inference is by definition conscious. To be sure, we could call certain unconscious cognitive processes “inferences”, and so allow for unconscious inference. But this is not how Rosenthal uses the term. He allows that there may be unconscious processes resembling inference in every other respect, but reserves the term “inference” to those that are conscious. For the sake of clarity, I will align my usage with Rosenthal's. To refer to the unconscious cognitive processes that are otherwise just like inference, I will use the expression “unconscious inferential processes.”³⁸)

Rosenthal's treatment of the problem of immediacy may initially appear satisfactory, but it does not withstand scrutiny. The problem is to account for the difference between S's awareness of her conscious states, which is immediate, and S's (occasional) awareness of her unconscious states, which lacks the requisite immediacy. Rosenthal's suggestion is that the *conscious* states are those the awareness of which is formed through unconscious inferential

processes, whereas the *unconscious* states are those the awareness of which is formed through conscious inferences.³⁹ This suggestion, I will now argue, is unlikely to work.

Let us start by adopting a certain principle regarding inferential processes. The principle is that a conscious inference can only start from conscious “premises”. More precisely, for any process P leading from mental state M_1 to the formation of mental state M_2 , P is conscious only if M_1 is conscious. If M_1 is unconscious, then P must be unconscious.⁴⁰

The problem with Rosenthal’s suggestion is that M is *always* unconscious before the formation of M^* , since M^* is what bestows consciousness on M. So *every* process leading from M to the formation of M^* would have to start from an unconscious state, and therefore itself be an unconscious process. This ensures that *every* higher-order representation formed through a process leading from its object (the first-order state) would be non-inferential and therefore would bestow consciousness on the first-order state.⁴¹

My claim is not that there can be no awareness of M formed by conscious inference. There surely can. My claim is rather that there can be no awareness of M formed by conscious inference from M *before* M is already conscious. More generally, there can be no conscious states whose being conscious is due to the fact that their representation is formed by conscious inference

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The reason the subject would necessarily be aware of this process is that it is conscious, and conscious states and processes are states and processes the subject is aware of having or undergoing.

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It is important to stress that no substantive issue is at stake here, only a verbal one. If we insist that there are unconscious inferences, Rosenthal would only need to rephrase his thesis. Instead of claiming that M^* is an appropriate representation of M only if it is non-inferential, he could claim that that M^* is an appropriate representation of M only if it is non-schminferential, where “schminference” is a conscious inference.

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One might interpret the view otherwise, though. The suggestion might be thought to be that M^* is not formed through any process, but rather “forms” somewhat simultaneously – or that it is formed either through an unconscious inferential process or through no process whatsoever. However, the notion of a mental states that is unformed, or forms spontaneously through no process, is not obviously intelligible.

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It is important to distinguish here between a process being conscious and the process’ product being conscious. There are certainly inferential processes whose product is conscious even though the “premises” are not. But that is not the same as the inferential processes being themselves conscious.

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Consider a normal case in which a higher-order representation M^* is formed. Before M^* is formed, M is not conscious (since it is not represented). There then takes place a process leading from M to the formation of M^* , at the end of which M becomes conscious (due its representation by M^*). What Rosenthal must do is distinguish between processes that would make M^* an immediate awareness of M and processes that would make M^* an awareness lacking the requisite immediacy. His suggestion is that the former are unconscious inferential processes, whereas the latter are processes of conscious inference. However, at the beginning of all these processes, M is supposed to be unconscious. So if we accept the principle that conscious inference can only start from conscious “premises”, the fact that at the outset of the process M is unconscious means that the process cannot possibly be a conscious inference. So in fact no awareness of M can be formed through a conscious inference from M (before M is already conscious). (It is, of course, possible to make a conscious inference from one of one’s conscious state to an awareness of that state. But the awareness formed through such inference is not the kind that initially bestows on the state its consciousness, since the state must already be conscious for the awareness of it to arise in this way.) Therefore, there is no explanatory force in the distinction between awareness of M formed by conscious inference from M and awareness of M formed by unconscious inferential processes emanating from M. It is not this distinction that marks the difference between immediate awareness of M and awareness of M that is not immediate.

from these states (before they are already conscious). A subject can certainly become aware that she harbors an unconscious anger at her mother on the strength of her therapist's testimony; in which case her awareness of her unconscious anger is consciously inferred from the evidence presented to her by the therapist. But in such a case, the subject's awareness of M is not formed by conscious inference *from M* (or *on the basis of M*). Rather, it is formed by conscious inference from (or on the basis of) the therapist's testimony. Rosenthal's account is incompatible with this, however, for the reason provided in the previous paragraph.

Rosenthal might modify his account of immediacy accordingly. Instead of claiming that the difference between S's awareness of her conscious states and her awareness of her unconscious states is that the former is formed through unconscious inferential processes whereas the latter is formed through conscious inferential processes, he might suggest that the former is formed through processes that do not emanate from the relevant conscious states whereas the latter is formed through processes that do.

This modified account is, however, extremely implausible, indeed somewhat absurd. On the suggestion under consideration, what makes S's awareness of M immediate is precisely that it is not formed responsively to M, but as an upshot of some other process. Whenever M happens to lead to an awareness of it, M is bound to remain unconscious. This appears to get things exactly backwards.

On the other hand, the proponent of HOMT cannot opt for the opposite modification, according to which the difference between S's awareness of her conscious states and her awareness of her unconscious states is that the former is formed through processes that *do* emanate from the relevant conscious states, whereas the latter is formed through processes that do *not*. For this would allow awareness of some conscious states to emanate from these states through conscious inferential processes. Such inferential processes would be causal processes of which S is aware, and would therefore *seem mediated* to S.

Finally, A proponent of HOMT could retreat to the view that immediacy is *not* what distinguishes the awareness we have of our conscious states from that we have of our unconscious states. But this, beside being quite *ad hoc* and *prima facie* implausible, would leave HOMT without an account of the difference between conscious and unconscious states of which we are aware. Furthermore, arguably the immediacy that characterizes our awareness of our conscious states is a phenomenon that calls for explanation regardless of its theoretical role within the theory of consciousness.

In conclusion, HOMT faces a serious difficulty in its attempt to account for the immediacy that characterizes the awareness we have of our conscious states (and does not characterize the awareness we have of some of our unconscious states).⁴² SOMT, by contrast, faces no serious difficulty from that quarter. In essence, SOMT's position is that the awareness we have of our conscious states is immediate simply because it *really is* unmediated.

Relationality

An important aspect of HOMT is the fact that it construes consciousness as a relational property: mental states are conscious in virtue of standing in a certain relation to other mental states. Many philosophers find this counter-intuitive. What it is like to be in a given conscious state seems to be an intrinsic property of the state. For some philosophers, this alone is a ground for rejecting HOMT (see Smith 1989, Gennaro 1996, Natsoulas 1999). In this section, I will argue

that construing consciousness as relational not only is counter-intuitive, but also brings up the specter of two serious problems for HOMT. This would constitute another advantage for SOMT, given that these difficulties do not even arise for SOMT, since the latter construes consciousness as an intrinsic property of the conscious state, as we will see toward the end of the section.

A decade or two ago, the most widely discussed problem in the philosophy of mind concerned the causal efficacy of mental content. After externalist accounts of content (which construe it as a relational property of mental states) became popular,⁴³ it was noted that this appears to render mental content causally inert.⁴⁴ The reasoning was this: only intrinsic properties of a mental state contribute to its fund of causal powers, because causation is a local affair; so if content is an extrinsic, relational property, it makes no contribution to the state's causal powers, and is therefore causally inert, or *epiphenomenal*.

That problem was never resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Different solutions, of different merits, have been offered, but no agreement is in sight.⁴⁵ One thing almost everybody accepted, though, was the thesis that the causal powers of a mental state reside fully in its intrinsic properties.^{46,47}

This thesis threatens to undermine HOMT, since the latter construes consciousness as relational. If consciousness were indeed a relational property, M's being conscious would fail to contribute anything to M's fund of causal powers. And this would make the property of being conscious epiphenomenal (see Dretske 1995: 117 for an argument along these lines).

This is, by all appearances, a serious problem for HOMT. Why have philosophers failed to press this problem more consistently? My guess is that we are tempted to slide into a causal reading of HOMT, according to which M* *produces* the consciousness of M, by impressing upon M a certain *modification*. Such a reading does make sense of the causal efficacy of consciousness:

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Another, related problem with Rosenthal's original suggestion for distinguishing immediate awareness from awareness lacking immediacy – which I did not discuss in the main text – is brought up by Kobes (1995: 293): "... suppose that, by feedback training or neurosurgery, I become [aware] of the... inference that yields the HOT [higher-order thought M*]. Then it follows on Rosenthal's view that [M] is no longer conscious. But it is not credible that the addition of [awareness] of processes whereby the HOT is derived should cause loss of consciousness of the first-order state". That is, it is absurd to think that a mental state that is conscious would suddenly become unconscious when the subject suddenly becomes aware of the process that mediated the formation of the higher-order representation.

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See Putnam 1975, Burge 1979.

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Perhaps the most poignant presentation of the problem is Stich's (1979).

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Perhaps the most common approach was to claim that even if mental content lacks causal powers, it is nonetheless *explanatorily* rele-

vant in psychology (see Burge 1989). Another popular strategy, identified with the internalist camp, was to construct a notion of *narrow content* – that is, content which is fully determined by the intrinsic properties of the state whose content it is (see Fodor 1987) – and to claim that this narrow content is the causally efficacious content.

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For a defense of this thesis in this context, see Kim 1982.

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Sometimes, it has been claimed not that causal efficacy resides solely in intrinsic properties, but that it resides solely in properties that *supervene* on intrinsic properties ("locally supervenient" properties). This does not make a difference to the present argument, though. The present argument is based on the fact that HOMT construes consciousness as an extrinsic relational property. But HOMT *also* construes consciousness as not locally supervenient. Thus, according to HOMT, two mental states that are intrinsically indistinguishable can differ in consciousness: one is conscious and one is not (because one is appropriately represented and one is not). If so, the property of being conscious is not locally supervenient.

after M^* modifies M , this intrinsic modification alters M 's causal powers. But of course, this is a *misreading* of HOMET. It is important to keep in mind that HOMET is a *constitutive*, not *causal*, thesis. Its claim is *not* that the presence of an appropriate higher-order representation *yields*, or *gives rise to*, or *produces*, M 's being conscious. Rather, the claim is that the presence of an appropriate higher-order representation *constitutes* M 's being conscious. It is not that by representing M , M^* *modifies* M in such a way as to make M conscious. Rather, M 's being conscious simply *consists in* its being represented by M^* .

A person *could*, of course, propound HOMET as a causal thesis. But such a person would not take HOMET to be an account of consciousness itself; she would take it to be merely an account of the *causal origin* of consciousness. To the extent that HOMET is meant as an account of consciousness itself, it puts in jeopardy the causal efficacy of consciousness.

When proponents of HOMET have taken this problem into account, they have responded by downplaying the causal efficacy of consciousness.⁴⁸ But if the intention is to bite the bullet, *downplaying* the causal efficacy is insufficient – what is needed is *nullifying* the efficacy.⁴⁹ The charge at hand is not that HOMET may turn out to assign consciousness too small a fund of causal powers, but that it may deny it *any* causal powers. To bite the bullet, proponents of HOMET must embrace epiphenomenalism. Such epiphenomenalism can be rejected, however, both on commonsense grounds and on the grounds that it violates what has come to be called *Alexander's dictum*: to be is to be causally effective.^{50,51} Surely HOMET would be better off if it could legitimately assign some causal powers to consciousness. But its construal of consciousness as a relational property makes it unclear how it might do so.

Another consequence of the alleged relationality of consciousness would be the following. According to HOMET, M 's property of being conscious is just the property of being appropriately represented by another internal state. Some critics have charged that the property of being appropriately represented by another internal state is a property which internal states of inanimate objects can also instantiate (see again Dretske 1995: 97).⁵² If so, they argue, HOMET is committed to attributing conscious states to inanimate objects. Thus, when a person harbors an appropriate representation of the internal physical state of a stone, the internal state of the stone is appropriately represented by another internal state, and so there would be no non-arbitrary way to deny consciousness to the stone's internal state.⁵³

Proponents of HOMET may respond that internal states can be conscious only when appropriately represented by a separate state *of the same organism* (or object). But this reply would not do. There are states of our skin that we have appropriate representations of, and yet these skin states are not conscious, even though they are states of the same organism that has the higher-order representations.

A more sophisticated rejoinder is that it need not be part of HOMET that *any* internal state can become conscious upon being appropriately represented by another internal state. In particular, it is often suggested that only *mental* states (perhaps only mental states of a certain *kind*) are such as to become conscious upon being suitably represented by another internal state.⁵⁴

This reply has less merit to it than may initially appear, however. Again, the problem is that we are tempted to read HOMET causally instead of constitutively. If M^* *gave rise* to consciousness by modifying M , then it would make a difference what characteristics M has (e.g., being mental). Thus, it could be claimed that only states with such characteristics can be so modified by being appropriately represented as to become conscious. But recall that

according to HOMT, conscious states do not undergo any (non-Cambridge) change in response to the fact that they are appropriately represented. It is not so clear, then, what difference it makes whether an internal state has certain characteristics or not. To claim that only a certain kind of internal state is “the right kind” of state for becoming conscious upon being appropriately represented, even though nothing has to happen with those states when they are thus represented, is to introduce a completely artificial, *ad hoc* condition to the account.⁵⁵

In summary, the relational construal of consciousness lands its proponents in significant trouble. It appears to cast consciousness as causally inert and suggests consciousness may be a ubiquitous property of nature, including inanimate nature. No doubt the proponents of HOMT may devise ways of dealing with these problems. Those “ways of dealing with the problem” are likely,

48

Thus Rosenthal (2002: 416; italics mine): “It’s easy to *overestimate* the degree to which a state’s being conscious does actually play any [causal] role... [In fact,] whether or not a state is conscious will not affect the state’s [causal] role in planning and reasoning.”

49

Epiphenomenalism about consciousness has been explicitly propounded by some (Velmans 1992, and to a significant extent, Chalmers 1996). But I take it that it is still a virtue of an account of consciousness that it does not render consciousness epiphenomenal. Epiphenomenalism is a liability, not an attractive feature.

50

Kim (1998) is responsible for reintroducing this dictum into philosophical discourse. In fact, what HOMT violates is an even weaker principle: to be *at least* to be causally efficacious.

51

There may also be an epistemological problem involved in epiphenomenalism: if genuine knowledge requires causal interaction, as some philosophers have maintained (e.g. Goldman 1967), there can be no knowledge of epiphenomenal entities or phenomena. This would make HOMT entail the absurdity that we cannot, in principle, have any knowledge of the existence of consciousness.

52

Dretske (1995: 97) writes: “Some people have cancer and they are conscious of having it. Others have it, but are not conscious of having it. Are there, then, two forms of cancer: conscious and unconscious cancer?... Experiences are, in this respect, like cancers. Some of them we are conscious of having. Others we are not. But the difference is not a difference in the experience. It is a difference in the experiencer – a difference in what the person knows about the experience he or she is having.” See also Van Gulick 2001.

53

This is sometimes referred to as the *generality problem*. Since this reasoning applies to just about everything in nature, we may also frame the problem in terms of panpsychism: HOMT appears to lead to panpsychism, according to which anything in nature is capable of consciousness. Although some philosophers have flirted with panpsychism (e.g., Chalmers 1996), such panpsychism would not sit well with the reductive and demystifying ambitions of HOMT.

54

Thus Lycan (1990: 758–9; I am quoting from the reprint in Block et al. 1997): “What is it that is so special about physical states of that certain sort, that consciousness of them makes them ‘conscious’? That they are themselves mental... It seems psychological states are called ‘conscious’ states when we are conscious of them, but nonpsychological things are not.” Lycan’s view is particularly implausible, as he seems to hold that there is nothing substantially different about mental states that makes them conscious upon being suitably represented – it is simply that we are unwilling to *call* internal states of inanimate objects conscious when they are suitably represented.

55

After all, as we can see with Lycan’s view (see the previous footnote), there is nothing theoretically (or explanatorily) relevant in the fact that these states are mental. The upshot must be that there is an arbitrary fact which makes suitably represented mental states, but not other suitably represented internal states, conscious. In Lycan’s case the arbitrary fact in question is the fact that we are willing to *call* the former, but not the latter, “conscious”. This line of rejoinder, if seriously pursued, would be at odds with the fact that conscious states most probably constitute a *natural kind*, and in any event seem to share something objective that is common and peculiar to them.

however, to complicate the theory considerably. And in any case, it is clearly preferable to avoid these problems altogether.

The problems are avoided altogether by any account of consciousness that construes it as an intrinsic, non-relational property of conscious states. SOMT is such an account. According to it, M is conscious in virtue of representing itself. This means that M need not stand in a relation to any *numerically distinct* state (or other entity) in order to instantiate consciousness, which is therefore intrinsic.

There is *a* sense, of course, in which the property of being self-representing is relational, namely, that it is a matter of its bearer standing in a certain relation to itself. But this is not the sense of relationality that threatens to entail epiphenomenalism and panpsychism. To clarify matters, we may appeal here to a distinction sometimes drawn between relational properties and extrinsic properties. My property of having an arm is a relational property, but it is not an extrinsic property. It is relational because I instantiate it in virtue of standing in a relation to *something*, namely my arm. But it is not extrinsic because I do not instantiate it in virtue of standing in a relation to *something that does not overlap me*. With this distinction at hand, we may reframe the argument of this subsection in terms of the fact that HOMT construes consciousness as an extrinsic property, whereas SOMT does not.

In this regard, the part-whole relation is similar to the self-representation relation: it does not require that its bearer stand in any relation to a numerically distinct entity. If M^* is a part of M, then M's property of standing in a certain relation to M^* (namely, the relation of being represented by M^*) is a non-relational property in the relevant sense. This ensures that in SOMT₇, the generic version of SOMT, consciousness is construed as a non-extrinsic property.

To summarize, the fact that SOMT construes consciousness as an intrinsic property of conscious states, whereas HOMT construes it as a relational, indeed extrinsic, property of them, means that there are certain difficulties that arise for HOMT but not for SOMT. This is an important advantage of SOMT over HOMT.⁵⁶

4. Conclusion

For almost two decades now, the Higher-Order Monitoring Theory has been at the forefront of attempts to make the place of consciousness in nature intelligible. However, the theory faces a number of serious difficulties, some technical some fundamental. Moreover, many philosophers share the sentiment that it misses out on what is so special about consciousness. At the same time, it is built on the sound notion that conscious states are states we are somehow *aware* of. It is perhaps for this reason that, in recent work on consciousness, one detects an interesting, and significant, development of the monitoring approach to consciousness. A surprising number of accounts that are happy to construe consciousness in terms of monitoring attempt to bring closer together the monitoring state and the monitored state, in such a way that the two are not “independent existences”, but are somehow constitutively, or “internally”, or otherwise non-contingently, connected to each other.

My goal in this paper has been twofold: first, to identify this trend and lay out its conceptual foundations; and second, to suggest that the trend is indeed a positive development, in that the emerging account of consciousness can overcome a number of fundamental difficulties that have seemed to bedevil the project of the more traditional Higher-Order Monitoring Theory.⁵⁷

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This is also connected to one of HOMET's best-known difficulties, namely, the problem it faces with second-order misrepresentations of the very existence of a first-order mental state (see Byrne 1997, Neander 1998, Seager 1999: Ch. 3, Levine 2001: Ch. 4). As several authors have noted, this problem does not present itself for a view such as SOMT₁: a mental state may misrepresent its own *properties*, but it is impossible that it should misrepresent its own *existence* (see Caston 2002, Kriegel 2003a, Raymont Ms). Whether this solution extends to other versions of SOMT is something we will not have occasion to consider here.

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Die Theorie gleichrangigen Monitorings in der Bewusstseinsforschung

Zusammenfassung

Laut Monitoring-Ansätzen in der Bewusstseinsforschung ist ein Mentalzustand als bewusst zu bezeichnen, wenn er in angemessener Weise beobachtet wird. Gemäß der Theorie höherrangigen Monitorings sind der Zustand des Beobachtens und der Zustand des Beobachtetwerdens voneinander logisch unabhängig. Vertreter der Theorie gleichrangigen Monitorings bestehen auf einer konstitutiven, nicht-kontingenten Verbindung zwischen Beobachten und Beobachtetwerden. Der Verfasser dieses Beitrags artikuliert verschiedene Versionen zur Theorie gleichrangigen Monitorings und vertritt ihren Vorrang vor der Theorie höherrangigen Monitorings.

Schlüsselbegriffe

Bewusstsein, höherrangige Theorien, gleichrangige Theorien, Selbst-Repräsentation

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La théorie de la surveillance d'ordre supérieur

Résumé

Les approches dites de surveillance de la conscience affirment qu'un état peut être qualifié de conscient lorsqu'il est surveillé en continu. La théorie de la surveillance d'ordre supérieur distingue l'état surveillant et l'état surveillé comme logiquement indépendants. La théorie de la surveillance du même ordre soutient l'hypothèse d'une connexion constitutive et non contingente entre l'état surveillant et l'état surveillé. Dans cet article, je présente diverses versions de la théorie de la surveillance du même ordre et j'affirme leur suprématie par rapport aux théories de la surveillance d'ordre supérieur.

Mots-clés

conscience, la théorie d'ordre supérieur, la théorie de même ordre, représentation du soi