



Reflexivity Without Noticing: Durand of Saint-Pourçain, Walter Chatton, Brentano

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Abstract

According to Franz Brentano, every mental act includes a representation of itself. Hence, Brentano can be described as maintaining that: (T1) reflexivity, when it occurs, is included as a part in mental acts; and (T2) reflexivity always occurs. Brentano's way of understanding the inclusion of reflexivity in mental acts (T1) entails double intentionality in mental acts. The aim of this paper is to show that the conjunction of (T1) and (T2) is not uncommon in the history of philosophy. To that end, the theories of two medieval thinkers, namely, Walter Chatton and Durand of Saint-Pourçain, are presented. The repeated conjunction of (T1) and (T2) paves the way for a more general distinction than that between subjectivist and objectivist theories of reflexivity, namely, one between automatic theories of reflexivity (where noticing is not required for reflexivity) and apperceptive theories of reflexivity (where noticing is required for reflexivity).

Keywords Brentano · Durand of Saint-Pourçain · Walter Chatton · Reflexivity · Noticing · Object

1 Introduction

Apart from the concept of intentionality itself, one central aspect of Brentano's *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte* that has consequences for the understanding of the structure of mental acts is his conception of reflexivity. According to this conception, every mental act, no matter how simple, includes a representation of itself. The Brentanian approach to reflexivity can be analysed as the adoption of two distinct theses:

Inclusion thesis (T1) Reflexivity, when it occurs, is included as a part in mental acts.

General reflexivity thesis (T2) Reflexivity always occurs.

The alternative to the inclusion thesis is that, when there is or may be reflexivity, there is also a reflexive act, which is a mental act that is distinct from the act that is reflexively apprehended. However, with the inclusion thesis, it is not required that there be two distinct mental acts to account for

reflexivity, since the mental act is a whole of which reflexivity is a part. The alternative to the general reflexivity thesis is that mental acts are not always reflexively apprehended, but only when one notices them. I take it that it is unproblematic from an exegetical point of view that Brentano does indeed subscribe to both the inclusion thesis (T1) and the general reflexivity thesis (T2). However, the specific way in which he supports (T1) is debated. In this article, I will argue that the specific way in which Brentano endorses (T1) is by subscribing to a double-intentionality thesis regarding mental acts—that is to say, by contending that when reflexivity occurs the mental act that is reflexively apprehended is the object of a second (reflexive) intention that occurs within the same act.¹

¹ Recent support for my reading can be found in Kriegel (2013, 2018, esp. pp. 28–32). An alternative reading suggests that the reflexive act and direct act might not be the same mental act but rather are indistinctly fused in a single mental phenomenon (Textor 2006, pp. 426–427). According to a yet another interpretation, Brentano does not have double intentionality, but “plural intentionality” (Textor 2017, p. 122), meaning that one and the same act is not intentionally directed *twice* at two objects in particular, but intentionally directed *once* at two objects as a whole. The best argument for the first reading is the fact that Brentano explicitly describes the mental *act* as a *second* object for itself. For a detailed survey of the interpretations of Brentano and an alternative solution, see Marchesi (2021) in this issue.

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As might already be clear, the inclusion thesis (T1) is rather broad. Indeed, any thinker who rejects a higher-order theory of reflexivity—that is, one according to which a distinct reflexive mental act needs to be posited to account for reflexivity—and thus develops a one-level account, could be described as supporting (T1). This includes both supporters of objectivist one-level theories, which include reflexivity in mental acts by making the act a second object, and of subjectivist one-level theories, which include reflexivity in mental acts by claiming that acts are somehow felt. This could be seen as a problem. Studies have insisted on the fundamental difference between objectivist and subjectivist one-level approaches to consciousness, both in the medieval (e.g., Brower-Toland 2012) and phenomenological (e.g., Zahavi 2006) traditions.

The purpose of this article is to show two things: first, that Brentano's conjunction of the inclusion thesis (T1) and the general reflexivity thesis (T2) is not idiosyncratic; and second, that this conjunction hints at a more general divide between accounts of reflexivity than the one opposing subjectivist and objectivist theories. I will do so by arguing that a similar conjunction of (T1) and (T2) can be found in two medieval theories of reflexivity, namely, Walter Chatton's (from around 1321) and Durand of Saint-Pourçain's (from around 1310).² The fact that these two medieval theories in particular present the conjunction is relevant. By hypothesis, if both Chatton's subjectivist account and Durand's objectivist account present the conjunction, then not only is that conjunction more than a Brentanian peculiarity from the point of view of history of philosophy, it also paves the way for a more general division than that between objectivist and subjectivist accounts of reflexivity, namely, one between automatic and apperceptive accounts of reflexivity. According to the apperceptive account, noticing is required for reflexivity to occur; according to the automatic account, it is not. Moreover, observing the repeated conjunction of (T1) and (T2) would have another benefit. The general reflexivity thesis (T2) has been described as "unusual" (Friedman 2009, p. 446; Knebel 2014, p. 344) and "rather implausible" (Perler 2017, p. 223), but the repeated conjunction should make us wonder whether (T2) is all that unusual after all.

2 Brentano: Reflexivity and Implicit Consciousness

Let me begin with an overview of how the Brentanian account operates, focusing on the first edition of the *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte* (1874), before examining how it supports the inclusion thesis (T1) and the general reflexivity thesis (T2).

For Brentano, every mental act, for example a representation, includes a representation of itself.³ This means that every mental act is conscious for Brentano. In fact, inasmuch as it has a content, every psychic phenomenon is a consciousness (*Bewusstsein*). Therefore the representation of itself that every mental act includes is already a consciousness of that mental act, and that mental act is conscious.⁴

Inasmuch as every mental act includes a representation of itself, a second intentional object is introduced in the mental act. Brentano thus commits himself to double intentionality. Every mental act—for example, a representation—is intentionally directed towards two objects: its primary object and itself.⁵ Thus, according to Brentano's view, mental acts are not counted according to the number of objects, since a single mental act has several objects (Brentano 2008, p. 146). A same act can be described in different ways (e.g., direct, reflexive) depending on which partial intention one focuses (Brentano 2008, p. 146).

Brentano famously defends his account with two arguments. The first one is based on the threat of infinite regress in reflexive mental acts (e.g., Textor 2017, p. 92). Given that every representation is represented (and therefore conscious), then if the reflexive representation were not included as a part in the same mental act as the first representation, we would need a different mental act for the first representation to be represented, and so on ad infinitum (Brentano 2008, p. 140). In order to escape this regress, one might posit that some representations are unrepresented, that is, they are unconscious. But since Brentano wants to maintain that there are no unconscious psychic phenomena, the only way

³ Brentano (2008, p. 173): "Jeder psychische Act ist bewusst; ein Bewusstsein von ihm ist in ihm selbst gegeben".

⁴ For the connection between being represented and being conscious, see Brentano's broad definition of consciousness in Brentano (2008, p. 157): "Mit dem Namen Bewusstsein bezeichnen wir nach unserer früheren Erklärung eine jede psychischen Erscheinung, insofern sie einen Inhalt hat". A referee for this journal argued that this entailment is problematic because consciousness also implies a judgement for Brentano. I agree that a judgement is always associated in fact with our consciousness of some mental act; however, the mere representation of the act, which is logically prior to the judgement, is enough to call the act "conscious".

⁵ Brentano (2008, pp. 173–174): "Jeder auch noch so einfache psychische Act hat darum ein doppeltes Object, ein primäres und ein sekundäres".

² On the similarities between Durand's and Brentano's conceptions of reflexivity, with a mention of Chatton, see Perler (2017, pp. 224–225). Brower-Toland (2013, p. 151) also brings up Brentano while discussing medieval material on reflexivity.

out of the regress, it seems, is to posit that the representation of a first representation is not a different mental act from the first representation (Brentano 2008, pp. 140–141); rather, the reflexive representation is included as a part in the same mental act as the first representation. The infinite regress is thus blocked and there is no need to postulate a third degree of reflexivity (Brentano 2008, p. 148). The second argument is based on the redundancies that follow from the real distinction between a representation and its own representation; this argument has been labelled the *duplication argument* (e.g., Textor 2017, pp. 93–94). The problem is that if, say, a representation were distinct from the representation of itself, the first object of the representation would have to feature, redundantly, in every subsequent representation as well (Brentano 2008, p. 140).

But this is not the whole story, since there are various reflexive ways of dealing with a single mental act such as a representation—three to be exact, according to the 1874 edition of the *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte*.⁶ Brentano calls them modes (*Weisen, Arten*) of consciousness. The representation could be taken as an object of representation, as an object of knowledge, or as an object of feeling.⁷ For a representation to be represented means that that representation (e.g., the act of hearing a sound) is apprehended by the mind. For that representation to be known means that it not only is apprehended but is also the object of a judgement (e.g., the judgement by which I acknowledge the hearing of a sound).⁸ As for the third mode of consciousness, feeling, Brentano's usual example is that of the pleasure felt when hearing a sound. This pleasure is not directly caused by the sound itself but by the representation of it: it is because I know that I am hearing that sound that I feel pleasure. As such, pleasure is a reflexive mode of the act of hearing (Brentano 2008, p. 108). Moreover, Brentano thinks that these three modes of consciousness not only *can* coexist in a single mental act, but *must* coexist. For Brentano, there is a generality (*Allgemeinheit*) to concomitant knowledge and feeling, so that the initial statement that every mental act includes a representation of itself must be read as: every mental act includes a representation, a knowledge, and a feeling about itself (Brentano 2008, pp. 162–163, 173).

⁶ Brentano later abandoned the third mode. This is clear from the second edition (1911) of the *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte* (Kriegel 2018, p. 23). See Brentano (2008, p. 395). But there is also evidence that Brentano disposed of that view earlier, at least since 1880–1881, due to a lack of evidence. See Brentano (1982, pp. 83, 103).

⁷ Brentano (2008, p. 174): “[...] er kann aber auch betrachtet werden als Vorstellung seiner selbst, als Erkenntnis seiner selbst und als Gefühl seiner selbst”.

⁸ For the difference between representation and knowledge, see Brentano (2008, p. 157).

Things are even more complex in Brentano's theory, since in order to solve another puzzle, that of the simultaneity of mental acts, Brentano states that there can be multiple acts in the mind at the same time as long as they are all united in the same reality, that is, in the same psychic phenomenon (Brentano 2008, pp. 182–183). Brentano insists, however, that the unity of that psychic phenomenon does not entail simplicity. In fact, there can be many parts in a single psychic phenomenon: first, simultaneous acts; second, the parts of these acts themselves. Brentano calls all of these parts “divisives” (*Divisive*). Unlike a collective such as a herd, whose parts are real things making up a whole that is not a thing, divisives are non-things making up a whole that *is* a real thing (Brentano 2008, p. 176). Some of these parts are more closely related than others (Brentano 2008, p. 181). Some simultaneous mental acts, for example, could well exist without the others; for example, the representation of a colour could exist without the representation of a sound. However, the representation of a colour and the representation of a sound each include the three reflexive modes as inseparable parts. The reflexive modes are conceptual parts of the mental act because they cannot actually be separated from the act, but only in thought (Brentano 1982, p. 25).⁹

According to this overview, it is clear that in order to account for reflexivity Brentano does not posit a distinct reflexive mental act, but rather insists that there are several reflexive modes that always accompany even the simplest mental act. These modes are inseparable parts of the mental act. Thus, he maintains both that reflexivity, when it occurs, is included as a part in mental acts (T1), and that reflexivity always occurs (T2), since these reflexive modes are always present.

Focusing on (T2), Brentano does not systematically explain in the *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte* how all mental acts could include reflexivity, and thus be conscious. One key problem is that one can give plenty of examples of situations that seemingly entail the existence of unconscious acts; for instance, the fact that I did not realize that I had feelings for someone before, though now I realize that I did (Brentano 2008, p. 133). Or again, to take one of Ulrici's example that Brentano quotes (Brentano 2008, p. 130), the fact that I can now remember the words that were spoken to me while I was completely distracted. However, Brentano argues that all these situations could be explained without resorting to unconscious acts. Brentano claims that the concept of associations of ideas could play a large part in the explanation of these facts. In the case of the words I now remember, it is just that the laws of association of

⁹ For another interpretation of these modes, as real parts, see Marchesi (2021) in this issue.

ideas by which sounds are connected to their meaning did not operate at the time, precisely because I was distracted (Brentano 2008, p. 131). Indeed, Brentano says that the laws of association seem to depend on attention in order to operate (Brentano 2008, p. 136).

The way the generalization of reflexivity is supposed to work is made clearer in the *Deskriptive Psychologie*, where Brentano distinguishes between implicit and explicit consciousness, or perception and apperception.¹⁰ If I remember a mental act that I did not realize I had before, it is not that my mental act was unconscious then; rather, it was only implicitly conscious. The distinction between implicit and explicit consciousness depends on the concept of noticing: that is, to be explicitly conscious about a mental act, I have to notice it.¹¹ But if I have an act occurring right now and do not notice it, the act is still conscious, though only implicitly. Thus, when Brentano says that every mental act includes reflexivity, he also means (a) that every mental act includes a form of consciousness, namely, implicit consciousness, and (b) that reflexivity does not require noticing.

The conjunction of the inclusion thesis (T1) and the general reflexivity thesis (T2) might seem bold. In Brentano, both theses stem from the rejection of unconscious acts. If reflexivity needs a distinct reflexive act to occur, then at some point in the open indefinite series one will need to posit an unconscious act. And if reflexivity does not always occur with every mental act, then the act for which it does not occur will be unconscious.

The hypothesis I want now to examine is the following: the conjunction of (T1) and (T2) cannot only be found in Brentano but also in both subjectivist and objectivist accounts of reflexivity, which points to a more general division of accounts of reflexivity. In that regard, I will now argue that two medieval theories of reflexivity, a subjectivist one and an objectivist one, both present a conjunction of

the inclusion thesis (T1) and the general reflexivity thesis (T2).¹² I will begin with the subjectivist account, that of Walter Chatton.¹³

3 Walter Chatton on the Reception of Mental Acts and Noticing

Walter Chatton's theory of reflexivity, developed around 1321, presents a conjunction of (T1) and (T2), as I will argue. For Chatton, there is no need for a distinct higher-order mental act to account for reflexivity. The specific way in which Walter Chatton accounts for reflexivity without a distinct reflexive mental act is by claiming that we experience mental acts insofar as they are received in the soul. Having accounted for reflexivity in this way, Chatton assumes that reflexivity always occurs, that is, that every mental act is always reflexively apprehended.

Chatton starts from the fact that the existence of one's own mental acts is evident to oneself. His argument is that this evident character cannot be established by a distinct reflexive act, but only by a subjective experience, which he calls the reception of the act. He says:

Because I am certain that I have an intellection of the stone, it must be said that this is not due to a vision, but only due to the fact that that intellection is received in the soul.¹⁴

For Chatton, there are only two ways that something can be known as existent, or, in his words, experienced.¹⁵ The first way of experiencing something is to experience it as an object, that is, by intuitive cognition. According to the definition of Ockham, which Chatton takes up, intuitive cognition is a type of cognition that can lead to the evident knowledge of the existence or non-existence of particular things, in contrast with abstractive cognition, which considers its

¹⁰ See Brentano (1982, pp. 33, 121) for implicit and explicit consciousness, and Brentano (1982, pp. 83, 154) for perception and apperception.

¹¹ For Brentano, in 1880–1881, noticing is distinct from paying attention, since unlike attention it does not necessarily involve the will. See Brentano (1982, pp. 35–36).

¹² Other medieval theories might deserve credit here, such as that of Peter John Olivi (Brower-Toland 2013). But Olivi seems to heavily rely on higher-order mental acts (Martin 2007, pp. 107–108; Rode 2010, pp. 164–165; Rode 2015, pp. 120–122).

¹³ An objection would be that the problem is not exactly the same for the medieval thinkers and for Brentano, since Brentano focuses on sensation whereas the medieval authors discussed focus on intellection. This is true, but it does not change the structure of reflexive mental acts. Moreover, Brentano does not draw a line between the case of sensation and intellection on these issues in the *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte*. See Brentano (2008, p. 144, n. 140). He also invokes for his own purpose medieval discussions focusing on intellection.

¹⁴ Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5, (ed. Wey 1989, p. 123): “Arguo igitur ex opposito: ad hoc quod sim certus quod intelligam lapidem, non est ibi aliqua visio quae sufficiat ad hoc sine ulteriori discursu, sicut habes concedere; cum igitur sim certus quod intelligo lapidem, oportet dicere quod hoc non sit per visionem, sed solum per hoc quod illa intellectio recipitur in anima.” All references to Chatton are from Walter Chatton (1989).

¹⁵ Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5, (ed. Wey 1989, p. 121): “Confirmo istud, quia anima dupliciter experitur aliquid: quia experitur aliquid sicut obiectum, et aliquid experitur sicut subiectum vivum experitur proprium actum”. Chatton then describes the second mode of experience as simply the experience of something as an act. See *ibid.*: “[...] experientia qua experitur aliquid sicut actum et non sicut obiectum [...]”.

object in abstraction from its existence or non-existence.¹⁶ The second way of experiencing something is experiencing it as an act, or by reception. This way is subjective in nature (Yrjönsuuri 2007, p. 148; Brower-Toland 2012, p. 26), inasmuch as it is nothing more than the subjective counterpart of the inherence of mental acts as accidents in the mind.¹⁷

Now, when Chatton says that I cannot be certain of the existence of my mental acts by a vision, he is referring to intuitive cognition. More precisely, he is taking a position against William of Ockham, who claims that the existence of one's own mental acts is self-evident thanks to one's (higher-order) intuitive cognition of one's own acts. Chatton has two qualms regarding Ockham's account. First, Chatton generally rejects the thesis that the human intellect can have any intuitive cognition in this life (Brower-Toland 2012, p. 7; Schierbaum 2016, pp. 27, 30, Schierbaum 2018, p. 131); therefore, one cannot know one's own mental acts intuitively. Nevertheless, one can still know one's own mental acts as objects in this life, but only by means of abstractive cognition, which, however, does not give one access to one own's mental act as existent, nor for that matter does it ground the self-evident character of mental acts.¹⁸

Second, even if intuitive cognition were granted to the human intellect in this life, Chatton thinks intuitive cognition fails to provide evidence for the existence of one own's mental acts, for this would lead to an infinite regress in mental acts (Putallaz 2005, p. 253; Michon 2007, p. 136, Brower-Toland 2012, p. 22). The issue is that intuitive cognition is transitive: it leads to the cognition of something as an object. Therefore, if to be evidently known as existent a mental act needs to become the object of another act, it seems that an infinite series of acts will be needed if we want *all* mental acts, whatever their degree of reflexivity might be, to be evidently known as existent.¹⁹ For Ockham, the regress is supposed to stop at the second degree: I cognize that I cognize the stone, and that is it. But if, as Ockham puts it, the act owing to which I cognize a stone and the act owing to which I cognize that I cognize the stone are two different mental acts, why would the first act need a reflexive act to be evidently known, whereas the second act would not?²⁰

For Chatton, if mental acts are self-evident, they should all be self-evident in the same way. This result is achieved if mental acts are known evidently through their mere reception in the soul. Spelled out like this, Chatton's theory clearly

supports the inclusion thesis (T1): first, because Chatton's theory is explicitly designed to avoid positing a distinct reflexive mental act, which is the alternative to (T1); and second, because reflexivity is explained by the subjective experience one has of one's own acts, an experience which consists simply in the fact that mental acts are received in the soul; but for an accidental mental act, being received is the same as existing, and in that sense being received is a conceptual part of an existent mental act.²¹

However, an objection might be raised against this reading. Chatton sometimes seems to claim that direct and reflexive acts are distinct. He says:

To the second objection, I say that the direct act and the reflexive act are never the same properly speaking, because the stone outside and its intellection inside the mind are distinct things; therefore, their proper intellections are distinct.²²

On the basis of this text, the objection would run as follows: reflexivity cannot be included in mental acts for Chatton, since the direct act and the reflexive act are never the same, properly speaking.²³ Considered in its context, however, the quoted passage must be read as an attempt to escape the objection that Chatton's position would lead to an incorrect identification of the direct act and the reflexive act, which obviously differ, since they do not have the same object.

Chatton's answer to this objection is: yes, properly speaking, direct acts and reflexive acts differ; but (1) in the proper sense, both acts are understood as having an *object*,²⁴ and (2) reflexive acts so defined are unavailable to us in this life, at least at the level of intuitive cognition. In fact, the only concession made by Chatton in the passage quoted above

²¹ One objection to Chatton's argument would be that his account is supposed to provide us with something more, namely, a feeling of our own acts (Putallaz 2005), but the nature of such a subjective experience is left unclear (Schierbaum 2018). It is supposed to be somehow included in the mental act, but there is no doubt that it would have to be a different kind of mental *attitude*. If doubts were raised whether these radically distinct kinds of attitude—the experience and the mental act—can be really the same act, one might again raise the question whether the experience should be a radically distinct act from the direct act, and itself something that is received. Here again, an infinite regress might just be waiting down the road.

²² Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5 (ed. Wey 1989, p. 125): “Ad secundum dico quod numquam sunt idem actus rectus et reflexus proprie, quia lapis extra et sua intellectio in anima sunt res distinctae, igitur et intellectiones propriae eis distinctae sunt”.

²³ I owe this objection to one of the referees for this article.

²⁴ Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5 (ed. Wey 1989, p. 126): “Notandum tamen quod intelligere intellectionem lapidis, sicut videre intellectionem lapidis, potest intelligi dupliciter: vel sumendo intelligere et videre intellectionem lapidis proprie, et sic est quidam actus cuius obiectum est ipsa intellectio lapidis; et sic intellectio lapidis et intellectio seu visio illius intellectionis distinguuntur”.

¹⁶ See Ockham, *Ord.*, I, prol. (OTh I, p. 31). References to Ockham are from William of Ockham (1967–1988).

¹⁷ Based on Chatton's subjectivism, one could draw parallels with Husserl as read by Zahavi (2006, 2015).

¹⁸ Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5 (ed. Wey 1989, p. 125, p. 127).

¹⁹ Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5 (ed. Wey 1989, p. 121).

²⁰ Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5 (ed. Wey 1989, p. 120).

is to acknowledge that his use of “reflexive act” to mean the mere reception of the mental act is not the proper use of the term, but he still maintains that reflexive acts in this improper sense are what actually account for reflexivity.²⁵ Indeed, the direct mental act alone, by its mere reception, now takes on the role that was usually attributed to a distinct reflexive act: that of explaining how one can access one’s own mental acts in this life. That is, the mere reception of one’s own mental act is enough to cause one’s assent to the proposition “I have that act of intellection” (Michon 2007, p. 145). For this reason, Chatton says, the reception itself can be called an intellection or a vision of the act.²⁶ Of course, when we speak of assent to a proposition about the existence of a mental act, an act of forming the proposition is also involved, in addition to the mere reception of the mental act (Perler and Schierbaum 2014, pp. 457–458, Schierbaum 2018, p. 133). However, the assent that is given is caused solely by the subjective experience of reception, which happens independently of the formation of the proposition. The proposition “I have that act of intellection” does not contribute to that experiential knowledge, since it depends for its formation on (higher-order) abstractive cognitions.

Chatton’s distinction between the subjective experience and the abstract proposition plays an important part in the way he generalizes the occurrence of reflexivity (T2). On the one hand, it goes without saying that every mental act is always accompanied by its reception: there are no mental acts in me that are not received in me. But precisely because of that, Chatton discusses an objection to his view: is it not true that I can remember having an act of intellection that I did not notice before?²⁷ Since every act is received, and since the act being received is what it is to subjectively experience the act, it seems that Chatton’s theory cannot explain how I can remember an act I had not noticed before. If every act is received, and thus experienced, then every act is noticed.

The basis of Chatton’s answer is the following:

²⁵ Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5 (ed. Wey 1989, p. 126): “Alio modo, sumitur intelligere et videre intellectionem lapidis magis improprie quoad virtutem sermonis; tamen sic aliquando sumitur propter usum loquendi hominum, scilicet pro receptione illius intellectionis lapidis in mente, quia mentem recipere intellectionem lapidis est experiri illam intellectionem, non sicut potentia experitur obiectum, sed sicut potentia experitur actum suum recipiendo illum”.

²⁶ See the text quoted in note 25 above, and also Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5 (ed. Wey 1989, p. 126): “Quia igitur ex hoc quod intellectio lapidis recipitur in mente, statim cum mens format hoc complexum ‘ego intelligo’, causatur virtute istius receptionis actus assentiendi rei significatae per complexum, ideo potest ista receptio vocari intelligere seu videre intellectionem lapidis”.

²⁷ Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5 (ed. Wey 1989, p. 122).

Indeed, I concede that someone may recall that he had an intellection of a stone, although he did not notice that he had the intellection of a stone when he had it. [...] I confirm this, because someone can have an intellection of a stone and nevertheless not be forming the following complex: “I have an intellection of a stone.”²⁸

What happens when someone now notices (*advertit*) an act of intellection that he had before is this: he *previously* had the intellection, and so also the reception or subjective experience, but he did not form a proposition equivalent to “I have that act”; but *now* he notices the act because it is only now that he forms that proposition. Chatton’s answer is a clear confirmation that reflexivity always occurs (T2). There is no denying that the acts I did not notice are still experienced. Moreover, the link that Chatton makes between forming a proposition about the act and noticing the act must be emphasized. Because of such a link, reflexivity and noticing appear to be disjoined.

4 Unity of the Mental Act and Noticing in Durand of Saint-Pourçain

The case of Walter Chatton shows that the conjunction of (T1) and (T2) is not peculiar to Brentano and that it can fit a subjectivist account of reflexivity. In order to further confirm my hypothesis, I consider now an objectivist theory of reflexivity where such a conjunction also appears. A few years before Walter Chatton, Durand of Saint-Pourçain developed an account of reflexivity where no distinct reflexive mental act is posited to account for reflexivity. The same act can be described as both direct and reflexive inasmuch as it has two intentional objects: its regular object and itself. As I will argue, he also accepts (T2).

Durand makes his first, hypothetical, formulation of the account of reflexivity in a theological context: the discussion of the way the beatific vision brings joy to the blessed. Durand claims that one of the blessed does not feel enjoyment (*fruitio*) precisely in contemplating God, but by knowing that he sees God:

The first point is that the immediate object of enjoyment is not God, but the act owing to which God is reached by us.²⁹

²⁸ Chatton, *Rep.*, prol., q. 2, a. 5 (ed. Wey 1989, pp. 124–125): “Concedo enim quod aliquis potest recordari se intellexisse lapidem, et tamen quod quando intellexit lapidem, non advertit se intelligere. [...] Confirmo istud, quia aliquis potest intelligere lapidem, et tamen non formare hoc complexum ego intelligo lapidem”.

²⁹ Durand, *Sent.*, I (B), d. 1, q. 1 (ed. Guldentops 2019, p. 94): “Primum est quod immediatum obiectum fruitionis non est Deus, set aliquis actus quo Deus a nobis attingitur”. There are three versions

In other words, there is no enjoyment without a reflexive consideration of the vision had by the intellect of the blessed.

Durand's main basis for defending this conception of enjoyment is his classification of the act of the will that is enjoyment as an act of concupiscent love (Kitanov 2012, p. 168). Durand maintains that there are two main types of acts of the will: benevolent love, through which one aims at someone else's good, and concupiscent love, through which one aims at the *possession* of some good for oneself.³⁰ Because an act of concupiscent love requires the possession of some good, the object of such an act cannot be external to the loving subject, but must be in the loving subject.³¹ Now, the act of enjoyment in the beatific vision is an act of concupiscent love: obviously, through that act, the blessed aims at the possession of some good for himself, not at the good of God. Therefore, the object of enjoyment cannot be God himself, because God is really external to the blessed; it must instead be identified with the act of the blessed's intellect by which it sees God. Thus, Durand's thesis on beatific enjoyment appears as the sole application to a theological case of a principle in Durand's psychology: concupiscent love always has something internal to its subject as its object. This is made clearer by Durand's example: when I feel pleasure while drinking wine—an act of concupiscent love—it is not the wine that is the object of that pleasure, but rather the act of tasting.³² The same thing happens when one of the blessed sees God: it is not God that is the object of enjoyment, but the act of seeing. In general, acts of concupiscent love are of a reflexive nature.³³

Footnote 29 (continued)

of Durand's *Sentences* commentary. The quoted edition corresponds to the second version ("B") of his commentary, but the text is the first version available for the commentary on book I. Durand did not change his mind on that topic later on: see *Sent.*, I (C), d. 1, q. 1, f. 15rB. All references to Durand, *Sent.*, I (B), d. 1, q. 1 are from Durand of Saint-Pourçain (2019). All references to *Sent.*, I (C) are from Durand of Saint-Pourçain (1571).

³⁰ Durand, *Sent.*, I (B), d. 1, q. 1 (ed. Guldentops 2019, p. 95).

³¹ Durand, *Sent.*, I (B), d. 1, q. 1 (ed. Guldentops 2019, p. 95): "[...] immediatum obiectum amoris concupiscentie non est res subiecto distincta a concupiscente; set fruitio, cum sit delectatio de Deo et in Deo habito, est quidam amor concupiscentie; ergo immediatum obiectum fruitionis uel delectationis non est Deus cum sit res a nobis subiecto distincta, set aliquis actus quo a nobis attingitur uel habetur".

³² Durand, *Sent.*, I (B), d. 1, q. 1 (ed. Guldentops 2019, pp. 95–96): "[...] diligo uinum dilectione concupiscentie; numquid immediatum obiectum huius dilectionis est uinum?—certe non, set usus uini, qui est actus gustantis; non enim diligo uinum immediate, set gustare uinum; et idem est in omnibus aliis". On this text, see Friedman (2009, pp. 443–444); Kitanov (2014, p. 117).

³³ As a comparative side note, Durand and Brentano both have a reflexive account of feeling. But for Brentano all feelings are reflexive, whereas for Durand only some feelings are, namely, those classified under concupiscent love.

Now, there is one difficulty with this account, one which leads Durand to introduce a version of the Inclusion Thesis (T1) as a potential escape route. If the object of the act of enjoyment (an act of the will), is the vision itself, it seems that two acts of the intellect are presupposed in the case of the beatific vision: the vision itself and the cognition of that vision. For the will cannot rejoice at something the intellect does not know. But with that reflexive act, a problematic gap is introduced between vision and enjoyment, so that it might seem that beatitude is not the beatific vision of God himself, but the reflexive cognition of that vision. Durand's hypothetical solution to this problem, in 1310, is to identify the direct act of the intellect and its reflexive counterpart:

Maybe it is by the same act that the blessed sees God and sees that he sees God, but inasmuch as it directs itself at God, this act is called direct, and inasmuch as it directs itself at the vision of God, this act is called reflex.³⁴

According to this solution, the reflexive act by which the blessed intellect cognizes its act of the vision of God is nothing more than that act of vision itself. Thus, there is no need for a distinct intermediary act between the vision and enjoyment, for it is in fact the same act that is called "direct" and "reflex". Durand's hypothesis entails that, in the case of the act of the vision of God, reflexivity is included in the act of vision itself by making the act of vision a second object for itself. Indeed, Durand says that the same act directs itself (*fertur*) at itself in addition to directing itself at its regular object. If this is true, then one and the same mental act can have two objects: its proper object and itself.³⁵

However, a later text, from the *Quaestiones de libero arbitrio* (1312), shows us that Durand no longer considered the inclusion of reflexivity in the mental act to be merely a hypothesis. Rather, in this text, it is a position that he now endorses; moreover, the inclusion is now applied to human cognition in general. It is in discussing another problem,

³⁴ Durand, *Sent.*, I (B), d. 1, q. 1 (ed. Guldentops 2019, pp. 101–102): "Nam forte idem actus per essentiam est quo beatus uidet Deum et uidet se uidere Deum, sed ut fertur in Deum dicitur rectus, ut autem fertur in uisionem Dei, dicitur reflexus".

³⁵ One may ask why Durand does not include reflexive acts of the will (such as enjoyment) in the intellectual act, since for Durand the intellect and the will are distinct only by a distinction of reason. This move would be open to Durand only in the last version of his *Sentences* commentary (after 1317), where he argues that the two faculties have only a distinction of reason. However, there he argues only that since acts of the will are connected to acts of the intellect, they can belong to the same faculty; he does not argue that the intellect and the will can share one and the same act. Maybe Durand does not need to make the move, since there seems to be no requirement that acts of the intellect and will about one and the same object be simultaneous, and thus fused, if one rejects simultaneous acts. See *Sent.*, I (C), d. 3, q. 4, ff. 26rB–27rA.

that of the simultaneity of distinct mental acts, that Durand defends the inclusion of reflexivity in mental acts. On the matter of simultaneity, Durand sides with a rather common view in late medieval philosophy, that it is impossible for an intellect to have simultaneous acts. Thomas Aquinas, for example, defends the claim in the following way in a text from 1256: since, according to Aristotle, the intellect is supposed to become one with the thing known, it cannot have multiple acts involving multiple objects at the same time, for then it would be two things at once.³⁶ Durand chooses another approach: for him, all distinct mental acts are to some degree contrary to one another, and so exclude each other and cannot exist simultaneously.³⁷ However, he still wants to maintain that two things can be intellected at the same time. In other words, though he denies the simultaneity of mental acts, he wants to have a simultaneity of objects. Aquinas also allows that several objects can be considered by the intellect at the same time, the most common case being when one knows one object directly and another in an indirect way.³⁸ Durand uses the concept of connection (*habitus*) to state a rule that stipulates when two objects can be simultaneously intellected (meaning, by a single act):

Several objects having an order or any type of connection between them are as such intellected by one act.³⁹

Only connected objects (*habentia habitudinem*) can be intellected simultaneously.

Now, reflexivity, Durand insists, is just one of the cases where the aforementioned rule applies: if objects are connected, there is only one act. To be sure, in replying to the objection that when there are two objects, as in the case of a cognition and its reflexive counterpart, there must be two distinct acts,⁴⁰ Durand says:

To the form of the argument, it must be said that when I intellect the rose, there is a single primary object, that is, the rose, in connection with which we cognize

everything that we cognize through a reflexive intellectual act. Indeed, I do not cognize the rose or the object on the one hand, or cognize that I cognize on the other, unless more is added, because it is impossible that I cognize something other than the cognition of the rose—or something like it that is the primary term for the act of cognition on the mode of an object.⁴¹

Everything that is known reflexively is known in connection with a primary object (*principale obiectum*). To show that such a connection exists, Durand explains that I cannot cognize only that I cognize; rather, whenever I cognize that I cognize, I cognize that I cognize *an object*. For example, when I cognize the act by which I cognize the rose, I cognize that I cognize *the rose*. Therefore, because there is an undeniable connection between the mental act and the object, there is no need for a distinct mental act for the mental act to be cognized.⁴² Thus, despite there being two objects in the case at hand (namely, the rose and the act itself), there is numerically only one act, because there is only one primary object, to which the other object is connected. As Durand says:

When I cognize that I cognize the rose, then too there are not two acts, but one.⁴³

Durand thus clearly subscribes to the inclusion thesis (T1). There is no distinct reflexive mental act required to

³⁶ Aquinas, *Quodlibet* VII, 1, 2 (Leon. 25.1, 10). On that text, see Dubouclez (2014, pp. 336–337). All references to Aquinas are from Thomas Aquinas (1882–).

³⁷ Durand, *Quaestiones de libero arbitrio* (hereafter *QLA*), q. 3, (ed. Stella 1962, p. 489). On that argument, see Friedman (2009), pp. 434–435. All references to Durand, *QLA* are from Durand of Saint-Pourçain (1962).

³⁸ Aquinas, *Quodlibet* VII, 1, 2 (Leon. 25.1, p. 10). On that text, see Dubouclez (2014, pp. 336–337).

³⁹ Durand, *QLA*, q. 3 (ed. Stella 1962, p. 489): “[...] scilicet quod plura obiecta habentia inter se ordinem vel quamcumque habitudinem, ut sic accepta, intelliguntur per unum actum [...]”

⁴⁰ Durand, *QLA*, q. 3 (ed. Stella 1962, p. 486): “Maior patet quod actus rectus et actus reflexus sint duo actus, quia illi actus sunt diversi, quorum sunt diversa obiecta. Sed obiecta actus recti et reflexi sunt diversa, nam obiectum actus recti est res cognita, obiectum autem actus reflexi est actus rectus cognoscendi. Ergo etc.”

⁴¹ Durand, *QLA*, q. 3 (ed. Stella 1962, p. 497): “Ad formam igitur rationis dicendum quod quando intelligo me intelligere rosam, non est ibi nisi unicum principale obiectum, scilicet rosa, sub cuius habitudine cognoscitur quidquid intelligibili reflexione cognoscitur. Non, enim, seorsum cognosco rosam vel obiectum, et seorsum cognosco me cognoscere, nisi plus addatur, quia impossibile est quod ego cognoscam me cognoscere aliquid aliud quam cognoscere vel rosam vel aliquid tale, quod est principaliter terminans actum cognitionis per modum obiecti.” Here quoted as corrected by Jeschke (2010, p. 543); on this text, see Friedman (2009, pp. 445–446).

⁴² Durand also argues elsewhere that mental acts are necessarily connected to an object. See Durand, “Utrum intelligere...” (ed. Koch 1935, p. 38); on this text, see Hartman (2019, pp. 191–192). But there, Durand also goes for the stronger claim, that one cannot have an intellection of an act without *cognizing* the object. Surely, if this were true, reflexive acts, if they were distinct, would not be blind with respect to primary objects. This leaves Brentano’s duplication argument just a step away. In this issue, Marchesi (2021) rightfully points out that, without further qualifications, the claim that one cannot think about an act without thinking about its object does not entail that that thought that is about the act is about the object. Here however, the context of his argument both in the *QLA* and in “Utrum intelligere...”, Durand makes it clear that the act of intellection that is about the act must also be about the object. References to Durand, “Utrum intelligere...” are from Durand of Saint-Pourçain (1935).

⁴³ Durand, *QLA*, q. 3 (ed. Stella 1962, p. 497): “Quando, autem, cognosco me cognoscere rosam, nec tunc sunt duo actus, sed unus”. And below: “Similiter, cognitio per quam intellectus cognoscit obiectum, ipsa cognoscitur, non alia cognitione quam seipsa”.

account for reflexivity; rather, the same act is directed at two distinct, but connected, objects. Thus, reflexivity is included in the mental act as a part: it corresponds to the partial intention that is directed towards the secondary object. Durand's subscribing to (T1) thus entails a commitment to double intentionality in mental acts; and double intentionality is possible because of the connection of objects.⁴⁴

But does Durand also accept that reflexivity always occur in mental acts (T2)? Some scholars have argued that he does (Friedman 2009, p. 446; Knebel 2014, pp. 343–344). To be sure, when he discusses the case of remembering one's own past acts, Durand claims that we can remember all acts of cognition even if we did not notice (*discernamus*) them at the moment they occurred. But he also claims that we cannot remember something that has not been previously cognized. Therefore, reflexivity must always occur for every mental act,⁴⁵ and noticing seems to be independent of reflexivity.

One might doubt that Durand intends to generalize the claim to *all* mental acts. Perler (2017, pp. 222–223) has insisted that Durand's claim was modalized by the use of the expression “at least perfect acts” (*saltem perfectum*), and hence that Durand did not claim that all mental acts include reflexivity, but only perfect ones, leaving room for unconscious acts. On my reading, however, Durand here deliberately restricts his claim to mental acts in the proper and complete sense of the term (*saltem perfectum*), in order to disarm objections about limit cases or pseudo-cognitions, that is, objectless or unsuccessful mental acts. The significance of this focus can be explained from the context. Durand claims

that reflexive cognition of an act depends on its connection to the primary object; therefore there must be some primary object cognized—in the proper, complete sense—in order for a reflexive cognition to occur. Thus, a perfect cognition is a proper cognition, that is, one that gives a primary object to the intellect. This interpretation of Durand's focus on perfect cognitions is confirmed by what he adds when he compares his statement about cognitions being cognized by themselves to the general and unrestricted statement that, in natural things, local movement is moved by itself. For then Durand says that the cognition by which the intellect cognizes the object (*cognoscit obiectum*) is cognized by itself.⁴⁶ Thus again, it seems that every proper cognition is cognized by itself. If this is correct, Durand's restriction of the claim that all mental acts include reflexivity to perfect acts means only that for him, at least all standard mental acts include reflexivity. It is not clear that Chatton or Brentano claimed anything more: when they support (T2), they do not speak of objectless or unsuccessful mental acts.

5 Conclusion

I have argued that Brentano develops a theory of reflexivity that amounts to two main theses: the inclusion thesis (T1) and the general reflexivity thesis (T2). I have shown that Brentano's conjunction of (T1) and (T2) is not idiosyncratic, and that it precedes the distinction between subjectivist and objectivist theories of reflexivity, inasmuch as it is more general. Indeed, both Walter Chatton's subjectivist account of reflexivity and Durand's objectivist account present the conjunction of the two theses. Going beyond the division between objectivist and subjectivist theories and examining what these theories have in common, a notable fact is that they all accept the general reflexivity thesis (T2) by assuming a distinction between reflexivity on the one hand and noticing on the other. It seems as if the mind cognizes its own acts automatically, but we might or might not notice these cognized acts. A more usual way of understanding reflexivity, however, is precisely in association with noticing. This is the case for example, in higher-order theories, where taking one own's mental act as an object of a distinct reflexive act is associated with noticing, or, if you will, apperceiving, the first act.

The shift in the general conception of reflexivity is huge. The fact that both subjectivist and objectivist one-level theories could accept the alternative conception shows that a more general divide than that between subjectivist and

⁴⁴ In the following years, Gui Terrena debated the notion of connection, arguing that distinct mental acts can exist simultaneously in the intellect precisely if they are connected. See Gui Terrena, *Quodlibet* I, q. 14 (ed. Friedman 2009, p. 460): “[...] non poterit intellectus pluribus actibus intelligendi informari nisi inter se habeant connexionem”. John of Pouilly and Peter of Palude also support Durand's inclusionist views, see John of Pouilly, *Quodlibet* V, q. 7, (ed. Jeschke 2010, pp. 698–700) and Peter of Palude, *Quodlibet*, q. 7, f. 101rA–B. However, they both disagree with Durand on the consequences of that inclusion for the definition of beatitude in the context of the beatific vision; see John of Pouilly, *Quodlibet* V, q. 7 (ed. Jeschke 2010, p. 700) and Peter of Palude, *Quodlibet*, q. 11, f. 116rA–B. References to Gui Terrena are from Gui Terrena (2009); references to John of Pouilly are from John of Pouilly (2010).

⁴⁵ Durand, *QLA*, q. 3 (ed. Stella 1962, p. 497): “[...] recordatio non potest esse, nisi alicuius praecogniti; sed de omni actu quo aliquid cognoscimus saltem perfecte, etiamsi pro tunc non discernamus nos cognoscere, potest esse recordatio; ergo omnis talis actus fuit non solum cognitio, sed etiam cognitio, nec cognitio alio actu quam seipso”. See also, just before: “Nullus, enim, actus intelligendi, saltem perfectum, latet intellectum, quia cognitio inexistens in cognoscente non potest ipsum latere, quamvis hoc non discernamus semper ad plenum.” In my reading, one must not take *ad plenum* to mean that undiscerned acts are still discerned somehow. Discerning fully should not be opposed to discerning partially, but to not discerning at all. See the first text quoted in this footnote for confirmation. For a different interpretation of these texts, see Hartman (forthcoming).

⁴⁶ Durand, *QLA*, q. 3 (ed. Stella 1962, p. 497): “Similiter, cognitio per quam intellectus cognoscit obiectum, ipsa cognoscitur, non alia cognitione quam seipsa.”

objectivist theories is at play in these discussions, namely, one between automatic and apperceptive theories of reflexivity. Automatic theories of reflexivity are theories according to which reflexivity always occur. They are all-inclusive in the sense that no mental act that qualifies as such can exist without being reflexively apprehended; however, the mental act can be reflexively apprehended without being noticed. Apperceptive theories of reflexivity are theories according to which reflexivity occurs when and only when the mind focuses on its own acts. That focus implies that the mental act is noticed when reflexivity occurs.

Nevertheless, one might ask: why accept the general reflexivity thesis (T2) in the first place? If we start from the inclusion thesis (T1) and take (T2) as a further step, it might be hard to see why that step is made. The suggestion that I want to briefly put forward here is the following: maybe these theories start from (T2), that is, the idea of an all-cognizing mind with respect to its acts, and its implications for the general conception of reflexivity. This is perfectly clear in Brentano, who consistently rejects unconscious mental acts. If this is true, the admission of (T2) could explain the preference for (T1), that is, for one-level accounts of reflexivity. Indeed, if reflexivity is conceived of as an always-occurring process, one-level answers might prove all the more economical.

Finally, one might ask whether the two medieval theories here considered also reject *unconscious* acts. In my opinion, since these theories do not use the term, the issue is open; the answer thus depends entirely on how one defines consciousness. If a definition in line with the Brentanian one—that consciousness is a mental phenomenon that has a mental content—is maintained, surely reflexivity should go hand in hand with act consciousness for Durand and Chatton as well: mental acts are automatically cognized, after all. But one could still claim that consciousness should go hand in hand with noticing. But for my purpose here, this does not really matter: regardless of how consciousness is defined, the divide between reflexivity and noticing remains.

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