

ESPRA2. *Subjectivity and the body.*

Copenhagen 29.01 / 01.02.08

Bodily Presence

Dorothee Legrand. Center For Subjectivity Research.

False start & Re - start

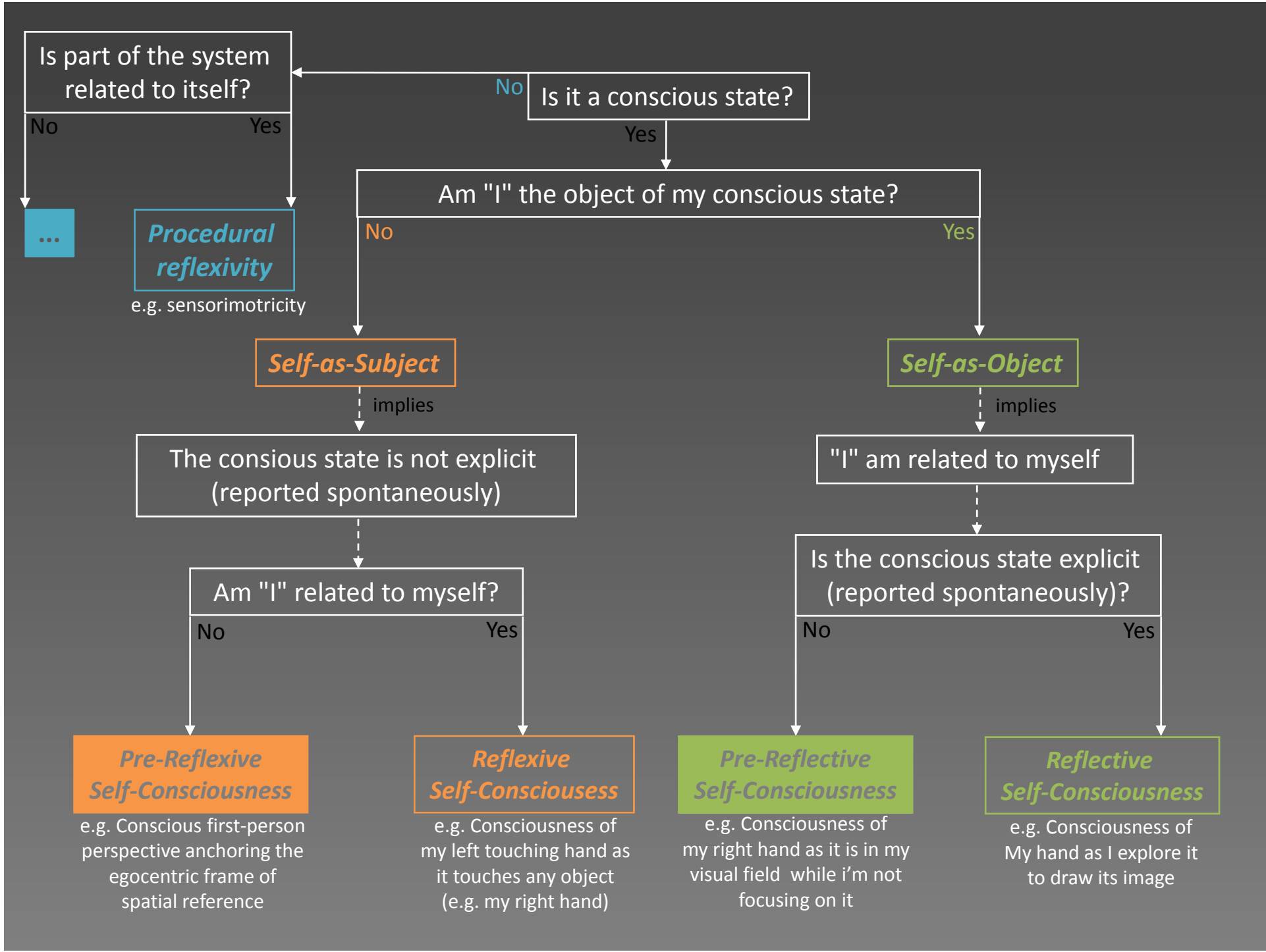
The acronym “ESPRA” comes from the title of the first conference:

“Experience Subjective Pre-Reflexive et Action”

“Pre-Reflective Subjective Experience and Action”

Pre-reflexivity and pre-reflectivity are used interchangeably, ironing out the specificity of their respective meaning.

Pre-reflexive and pre-reflective forms of self-consciousness are also sometimes confused with non-conscious implicit self-related processes.



The bodily Self

Presence-as-subject

beyond the body proper:
experience of the world
as disclosed by one's body.

the body part which makes
anything present as-object
is *itself absent-as-object*.

Absence-as-object

the body **is experienced-as-subject**
correlatively to things in the world
perceived-as-object.

"background disappearance"
when one directs one's attention
to some other objects/projects

Pre-Reflexive Self-Consciousness

e.g. Conscious first-person
perspective anchoring the
egocentric frame of
spatial reference

Reflexive Self-Consciousness

e.g. Consciousness of
my left touching hand as
it touches any object
(e.g. my right hand)

Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness

e.g. Consciousness of
my right hand as it is in my
visual field while i'm not
focusing on it

~~Reflective Self-Consciousness~~

~~e.g. Consciousness of
My hand as I explore it
to draw its image~~

Pathological bodily Self

Absence-as-subject

Presence-as-object

~~***Pre-Reflexive
Self-Consciousness***~~

~~e.g. Conscious first-person
perspective and/oring the
egocentric frame of
spatial reference~~

***Reflective
Self-Consciousness***

e.g. Consciousness of
My hand as I explore it
to draw its image

Anorexia: the objectified body

Anorexics are often victimized as being enslaved to the ideal of the slim body that occidental societies heavily convey.

However, what matters is not only the **content** of these **body images** (slimness).

One needs to also take into consideration the **objectivation** of the body that is operated, notably by the very fact that the body is considered through its image (whatever its exact content, which remains contingent).

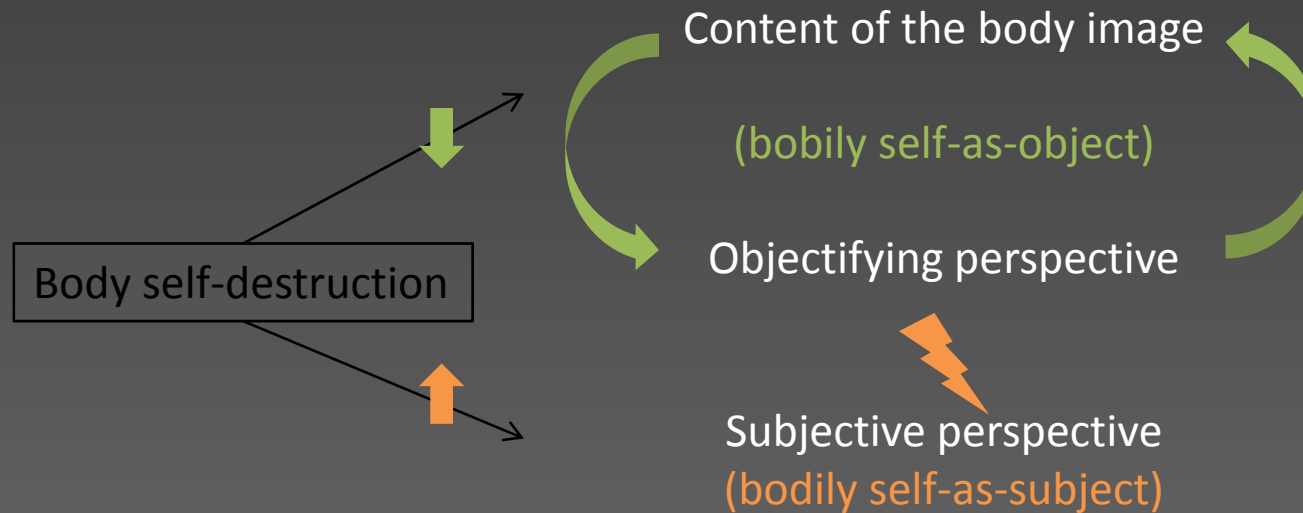


Anorexia: the objectified body

As Sartre explains, a shy man: “is vividly and constantly conscious of his body not as it is for him but as it is for the Other...This is why the effort ... will be to suppress his **body-for-the-Other**. When he longs “not to have a body anymore”, to be “invisible,” etc., it is not his **body-for-himself** which he wants to annihilate, but this inapprehensible dimension of the body-alienated” (1943, 353).

Anorexia would thus be grounded on the fact that any subject may have “the impression that the alien gaze which runs over his body is stealing it from him... in so far as I have a body, I may be reduced to the status of an **object** beneath the gaze of another person, and no longer count as another **person** for him... Saying that I have a body is thus a way of saying that I can be seen as an **object** and that I try to be seen as a **subject**” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, 193).

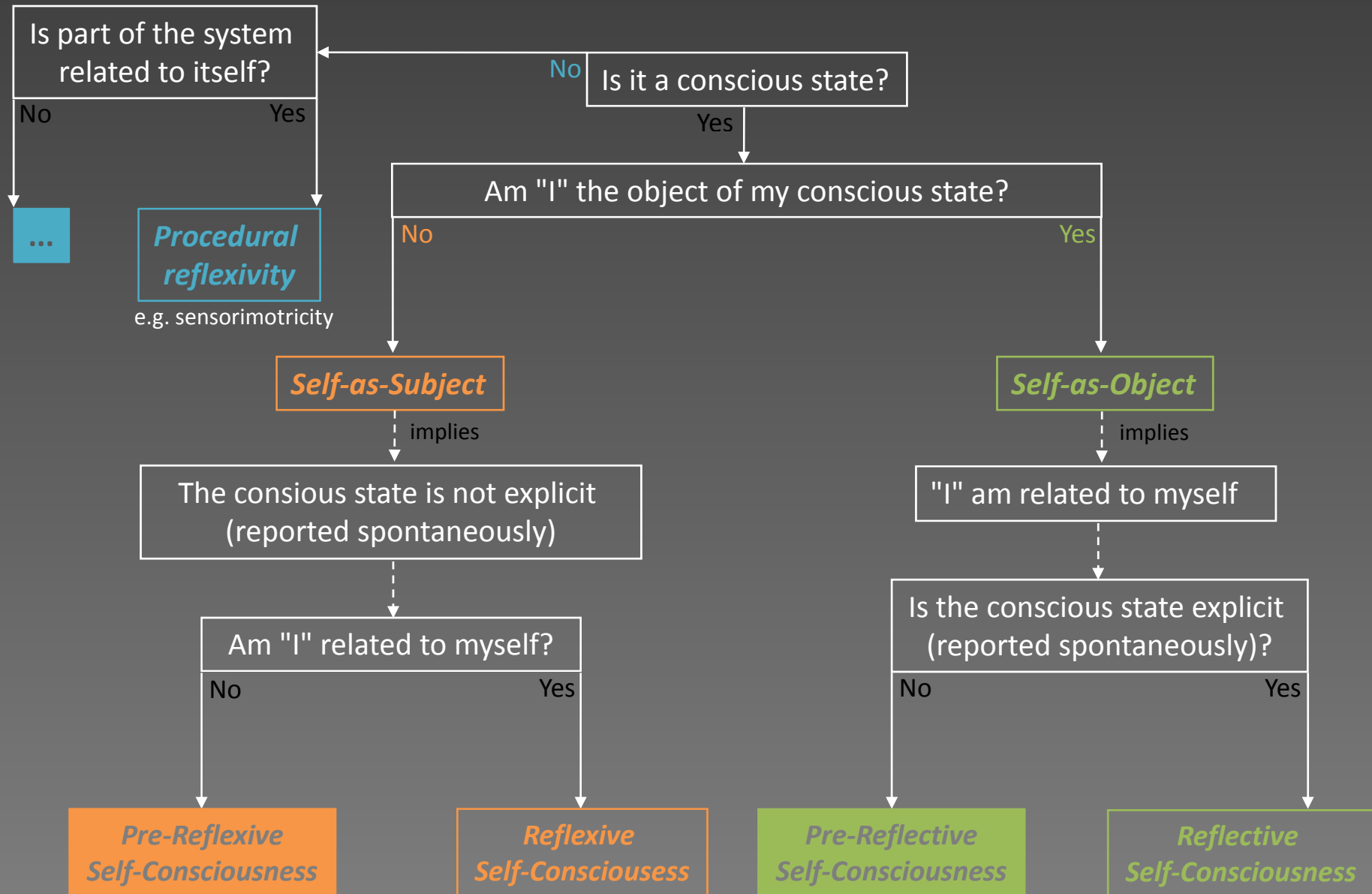
Anorexia: the fight for the subjective body

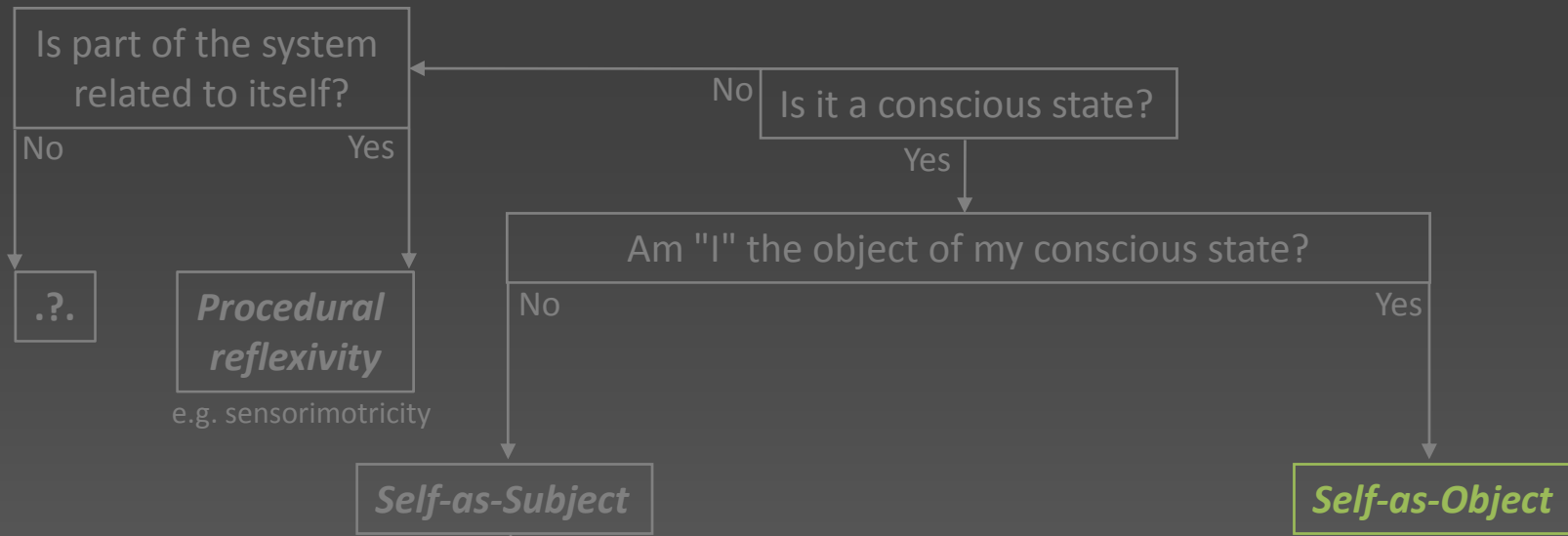


Anorexia would thus be characterized by a tension between the **body-as-object** and the **body-as-subject**, rather than by a tension between the self and the body.

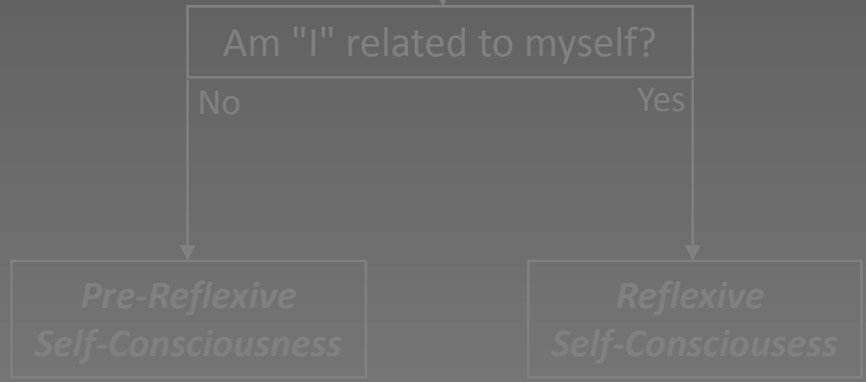
The bodily-self discloses an experience of itself both as-subject and as-object, for oneself and others. This subject-object intertwining grounds the possibility of the unbalanced self-construction faced by anorexic patients.

Physiological anchoring of the bodily self



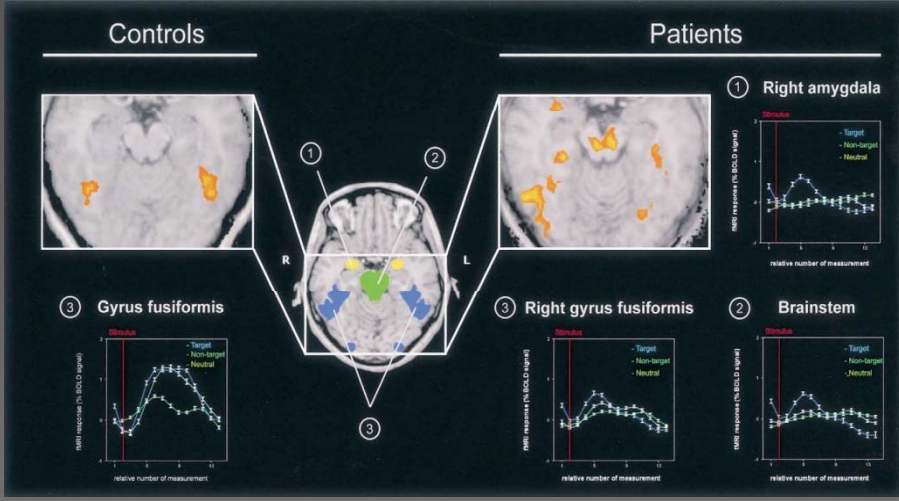


The conscious state is not explicit
(reported spontaneously)



Pre-Reflexive Self-Consciousness
e.g. Conscious first-person perspective anchoring the spatial reference

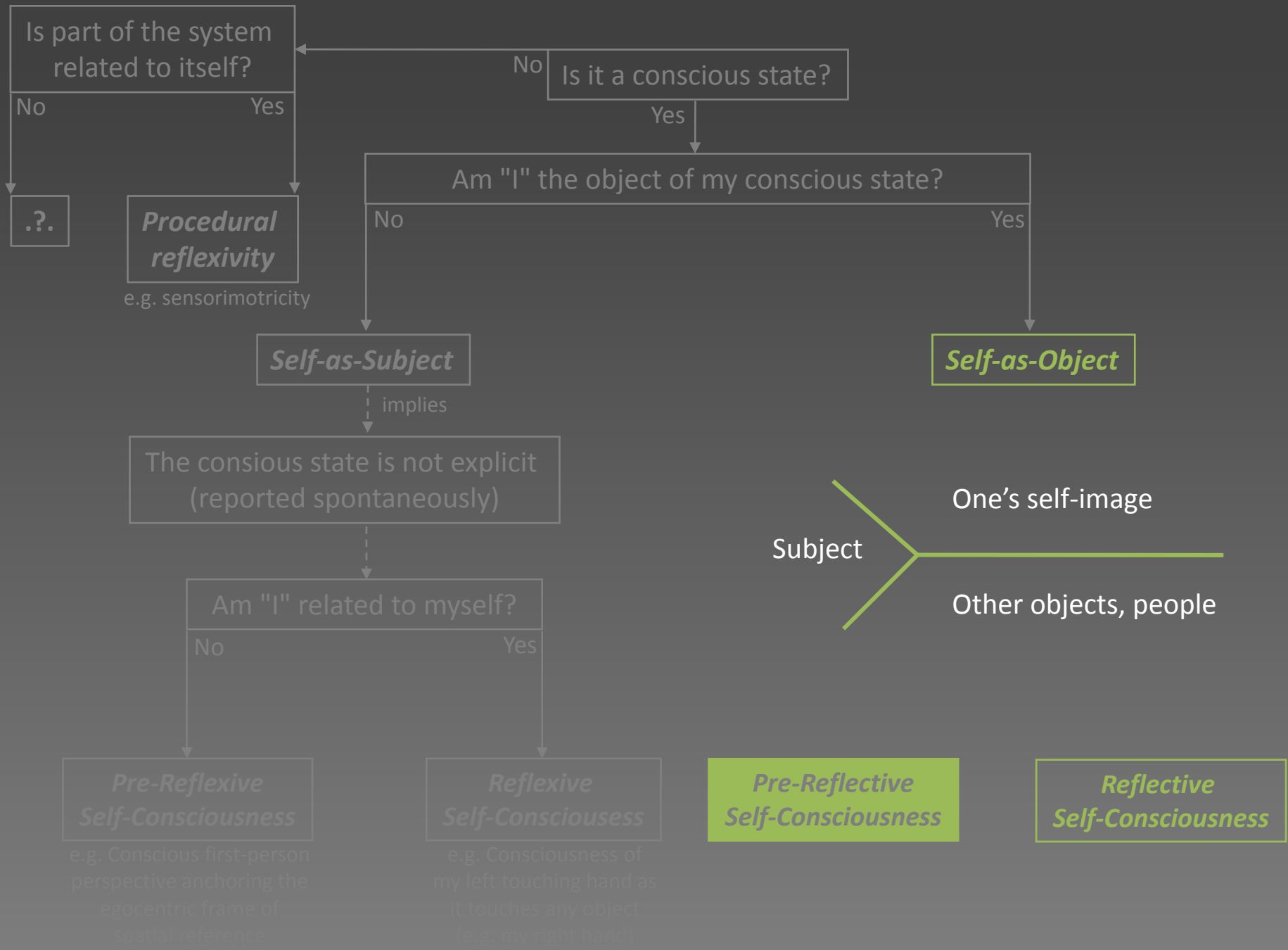
Reflexive Self-Consciousness
e.g. Consciousness of my left touching hand as (e.g. my right hand)

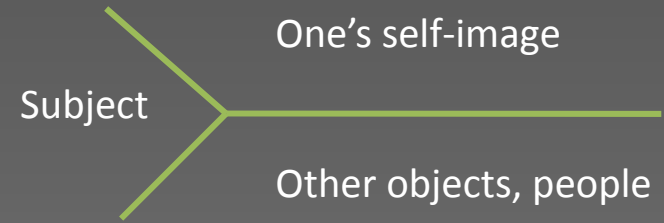
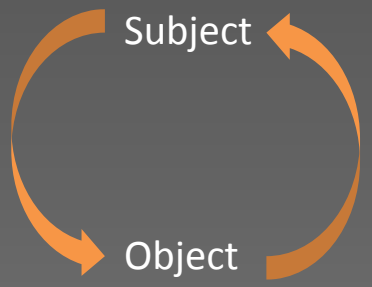
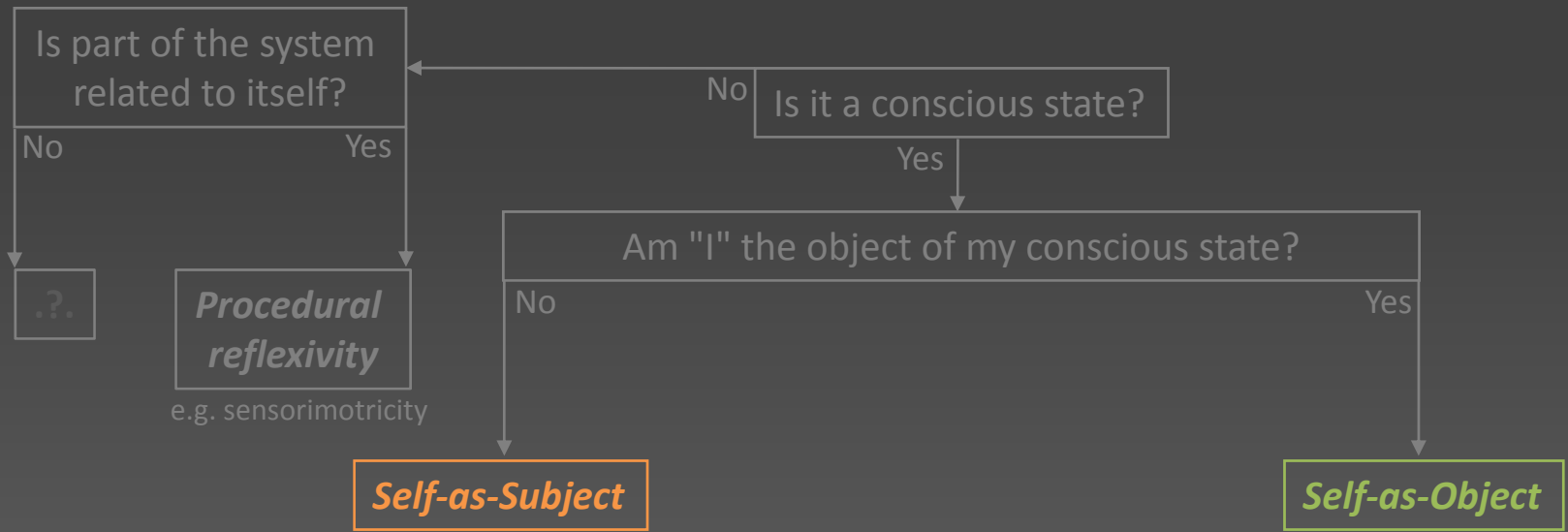


Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness

Reflective Self-Consciousness

Body image distortion reveals amygdala activation in patients with anorexia nervosa – a functional magnetic resonance imaging study
Neuroscience Letters, Volume 326, Issue 1, 21 June 2002, Pages 25-28
 Gert Seeger, Dieter F. Braus, Matthias Ruf, Ursula Goldberger and Martin H. Schmidt





**Pre-Reflexive
Self-Consciousness**

**Reflexive
Self-Consciousness**

**Pre-Reflective
Self-Consciousness**

**Reflective
Self-Consciousness**

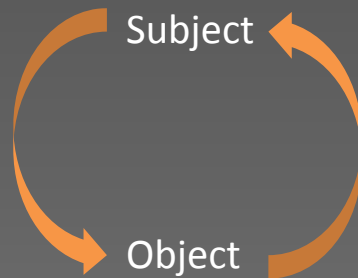
Perception
(re-afference)

Action
(efference)

*Procedural
reflexivity*

Self-as-Subject

Re-afferent information
characterizes perception
by anchoring it to
the action of the subject.



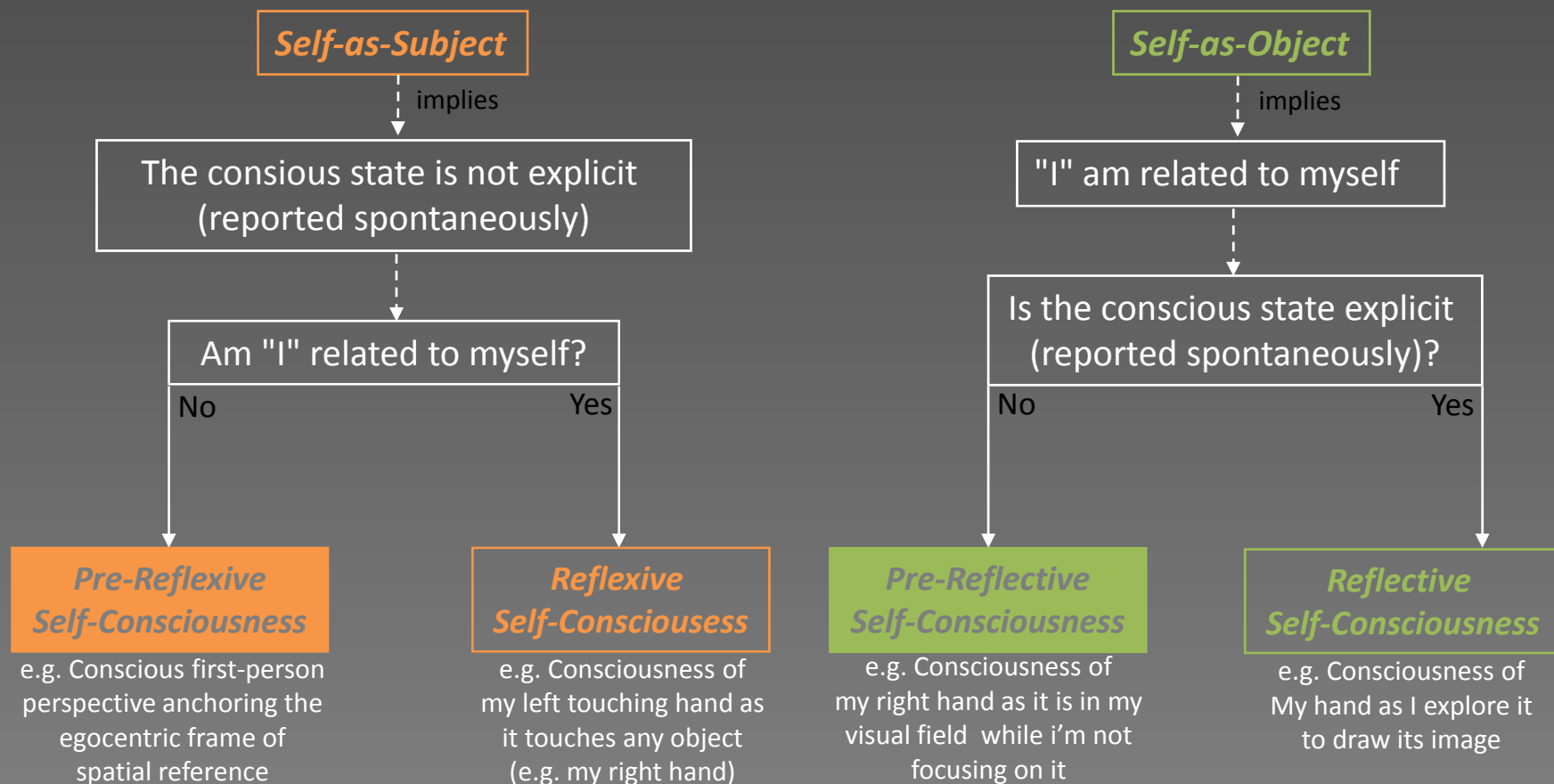
The subject is characterized by
its anchoring to the world
by its perspective
and the anchoring of
this perspective
to its body.

*Pre-Reflexive
Self-Consciousness*

*Reflexive
Self-Consciousness*

Concluding summary

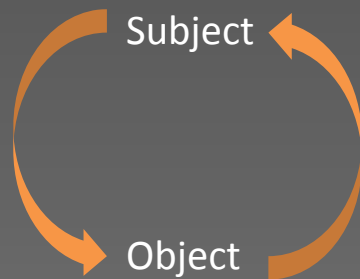
1. Any conscious act has not only an *object* but also and necessarily a *subject*. In other terms, any conscious act is characterized not only by its *object*-directedness (*intentionality*) but also by its subject-relatedness (*subjectivity*).



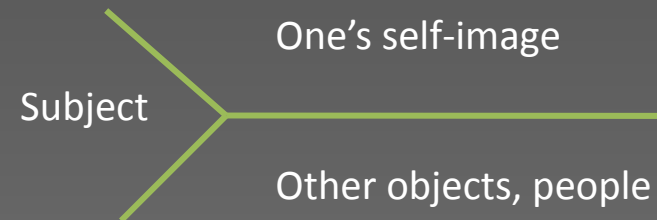
Concluding summary

2. The **subjective** (subject-related) and **intentional** (object-directed) dimensions of experience are intertwined with each other as dimensions correlatively constituting a single act of consciousness.

Self-as-Subject



Self-as-Object



**Pre-Reflexive
Self-Consciousness**

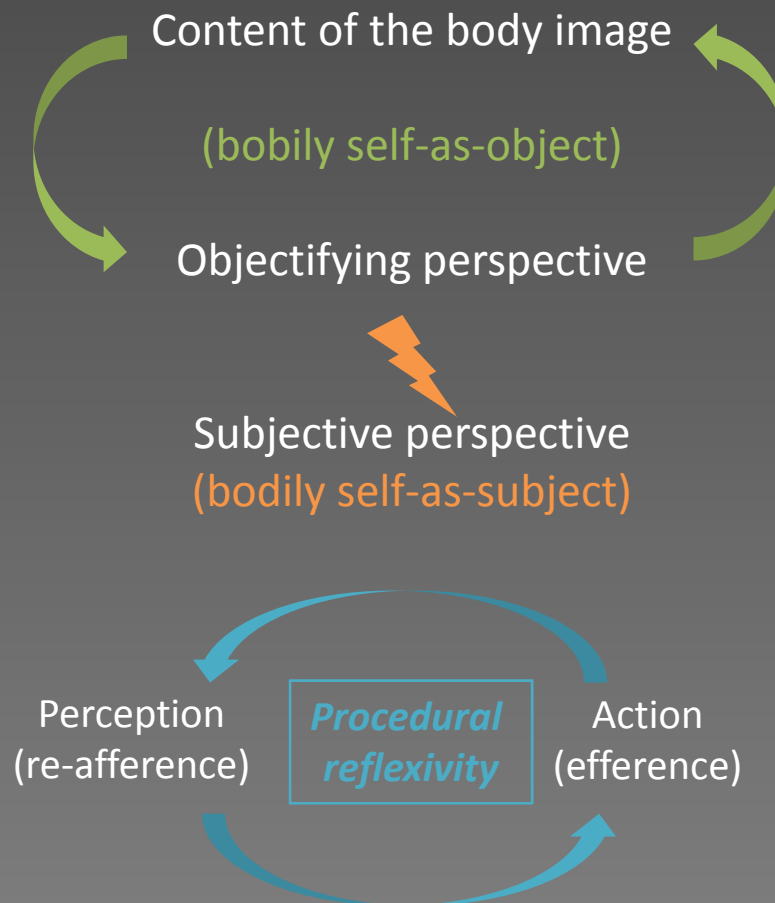
**Reflexive
Self-Consciousness**

**Pre-Reflective
Self-Consciousness**

**Reflective
Self-Consciousness**

Concluding summary

- The subjective (subject-related) dimension of consciousness is paradigmatically anchored to **the subject's own body**, to the sense of bodily anchoring one's first-person perspective.



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-Legrand D (2007) Subjectivity and the Body: Introducing basic forms of self-consciousness. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 16 (3) 577-582

-Legrand D (2008) Myself with no body? The body, body-consciousness and self-consciousness. In: S. Gallagher and D. Schmicking (Eds.) *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*, Springer.

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