next to nothing about self-self relations (other than at the level of our relationships with our bodies) nor about self-world relationships.

Even in the discussion on Phenomenological research, the section of the text that I valued the most, the author's account suggests an easy-goingness, even sloppiness, in methodological thought and structure that simply does not equate with the rigour and careful preparation and exposition of data that exemplifies this approach and which makes it such a viable alternative to (and critique of) more standard, quantitatively-focused research methodologies.

I also find it inconceivable that an up-to-date text such as this one is manages to avoid mention, much less discussion, of Emmy van Deurzen-Smith's pertinent contributions to existential-phenomenological thought and practice - especially as both authors are published by the same publisher!

In 1981, the songwriter Bob Dylan recorded a song entitled 'Watered-Down Love'. Its focus is on the unwillingness on the part of many to acknowledge the danger, the despair, the conflict and the uncertainty that the willingness to love unleashes in them and, instead, to confine their experienced attitudes and views to the superficial, the safe, ultimately to those features which if considered complete unto themselves will only misconstrue and stultify the experience and deny the possibility of a more adequate and liberating understanding of the concept. I believe that Dylan's critique of this view of love is pertinent to Dr Becker's text. It should have been titled 'Watered-Down Phenomenology'.

Ernesto Spinelli

***Consciousness in Contemporary Science edited by A. J. Marcel and E. Bisiach, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1992) 405 pp.**

As a young, naive student of psychology back in 1968 I remember being shocked when, early on in the very first lecture of 'Psychology 100: an introduction to psychology', the professor teaching us announced that we must expel from our vocabulary all manner of meaningless and anachronistic terms such as 'will', 'soul', 'mind', and, most of all, 'consciousness'. I recall, as well, thinking to myself: "Well, what's left, then?" As it became increasingly obvious even to the most dedicated behaviourists, the answer to my question was: not a great deal. Too little, in fact, to make sense of the confusing data that they themselves were accumulating and which would soon give rise to the 'cognitive revolution'.

In the quarter century since those days, the concept of consciousness has made a dramatic comeback in the literature of psychology (not to mention philosophy, neuroscience and even physics). Increasingly, psychologists have adopted the term in order to give credence to their studies on human experience in general and on certain phenomena in particular, (such as split-brain studies, multiple personalities, attention processes, etc). In such cases, 'consciousness' is presented both in a descriptive and explanatory fashion.

The problem, however, is that no matter its potential use and descriptive power, 'consciousness' remains an unclear and inconsistent concept. As the editors of this text put it:

> *Sometimes the term appears to be used in a functionalist way, so that it is the equivalent to concepts such as attention, short-term memory, representation, control, or what people can assert verbally (concepts which themselves are often unclear). At other times it is used to refer to Phenomenological concepts, such as subjective experience, qualia, the contents of awareness, intentionality, or personal unity.... Furthermore, the very relationships between descriptions and explanations in Phenomenological terms and in functional (eg. information-processing) terms remain problematic and are in need of scrutiny.* (p3)

It was precisely with the intention to confront and discuss these problematic issues that a meeting of experts from a variety of disciplines was held at the Villa Olmo near Lake Como in northern Italy in 1985. This text provides the reader with 16 wide-ranging and diverse papers (plus the editors' very useful overview) that are the result of that meeting (the papers included are not the original delivered papers but rather have been revised to reflect the issues and clarifications that were prompted as a result of on-going discussions). It is fair to say that, while not exhaustive, the text succeeds in presenting many of the major views (Phenomenological, functionalist, neurological, and computational), findings, and areas of conflict and disagreement in contemporary 'consciousness research'.

All of the papers have something valid and interesting to say. Certainly, Robert Van Gulick's 'Consciousness, intrinsic intentionality, and self-understanding machines' (pp78-99) is of particular interest to readers of this Journal since it explores the meaning of having an intentional state and considers the relationship of intentionality to subjective experience. But the two papers I found to be of most interest were those by Daniel C Dennett ('Quining qualia' (pp 42-77)) and Alan Allport's 'What concept of consciousness?' (pp 159-82). Each of these is somewhat more critical of certain aspects of the concept of consciousness. Dennett's

paper in particular taking as its task the exposure of the groundlessness of the belief in, or assumption of, any special qualitative properties of phenomenal experience ('qualia') is a masterly (and often amusing) homage to Wittgensteinian discourse and certainly the paper seems to have such impact on the meeting that, in various ways, it keeps resurfacing in other presentations. Allport, in a similar, if broader, vein attempts to 'establish what it is that is being referred to by consciousness and how we should recognize an instance of if (p 11). Perhaps of more interest to the readership, he considers critically the notion of an underlying 'unity' in consciousness. He writes:

> *My own view is that there* are *no such (general) criteria, because* there is no such phenomenon. *That is, there is no unitary entity of phenomenal awareness'- no unique process or state, no* one, *coherently conceptualizable pheneomenon for which there could be a single, conceptually coherent theory.*
>
> *I do not deny the reality of phenomenal awareness, just as I do not deny the reality* of life *or of* understanding. *Of course there is life; of course there is understanding. But 'life' is not a unitary phenomenon, susceptible of explanation in terms of a single explanatory principle...* (pp161-2)

In many ways, the above passage encapsulates the 'feel' of this text. We are presented with various, and quite variant, views of consciousness - each offering something of relevance to our understanding of the term yet none quite satisfactory and sufficient in itself.

Still, if no final solutions to the problem of consciousness are offered, at least the relevance and significance of the topic is no longer considered dubious or doubtful. For this once-bored and empt—headed student of psychology, that seems to be good enough for now.

Ernesto Spinelli

***The Art of the Obvious: developing insight for psychotherapy and everyday life by Bruno Bettelheim and Alvin A. Rosenfeld, Thames and Hudson, London (1993) 247pp.**

Between 1977 and 1982 Bruno Bettelheim and Alvin Rosenfeld conducted weekly seminars for students in child and adult psychiatry, psychology and social work. This extraordinary text is a distillation of the essence of these seminars in a manner that is straightforwardly