

# INNER ACQUAINTANCE THEORIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Anna Giustina

Forthcoming in *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Mind*

## 1. Introduction/Abstract

Most recent philosophical theories of consciousness account for it in terms of *representation*, the bulk of the debate revolving around whether (suitably) representing something is sufficient for consciousness (as per first-order representationalism) or some further (meta-)representation is needed (as per higher-order representationalism and self-representationalism). In this paper, I explore an alternative theory of consciousness, one that aims to explain consciousness *not* in terms of representation but in terms of the epistemically and metaphysically direct relation of *acquaintance*. I call this the *Inner Acquaintance Theory* of consciousness (IAT). Roughly, on IAT, what makes a mental state conscious is its subject being acquainted with it.

Though not wholly unprecedented, IAT is still at the fringe of consciousness debates and remains largely underexplored. The main goal of this paper is to take some steps toward developing the details of IAT, illustrate its potential explanatory power, and put it forward as a plausible alternative to representational theories, with the hope that this will contribute to shifting IAT closer to the center of the debate.

Here is how I proceed. In §2 I introduce a notion—*inner awareness*—that is crucial both to contextualize and to understand IAT. In §3 I provide some preliminary motivation for exploring IAT. In §4 I explain the notion of *acquaintance* and illustrate some of the features that are typically attributed to it in the literature. The details of IAT are then shaped through four main decision points. I address them in §§5-8, where I suggest a particular choice at each decision point, thereby progressively building up a view that I consider particularly promising.

## 2. Inner awareness and acquaintance

A crucial divide in philosophy of consciousness is on whether phenomenal consciousness implies some form of self-consciousness. Disagreement revolves around something like the following principle:

*AP*: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, M is conscious only if S is aware of M.

We may call the relevant awareness of one's own mental states "inner awareness" and the principle "Awareness Principle" (AP). First-order representationalists reject AP (they argue that first-order representation is sufficient for consciousness), whereas meta-representational theories (higher-order representationalism and self-representationalism) have it at the core of their account of phenomenal consciousness (on these views, *awareness of* first-order representation is necessary for it to be a *conscious* representation).

Inner awareness is often characterized as a *non-attentive*, *non-introspective*, *non-conceptual*, *non-thought-like*, and *non-inferential* awareness of one's own current conscious states. To be sure, some philosophers defend stronger versions of AP; some argue that (attentive) *introspective awareness* is

required for consciousness (Armstrong 1968); others that forming a (conceptual and propositionally structured) *thought* about a mental state is necessary for it to be conscious (Rosenthal 1997). Such stronger claims, however, are not entailed by AP. Arguably, we can be aware of things we do not attend to (you can be olfactorily aware of fresh-baked cake even if your attention is focused on the sentence you are reading) and we can be aware of something without entertaining a thought about it (you can be gustatorily aware of durian without being aware *that it is durian*; cf. Dretske 1993). In what follows, I will thus adopt the weakest possible version of AP, where consciousness only requires a “minimal” form of inner awareness, i.e., an awareness that is non-attentive, non-introspective, non-conceptual, non-thought-like, and non-inferential.

Many AP proponents maintain that inner awareness is not only *necessary* for consciousness, but also *constitutive* of it: it is what *makes* a mental state conscious (i.e., that *in virtue of which* a mental state is a conscious state). They thus argue for:

*AP<sup>+</sup>*: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, M is conscious *in virtue of* S’s being aware of M.

Theorists who defend *AP<sup>+</sup>* have typically accounted for inner awareness in terms of (meta)*representation*: S is aware of M iff S (suitably) represents M. Accordingly, they have developed a Meta-Representational account of Inner Awareness (MRIA):

*MRIA*: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, S is innerly aware of M iff S is in a mental state M\* that suitably represents M.

By combining *AP<sup>+</sup>* with *MRIA*, Meta-Representational Theories (MRT) aim at explaining consciousness in terms of meta-representation:

*MRT*: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, M is conscious in virtue of S’s being in a mental state M\* that suitably represents M.

On this ground, the debate has mostly revolved around the relationship between M and M\*. On Higher-Order Representationalism, M and M\* are *distinct* mental states; on Self-Representationalism, they are the *same* mental state.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, I want to explore a *third* option—one that has received little attention so far. On this view, inner awareness is explained *not* in meta-representational terms, but in terms of the relation of *acquaintance*—hence the Acquaintance account of Inner Awareness (AIA):

*AIA*: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, S is aware of M iff S is acquainted with M.

By combining *AP<sup>+</sup>* with *AIA*, we obtain the general form of an Inner Acquaintance Theory of consciousness (IAT):

*IAT*: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, M is conscious in virtue of S’s being acquainted with M.

Arguably, IAT has been disregarded mostly due to naturalizability concerns. Representation can be found anywhere in nature—not just in conscious minds. If the intentionality-naturalization

---

<sup>1</sup> For higher-order representationalism, see Armstrong (1968), Lycan (1996), and Rosenthal (1997). For self-representationalism, see especially Kriegel (2009); see also Carruthers (2000, 2005), Van Gulick (2000, 2004), and Gennaro (1996, 2012). For a collection of papers on self-representationalism, see Kriegel and Williford (2006).

research program turns out successful and mental representation can be fully explained in (causal/teleological/functional and thereby purely) physical terms, representational theories promise to offer a naturalistic account of consciousness. Acquaintance, on the other hand, is supposed to be *unique* to conscious minds; it is a *special* relation that seems refractory to physical reduction. For these reasons, many theorists have considered it mysterious and regarded it with suspicion. However, although acquaintance's prospects for naturalization are still underexplored, they are not null (see e.g., Balog 2012) and a few philosophers have recently ventured acquaintance-based accounts of consciousness (Coleman 2015; Williford 2015; Levine 2019). The details of IAT, though, remain unexplored. This paper's ambition is to make some substantial steps toward a detailed and precise version of IAT, one that can compete with the much more widespread and already well-developed meta-representational views.

I will proceed by highlighting four decision points—concerning both the acquaintance *relation* and its *relata*—that, as I see it, anyone who wants to develop a version of IAT faces. A secondary goal is to argue for, or at least recommend, a particular choice at each decision point, thereby developing a version of IAT that I consider particularly promising.

A note before continuing. I propose IAT as a third kind of theory (besides Higher-Order Representationalism and Self-Representationalism) that endorses and aims to explain AP<sup>+</sup>. In what follows, then, I am going to *assume* AP<sup>+</sup>. This is not uncontroversial. In particular, some proponents of the *transparency of experience* (Harman 1990) and first-order representationalists about consciousness (Dretske 1993) deny that there is anything like inner awareness. A full defense of AP<sup>+</sup> would require substantive theoretical argumentation, which I do not have the space to carry out here.<sup>2</sup> I thus simply assume that inner awareness is real and a constitutive aspect of conscious experience.

### 3. Motivating an Inner Acquaintance Theory

My primary aim being exploring a positive view, I cannot develop here a full argument in favor of the Inner Acquaintance Theory and against its competitors.<sup>3</sup> I will just hint at some *prima facie* motivation by briefly reviewing what I consider the most worrying objections to representational theories that accept AP<sup>+</sup>: Higher-Order Representationalism (HOR) and Self-Representationalism (SR).<sup>4</sup>

As noted, both HOR and SR explain inner awareness in terms of meta-representation:

*MRT*: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, M is conscious in virtue of S's being in a mental state M\* that suitably represents M.

On HOR, M\* is distinct and different from M (M≠M\*); on SR, M and M\* are the same mental state (M=M\*).

The main problem with HOR is that it allows for *targetless* higher-order representation (Byrne 1997; Neander 1998, Levine 2001, 2018, and Kriegel 2009). On HOR, the first-order representation and the meta-representation—that makes the first-order representation conscious

---

<sup>2</sup> For a recent positive argument in support of inner awareness see Kriegel (2019). See also Giustina (2022a, 2022c).

<sup>3</sup> I make some steps in that direction in Giustina (2022d).

<sup>4</sup> For objections to HOR, see, e.g., Dretske (1993, 1995), Goldman (1993), Tye (1995), Siewert (1998), Seager (2004), Levine (2006), and Kriegel (2009). For objections to SR, see, e.g., Weisberg (2008), Brogaard (2012), Gertler (2012), Van Gulick (2012), Mehta (2013), and Coleman (2015).

and thus phenomenally apparent to the subject—are *distinct* mental states and can therefore exist independently of one another. Compare this with the perceptual case. When you have a visual representation as of a red rose, the representation and the rose have distinct existences: each can exist without the other. Similarly, on HOR, your first-order rose representation can exist independently of your meta-representation of it and your meta-representation can exist even in the absence of *any* first-order representation. This, though, is very implausible. It entails that it can phenomenally appear to you that you have a conscious experience as of a rose while in fact you have none. Most theorists (and, arguably, any lay people contemplating this idea) consider this impossible or even inconceivable.<sup>5</sup> It seems that, necessarily, if an experience phenomenally appears to you, it cannot be that *no experience* is present.<sup>6</sup>

Such considerations have motivated Self-Representationalism. If the representing state M\* and the represented state M are the same, then, straightforwardly, it cannot be the case that the former occurs in the absence of the latter. SR thus rules out the kind of inner hallucination allowed by HOR.

However, SR also seems to face some problems, the deepest of which has to do with the explanatory adequacy of self-representation and has been articulated by Levine (2006). SR aims to explain phenomenal consciousness in terms of a mental state’s representing itself. However, if, as SR assumes, first-order representation is insufficient for consciousness, how can just adding more representation (meta-representation) of the same kind yield phenomenal consciousness?

Somehow, what we have in conscious states are representations that are intrinsically of subjective significance, “animated” as it were, and I maintain that we really don’t understand how that is possible. It doesn’t seem to be a matter of more of the same—more representation of the same kind—but rather representation of a different kind altogether. (Levine 2006: 195)

The mere fact that a conscious state represents (also) *itself*, rather than (just) something else, is insufficient to explain the peculiar “subjective significance” of phenomenal consciousness. After all, the sentence “This sentence is written in English” also represents itself, but is not phenomenally conscious (Kriegel 2009: 159). What makes a mental state phenomenally conscious cannot be *what* it represents (i.e., that it represents itself): it must have to do with *how* it represents—with the *kind* of self-representation involved (Kriegel 2011: 64-65). Now, either self-representation is of the familiar and naturalization-friendly kind or it is not. If it is, then it is unclear why and how just adding an extra (self-)representation of the mental state itself, on top of the first-order representation, should be sufficient to yield consciousness. If, instead, the self-representation is *not* of the familiar kind, then it *could* be sufficient for consciousness. However, it would have to be *sui generis* and *special*.

The problem, in other words, is that conscious awareness seems to be a *sui generis* form of representation, and not merely because it’s reflexive. Something about the representation relation itself—that it affords acquaintance, and not just representation—is such as to yield a mystery concerning its possible physical realization. (Levine 2006: 193)

---

<sup>5</sup> Though not all: see, e.g., Rosenthal (2005); Brown (2010); Churchland (2013); Hill (2016); Schwitzgebel (2011). So-called “illusionists” about phenomenal consciousness (Dennett 1988, 2016; Frankish 2016; Kammerer 2016) argue that not only such inner hallucination is possible, but it is what constitutes *all* our (seemingly) conscious experiences. However, illusionists are an outlandish minority in the philosophy-of-mind landscape.

<sup>6</sup> Though it may occur that you form an incorrect *belief* about the relevant experience, as when you introspectively judge that you have an itch sensation in your thigh, while what you really have is a tickle sensation.

So, the deepest problem with SR seems to be that no familiar kind of (self-)representation can account for the subjective significance that is peculiar to phenomenal consciousness. A *special* relation, one that uniquely ties subjects to their experiences, seems needed. *Acquaintance* may be the right candidate to play this explanatory role.

#### 4. Acquaintance

Made popular by Bertrand Russell (1910, 1912), but then neglected for much of the twentieth century, the notion of acquaintance has recently regained momentum.<sup>7</sup> Particular interest has been devoted to it in epistemology, both in the context of contemporary defenses of foundationalism (Fales 1996; Bonjour 2000, 2003; Fumerton 1996, 2001, 2009; Hasan 2013) and in the more recent revival of Russellian *knowledge by acquaintance* (McGinn 2008; Tye 2008; Hofmann 2014; Fiocco 2017; Duncan 2020, 2021b; Coleman 2019; Giustina 2022b). In philosophy of mind, the notion of acquaintance has been deployed in the “phenomenal concept strategy” defense of physicalism (Papineau 2002, 2006; Balog 2012), in some versions of naïve realism about perception (Campbell 2002; Brewer 2011; Soteriou 2013), as well as in the explanation of introspection (Gertler 2001, 2011, 2012; Chalmers 2003; Horgan and Kriegel 2007; Giustina 2021). Some philosophers have proposed acquaintance-based accounts of consciousness and subjectivity (Hellie 2007; Coleman 2015; Williford 2015; Duncan 2018; Levine 2019), but the use of acquaintance in this area is still underexplored.

Acquaintance is an epistemically significant mental relation, typically spelled out in terms of *direct awareness*, where the relevant directness is both epistemic and metaphysical (*cf.* Gertler 2011).<sup>8</sup> Acquaintance is *epistemically* direct in that, by being acquainted with  $x$ , a subject  $S$  gets an epistemic access to  $x$  that is *non-inferential*, i.e., does not depend on  $S$ 's having epistemic access to anything else (in particular, it is independent of  $S$ 's entertaining any judgment). It is *metaphysically* direct in that, when  $S$  is acquainted with  $x$ , no causal process mediates between  $x$  and  $S$ 's awareness of  $x$ . Differently from representation (that can be directed at non-existent objects), acquaintance entails the existence of its *relata*: if  $S$  is acquainted with  $x$ , then  $x$  (as well as, of course,  $S$ ) exists. We may call  $S$  the *fundament* of acquaintance and  $x$  its *terminus*. In *inner* acquaintance, the terminus is a mental state  $M$  of  $S$ .

Many acquaintance theorists hold that acquaintance is intimately connected to a constitutive relation between what the subject is acquainted with and a *mental state* of the subject. Often the idea is, roughly, that when  $S$  is acquainted with  $x$ ,  $S$  is in a mental state  $M^*$  that is (partly) constituted by  $x$ .<sup>9</sup> Some naïve realists, for example, argue that when  $S$  perceives  $o$  (i.e., is perceptually acquainted with  $o$ ),  $S$  has a perceptual experience that is (partly) constituted by  $o$ . Some theorists of phenomenal concepts (e.g., proponents of the “quotational” account, such as Balog 2012) argue that phenomenal concepts formed via introspective acquaintance are (partly) constituted by the experience they refer to. Similarly, on some theories of introspection (e.g., Gertler 2001), introspective acquaintance involves the introspected state being “embedded” or

---

<sup>7</sup> Raleigh (2019) and Duncan (2021a) offer excellent and very useful introductions to the notion of acquaintance. See also Knowles and Raleigh (2019) for a recent collection devoted to acquaintance.

<sup>8</sup> The epistemic significance of acquaintance is often taken to consist, at least, in its yielding a special kind of knowledge, namely *knowledge by acquaintance*.

<sup>9</sup> Constitution may be full or partial; more on this in §7.

come to (partly) constitute the introspective state. The idea of an intimate connection between acquaintance and constitutive relation will be relevant to our discussion in §5.

We can already see how IAT does not face the issues that affect HOR and SR. Recall, the main problem with HOR is that it allows for inner hallucination. IAT does *not* allow for inner hallucination because, as noted, acquaintance is a relation that entails the existence of its relata: if S is acquainted with M, then M must exist. The main issue with SR is that it seems to require some *special, sui generis* kind of representation—one that is different from the familiar, naturalization-friendly kind—to account for the subjective significance of experience. IAT simply embraces the unavoidable distinctiveness of subjectivity and accordingly tries to explain it via a *special relation*—instead of trying to force it into the familiar representational framework. Of course, acquaintance may well have its own problems. However, only a worked out and detailed version of the theory will enable the objector to raise pertinent and precise objections.

In the remainder of the paper, I provide a framework for spelling out the details of IAT and tentatively build up a version that seems to me particularly promising. I proceed by four decision points. The first concerns the *fundamental relation* involved in inner acquaintance (§5). The second concerns the *terminus* of the acquaintance relation (§6). The third concerns inner acquaintance’s *metaphysical directness* and explores a constitutional-mereological approach to it (§7). The fourth decision point concerns the way in which inner acquaintance constitutes awareness *of* M and thereby involves some sort of *directedness toward* M (§8).

## 5. The fundamental relation in inner acquaintance

Recall IAT’s general form introduced in §1:

*IAT*: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, M is conscious in virtue of S’s being acquainted with M.

Inner acquaintance involves at least two elements—S (the fundament) and M (the terminus)—and at least one relation—the acquaintance relation between S and M. But is the relation between S and M the *ultimate* or *most fundamental* fact about inner acquaintance? Or is there some more fundamental fact in virtue of which S is acquainted with M? This is our first decision point.

On one (perhaps the most natural) way to construe it, inner acquaintance just involves the relation between S and M (i.e., S’s being acquainted with M). Plausibly, if acquaintance is instantiated at all, it always takes a subject as fundament (at least on a natural conception of “acquaintance,” such that only *subjects* can be acquainted with something) and, at least when it is “inner,” a mental state as terminus. As noted, acquaintance is *metaphysically direct*. On a strong interpretation of metaphysical directness, acquaintance is not only unmediated by any *causal* process: it does not involve *any* further element, state, or process that may *ground* the relation between S and M. In this framework, then, there are no further elements (other than S and M) involved; the relation between S and M is the most fundamental fact about inner acquaintance, and indeed S’s being acquainted with M is all there is to inner acquaintance. Accordingly, acquaintance is construed as a *primitive* mental relation between S and M.<sup>10</sup>

On an alternative view, the acquaintance relation between S and M is *not* primitive: there is some more fundamental element, relation, or fact in virtue of which such a relation holds. Here

---

<sup>10</sup> It is primitive in that it is neither grounded in nor explained in terms of anything else.

the relation between S and M is still metaphysically direct in that it is *not causally mediated*; however, it is, so to speak, “*groundingly*” mediated, in that it metaphysically depends on something else. A variety of candidates for playing such a grounding role may be explored. Here, however, I am going to consider just one.

On the alternative option that strikes me as the antecedently most plausible, inner acquaintance involves a *third element*, besides S and M: a *mental state* M\* of S, which bears a *special (constitutive) relation* to M. The reason why this option seems antecedently plausible is twofold. First, it mirrors the meta-representationalist idea that what most fundamentally explains consciousness is a relation between two mental states, M and M\*. Unlike meta-representationalism, however, IAT construes the relation between M and M\* not in terms of representation but in terms of acquaintance. Second, and more substantially, this option paves the way for an informative account of acquaintance’s metaphysical directness in terms of constitution—somewhat similarly to some proposals already present in acquaintance-related literature (especially on phenomenal concepts, introspection, and naïve realism). On this view, the metaphysical directness of the acquaintance relation between S and M is not a brute fact but is grounded in a special (non-causally-mediated) relation between M and M\*. As noted, metaphysical directness is often taken to be intimately connected with *constitution*: acquaintance involves, or is intimately connected to, a relation that is *constitutive* (rather than causal). A plausible way to spell out such a constitutive relation is this: if S is acquainted with M, then S is in a mental state M\* that is (partly) constituted by M. We may call M\* the *state of acquaintance*. So, the idea is that the state of acquaintance M\* is (partly) constituted by the terminus of the relation of acquaintance, M.

To get a better grip of this, consider the perceptual case (I assume representationalism about perceptual experience for the purpose of exposition). When you see a red rose, the rose and your visual representation of it are causally related but distinct existents. In inner acquaintance, instead, the terminus and the state of acquaintance are neither causally related nor ontologically distinct. Rather than causal, the relationship between them is *constitutive*: the terminus (partly) constitutes the state of acquaintance. Accordingly, the terminus and the state of acquaintance are *not* independent of one another. Even if the terminus can exist independently of the state of acquaintance, the latter’s existence depends on that of the terminus. Therefore, when S bears the acquaintance relation to M, S is in a state of acquaintance M\* that is not wholly distinct from M, for M is a part of M\*. Whether M is a proper or improper part of M\* depends on how a theory specifies the mereology of acquaintance. (The latter will be the topic of §7.)

We may call the constitutive relation between M\* and M *state-acquaintance*. Granted that the term “acquaintance” is primarily meant to denote a relation between a subject and a mental state (assuming that the fundament of acquaintance is always a subject), I introduce the technical notion of *state-acquaintance* mostly for expository reasons, as a shorthand for “the constitutive relation between two mental states M\* (the state of acquaintance) and M (the terminus of acquaintance) of a subject S.” To distinguish it from state-acquaintance, I will call the relation between S and M *subject-acquaintance*. So, our first decision point is: which relation is fundamental? We may call the relevant options “subject-first” view and “state-first” view:

SUBJECT-FIRST: Subject-acquaintance is the most fundamental relation involved in inner acquaintance.

STATE-FIRST: State-acquaintance is the most fundamental relation involved in inner acquaintance.

On SUBJECT-FIRST, S's relation with M is primitive and constitutes the most fundamental fact about inner acquaintance: S's bearing the acquaintance relation to M is what ultimately explains inner acquaintance and thereby (if IAT is true) phenomenal consciousness. Further elements, facts, or relations may be involved, but if they are, they are not more fundamental than subject-acquaintance. In particular, if S's being acquainted with M involves the occurrence of a state of acquaintance M\*, then the latter depends on the primitive relation between S and M: it is in virtue of S being acquainted with M that (i) S is in a state of acquaintance M\* and (ii) M\* bears a constitutive relation to M.

On STATE-FIRST, instead, the relation between S and M is not fundamental but depends on S's being in a state of acquaintance M\* and on M\*'s bearing a special relation to M: it is in virtue of (i) S being in M\* and (ii) M\* bearing the (right kind of) constitutive relation to M, that S is acquainted with M. So, here, the most fundamental fact about inner acquaintance is one involving a relation between *mental states*—the terminus and the state of acquaintance. If so, part of IAT's task is to explain what that special relation amounts to. (The relevant relation will have, at least, the features mentioned in §4: relata-existence entailment, epistemic directness, and metaphysical directness/constitution).

So, our first decision point is whether to endorse SUBJECT-FIRST or STATE-FIRST. In the remainder of this section, I recommend opting for STATE-FIRST. I offer three reasons for this. The first concerns the priority of *state consciousness* over *creature consciousness* (§5.1). The second concerns the *explanatory power* of acquaintance (§5.2). The third concerns issues around the nature of *subjects* (§5.3).

### 5.1. State and creature consciousness

David Rosenthal (1993, 1997) makes two useful distinctions about the notion of consciousness. First, he distinguishes between what he calls *creature consciousness* and *state consciousness*. The former is a property of subjects and is expressed by sentences such as “I am conscious” or “I am conscious of vanilla cake.” The latter is a property of mental states and is expressed by sentences such as “My vanilla smell experience is conscious:” it is a conscious, rather than an *unconscious*, state. Second, he distinguishes between *transitive consciousness* and *intransitive consciousness*. Transitive consciousness is the relational property of being *conscious of* something (as in “I am conscious of vanilla cake”). Intransitive consciousness is the intrinsic property of being a conscious creature (“I am conscious”) or a conscious mental state (“My vanilla smell experience is conscious”).

By combining the two distinctions, we obtain four conceptually distinct notions: *intransitive creature consciousness* (“I am conscious”), *transitive creature consciousness* (“I am conscious of vanilla cake”), *intransitive state consciousness* (“My vanilla smell experience is conscious”), and *transitive state consciousness* (“My smell experience is conscious of the vanilla cake”). The latter may sound antecedently odd. However, although the sentence “My smell experience is conscious of the vanilla cake” is admittedly far-fetched, the substantial phenomenon underlying it is not, for what it expresses is, quite simply, the fact that, in virtue of having the smell experience, I am conscious of the cake (Kriegel 2003, 2009). Transitive state consciousness, then, is a relational property of M such that M is directed toward some object *o* and in virtue of this S is conscious of *o*.

Uriah Kriegel (2003, 2009) offers an argument to the effect that creature consciousness depends on state consciousness. On the one hand, plausibly, for a subject to be (intransitively) conscious, s/he must be in some (intransitively) conscious mental state: I am conscious in virtue



of having at least one conscious mental state. When none of my mental states is conscious, I am *unconscious*. So, intransitive creature consciousness depends on intransitive state consciousness. On the other hand, for a subject to be (transitively) conscious of something, s/he must be in some (transitively) conscious mental state, in virtue of which s/he is conscious of it: I am conscious of the vanilla cake in virtue of having a conscious smell experience directed at the cake. Thus, transitive creature consciousness depends on transitive state consciousness.

Given that inner awareness is a conscious phenomenon, the same reasoning applies to it. S's being innerly aware of M implies S's being *transitively creature conscious* of M. Since transitive creature consciousness depends on transitive state consciousness, when S is innerly aware of M, S is transitively creature conscious of M in virtue of having a conscious mental state directed at M—i.e., in virtue of having a mental state M\* that is transitively state conscious of M.

If state consciousness is prior to creature consciousness, inner awareness is, most fundamentally, a phenomenon that occurs at the *mental state* level, and only *derivatively* a phenomenon concerning conscious subjects. Accordingly, whatever explains inner awareness should account for this metaphysical priority. On IAT, what explains inner awareness is the mental relation of *acquaintance*. To meet the priority requirement, acquaintance is thus to rely, most fundamentally, on a relation between mental states. Recall the distinction between *subject-acquaintance* and *state-acquaintance*. Plausibly, subject-acquaintance accounts for transitive *creature* consciousness of M: S is (transitively creature) conscious of M in virtue of being subject-acquainted with M. State-acquaintance accounts for transitive *state* consciousness of M: M\* is (transitively state) conscious of M in virtue of being state-acquainted with M. If, as argued, transitive state consciousness is prior to transitive creature consciousness (and since, arguably, the priority relations between what explains them should mirror the priority relations between them), state-acquaintance is prior to subject-acquaintance.

## 5.2. Explanatory power

The second reason for preferring STATE-FIRST is that it has (potentially, at least) higher explanatory power. IAT's aim is to explain consciousness in terms of inner acquaintance. Arguably, to do so, it should also explain what inner acquaintance involves and why it has some special features (i.e., relata entailment, epistemic directness, and metaphysical directness). Now, if inner acquaintance is characterized as a *primitive* relation between S and M, the explanatory power of the theory seems to be very limited: what is offered as the explanans of consciousness is a relation we do not have a deeper understanding of, and whose possession of peculiar features is just a brute fact. Positing a state of acquaintance M\*, by contrast, promises to allow for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that underlie consciousness and inner awareness. In particular, an analysis of the special relation between M and M\* in terms of *constitution*, coupled with an account of what such a constitutive relation consists in, may explain inner acquaintance's special features, and offer a more substantial and informative account of the metaphysics of consciousness.

Obviously, for such a constitutive relation to play the relevant explanatory role, it needs to be posited as fundamental: it must be *that in virtue of which* inner acquaintance holds. This is exactly what STATE-FIRST recommends. On SUBJECT-FIRST, instead, if there is a constitutive relation between M and M\*, it is *not fundamental*: at most, it depends on S's bearing the acquaintance relation to M. This makes the constitutive relation *explanatorily inert*. Since it is the relation

between S and M that grounds the occurrence of M\* and its constitutive relation with M, it is the former that explains the latter. But this does not seem a good result. For, arguably, the constitutive relation is explanatorily more fecund.

Compare this with causation in perception. In perception, it is the causal connection that does (part of) the explanatory work: it is *not* in virtue of S's seeing the rose that the rose causes S's visual representation of the rose; rather, it is in virtue of the rose's causing S's visual representation that S sees the rose. So, in perception, the causal connection between the subject's perceptual representation and the perceived object O is part of what explains the perceptual relation between S and O (that is, S's perceiving O). Analogously with constitution and inner acquaintance: the constitutive connection between the state of acquaintance and the terminus is (part of) what explains the acquaintance relation between subject and terminus. If so, it is not in virtue of S's being acquainted with M that M\* is constituted by M; rather, it is in virtue of M\*'s being constituted by M that S is acquainted with M.

### 5.3. Subjects

A further reason for preferring STATE-FIRST over SUBJECT-FIRST is that prioritizing state-acquaintance over subject-acquaintance allows us to be neutral about the nature of subjects and spares us the arduous enterprise of defining conscious subjects independently of conscious states. Those who construe the most fundamental facts about inner acquaintance as involving subjects would need a definition of the notion of subject which is *independent* of the notion of mental state (unless they endorse a bundle theory of subjects, on which a subject is a bundle of conscious states; obviously, though, if we adopt the bundle theory, subject-acquaintance collapses onto state-acquaintance). Alternatively, they would have to take subjects as *primitives*. I do not claim that neither option is viable. However, both feel somewhat uncomfortable. Defining subjects independently of conscious mental states strikes me as a very hard challenge. Taking subjects as primitives may be criticized as *ad hoc* and charged with mysteriousness. Other things being equal, a version of IAT that avoids the thorny issues effusing from the fundamentality of subjects is preferable. By construing the most fundamental facts about acquaintance as involving only mental states, STATE-FIRST promises to offer an understanding of acquaintance that sidesteps the question whether a mental-state-independent definition of subjects is viable. This gives us a further reason in favor of it.

\*

I suggest, then, that the acquaintance relation between S and M depends on the occurrence of the state of acquaintance M\* and on its bearing a constitutive relation to M. If so, IAT may be reformulated accordingly:

*IAT<sub>r</sub>*: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, M is conscious in virtue of S's being in a state of acquaintance M\* and of M\*'s being state-acquainted with M.

Further details about the relation between M and M\*, as well as its mereological implications, will be addressed in §§7-8. Before that, let us focus on the *terminus* of the acquaintance relation.

## 6. The terminus of inner acquaintance

Our second decision point concerns the *terminus* of the acquaintance relation. There are two relevant alternatives (or so I suggest):

INDIVIDUAL-STATE: The terminus is one of S's individual conscious states at  $t$ .

OVERALL-STATE: The terminus is S's overall experience at  $t$ .

My suggestion is opting for OVERALL-STATE. I will explain why after having said something more about what each option involves.

Consider the following vignette:

The cake I am baking emits an irresistible vanilla smell, of which I am filling my nose. The smell makes me feel hungry and nourish an increasingly intense desire to taste it. I strive not to get distracted by it and keep my thoughts focused on the metaphysics of consciousness. At the same time, I feel proud for having prepared such a nice-smelling cake. I realize that this cake business put me in a good mood.

The example involves several co-occurring conscious mental states: at time  $t$ , I have some perceptual experiences (e.g., smelling vanilla), interoceptive experiences (feeling hungry), conative experiences (desiring a piece of cake), cognitive experiences (thinking about consciousness), emotional experiences (feeling proud) and mood experiences (feeling in a good mood). (This is not supposed to be an exhaustive list—you can fill it in with all the other conscious states you think I may plausibly undergo at  $t$ ; anyway, this will suffice for my point.) Each of these is what I call an “individual conscious state at  $t$ .” Typically, at any time  $t$ , a conscious subject has several individual conscious states. One's co-occurring conscious states are *phenomenally unified*: they not only occur together, but are *experienced* by the subject as occurring together—they are not only co-occurring and unified, but they also *phenomenally appear* to their subject as co-occurring and unified. This is what is called the “unity of consciousness” (Dainton 2000; Bayne and Chalmers 2003; Bayne 2010).<sup>11</sup> The phenomenally unified conjunction of all the conscious states of a subject at  $t$  is the subject's “overall experience at  $t$ ”.

The question about the terminus of the acquaintance relation, thus, is the following. When S is inner-acquainted with M at  $t$ , is S acquainted with one of S's *individual conscious states* at  $t$ , such as *smelling vanilla at  $t$*  (INDIVIDUAL-STATE), or is S acquainted with S's *overall experience* at  $t$  (OVERALL-STATE)?<sup>12</sup> As we will see, each option has different repercussions on the metaphysical structure of conscious experience, including the unity of consciousness and the state of acquaintance.<sup>13;14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> More specifically, this is the *synchronic* unity of consciousness (i.e., the phenomenal unity of a subject's conscious experience *at time  $t$* ), to be distinguished from the *diachronic* unity of consciousness, i.e., the phenomenon such that a subject's successive experiences are phenomenally unified *over time* in one single stream of consciousness.

<sup>12</sup> There is, of course, logical space for a third option, namely that the terminus is a subset of S's individual conscious states at  $t$  (or a part of the overall experience that is constituted by such a subset). However, this option seems to imply an arbitrary construal of the terminus. Moreover, it would inherit the downsides of both other options without benefitting from their merits.

<sup>13</sup> Here is just as a foretaste. The state of acquaintance presents us with a similar issue: is it an *individual mental state* or is it one's *overall experience*? Depending on what we opt for in the terminus case, plausible options vary when it comes to the state of acquaintance.

<sup>14</sup> When it comes to the terminus of the acquaintance relation, there is an orthogonal question about its specific *ontology*. I have been talking about mental states without specifying to what ontological category they belong: are they *events* (instantiations of phenomenal properties by a subject at  $t$ ), *tropes* (phenomenal-property instantiations), *particulars* (bearers of phenomenal properties), something else? A complete Inner Acquaintance Theory of

On my view, the terminus of acquaintance is best construed as one's *overall experience* at  $t$ , for reasons that I articulate in the next three subsections.

### §6.1. Economy

One reason to resist INDIVIDUAL-STATE is that construing the terminus as an individual mental state implies a *multiplication* of instances of the acquaintance relation. As noted, at  $t$ , S typically has many individual conscious states. By AP<sup>+</sup> (the awareness principle<sup>15</sup>), S is aware of each of those individual states and, by IAT, S is so aware by being acquainted with each of them. On INDIVIDUAL-STATE, this is accounted for by each of the co-occurring individual conscious states of S at  $t$  being the terminus of an (instance of the) acquaintance relation. This implies that, at  $t$ , S bears a distinct instance of the acquaintance relation to each of the co-occurring individual conscious states at  $t$ .

On OVERALL-STATE, instead, at  $t$  there is just *one* terminus of acquaintance—the overall experience. Accordingly, at  $t$  there is just one instance of the acquaintance relation—the relation between S and its overall experience.

Now, for one thing, considerations of ontological economy should incline us to prefer OVERALL-STATE: *ceteris paribus*, an explanation that posits only one instance of a relation is preferable with respect to one that posits a multitude of such instances. But the issue is not just one of *ontological* economy—it is also one of *psychological* economy. Arguably, entertaining the multitude of acquaintance-relation instances implied by INDIVIDUAL-STATE would constitute for the subject a psychologically implausible cognitive burden.

True, INDIVIDUAL-STATE straightforwardly accounts for the fact (implied by AP<sup>+</sup>) that, at  $t$ , S is aware of each of its co-occurring conscious states. However, OVERALL-STATE does have the resources to account for this too. While the overall experience is the *primary* terminus of acquaintance, each conscious state that can be identified within it is a *secondary* or *derivative* terminus. By being acquainted with the overall experience, the subject is also (derivatively) acquainted with each of the conscious states that compose it. As by seeing a tree you also see each of the leaves that compose it, by being acquainted with your overall experience you are also acquainted with each conscious state it comprises.

It may be objected that, by seeing a tree, one may in fact *not* see each of its parts: if the glance at the tree is short enough, one may just become aware of structural, *global* features of the tree, but not of the detailed, *local* features of its composing elements (*cf.* Navon 1977). Analogously, being acquainted with the overall experience might not, after all, entail being acquainted with each of the conscious states that compose it. However, first, evidence for visual awareness of global features occurring without visual awareness of local features concerns extremely short-lived visual experiences (images in Navon's experiments are flashed for only 40 to 400 milliseconds). We could thus just stipulate that  $t$ , rather than denoting an instant or a quasi-instantaneous amount of time, denotes a span that is sufficiently extended to allow for full awareness, i.e., awareness of both global and local features (so-called "specious present" is probably what is needed here). This would apply to all forms of awareness, including inner

---

consciousness should cover this issue. Here, though, I can only flag it, for I do not have the space for a satisfactory treatment. All I say is neutral on this and can be applied to different specific stances on the ontology of mental states.

<sup>15</sup> Recall: AP<sup>+</sup>: For any subject S and conscious state M of S, M is conscious in virtue of S's being aware of M.

acquaintance. Second, a careful separation of (mere) *awareness* from related phenomena such as *memory* and *attention* may show that awareness of the whole may well entail awareness of each part, even though it does not entail that the subject *attends to* (or can attend to) every part, or that they can subsequently *remember* every part. Take, for example, Sperling's (1960) experiment, where arrays of letters are flashed to subjects for 50 milliseconds; although they claim they saw all letters, subjects can report no more than half of them. However, if cued to report one specific row right after the stimulus has been flashed, subjects can do that (for any row), though then they usually can report no letter from other rows. What Sperling's experiment seems to show is that, while the stimulus is flashed, subjects are aware of the whole array as well as of each of its parts (each letter that composes it)—and this despite the stimulus being extremely short-lived: since, for any row they are asked to report after the stimulus is flashed, they can remember all the letters contained in it, they must have been aware of each letter of each row at the time they were exposed to the stimulus. What subjects are shown *not* to be able to do is *remembering* each letter in the array—nor, arguably, can they *attend* to each letter in such a short amount of time. This suggests that, even if we cannot remember or attend to each part of what we see, we nonetheless can and indeed are visually aware of each part. This, arguably, applies to inner acquaintance too. Even though we cannot attend to or subsequently remember each of the conscious states that compose our overall experience at *t*, by being acquainted with the overall experience we can be (and indeed are) acquainted with each of its parts.

### §6.2. *Conscious-state individuation*

A perhaps more worrying issue for INDIVIDUAL-STATE concerns conscious-state individuation. By construing the terminus as an individual conscious state, it faces the challenge of explaining *how conscious states are individuated*. Meeting this challenge is not straightforward. In the vignette above, I presented a simplified view of individual conscious states. A more thorough look brings the complexities of conscious-state individuation to the surface. When we consider, for example, the taste experience I have when I eat the cake, several components can be identified: vanilla, sweetness, milkiness, and so on. When I look at the cake, I see the cake, but I also see its yellowish color at the bottom, its brownish color at the top, its round shape, and so on. I also see other things in my visual field, though they lie in the periphery. Now, how many individual conscious states are there? Just two: the (overall) taste experience and the (overall) visual experience? Or do the vanilla, sweetness, and milkiness taste components each constitute a distinct individual conscious state? And what about the visual experience: is my seeing the cake one individual conscious state, as well as each of my other concurrent visual representations of objects around me? Or should visual conscious states be individuated in a more fine-grained way, for example in terms of “homogeneous parts,” such that, say, my seeing the cake bottom's homogeneous yellowness itself constitutes one individual conscious state? Or is the individuation of visual states even more fine-grained—perhaps the individual visual state is a yellowish “pixel” in my visual field? I do not claim that these questions are *impossible* to answer.<sup>16</sup> However, they are quite difficult ones and perhaps impossible to answer *univocally*. For, at least *prima facie*, there does not seem to be any fact of the matter that would make us lean toward one individuation criterion over others. Arguably, different theorists will privilege different criteria mostly depending on how this fits their broader view. As I see it, the conscious-state individuation

---

<sup>16</sup> Masrour (2020: 215), for example, suggests that conscious states should be individuated by their intentional object; however, this view still needs more argumentative support and is theoretically committed to intentionalism about all kinds of conscious states.

question can only be answered on *pragmatic* grounds and does not speak to any fact of the matter about the *metaphysics* of consciousness. If so, IAT should avoid relying on a specific answer to it.

OVERALL-STATE, on the other hand, sidesteps the conscious-state individuation question. By construing the terminus as the overall experience, IAT can remain neutral as to what individuation criterion we should choose. Indeed, it can fit whatever criterion best meets the theorist's desiderata about the metaphysics of consciousness.

### 6.3. Unity of consciousness

OVERALL-STATE also has a virtue of its own: it offers a straightforward explanation of the *unity* of consciousness, one that is nicely integrated with IAT's explanation of the *nature* of consciousness. If we go for INDIVIDUAL-STATE, we need an extra story to account for the unity of consciousness: we have a number of separate conscious states, each of which is the terminus of a distinct instance of the acquaintance relation; we thus need an account of how they stitch together and of why the subject experiences them as unified. Arguably, those who opt for INDIVIDUAL-STATE will have to posit a special unifying relation among distinct individual conscious states and thereby develop a separate account of phenomenal unity. Adopting OVERALL-STATE, by contrast, offers an account of the unity of consciousness *for free*, as it were. In this framework, what accounts for the *nature* of consciousness also accounts for its *unity*. In virtue of what are all of S's co-occurrent conscious states at *t* unified? They are unified in virtue of S's being acquainted with S's overall experience at *t*: S is acquainted with each of them via *one single acquaintance relation*. Through one acquaintance relation, whose terminus is the overall experience at *t*, S is acquainted with each of S's conscious states at *t*. This explains not only why all of S's conscious states at *t* are unified, but also why S *experiences* them as unified (which, as noted, is a key element to phenomenal unity). S experiences them as unified because S is aware of them in one fell swoop, by being aware of the single overall experience that comprises them.

\*

The above considerations give us *prima facie* reasons for taking the terminus of acquaintance to be S's overall experience at *t*.

A last remark concerns the consequences this has for the *state of acquaintance*. (This is especially relevant if we adopt STATE-FIRST.) Taking the terminus to be an individual conscious state would allow for two possibilities concerning the state of acquaintance. Since state-acquaintance is such that the terminus (partly) constitutes the state of acquaintance, if the former is an individual conscious state, the latter could be either an individual state or the overall experience (or else a mental state that includes the overall experience).<sup>17</sup> If, instead, the terminus is the overall experience, the state of acquaintance cannot be one of the individual conscious states that are part of it because, obviously, a whole cannot be part of one of its proper parts. Therefore, if we take the terminus to be the overall experience, then the state of acquaintance can only be either the overall experience itself (whereby the terminus would constitute the state of acquaintance *fully*) or a mental state that includes the overall experience and exceeds it (whereby the terminus would constitute the state of acquaintance *partially*). Which of these is preferable is the topic of the next section.

---

<sup>17</sup> Middle-way options would be certainly possible, though not straightforwardly useful, and probably arbitrary.

With these remarks in mind, we may reformulate our characterization of IAT as follows (we replace “M\*” with “E\*” to highlight the fact that the state of acquaintance needs to encompass the overall experience E):

*LAT*<sub>2</sub>: For any subject S, conscious state M of S, and time *t*, M is conscious at *t* in virtue of (i) S’s being in a state of acquaintance E\* at *t*, (ii) E\*’s being state-acquainted with S’s overall experience at *t*, E, and (iii) M’s belonging to E.

## 7. The mereology of inner acquaintance

If we adopt STATE-FIRST (as I suggest in §5), then a third decision point concerns the special (constitutive) relation between the state of acquaintance M\* and the terminus M. More specifically, this decision point concerns the *mereology* of acquaintance, where the relevant questions include: do M\* and M overlap? If so, is the overlap full or partial? If M mereologically constitutes M\*, is it a proper or improper part of M\*? Here I review what strike me as the most pertinent options.<sup>18</sup>

I said that acquaintance is typically taken to involve a constitutive relation. However, this may be rejected: an inner acquaintance theorist may maintain that there is no mereological overlap between terminus and state of acquaintance. Those who do accept constitution, on the other hand, have to figure out whether the terminus constitutes the state of acquaintance fully or only partially. Accordingly, three options present themselves:

NO-CONSTITUTION: The state of acquaintance and the terminus are wholly *distinct* (there is *no overlap* between them).

PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION: The terminus constitutes the state of acquaintance *partially* (it is a *proper part* of the state of acquaintance).

FULL-CONSTITUTION: The terminus constitutes the state of acquaintance *fully* (it is an *improper part* of the state of acquaintance).<sup>19</sup>

I will suggest that we should opt for FULL-CONSTITUTION—the terminus is an *improper* part of the state of acquaintance. Before motivating my leaning toward this option, I add some specifications about the terminus.

### 7.1. More on terminus

In §6 I argued that the terminus of acquaintance is S’s *overall experience* at *t*. Strictly speaking, however, the mental state that constitutes the terminus of acquaintance cannot, by itself, be a *conscious experience*: for entering the acquaintance relation is exactly what *makes* that mental state conscious. *Qua* terminus of acquaintance (i.e., once it has entered the acquaintance relation), the mental state *is* a conscious experience. But, arguably, the same mental state may exist

---

<sup>18</sup> A more fundamental issue that would need to be addressed is whether the constitutive relation between M\* and M should be construed as *mereological* constitution or as some other kind of constitution—most relevantly *material* constitution. Unfortunately, this paper is already exceedingly long and discussing this issue would make it even more unbearably long. But I do plan to address this in further work.

<sup>19</sup> There is at least a fourth option, whereby the terminus and the state of acquaintance partially overlap. Examining the consequences of such a view would be interesting, but, again, I do not have the space to do it here.

unconsciously—thus independently of being a terminus of acquaintance. What constitutes the terminus, then, is not the overall experience, but rather the overall mental state that is made conscious by the acquaintance relation. Roughly, this is constituted by the conjunction of all the mental representations of S that are in fact conscious at  $t$ . When S is acquainted with it, the terminus is a conjunction of *conscious* mental representations. However, outside the acquaintance relation, each of those mental representations (and, *a fortiori*, their conjunction), would be *unconscious*. Acquaintance is what makes each mental representation of S at  $t$  (and their conjunction) conscious. As noted in §6, acquaintance is also what makes the conjunction of mental representations phenomenally *unified*, once they are conscious. The conjunction of mental representations is conscious and unified in virtue of S’s being acquainted with it (and more fundamentally, given STATE-FIRST, in virtue of such a conjunction’s bearing a constitutive relation to the state of acquaintance).

Let me explain this more slowly. Consider a subject S, the conjunction  $\Sigma$  of all conscious mental representations of S at  $t$ , and S’s overall experience at  $t$ , E. In the actual world, S is subject-acquainted with  $\Sigma$  at  $t$ , that is, S is in E. In virtue of being the terminus of acquaintance at  $t$ ,  $\Sigma$  is conscious—and each mental representation composing it is conscious—and phenomenally unified. It thereby constitutes S’s overall conscious experience E at  $t$ . However, in a counterfactual world where  $\Sigma$  is *not* the terminus of acquaintance at  $t$ —a world where S is not acquainted with  $\Sigma$  at  $t$ — $\Sigma$  is *unconscious* (and, *a fortiori*, *not phenomenally unified*). In other words, there is a possible world where S has  $\Sigma$ , but is not acquainted with it; in that possible world,  $\Sigma$  is unconscious (so S is *not* in E).

Acquaintance is thus what makes  $\Sigma$  conscious and phenomenally unified—it is that in virtue of which  $\Sigma$  is a *unity* of *conscious* mental representations, rather than a *conjunction* of *unconscious* mental representations. By way of a metaphor, we may say that acquaintance “illuminates”  $\Sigma$  thereby making the subject aware of it—this is what makes it conscious. Without acquaintance,  $\Sigma$  is, so to speak, “in the dark”—it is unconscious. When it becomes the terminus of acquaintance,  $\Sigma$  “comes to light” and is thereby “revealed” to the subject—it becomes conscious.

So, on the version of IAT we are developing, the terminus is  $\Sigma$ , which within the acquaintance relation constitutes E (i.e., S’s overall experience). Now, the question under consideration concerns the mereological relation between  $\Sigma$  and the state of acquaintance E\*.

## 7.2. In favor of full constitution

On NO-CONSTITUTION, terminus and state of acquaintance are distinct mental states and acquaintance is a metaphysically and epistemically direct relation between them. Distinct mental states have independent existences: although they may be causally related, the existence of one may imply the existence of the other only *contingently*. However, to account for the *relata-entailment* feature of acquaintance, NO-CONSTITUTION must posit an exception to this *distinctness-implies-metaphysical-independence* rule and construe acquaintance as so special a relation that it makes distinct existences depend on each other in a *metaphysically necessary* way.

Although it is a legitimate logical possibility, NO-CONSTITUTION does not seem to be a promising option for the acquaintance theorist, for it compels to an account of acquaintance not only as a primitive, but also as a metaphysically exceptional relation, without providing any substantial explanation of the necessary connection between terminus and state of acquaintance.



Instead of explaining metaphysical directness, NO-CONSTITUTION seems to ascribe it to some *sui generis* and somewhat mysterious feature of the relation between the two states. By contrast, construing acquaintance in terms of *constitution* aims at *explaining* acquaintance and its features. It explains *why* acquaintance entails the existence of its relata: the state of acquaintance cannot exist without the terminus because it is (partly) constituted by it. And it explains metaphysical directness: the relation between state of acquaintance and terminus is metaphysically direct in that it is *constitutive*—the terminus is a (proper or improper) part of the state of acquaintance. (As it will become clear in §8, it also explains, indirectly, epistemic directness, since epistemic directness occurs (partly) in virtue of metaphysical directness.) Given the explanatory sterility of NO-CONSTITUTION, I suggest that we focus on constitutive models (PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION and FULL-CONSTITUTION), that do *not* construe state of acquaintance and terminus as wholly independent mental states.

As noted, if the terminus is the conjunction  $\Sigma$  of all the mental representations that constitute the overall experience E of S at *t*, the state of acquaintance E\* must encompass E (since a whole cannot be a part of one of its proper parts). Therefore, the decision between PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION and FULL-CONSTITUTION is a decision on whether  $\Sigma$  is a proper or an improper part of E\*.

On PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION, the terminus is a proper part of the state of acquaintance:  $\Sigma$  is a proper part of E\*. This implies that, by entering the acquaintance relation,  $\Sigma$  is somehow *subsumed* by E\* and is thereby made conscious—it constitutes S's overall experience E. Therefore, on PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION, when S becomes acquainted with  $\Sigma$ , a *new* mental state, E\*, is formed and a new mental relation, *state-acquaintance*, is instantiated. By entering the state-acquaintance relation with  $\Sigma$ , E\* subsumes  $\Sigma$ — $\Sigma$  becomes a proper part of E\*.

On FULL-CONSTITUTION, instead, the terminus is an *improper* part of the state of acquaintance. In this framework, E and E\* are the *same*. When S becomes acquainted with  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Sigma$  enters the state-acquaintance relation with itself—it becomes *state-self-acquainted*—and is thereby conscious—it is S's overall experience E. On FULL-CONSTITUTION, then, *only a new mental relation* is instantiated when S becomes acquainted with  $\Sigma$ , a relation that makes  $\Sigma$  a conscious experience E: no new mental state is formed.

With this in mind, we can now see why FULL-CONSTITUTION is, at least *prima facie*, preferable. For one thing, it is more economical. While PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION implies the introduction of both a new relation (state-acquaintance) and a new mental state (E\*), FULL-CONSTITUTION implies only the instantiation of a new relation ( $\Sigma$  becomes state-self-acquainted; E\* coincides with E). While being more economical, FULL-CONSTITUTION has the same explanatory power as PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION. As noted, on IAT, what explains phenomenal consciousness is the *relation* of acquaintance: it is in virtue of entering the acquaintance relation that a mental state  $\Sigma$  is a conscious state E. Now, this may occur in two ways: either the subject enters a new mental state E\* that is state-acquainted with  $\Sigma$ , or  $\Sigma$  simply becomes state-self-acquainted. There does not seem to be any principled theoretical reason to prefer the former over the latter.

Indeed, there seem to be reasons to prefer the latter over the former (this is my second motivation for favoring FULL-CONSTITUTION). Both PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION and FULL-CONSTITUTION imply a mereological relation between state of acquaintance and terminus—the latter is a (proper, on PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION; improper, on FULL-CONSTITUTION) part of the former. One of the axioms of classical mereology is *supplementation*: if *x* is a proper part of *y*, there

must be a  $z$  (a *supplement*) that is part of  $y$  but does not overlap with  $x$ . If  $x$  is an *improper part* of  $y$ , then  $x = y$ : there is no supplement. If, instead,  $x$  is a *proper part* of  $y$ , every part of  $x$  overlaps some part of  $y$  but  $x$  is not identical to  $y$ ; accordingly, there must be some other proper part of  $y$ ,  $z$ , that ‘supplements’  $x$ , so that  $x$  and  $z$  together constitute a whole, i.e.,  $y$ . Now, if  $\Sigma$  were a proper part of  $E^*$ , it is not clear what the supplement (i.e., the proper part of  $E^*$  that does not overlap with  $\Sigma$ ) would be. Once we have the conjunction of all the conscious mental representations of  $S$  at  $t$ , what would be the extra phenomenal aspect of  $S$ ’s overall experience that exceeds such a conjunction?

A defender of PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION may reply by appealing to the distinction between *subjective character* and *qualitative character* (Levine 2001; Kriegel 2009). All conscious experiences are somehow *given to* the subject, they are *for* the subject: when I smell vanilla, there is a vanilla-ish way it is like *for me* to have that experience; this “for me” aspect is the experience’s *subjective character*. The vanilla-ish way, on the other hand, is the experience’s *qualitative character*. Whereas qualitative character is the aspect of the phenomenology that varies across different (kinds of) experiences, subjective character is shared by all conscious mental states. Following Kriegel (2009), it is plausible to suppose that what accounts for qualitative character is the experience’s representing the world as being a certain way. What accounts for the vanilla-ish quality of my smell experience is its representing vanilla. In this framework, first-order representation constitutes qualitative character. By itself, however, first-order representation lacks subjective character. A defender of PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION may argue that the supplement of  $\Sigma$ —the extra phenomenal aspect that is part of  $E^*$  but does not overlap with  $\Sigma$ —is the *subjective character* of the overall experience—its being *for me*.  $\Sigma$  (the conjunction of all conscious mental representations) merely accounts for the experience’s *qualitative character*, an extra bit is needed to account for subjective character.<sup>20</sup>

I agree. However, note that, to account for this, an extra mental *state* is *not* needed. On FULL-CONSTITUTION,  $\Sigma$ , by itself, is indeed not sufficient to account for the phenomenal character of the overall experience  $E$ —it only accounts (arguably) for its qualitative character. What accounts for subjective character is not an extra mental state  $E^*$  but simply the *relation of state-acquaintance*— $\Sigma$ ’s becoming state-acquainted with itself. Subjective character is thus due not to a further *item* or element in the metaphysical composition of consciousness, but rather to a *structural feature* of it. There does not seem to be a reason for considering this solution explanatorily less adequate than the one posited by PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION. In fact, the FULL-CONSTITUTION structural account of subjective character might even turn out more adequate. For while elements in the *qualitative character* are adequately accounted for by phenomenal *items* (most plausibly: representations), *subjective character* seems to be a *fundamentally different* aspect of the phenomenology—and a notoriously elusive one at that. On the FULL-CONSTITUTION structural account of subjective character, such a radical phenomenal difference is nicely mirrored by a metaphysical difference: while qualitative character is accounted for by conscious *items* (i.e., mental states), subjective character is accounted for by structural features of consciousness (i.e., the relation of state-self-acquaintance). This is of course speculative and underdeveloped—I suggest it merely as tentative motivation for preferring the FULL-CONSTITUTION structural account of subjective character. At

---

<sup>20</sup> Another candidate for the extra (supplement) phenomenological bit may be the “feeling of acquaintance” (I owe this suggestion to Uriah Kriegel). This is an interesting proposal, one that it is worth exploring, though this would require a phenomenological investigation that I do not have the space to carry out here. Arguably, what I say about subjective character (i.e., that it can be explained in a FULL-CONSTITUTION framework as well as in a PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION one) would similarly apply to the “feeling of acquaintance.”

any rate, I am quite confident that FULL-CONSTITUTION and PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION are at least on a par, when it comes to explanation of subjective character.

Another *prima facie* problem with PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION is the ontological status of such supplementation. As just noted, if  $\Sigma$  is a proper part of  $E^*$ , there is a proper part of  $E^*$ —call it  $\sigma$ —that does not overlap with  $\Sigma$ . Now, a bunch of questions arise about the ontological status of  $\sigma$ . What is it, exactly? Can it exist independently of being a part of  $E^*$  (that is, independently of forming a whole with  $\Sigma$ )? Answers to these questions are not straightforward and, on my view, an account that can sidestep them, and is equal in terms of explanatory power, is preferable.

That said, I do not claim that such answers cannot be given. Here is the sketch of a potential proposal that comes to my mind. On PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION,  $\sigma$ , together with state-acquaintance, is what accounts for subjective character. By itself, however, it cannot constitute subjective character—it is not phenomenologically manifest at all. It becomes phenomenologically manifest only when (together with  $\Sigma$ ) it becomes part of  $E^*$ . It does nonetheless have (non-phenomenologically-manifest) independent existence. When not part of  $E^*$ ,  $\sigma$  is a mental state that (i) has the disposition to constitute the subjective character of a conscious experience  $E$  and (ii) constitutes the condition of possibility for any relation of acquaintance to occur. Here is a relevant analogy. Site-specific performances take place in urban (or natural) areas that (unlike theaters) normally are *not* performance locations. The urban location, by itself, is not a performance location. However, given the possibility of site-specific performance, it has the *potential* (the disposition) for being one. When a choreography is danced in an urban location, the latter becomes a performance location. On the other hand, although the choreography can exist independently of the location—it can be danced elsewhere (e.g., in the rehearsal room)—it becomes a site-specific *performance* only if danced in the urban location. The latter, then, is the condition of possibility for the choreography to become performance. The instantiation of a site-specific performance is only made possible by the coming together of the choreography and the urban location. Spelling out the analogy: the choreography is  $\Sigma$ , the urban location is  $\sigma$ , and the instantiation of a site-specific performance is phenomenal consciousness. As the urban location, by itself, is not a performance location,  $\sigma$ , by itself, does not constitute subjective character. However, as the urban location has the potential to become a performance location,  $\sigma$  has the potential to become subjective character. As the choreography can be danced independently of being performed (e.g., during rehearsals),  $\Sigma$  can exist (unconsciously) independently of being object of inner awareness (i.e., independently of being the terminus of acquaintance). As in the rehearsal room the choreography is not yet performance, outside of the acquaintance relation  $\Sigma$  is not conscious. As the urban location is the condition of possibility for the choreography to become a performance,  $\sigma$  is the condition of possibility for  $\Sigma$  to become conscious. This is a consistent story, though a somewhat cumbersome one. Other PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION-friendly stories may be offered, but I suspect that they would be at least equally cumbersome. At any rate, FULL-CONSTITUTION seems to have the resources to explain the relevant phenomena in a much more straightforward way.

It may be objected that FULL-CONSTITUTION, though, faces the following problem. If the terminus is a proper part of the state of acquaintance, as per PARTIAL-CONSTITUTION, they are easily distinguishable: the state of acquaintance is the terminus *plus the supplementation*. But if terminus and state of acquaintance coincide, as per FULL-CONSTITUTION, how do we distinguish one from the other? I believe that this problem is merely virtual. For one thing, it is not fully clear that there is a principled reason for needing an account that makes terminus and state of acquaintance easily distinguishable. On FULL-CONSTITUTION, state-acquaintance is simply a

reflexive relation, where terminus and state of acquaintance are the same. At any rate, there is a way to distinguish terminus and state of acquaintance even if we adopt FULL-CONSTITUTION. For although it is true that when a mental state E is state-self-acquainted E is both the terminus and the state of acquaintance, we can still tell apart E *qua terminus* from E *qua state of acquaintance*. The former is E *qua* the conjunction of mental representations  $\Sigma$ ; as such, it has a bunch of distinctive features, that I outlined above: it can exist independently of being the terminus of acquaintance, but can have conscious existence only within the acquaintance relation, it is what constitutes qualitative character, and so on. The latter is E *qua* overall conscious experience; as such, it has a bunch of *different* features: it has subjective character, it is phenomenally unified, it is that in virtue of which S is acquainted with  $\Sigma$ , and so on. Therefore, even if, on FULL-CONSTITUTION, terminus and state of acquaintance are *not distinct*, they are still *distinguishable*.

\*

Having specified the mereological relation between the state of acquaintance and the terminus of the acquaintance relation, we can thus update our characterization of IAT:

*LAT*<sub>3</sub>: For any subject S, conscious state M of S, and time *t*, M is conscious at *t* in virtue of (i) S's having an overall experience E at *t*, (ii) E (qua overall experience) being state-acquainted with itself (qua conjunction of mental representations), and (iii) M's belonging to E.

## 8. The directedness of inner acquaintance

Inner awareness is awareness of one's current conscious experience. Although, as noted, inner awareness is importantly different from outer awareness, it shares with the latter the feature of being *directed toward* something—of being awareness *of* something.<sup>21</sup> Arguably, when it comes to outer awareness, such *directedness* is best accounted for in terms of representation. What makes my smell experience an experience *of* vanilla is its *representing* vanilla. As noted, meta-representational theories offer an analogous account of inner awareness: what makes my current inner awareness an awareness *of* vanilla-smell experience is its being a *representation* of vanilla-smell experience. However, as pointed out in §3, meta-representational views seem unable to account for the special *subjective significance* of inner awareness. While representation offers a plausibly adequate explanation of *outer* awareness, it does not seem suitable when it comes to accounting for *inner* awareness, whose directedness is fundamentally different from the kind of directedness instantiated by outer awareness. Appeal to acquaintance is primarily aimed to do justice to such a difference.

---

<sup>21</sup> Some philosophers (especially in the phenomenological tradition) have argued that, despite the surface grammar similarities between inner and outer awareness (both are construed as “awareness of”), the difference between their natures is so radical that, differently from the latter, the former should be modeled as involving *no* directedness at all (*cf.* Zahavi 2005). I disagree on this point. Although there *are* fundamental differences between the two kinds of awareness, I think that inner awareness does involve directedness. The main reason why I think this has to do with the epistemic significance of inner awareness (I develop this point below, in the main text). What, on my view, accounts for those differences is that inner and outer awareness involve fundamentally different kinds of directedness. As I try to specify in what follows, whereas outer awareness' directedness is intentional or representational (where this implies, among other things, the possibility of targetless or mistargeting directedness), inner awareness' directedness is not. I suggest that this way of construing the difference between the two kinds of awareness is more fruitful than denying inner awareness' directedness altogether.

Relatedly, a form of directedness is needed to account for the *epistemic significance* of inner awareness. Intuitively, just by having a certain conscious experience, one can learn something about it. If I ask you what your auditory experience was an instant ago, you are in a position to answer, even if you were not attending to that experience. Arguably, you are in such a position in virtue of the fact that the inner awareness that comes with every conscious experience provides you with information about the phenomenology of the relevant experience and thereby enables you to *learn* something *about* it. For you to learn something *about* your experience, you need to be in a mental state that is somehow *directed at* it. Evidence of the epistemic significance of inner awareness is also provided by the fact that one can *remember* one's past experiences, even if one does not attend to them while one has them (Thompson 2011; Kriegel 2019). You can now remember at least some of your past experiences because, even if you did not attend to them when they occurred, you were nonetheless innerly aware of them and inner awareness provided you with some information about their phenomenology—information that you have retained and that your memory is now recruiting.

Moreover, the way you come to know the phenomenology of your experience via inner awareness is distinctive and special. Your *perceptual* knowledge of vanilla smell depends on and is *mediated* by your mental state of representing vanilla; plausibly, it also depends on some (implicit) assumptions about the reliability of the causal process through which vanilla provokes a certain smell representation in you. The kind of knowledge involved in inner awareness is different. It does *not* depend on any mediating representation or on any assumptions about how the subject relates to their experience. The experience is simply *presented* to the subject, who apprehends its phenomenology in an unmediated way. In this sense inner awareness is *immediate* and *direct*. A symptom of that immediacy is the fact that the epistemic results of inner awareness are *indubitable* (Gertler 2011: 89). While you might doubt the presence of vanilla in your surroundings even if you have a smell experience as of vanilla (you might undergo an olfactory hallucination), while being innerly aware of such a smell experience, you cannot doubt that you do have it (you can doubt the existence of the external cause of your experience but you cannot doubt the existence of the experience itself). Arguably, this is because, while perception relies on some intermediary causal processes where something may go astray, inner awareness does not: it is immediate and direct.

So, there is an epistemic dimension to inner awareness, and a special one at that. It is to do justice to this special epistemic dimension that acquaintance is construed, as mentioned in §4, as *epistemically direct*. Acquaintance involves a kind of directedness that implies epistemic directness (it is not mediated by any mental state or representation) and that is fundamentally different from representational directedness (it does not involve any causal process and it cannot be targetless or mistargeting).

How should this special directedness be accounted for? This is the question driving our fourth decision point. Here, again, options may vary depending on the choice made at previous decision points. Since I cannot consider all the possible options here, I will assume the choices I recommended in the previous sections. Some of the options below may still be relevant for some decision paths.

The most promising way to explain acquaintance's epistemic directness and special directedness is to appeal, at least partly, to acquaintance's *metaphysical directness* (Gertler 2001, 2011). On the version of IAT I have been building up, such a metaphysical directness is grounded in a constitutive relation between the terminus and the state of acquaintance. The idea

then is that the terminus being a constitutive part of the state of acquaintance allows for a direct epistemic access to the former. However, mereological composition does not, by itself, imply *directedness*: obviously,  $x$ 's being a part of  $y$  is not sufficient for  $y$ 's being directed at  $x$ . The referential structure of inner acquaintance and the way it interacts with (and partly depends on) its mereological structure need to be further articulated. Plausibly, we need a model of acquaintance such that (a) the state of acquaintance *refers* to (is directed at) the terminus and (b) this is so partly in virtue of the state of acquaintance being *constituted* by the terminus. How to exactly construe such a model is our fourth decision point. Three options suggest themselves: what I call the *primitivist model*, the *demonstrative model*, and the *quotational model*. I will suggest that the latter is the most promising model of inner acquaintance reference.

### 8.1. *The primitivist model*

On the *primitivist model*, acquaintance involves a primitive referential relation. When such a relation is instantiated, the relevant mental state becomes conscious and its subject is connected directly to it via a special, epistemically rewarding directedness, in virtue of which s/he acquires information about its phenomenology. On the primitivist model, there is no more fundamental explanation of this: those are just brute and fundamental facts about inner acquaintance.

Although there is no ultimate presumption against primitivist models (arguably, any theory will need to rely on some bedrock unexplained explanans), they should nonetheless be used sparsely; more explanatory options, if available, should be prioritized. This is especially pressing when it comes to acquaintance, whose alleged mysteriousness has been the main reason of its relegation at the fringe of consciousness debates. It seems that modelling acquaintance as a primitive relation would make any attempt to provide a naturalization-friendly account of it almost hopeless.

### 8.2. *The demonstrative model*

On the *demonstrative model*, acquaintance involves demonstrative reference to an experience. Indeed, it involves a *special* kind of demonstrative reference, as we will see, and this is what makes it categorically different from ordinary representation.

Brie Gertler (2001) put forward a thorough articulation of this model. (Note well: Gertler proposes the demonstrative model as a model of *introspective* reference, rather than of *inner awareness* reference; in this section I try to apply her model to inner awareness.) The core idea is that, in inner acquaintance, reference to the experience occurs via a *pure demonstrative* (i.e., a demonstrative without descriptive component) that is related to the experience it refers to via a constitutive (rather than causal) relation. By drawing on Kaplan (1989), Gertler argues that, to refer, a demonstrative must be accompanied by a demonstration—an act of “pointing at” what the subject intends to refer to, an act that may take various forms but always involves the subject’s drawing their attention (and, in conversation, that of the interlocutor) to what they intend to refer to. Demonstration requires that what the subject intends to refer to *appears* to them a certain way. *Perceptual* demonstratives involve a *causal* connection between what is referred to and its appearance to the subject. Besides demonstration, they also require a descriptive element. The latter may specify the category to which the referent appears to belong (“that woman,” “that object”), but it does not need to; what is constitutive of every instance of

perceptual demonstration is an “implicit descriptive component” to the effect that there is an appropriate causal relation between the referent and the way it appears to the subject (Gertler 2001: 315). The kind of demonstratives that we use to refer to the phenomenology of our experiences (what Gertler calls *introspective* demonstratives), instead, do not require any descriptive component—they are *pure*. They only require that the subject *attends to* a phenomenally conscious state, independently of any implicit descriptive component concerning the connection between the referent and its appearance. Here is why this is so. Like perceptual demonstratives, introspective demonstratives also refer via the way what is referred to appears. However, here *appearance* is not only the *vehicle* of demonstration (i.e., that through which demonstrative reference occurs), but also the *referent* (i.e., what is referred to). In perceptual demonstration, one demonstratively refers to an object in virtue of that object appearing a certain way in the subject’s experience. Arguably, such appearance is constituted by the phenomenology of the relevant experience. In *introspective* demonstration, however, the very appearance that constitutes the vehicle of demonstration (the experience’s phenomenology) is also what is referred to. The subject refers to the phenomenology of their experience in virtue of that very same phenomenology. This is why, in introspective demonstration, the connection between the demonstrative and its referent needs to be *constitutive*: the referent and the vehicle of demonstration are not distinct entities; they thereby cannot be causally related—they are *constitutively* related.

The demonstrative model thus offers a substantial explanation of how (a) the state of acquaintance refers to the terminus (via a pure demonstrative) and (b) this is so partly in virtue of the state of acquaintance being constituted by the terminus (the appearance that constitutes the vehicle of demonstration is also the demonstrative’s referent).

The demonstrative model is primarily a model for *introspective* reference, which occurs when the subject focuses their attention on the experience (usually) to form a judgment about it—indeed, Gertler develops the demonstrative model as part of her account of introspection of phenomenal states (as mentioned, she does *not* herself offer it as a model of *inner awareness* reference). However, as a model of the kind of reference involved in *inner acquaintance*, it seems to have the following problem. As noted, any successfully referring demonstrative requires a demonstration, which involves, at the very least, *attention*. Now, on IAT, acquaintance is what constitutes inner awareness. But inner awareness is typically *non-attentive*. Although we sometimes introspect, and thereby attend to, our experience, our attention is typically focused on things *other* than the experience itself—usually on what the experience is *about* (the object seen, the smell smelled, the content of a thought, etc.). Obviously, however, unintrospected experiences can be conscious: one can be acquainted and thereby innerly aware of an experience even if one does not attend to it. If so, attention to the experience cannot be a requirement on inner acquaintance, as it is on the demonstrative model. The demonstrative model, thus, seems to be unfitted to inner acquaintance reference.

It may be suggested that a more thorough examination of the phenomenon of attention could dissolve this problem. Attention is often seen as an *on/off* phenomenon: either you attend to something or you do not, and if you are attending to something, you cannot, at the same time, attend to something else. However, it is plausible that attention is a *gradable* phenomenon: it can be distributed in different amounts over several items. Even if most of your attentional resources are devoted to, say, the object of your visual experience, the remainder can be devoted to the objects of other experiences, or to the experiences themselves. In this picture, a model of

attention can be developed such that, at any one time, each conscious state composing the overall experience of a subject obtains at least a tiny amount of attention.<sup>22</sup>

Regardless of the attractiveness of this model of attention, it does not seem to make the demonstrative model more suitable to inner acquaintance reference, for at least two reasons. First, even if it were true that each conscious state receives at least a tiny amount of attention, this seems to be a *contingent* fact, not a necessary fact about consciousness.<sup>23</sup> Even if, in the actual world, all conscious states are attended to, it seems at least conceivable that an experience can be conscious though unattended. If so, attention should not be construed as part of what *makes* an experience conscious; therefore, it cannot be a requirement for the relation of acquaintance (given that acquaintance is meant to be what makes an experience conscious). Second, even if being attended to were necessary for a conscious state to be conscious, the tiny amount of attention the model reserves to each conscious state is, arguably, insufficient for demonstration. Demonstrating something requires it occupying the center of the phenomenal field—being somehow salient for the subject. Plausibly, something can be salient only if the subject devotes to it a sufficiently large amount of attentional resources. Arguably, the amount of attention that one typically (i.e., in non-introspective contexts) devotes to the experience itself is too small for one to form a demonstrative about it.

So, although the demonstrative model may be a promising way to articulate introspective reference (where most of one’s attentional resources are devoted to the experience itself), it does not seem suitable as a model of inner acquaintance reference.

### 8.3. *The quotational model*

The *quotational model* construes inner acquaintance reference by analogy to the linguistic phenomenon of quotation. In linguistic quotation, reference to a linguistic expression (a word, a sentence, etc.) is made by employing that very linguistic element via a quotation operation usually signaled by quotation marks. By writing “*vanilla*” I refer to the word enclosed between the quotation marks—the word spelled v-a-n-i-l-l-a. The expression (“*vanilla*”) that I use to refer to the word “*vanilla*” is constituted by a token of the very word I intend to refer to: the word “*vanilla*” is used, through the quotation operation, to refer to itself. The expression “*vanilla*” thus refers to the word “*vanilla*” (partly) *in virtue of being constituted* by it.

Things other than linguistic expressions may be used to quotationally refer to themselves in a similar way. The sign “under construction” painted on a bridge conveys the sentence “This bridge is under construction” (Kriegel 2009: 162-63). The bridge (the object itself) is a constituent of the sentence and its semantic contribution is to refer to itself. In this case, a token (the concrete object: the bridge) is used to refer to that very same token (the bridge itself), rather than to the type it instantiates. Here too, the sentence refers to the bridge *in virtue of being partly constituted* by it.

---

<sup>22</sup> Sebastian Watzl’s (2017) theory of attention, as the structuring of the field of consciousness, is a promising way to develop such a model. Roughly, the idea is that attention shapes the structure of one’s overall experience by making some aspects of it central, other peripheral. Central aspects are phenomenally more prominent, peripheral aspects are less prominent. In this picture, attention is (unequally) distributed over the whole conscious experience.

<sup>23</sup> Jesse Prinz (2011) argues that attention *is* necessary for consciousness. I disagree and my main motivation is the abovementioned epistemic significance of non-attentive inner awareness. Prinz’s position is minoritarian anyway. Arguments against the necessity of attention for consciousness have been put forward by Mole (2008) and Smithies (2011).



The quotational model of first-person reference to experience has been developed primarily within the context of the debate around phenomenal concepts (Papineau 2002, 2006; Balog 2012). The idea is that at least some phenomenal concepts refer to a (type or token of a) certain experience in virtue of being constituted by (a token of) that very experience:

My proposal is that there is a concept forming mechanism that operates on an experience and turns it into a phenomenal concept that refers to either the token experience, or to a type of phenomenal experience that the token exemplifies. (Balog 2012: 33)

The mental operation that turns an experience into a phenomenal concept is analogous to linguistic quotation: the token experience is “taken up” via the operation and used to refer to itself or to the experience type it instantiates.

The quotational model of phenomenal concepts is a model of how we *think* about consciousness. My proposal is to explore a quotational model of the *nature* of consciousness. Samuel Coleman (2015) offers an account that goes in this direction. He puts forward a quotational model of consciousness, that he calls Quotational Higher-Order Thought theory (QHOT):

I suggest the right higher-order analysis of consciousness sees a HO state ‘quote’ a sensory state, forming a larger composite structure wherein the sensory state is displayed. Its being embedded within the HO state and thereby displayed is what constitutes the subject’s awareness of the sensory state. (Coleman 2015: 2717-2718)

On Coleman’s view, a first-order state (by itself unconscious) is taken up by a higher-order thought via a mental operation analogous to quotation, by which the higher-order thought “displays” the first-order state thereby making it conscious. The relevant higher-order thought is relatively “thin” and has a “frame-like structure “This state is present: “\_\_\_\_\_”, with the gap between the “\_\_\_\_\_” for the embedding of a sensory state.” (*ibid.*: 2718). In virtue of being so constituted by it, the higher-order thought refers to the first-order state. As noted by Coleman, differently from the phenomenal-concept quotational model, on QHOT what is quoted is not the experience itself, but the first-order state (what he calls “sensory content”): the quotation operation is what *makes* the first-order state a conscious experience. Moreover, on QHOT what is referred to is always the token experience itself (rather than the experience type it instantiates).

I suggest that the best explanation of inner acquaintance reference is a quotational model inspired by, but somewhat different from, QHOT. To best fit the Inner Acquaintance Theory I propose, two main modifications need to be made. First, the quotational state should not be construed as a *thought*. For even the “thin” content stipulated by Coleman is still too thick to fit inner acquaintance. Thoughts have conceptual, propositionally structured—thus *descriptive*—content. The thought ““This state is present: “\_\_\_\_\_” involves the deployment of the descriptive demonstrative “this state” and of the predicate “is present.” However, as noted in §8.2, inner acquaintance reference is *direct*, and this implies, among other things (as Gertler effectively argues), that it is *not* mediated by *any description*. Therefore, the quotational state featuring in inner acquaintance should not be construed as a thought (not even a thought with the “thin” content stipulated by Coleman).

Second, the quotational state should not be construed as *distinct* from the quoted state. I argued in §7 that, on the version of IAT I recommend, the terminus is an improper part of the state of acquaintance: what makes a mental state conscious is *not* its entering a relation with a *distinct* state (as theorized by QHOT), but rather entering a relation with *itself*. On the model I

suggest, the quotation operation does not consist of a separate mental state “taking up” the first-order state and integrating it in a suitably structured content. Rather, it consists of a *structural change* occurring *within* the first-order state. Speaking somewhat metaphorically, the structural change amounts to the introduction of ‘mental quotation marks.’ By such a structural change, the first-order state is ‘quoted’ and thus displayed or presented to the subject, thereby becoming conscious. There is no separate mental state quoting, displaying, and presenting the first-order state: the first-order state quotes itself, and thereby displays and presents itself. By displaying and presenting itself, the first-order state *refers* to itself. The conscious experience (qua state of acquaintance) refers to itself (qua terminus) *in virtue of being an improper part of (and thus constituted by) itself*.

Similarly to Gertler’s demonstrative model, here too the experience is both referential vehicle and referent: it is that by which reference occurs (it is in virtue of being constituted by itself that the experience refers, somewhat similarly to the way in which it is in virtue of being constituted by the token word “vanilla” that the expression ““vanilla”” refers) and at the same time it is the very item referred to.

By displaying or presenting itself, the mental state makes information about its phenomenology available to be epistemically accessed by the subject. The quotation operation makes information that is generated by the first-order state available to the subject’s consciousness: by entering the quotation relation with itself, the first-order state is no longer just a *source* of information, but it becomes a *receiver* and *transmitter* of information (it receives information about its own phenomenology and potentially transmits it to the subject). Of course, not all such information is actually *accessed* by the subject, though usually at least some of it is. The relevant information is accessible *directly*: there is no mediating mental state, representation, or description. This accounts for the *epistemic significance* of inner awareness, as well as for its *epistemic specialness*.

Much more work needs to be done to fill out the details of the quotational model and show that it promises a satisfactory account of inner acquaintance and phenomenal consciousness. Though sketchy and tentative, I hope that this section’s discussion could at least give a sense of the potential fecundity of this research project.

## 9. Conclusion

I have argued that the Inner Acquaintance Theory should be spelled out through at least four decision points, concerning, respectively, the fundamental relation, the terminus, the mereology, and the directedness of inner acquaintance. As noted, a particular choice at a certain decision point may affect, on the one hand, which further decision points may arise and, on the other hand, which options are available at further decision points. Moreover, those considered above are far from exhausting the possible decision points faced by (different versions of) IAT. Obviously, considering all the relevant cross-cutting possibilities and combinations cannot be done in one single paper. This, I suggest, would be the preliminary goal of a IAT research program, if ever such a program was to see the light.

In this paper, I have sketched one possible way IAT could be spelled out. I suggested that (1) the most fundamental relation involved in inner acquaintance is what I called *state-acquaintance*, i.e., the special constitutive relation between the terminus M and the state of acquaintance M\*; (2) the terminus of acquaintance is the *conjunction of all the conscious mental representations* harbored by

the subject at a given time (rather than an *individual* mental state or representation); (3) the terminus is an *improper* part of the state of acquaintance (rather than a *proper* part); (4) the overall experience *qua* state of acquaintance refers to itself *qua* terminus via a quotation operation. By putting all this together, we obtain the following articulation of IAT:

*IAT<sub>4</sub>*: For any subject S, conscious state M of S, and time *t*, M is conscious at *t* in virtue of (i) S's having an overall experience E at *t*, (ii) E (*qua* overall experience) being state-acquainted with itself (*qua* conjunction of mental representations), (iii) E *qua* state of acquaintance referring to E *qua* terminus in virtue of being an improper part of itself and of entering a quotation operation, and (iv) M's belonging to E.

*IAT<sub>4</sub>* accounts for the fundamental differences between inner and outer awareness without giving up the intuitive idea that inner awareness is *awareness of* one's experience. The constitutive relation between state of acquaintance and terminus makes mistargeting inner awareness impossible. It is also what underlies both the epistemic significance and the epistemic specialness of inner awareness (its "intimacy" or "cognitive immediacy"): by being innerly aware of an experience, the subject enters an especially intimate cognitive contact with it in virtue of the experience's displaying and presenting itself via a quotation operation. Accordingly, all the information about the phenomenology of experience that is available to the subject via inner awareness is guaranteed to be generated by the experience itself—no misinformation is possible.

*IAT<sub>4</sub>* has the virtue of constituting a *unified* account of *phenomenal consciousness*, *subjectivity*, and *phenomenal unity*. The same relation of acquaintance accounts for the fact that (a) a subject's overall experience is *conscious*, (b) the overall conscious experience (as well as each of the conscious states that compose it) is *for* the subject (or *given to* the subject), and (c) the overall experience is phenomenally *unified*. All the co-occurrent conscious states of a subject at *t* are unified in virtue of their conjunction constituting the terminus of one single instance of state-self-acquaintance.

\*

The Inner Acquaintance Theory is a promising alternative to meta-representational theories of consciousness, albeit an underexplored one. In this paper, I tried to make a few steps toward filling this theoretical gap. I pointed at some crucial decision points that any theorist who wants to build an Inner Acquaintance Theory of consciousness must address. I offered a specific version of IAT (*IAT<sub>4</sub>*), by arguing for a particular choice at each decision point. The result is what antecedently strikes me as the most promising version of the account. However, different choices may be defended, and alternative (perhaps ultimately better) versions may be developed. My hope is that, by pointing at the main questions that any such a theory needs to answer, this paper can pave the way for future, more refined, Inner Acquaintance Theory of consciousness.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> For very helpful conversations on the topics of this paper I am grateful to Davide Bordini, Matt Duncan, Arnaud Dewalque, Uriah Kriegel, and Jim Pryor. I am particularly grateful to Uriah Kriegel for extensive and generous comments on a previous draft. The paper was presented in the *Global Consciousness* online conference, in the *Rice Workshop in Philosophy of Mind* in Houston, in the *Cornell Workshop on Mind and Value: Acquaintance* in Ithaca, and in the *Awareness, Consciousness, Experience* workshop in Milan. I am grateful to the audiences there, in particular to Torin Alter, Emad Atiq, John Barnden, Davide Bordini, Quentin Coudray, Matt Duncan, Santiago Echeverri, Philip Goff, Andrea Guardo, Robert Howell, Michelle Liu, Callum MacRae, Matt McGrath, Laurie Paul, Adam Pautz, Jim Pryor, Adriana Renero, Susanna Schellenberg, Miguel Ángel Sebastián, Umrao Sethi, Will Sharp, Charles Siewert, Giuliano Torrengo, Logan Wigglesworth, Helen Yetter Chappel, and Nick Young.

## References

- Armstrong, David M. 1968. *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*. New York: Humanities Press.
- Balog, Katalin. 2012. "Acquaintance and the Mind-Body Problem." In *New Perspectives on Type Identity: The Mental and the Physical*, edited by Simone Gozzano and Christopher S. Hill, 16–42. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bayne, Tim. 2010. *The Unity of Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bayne, Tim, and David J. Chalmers. 2003. "What Is the Unity of Consciousness?" In *The Unity of Consciousness: Binding, Integration, and Dissociation*, edited by Axel Cleeremans, 23–58. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- BonJour, Laurence. 2000. "Toward a Defense of Empirical Foundationalism." In *Resurrecting Old-Fashioned Foundationalism*, edited by Michael R. DePaul. Lanham, Ma: Rowman and Littlefield.
- . 2003. "A Version of Internalist Foundationalism." In *Epistemic Justification: Internalism vs. Externalism, Foundations vs. Virtues*, by Laurence Bonjour and Ernest Sosa. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Brewer, Bill. 2011. *Perception and Its Objects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brogaard, Berit. 2012. "Are Conscious States Conscious in Virtue of Representing Themselves?" *Philosophical Studies* 159 (3): 467–74.
- Brown, Richard. 2010. "Deprioritizing the A Priori Arguments Against Physicalism." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 17 (3–4): 47–69.
- Byrne, Alex. 1997. "Some like It Hot: Consciousness and Higher-Order Thoughts." *Philosophical Studies* 86 (2): 103–29.
- Campbell, John. 2002. *Reference and Consciousness*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Carruthers, Peter. 2000. *Phenomenal Consciousness: A Naturalistic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2005. *Consciousness: Essays from a Higher-Order Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chalmers, David J. 2003. "The Content and Epistemology of Phenomenal Belief." In *Consciousness: New Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by Quentin Smith and Aleksandar Jokic, 220–72. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Churchland, Paul M. 2013. *Matter and Consciousness, Third Edition*. 3rd ed. MIT Press.
- Coleman, Sam. 2015. "Quotational Higher-Order Thought Theory." *Philosophical Studies* 172 (10): 2705–33. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-015-0441-1>.
- . 2019. "Natural Acquaintance." In *Acquaintance: New Essays*, edited by Jonathan Knowles and Thomas Raleigh, 49–74. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dainton, Barry. 2000. *Stream of Consciousness: Unity and Continuity in Conscious Experience*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Dennett, Daniel C. 1988. "Quining Qualia." In *Consciousness in Contemporary Science*, edited by Anthony J. Marcel and Edoardo Bisiach. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2016. "Illusionism as the Obvious Default Theory of Consciousness." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 23 (11–12): 65–72.
- Dretske, Fred. 1993. "Conscious Experience." *Mind* 102 (406): 263–83.
- . 1995. *Naturalizing the Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Duncan, Matt. 2018. "Subjectivity as Self-Acquaintance." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 25 (3–4): 88–111.
- . 2020. "Knowledge of Things." *Synthese* 197 (8): 3559–92. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-018-01904-0>.
- . 2021a. "Acquaintance." *Philosophy Compass* 16 (3): e12727. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12727>.
- . 2021b. "Experience Is Knowledge." *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Mind* 1: 106–29.
- Fales, Evan. 1996. *A Defense of the Given*. Lanham, Ma: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- Fiocco, M. Oreste. 2017. "Knowing Things in Themselves." *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 94 (3): 332–58.
- Frankish, Keith. 2016. "Illusionism as a Theory of Consciousness." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 23 (11–12): 11–39.
- Fumerton, Richard. 1996. *Metaepistemology and Skepticism*. 1 vols. Studies in Epistemology and Cognitive Theory. Lanham, Ma: Rowman & Littlefield.
- . 2001. "Classical Foundationalism." In *Resurrecting Old-Fashioned Foundationalism*, edited by Michael R. DePaul, 3–20. Studies in Epistemology and Cognitive Theory. Lanham, Ma: Rowman and Littlefield.
- . 2009. "Luminous Enough for a Cognitive Home." *Philosophical Studies* 142 (1): 67–76.
- Gennaro, Rocco J. 1996. *Consciousness and Self-Consciousness*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- . 2012. *The Consciousness Paradox: Consciousness, Concepts, and Higher-Order Thoughts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Gertler, Brie. 2001. "Introspecting Phenomenal States." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 63 (2): 305–28.
- . 2011. *Self-Knowledge*. London; New York: Routledge.
- . 2012a. "Conscious States as Objects of Awareness: On Uriah Kriegel, Subjective Consciousness: A Self-Representational Theory." *Philosophical Studies* 159 (3): 447–55.
- . 2012b. "Renewed Acquaintance." In *Introspection and Consciousness*, edited by Declan Smithies and Daniel Stoljar, 89–123. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Giustina, Anna. 2021. "Introspective Acquaintance: An Integration Account." *European Journal of Philosophy*, 1–18.
- . 2022a. "A Defense of Inner Awareness: The Memory Argument Revisited." *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 13: 341–63. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-021-00602-0>.
- . 2022b. "Introspective Knowledge by Acquaintance." *Synthese* 200 (2): 128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-022-03578-1>.
- . 2022c. "Nature Does Not Yet Say No to Inner Awareness: Reply to Stoljar." *Erkenntnis*, May. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-022-00557-3>.
- . 2022d. "An Acquaintance Alternative to Self-Representationalism." *Philosophical Studies* 179 (12): 3831–63. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-022-01868-5>.
- Goldman, Alvin I. 1993. "Consciousness, Folk-Psychology, and Cognitive Science." *Consciousness and Cognition* 2: 364–82.
- Harman, Gilbert. 1990. "The Intrinsic Quality of Experience." *Philosophical Perspectives* 4: 31–52.
- Hasan, Ali. 2013. "Phenomenal Conservatism, Classical Foundationalism, and Internalist Justification." *Philosophical Studies* 162 (2): 119–41.
- Hellie, Benj. 2007. "Higher-Order Intentionality and Higher-Order Acquaintance." *Philosophical Studies* 134 (3): 289–324.
- Hill, Christopher S. 2016. "Replies to Byrne, McGrath, and McLaughlin." *Philosophical Studies* 173 (3): 861–72. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-015-0616-9>.
- Hofmann, Frank. 2014. "Non-Conceptual Knowledge." *Philosophical Issues* 24 (1): 184–208.
- Horgan, Terence, and Uriah Kriegel. 2007. "Phenomenal Epistemology: What Is Consciousness That We May Know It so Well?" *Philosophical Issues* 17 (1): 123–44.
- Kammerer, François. 2016. "The Hardest Aspect of the Illusion Problem--and How to Solve It." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 23 (11–12): 124–39.
- Kaplan, David. 1989. "Demonstratives." In *Themes from Kaplan*, edited by Joseph Almog, John Perry, and Howard Wettstein. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kriegel, Uriah. 2003. "Consciousness as Intransitive Self-Consciousness: Two Views and an Argument." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 33 (1): 103–32.
- . 2009. *Subjective Consciousness: A Self-Representational Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- . 2011. “Self-Representationalism and the Explanatory Gap.” In *Consciousness and the Self: New Essays*, edited by JeeLoo Liu and John Perry, 51–75. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511732355.003>.
- . 2019. “Dignga’s Argument for the Awareness Principle: An Analytic Refinement.” *Philosophy East and West* 69: 143–55.
- Kriegel, Uriah, and Kenneth Williford. 2006. *Self-Representational Approaches to Consciousness*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Levine, Joseph. 2001. *Purple Haze: The Puzzle of Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2006. “Conscious Awareness and (Self-)Representation.” In *Self-Representational Approaches to Consciousness*, edited by Uriah Kriegel and Kenneth Williford, 173–98. MIT Press.
- . 2018. *Quality and Content: Essays on Consciousness, Representation, and Modality. Quality and Content*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2019. “Acquaintance Is Consciousness and Consciousness Is Acquaintance.” In *Acquaintance: New Essays*, edited by Jonathan Knowles and Thomas Raleigh, 33–48. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lycan, William G. 1996. *Consciousness and Experience*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Masrour, Farid. 2020. “The Phenomenal Unity of Consciousness.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Consciousness*, edited by Uriah Kriegel, 208–29. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- McGinn, Colin. 2008. “Consciousness as Knowingness.” *The Monist* 91 (2): 237–49.
- Mehta, Neil. 2013. “Is There a Phenomenological Argument for Higher-Order Representationalism?” *Philosophical Studies* 164 (2): 357–70.
- Mole, Christopher. 2008. “Attention and Consciousness.” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 15 (4): 86–104.
- Navon, David. 1977. “Forest Before Trees: The Precedence of Global Features in Visual Perception.” *Cognitive Psychology* 9: 353–83.
- Neander, Karen. 1998. “The Division of Phenomenal Labor: A Problem for Representational Theories of Consciousness.” *Philosophical Perspectives* 12: 411–34.
- Papineau, David. 2002. *Thinking About Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2006. “Phenomenal and Perceptual Concepts.” In *Phenomenal Concepts and Phenomenal Knowledge: New Essays on Consciousness and Physicalism*, edited by Torin Alter and Sven Walter, 111–44. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Prinz, Jesse. 2011. “Is Attention Necessary and Sufficient for Consciousness?” In *Attention: Philosophical and Psychological Essays*, edited by Christopher Mole, Declan Smithies, and Wayne Wu, 174–203. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Raleigh, Thomas. 2019. “The Recent Renaissance of Acquaintance.” In *Acquaintance: New Essays*, edited by Jonathan Knowles and Thomas Raleigh, 1–31. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rosenthal, David M. 1993. “State Consciousness and Transitive Consciousness.” *Consciousness and Cognition* 2 (3): 355–63.
- . 1997. “A Theory of Consciousness.” In *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*, edited by Ned Block, Owen J. Flanagan, and Güven Güzeldere, 729–53. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- . 2005. *Consciousness and Mind*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Russell, Bertrand. 1910. “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 11: 108–28.
- . 1912. *The Problems of Philosophy*. New York: H. Holt and Company.
- Schwitzgebel, Eric. 2011. *Perplexities of Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Seager, William E. 2004. "A Cold Look at HOT Theory." In *Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness: An Anthology*, edited by Rocco J. Gennaro, 255–76. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Siewert, Charles. 1998. *The Significance of Consciousness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Smithies, Declan. 2011. "Attention Is Rational-Access Consciousness." In *Attention: Philosophical and Psychological Essays*, edited by Christopher Mole, Declan Smithies, and Wayne Wu, 247–73. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Soteriou, Matthew. 2013. *The Mind's Construction: The Ontology of Mind and Mental Action*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sperling, George. 1960. "The Information Available in Brief Visual Presentations." *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied* 74 (11): 1–29.
- Thompson, Evan. 2011. "Self-No-Self? Memory and Reflexive Awareness." In *Self, No Self?: Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*, edited by Mark Siderits, Evan Thompson, and Dan Zahavi, 157–75. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tye, Michael. 1995. *Ten Problems of Consciousness: A Representational Theory of the Phenomenal Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- . 2008. *Consciousness Revisited: Materialism Without Phenomenal Concepts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Van Gulick, Robert. 2000. "Inward and Upward: Reflection, Introspection, and Self-Awareness." *Philosophical Topics* 28 (2): 275–305.
- . 2004. "Higher-Order Global States (Hogs): An Alternative Higher-Order Model of Consciousness." In *Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness: An Anthology*, edited by Rocco J. Gennaro. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- . 2012. "Subjective Consciousness and Self-Representation." *Philosophical Studies* 159 (3): 457–65.
- Watzl, Sebastian. 2017. *Structuring Mind. The Nature of Attention and How It Shapes Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Weisberg, Josh. 2008. "Same Old, Same Old: The Same-Order Representation Theory of Consciousness and the Division of Phenomenal Labor." *Synthese* 160 (2): 161–81.
- Williford, Kenneth. 2015. "Representationalisms, Subjective Character, and Self-Acquaintance." In *Open MIND*, edited by Thomas Metzinger and Jennifer M. Windt, 39:1–27. Frankfurt am Main: MIND Group.
- Zahavi, Dan. 2005. *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First-Person Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.