

Faces of Subjectivity

A workshop on inner awareness in the context of monistic theories of phenomenal consciousness

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A Book of Abstracts

Alberto Barbieri (University Vita-Salute San Raffaele), **From Intimacy to Qualitative Character: A Deeper Case for the Acquaintance Theory of Consciousness**

Some contemporary theories of consciousness endorse the view that phenomenal character—what it is like for a subject to undergo a conscious state—has two aspects: qualitative character (the “what-it-is-like” aspect) and subjective character (the “for the subject” aspect). While qualitative character varies across conscious states, subjective character remains invariant and is typically spelled out in terms of an experiential inner awareness the subject has of their conscious states. Sometimes this view is called “Subjectivism” (SUBJ), and theories endorsing it are called “subjectivity theories.”

For a couple of decades, subjectivity theories have been dominated by Self-Representationalism (SR), the view according to which a mental state has subjective character in virtue of suitably representing itself. Part of SR's popularity stems from the demystifying perspective it promises to offer on consciousness, paving the way for functional reduction to brain processes. However, over the years, SR has met with dissatisfaction, and some have explored an alternative based not on representation but on the epistemically and metaphysically direct relation of acquaintance. On such Acquaintance Theory (AT), a mental state has subjective character in virtue of its subject being acquainted with it.

A prominent way to motivate AT is to argue that it is theoretically superior to SR, for the latter is beset by difficulties that do not afflict AT. Most of these difficulties—such as the explanatory idleness of first-order representation (Kidd 2011) and the epistemic insulation from the world—relate to SR's construal of the self-representation grounding inner awareness as *constituting representation*. This commitment is motivated by SR's ambition to accommodate the intimacy of consciousness: that no mismatch is possible between how the experience is and how it

appears. According to AT theorists, it is in accommodating intimacy that acquaintance performs better than representation.

In this talk I aim to strengthen the case for AT by pointing to a more fundamental reason why SR must appeal to constituting representation—one that does not depend on intimacy. Although intimacy has currency in the literature, it is not without critics. Furthermore, intimacy is not an intrinsic commitment of SUBJ. Accordingly, a self-representationalist could sidestep the difficulties AT theorists exploit by dropping intimacy and construing the self-representational relation in more ordinary terms. My contention, however, is that SR cannot take this step backward, as appealing to constituting representation is required to avoid conflict with the structure of the explanandum it starts theorizing from, namely SUBJ. I also show that at least one way of modelling AT does not face such a conflict. This asymmetry constitutes a deeper, but underappreciated, reason to prefer AT over SR.

Sam Coleman (Birkbeck College, University of London), **Transparency and the Reduction of Consciousness**

Many philosophers have claimed that consciousness is in some sense *transparent* to its objects. I will suggest that, in the relevant sense of transparency, this feature will stop us getting a sufficient conceptual handle on consciousness to be able to reductively explain it. For one thing, such transparency will mean that consciousness as such simply does not show up in the 'zombie'-style thought experiments that are used as tests of reductive explanation. So, a failure of reductive explanation of consciousness will in fact not count against a theory of consciousness, assuming that consciousness is transparent. We may already have identified the correct substrate or mechanism for consciousness, even if we cannot grasp just how it does its job in producing consciousness. However, it will turn out that this story about transparency favours some metaphysical theories of consciousness over others, notably the view known as panqualityism.'

Andrea Pace Giannotta (Niccolò Cusano University, Rome), **Radically Embodied Panqualityism and the Mind/Flesh Identity Thesis**

In this paper, I develop the panqualityist view, defended by Coleman and others, beyond its standard neurocentric stance. Drawing on the neurophenomenological and enactivist literature, I propose a radically embodied version of panqualityism that locates the awareness of

phenomenal qualities not just in the brain but in the inseparable intertwining of brain, living body (flesh) and environment.

A central issue in the philosophy of mind regards the “location” of the phenomenal qualities of our experience in the natural world. Panqualityism (Feigl, Chalmers, Coleman) is a version of Russellian monism that conceives of pre-phenomenal (unconscious) qualities as the intrinsic properties in nature that ground the structural properties investigated by mathematical physics. The panqualityist answer to the location problem is that the macro-qualities of our experience, such as feeling pain or seeing red, are located in the brain and, specifically, in those processes that realize awareness. Indeed, several precursors and proponents of this view agree in identifying the basis of consciousness in the brain and the central nervous system. For instance, Moritz Schlick (1974: 299) refers to the relation of identity between “immediately experienced reality and physical brain processes”. Russell defends his neutral monist view referring to “what is happening in the brain” (1927: 104) and claims that “we can witness or observe what goes on in our heads, and (...) we can not witness or observe anything else at all” (1959: 19). Feigl, who introduces the term “panqualityism”, refers specifically to “processes in the central nervous system, perhaps especially in the cerebral cortex” (1967: 79). Lockwood (1998: 88) claims that “in awareness, we are, so to speak, getting an insider’s look at our own brain activity”.

The most recent and articulated version of panqualityism is defended by Coleman, who draws on Rosenthal’s higher-order thought theory of consciousness to develop an HOT panqualityism (2017: 265). In this view, the world is a web of qualities and, within it, the brain is a sort of “self-directed viewing instrument” (2015: 96). By implementing an HOT system, the brain represents itself, thereby giving rise to consciousness. In this way, Coleman defends a (nonphysicalist) version of the mind/brain identity thesis. In contrast to neurocentrism and the mind/brain identity thesis, I propose a radically embodied version of panqualityism. I do so by drawing on the literature on the neuroscience of consciousness, neurophenomenology and the enactive approach.

Investigating the neuroscience of consciousness, authors such as Cao, Godfrey-Smith, Piccinini, and Seth, among others, agree in criticizing computational functionalism (the idea of the mind as a multiply realizable Turing machine). On the contrary, these authors claim that biological features of the whole brain are constitutive for the genesis of consciousness. In doing so, they come close to the panqualityist view, looking at the correlates of consciousness in complex “multiplexed functions” that are realized by a biological brain. At the same time, these authors stress the fact that the processes that are relevant for consciousness are not confined to the central nervous system, since biological features other than neuronal activity (e.g. glial cells, neurotransmitters, neuromodulators, hormones, etc.) play a crucial role in the genesis of consciousness.

This line of inquiry is further developed in the neurophenomenological approach inaugurated by Varela, which stems from the enactive approach (Varela, Thompson, Rosch 1991). These authors criticize the form of “embodiment” that looks for the correlates of consciousness in the brain (NCCs), conceived of as sufficient conditions for the genesis of consciousness. This form of “Cartesian materialism” (Dennett) leads us to the possibility of a brain-in-a-vat. On the contrary, according to the radical embodiment thesis (Cosmelli, Thompson, Varela, Fuchs), consciousness is a field of manifestation of phenomena that arises from the entire organism intertwined with the environment, involving processes that cut across the brain-body-world divisions.

However, neurophenomenology doesn’t take a stance on the metaphysics of consciousness. Varela notoriously conceived of neurophenomenology as a methodological remedy for the hard problem, and not as a metaphysical solution. In contrast to this anti-metaphysical stance, I propose to combine the radical embodiment thesis of neurophenomenology with the panqualityist metaphysics, locating consciousness in the self-affection of the whole living and lived body (*Leib*, in Husserl’s terminology, i.e. flesh), which is inseparably intertwined with the environment.

Anna Giustina (Valencia), **The Structure of Inner Acquaintance**

In previous work (Giustina 2022, 2024a, 2024b), I have proposed an “inner acquaintance” theory of consciousness, on which what makes a mental state conscious is its subject being acquainted with it. More specifically, on the view I propose, a conscious state’s *qualitative character* is determined by its representational properties, its *subjective character* is determined by inner acquaintance, and inner acquaintance *makes* representational properties *conscious*. The view, I have argued, is superior to representational and meta-representational theories of consciousness. Several details of the view still need to be filled out though, concerning (i) the kind of representational properties involved (How can they constitute *qualitative* character?), (ii) the nature of the acquaintance relation (Is it primitive and irreducible or can it be analyzed? Can it be analyzed in terms of constitution? If so, what kind of constitutive relation is it?), and (iii) the metaphysical structure of acquaintance with representational properties (Is it a higher-order mental state? Or is the first-order state *self-acquainted*?). The aim of this paper is to make some progress toward articulating a more precise account of the metaphysical structure of inner acquaintance.

James Hill (Charles University), **Active Subjectivity: A Berkeleyan Account**

George Berkeley is best known for his immaterialism, but he also offers an account of subjectivity which can be understood independently of the denial of matter. My aim here is to introduce the fundamentals of this account—often referred to as Berkeley’s ‘doctrine of notions’—in the context of current debate about subjectivity. The hope is to suggest a viable alternative to neo-Brentanian approaches which are perhaps most influential in contemporary discussions of subjectivity. This alternative, founded in Berkeley’s critique and rejection of Locke’s proto-Brentanian position, we might call ‘active subjectivity’. It will be argued that the contemporary accounts of subjectivity which appeal to some successor version of Brentano’s *innere Wahrnehmung* (inner perception)—such as ‘self-representation’, ‘for-me-ness’, ‘higher order thought’ or ‘higher-order perception’—face a series of challenges. In particular we will examine the neo-Brentanians’ failure to make proper sense of the ownership of our own willed acts and the related difficulty in conceiving of a subject of conscious experience. It will be argued that Berkeley’s approach, which characterises the claim that our mental acts are known by ideas—i.e. by quasi-perceptions or representations—as ‘the Grand Mistake’ (Notebooks 176a), can meet these different challenges. The active subject does not know itself by ‘turning the mind’s eye back to oneself’, as Nida-Rumelin so aptly describes the model she rejects, nor by attending to any phenomenal manifestation, or aspect or mode of phenomenality. Instead, I know myself as subject through my operating on, or attending to, mental objects. This is knowledge of myself *as myself* or knowledge *de se*. Included here are volitional and conative exertions, among which attention is of particular significance. The subject is the inner active principle which is an essential and constitutive component of conscious experience, and it knows its own acts *not* by any kind of perception or representation, but by what Berkeley called ‘notions’—that is, by a knowing through doing.

Robert J. Howell (Rice University), **The Epistemic Aspect of Consciousness**

Phenomenal Consciousness is often introduced as what it’s like for a subject to taste chocolate or smell bacon. There is a certain qualitative character to our experience of the world’s colors, flavors and odors that goes beyond mere access to the presence of those properties. Some philosophers introduce a way of knowing these states that is unlike any other sort of knowledge—knowledge by acquaintance. I argue that while nothing is wrong with talking about acquaintance, it can distract us from the important fact that there is something intrinsically epistemic about phenomenally conscious experience. It doesn’t need to be added to phenomenal consciousness with a ray of acquaintance or anything particularly sophisticated.

Phenomenal Consciousness is already a source of knowledge, and it's not possible to strip that away from it without changing the subject.

Recognizing the epistemic aspect of consciousness has several payoffs. For one thing, it might well be that we can do without an independent notion of acquaintance. In addition, it helps explain what phenomenal consciousness can do for the subject that has it. Phenomenal conscious states play a role in the subject's cognitive economy, and like anything epistemic they come with and generate certain norms that bear on a subject's responses to them.

Furthermore, recognizing the epistemic side of consciousness helps ween us away from a tendency to think of "qualia" or "phenomenal properties" independent of the more fundamental subjects that have them.

Jacek Jarocki (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin), **A Farewell to Descartes: Epistemological Monism and Panqualityism**

It is one of the deepest metaphysical intuitions to believe in the view I dub the Thesis of Dependence (ToD). According to ToD, the object of perception is – at least in certain cases – constituted in its existence by an act of perception. This view is particularly convincing with regard to mental properties, such as phenomenal qualities. For example, we usually believe that a toothache does not exist independently of a subject but is constituted by the subject's phenomenal state of experiencing it. In other words, a subject of perception is a necessary condition for the object of perception to be (Strawson 2009, p. 269). Today, this approach is challenged by proponents of so-called panqualityism. The view, named by Herbert Feigl (1975) and defended by, among others, Sam Coleman (2024) as well as – under the name of color primitivism – Alex Moran (2025), states that ToD is false, i.e., that it is not necessary for phenomenal qualities to be experienced in order to exist. Quite the opposite: qualities are just *out there*, as constituents of the physical world.

Interestingly, the view is not new. In fact, it was popular in English-speaking philosophy at the beginning of the past century. Its most popular proponents were English New Realists, such as Thomas Percy Nunn, Samuel Alexander, G. E. Moore as well as William James and his students and friends, known as American New Realists – William Montague and Edwin Holt. They all agreed that phenomenal qualities constitute the physical world. Additionally, they argued that the process of perception does not rest on copying the qualities but on establishing a relation between them and a subject of perception.

However, beginning with this theory, American New Realists developed the view that went much further than this. They claimed not only that literally *every* phenomenal quality is

objective (they named the view *panobjectivism*) but also that to account for the process of perception, one can safely drop the subject/object distinction as superficial and philosophically suspicious. According to this solution, known as Epistemological Monism (EM), every mental act – including memories, imaginations, and so on – refers to an actual piece of the objective universe. In view of this, ToD becomes false. On a more general level, this solution marks a radical protest against the whole Cartesian and post-Cartesian tradition that draws a sharp line between the subjective space of one's mind and the objective space of material things.

Of course, this theory brings numerous problems. How should one understand the view that, say, memories are in the objective space? What about non-veridical perceptions, such as illusions and hallucinations? Most importantly, how can we explain some unique features of our mental lives such as for-me-ness (Mihálik 2020)? In my talk, I will show how these challenges were, or at least might be, faced by American New Realists, particularly Montague. By referring to Brentano's/Meinong's conception of subsistence and the non-thetic models of self-consciousness, such as pre-reflective self-awareness proposed by Dan Zahavi or *Erlebnissintuition* developed by Roman Ingarden, I wish to present EM in a new light. In particular, my aim is to explore the possibility of accounting for the feature of for-me-ness in terms of relational structures constituted in the objective universe, without falling into a subjectivistic epistemology of Descartes and his followers. As I will argue, EM develops a novel way of expressing panqualityism. Indeed, this path is alien to contemporary proponents of the latter view, accepting the division between "reality inside one's mind [...] and reality outside one's mind" (Coleman 2024, p. 371). Contrary to Coleman's claim that the only alternative to this dualism is solipsism, I want to explore panobjectivism as a plausible option in recent debates about objective phenomenal qualities.

Jakub Mihálik (Czech Academy of Sciences), **Inner Awareness, Intimacy, and the Naturalization Challenge**

According to an influential view with roots in Aristotle and Brentano, when one is in a phenomenally conscious state, one is *ipso facto aware* of this state. Until recently, the prevalent understanding of this 'inner awareness', a subject's ubiquitous awareness of their own phenomenally conscious states, due to which these states are conscious, was representationalist (e.g., Rosenthal 2005, Kriegel 2009). If, however, inner awareness of one's conscious states is a matter of one's representing these states, it would seem that one is, in a sense, kept 'cognitively apart' from the qualitative states and properties one phenomenally encounters. Note, after all, that the representations that constitute inner awareness could

misrepresent the qualitative properties they target, especially if representations are understood naturalistically, as grounded in broadly causal processes (Armstrong 1968). This result, however, seems highly implausible – one’s awareness of own’s own qualitative states seems direct, or intimate (Kriegel 2009, Levine 2007) in a sense that rules out such a ‘qualitative mismatch’. In the light of this *objection from intimacy*, Williford (2015), Levine (2019), Giustina (2022), and others have suggested that inner awareness is better understood non-representationally, as Russellian *direct acquaintance*. While an acquaintance-based model of inner awareness arguably cancels any cognitive distance between a subject and the qualitative properties she instantiates, granting the subject intimacy with these qualities, it faces a significant *naturalization challenge* since acquaintance is often viewed as naturalistically suspect, or even mysterious (Frankish 2021). In response to this challenge, some philosophers have argued that acquaintance is consistent with naturalism (Williford 2015) or have even suggested naturalistic models of acquaintance (Coleman 2019).

According to Coleman’s (2019) approach, which I’ll focus on, acquaintance can be accounted for in terms of a special, non-representationalist version of the HOT theory. For Coleman, one’s inner awareness of qualitative properties is a matter of having special ‘quotational’ HOTs, or *QHOTs*, about these states, where these HOTs do not represent our mental states, but rather ‘quote’ them, due to the target mental states’ being embedded within the HOTs. While I think Coleman’s framework is well-worth our attention, I’ll argue that it faces several significant challenges. Recall first that, according to Coleman, one is acquainted with a qualitative property in virtue of instantiating a QHOT that is intentionally *about* the quality because the quality is quoted in this thought. As I’ll argue, however, it’s unclear that the QHOT could be intentionally about the quality in any sense that would enable us to make sense of one’s acquaintance with the quality. According to Coleman, the physical relation that grounds the intentional relation between the QHOT and the quality is a part-whole relation but, as I’ll explain, it’s unclear that a physical whole must be intentionally about a specific part it contains. While the QHOT theorist might invoke functional properties as a factor that helps determine the intentional properties of the QHOT, I’ll argue that this proposal fails since functional properties that are essentially dispositional cannot account for the *occurrent* awareness relation that acquaintance arguably amounts to.

The other challenge that I’ll suggest the QHOT account faces stems from the idea, expressed by Russell, that in being acquainted with a quality, one is *ipso facto* afforded a rich proto-cognitive grasp of the quality. I like to express this point by saying that acquaintance essentially involves ‘proto-cognitive presence’ of the quality for the subject. I take it that this must mean that the quality significantly proto-cognitively affects the acquainted subject. Insofar as the QHOT theory is naturalistic, however, one would expect that the quality should significantly physically affect the organism instantiating the quality. I’ll argue that any such physical impact of the quality on

the organism would need to be causal, which would bring back a form of Armstrong's misrepresentation worry that acquaintance was supposed to dispel. In addition to undermining the QHOT account of acquaintance, this 'proto-cognitive presence challenge' might, as I'll explain, point towards a more general dilemma for any naturalistic account of acquaintance, a dilemma of having to invoke either causal relations, that seem to rule out intimacy, or 'constitutive' relations, that seem to rule out this 'proto-cognitive presence'. I'll conclude by considering possible strategies to avoid the described dilemma, including a possible non-reductive approach to acquaintance.

Maik Niemeck (Marburg), **Adverbialism about Inner Awareness is Feasible**

Many philosophers of mind assume that phenomenally conscious states are very often accompanied by a non-observational and effortless conscious awareness of themselves. A conscious visual awareness of a red tomato, for instance, may also involve an additional consciousness of the visual state itself (on some accounts including the subject being in that state). This alleged phenomenon goes by such names as "inner awareness", "subjective character", "mine-ness" or "pre-reflective self-consciousness." While there is considerable agreement that there is such a thing as inner awareness, it remains far from settled how to best understand its nature.

Here I defend a view regarding the metaphysics of inner awareness that may most suitably be labeled "adverbialism", as it tries to accommodate the features associated with inner awareness by appealing to monadic properties of conscious states. According to adverbialism, inner awareness is a *way* or *manner* in which, for instance, a red tomato is visually represented, rather than an additional higher- or same-order representation of the visual state itself. On such views, the reflexive component may be understood as a property of the relations we entertain towards the usual non-reflexive contents we grasp when having conscious states. In this regard, adverbialism belongs to a broader family of theories – arguably originating in the work of Smith (1986) – that understand inner awareness as being part of what is often called the *modality* of experience. With a few notable exceptions (e.g. Thomasson 2000), however, the logical space available to an adverbialist theory of inner awareness has not been explored in sufficient detail. As a result, adverbialist approaches are often dismissed prematurely, based on objections that, as I will argue, lose much of their force once the underlying metaphysics of adverbialism is properly articulated.

This talk addresses two of the key objections to adverbialism. The first problem is that adverbialism seems to entail the counterintuitive view that inner awareness is non-intentional.

Kriegel (2009: 102–104), for instance, claims that “the very suggestion that subjective character is simple and unstructured is quite straightforwardly implausible. It is natural to hold that, in virtue of a conscious experience’s subjective character, the subject is aware of her experience. [...] Since this awareness is awareness-of, it involves an of-ness relation to the experience.” A second issue raises the question of how an account that appeals to properties can contribute anything to an explanation of inner awareness at all. Rosenthal (1997: 736), for instance, formulates a related criterion for theories of consciousness in general: “No informative explanation of state consciousness is possible unless we can represent it as having some articulated structure. [...] So the only reason to see consciousness as an intrinsic property of mental states will be that it lacks such structure, and is therefore simple and unanalyzable.”

I will demonstrate that adverbialism possesses conceptual resources to deal with both problems and that these issues only arise if we engage in what Heil (2021) calls *linguisticised metaphysics*, that is, the practice of taking the structure of linguistic representations at face value and projecting them directly onto the metaphysics of the entities those representations are about. The fact that we ascribe inner awareness in many familiar natural languages by means of attitude ascriptions does not entail that truthmakers of such ascriptions must themselves have an analogous structure. For parallel reasons, we need not assume that properties are simple or unanalyzable merely because the linguistic expressions we use to talk about them represent them in that way. There are well-known views according to which properties exhibit structure that allow the adverbialist to offer an informative account of inner awareness. To address the two problems sketched above, I will articulate two candidate views: first, that inner awareness may be understood as a relational property (e.g. Findlay 1938) – i.e., the unary counterparts of polyadic relations –, and second, that it may be construed as a structural property (e.g. Armstrong 1978; Bigelow 1986). On either proposal, inner awareness is neither simple nor metaphysically unanalyzable. I will also show how the intentionality of inner awareness can be accommodated by adverbialism. Since structural properties encode *information* about first-order properties of mental states, they may be taken to be *about* them. Here I will appeal to a concept of information recently defended by Kelp & Simion (2025), according to which, roughly speaking, something carries information that *p*, iff it has the disposition to generate knowledge that *p* in some agent.

Jacopo Pallagrosi (Liège), **The Acquaintance Trilemma: Knowledge, Consciousness, and Mental Qualities**

Contemporary debates on acquaintance—the subject’s direct awareness of the qualitative character of their own conscious states—increasingly treat it as doing double duty within both the epistemology and the metaphysics of consciousness. On the one hand, acquaintance is often understood as constituting a *sui generis* kind of introspective knowledge, typically labeled *knowledge by acquaintance* (KbA) (Russell, 1910; Pitt, 2019; Duncan, 2020; Atiq, 2021; Giustina, 2022; Pallagrosi, 2025, among others). On the other hand, acquaintance is also invoked to explain what it is for a mental quality to be phenomenally conscious at all: a mental quality is conscious, on this view, in virtue of the subject’s being acquainted with it (Williford, 2015; Coleman, 2019; Levine, 2019; Giustina, 2024). Although these two roles are often presented and discussed separately, recent literature has converged on what may be described as a coherent “package deal” about acquaintance, according to which a single relation unifies the epistemology and metaphysics of phenomenal consciousness.

This paper argues that this package deal becomes unstable once combined with a further thesis that is widely assumed about the nature of mental qualities themselves. In particular, I focus on the following triad of commitments: (i) acquaintance constitutes knowledge (i.e., KbA), (ii) acquaintance constitutes phenomenal consciousness (it is the consciousness-maker), and (iii) necessarily, mental qualities are phenomenally conscious. Each claim enjoys independent plausibility and receives substantial support in the literature. Yet, I argue, taken together they generate a trilemma: acquaintance theorists can consistently retain any two of these commitments, but not all three.

The plausibility of the trilemma’s three claims can be briefly motivated as follows. First, proponents of KbA argue that acquaintance shares several hallmark features of paradigmatic knowledge cases of knowledge (Duncan 2020), it plays an evidential role (Atiq 2021), and it explains epistemic asymmetries between subjects (Giustina 2022). Second, acquaintance is often assigned a metaphysical role as the consciousness-maker. On a constitutive inner-awareness view, a mental quality is phenomenally conscious in virtue of being directly presented to the subject, and acquaintance is identified with this inner-awareness relation. This promises to explain both the ubiquity of inner awareness and the “for-me-ness” of experience, while unifying the epistemology and metaphysics of consciousness under a single relation. Third, it is widely assumed that mental qualities are necessarily conscious: qualitative character is taken to be constitutively phenomenal, such that the instantiation of a mental quality just is its phenomenal manifestation. This intuition is motivated by the apparent incoherence of unconscious what-it-is-likeness, e.g., unfelt pain or unexperienced sadness.

The central argument of the paper proceeds by introducing a general anti-triviality constraint on first-order empirical knowledge. The guiding idea is that, in paradigmatic cases, knowledge involves cognitive contact with a reality that is not constituted by the knowing relation itself. Knowledge is thus a kind of cognitive discovery rather than creation: its object must be something the subject reaches, not something made true (or made to obtain) by being reached. This is clearest in the propositional case: if a proposition were true merely in virtue of being believed or known, epistemic success would be trivialized, since there would be no substantive contrast between getting things right and occupying a state that guarantees its own correctness. I argue that the same constraint extends to knowledge by acquaintance. If acquaintance is to qualify as a genuine form of knowledge of qualitative character, its epistemic standing cannot be secured by constitutive ties that make success automatic. In particular, the qualitative character allegedly known must not depend for its existence or nature on the acquaintance relation in a way that undermines the distinction between epistemic access and metaphysical grounding.

Once we combine (i), (ii), and (iii), however, this constraint is violated. If acquaintance constitutes phenomenal consciousness and mental qualities are necessarily conscious, then the very relation that purports to know a mental quality is also what ensures that such a quality exists as such. The result is an illicit trivialization of KbA: acquaintance no longer discloses an independently obtaining reality but metaphysically secures the target it purports to know.

I conclude by mapping the logical space opened by the trilemma. If one retains (i) and (ii), one must reject (iii) and allow that qualitative character can exist unconsciously. If one retains (i) and (iii), one must reject (ii) and treat acquaintance as a purely epistemic relation that tracks but does not constitute consciousness. If one retains (ii) and (iii), one must reject (i) and downgrade acquaintance to a mere enabling condition for some other epistemic state. The paper is thus diagnostic and programmatic: it exposes a neglected pressure point at the core of contemporary acquaintance theory, clarifies the costs of each escape route, and invites acquaintance theorists to take a principled stand on which limb of the triad they are willing to abandon or revise.

Adriana Renero (UNAM/CUNY Graduate Center), **Kripke and Lewis on Subjective Character and *de se* Beliefs**

Saul Kripke and David Lewis have different views on what physicalism entails. Kripke argues against physicalism and supports Thomas Nagel's account of the subjective nature of experience. Lewis, on the other hand, defends "type-A physicalism," also known as "*a priori* physicalism." The two philosophers also have different understandings of another "face of

subjectivity": *de se* beliefs and indexicals, such as the "I," which are linguistic entities that refer to different subjects or speakers. At some point in their discussions, however, they seem to agree that Nagel's *de se* argument is not an effective way to argue against physicalism. I will explore the reasons for their agreement and suggest how Kripke and Lewis could reach a consensus on this issue despite their irreconcilable perspectives. To do so, I will build on "Kripke's knowledge argument against materialism"—i.e., a continuation of Lecture III in *Naming and Necessity*.

Rituparna Roy (University of Porto), **The Experiential 'I': Subjectivity Without the Selfhood in Buddhist-Brentanian Account of Reflexivity, Intentionality and Consciousness**

Does consciousness necessarily entail self-consciousness? If it is, then does it presuppose the existence of a substantial self? Conscious states always exhibit a kind of irreducible first-person perspective as if it is tailor-made 'for me'. This paper aims to investigate two questions: first, whether conscious experience is intrinsically self-aware or arises through a distinct representational or higher-order mechanism, and second, whether first-personal subjectivity requires a metaphysical self beyond for-me-ness or is a structural feature of conscious experience. In contemporary philosophy of mind, theories of self-consciousness often face a dilemma: either they posit a minimal self as the bearer of experience or they attempt to explain subjectivity in purely functional or representational terms. The confusion arises because the notion of intentionality is primarily taken as representational. This paper develops a third position by integrating Brentanian theories of consciousness with Yogācāra Buddhist accounts of reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*). On one hand, it is a revisit to Brentano's notion of intentionality and inner-perception to demonstrate that translating 'Vorstellung' only as representation is quite misleading because when he used the term, he did not mean a mental content but the 'mental act' itself. He was largely impacted by the Aristotelian-scholastic traditions and reading Brentano through the right lenses reveals that, in inner perception, there is more than mere correspondence between act and object, rather a unity between them, the mental act "is present to itself as content" (*ist sich selbst als Inhalt gegenwärtig*) (Brentano, 1924–1928, I, p. 180, Eng. 98). Hence, it is not representational rather self-presenting, direct, authoritative. I will also reflect upon contemporary developments by Zahavi, Kriegel and others as they converge on the idea that consciousness involves an intrinsic form of self-manifestation, whether interpreted as self-representation, self-presentations, or pre-reflective awareness. On the Buddhist side, I examine Yogācāra epistemology developed by Dignāga, Dharmakīrti and Vasubandhu, according to which consciousness is reflexively aware of itself (*svasaṃvedana*) and consciousness is given through its own immanent manifestation rather than given to the

subject, while rejecting any enduring self (ātman). Dignāga (Pramāṇasamuccaya I.8cd–10, ed. Sankrityayan, 1935) construes self-awareness as an intentional self-revealing aspect of cognition and cognition functions simply by revealing its intentional aspect or its object-directedness. Similarly, Dharmakīrti (Dreyfus 2007, p. 102) asserts that certain emotions are inherently self-revealing insofar as they occur in particular modalities of awareness (seeing or hearing), intend specific things, and emerge from past behaviour patterns. According to Dharmakīrti, these emotions are intrinsically cognitive; they can be recognized without any second-order cognition, which refers to the reflexivity of awareness.

Instead of treating Yogācāra thought as a historical parallel, the paper treats it as a conceptual resource for refining contemporary debates in philosophy of mind. In *svasaṃvedana* and Brentano's inner perception alike, subjectivity is not an entity but the immanent reflexive structure through which cognition is self-given in its very occurring. In both, this yields a robust but non-substantialist account of subjectivity: the for-me-ness of experience can be explained without positing any enduring self beyond (flux of) consciousness. The expected conclusion is a revised account of reflexivity that explains the relation between consciousness, intentionality, and self-awareness, and at the same time, it is an odyssey towards the experiential 'I' or subjectivity without the selfhood.

Milan Zeman (Charles University), **Is Inner Awareness Sufficient for State Consciousness?**

A widespread view in recent theorizing about the nature of phenomenal consciousness is that what makes any particular mental state a phenomenally conscious state is the subject's 'inner' awareness of the state. This general 'Inner Awareness Theory' (IAT), as it may be called, underlies a number of contemporary theoretical models of phenomenal consciousness, including *higher-order thought theory* (Rosenthal), *self-representationalism* (Kriegel) and *self-acquaintance theory* (Giustina). Following an analysis of IAT in which it is shown how IAT is based on the notion that the defining feature of phenomenally conscious states is the feature called variously "subjectivity", "subjective character" or "for-me-ness"—that is, the feature of a mental state of being *for* or *given to* its subject—I critically examine the central assumption of proponents of IAT, namely, the view that a mental state's having subjective character is a matter of the subject's being aware of the state. It is argued that there is an important difference between the specific kind of givenness that characterizes phenomenally conscious states and the kind of givenness constituted by the awareness-of relation, and hence that, although inner awareness does, *qua* awareness, constitute a certain kind of for-me-ness or givenness of one's mental states to one, it is nevertheless insufficient for the kind of givenness *in virtue of which*

mental states are phenomenally conscious. If that is right, inner awareness is insufficient for phenomenal state consciousness, and IAT is false.