

INTROSPECTIVE ACQUAINTANCE: AN INTEGRATION ACCOUNT

The focus of this paper is *introspection of phenomenal states*, that is, the distinctively first-personal method through which one can get knowledge of, or form beliefs about, the phenomenology of one's current conscious experience.

I suggest that a distinction should be drawn between two kinds of introspection of phenomenal states. On the one hand, there is a kind of introspection which involves recognizing the introspected phenomenal quality and classifying it as an instance of a certain experience type (what I call *reflective introspection*). On the other hand, there is a kind of introspection of phenomenal states that does not involve recognition or classification of what is introspected. It merely involves attending to the phenomenal state and non-descriptively acquiring information about its phenomenology, where by non-descriptively I mean without recognizing or classifying the introspected phenomenal state as an instance of a certain experience type. The latter is what I call *primitive introspection*. The purpose of this paper is to provide an account of the nature of primitive introspection. Particularly, I develop an account of the metaphysical structure of the mental state the subject is in in virtue of primitively introspecting.

The account I want to propose is a version of the *acquaintance view*, which traces back at least to Bertrand Russell (1912). Among the contemporary defenders of the acquaintance view (Conee 1994; Fumerton 1995, 2009; BonJour 2000, Gertler 2001; Chalmers 2003; Balog 2012; Horgan and Kriegel 2007), Brie Gertler (2001) provides what strikes me as the most promising acquaintance account of phenomenal state introspection. Gertler's Phenomenal State Introspection (*PSI*) thesis is that a subject *S* introspects a phenomenal state *a* iff *S* has an occurrent mental token *b* which is such that: (i) *a* is embedded in *b* (where a mental state *a* is embedded in a mental state *b* iff (1) if *b* is present, *a* must be present too, and (2) *a* can be present even if *b* is not present); (ii) *b* refers to F; and (iii) (ii) is true partly in virtue of (i). (Gertler 2001: 307)

Although Gertler's *PSI* is well developed and illuminating, I believe it does not provide the most suitable theory of the metaphysics of primitive introspection. For, as it seems to me, it does not take into account a non-negligible phenomenological fact, namely that the state of primitive introspection may *differ phenomenally* from the target phenomenal state. In fact, at least two dimensions of phenomenal variation should be considered while theorizing about primitive introspection. First, by being primitively introspected, a phenomenal state acquires a higher level of *saliency*: attending to it somehow renders it more prominent, and this makes a difference to the phenomenology. Second, introspecting a phenomenal state might modify the *intensity* of its phenomenology.

The *embedment* condition entails that the embedded phenomenal state can exist independently of the introspective state which embeds it. Now, in the case of primitive introspection, the phenomenology of the target phenomenal state is *not* the same before and while being primitively introspected: some aspects of it (i.e. those associated with saliency and intensity) *change* upon the relevant phenomenal state's being introspected. Accordingly, the

target phenomenal state, *post-change* in phenomenal features associated with salience (and intensity), cannot exist independently of the state of primitive introspection. This is because certain phenomenal features of the target phenomenal state can only be present when the relevant phenomenal state is primitively introspected. The *embedment* condition is silent about this phenomenological fact and I take this to be an imperfection in the theory. Once phenomenal variation is considered, a more fine-grained analysis of the metaphysics of primitive introspection is in order.

On the alternative account I propose, the relationship between the target phenomenal state and the state of primitive introspection is not *embedment* but what I call *integration*. While characterizing that relationship in terms of partial constitution, integration explains the phenomenological variation associated with change in salience and intensity.

The integration account I propose is grounded in the following assumptions about phenomenal states and their properties. First, a phenomenal state is a particular and it may have different kinds of property. Some of its properties are phenomenal properties. Some of a phenomenal state's phenomenal properties are *essential* to it, others are *accidental*. A phenomenal state's essential phenomenal properties are its qualitative intrinsic phenomenal features (e.g. the painfulness of the pain). A phenomenal state's accidental phenomenal properties are its quantitative and its relational phenomenal features. Among phenomenal states' accidental phenomenal properties are salience and intensity. Finally, a phenomenal state is individuated by its essential phenomenal properties: *a* and *b* are the same phenomenal state iff they have exactly the same essential properties. Therefore, even if a phenomenal state's accidental phenomenal features change, it remains the same state.

Integration is a relationship between phenomenal states (i.e. conscious states with phenomenology). A phenomenal state *a* is integrated in a phenomenal state *b* iff:

- (i) *a* is a proper part of *b*;
- (ii) *b* inherits *a*'s essential phenomenal properties;
- (iii) (some of) *a*'s accidental phenomenal properties change;
- (iv) *a*, *post-change* in accidental phenomenal properties, cannot be present without *b* being present.

(i) entails that, when *a* is integrated in *b*, *b* is constituted by *a*, although not *fully* constituted by it: some parts of *b* are not parts of *a*. (ii) means that, when *a* is integrated in *b*, all of *a*'s essential properties are also *b*'s essential properties. As a consequence, *b* cannot be present without *a* being also present: without *a*, some of *b*'s essential features would not be present, therefore (since, recall, phenomenal states are individuated by their essential phenomenal properties) *b* could not exist. Upon being integrated in *b*, some of *a*'s accidental phenomenal properties change (iii). Such a change in phenomenal features *depends* on *a*'s being integrated in *b*. The change thus ultimately depends on *b*'s presence: were *b* not present, *a*'s accidental features would not have changed the way they do when *a* is integrated in *b*. Therefore, *a*, *post-change* in accidental phenomenal properties, cannot be present without *b* being also present (iv). My substantial claim about the metaphysics of the state of primitive introspection is that the

relationship between the target and the state of primitive introspection is integration: when one primitively introspects, the target phenomenal state is integrated in the state of primitive introspection.

In virtue of condition (iii), *integration* accommodates and explains the phenomenological changes the target phenomenal state undergoes upon being primitively introspected. As noted, salience and intensity are accidental properties of phenomenal states. According to (iii), some of the accidental phenomenal properties of the target phenomenal state change when it is integrated in the state of primitive introspection. This explains the phenomenal modification associated with salience and intensity.

Integration, on the other hand, keeps what's good in *PSI*. Particularly, in virtue of (ii), it accounts for the fact that the state of primitive introspection cannot be present if the target phenomenal state is not present. Moreover, it *explains* this fact. It is because it inherits the target phenomenal state's essential phenomenal properties that the state of primitive introspection cannot exist independently of the target phenomenal state.

Finally, *integration* is compatible with *a* having independent existence from *b*. Since *a* has the same essential features before and while being introspected, post-change *a* is the same state as pre-change *a*, though it is different in that (some of) its accidental features have changed.

I conclude that the acquaintance account of primitive introspection should be spelled out in terms of integration, rather than embedment.

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