

Review of Declan Smithies and Daniel Stoljar's (Eds.) *Introspection and consciousness* (2012, Oxford University Press)

Michael Roche* and William Roche†

* Department of Philosophy, Mississippi State University, MS, USA, e-mail: mjr454@msstate.edu

† Department of Philosophy, Texas Christian University, TX, USA, e-mail: w.roche@tcu.edu

This is an excellent collection of essays on introspection and consciousness. There are fifteen essays in total (all new except for Sydney Shoemaker's essay). There is also an introduction where the editors explain the impetus for the collection and provide a helpful overview. The essays contain a wealth of new and challenging material sure to excite specialists and shape future research. Below we extract a skeptical argument from Fred Dretske's essay and relate the remaining essays to that argument. Due to space limitations we focus in detail on just a few of the essays. We regret that we cannot give them all the attention they merit.

I. THE SKEPTICAL ARGUMENT

Dretske's theory of introspective knowledge is based in part on the following theses:

No Inner Experiences (NIE): All experiences are outer experiences, i.e., experiences of things external to one's mind.

Knowledge and Experience (KE): One knows that p only if one has (or had) an experience of something indicating that p.

(It is being assumed here and throughout this review that p is an empirical proposition.)

KE can be motivated by appeal to the thesis:

Knowledge Requires Evidence (KRE): One knows that p only if one has adequate evidence for p.

KE's consequent provides a way of fleshing out KRE's consequent.

NIE and KE together lead to a kind of introspective skepticism. Suppose one believes that there is beer in the refrigerator. It follows from NIE and KE that one knows that one believes that there is beer in the refrigerator only if one has an experience of something external to one's mind indicating that one believes that there is beer in the refrigerator. If, though, one's knowledge is attained via such an experience, then it is attained in a way available to others (since others could have a relevantly similar experience), in which case one's knowledge is not introspective.

It is being assumed here, as is standard, that knowledge of one's mind is introspective only if it is attained in a special or essentially first-personal way. It is not being assumed that knowledge of one's mind is introspective only if it is attained by 'looking inward'.

The argument sketched above generalizes to all other aspects of one's mind. Hereafter we refer to the argument so generalized as 'the Skeptical Argument' or 'SA' for short.

SA can be reformulated in terms of justification. It is widely held in epistemology that:

Justification Requires Evidence (JRE): One has justification to believe that p only if one has adequate evidence for p.

JRE can be fleshed out in terms of a variant of KE:

Justification and Experience (JE): One has justification to believe that p only if one has (or had) an experience of something indicating that p.

NIE and JE together imply that if, say, one has justification to believe that one believes that there is beer in the refrigerator, then this justification is not introspective.

Dretske, perhaps surprisingly, allows for introspective knowledge. He holds that one can have introspective knowledge of *content* but one cannot have introspective knowledge of *attitude*. One can know by introspection *what* one believes/experiences/feels but one cannot know by introspection that one *believes/experiences/feels* it. Dretske calls his theory "conciliatory skepticism".

This theory is fascinating but, at the same time, somewhat obscure. It is far from clear upon reflection how exactly to flesh out the distinction between knowledge of content and knowledge of attitude. Below we set aside Dretske's theory and focus on SA.

One approach to resisting SA is to reject NIE. Another approach is to reject KRE/JRE (along with KE/JE).

II. REJECTING NIE: POSITING INNER EXPERIENCES

Brie Gertler's and Terry Horgan's essays can be understood as exemplifying the first approach. Both Gertler and Horgan appeal to "acquaintance". Below we focus on Gertler's essay.

Gertler develops an acquaintance approach to introspective knowledge according to which:

Acquaintance Approach (AA): Some introspective knowledge is knowledge by acquaintance in the following sense: (1) one's introspective judgment is directly tied to its truthmaker, (2) one's introspective judgment is entirely dependent for its justification on one's conscious states (at the time of the judgment), and (3) one's introspective judgment is more strongly justified than all (empirical) judgments not directly tied to their truthmakers or not entirely dependent for their justification on the subject's conscious states.

Gertler clarifies that AA runs counter to 'inner sense' theories. The latter imply that one's introspective judgments are *indirectly* tied to their truthmakers in that they are *merely causally* tied to their truthmakers (as in ordinary perception). The former, by contrast, implies that (at least some of) one's introspective judgments are *directly* tied to their truthmakers in that they are *metaphysically* tied to their truthmakers.

Gertler's theory goes beyond AA (a purely existential thesis). Gertler holds that some introspective knowledge of *phenomenal experience* is knowledge by acquaintance. Here is the rough idea. One, say, has a pinching experience. One is directly aware of one's experience. By virtue of this direct awareness one demonstratively refers to the phenomenal property of pinching and judges that it is instantiated (in one now). One thereby comes to know by acquaintance that it (the phenomenal property of pinching) is instantiated.

The term 'experiences' in NIE is meant to include direct awarenesses. Gertler's theory therefore runs counter to NIE.

Charles Siewert gives a nuanced critique of the idea that one has experiences (or awarenesses/sensings) of one's experiences (awarenesses/sensings). Siewert's critique thus puts pressure on AA (and also on at least some inner sense theories).

Eric Schwitzgebel grants that perhaps one can acquire introspective knowledge as spelled out by Gertler; he thus grants that perhaps NIE is false. He argues, though, that introspective knowledge of that sort is not the kind that is important in human affairs and the methods of psychology and consciousness science. (Schwitzgebel (correctly) does not claim that Gertler says otherwise.) He also argues—and this is the main point of his

essay—that introspective judgments issue not from a single process but from a plurality of processes (some of which are non-evidential) both within and between cases.

Maja Spener's and Aaron Zimmerman's essays are primarily about the nature of experience. But they are nonetheless relevant to SA. Spener argues against the view that it is a pre-theoretic datum, revealed by introspection, that ordinary visual experience presents objects and properties as mind-independent. Zimmerman argues against the view that introspection supports the disjunctivist thesis that there is no fundamental or explanatorily important genus of which veridical visual experience and hallucination are species. Spener's and Zimmerman's arguments involve discussions very much relevant to whether NIE is true.

III. REJECTING KRE/JRE: ESCHEWING EVIDENCE

Alex Byrne's, Richard Moran's, Sydney Shoemaker's, Siewert's, Nicholas Silin's, Declan Smithies's, Ernest Sosa's, and Daniel Stoljar's contributions can be understood as exemplifying the second approach to resisting SA. Byrne's and Sosa's essays differ from the others in that in the former, but not in the latter, reliability (broadly construed) takes center stage. Byrne's and Smithies's essays make for a nice contrast; they are our focus below.

It will help to start with Byrne's earlier work on doxastic introspective knowledge (i.e., introspective knowledge of one's beliefs).¹ Consider the rule:

BEL: If p, believe that one believes that p.

Byrne argues that one can come to know that one believes that p by following BEL, where one follows BEL on a given occasion if and only if one comes to believe that one believes that p by coming to know that p. He argues for this on the grounds that BEL is self-verifying in that one follows BEL only if the resulting higher-order belief is true.

There is no claim in any of this to the effect that when one follows BEL, one has an experience of one's belief that p. Byrne can accept NIE. Moreover, there is no claim to the effect that when one follows BEL, one has adequate evidence for the proposition that one believes that p (or that one has an experience of something indicating that one believes that p). Byrne rejects KRE (along with KE).

Byrne's theory of doxastic introspective knowledge is a 'transparency' theory. It implies that the question of whether one believes that p is transparent to the question of

¹ See A. Byrne, 'Introspection', *Philosophical Topics*, 33, 2005, pp. 79-104.

whether p in that one can come to know the answer to the former by coming to know the answer to the latter.

Byrne's essay concerns knowledge of what one sees. Consider the rule:

SEE: If [... x ...]_v and x is an F, believe that one sees an F.

Here '[... x ...]_v' is what Byrne calls a 'v-proposition', that is, a proposition capturing a visible scene *in all its details*. Byrne acknowledges that SEE is *not* self-verifying, since in principle one could come to know that [... x ...]_v (and x is an F) without seeing an F (or having any visual experience whatsoever). He insists, though, that SEE is *practically* self-verifying in that one sees x (and thus sees an F) in all ordinary situations where one knows that [... x ...]_v (and x is an F). He concludes on this basis that by following SEE one can come to know that one sees an F.

There is a worry lurking. One follows SEE on a given occasion only if one comes to know that [... x ...]_v. The worry is that, since [... x ...]_v captures a visible scene in all its details, one does not have the concepts requisite to come to *believe*—let alone come to know—that [... x ...]_v. If this worry cannot be adequately met, then Byrne's theory fails to explain one's knowledge of what one sees.

Moran, Shoemaker, and Silins are all critical of Byrne's theory of doxastic introspective knowledge. They all nonetheless endorse theories running counter to KRE/JRE (along with KE/JE). Moran and Silins, like Byrne, develop transparency theories; Moran focuses on the role of rational agency, whereas Silins focuses on the role of conscious judgment. (Silins sometimes suggests that justification on his theory is a matter of evidence (p. 306, n 7). But there he seems to have in mind a sense of evidence distinct from the sense at play in JRE. Stoljar's distinction between 'evidence 1' and 'evidence 2' is helpful here (p. 86)). Shoemaker, in turn, develops a 'constitutivist' theory on which, under certain conditions, one's belief that p partially constitutes and serves as a reason for—but not in the sense of evidence—one's belief that one believes that p.

Smithies develops a constitutivist theory differing in important respects from Shoemaker's theory. Smithies argues that:

For some mental states m, necessarily, one is in m if and only if one has introspective justification to believe that one is in m and one thereby has an introspective way of knowing that one is in m.

He argues more specifically that this is true of 'phenomenally individuated mental states', that is, mental states wholly individuated by their relations to phenomenally conscious mental states. He clarifies that beliefs, though not phenomenally conscious, are

phenomenally individuated because (a) judgments are phenomenally conscious and (b) beliefs are wholly individuated in terms of their dispositions to cause judgments. It follows that one believes that p if and only if one has introspective justification to believe that one believes that p. His theory is bold to say the least!

Smithies rejects JRE (along with JE). Suppose one believes that there is beer in the refrigerator. It follows on Smithies's theory that, by virtue of that belief, one has justification to believe that one believes that there is beer in the refrigerator. It does not follow, though, that one's first-order belief (or its content) is adequate evidence for one's second-order belief.

Smithies emphasizes that his theory is entirely epistemological and not at all psychological. It specifies necessary and sufficient conditions for introspective justification but is silent on the workings and reliability of introspection.

Patrick Greenough builds on Timothy Williamson's anti-luminosity argument against the thesis (roughly) that one's (core) mental states are luminous in that if one has a mental state m, then one is in a position to know via introspection that one has m.² Greenough argues against several weaker, and thus more plausible prima facie, theses. One issue for future investigation is whether Greenough's arguments succeed against Smithies's theory.

We find it interesting that so many of the authors deny KRE and/or JRE. These theses are widely accepted in epistemology. Perhaps epistemologists need to rethink their allegiance to them.

² See T. Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* (Oxford UP, 2000).