

## RATIONALISM

**Shoemaker, Lecture II: The Broad Perceptual Model**

1. *Pain*: “And likewise with our self-blind man ... his pains hurt, but they don’t hurt him. But this of course is nonsense.” (228)

- Is it? After all, we call the disease “chronic insensitivity to pain,” not “chronic painlessness.”

2. *Perceptual experience*: “our putative self-blind person ... might seem like a normal person, making the right judgments about how things appear to her in a wide variety of circumstances. But she would give away her self-blindness by her inability to say what her visual experience is like if she is deprived of information about perceptual conditions ... **I do not deny that this case is possible**, but I do deny that it should count as a case of self-blindness – for I deny that the person, as described, has perceptual experiences in the sense that we do.” (230-31)

- But surely the Inner Sense theorist could agree that our normal perceptual experiences are the result of a combination of the first-order state and one’s higher-order knowledge of it, and that removing the latter state entails that one no longer has normal perceptual experiences.

3. *The will*: “So what we apparently have to imagine is that we have someone engaged in what looks like the execution of a rational action plan, with verbal behavior integrated with the nonverbal behavior, and that the only thing out of the ordinary is that the utterances that are integrated with the rest of the behavior are interspersed with ones that profess introspective ignorance of what is going on.”

- There do seem to be cases like this (Alien Hand Syndrome, Ouija boards, other Freudian cases). Also, many of our actions are just those ones that would make sense given the context; we don’t need introspection to know that we’re doing the usual thing one does in such situations.

**On Knowing One’s Own Mind (1988)***The Strategy*

1. Introspection is a quasi-perceptual faculty only if self-blindness is a conceptual possibility.
2. Self-blindness is not a conceptual possibility.
3. Thus introspection is not a quasi-perceptual faculty, i.e., the inner-sense model is false.

- Do we all agree with (1)?

*The Rational Revision Argument*

1. In a creature endowed with normal human rationality, that creature’s attitudes undergo revisions in response to new experiences, in a way that promotes the consistency and coherence of those attitudes.
2. Eliminating inconsistencies in a rational way requires knowledge of one’s attitudes.
3. Therefore, rationality is inconsistent with self-blindness.

- Objection: this process could still be automatic and subpersonal.
- Reply: even so, specific *behaviors* aimed at resolving inconsistencies (e.g. conducting further experiments) could only be rationalized by second-order beliefs.

*The Reductio Argument*

1. Suppose George has the conceptual competence, intelligence, and rationality of a normal person, but can only attribute attitudes to himself in a third-personal way.
2. Nothing in George's behavior, verbal or otherwise, would reveal that he lacks self-acquaintance.
3. It is therefore absurd to conclude that he is self-blind.

## Objections:

1.) Doesn't Shoemaker's argument actually demonstrate that the normal extent of self-knowledge could be accounted for *without appeal to any kind of privileged epistemic method*? By hypothesis, George relies only on evidence that is third-personally available, and yet he seems to be as aware of his own mind as a normal person is.

2.) "I am tempted to say that if everything is as if a creature has knowledge of its beliefs and desires, then it does have knowledge of them."

- Given the possibility of mere confabulation, together with the Wittgensteinian point that we habitually defer to people's self-ascriptions, should we accept this inference?

3.) Is it plausible that there are Moore's-Paradox equivalents for states other than belief that George could use to avoid revealing his lack of acquaintance with his desires, intentions, etc.?

"Please close the window, but I don't want you to."

"Would that he would come, but I hope that he doesn't."

"It is most desirable that I go for a run, but I don't want to go for a run."

"I'll be there, but I don't intend to be there."

4.) Couldn't the proponent of the Inner Sense theory agree that breakdowns in self-knowledge are connected with breakdowns of rationality, and conclude that the impossibility of self-blindness is a consequence of the impossibility of comprehensive irrationality?

*Shoemaker's own view (2009):*

There is a constitutive relation between believing that P and having a standing second-order belief that one believes that P. Having the first-order belief involves having the tendency to reason and act on the assumption P, when P becomes relevant (though this tendency might be blocked by other forces such as self-deception). The standing higher-order belief contains the belief that P as a part, in that the first-order belief + rationality and conceptual competence constitute the higher-order belief, and the latter cannot survive the extinguishing of the former.

- What about falsely believing that you believe that P?
- SS: this is impossible. All apparent cases are really cases of having contradictory beliefs.

*References/Further Reading*

Shoemaker, "Self-Intimation and Second-Order Belief," *Erkenntnis* 71, 2009.

Amy Kind, "Shoemaker, Self-Blindness, and Moore's Paradox," *Philosophical Quarterly* 53(210), 2003.

Charles Siewart, "Shoemaker on Self-Blindness," in *Privileged Access*, ed. Brie Gertler, Ashgate 2003.

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