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The Case for Intrinsic Theory: VII. An Equivocal Remembrance Theory

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O'Shaughnessy advocates an account of inner awareness (in the sense of the present series of articles) that I would categorize as a remembrance theory. Accordingly, as the consciousness stream is proceeding, one is normally acquiring without any occurrent conceptual awareness of one's experiences, thus silently and automatically, a latent knowledge of these experiences that can subsequently provide experiential remembrances of them. It is these remembrances that are proposed to be one's inner awareness of one's experiences: occurrent non-inferential conceptual awarenesses of the latter. Although O'Shaughnessy argues contra one's having intrinsic occurrent conceptual inner awareness of one's experiences, he maintains that every experience is its own "extensional object" (which is distinct from its being its own intentional object, as an intrinsic theory of inner awareness would imply). This non-conceptual reflexive relation of an experience to itself — "one's experiential awareness of one's experiences" — is claimed by O'Shaughnessy to be a case of awareness in exactly the same sense that any basic perceptual experience is awareness of its extensional object. The present article and the next one in the present series comprise an attempt to explicate O'Shaughnessy's conception of inner awareness, in particular, aspects of the conception that may contribute to the positive case for intrinsic theory.

In a large volume titled *Consciousness and the World*, which indeed, as the flyleaf promises, presents a "bold original" theory of consciousness, O'Shaughnessy (2000) proposes to elucidate, among much else, what I am calling in this article series (Natsoulas, 1996a, 1996b, 1998b, 1999b, 2001a, 2001b) "inner awareness," or "consciousness₄" after *The Oxford English Dictionary's* (1989) fourth entry under *consciousness*. Introducing the phenomenon in question and the intrinsic kind of account of inner awareness,

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the first article of the present series, as well as the opening section of the fifth, can be usefully consulted at this point. But, all one really needs to follow the present discussion is available here, starting with the following paragraph quoted from the installment just preceding this one (Natsoulas, 2001b):

My main purpose in this series is to give expression to the positive arguments in support of the intrinsic kind of theoretical account of that inner awareness which each of us surely has of many of our own mental-occurrence instances. According to all versions of intrinsic theory, a mental-occurrence instance that is conscious, in the sense of its being an object of immediate apprehension, possesses a phenomenological structure that intrinsically includes reference to the mental-occurrence instance itself. Thus, contrary to James's [1890/1950] "appendage" view of such immediate awareness, as presented in *The Principles of Psychology . . .*, a mental-occurrence instance can occur consciously absent any separate mental-occurrence instance that is directed upon it, that has it as an object. Thus, the very last mental-occurrence instance of one's life may be a conscious one, notwithstanding that no further mental-occurrence instance will take place in one after it (cf. Woodruff Smith, 1989). (p. 120)

O'Shaughnessy's account would seem only equivocally to be a species of intrinsic theory; later, I shall suggest that his conception of inner awareness may best be classified under the heading of "remembrance theory" (Natsoulas, 2001b, pp. 136–137). However, the presentation of his views yields material relevant to the topic of this series of articles: which is the positive case in favor of intrinsic theory, as distinct from demonstrating how alternative theories of the phenomenon have gone wrong. The present article's focus is on the mentioned material from O'Shaughnessy and on what it directly suggests.¹ Since it is no purpose of these articles to attempt to eliminate accounts opposed to intrinsic theory, I shall not digress to proffer criticism of O'Shaughnessy's conception of inner awareness. From time to time it may seem otherwise, but the intention of the questions I shall raise is expository. I do plan to write, outside of the present series (cf. Natsoulas, 2002a), a critical article concerning his theory. But, in the present article and in the next installment of the series, I shall be exploring only parts of O'Shaughnessy's conception of consciousness wherein an understanding of inner awareness as intrinsic would seem to be in operation or necessitated by his claims.

¹All bare page references found in the present article, and all of the references to O'Shaughnessy by name that are made in the footnotes or the text, are actually to his latest book (O'Shaughnessy, 2000).

The Attention, a System of Experiences, and Awareness

According to O'Shaughnessy, the stream of consciousness, or "experiential consciousness" as he tends to call it,² consists of "the attention" proceeding in time (pp. 278–279). At any moment in which that stream is flowing, the attention, which is conceived of as a kind of "experiential mental space," is occupied by a number of simultaneous experiences (e.g., perceptions, thoughts, images, emotions, affects, and desires) that together form a system. Whatever experience does occur will perforce occur in the attention of each moment of the experience's duration. Important to keep in mind: the attention is a technical concept; it is not to be understood finally as the equivalent of the ordinary concept of attention. O'Shaughnessy's attention is posited to be a "space of awareness" that enables experiences to come into being depending on causal conditions and whether there is room for them in the attention. The synchronic unity often attributed (by, e.g., James, 1890/1950) to each of the successive pulses of mentality making up the consciousness stream, O'Shaughnessy conceives of as being the unity of a set of mutually distinct experiences that transpire together as a system, which is the attention of the moment.

However, the attention's function as a container of experiences does not mean that it is itself to be understood as an experience. Of the attention, among other mental systems, O'Shaughnessy writes, "When mental items come together to form systems, they are not conjoining to constitute a single enlarged example of their own kind" (p. 289). Thus, it would be a mistake to construe the attention as its being the total experience of the moment. Such understanding would apply instead to James's (1890/1950) conception of the single pulses of mentality that successively make up the stream of consciousness; according to his conception, every such pulse is no more or less than a

²Thus distinguishing it from "consciousness," which is the general state of waking consciousness in which the consciousness stream flows, as it does in other such general states (e.g., in dreaming sleep; Natsoulas, 1999c). O'Shaughnessy describes "the stream of consciousness [as] being the visible or experiential face ["the phenomenal core"] of the continuous occurrent complex whole" that is the general state of waking consciousness (p. 273). With reference to the various general states, O'Shaughnessy's views are not entirely the same about the stream of consciousness, "the attention," or inner awareness. What the present text expresses regarding these views should be understood, therefore, as applying to the general state of consciousness that, elsewhere, I have sought to distinguish as "the normal waking state" (Natsoulas, 1981, 1983, 1999c), well assisted by certain earlier publications of O'Shaughnessy's (1972, 1986). Which is not to say, of course, that my statements concerning his views do not apply as well in some part to some of the other general states of consciousness. Similarly, all statements in this article are intended to apply to individuals whom O'Shaughnessy identifies as the self-conscious conscious, as distinct from the not self-conscious conscious, the possessors of merely animal consciousness (p. 102). This does not say that the views discussed here do not in some part apply to some of the latter individuals as well.

unitary awareness (Natsoulas, 2000). In contrast, each moment of the attention as it proceeds is not a unitary phenomenon except in the sense of a system that consists of a “colony” of distinct experiences (or phases thereof) standing to each other in certain relations (O’Shaughnessy, 2000, p. 273; Natsoulas, 2002a). In O’Shaughnessy’s (1986, p. 51) terms, at any moment, the attention is comprised of several “particular consciousnesses or awarenesses.” From O’Shaughnessy’s view of the attention as merely a system, the implicit suggestion would seem to be the instantiation of several first-person perspectives, not just one, existing at any temporal cross-section of the stream of consciousness (p. 278).

Although all experiences are proposed to be instances of awareness occurring with other such instances in a single system, this thesis does not mean that their container, too, is an awareness, an awareness of them. An experience is one among other occupants of the attention, and is not ever an object of the attention. Insofar as experiences are held to be objects of awareness, this is not because the attention, containing (“harbouring”) an experience, is also a kind of “mental eye” that includes the experience in its scope and has a view of it (cf. Natsoulas, 1993, pp. 138–140). Thus, O’Shaughnessy states,

It is vitally important that we take note of the fact that the “mental space” of awareness [i.e., the attention] is literally constituted out of, rather than distinct from the experiences filling the stream of consciousness. Failure to do so leads to a mythology in which Experiential Consciousness [i.e., the attention] is misconceived as a second centre of consciousness, as a sort of a internal gaze trained upon and harbouring in its “field of view” the immaterial experience-objects of the moment! Experiences bring their own awareness with them (rather as material objects bring their own space): they stand in no need of such an “internal gaze.” (p. 337)³

What is this awareness of which O’Shaughnessy speaks? It is said to be instantiated by every experience, every experience bringing this awareness with it as the experience performs in the attention. The awareness in question is not relational; it does not take the form of a separate, distinct occurrence that is directed upon the experience. Thus, for an experience to occur, which is for it to be an awareness, it does not need a second consciousness center to bring it into being, a center that by accepting the experience

³Cf. my explanation of the firsthand impression that some people have of their inner awareness of a state of consciousness as being distinct from that state (Natsoulas, 2001b). My suggestion was that this impression derives, perhaps, from what James (1902/1982) called “the divided self.” In brief: disapproving notice is subjectively taken of troubling incompatibilities or discordances that transpire in the stream of consciousness; and, consequently, states of consciousness that make up this one stream are subjectively assigned, depending on their content, to different selves, that is, to one or the other of two centers of consciousness.

gives it mental space in which to occur and renders the experience thereby an instance of awareness. The attention of O'Shaughnessy is not posited to be such a center, somehow distinct from the experiences occupying it. The consciousness center that does exist is just the experiences themselves, which populate the stream consciousness.⁴

Awareness comes only in the form of the experiences themselves. That which enables them to occur, which is the attention, or space of awareness that they occupy, is not in itself an awareness directed on them (or on anything). Thus, O'Shaughnessy rejects what might be called in general an "appendage" conception of the (as-yet-unspecified) awareness instantiated by every experience (cf. Freud, 1895/1966, p. 311; Natsoulas, 1993). The following is how O'Shaughnessy describes the alternative type of account that he believes not to be adequate: "This theory must suppose that one's awareness of one's experiences is a contingent relational and experiential addendum to those experiences, rather than an in-itself or intrinsic necessary property" (p. 285).

The latter statement would seem to specify "one's awareness of one's experience" to be the awareness intrinsic to every experience and, thus, to express an intrinsic thesis regarding the inner awareness we have of our experiences. To ensure an accurate understanding, one feels forced to ponder what other than inner awareness could O'Shaughnessy mean by *one's awareness of* in that quoted phrase. Well, he did not choose to say "the awareness belonging to the experience." This would have left what the awareness is unspecified. Instead, he makes use of the phraseology of inner awareness. Is he not speaking of the apprehension one has firsthand of the experience?⁵

O'Shaughnessy might be referring in this way to the view of the alternative theory, not to his own. The alternative, a kind of appendage theory, holds the awareness every experience possesses is its being the object of an awareness distinct from it.⁶ O'Shaughnessy goes on to argue next that the

⁴Cf. James's (1890/1950) non-egological conception of the mind (Natsoulas, 1999–2000).

⁵Using a distinction of Alston's (1991, pp. 21–24), we can say that the appendage type of theory that O'Shaughnessy is rejecting conceives of inner awareness as a case of "mediated immediacy," requiring, as it does, a "relational addendum" for awareness to be instantiated. Intrinsic theory, in contrast, conceives of one's inner awareness of one's experience to be "absolutely immediate," for it proposes that the inner awareness is a feature of the experience itself.

⁶Important to note that not all appendage theories of inner awareness assume that an experience's occurrence or its being an awareness requires that it be the object of inner awareness, that it be an instance of consciousness₄ (Natsoulas, 1993). James's (1890/1950) appendage account of inner awareness, for example, assumes that inner awareness of any state of consciousness is included, if it occurs at all, in a succeeding state of consciousness; the first state of consciousness is already an awareness, prior to the occurrence of any subsequent awareness of it.

distinct-awareness requirement implies a regress and, thus, “teaches us the fundamental truth that the experiential awareness of one’s experiences must begin and end with the experience itself: it simply is the experience itself” (p. 285). That is, the supposed distinct awareness would be just another experience and require, as does every experience *ex hypothesi*, an extrinsic awareness of it (etc). Of course, such an outcome depends on what the particular appendage theory claims of the awareness that is instantiated by every experience. An appendage theory could maintain that inner awareness requires a distinct awareness be directed on the experience without also assuming the experience cannot be an awareness (of something else) absent this relational addendum (e.g., Rosenthal, 1986, 1993; see Natsoulas, 1992).

O’Shaughnessy’s discussion of the alternative account does suggest that he might be a kind of intrinsic theorist of inner awareness. With his statement that one’s experiential awareness of one’s experience is simply the experience itself, what else could he mean than that the experience is, among other things, an awareness of itself? However, his shift at once to commenting on how we acquire knowledge of our experiences arouses some doubt (cf. the final section of this article). He immediately declares that the latter cognitive relation (i.e., knowing), wherein we stand to our experiences, is “a wholly different kind of awareness” from that experiential awareness which is wrongly assigned to an appendage or is rightly recognized to be intrinsic to the experience itself.

Non-Cognitive Experiential Awareness

But might O’Shaughnessy have in mind a distinction between cognitive inner awareness and inner awareness that is not cognitive? May he be including in his account both the non-cognitive and the cognitive kind of inner awareness? For he does state that one’s experiential awareness of one’s experiences is not the same phenomenon as having cognitive awareness of them. However, non-cognitive inner awareness would seem problematical. What would this awareness’s relation be to the experience of which it is said to be the awareness? How could there actually be such an occurrence as a non-cognitive awareness? Is that not a contradiction?

The answer depends, of course, on what *non-cognitive* means as applied to inner awareness. I shall soon come to a use of the word by a theorist who describes certain visual awarenesses as non-cognitive because the items of which they seem to be occurrent awarenesses do not exist at the time of the awarenesses’ occurrence (Gibson, 1979/1986). Another use of the term refers to the non-conceptual psychological, that is, to the absence of actualized conceptual capacities in the case characterized as non-cognitive (cf. McDowell, 1998).

Even before discussing O'Shaughnessy's extrinsic relation to experiences wherein one has a cognitive awareness of them, the evidently proposed, non-cognitive inner awareness is well worth exploring not only to understand more fully O'Shaughnessy's conception of inner awareness, but also because we may be led thereby better to appreciate certain remembrance types of account of inner awareness (e.g., Dulany, 1991, 1997; Natsoulas, 1998a, p. 137) as being based, actually, on an absolutely immediate awareness of one's experiences as they take place (see footnote 5). Some versions of remembrance theory may be as well, more or less implicitly, intrinsic theories of inner awareness.

Is one's experiential awareness of one's experiences, which is said to begin and end with the experience itself, a non-cognitive inner awareness? Some confirmation that it is so proposed to be would seem to come on the next page, very soon after O'Shaughnessy draws a contrast between this awareness and our firsthand cognitive relation to our experiences. Thereupon, O'Shaughnessy (a) makes mention of "the experiential non-cognitive awareness of one's own experiences — that which waxes and wanes during long-distance driving" (p. 286) and (b) appends to the text a long footnote that may express his own view:

The experiential awareness of our own experiences is none other than the "pre-reflective" or "non-positional" consciousness of Sartre [1957]. That is, it is an immediate consciousness of an experience X_i which is such that X is not the intentional object of that consciousness. We encounter mention of such "awareness" in "For some of the time, as he drove on through the night, the driver was only marginally aware of his driving." These are the cases, noted earlier in the present chapter, in which an item comes to consciousness, not as its object, but as an occupant. In his (understandable) anxiety to distinguish this phenomenon from cognition, Sartre (as it seems to me) makes the mistake of denying the existence of cognitive awareness of our own experiences as they occur. (p. 286)

I shall later be discussing the latter cognitive awareness as O'Shaughnessy understands it; see the final section of the present article and the next installment in this series of articles. That cognitive awareness should be kept distinct from the inner awareness described above, paradoxically it may seem, as a firsthand awareness of an experience that does not have the experience as its object.

The proposal of non-cognitive inner awareness reminds me of Gibson's (1979/1986, p. 239) distinction that he expressed as "awareness-of instead of just awareness." But one may well judge O'Shaughnessy not to be referring to either of the latter: O'Shaughnessy's experiential awareness may not be a kind of awareness-of in Gibson's sense, for Gibson held every perceptual awareness has one or more real objects: "It may be awareness of something in the environment or something in the observer or both at once, but there is

no content of awareness independent of that of which one is aware" (Gibson, 1979/1986, p. 239). Maybe O'Shaughnessy is claiming that non-cognitive inner awareness is awareness without an object.⁷ But, clearly, O'Shaughnessy is not thinking of something like Gibson's "just awareness." The latter is probably the equivalent of what Gibson called "nonperceptual awareness" (p. 255) and the "noncognitive kinds of awareness — fictions, fantasies, dreams, and hallucinations" (p. 263). Gibson holds that the apparent objects of these kinds of awareness do not have existence here and now. Presumably, such awarenesses cannot be rightly said, therefore, to be of anything, and so they are cases of "just awareness." Assuming that O'Shaughnessy ascribes intrinsic non-cognitive awareness of itself to every experience, its being an awareness in this sense would make it nothing less than an objective reality (p. 40). Although the experiences might be said not to be objects of this inner awareness, they are real phenomena, occurring as they do in the space of awareness, the attention, and thereby limiting what other experiences can occur along with them, also as parts of the same system of experiences.

The experiences' occupancy of the attention makes them awarenesses, without any extrinsic awareness of them being necessary to their taking place. All experiences are, independently of any extrinsic awareness of them that may occur, contents of the attention but not objects of same; indeed, the attention is not an experience and it does not have objects. Nevertheless, experiences themselves are held to be "what is before your mind right now, the most familiar thing[s] in the world: perceptions, thoughts, emotions, images, etc." (p. 37). "They are those psychological phenomena of which at any moment we are conscious" (p. 278). But how are we conscious of them? Is O'Shaughnessy referring to the non-occurrent knowledge relation in which we stand to them (see later) or to a (reflexive) occurrent awareness of them that we have in the form of their own occurrence? Being before one's mind right now surely suggests one's having a consciousness of them that is occurrent and immediate, not dependent on mental action to bring them into view, so to speak, such as the mental action of consulting one's memory.

What is this consciousness or awareness that is entailed by merely being an experience? All experiences when they occur are, O'Shaughnessy states, "given to consciousness *qua* content of consciousness" (p. 278). One is tempted to the interpretation that the givenness to consciousness and being a content of consciousness that is here intended is a presence to or in con-

⁷Or does such awareness have an object in a different sense than Gibson's? That is, perhaps such awareness does not have an *intentional* object in O'Shaughnessy's view, whereas Gibson (1979/ 1986) likens his concept of perception to that which was exercised in the act psychology of the nineteenth century. In a subsequent section, I shall return to whether the experiential awareness of one's experiences has objects.

sciousness, a being “before one’s mind right now” that is non-conceptual, unmediated by concepts applied to something already “there.” However, we must follow O’Shaughnessy closely to see if he leads us to a conclusion along the latter lines.

Experiential awareness is something that varies in intensity according to O’Shaughnessy, so that an experience can be given to consciousness to a greater or lesser extent, more centrally or marginally, depending on, among other things, the intensities of the co-occurring, simultaneous experiences that constitute the attention of the moment (pp. 280–283). Recall “the experiential non-cognitive awareness of one’s own experiences — that which waxes and wanes during long-distance driving” (p. 286). The consciousness or awareness to which experiences are said to be given and that varies in intensity or extent would seem to be, therefore, the inner awareness of our experiences that exists intrinsically to them and that is described as having a non-cognitive nature. And, evidently, it does work in this respect, and possesses adaptational value; different actions are emitted partly owing to which experiences have “centre-stage in awareness” (p. 278).

Consider the case of one’s attending closely to one’s driving: described by O’Shaughnessy as a case in which certain experiences gain center-stage in the system of experiences, the attention, as does not occur when one is not attending closely to one’s driving. O’Shaughnessy accepts that a case of intentional physical action such as this requires greater perceptual activity be directed on the action itself and on the relevant part of the environment. Thus, increased perceptual awareness of certain objects is involved; the experiences constituting the consciousness stream at such times include a greater number that contribute to the activity of driving than if one were not attending so closely to the activity. A greater number of objective items are perceptually noticed, but there is also more of something else directly bearing on our question.

Thus, when O’Shaughnessy adds to this that “the attention . . . is at the same time called upon for reasons of a wider scope than that of perception, indeed for reasons of wider scope than that of cognition” (p. 276), I believe he is thinking indirectly of the increased extent, during the closely attended-to driving, of inner awareness of the center-stage perceptual experiences. He conceives of the shift to center-stage of the involved experiences as the intentional physical action’s taking up now more of the space of awareness, which implies at least a reduction in the intensities of the other simultaneous experiences and a very likely failure of some of them to occur that otherwise would have occurred. O’Shaughnessy makes it a point to emphasize that attending more than before to one’s driving is “an increase in ‘awareness of action’ in a *non-perceptual* sense of that expression” (p. 286). What is this sense of non-perceptual? Surely, he means a greater inner awareness of the

mental phenomena involved in the action; these phenomena are described as their now “loom[ing] larger in consciousness, and correlatively . . . certain other mental phenomena tend at the same time to recede” (p. 286). We do also speak of external objects or events as their looming large in our perceptual awareness, but O’Shaughnessy suggests that the latter looming is the same as the large looming of the awareness itself: “For example, if a particular sound looms large in my awareness, then the hearing-experience absorbs just such a considerable portion of my awareness (for they are one and the same phenomenon)” [p. 293].

Experiences take up a greater part of the available space of awareness when they are center-stage in awareness, but this spatial notion is only a way of speaking of the limits of experiential consciousness, for the attention is not any kind of space, but wholly consists of the simultaneous experiences occurring at the moment (pp. 285–288). Rather than experiential mental space, there is a limited amount of awareness that is possible at any moment, and the experiences constituting the attention of the moment each bring their portion of intrinsic awareness to that system. That is, coming into being as awarenesses, the experiences contribute, as it were, each their own portion of awareness to the totality, or system, that is the attention of the moment. As I brought out in another section, the attention does not stand, in an awareness relation, over against its constituent experiences. And, of course, this pertains to one’s experiential awareness of experiences, which is said to be intrinsic to them.

The Concept of Awareness O’Shaughnessy Applies in Both the Perceptual and Reflexive Cases

In the effort to comprehend the non-cognitive inner awareness (one’s experiential awareness of one’s experiences) that O’Shaughnessy is attributing to all experiences as intrinsic to them, we can make some progress by focusing on the kind of experience that most receives discussion in his book: perceptions are one kind of experience among a number of different kinds that occur in the attention (where all experiences are held to occur). Simultaneously with other kinds of experience, a perception occurs in a system of experiences that is the attention of the moment. The perceptual experiences are each a “noticing” of “some phenomenal reality” (p. 275). The following remarks about perceptual experience are provided early in O’Shaughnessy’s book:

What is the general type of the objects that are thus given to perception? They are *things* (broadly understood). That is to say, concrete things, material objects, events, qualities, relations, and suchlike. And they are not facts about those things. The perceptual objects are concrete realities, not truths about concrete realities — and by

“concrete realities” I mean, merely the realities themselves. Thus, we “set eyes upon” people, mountains, the Battle of Midway, Naples for the first time, and in general upon objects and phenomena. And we do not “set eyes upon” truths. We glimpse or “catch sight of” or study or scrutinize objects, faces, phenomena, scenes: in short *visible items!* The Causal Theory of Perception governs the relation between objects and events in the environment and the event in the attention of noticing in which they come to awareness, and the causal relation holds not between a fact in physical nature and a mental event in which that fact comes to awareness, but between the phenomenal particular and the bare awareness of it. (p. 25)

Note “bare awareness”; O’Shaughnessy claims that the awareness at the core of perception, that to which perceptual objects come, is the same awareness as the inner, experiential awareness of one’s experiences. Does this mean that this awareness, too, is a “bare awareness,” and in the same sense: that is, not an awareness of fact (or truth), but a bare awareness of the concrete reality that the experience itself is?

Gibson (1979/1986, p. 239) too holds that perceptual experiences are instances of awareness-of. For example, in his chapter on picture perception, he speaks of our experience of pictures as always characterized by dual awareness: we have direct apprehension of the picture surface and are also aware of the items which the picture depicts, even though the two kinds of awareness are mutually discrepant. Despite that: “This dual apprehension is inescapable under normal conditions of observation” (Gibson, 1979/1986, p. 291). Both of these visual apprehensions are awarenesses-of, although the depicted surfaces (and so on) do not themselves cause the experience that is here and now of them; indeed, the evidently depicted need not exist. Although he states the perceiver “cannot help but see both” the picture surface and the items therein depicted, Gibson (1979/1986) does not say anything that would exclude the understanding that the picture surface and the items depicted are successively rather than simultaneously apprehended.

According to O’Shaughnessy’s different conception, not only the perceptual experiences of pictures but every perceptual experience instantiates a certain duality of apprehension and thus it is simultaneously a dual awareness. To have a perceptual experience, however instantaneous, is to be not only aware but doubly aware. However, this double awareness is not to be assimilated to Gibson’s dual-apprehension thesis for picture perception, nor to a proposal of body-awareness ubiquity in the stream of consciousness: “Our own bodily position, attitude, condition, is one of the things of which *some* awareness, however inattentive, invariably accompanies the knowledge of whatever else we know” (James, 1890/1950, p. 241). O’Shaughnessy’s thesis is, rather, that every perceptual experience that occurs “is an awareness which is at once (reflexively) of itself and of its objects” (p. 297).

Any experience of the perceptual kind is (a) a perceptual awareness of one or more concrete things, material objects, events, qualities, relations, or the

like; and it is also at the same time (b) an inner awareness of itself. This surely sounds like an expression of an intrinsic theory of inner awareness. But again, whether it is such an expression depends on the concept of awareness that is at work. The concept of reflexive awareness at work is a concept of non-cognitive awareness. Then is it actually a concept of awareness? After all, what awareness remains in the case of bare awareness? For: "Roughly, it is coming face to face with Reality, rather than Truth . . . Making attentive contact with an actual existent" (p. 291). O'Shaughnessy repeatedly insists there is no more to the perceptual awareness to which he is referring than just that "extensional" contact. "Some phenomenal reality becoming object for awareness" (p. 293) is what perceptual awareness merely is.⁸ Also, of course, perceptual experience, as is true of every experience, has a reflexive-awareness aspect that is intrinsic to it, according to O'Shaughnessy.

Every perceptual experience is a double instantiation of the concept of awareness exercised in describing the attention as a space of awareness. It is in terms of this same concept of awareness that O'Shaughnessy identifies the perceptual awareness basically involved in every experience of the perceptual kind. He gives repeated expression to the following "principle:" "Whatever-it-be that perception is a coming of some existent as direct-object *to*, is the same whatever-it-be that emotion, thought, action, perception occupy or use" (p. 296). We have seen that this whatever-it-be is held not to be, in fact, a mental space distinct from and pre-existing the experiences that enter it. In its entirety, the attention consists only of its constituent experiences, which include a reflexive inner awareness each one of itself. Consistently with the above principle, the following expresses the equivalence of the awareness that is instantiated by the most basic inner, reflexive awareness and the most basic outer, perceptual awareness:

"Aware of" has the same sense in "We are aware of the objects of perception" and "We are aware of our experiences." . . . The objects of perception in a certain sense mimic the occupants of the attention: mere things appear to jostle around in the stream of consciousness alongside thoughts and emotions, just as concretely given to the subject of experience as they. (pp. 296–297)

⁸It will emerge that, for O'Shaughnessy, the bare awareness at the core of perception is of certain mental items, namely, sensations. These must be taken for their physical causes in order for these causes to be perceptually experienced. In perception, sensations serve as representatives of their causes in the environment; and, thus, O'Shaughnessy states they "are" the physical items that they represent. But for one's perceptions cognitively to "reach" a physical item, one's sensations must produce therein an interpretation of one's sensations. Along with a bare awareness of sensations, a perceptual experience would include a recognitional act that apprehends the sensations under a concept.

Both of them, both kinds of realities, experiential phenomena and environmental happenings and things, are concretely given in awareness; they are present in person to consciousness. But, is it perhaps O'Shaughnessy's view that, in being objects of this awareness, they are not grasped? The nature of the "apprehension" is the question. In what sense are we held to be aware reflexively of our experiences? The answer is: as we are aware in the first place of our perceptual objects. But how is the latter awareness proposed to be?

O'Shaughnessy states that he cannot say what the awareness concept is that he is exercising in both the perceptual and reflexive cases. He believes it to be so basic as to be unanalyzable (p. 298). He says the same of the synonymous concept of experience and of many other fundamental concepts in the mental realm (p. 39). But, although unable to define the concept of experience, we can acquire, exercise, and investigate that concept. Without hesitation, we can distinguish those mental phenomena that are and those that are not experiences or awarenesses: "This attests to a decisiveness of sense which owes its existence to an objective unanalysable reality" (p. 40).

I should think that this ability attests to the revelatory character of the reflexive awareness of our experiences that O'Shaughnessy proposes we have. It would seem that it is by such awareness that we know them to be the experiences they are. In this case, the objective unanalyzable reality would seem to be concretely given to us in such a way that, for example, O'Shaughnessy is able to notice and report the close similarity existing between the presence to awareness of that inner objective reality and the unique presence of perceptual experience's external objects, exclaiming, "For we awake in the World with outer perceptibles as near to us experientially as our very own thoughts!" (p. 300). Based upon the firsthand contact that he has with the objective unanalyzable reality that is his perceptual and other experiences, O'Shaughnessy is in a position to say of the external objects of our perceptual experience that they come to us appearing as though they too are components of the attention and the stream of consciousness, as though they exist alongside the perceptions, thoughts, images, emotions, affects, and desires that in fact have their occurrent existence there. O'Shaughnessy says this as part of the fruits of his investigation of the concept of awareness that is instantiated by perceptual experience, but his discussion is useful for the present purpose in yielding some comprehension of the concept of awareness at work when he is referring to one's experiential (reflexive) awareness of one's experiences. For O'Shaughnessy these are the same concept.

O'Shaughnessy emphasizes there is nothing more to a perceptual experience's (p's) being an awareness of x in the perceptual sense than that he is investigating than that p is an experience and that p is extensionally and non-reflexively an experience of x. And there is nothing more to p's or any

experience's being awareness of itself than *p*'s (and so on) being an experience extensionally and reflexively of *p* itself. That is all that the concept of awareness in question amounts to whether it is applied to perceptual experience or one's experiential contact with one's own experiences. This univocality of *aware of* in these two respects is further argued by bringing out that both kinds of awareness are "concrete and precognitive." Accordingly, perceptual awareness is

concrete because it is the bearer of interpretations, and it is precognitive because it is no more than a natural foundation for knowledge. Then it is surely of some significance that experiential awareness of experiences is the same. Thus, it is concrete because nothing conceptual mediates one's relation to one's own experiences, and it is precognitive since we know of our present and recent experiences precisely because they are experiences. (p. 299)

The reflexive inner awareness we have of our experiences is non-conceptual, involves no exercise of concepts; nor is perceptual awareness conceptual. That is how I would tend to read the above passage, for the two awarenesses are claimed to be the same, both are concrete and precognitive. That is, the role of perceptual awareness in the acquisition of knowledge is not one wherein this awareness places its objects under headings. As a natural foundation of knowledge and the bearer of interpretations, perceptual awareness must stand in some relation to cognitive occurrences yet it is not itself a cognitive occurrence. It is prior to the cognitive, which means it is non-cognitive. Knowledge of experiences is also held naturally to occur immediately somehow. But the reflexive awareness said to be intrinsic to each experience is not propositional, is not a formulation of some truth regarding the experience, not even the truth of its occurrence. An experience's producing, somehow, some knowledge about it is not owed to the intrinsic experiential awareness's being a cognitive phenomenon, which it is not.

Experience's Taking an Extensional Object, Whether Outer/Perceptual or Inner/Reflexive

This next section is not intended as criticism, any more than the preceding sections are. It is the result of an effort to comprehend O'Shaughnessy's thesis of intrinsic reflexive awareness. The sense in which intrinsic reflexive awareness is a kind of awareness has not yet been made obvious. Nor is O'Shaughnessy's central proposal obvious regarding the basic awareness at the core of all primary perceptual experiences. He proposes this core awareness is "extensionally" related to its object and (with emphasis) "that is all." The following would seem to be his claim: whereas basic perceptual awareness has an extensional object, it does not have an intentional object. Thus,

this awareness has nothing which it is actually about — is this interpretation correct?

The extensional–intentional distinction at work in O’Shaughnessy’s discussion recalls James’s contrast of “knowledge of acquaintance” vs. “knowledge-about.” Those occurrent awarenesses that James considers to be exclusively of the acquaintance type would seem like the awarenesses with an extensional object that O’Shaughnessy has in mind. James states,

We can relapse at will into a mere condition of acquaintance with an object by scattering our attention and staring at it in a vacuous trance-like way. We ascend to knowledge *about* it by rallying our wits and proceeding to notice and analyze and think. What we are only acquainted with is only *present* to our minds; we *have* it, or the idea of it. But when we know about it, we do more than merely have it; we seem, as we think over its relations, to subject it to a sort of *treatment* and to *operate* upon it with our thought . . . The minimum of grammatical subject, of objective presence, of reality known about, the mere beginning of knowledge, must be named by the word that says the least. Such a word is the interjection, as *lo! there! ecco! voilà* or the article or demonstrative pronoun introducing the sentence, as *the, it, that*. (James, 1890/1950, p. 222)

All perceptual experiences, whether these occur in staring blankly or in thoughtfully scrutinizing a part of the environment, take an extensional object. It will be seen that their taking such objects makes it possible, according to O’Shaughnessy, for certain distinct, propositional experiences to “single out indexically” the extensional object of a perceptual experience as being that which they themselves are about. Similarly, James (1890/1950, p. 222) speaks of the subject of a grammatical sentence as standing for an object of acquaintance, while the sentence’s predicate gives expression to something known about the object of acquaintance.

O’Shaughnessy uses the extensional–intentional distinction also in characterizing the reflexive awareness of an experience that is an intrinsic feature of every experience. He describes the basic awareness instantiated in all cases of perceptual or non-perceptual experience as the same and not analyzable, though he defines basic perceptual awareness to be a matter of experience’s taking an extensional object outside of the stream of consciousness: he states, “We simply take hold of the [unanalysable] concept of an experience and give it a non-reflexive extensional object” (p. 298). The concept that is thus “taken hold of” O’Shaughnessy considers already to possess a reflexive extensional object, namely itself, since it is an occupant of the attention (see earlier in this article).

However, I do not want to suggest intrinsic reflexive awareness, the objective phenomenon, may not actually be an occurrent awareness. That has never been my view. In the present series of articles, I have repeatedly claimed the reality of intrinsic inner awareness, although not holding, as O’Shaughnessy

does (cf. Brentano, 1911/1973), that every experience that occurs to the self-conscious conscious normally instantiates intrinsic inner awareness. My comments in this section, above and below, refer to O'Shaughnessy's conception of intrinsic inner awareness. Although he calls it "one's experiential awareness of one's experiences," he may not be in fact conceiving of intrinsic reflexive awareness as awareness. Also, similarly, the question I am raising about the core perceptual awareness is not its possibly not having something that it is actually about; rather, I am asking: Does O'Shaughnessy's concept of that kind of awareness as taking an extensional object reduce this relation to a causal one between the awareness and a certain link in the chain of causes that brings the awareness into occurrence? Thus, a behavioristic concept would be replacing the usual concept of awareness according to which an awareness instantiates intentionality and, so, it may be about something. After making more sense of the proposed relation between perceptual awareness and external object, we may perhaps find that O'Shaughnessy's concept of extensional awareness is not really behavioristic.

In O'Shaughnessy's view, a perceptual experience "already" possesses a reflexive extensional object when the experience is "given" a further, non-reflexive extensional object.⁹ The experience possesses a reflexive object in the sense that all experiences do, being experiential awarenesses of themselves. All experiences are instances of awareness, at least of experiential awareness, which is reflexive. Next, let me quote several of O'Shaughnessy's characterizations of the relation of perceptual awareness to its extensional object. Based in part on each of these characterizations, I provide comment in accordance with O'Shaughnessy's theoretical perspective on intrinsic inner awareness's taking a reflexive extensional object.

1. "Perception . . . relates concretely ['not with the aid of thought'] to its object, which it discovers through physical causality, and . . . the phenomenon in question simply consists in an awareness of its object" (p. 15). Inner, reflexive awareness, too, is proposed to relate concretely to its object, and without the aid of thought. However, this awareness's relation to its object is not causal; rather, the relation is intrinsic to its object, the experience being its own object. It is error, O'Shaughnessy states, to detach the awareness (in the present sense) of an experience from the experience itself (p. 286). Now, if one assumes, as I do, that experiences are brain events or

⁹As will be seen, although it serves my expositional purpose now, expressing the point in terms of two extensional objects per perceptual awareness requires revision to state O'Shaughnessy's true view. As it turns out, the core awareness belonging to a perceptual experience has the perceptual experience alone for its extensional object, the perceptual experience itself consists of sensations, and the perceptual experience (externally to its core awareness) interprets these sensations to be that something in the environment or body causing them to take place (cf. Sellars, 1978a, 1978b; Natsoulas, 1999a).

processes, the two extensional-awareness relations, inner and outer, would be, equally, physical relations, although only one of these relations is causal. Thus, it is my view that the intrinsic inner awareness of an experience is not a distinct part the experience that, therefore, might be produced by its other part (cf. Gurwitsch, 1985; Natsoulas, 1996b, 1998b). Any experience of which one has intrinsic inner awareness is integral and unitary; it has only a single phenomenological content, not two such contents, not one content directed on another (cf. Woodruff Smith, 1989).

2. "Intentionality is neither temporally, developmentally, logically, nor causally prior to extensionality: consciousness arises in the world with both kinds of objects equally primitively given to it" (p. 17). O'Shaughnessy conceives of the inner, reflexive awareness that he proposes to be intrinsic to experiences, to be an instantiation of the concept of awareness that is instantiated too by the pre-interpretational core perceptual awareness essential to perceptual experience. And this awareness in neither of its instantiations involves concepts; it is not an exercise of conceptual capacities, nor is it an involuntary actualization of such capacities (McDowell, 1998; Natsoulas, 2002b). Not yet considered here is the O'Shaughnessy conception of a distinct, cognitive inner awareness (or at least knowledge) of every experience, a conception that I would categorize as a kind of remembrance theory. According to this account, each experience, simply by its transpiring, yields knowledge of itself directly, that is, not by means of any occurrent cognitive mediation. Every experience automatically and silently leaves a knowledge of itself as a trace or a deposit, as it were. This extrinsic knowledge is a different matter from the intrinsic self-awareness that O'Shaughnessy ascribes also to every experience. The proposed primitive relation of an experience to itself, taking itself as object, must be sharply distinguished from an intentional relation of aboutness. In contrast, the extensional relation that the intrinsic reflexive awareness of one's experiences instantiates, according to O'Shaughnessy's conception, has no interpretational feature. Neither does the reflexive awareness include an occurrent belief that such and such is the case regarding the experience, nor even a recognitional dimension in which the experience simply apprehends itself as something. All one can know in a privileged way about one's experiences is only by means of a certain process, extrinsic to experiences, whereby memories of experiences are acquired that may subsequently be consulted (cf. Dulany, 1991, 1997; Natsoulas, 1998a, p. 137; more about this process soon).

3. "Things are present in awareness *qua* concrete object, as 'near' *qua* object as the experiences themselves are 'near' *qua* occupant (for when the experience is perceptual, these two presences are one and the same!)" [p. 19]. Both physical things and experiences are "present" in the stream of consciousness as it exists objectively, not merely as it seems. The "presence" there of physi-

cal things is possible, according to O'Shaughnessy, because some of the mental items that occupy the stream represent physical things. Only mental items literally populate the stream, but certain mental items, namely, the concrete representatives of physical things, are the extensional objects of perceptual experience: "Their concrete presence to awareness is that of those physical objects" (p. 19). O'Shaughnessy would also seem to be proposing (see parenthetical exclamation above) that the extensional object of the basic awareness in a perceptual experience is none other than the experience itself. The experience's concrete "presence" to inner, reflexive awareness is the concrete "presence" of the physical thing that produces the perceptual experience. However, I cannot say the notion of presence helps us at this point: the presence subjectively of something real normally implies more than the latter objective item's standing to awarenesses in the relation of cause to effect. The awarenesses must be apprised somehow of that objective presence. But then would this not mean that the objectively present item is, also, object of an intentional relation of aboutness?

4. "[Perceptual experiences] are at once essentially extensionally directed to immediate sensuous objects (colour, pain, sound) and mostly also at the same time intentionally directed to mediated physical objects (people, sky, trees, and the public occurrence of secondary qualities)" [p. 19]. The presence of physical things in perceptual experience would seem to require that they be intentional objects of perceptual experience. It must be that a perceptual experience instantiates an interpretational dimension applied to sensations that constitute the perceptual experience itself. Thus, the sensations — not the represented physical things which determine the sensations — are the extensionally, concretely, literally present items: the items that in fact do occupy the attention. Because (a) the attention is not, as we have seen, an awareness and (b) regress is to be avoided by rejecting, as well, any other kind of appendage account of inner awareness, the interpretation of sensations as the respective physical items must be a dimension of the perceptual experience itself. That is, the perceptual experience extensionally takes itself as object and, also, intentionally takes itself as a physical thing, the one that produced the experience by its impact on sense receptors of the respective perceptual system. Thus, we seem to have here what amounts to an intrinsic theory of inner awareness, at least in the case of perceptual experience; the account so qualifies because it assumes an intrinsic intentional awareness of the perceptual experience. Albeit, this is awareness of the perceptual experience as being a physical thing, but not ruled out is the experience's taking itself, instead, as what it actually is. In the case of other experiences than the perceptual kind, this matter is not as clear: whereas the other experiences are said to "acquire their objects abstractly, through the offices of thought and concept" (p. 17), there is "nothing conceptual [that]

mediates one's intrinsic relation to one's own experiences" (p. 299). Neither these other experiences' having extensional objects, which is each experience itself in each instance, nor their acquiring intentional objects is a matter of meanings imposed on an extensional object of awareness.

5. "While a match of experiential content and outer object under minimal headings, such as seeming-to-see a round red patch and the setting sun, is a necessary condition of that [perceptual, "in the flesh"] contact, only a mechanistic-causal linkage can establish the actual connection" (p. 334). O'Shaughnessy is speaking here of a perceptual experience's property of concreteness, and he is identifying a feature of that property: namely, the special character of the perceptual relation. He is saying that one cannot have contact in the flesh with a perceptual object if the object is not there and causing the perceptual experience to occur. However, he is also bringing out that this causal relation does not suffice: the experience must also have a suitable content. Moreover, the requirement of matching content would seem to imply that there occurs some kind of awareness of the sensation preceding any interpretation of it. The respective perceptual content comes into being not by an operation on something whose concrete presence is no more than its producing a sensuous representative of it; rather, the sensations on which an interpretation acts must already be a content of awareness. Both sensuous effect and intrinsic reflexive awareness is claimed not to be conceptual — "The constitutional core of perception is a-conceptual in character" (p. 335) — yet the implication seems to be that the involved awareness preceding any interpretation is of a kind that is not reducible to a causal-mechanical linkage. Accordingly, O'Shaughnessy describes a heard thump as perforce being, before the occurrence of any thought regarding the thump, "a recorded object of consciousness . . . already [an]object for the attention" (p. 327). In the case of the non-perceptual experiences, there does not occur, evidently, any interpretation, any operation of the Understanding, based directly on intrinsic reflexive awareness. O'Shaughnessy does not characterize in the same terms the non-perceptual experiences' presence "in the flesh," their, too, being extensional objects of awareness. He does not speak of them in the way that he does of the perceptual experiences: as their being "eminently susceptible of redescriptive interpretation" (p. 335). The other experiences, too, are "concretely present" but, by way explicating their concrete presence, no analogous notion of a non-intentional content of inner awareness is introduced. It may be suggested that they themselves are that content, for they are among the occupants of the attention. Perhaps they too are held to be recorded (registered?) objects of consciousness, simply in the fact of their instantiating awarenesses, of each providing its own awareness. But this does not move us forward with respect to the relation of each to itself as reflexive awarenesses. In the case of the non-perceptual experiences,

what content, if any, does the intrinsic reflexive awareness have? Is the latter some kind of awareness without content? Are experiences concretely present without their being in any way apprehended?

6. "The perceptual experience both causes and provides the cognitive experience [that almost invariably accompanies it] with its indexically given topic or object" (p. 411). The latter cognitive experience that O'Shaughnessy mentions here is the "perceptual-discovery experience," by which he means "the sort of phenomenon that occurs when one *sees that* the traffic lights are green" (p. 318). Whereas this is a perceiving-that, the perceptual experience that directly produces it and, at the same time, provides it with its object is a perceiving-of, the attentive kind of event that I have been discussing. For example, (a) one has a non-conceptual visual perceptual awareness of the traffic lights, and (b) one is then aware of the lights as such, the non-conceptual awareness evokes a distinct interpretational, recognitional act that is not propositional. Also, (c) one has a distinct cognitive propositional experience of the traffic lights, produced by the perceptual experience that consists of both of the first two items of these three (a, b, and c). The total perceptual experience (a plus b) has, as we have seen, itself as its extensional object, given that the experience consists of sensations that are produced by the traffic lights, and has the traffic lights as intentional objects, given a suitable inner interpretation of those sensations. The distinct cognitive experience (which is c and consequent upon a plus b), being an occurrent believing that the lights are green, also has the traffic lights for its intentional objects. O'Shaughnessy adds that such instances as the latter of perceiving-that generally do more than so far indicated; namely, they also "indexically single out the object of the belief as what is there and then experienced in the contemporaneous perception" (p. 321). This seems to say that, like the recognitional or interpretational act, b, that is said to be a dimension of the perceptual experience, a plus b, the distinct, cognitive, perceptual-discovery experience, c, takes for its objects the very sensations being perceptually experienced, a plus b, as traffic lights. Thus, O'Shaughnessy would seem to be countenancing in effect three kinds of inner awareness of a perceptual experience. These take place either intrinsically to or together with the perceptual experience: the reflexive awareness intrinsic to the perceptual experience extensionally apprehends the concrete sensations of which the perceptual experience consists. A recognitional act that is a distinct aspect of the perceptual experience conceptually interprets the sensations as being the external object that produces them. A distinct experiential propositional effect (of the perceptual experience) occurs, as well, to which O'Shaughnessy attributes the ability indexically to single out directly, across experiences, its own object as being what is now being perceptually experienced non-propositionally. I consider this perceptual-discovery experience (e.g., seeing that the traffic lights are

green) to be an inner awareness (of extrinsic, non-reflexive, type) because, *ex hypothesi*, it is sensations, which are mental items, that are directly taken for their environmental causes. The environmental causes are not that which perceptual-discovery experiences indexically single out, I presume; for those causes are not the basic, non-conceptual perceptual experience's extensional objects, being rather interpretationally mediated objects (p. 19).

**A Remembrance Theory:
Rejection of Occurrent Conceptual Inner Awareness
as Intrinsic to or an Appendage of Its Object**

Yet there is also to be found in O'Shaughnessy's book an explicit rejection of one's having an inner awareness of one's experiences, namely an inner awareness that involves the actualization of conceptual capacities and is either intrinsic to experiences, simultaneous with them, or their direct effect. Considering the material in the just prior section of the present article, readers may well think that, with respect to what O'Shaughnessy in fact holds, the signs are pointing in a different direction. And the following quoted paragraph will appear, too, to contradict my characterization of his explicit view as being a denial of immediate, cognitive occurrent awareness of experiences.

Very occasionally we discover what is here and now occurring in our minds through inference and appeal to experience. For example, we might take seriously the suggestion of a friend that our present motivation is other than we might have supposed. But before all else and for most of our waking lives we are absolutely immediately aware of a great slice of the present contents of our own minds. That is, we know of a great many such items "just like that" or no-how. And it could not be otherwise. How could a child learn what passes in his own mind from his elders first, and only secondarily graduate to immediate self-knowledge of such phenomena? What kind of mind would it be that would discover from other people about its own thoughts and desires and intentions, but was unable to immediately know of such items in its own mind? It defies comprehension. There can be no doubt that immediate self-knowledge is an essential element of human mentality. Such natural insight governs our knowledge both of present experiences like thought and affect, of unexperienced mental states like beliefs and desires, of the mental sources of many of our acts and beliefs and desires, and so on. Thus, I know that I am now thinking of this, I know I now believe that, I know that I do so because I just now observed such and such, immediately and automatically as a complete matter of course. This property has to be realized as soon as a mind is a reality. More exactly, as soon as a human or self-conscious type of mind is a reality. (p. 105)

Note, however, that the above paragraph is about the firsthand acquisition of a knowledge of one's experiences, rather than about one's occurrent awareness of them. O'Shaughnessy is here claiming that, although one acquires this knowledge firsthand, one does so in no way. Knowledge of one's experiences is conceived of as a non-occurrent condition of the mind and it simply

comes to one immediately just as the experiences occur. This latent knowledge has the form of “change located elsewhere in the mind than in the stream of consciousness” (p. 107). And it is “absolutely immediate awareness” — meaning immediate knowledge — of one’s experiences, but not through one’s undergoing any occurrent conceptual awareness of them: “There exists no cognitive path via which this knowledge is reached” (p. 105). O’Shaughnessy insists that a cognitive path would require in this case that each of our experiences be accompanied by a separate experience with the first experience as an object, thus generating a regress of experiences. There would have to be a location within the stream of consciousness, in the form of further experiences, where the mental contents that are instantiated in the stream are experientially disclosed.

Parts of James’s (1890/1950, pp. 297–299) phenomenological characterization of the “self of all the other selves” can be used to exemplify the kind of extra occurrences in the consciousness stream that O’Shaughnessy has in mind (albeit as being mythical). Among the things James says regarding those basic durational components of the stream, or pulses of mentality, that abstractly make up the self of selves are that they seem to go out to meet, to receive, and to welcome or reject the contents of other states of consciousness in the same stream. Clearly, whatever else according to James the components of the self of selves are, they involve a conceptual kind of inner awareness of the states of consciousness that are their objects. James would seem to hold that acquiring knowledge about one’s experiences requires such occurrent awarenesses; mere acquaintance with our experiences, whether this be intrinsic to them or by means of the self of selves cannot suffice for such acquisition: “Through feelings we become acquainted with things but only by our thoughts do we know them” (James, 1890/1950, p. 223). To have knowledge of our experiences one must have thoughts about them; the simple occurrence of an experience, even if accompanied by “dumb” acquaintance with it, cannot suffice.

The self of selves James holds to be the cognitive path whereby we acquire knowledge of our experiences. O’Shaughnessy claims any such path is a myth because it consists of experiences; the path itself would have to be an object of experience: “In order to avoid [an] infinite multiplication of mental contents . . . we have no choice but to accept that the knowledge of present experiences . . . cannot in general be through . . . [an] experienced avenue of knowledge” (p. 105). O’Shaughnessy thus rejects as well, without mention, an account of inner awareness according to which the path to knowledge lies internally to each present experience immediately known to occur. Presumably, we are to gather that any conceptual awareness that an experience has of itself, in contrast to the kind of inner awareness sans concepts O’Shaughnessy attributes to all experiences, would lead to a regress also. In

the first place, each experience would instantiate a dual content: for example, any thought would be an awareness of or a seeming awareness of something beyond itself and, at the same time, an awareness of itself. O'Shaughnessy's implicit argument would seem to be that if the latter awareness is theoretically conceived of as conceptual, this would require the inclusion of an intrinsic awareness of it in turn (etc.). But this evidently rejected alternative is not discussed, so that the actual case against it might be considered.

Instead, O'Shaughnessy claims that there is no third event, one that occurs between (a) the thought experience with the content expressible by "The train leaves in five minutes" and (b) the onset of a state of knowledge of the occurrence of that experience. Moreover, the respective knowledge-onset, not being an experience, does not in turn cause an onset of knowledge of its occurrence. Only experiences have this effect, and no regress is thereby begun. The knowledge-onset is automatic and silent. O'Shaughnessy describes it as "absolutely immediate." Thus, from the first-person perspective, it is as though nothing besides the experience itself occurred. More exactly, one simply knows of the experience that produced it, and must infer to this knowledge's acquisition, that the experience one knows of produced it.

In explaining O'Shaughnessy, it is largely correct, it would seem, to let James (1890/1950) comment (sympathetically) as follows: "The present moment of consciousness is thus, as Mr. Hodgson says, the darkest in the whole series. It may feel its own immediate existence . . . but nothing may be known about it till it be dead and gone" (p. 341). The thought experience of our example had itself as extensional object, as do all experiences according to O'Shaughnessy, but it did not apprehend itself conceptually. Thus, the thought transpired in "darkness" and it remained unapprehended until it was remembered if it was. That is, an occurrent memory experience about the thought might later take place, owing to knowledge of the thought acquired automatically at the time of the thought's occurrence, which involved no conceptual inner awareness of it, neither intrinsic or distinct. Consistently, the occurrent memory experience too would occur in darkness but would leave, as the thought had, knowledge of its occurrence.

Characterizing one's immediate knowledge of one's experiences, O'Shaughnessy speaks of the "continuous silent 'cognitive print out' of present mental content" (p. 106). This manner of expressing his view will no doubt evoke a major question: how a knowledge of the mental content belonging to one's experience makes it possible for one to remember one's having the experience. Recall that the remembered experience took place in the dark; that is, it occurred unapprehended as anything at all, not even as a kind of experience. Being conceptual, the original experience was, at least, an apprehension or seeming apprehension of something or other else as

something. The experience only had content about its object or apparent object, no content about itself, according to O'Shaughnessy. His account needs an explanation for how an experience can be remembered given that none of the knowledge produced by its occurrence is about the experience — which is implied by a view that no occurrent conceptual inner awareness of an experience accompanies the experience or is intrinsic to it.

It cannot suffice simply to say that knowledge of the experience is acquired immediately in no way, that there automatically occurs a

silent event of augmenting the knowledge-system, which happens simultaneously with the experience [and] manages itself not to be a further experience. And it is this fact which enables us to avoid an endless multiplication of experiences Far from being an outré or occult divination of phenomena, it is the *natural* accessibility of a whole slice of the present life of the mind of the subject. (p. 107)

There is surely the appearance of occult divination absent an explanation of how an experience is known of when only the content that it instantiates is known. Indeed, O'Shaughnessy emphasizes the difference between this inner acquisition of knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge that occurs in outer perception. Direct knowledge of our experiences is gained in a “wholly dissimilar way” from how our knowledge of outer phenomena arises (p. 105). Thus, learning firsthand the present occurrence of a flash of lightning requires visual experience, whereas firsthand knowledge of the occurrence of an experience does not require anything more than the experience itself.

O'Shaughnessy does not explain how the conceptual occurrent inner awareness of sensations — an awareness that he holds does occur intrinsically to every perceptual experience, as we have seen in the immediately preceding section of the present article — avoids starting up of an endless multiplication of experiences. O'Shaughnessy assumes a perceptual experience's conceptual inner awareness of itself does not imply the occurrence of a regress of awarenesses. But avoidance of the latter is his expressed motivation for rejecting occurrent conceptual inner awareness of present experiences.

On the basis of the above discussion, it may occur to one that O'Shaughnessy's view may be this: having direct knowledge of only the contents of one's experiences, not of the experiences themselves, one draws inferences from certain remembrances, from present occurrent awarenesses of remembered contents, to the effect that one must have had certain experiences possessing those contents (cf. James, 1890/1950, pp. 304–305).¹⁰ However, O'Shaughnessy's understanding of what it is about our experiences

¹⁰Hebb (1981, 1982; Hebb and Donderi, 1987) takes this sort of view and, elsewhere, I address his view critically (Natsoulas, 1977, 1983, pp. 38–41).

that we are normally able immediately to remember is not merely their contents but also the experiences themselves, the facts of their occurrence in us. One knows that one is experiencing and, normally, one knows of the particular experiences one is having (p. 168). In O'Shaughnessy's notion of one's knowing the present contents of one's mind, there are included both contents of experiences and experiences possessing those contents.

That O'Shaughnessy holds experiences themselves, not merely their contents, are objects of conceptual inner awareness (remembrance-type) is evidenced by, among others, this statement of his:

There are simply no such things as "unconscious experiences," for merely through being an experience the item in question has (more or less) arrived already at "cognitive headquarters" (as one might express it). Thus, it is already part of the "stream of consciousness," and sheer ignorance of the presence of an experience, whether singled out under correct or incorrect description, is something it is difficult to make head or tail of The variety of failure of insight encountered with experiences tends to concern *type* rather than experientiality or intentional content. (p. 181)

All of this is said to be normally true; failures of knowledge acquisition in this domain as in others do occur. However: "Normally, one carries with one an ongoing continually mutating short-term memory [i.e., knowledge; a cognitive, non-experiential state] whose content precisely is of one's recent experiences (and the outer objects of perceptual experience!)" [p. 300]. In the next article of the present series, I shall be continuing my consideration of O'Shaughnessy's account of inner awareness. I shall inquire there into the implications of (a) his proposed immediate knowledge of experiences and (b) his proposed erroneous non-inferential beliefs about experiences, specifically, their implications for the conceptual intrinsic awareness that I claim that we have of some of our experiences and O'Shaughnessy claims that we do not.

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