

The Case for Intrinsic Theory: VIII. The Experiential in Acquiring Knowledge Firsthand of One's Experiences

Thomas Natsoulas

University of California, Davis

Discussion continues here of a theory (O'Shaughnessy, 2000) I have previously described as being an equivocal remembrance theory of inner awareness, the direct apprehension of one's own mental-occurrence instances (Natsoulas, 2001c). O'Shaughnessy claims that we acquire knowledge of each of our experiences as it occurs, yet any occurrent cognitive awareness of it that we may have comes later and is mediated by memory. Thus, acquiring knowledge of an experience firsthand is automatic and silent, not a matter of experientially apprehending the experience. Although O'Shaughnessy does hold that every experience has itself as an ("extensional") object, this is not a matter of a cognitive self-apprehension (as an intrinsic theory of inner awareness would maintain, e.g., Brentano, 1911/1973). O'Shaughnessy's grounds for his proposal of a nonexperiential acquisition of knowledge of one's experiences amounts to the claim that to hold otherwise would imply an infinite regress of experiences, for the experience by which we would know of an experience would be itself the object of experience, etc. I argue that neither an appendage theory (e.g., James, 1890/1950) nor an intrinsic theory (e.g., Sigmund Freud [Natsoulas, 1984]) of inner awareness, both of which are experiential, sets an experiential regress going. Then, I argue that something experiential would seem to be essential to acquiring firsthand knowledge of one's experiences according to O'Shaughnessy's own account of environmental perception. At its core is the thesis that the basic perceptual experience, the primary component of a perception, is a nonconceptual and noncognitive noticing of present sensations produced by environmental items. This first component evokes a second, cognitive component of the experience that is a recognitional awareness of the first component. Only in this way could perception perform its cognitive function, according to the theory, which is to yield knowledge of sensations and their causes in the environment. But the recognitional awareness, the "interpretative" component, clearly is experiential and an inner awareness. Moreover, O'Shaughnessy does not appear to view this component as resulting in an infinite number of inner awarenesses because implicitly he considers it, perhaps, to be intrinsic to the perceptual experience.

In his recent book, Brian O'Shaughnessy (2000) puts forward in some detail a bold theory of consciousness. The theory includes, among much else, an account of the kind of consciousness I have been calling "inner awareness," for example, in this article series (Natsoulas, 1996a, 1996b, 1998c, 1999b, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c). I would characterize O'Shaughnessy's understanding of inner awareness as being of the "remembrance theory" kind (cf. Dulany, 1991, 1997; Natsoulas, 1986, 1998a, 2001b; Wheeler, Stuss, and Tulving, 1997). Several parts of his book bear on inner awareness; of special interest is the material to be found there on "experiential consciousness" — which is, frequently, O'Shaughnessy's term for the Jamesian stream of consciousness (James, 1890/1950; Natsoulas, 1998a).¹

Let me start with what I mean by inner awareness, or how I am using the term in the present series of articles. Then, I shall say, by way of further introduction, what I have reference to when I speak of a remembrance theory of inner awareness.

1. The direct apprehension that one surely has of each of many of one's mental-occurrence instances, as it takes place, is an inner awareness. When such a mental-occurrence instance takes place, one is occurrently aware of it often without first having, at the time, occurrent awareness of anything else. There is an obvious exception to the latter statement. In my view, one's mental-occurrence instance, whatever else it may also be, is in itself an awareness of something else or, at least, as though of something else — the latter when what one seems to have awareness of has now and had in the past no actual existence and will not come into existence at any future time. The "awareness" (or "apprehension") to which I mean to refer when, on my own behalf, I speak of inner awareness — or, for that matter, of any other kind of awareness — is an occurrent and it is an actualization of conceptual capacities (cf. McDowell, 1998; Natsoulas, 2002c).

¹O'Shaughnessy distinguishes the stream of consciousness from consciousness *per se*. The latter is a general state (of waking consciousness) within which the stream flows, as it does too in other general states (e.g., dreaming sleep; Natsoulas, 1999c). Thus, he characterizes the stream as "the visible or experiential face ["the phenomenal core"] of the continuous occurrent complex whole" (2000, p. 273) that is the general state of waking consciousness. O'Shaughnessy's conception of the different general states is not wholly the same with respect to the stream of consciousness nor inner awareness. Therefore, what I state that he claims concerning inner awareness or the stream of consciousness should be understood to have application to the general state I have elsewhere (Natsoulas, 1981, 1983, 1999c) called "the normal waking state" and tried to describe assisted by previous publications of O'Shaughnessy's (1972, 1986). This does not mean, of course, that my statements of his views are not supposed to apply in part also to the other general consciousness states. Similarly, these theses apply to the individuals whom O'Shaughnessy (2000) identifies as the self-conscious conscious, distinct from the possessors of a merely animal consciousness: the not self-conscious conscious (p. 102), which is not to say the views discussed here do not have some application to some of the latter individuals as well. (A similar footnote appears in the just prior article in this series; the same limited applicability of claims is intended there too.)

As the preceding article in this article series (Natsoulas, 2001c) brings out, O'Shaughnessy (2000) uses awareness differently than I do. Thus, for one thing, he refers with the term to both certain nonconceptual mental occurrences and certain conceptual mental occurrences, proposing, for example, that there are at least two kinds of inner awareness: (a) a cognitive inner awareness that often occurs subsequently to the experience which is its object, and (b) a noncognitive inner awareness that is intrinsic to every experience that takes place and has the very experience as its "extensional" object.

Indeed, with the word awareness, O'Shaughnessy expresses, too, a third sense of awareness that pertains to the present topic: a sense into which I shall not enter until the next section of the present article. That is, he speaks also of a certain nonexperiential kind of "awareness," whereas he conceives both (a) and (b) above as experiential in every instance: always, a cognitive inner awareness is an occurrence in the stream of consciousness, albeit distinct from its object, which is another occurrence in the same stream; and every occurrence in the stream of consciousness is always a noncognitive inner awareness of itself, in addition to whatever else it may be — including a cognitive inner awareness of another occurrence in the stream of consciousness.

2. A remembrance theory would explain the occurrence of inner awareness in such terms as the following. (a) A mental-occurrence instance has a certain immediate automatic effect that is frequently conceived of as the event of the mental-occurrence instance's becoming stored within the individual, or the instance's producing a trace of itself in the brain. (b) Owing to "activation" of this trace, one may later be aware of the mental-occurrence instance in the form of having an occurrent remembrance of it (Natsoulas, 2001b, pp. 136–137). In the predecessor to the present article, I expressed as follows O'Shaughnessy's version of a remembrance interpretation of inner awareness:

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. (Natsoulas, 2001c, p. 2)

In contrast to such a remembrance theory stands the kind of conception in favor of which the present series compiles and develops positive arguments. An intrinsic theory of inner awareness holds that every conscious mental-occurrence instance — "conscious" in the sense of its being an actual object of direct apprehension — has, among other essential features, a phenomenological structure that contains a reference to the instance itself (cf. Alston, 1991; Brentano, 1911/1973; Freud [Natsoulas, 1984, 1985, 2002a]; Gurwitsch, 1985 [Natsoulas, 1996b, 1998c]; Woodruff Smith, 1989). Thus, inner aware-

ness is not distinct from the mental-occurrence instance that is its object — as, for example, “appendage” theory claims that it must be (e.g., James 1890/1950; Rosenthal 1986, 1993).² Any mental-occurrence instance that is an object of inner awareness is so because inner awareness is among the intrinsic properties of that mental-occurrence instance.

The prior installment in the present series (Natsoulas, 2001c) considered O’Shaughnessy’s remembrance theory briefly: in its final main section titled “A Remembrance Theory: Rejection of Occurrent Conceptual Inner Awareness as Intrinsic to or an Appendage of Its Object.” For at least the following two reasons I characterized O’Shaughnessy’s as “an equivocal remembrance theory.” (a) Although O’Shaughnessy denies there is any intrinsic cognitive inner awareness of one’s experiences, he claims every experience is its own “extensional object.” (b) And, although the latter does not mean an experience has itself among its intentional objects, he claims that the nonconceptual reflexive relation of an experience to itself — “one’s experiential awareness of one’s experiences” — is a case of awareness in the same sense as any basic perceptual experience is an awareness of its extensional object.³ This proposed relation between every experience and itself (i.e., having itself as extensional object) does not involve any interpretational feature; and, so, this relation must be distinguished from any aboutness relation — which, in contrast, intrinsic theory holds that every conscious mental-occurrence instance instantiates in relation to itself and typically to one or more other objects.

Except for its final section, the just prior article (Natsoulas, 2001c) focused on the reflexive relation in which, according to O’Shaughnessy, every experience stands to itself. But, however relevant to intrinsic theory O’Shaughnessy’s grounds for holding as he does are considered to be, they do not serve to qualify him as an intrinsic theorist. While a close study of his account may well determine the presence there of, as it were, intrinsic elements (e.g., Natsoulas, 2001c, pp. 23–24), the proposed primitive reflexive relation is a nonconceptual one. His expressed position on one’s having immediate, cognitive occurrent awareness of one’s experiences is unambiguously a denial of such awareness. Thus, what seems to you firsthand as your having such an awareness is actually just a later remembrance that you have of the respective experience.

²For discussions of appendage theory with special reference to William James and to David M. Rosenthal, see Natsoulas (1992, 1993b, 1993d, 1995–1996b, 1996–1997). For a suggestion as to why it seems to some appendage theorists that their own inner awareness of a mental-occurrence instance is a distinct occurrence from its object, see Natsoulas (2001b). I draw on the discussion of “the divided self” in James (1902/1982) in developing my suggestion.

³I return to this thesis later on in the present text: in the light of O’Shaughnessy’s insistent claim that we know of outer phenomena in a “wholly dissimilar” way from how we know of our inner phenomena.

As will be seen, O'Shaughnessy does claim that we acquire a knowledge of our experiences on the spot, as they proceed, but any cognitive occurrent awareness of them comes later, when it does come, and is mediated by memory. Immediate inner knowledge of experiences is proposed to be acquired in an automatic fashion. It would be described as extrinsic, as compared with the intrinsic awareness of itself O'Shaughnessy ascribes to every experience, although both of these are proposed to come into being with the occurrence of any experience.

A difference between them would be that the immediate knowledge of an experience is said to be a separate effect of its occurrence while the experience itself has the reflexive awareness as an intrinsic dimension. This difference in nearness to the source, as it were, should not obscure the fact that, according to O'Shaughnessy, an experience's intrinsic awareness of itself includes no occurrent belief that such and such is the case about the experience: not even a recognition of itself, an apprehension of itself as anything. According to O'Shaughnessy, all that it is possible to know of experiences in a privileged way is through a process extrinsic to them, although they do, mysteriously, produce this knowledge themselves. The extrinsic process is such that a memory of the experience is acquired, which may later be consulted in the form of a remembrance of the experience.

A purpose of this article and the next one in this series is to develop the final section of the preceding article (Natsoulas, 2001c). Thus, I am seeking to uncover further "intrinsic elements" within O'Shaughnessy's account of inner awareness, such elements as are explicitly or implicitly contained therein or as may be needed in order for that account to work. Finding such elements in a theory alternative to intrinsic theory can amount, in my view, to an argument supportive of intrinsic theory. When an important theorist is led to introduce or imply intrinsic elements even while distinguishing what he or she proposes from intrinsic theory, there is something added to the positive case for intrinsic theory. I realize the presence of such elements does not necessarily show weakness in the alternative theory. Because it contains intrinsic elements, a theory of inner awareness may be stronger than otherwise it would be, and the best such theory may ultimately turn out to be purely of neither kind but a combination of both.

The previous article focused largely on the consciousness that, according to O'Shaughnessy, is intrinsic to any experience. It did not say much concerning the cognitive awareness one later has of one's experiences: the cognitive awareness that O'Shaughnessy would explain in terms of experiences' leaving in one's brain, automatically and silently in the form of traces, knowledge of themselves. Not that his theory holds an experience actually to possess a knowledge of itself that it can leave; rather, the experience is supposed to otherwise produce knowledge of its having taken place and other things about it.

Although the above may seem negative, not consistent with my plan to limit the contents of this series to positive arguments for intrinsic theory, I do not intend to argue from weaknesses in other theories of inner awareness.⁴ Indeed, what I show about O'Shaughnessy's remembrance theory could lead to its improvement. He may come to acknowledge the intrinsic elements and integrate or eliminate them or replace them with features that are more consistent with a pure remembrance theory of cognitive inner awareness.

The Basic Claim: One's Immediate Knowledge of Experiences Is Acquired "No-How"

O'Shaughnessy (2000, p. 105) claims that one is "absolutely immediately aware" of one's experiences.⁵ The statement quoted from him next proposes also how such awareness takes place. Accordingly, the "awareness" O'Shaughnessy speaks of here just happens; one does not engage in any activity to have it — except if the particular experience, the object of awareness, is itself the product of a mental or "psychosomatic" activity, to use Gibson's (1979/1986) word.⁶

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 [, that is,] immediately and automatically and 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)

From the present article's second paragraph, recall my distinguishing O'Shaughnessy's two main uses of awareness: to refer either to (a) awareness whose occurrences actualize conceptual capacities or (b) something else that, he holds, does not involve such capacities. Remembrances of past experiences are occurrent awarenesses with conceptual content, whereas every experience that takes place is experientially self-aware in a nonconceptual sense. In the above quotation, he uses *awareness* in still another way: to speak, rather, of a nonexperiential awareness. He refers to an "absolutely immediate awareness" (of one's experiences) that is not itself an experienc-

⁴Elsewhere, however, I have written critically about certain aspects of O'Shaughnessy's theory of consciousness (Natsoulas, 2002d).

⁵In the rest of the text and footnotes, all bare page references are to O'Shaughnessy (2000). All references simply to O'Shaughnessy by name are also to the same book.

⁶See Natsoulas (1993c, 1998d) for discussion of the activity/experience distinction in context of Gibson's (1979/1986) theory. Similarly to but more explicitly than Gibson, I distinguish between the activity of, say, visual perceiving, in which the visual perceptual system as a whole and allied behavior are involved, and the stream of visual perceptual experience proceeding at the heart of the activity, a product and proper part of the activity.

ing nor an intrinsic property of any experience (in contrast, respectively, to his other two awareness senses).

The referent of O'Shaughnessy's third awareness sense is the event of acquiring knowledge of one's experience directly, owing simply to its occurrence.⁷ Though this immediate knowledge acquisition is a mental event, it takes place outside one's stream of consciousness. Not being an event of which one has inner awareness, acquiring knowledge immediately of one's experiences always occurs unconsciously. Comparison may be helpful with Freud's theory of consciousness, which may be more familiar.⁸

In Freud's theory, no mnemonic trace of any conscious psychical process gets laid down in the anatomical perception–consciousness system. Perception–consciousness is the only location in the psychical apparatus where the conscious psychical processes occur, for they exist thanks to a special neurophysiological substrate. In every one of their instances of occurrence, the conscious psychical processes are intentional objects of occurrent inner awareness. (This is in contrast to O'Shaughnessy, who holds no such inner awareness of any of them occurs, or else there would be a regress started; see below). The energy of those conscious psychical processes that occur discharges externally to the perception–consciousness system. And, therefore, even if it is such as to cause a mnemonic trace of the respective experience to form, this discharge cannot possibly be conscious.

So too, O'Shaughnessy states about the immediate knowledge of one's experiences, which one acquires as a complete matter of course, that it “consists of change located *elsewhere in the mind* than in the stream of consciousness” (p. 107; his emphasis). Were this change to occur in the consciousness stream, which it does not, it would be an experience and one would be aware of it in O'Shaughnessy's third sense: one would immediately acquire a knowledge of the change, which one does not. The event of acquiring knowledge of one's experience leaves no memory of itself for the reason that it is not an experience (p. 106).

⁷For O'Shaughnessy more than just experiences are objects of immediately acquired knowledge: “Such natural insight governs our knowledge both of present experiences like thought and affect, of unexperienced mental states like belief, and the mental sources of many of our acts and beliefs and desires, and so on (p. 105).” However, the present article is only concerned with experiences, only with the components of streams of consciousness, the states of consciousness and features thereof. O'Shaughnessy also characterizes experiences as being the “occupants of the attention” proceeding in time (pp. 278–279). The latter construal of them is discussed critically in a recent article (Natsoulas, 2002d).

⁸Freud's consciousness theory finds some expression at many points in his writings of more than three decades. Here are the sources that I have found most useful: Freud (1895/1966, 1900/1953, 1912/1958, 1915/1957, 1920/1955, 1923/1961, 1925/1959, 1933/1964, 1940/1964, 1941/1964). The following publications provide accounts of Freud's theory that are largely consistent across discussants: Laplanche and Pontalis (1967/1973), Natsoulas (1984, 1985, 1989b, 1993b, 2002a, 2002b), and Smith (1999a, 1999b, 2000).

Let me state the following for emphasis because I shall return to it soon: the automatically and silently acquired immediate knowledge of one's experiences does not include, along with it, any knowledge of one's acquiring that knowledge of one's experiences. One only knows of the experiences themselves, not of the mental events that constitute one's coming to know of these experiences. Freud would say the process of mnemonic-trace formation is an unconscious process and we can only know about it by indirect scientific or other inferential means. The latter ways of knowing may well involve an appeal to experience, but no appeal to experience of the process involved; one has no immediate awareness of this process.

O'Shaughnessy calls attention to how very different the absolute immediate awareness (in his third sense) of one's experiences is from how one's knowledge of outer phenomena arises. He even states that the two ways of acquiring knowledge are "wholly dissimilar" (p. 105). The occurrence of a certain bolt of lightning is an outer event he uses to illustrate the difference. This external occurrence may cause a seeing of itself to occur, that is, a mental event that will likely produce a third event: the event of acquiring knowledge of the outer event, the occurrence of the bolt of lightning. In contrast, no mental event mediates acquiring firsthand knowledge of one's experiences. One comes to know that one sees a bolt of lightning simply as a direct effect of the experience of seeing that bolt of lightning.

"This unlikeness to the perceptual situation," O'Shaughnessy emphasizes, "shows there is no experienced avenue of knowledge" (p. 106). However, one wants to ask, in response, how he has ruled out an experienced avenue of knowledge. Why should we think there is no such avenue in knowing of one's experiences? O'Shaughnessy's answer seems to be simply this: suppose it is assumed, as it often is, that having firsthand knowledge of the contents of one's consciousness stream as such requires one's being aware, in the occurrent cognitive sense, of one's experiences. Because this inner awareness too would be an experience, there would be necessitated as well an occurrent awareness of this experience; and a regress would be set in train. Therefore: "In sum, we know of our present experiences . . . *through* no experience, *in* no experience, and *absolutely immediately*" (p. 106). Of course, as we have seen, there is proposed to be a mediating event of knowledge acquisition, but O'Shaughnessy's claim is clear that this mediating event is not itself an experience. That is, it is not an event that we must be assumed to have inner awareness of in the occurrent cognitive sense.

A Response: No Experiential Regress Need Follow from Occurrent Cognitive Inner Awareness

Supporting his claim that immediate knowledge of one's experiences is acquired "no-how," O'Shaughnessy argues that, unless this knowledge is assumed to come "just like that," simply by the occurrence of the experience, absolutely immediately, without any experiential mediation, a regress of experiences will be implied. This argument purports to eliminate from contention the alternative thesis that immediate knowledge of an experience is acquired by means of occurrent cognitive inner awareness. O'Shaughnessy's explicit view is that any occurrent cognitive inner awareness one might have is not an event of knowledge acquisition; it depends upon memory, on one's already having acquired the corresponding knowledge. The non-experiential event that is the immediate acquisition of knowledge of an experience makes it possible subsequently to have remembrances of the experience; and these remembrances are the only occurrent cognitive inner awareness that there can be of the experience.

Must occurrent cognitive inner awareness set an experiential regress going? Let me consider this question from two theoretical perspectives: James's in *The Principles* and the perspective of Freud's consciousness theory. With respect to immediate knowledge of one's experiences, these are perspectives alternative to the O'Shaughnessy remembrance theory, as well as their being an alternative to each other. James proposes a kind of appendage theory of occurrent cognitive inner awareness, whereas Freud's theory of the same function is an intrinsic theory. According to both theories, however, an occurrent cognitive inner awareness transpires prior to the laying down of a mnemonic trace of the experience that is therein apprehended and, therefore, before it is possible for a remembrance of the experience to occur.

There are several kinds of accounts of occurrent cognitive inner awareness. Two such kinds can be distinguished as follows.⁹ What I have been calling an appendage theory would construe inner awareness of an experience to be a "mediated immediacy" because it requires, according to the theory, a distinct "relational addendum" to the experience. An intrinsic theory conceives of having inner awareness of an experience as, in contrast, a case of "absolute immediacy," for such a theory holds that any inner awareness that there may be of an experience is an intrinsic feature of the experience itself. That is, in the having of inner awareness, there is no causal mediation at all involved except for whatever may be responsible for the experience's taking place. James's account and Freud's account correspond, respectively, to the above descriptions of two kinds of theory of occurrent cognitive inner awareness.

⁹With Alston's (1991, pp. 21–24) terminological help.

Of special interest here is whether the theories do indeed imply an experiential regress. If they do not, the claim that the immediate acquisition of knowledge of one's experiences happens "just like that" (i.e., enough said) can be addressed; we can proceed with discussion of what is involved in such acquisition, and whether there is, in fact, something experiential that is essential to the process.

1. According to James (1890/1950), occurrent cognitive inner awareness of an experience is a separate event from the experience, although these two events are basic durational components of the same stream of consciousness. Thus, the inner awareness of an experience is an experience that has another experience for its intentional object, or among its intentional objects. As all the basic durational components of James's consciousness stream do, the two experiences that I just mentioned occur one at a time, never at the same time, nor do they ever overlap in time.¹⁰ They are two states or pulses of consciousness that the ongoing total brain process brings into passing and momentary existence in immediate or near succession.

Although a Jamesian state of consciousness commonly has more than one intentional object, it cannot have itself as intentional object. Why it cannot do so is not obvious to me (who favors an intrinsic theory) because the ongoing brain process contains all the "information" necessary to produce first an experience and thereupon an occurrent awareness of that experience. However, according to James, for some reason the brain process cannot bring into being an experience that has a reflexive phenomenological structure, that is, an experience that includes an awareness of this experience.

For that matter, assuming James's view is correct, it would be consistent to expect that inner awareness of an experience will sometimes occur prior to the experience itself. This point could be a difficult one to grasp; the tendency may be to construe occurrent cognitive inner awareness on the model of perception or stimulus-response. Thus, it would be assumed that an experience is at least a part of the cause of inner awareness of it. However, according to James's theory, the brain process exclusively constitutes the fundamental causal action responsible for any occurrent cognitive inner awareness. Even in the expected kind of case, whenever an experience is quickly followed by an inner awareness of it, the ongoing total brain process on its own brings these two states into existence.

Be that as it may, an occurrent cognitive inner awareness is clearly not a product of memory for James, as it emphatically is for O'Shaughnessy. According to James, the total brain process having brought a state of con-

¹⁰The latter sentence needs qualification by mention of certain cases James (1890/1950) allows, wherein two streams of consciousness flow simultaneously in a person. However, in such cases, neither of the two streams includes a state of consciousness that is an inner awareness of a state in the other stream (Natsoulas, 1994-1995, 1995-1996a).

sciousness into existence, this state of consciousness can affect the course of the brain process, but the state need not have any effects on the brain process in order for the latter to add to the stream of consciousness an occurrent cognitive inner awareness of the state of consciousness.

O'Shaughnessy's remembrances of experiences, which are the proposed occurrent cognitive inner awarenesses that one has of one's experiences, are experiential occurrences that transpire in the stream of consciousness; yet their occurrence does not set in train an experiential regress. A knowledge of these experiences, too, is automatically acquired, as is knowledge of each of one's experiences according to O'Shaughnessy's theory, but an occurrent cognitive inner awareness of the remembrances does not automatically transpire, any more than such awareness transpired of the experiences now remembered when they originally took place.

Much the same can be said regarding James's conception of occurrent cognitive inner awareness: the ongoing total brain process produces the states of consciousness that constitute the respective stream, including those that are inner awarenesses of other states of consciousness in the same stream. Therefore, the brain process also includes "information" as to the occurrence of the inner awarenesses it brings into existence. Yet the brain process need not produce as well occurrent cognitive inner awareness of them.

Moreover, memory traces can be laid down only of those of one's experiences of which one has occurrent cognitive inner awareness. Experiences are not later remembered that, when they occurred, were not objects of occurrent cognitive inner awareness. As James (1890/1950) wrote,

Any state of mind which is shut up to its own moment and fails to become an object for succeeding states of consciousness, is as if it belonged to another stream of thought. Or, rather it belongs only physically, not intellectually, to its own stream, forming a bridge from one segment of it to another, but not being appropriated inwardly by later segments or appearing as part of the empirical self, in the manner explained in Chapter X. (p. 644)

If a particular state of consciousness occurred in one unbeknownst to any and all of one's other states of consciousness, that state is now as though it never occurred so far as remembrance of it is concerned.

2. I consider next, and in the same respects, an intrinsic theory of occurrent cognitive inner awareness. As we have seen, an appendage theory of the same phenomenon does not necessarily hold that the occurrence of an experience, or its being an awareness, requires that the experience be the object of occurrent cognitive inner awareness (cf. Natsoulas, 1993d). For example, James insists that an occurrent cognitive inner awareness of a state of consciousness can only take place in the form of a separate state of consciousness that succeeds (or even precedes?) its object in the consciousness stream to which

both states belong. Thus, a state of consciousness does not need to be different in itself whether or not any awareness of it takes place.

Instead, Freud's (e.g., 1895/1966) conception of occurrent cognitive inner awareness locates this awareness right in its object. Every mental-occurrence instance that is conscious possesses a phenomenological structure that includes an awareness of the instance (cf. Brentano, 1911/1973; Woodruff Smith, 1989). Which means a conscious mental-occurrence instance apprehends itself to be an object of inner awareness; a self-apprehension is among the instance's intrinsic features (Brentano, 1911/1973; Natsoulas, 1989a). Does it follow that this account of inner awareness as intrinsic to a conscious mental-occurrence instance sets an experiential regress going?

Against intrinsic inner awareness, someone may want to argue from a kind of regress along the following lines:

Given intrinsic theory, direct apprehension of a conscious mental-occurrence instance as its being an object of inner awareness (a) would be an intrinsic feature of the mental-occurrence instance and (b) would therefore be itself apprehended, and so on. Admittedly, this "and so on" does not set a regress of experiences going; all the awarenesses that would be involved would be, *ex hypothesi*, dimensions of a single mental-occurrence instance. However, every conscious mental-occurrence instance would be made up, therefore, of an infinite number of awarenesses. This is not how our conscious mental-occurrence instances actually seem to us firsthand. And how they seem to us matters a great deal, for what is being addressed here is the character of just this empirical self-noticing.

One kind of reply to this line of argument is consistent with Freud's intrinsic theory of occurrent cognitive inner awareness. The following quoted statement from Brentano (1911/1973) suggests the particular counter-argument which I have in mind. Brentano, too, was an intrinsic theorist of occurrent cognitive inner awareness; and, while Freud was working toward his medical degree at the University of Vienna, Brentano was Freud's teacher in theoretical matters pertaining to mind. Whenever Brentano refers to "inner perception," as he does below, he means none other than the inner awareness that one has of a mental-occurrence instance and is an intrinsic property of that mental-occurrence instance.

Not everything which is apprehended is apprehended explicitly and distinctly. Many things are apprehended only implicitly or confusedly If this is true of physical phenomena, something analogous is true of the mental activity which refers to it. Thus, we have in this case, and in many others elsewhere, mental activities which are not explicitly perceived in all of their parts. Inner perception is, rather, confused, and although this imperfection does not limit the degree in which it is evident, it has nevertheless given rise to various errors. And these themselves have again led some psychologists to dispute the fact that inner perception is evident and even to question the correctness of saying that inner perception is universally valid. (p. 277)

Because inner awareness is intrinsic to a mental-occurrence instance, it does not follow that the mental-occurrence instance is “perceived in all of [its] parts.”

I used the above quoted passage in a recent paper (Natsoulas, 2002b), particularly the thesis of Brentano’s that, although they be objects of inner awareness, mental-occurrence instances are not always “explicitly” perceived. I want to argue here along the same lines:

Conscious mental-occurrence instances intrinsically instantiate features that inner awareness often fails to distinguish from others of their features. This proposal of “coarseness” of inner awareness prevents a theoretical regress of awareness from being set in train. Analogously, in perceiving a physical phenomenon, apprehension of parts of this phenomenon may occur without their being differentiated from each other. Yet, one has no less perceived the object and its parts than if one had distinguished all of the parts from each other. So too, from the coarseness of inner awareness, that is, from an inability or failure to notice as distinct parts or features of the mental-occurrence instance, the nonexistence of inner awareness does not follow, nor does the nonexistence of any other intrinsic features that, although belonging to the mental-occurrence instance, are not distinguished. However, an inability or a failure to notice that a mental-occurrence instance includes a particular inner-awareness feature means any potential regress of inner awareness stops there.

For the above argument to be rendered consistent with Freud’s theory of consciousness as I have explicated this theory elsewhere (Natsoulas, 1984, 1985, 1989b, 1993b, 2002a, 2002b), one needs to hold that the coarseness of inner awareness is never of such a degree that the conscious mental-occurrence instance does not apprehend itself *qua* conscious. That is, in every one of its instances, a conscious mental occurrence is a witting awareness of its own occurrence.¹¹ But this is as far as this “regress” of awareness needs to go to conform with the theory.

Let me spell out the latter requirement in terms that I have used before (Natsoulas, 1989b, 1998b, 2002b): each one of Freud’s conscious mental-occurrence instances instantiates “tertiary consciousness” in addition to the primary and the secondary kinds. The instance is an awareness of (or as though of) something else and so instantiates primary consciousness. Also, since it is a witting reflexive awareness of itself, it instantiates secondary and tertiary consciousness: That it is reflexive means it is a secondary consciousness; and apprehending its having the latter feature qualifies it as a tertiary consciousness too.

My main point can be found in Brentano (1911/1973): as in this passage, where he is writing with reference to one’s having auditory experience of a sound:

¹¹Cf. Woodruff Smith’s (1989) statement to the effect that one’s conscious mental-occurrence instances involve the presence to one of “the overall structure of an experience *qua* conscious” (pp. 96–97).

The presentation of the sound and the presentation of the presentation of the sound form a single mental phenomena; it is only by considering it in its relation to two different objects, one of which is a physical phenomenon and the other is a mental phenomenon, that we divide [the mental phenomenon] conceptually into two presentations. In the same mental phenomenon in which the sound is present to our minds we simultaneously apprehend the mental phenomenon itself. What is more, we apprehend it in accordance with its dual nature insofar as it has the sound as content within it, and insofar as it has itself as content at the same time.¹² (Brentano, 1911/1973, p. 127)

Note Brentano's choice of an intrinsic theory of inner awareness (Natsoulas, 1989a, pp. 103–114; 1993a, pp. 115–116). And then note how, in the last sentence, he completes the picture: making sure to include as a dimension of the auditory experience itself what I have been calling tertiary consciousness. Accordingly, inner awareness makes one not simply aware, in some respect, of the particular conscious mental-occurrence instance; also, one apprehends its being conscious or, as Brentano stated, its having itself, too, as content.

Is Something Experiential Essential to Immediately Acquiring Knowledge of One's Experience?

Previous Objections

1. In the preceding section, I argued contra one of O'Shaughnessy's major claims along the following lines:

It is not true that appendage theory of occurrent cognitive inner awareness or intrinsic theory of the same must set going a regress of awareness. An appendage theory need not have that implication, as O'Shaughnessy suggests it does. Nor, as may be supposed, does an intrinsic theory have to imply an inner-awareness regress intrinsic to any experience that is conscious (i.e., an object of inner awareness). Thus, an appendage theory may well hold that conditions can be such that inner awareness of an experience is not a witting one; the inner awareness may not be itself, in turn, an object of inner awareness. And, without falling into inconsistency, an intrinsic theory could hold that inner awareness, intrinsic to an experience and having that experience as its object, is, in some cases, of such coarseness as to be an apprehension of not even the experience's being conscious (i.e., its being an object of inner awareness). Indeed, an intrinsic theory will surely propose an early end generally to the potential regress. Thus, the regress of inner awareness would only get as far, for example, as the tertiary level: not any further than the witting inner awareness to which Brentano (e.g., 1911/1973, p. 127) has called attention.

Therefore, I want to examine O'Shaughnessy's remembrance theory of occurrent cognitive inner awareness with the aim of determining whether, even

¹²Brentano appends here a footnote consisting simply of a quotation from Aristotle's *De Anima* (III, 2) that suggests that Aristotle, too, was an intrinsic theorist of inner awareness (Natsoulas, 1993a, pp. 113–114).

from the perspective of his own conception and, thus, contrary to his expressed view, something clearly of an experiential type is essential in fact to one's immediate acquisition of a knowledge of one's experiences.

2. In a recent article, I objected to O'Shaughnessy's thesis that remembrance of experiences does not involve having any occurrent cognitive awareness of them when they occurred. Here are the words I used:

I should think an experience of which I was not aware at the time of its occurrence could not be something that I could have memory of. For example, I am working at my desk and I look up in the process of following a line of thought. Thereupon, through the window facing me, I have a visual perceptual experience of a bird in flight from one bush or tree to another. Now suppose I have no occurrent inner awareness of the latter perceptual experience. Is it possible that I could acquire, anyway, a memory of my having that experience? I am not asking here about the bird since I did have occurrent awareness of it. I am asking about a component of seeing the bird, my visual experience, of which I was completely unaware. I should think that, cognitively, it would be for me as though seeing the bird had not occurred. The experience might have effects on me but these would not be ones that would enable me to remember having the experience. (Natsoulas, 2002d, p. 55; cf. Natsoulas, 2001c, p. 28)

3. From the James (1890/1950, pp. 644–645) passage that I quoted in the section just before this one, one can see he would bring to bear against O'Shaughnessy much the same objection as the above one of mine. James speaks of a state of consciousness that may be "shut up to its own moment." James is an appendage theorist of occurrent cognitive inner awareness; therefore, his latter characterization implies that a state of consciousness might not be succeeded in the stream by any inner awareness of it. And, in such a case, according to James, no knowledge is acquired of the state and no remembrance of the state is possible later. As I mentioned, James rejected the existence of cognitive inner awareness intrinsic to any state of consciousness that has the state as an object (Natsoulas, 1995–1996b, 1996–1997).

A Major Proposal: How Differently Two Kinds of Knowledge Are Acquired

An insistence I mentioned earlier is a natural place to start in considering whether, contrary to O'Shaughnessy's expressed view, something experiential is involved in acquiring knowledge of one's experiences firsthand. How different the absolutely immediate acquisition of knowledge of experiences is held by O'Shaughnessy to be from the way a knowledge comes perceptually of outer phenomena. O'Shaughnessy's comparison of these epistemic means proceeds as follows:

(a) An external occurrence such as a bolt of lightning will cause a perceiving of the lightning to occur, that is, a certain mental event that, in its turn, can directly produce acquisition of a knowledge of that outer event. In contrast, (b) acquiring firsthand

knowledge of experiences is not mediated by a mental event; it is the experience itself that, as the bolt of lightning does not, immediately deposits in one a knowledge of the experience.

A major difference between the two cases is obvious: the bolt of lightning takes place externally to the individual and is not capable of producing, on its own, knowledge at a distance. It has to produce a suitable mental event or else no knowledge of the occurrence of the lightning bolt will be acquired on the spot, as it frequently is acquired.

Questions regarding such acquisitions of knowledge naturally arise, including ones pertinent to the present discussion: What sort of mental event does the lightning bolt produce to mediate causally a knowing of its occurrence? According to O'Shaughnessy's theory, does the mediation take place automatically, silently: without occurrent cognitive inner awareness of the mediating mental event? Is there at least this latter resemblance between perceptually acquiring knowledge of outer events and acquiring firsthand knowledge of experiences? Or does the theory include in the perceptual case what O'Shaughnessy disallows in how we know of our experiences? If he so does include, why does the acquiring of perceptual knowledge require occurrent cognitive inner awareness of the mediating mental event whereas, as he claims, one's acquiring knowledge of one's other experiences is normally absolutely immediate?

In O'Shaughnessy's example, the event of seeing the bolt of lightning mediates perceptual acquisition of some knowledge. O'Shaughnessy describes this cause of knowledge as follows:

The event of seeing lightning is the event of noticing a visual sensation which meets certain causal requirements: a phenomenon whose occurrence necessitates no specific cognitive attitudes, and whose distinctness from its cognitive mental effect is thus guaranteed. Then it is the existence of the latter two distinct events, seeing-of and coming to know-of the existence of a flash of lightning, together with the causal relation between the two, that enables us to say that here sight was the *avenue* of knowledge of the perceived event. Seeing was *how* we learned of the "outer event." (p. 106)

According to O'Shaughnessy, to see a particular bolt of lightning is to "notice" certain "visual sensations" that are produced in one's mind owing to the bolt of lightning's projecting light to one's point of observation.¹³

The thesis that a mental event of seeing is a matter of one's noticing sensations and produces in one an event of acquiring knowledge as to an outer cause of this seeing, leads us on to further questions, like those that pertain

¹³The latter terminology is Gibsonian (1979/1986). I use such language although Gibson rejects sensations' serving any role in perceiving and perceptual experience. My use of such terms, here and elsewhere, should not be understood as an attribution to O'Shaughnessy of any theses from Gibson's theory.

to how an experience, simply by its occurrence, has the event of acquiring knowledge of the experience as an immediate consequence. As will be seen, a visual sensation, although it is causally related to both, is neither an experiential nor an environmental phenomenon. The distinct event of noticing a sensation is an experience and this noticing yields, *ex hypothesi*, absolutely immediate knowledge of itself and its having for an object the sensation that caused it. This, so far, does not yet have perceptual knowledge reaching out there, as far as the environment; more theory is needed, which O'Shaughnessy does furnish.

O'Shaughnessy characterizes the perceptual and mental epistemological situations as being "grossly dissimilar" (p. 105) from each other. Yet they seem to possess in common, according to his theory, something important. But, to surmise concerning this commonality requires, among other things, close attention to what noticing a sensation amounts to in his book.

The Noticing of Sensations: An Extensional Awareness

Is one's noticing a sensation a matter of one's being, at the point when the sensation takes place, occurrently aware of it in a cognitive sense? Does one have that kind of direct access to one's sensations? When one not only has a sensation but notices it too, is there any conceptual capacity actualized with the latter addition? Evidently, no conceptual capacity is involved in the noticing according to O'Shaughnessy. If he understood the noticing of a sensation to consist of the actualization of concepts, surely he would not say that such noticing "necessitates no specific cognitive attitudes."

Based upon what has already been made explicit in the present article, noticing a sensation would seem to be for O'Shaughnessy, much more probably, like the extensional, nonintentional kind of awareness which he ascribes to every experience, each of them being thus aware of itself. O'Shaughnessy calls this an "extensional" awareness because the object of awareness is present in person to consciousness and the awareness does not involve bringing the experience under any heading — as always does take place in intentional awareness. Accordingly, the awareness kind called extensional would have two kinds of possible objects, the experiences themselves as well as certain items that are not experiences, namely, those sensations that are objects of experience, that do get themselves experienced. These sensations would be noncognitively present in person to consciousness, just as the experiences themselves are according to O'Shaughnessy.

Indeed, early in his book (p. 16), O'Shaughnessy begins to address sensations by describing noticing, or being aware of, one's sensations as "an essentially extensional phenomenon." Also, he proposes that noticing sensations — which is the "core" of every perceptual experience — is "pre-interpret-

tional," though it does involve presence of the sensations, their "lying before one." Moreover, O'Shaughnessy argues that the alternative thesis, which states that the consciousness stream consists exclusively of states of cognitive awareness,¹⁴ is readily disprovable empirically: just notice the many phenomena that occupy your stream of consciousness and which are clearly not states of cognitive awareness: a flood of "concretely and pre-interpretationally given mental objects" are present to you right there in your stream of consciousness "side by side with purely interpretational essentially intentional mental phenomena" (p. 17). These other concretely given occupants of your stream of consciousness are your sensations.

However, the above expresses O'Shaughnessy's thesis somewhat misleadingly. It is more faithful to say this: the apprehension of only one of the two kinds of mental phenomena mentioned is an actual noticing of it; an intentional mental phenomenon, if it is in fact purely intentional, cannot be noticed; only sensations (and, thereby, the physical phenomena producing them) instantiate the property of noticeability (p. 16). Therefore, I need to comment here (and again a little later) on O'Shaughnessy's projected image of a person's encountering sensations together with other mental phenomena present side by side in his or her stream of consciousness.

Whereas sensations are noticed to be there in "bodily-relative physical space," all the other mental phenomena are at most, according to O'Shaughnessy's account, objects of remembrance, and they are "selectively strung along the one-dimensional temporal thread" in being objects of occurrent cognitive inner awareness (p. 16). Perhaps, O'Shaughnessy means that sensations may be noticed as they occur and, later, remembered together with other mental phenomena as being parts of a single stream of consciousness. Those other mental phenomena, however, cannot be noticed; for them to be noticed would require that which for O'Shaughnessy does not exist, that is, experiences having other experiences as their extensional objects. In O'Shaughnessy's view, at the point when an experience occurs, it is neither a nonintentional nor an intentional object of another experience.

Noticings, which are referred to as awarenesses and as experiences, have sensations for their extensional objects: "Experiential consciousness" (i.e., the stream of consciousness) is made up of "experiences which divide into the essentially intentional (say, thoughts and desires) and the essentially extensional (awarenesses of pains, sounds, etc.);" [p. 17]. The reflexive extensional awareness of an experience is not, of course, a separate component of the consciousness stream. According to O'Shaughnessy, it is an intrinsic property of every experience, of every component of the stream. And, therefore, every event of noticing is doubly an extensional awareness, of two different

¹⁴As James (1890/1950, p. 224) holds is the case no matter how young the stream.

kinds of existent items simultaneously, of itself (an experience) and, also, of that which it notices, the respective sensations or physical phenomena producing these sensations (neither of which are experiences; pp. 296–297).

The Presence of Sensations

The core of every awareness that is a noticing is held to be “pre-conceptual.” Any meaning such an awareness may instantiate is a meaning “imposed” upon it, not intrinsic to the noticing. What gets noticed is “a concretely presented phenomenal reality.” Sensations are senseless, non-conceptual and non-cognitive. Nevertheless, they are claimed by O’Shaughnessy to “represent” those outer objects and phenomena that, through stimulation, cause the sensations to take place. “The concrete presence [of sensations] to awareness is that of those physical objects” (p. 19) is how O’Shaughnessy expresses this relation of “representation.”

The presence of sensations and, thereby, of physical objects to awareness is not to be taken, of course, as a property of the sensations themselves, no more than of the physical objects they represent. Their presence is relationally instantiated and requires, no less than the occurrence of the respective sensation, an experience (awareness) that is a noticing of that current occurrence. O’Shaughnessy makes this explicit with the example at one point of pain sensation:

If a man “feels his pain” (as we say) then he *experiences* it, and that is to say that the pain comes to his attention or is *noticed* (something that is by no means a necessity, as the phenomenon of “taking his mind off his pain” makes clear). [p. 305; original emphases]

O’Shaughnessy gives other similar examples and speaks of such extensional objects of noticings as, always, “actually existing and wholly distinct” from the respective noticing. A sensation is an occurrence in the mind but, absent its being noticed, it does not possess a mental presence in the sense meant by O’Shaughnessy.¹⁵

If the presence of a sensation to awareness is not a conceptual apprehension, not a matter of the actualization of conceptual capacities (McDowell, 1998; Natsoulas, 2002c), what is it for a sensation to be present to awareness, for it to be an object of a noticing? O’Shaughnessy speaks of sensations as concrete mental objects that, in being noticed, are “concretely confronted.” He also speaks of this confrontation as “a bare awareness-of” and as the sheer presence to awareness of its extensionally given phenomenal object (p. 20).

¹⁵To be distinguished not only from a sensation’s merely occurring in the mind, that is, without its being noticed, but also from its merely being present as thought of, metaphorically, without its actually taking place (see Sellars, 1978a; Natsoulas, 1999a).

The noticing is said not to provide anything itself, no content or character; it is determined completely by its object; it is stated to be no more than a registration thereof.

Why Noticing? The Acquisition of Knowledge

What does noticing sensations (the presence to awareness of sensations) allow that the mere occurrence of sensations does not allow? Why should a "sheer replication" of a sensation, which the noticing of a sensation is said to be, constitute an advantage as against the sensation's mere occurrence in the mind? O'Shaughnessy states that the local environment must have a port of entry into the mind, and he states that perception, which is basically the noticing of sensations, is that entry port. But why is noticing needed, in addition to sensations? Why cannot sensations on their own serve the needed function? Why do sensations have to get "replicated" in the form of a nonintentional awareness of them?

I am not suggesting that sensations can do the indicated job: to enable the local environment to get itself into the mind. Rather, I want to understand why, on O'Shaughnessy's view, noticing of, experience of, awareness of a sensation is needed in light of his comments on how little this is supposed to provide that is not already provided by the sensation itself.

One answer might be that too many sensations occur at the same time; some sort of selective process must operate for certain of them to gain, over the rest, priority in mental functioning. For example, all experiences, including noticings of sensations, are proposed to leave traces so that they can be subsequently recalled and one can thus undergo occurrent cognitive inner awareness of them. An unnoticed sensation does not yield, as does any experience according to the theory, the event of acquiring knowledge of itself (p. 305). In order for one to remember a sensation, one has to notice its occurrence; the sensation has to be, at the point of its occurrence, an extensional object of awareness. Thus, a sensation takes place in the mind always outside the consciousness stream, yet it can also be, so to speak, included in that stream: by being an object of experience. This is true too of the many outer objects of experience that are not sensations. However, it is in the case of only sensations and the objects they are here and now "representing" that their being "included" in the stream of consciousness is such as to seem that these items are actually there, literally present therein.

With respect to remembering sensations, we are led to wonder as I mentioned: If the mental event of noticing the sensation is as described by O'Shaughnessy, namely, just the bare presence of the sensation to an awareness of noncognitive type, how does knowing that a certain particular sensation transpired get acquired in the first place? It is for this reason that I am pursuing

what it is that noticing a sensation further involves; there has to be more to it than is so far indicated that one might appeal to by way of explaining the proposed knowledge acquisition. We can approach this problem by attending to the function that sensations proposedly perform in the perceiving of environmental items.

O'Shaughnessy (p. 19) conceives of the presence to awareness of a physical object or event that is causing sensations to take place to be the presence of those sensations to awareness. But, this extensional awareness of the sensations does not distinguish the two: the sensations and their physical cause. It would seem evident that, in order for a knowledge of one or the other of these to be acquired, the extensional awareness would have to be, rather, an "awareness-as," that is, an apprehension of the sensations as such or, alternatively, a misapprehension of the sensations for their cause. For example, a bare awareness of the presence of snow or the respective sensations presence (the "two presences" are held to be just one) does not intrinsically involve any visual or tactual perceptual recognition of the snow. The bare awareness is held by O'Shaughnessy to be "the causal foundation of rather than an undetachable element of" the perceptual recognition (p. 25).

Note O'Shaughnessy's statement: the norm is for the bare extensional awareness, in cases such as seeing lightning, to be accompanied by a recognitional awareness that is produced by the extensional awareness. In the course of proposing a remembrance account of occurrent cognitive inner awareness, O'Shaughnessy's use of "seeing lightning" may well imply that the automatic and silent acquisition of knowledge of the occurrence of the bolt of lightning requires seeing the respective sensations not as what they are but as lightning. Indeed, O'Shaughnessy expresses his point in such a way as suggests that recognitional awareness of the latter kind is necessary for the perceptual acquisition of knowledge:

Since the function of perception is to lead to cognition, recognitional perception must be the norm. Therefore, while we "set eyes on" things, the claim is with more illumination to be expressed as follows. We "set eyes on" *structured* entities; and not just on them, but in a *structural mode*. For we recognize objects when we not merely see them, but (and with justification) see them as the complex entities they are. While perception is of things rather than facts about things, it is not of "bare particulars." It involves conceptualization of the contents of (say) the visual field. (pp. 25-26)

The contents of a visual field are visual sensations that physical objects or events are causing by their stimulatory effects to take place in the mind there and then. And, every time a lightning bolt is seen, it is such sensations that are "processed," "understood," or "conceptualized."

A perception is a double awareness, a matter of two distinct experiences occurring one after the other, the first of these being not at all conceptual,

the second an actualization of conceptual capacities.¹⁶ The core of any perception (such as a seeing of a bolt of lightning) is an extensional awareness of sensations, which are necessarily basic to all perceiving, but O'Shaughnessy holds too that, in turn, this bare awareness is the "causal foundation" of a recognitional awareness.¹⁷ In stating, "Perception simply is some phenomenal reality becoming object for awareness" (p. 293), O'Shaughnessy has reference to the nonconceptual experience that is the primary ingredient of a perception.¹⁸ When he speaks also of the second, conceptual component of a perception (i.e., the interpretational experience), as being "imposed upon that base," he means that the recognitional awareness has for intentional object its cause the extensional awareness.¹⁹ Thereby, a perception may realistically interpret those data of sense of which it includes awareness, and thus discharge its cognitive function (p. 32).

Note also that the perceptual awareness that has sensations for extensional objects is said to be the "bearer of interpretations" (p. 299). What does the latter phrase mean? Of course, it is not intended to contradict the thesis that a core perceptual experience is a bare extensional awareness of sensations. O'Shaughnessy is not conflating or fusing the two awarenesses, noncognitive and cognitive, that he proposes normally to constitute a perceptual experience and to stand in causal relation to each other as such. Much more probably, the notion would seem to be that the distinct cognitive component of the perceptual experience is interpretative of that experience's separate noncognitive component.

And also, it would seem, no perception is in itself an interpretation of sensations. What is interpreted by the recognitional component of the perception is the bare awareness of sensations, the primary or core component of

¹⁶According to O'Shaughnessy, each of the two experiences is in itself a double awareness in the different sense that I explained earlier in the text; see also Natsoulas (2001c). That is, as well as being an awareness of something else, each of them is an extensional awareness of itself.

¹⁷With *in turn* I mean both (a) that physical objects and events cause sensations to occur and (b) that sensations cause their being noticed, the extensional awareness that has them as its objects.

¹⁸O'Shaughnessy argues that this is true only of perceptions. He proposes that only perceptions are extensional awarenesses of (confrontations with) items distinct from the awareness itself yet literally present in the mind (sensations). In all of the nonperceptual experiences, it is concepts that mediate awareness, except that every experience, including the nonperceptual kind, is also an extensional awareness of itself.

¹⁹I return to the latter point soon, but let me now note this: occurrent cognitive inner awareness of a sensation — a matter of remembrance, according to the theory — is stated to be awareness of the sensation *qua* extensional object of the perceptual experience (p. 194). This suggests that what enables the immediate acquisition of knowledge of the occurrence of a particular sensation, or of particular sensations occurring together, what leaves a knowledge "trace" about sensations, is nothing other than a recognitional awareness, namely, of the extensional awareness that is the noticing of the particular sensation or sensations.

the perception. Sensations are literally external to experience, not themselves among the occupants of the stream of consciousness. At most, if they are noticed, sensations are present to awareness, objects of extensional awareness. Other than the experiences themselves, none of the objects of extensional awareness is a part of awareness, of the stream of consciousness. All experiences are proposed to be objects of extensional awareness, each being a noncognitive object of itself.

Knowledge of the occurrence of a set of sensations is acquired via immediate acquisition of knowledge of awarenesses having those sensations for extensional objects. As O'Shaughnessy asks rhetorically, "Would not the knowledge [of sensations] be nonexistent without [extensional] awareness [of them]?" (p. 305). Normally, a part of knowing of a perceptual experience of recent moments is knowing which are its objects. As we have seen, the view is that an experience, by its occurrence alone, leaves temporary traces enabling later remembrances to occur, occurrent cognitive inner awarenesses of the experience (p. 300). Our extensional awareness of sensations enables us to remember the sensations through remembering our experiences of them.

That is why sensations, which are not themselves experiences, cognitively seem to us (as in fact they are not) to be present in our consciousness stream alongside our true experiences, which are the exclusive constituents of this stream. Only sensations and what they are taken to be (i.e., their causes in the outer world) so seem; the objects of the nonperceptual experiences (except for each experience of itself) do not so seem. In nonperceptual experiencing, one has awareness of the respective objects only through concepts. These objects of experience are intentionally, not extensionally, present to awareness; and one's remembrances of them are, therefore, not of them as occupants of the stream of consciousness. In contrast, according to the theory, whether they are perceptual or nonperceptual, the experiences themselves are, in occurring, perforce objects of extensional awareness; each of them is, in every occurrent instance, a nonconceptual awareness of its own presence.

By what route then, more specifically, does bare awareness of sensation "lead quite naturally to knowledge of its sensation objects" (p. 305)? I have suggested above that it is the presence of sensations to awareness, that is, this extensional awareness of them, that is proposed to leave the necessary traces. However, I have implied that the acquisition of knowledge also depends on an awareness that is intentional. To discharge its cognitive function, a perceptual experience needs to contain an interpretation of the data of sense. The bearer of interpretations is, in the perceptual case, the bare extensional awareness of sensations. The vehicle of interpretation, that awareness which is, within the perceptual experience, an actualization of interpretation, is the recognitional awareness said to normally accompany the bare awareness. It

would seem to follow that what it is that makes knowledge of sensations possible is an occurrent recognition of them as present to awareness, which means a recognitional awareness that has the respective bare awareness as its intentional object. For it is only to bare awareness that sensations are extensionally present, not to any cognitive awareness. Let me call this understanding of the O'Shaughnessy account "the recognitional interpretation," and let me inquire into its accuracy and implications relevant to the present topic.

The Recognitional Interpretation

I must call attention again to one of O'Shaughnessy's central theses: his identification of the presence to awareness of sensations with the presence to awareness of the physical objects that the sensations "represent," that cause the sensations to take place (p. 19). Thus, the extensional objects of the bare awareness essential to any perceptual experience are sensations; see the direct causal role sensations play whenever noticed, whenever they have presence to the respective bare awareness. And outer phenomena, too, determine this presence: by their causing sensations to take place; they are even said to be themselves present to a perceptual experience.

However, the perceptual presence of outer phenomena, or the perceiver's contact with them, requires a "content-match." That is to say, "at the very beginning point inner and outer must in some regard non-accidentally and wholly reflect one another" (p. 306). O'Shaughnessy uses in explanation of his point the following example:

I can seem to see a red balloon in seeing a setting sun, but I can hardly see a setting sun if I do not seem to see something or another, whether it be a round red outline or a round outline or redness or mere brightness in some visual locale, which truly holds of the setting sun. The sun must under some lowest-order characterization appear to one's mind as it is. (p. 306)

This statement can be understood to be referring to a match between an outer phenomenon and the sensations it produces. Thus, to be an extensional object of a bare perceptual awareness, an outer phenomenon must be such that there is a match between some of its properties and those of the respective sensations.

However, although a perceptual contact with an outer phenomenon "cannot be conjured into existence by mere conceptual means," neither are extensional means capable of constituting such contact on their own. Given O'Shaughnessy's theory, it would seem that a perceptual experience — specifically, the recognitional awareness that is normally a part of the experience — must take the sensations' presence to the bare awareness, the extensional awareness of those sensations, in a way that corresponds to how the external

phenomenon actually is (see final sentence in above indented quotation). The sun must appear to the mind under some lowest-order characterization at least; and this, clearly, must be done by the recognitional awareness. The bare, extensional awareness is an effect of the sensations but it is not a cognitive awareness of any of its causes or of anything else, not even of itself. Thus, the "seeming to see" O'Shaughnessy refers to is such that, when one is actually seeing a certain reality, one can seem to be seeing something that is merely mythical (p. 308). When a perceptual experience takes place that consists of only a bare awareness, the experience is only extensionally, not intentionally, related to its objects; and, so, this experience cannot have something mythical for object. To seem to see anything requires a recognitional or interpretational awareness. The theoretical problem then becomes how such an actualization of conceptual capacities enables us perceptually to experience outer phenomena as such, when all that we have without it is perceptual experience-of in just the extensional sense, that is, only of sensations without any recognition of them as sensations or as anything else.

No perceptual experience is an instance of "perceiving-that." O'Shaughnessy distinguishes recognitional awareness (perceiving-as), normally a component of a perceptual experience, from the separate phenomenon of perceiving-that. Perceiving-that requires more than the occurrence of a perceptual experience with its noncognitive component and its cognitive component. Here, there is no need to go into perceiving-that. I bring it up because O'Shaughnessy's discussion of how perceiving-that and perceptual experience differ from each other contains material pertinent to an understanding of the recognitional component of a perceptual experience.

At one point, O'Shaughnessy describes perceiving-that in words that seem to me exactly to fit his conception of perceptual recognitional awareness. He states that perceiving-that owes its topic or content to the perceptual experience that produces it. An instance of perceiving-that is an occurrent belief-that

finds its content (or topic) only through the *agency* of the distinct contemporaneous perception. It indexically singles out the object of the belief *as* what is there and then experienced in the contemporaneous perception: it discovers its referent so to say on *the back* of the intuitional awareness of the object. (p. 321)

The "intuitional awareness" mentioned is the perceptual experience that has the respective object as its extensional object. That is, it is either the bare awareness component of that experience or, perhaps, it is both the bare awareness and the recognitional awareness that together constitute the perceptual experience.

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