Understanding the First-Person Viewpoint from the Third

Some Remarks on Being Someone

By

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"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart
and try to love the questions themselves."

Rainer Maria Rilke,
Letters to a Young Poet (1903–1908)

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Abstract

It is often argued that objective accounts of reality leave something out, yet there is little agreement about how to characterize what is left out. Jackson's knowledge argument invites us to locate the subjectivity of experience in experience itself, in its qualitative character, whereas Nagel invites us to locate it in the point of view from which experience is had. This thesis argues that the two are describing two sides of a single structure. Using Jackson's Fred case, I first argue that subjectivity is located in a point of view. Then, drawing on Biro's critique of Nagel, I argue that no feature of a point of view, whether its location, its sensory apparatus or its belonging to a subject, can by itself make experience subjective, since states such as digestion share all of these. What makes experience subjective, I argue, is not what it presents but the fact that it presents it to someone, a feature I call for-ness. I then argue that for-ness is grounded in the self, understood as one subject described in two senses, as the persisting bearer of a capacity for experience, which I call existential subjectivity, and as that same subject present in each exercise of that capacity, which I call experiential subjectivity. On this account, what escapes objective accounts is the self's presence in each experience as the one to whom that experience presents what it presents, something objective accounts can refer to but never capture. I defend this claim against three objections, and conclude that a complete picture of reality must recognize that the world contains not only things seen from nowhere, but someone for whom the world is there.

Keywords: subjectivity, point of view, for-ness, the self, knowledge argument, phenomenal consciousness, objectivity

1 Introduction

It has been argued that objective accounts of reality leave something out. Some argue that objective accounts leave out the qualitative character of experience (Jackson 1982), while others argue that they leave out what it is like to be a given subject (Nagel 1974). One thing quickly becomes apparent. While there may be some consensus that something subjective is left out, there is disagreement about how to characterize the subjectivity of what is left out. Is experience itself inherently subjective, or is it subjective because of its relation to a subject? Jackson's framing of the problem points toward the former. Nagel, to some extent, points toward the latter.

In this thesis, I argue for a position that stands somewhere between Nagel and Jackson. I argue that the subjectivity of experience consists in its for-ness, in the fact that every experience presents what it presents to someone. This implies that what accounts for the subjectivity of experience is neither in the experience nor simply in a subject standing outside it, but in the relation between them. That relation, I argue, is grounded in the self. The self, on my account, should not be taken to be a separate thing standing behind experience, as a substance stands behind its properties. Rather, it should be taken to be present within each experience as that to which the experience presents what it presents. What Nagel calls a point of view, understood in the right way, is the standpoint this self occupies when things are presented to it. If this is right, then Jackson and Nagel are each half right. Subjectivity belongs to experience, as Jackson holds, precisely because of the self, whose presence in experience is what Nagel's point of view picks out.

To make this argument, I give an account of the self that can play the required role. I argue that the self is one self described in two senses. In the first sense, which I call existential subjectivity, the self is the persisting bearer of a capacity for experience, one that does not come and go with its experiences. In the second sense, which I call experiential subjectivity, it is that same self as present in each experience, as the one to whom experience presents what it presents. Because a capacity is present in its own exercise, the persisting self is part of each experience without being confined to any. This, I argue, is what accounts for the subjectivity of experience, and it is why objective accounts, which describe experience by leaving behind the subject, are bound to fall short of that subjectivity.

1.1 Framing the Problem

Frank Jackson and Thomas Nagel are often grouped as early critics of physicalism, since both argue that a complete objective account of the world leaves something about experience out. I take an objective account to be a description that can be specified and grasped without occupying any subject's position. Hence objectivity here is meant to capture the idea that reality can be described in such a way that one subject can learn

about some aspect of it without having to stand in some specified relation to that aspect of reality. Subjectivity then is meant to capture the contrary idea, namely that there is some aspect of reality that a subject can only learn about by standing in a specified relation to it. On this way of putting things, both Jackson and Nagel can be read as claiming that experience is subjective, since in each case there is something about it that cannot be learned from the outside, however complete one's objective knowledge. However, the definition is deliberately silent about what accounts for the subjectivity of experience, and it is precisely here that the two come apart.

For Nagel, what accounts for the subjectivity of experience is the fact that every experience is tied to a point of view. He argues that an organism has conscious experiences only if there is something it is like to be that organism, or something it is like for the organism, and because this Subjective character is tied to a single point of view, an objective description which aims to abstract away from any particular point of view is bound to leave out the very thing it was meant to describe (Nagel 1974, 436-437). Jackson, by contrast, explicitly distances his knowledge argument from Nagel's. For Jackson, when we say that complete physical knowledge of Fred's particular color experience fails to tell us what Fred's color experience is like, what is at issue is not that we are not Fred and so could not occupy his point of view, rather, what is at issue is that there is a property of Fred's experience itself that we remain ignorant of even after attaining all the objective knowledge there is to attain. (Jackson 1982, 132). It therefore becomes apparent that while Jackson locates the gap in the qualitative content of experience, Nagel locates it in the perspective from which the content is had. The disagreement therefore raises a question that neither Jackson nor Nagel settles, specifically the question of whether what escapes objective accounts is a feature of experience, or the fact that experience is always given to someone.

The disagreement between Jackson and Nagel presupposes something that is itself contested. It presupposes the position that objective accounts leave anything out at all. So, in our effort to characterize the subjectivity of experience, it is worth beginning with the following question, can every aspect of reality be objectively accounted for? A natural thought is that it can, at least in principle. The physical sciences, for instance, aim to give an account of what reality is like independently of any observer, and the more impartial an account becomes, the closer it is assumed to get to reality as it is. The underlying idea is that if every fact could eventually be accounted for in this way, i.e., objectively, nothing would be left over, and we would have a unified picture of what reality is really like. Yet it has become almost as natural to think that this promise cannot be kept. The world does not consist only of chairs and tables, it also includes our experiences of them, and some philosophers have argued that there is something subjective about experience that escapes objective accounts despite being part of reality. Hence, in our effort to give a complete

account of reality, we find ourselves grappling with the question posed earlier, which is, can every aspect of reality (including experience) be objectively accounted for?

Jackson himself sets out to tackle the above question in his paper "Epiphenomenal Qualia" (1982), where he formulated what has come to be known as the knowledge argument. He proposes the knowledge argument by inviting us to dwell on what is implied by two examples, the Mary the scientist example and the Fred example. The more widely discussed of the Jackson examples is the Mary the scientist example, it goes as follows. Mary is a brilliant scientist who has spent her entire life in a black-and-white room, learning everything there is to know about the physical processes involved in color and color vision. She knows which wavelength combinations correspond to which surface reflectance properties, how the human visual cortex processes that information, and the full physical story of what happens when a person sees a ripe tomato. However, she has never seen color. When Mary is finally released and shown a red tomato for the first time, she learns something new, namely, what it is like to see red. Since Mary already supposedly possessed all the physical facts before her release and yet still learned something upon seeing color for the first time, Jackson concludes that something about experience escapes objective accounts.

The second, and less often discussed example concerns Fred. Jackson asks us to imagine a man who sees two colors, red1 and red2, where the rest of us see only one. Fred reliably and consistently sorts objects into two piles by color, drawing a distinction the rest of us cannot draw no matter how carefully we look at the same objects under the same conditions. However much we learn about the physics of the light reflected from those objects, or about the neurophysiology of Fred's unusual visual system, we still cannot tell what distinguishes red1 from red2 for Fred. Jackson's point is that what Fred experiences escapes objective description in the same way that what Mary learns does.

Together, the Mary and Fred examples are taken to imply the knowledge argument. In other words, from the examples, Jackson proceeds to argue that if physicalism were true, then knowing all the physical facts would amount to knowing all the facts, including what it is like, since on the physicalist picture all of reality can be accounted for within a physicalist framework (Jackson 1982, 127). Yet in Fred's case, we could know everything physical there is to know about him and his visual system and still not know what it is like for him to see the two shades he distinguishes, where we see only red. Similarly, Mary knows everything physical there is to know about color vision, and yet when she leaves her black-and-white room and sees red for the first time, it seems she learns something new, namely what it is like to see red (Jackson 1982, 130). So, in both examples, complete physical knowledge leaves something about experience out, and if that is right, then it seems there are facts that escape the physicalist story, and physicalism is false (Jackson 1982, 130).

As it should be evident, the target of Jackson's knowledge argument is physicalism, the view that a complete physical account of the world is a complete account of it. But physical information is the paradigm of objective information, and the aspects of Jackson's cases that make trouble for physicalism are precisely the aspects that make trouble for any account that aims at objectivity, I will be reading Jackson's argument in this broader sense. Thus, Jackson's knowledge argument can broadly be restated as follows,

1. A knower can possess complete objective, third-person information about a subject's experience.

2. Yet that knower can still lack knowledge of what it is like to undergo that experience.

3. If a complete objective description were a complete description of reality, someone with all the objective information would know everything there is to know, including what it is like to undergo the experience.

4. Conclusion, a complete objective description of the world is not a complete description of reality.

While the knowledge argument undoubtedly has its merits, it, like any argument in philosophy, is not without its critics[1]. A common counterargument, sometimes raised even by those who accept that Mary learns something, is that her learning something new does not justify the further claim that an aspect of reality is omitted from objective accounts. There are, critics argue, other ways to account for what Mary "learns" while holding that objective accounts are complete. Perhaps she gains a new ability (Nemirow 1990; Lewis 1988), becomes acquainted with a part of reality without acquiring new factual knowledge (Conee 1994), gains a new phenomenal concept (Loar 1990), or simply enters a new representational state (Jackson 2003).

However, I do not think these alternatives succeed, and the reason, I think, is much the same in each case. To see why, consider what each takes Mary to gain. Take the ability hypothesis first. The abilities Nemirow and Lewis have in mind are abilities to recognize, imagine and remember red. But to imagine or remember red is just to have red presented again to the one imagining or remembering it. Similarly, acquaintance, in Conee's sense, is knowing something by being directly presented with it, rather than by knowing a fact about it. A phenomenal concept, on Loar's account, is likewise one that can be formed only by having the experience, and so only by having red presented to oneself. And finally, a new representational state, if it is an experience at all, is not merely a state that represents red, since a camera's states do that much. Rather, it is a state in which red shows up for the one who is in it. So, in each case, it seems that what Mary gains can be had only by being the one to whom red is presented. Hence, I would argue

[1]Jackson himself later abandoned it (Jackson 2003)

that these alternatives do not in fact show that nothing subjective is left out of objective accounts. That is, rather than showing that nothing is left out, they simply relocate what is left out, from a fact to an ability, an acquaintance, a concept or a state. And each of these, in turn, turns out to require exactly what objective accounts abstract from, namely occupying the standpoint of the one to whom something is presented.

If this is right, the knowledge argument's conclusion survives its critics, though not quite in the form Jackson gave it. What escapes objective accounts is not a further fact about red, but something about the experience of red itself. This raises a further question, and it is the one this thesis aims to address. If something subjective does escape objective accounts of reality, what is it about experience that makes it subjective in this way? It is here that the disagreement between Jackson and Nagel becomes pressing.

This thesis proceeds as follows. Section 2 uses the Fred case to argue that subjectivity is located in a point of view. Then, drawing on Biro's critique of Nagel, I argue that a point of view is subjective only in a thick sense, and that its subjectivity consists not in what it presents, nor in mere ownership, but in for-ness. I end the section by showing that if a point of view in this thick sense is constitutive of experience, then the disagreement between Jackson and Nagel dissolves. Section 3 argues that experience is never free-floating, since there is always a subject to whom it is presented and proposes that this subject is the self. In this section, I also introduce the internality condition, which any account of the subject of experience must meet and show how it creates a dilemma for the two most familiar views of the self. Section 4 resolves this dilemma by arguing that the self is one subject described in two senses, as the persisting bearer of a capacity for experience, and as that same subject present in each exercise of the capacity. I then answer no-self views and conclude the section by showing what this account implies about what escapes objective accounts of reality, namely the self's presence in each experience as the one to whom that experience presents what it presents. Section 5 defends this claim against three objections, specifically objections concerning how the self's presence can be known, whether what escapes is shared or particular, and whether it belongs to the world or only to how the world is represented. Finally, Section 6 concludes by drawing out the implications of the thesis for the project of giving a complete account of reality, identifying the questions it leaves open, and reflecting on what it means to be someone.

2 Subjectivity as For-ness

2.1 Locating subjectivity

In the previous section, I characterized subjectivity as whatever escapes objective accounts. In this section, I aim to say more precisely what subjectivity is by further asking where subjectivity is located. Asking where subjectivity is located is really an effort to identify

what is responsible for the subjectivity of experience. And the answer matters, because it also determines which challenges to that subjectivity are the relevant ones. If, for instance, subjectivity is taken to be located in point of view, then point of view becomes what explains the subjectivity of experience, making the right line of questioning, if one aims to challenge the idea that experience is subjective, to question the role point of view plays in experience, as Biro does (Biro 2006). If, however, subjectivity is taken to be located in experience itself, then the right line of questioning would be to question if any aspect of experience is indeed subjective, as Dennett does when he denies that experience has any properties that are ineffable, intrinsic, private, and directly apprehensible (Dennett 1988). These two options need not exclude one another, but they do show that where we locate subjectivity determines where its critics must aim. So, before we can know which challenge to take up, we first need to say where subjectivity is located and, in turn, what accounts for the subjectivity of experience.

Nagel is a philosopher who takes subjectivity to be located in point of view or rather explained by it. His clearest argument for this comes in the form of a question, specifically the question "what would be left of what it was like to be a bat if one removed the viewpoint of the bat?" (Nagel 1974, 443). The answer, it seems, is nothing. To see why, consider what we can know about bats without taking up their point of view. We can learn how echolocation works, how bats fly and hunt, and how their brains process various signals. We can even try to imagine ourselves hanging upside down in the dark and finding our way by sound. But as Nagel points out, all of this tells us only what it would be like for us, as humans, to behave as a bat behaves, and not what it is like for the bat to be a bat (Nagel 1974, 439). Under Nagel's account, what is missing, then, is not a further fact we could add to our description, but a standpoint we cannot occupy. If we try to remove that standpoint altogether and try describing the bat's experience from no point of view at all, we find there is no longer anyone for whom the world is a certain way, and hence nothing it is like at all. This is why, Nagel argues, every subjective experience is essentially connected with a single point of view, and why an objective account, by moving away from any particular point of view, inevitably leaves it behind (Nagel 1974, 437). For Nagel, without a point of view, there is simply no subjectivity.

A philosopher who takes the opposing view is Frank Jackson. Jackson locates subjectivity in experience itself. For Jackson, what escapes objective accounts is a property of experience, a quale, such as the redness Mary sees for the first time on her release or the red 1 that Fred sees. In his view, what Mary lacks in her room is not the required point of view but knowledge of the qualitative character of experience, knowledge that is in principle available to anyone who has the relevant kind of experience. In fact, Jackson is explicit that this is where he parts ways with Nagel. He goes as far as distinguishing the knowledge argument from what he calls the "what is it like to be" argument and suggests that Nagel's version is the weaker of the two, since our inability to know what it is like

to be a bat may reflect nothing more than the limits of our imagination (Jackson 1982, 132). Hence, as the Mary and Fred examples illustrate, for Jackson, the issue is not that we can't imagine unfamiliar experiences, rather, the issue is explaining how we can know all the physical facts, and yet something about the experience is still missing. Jackson therefore concludes that what is left out is not a point of view we cannot take up, but a feature of the experience itself (Jackson 1982, 132).

Overall, it seems that while Jackson holds that subjectivity is in experience itself, Nagel holds that it is in the subject's point of view. The question then becomes who should we agree with, Nagel or Jackson? Because I am of the impression that a case can be made for how Jackson's characterization of subjectivity assumes some notion of point of view, I am inclined to agree with Nagel that subjectivity is located in point of view. But that is not to say I entirely disagree with Jackson either. In fact, in the sections that follow, I will be arguing for a sense in which Jackson's claim that what escapes objective accounts is a property of experience itself can be read as an extension of Nagel's claim that what accounts for the subjectivity of experience is point of view.

So, how does Jackson's account assume point of view? Seeing how requires revisiting the Fred example. I have long had the intuition that there really is a difference between the Mary example and the Fred example. The two are usually treated as illustrations of the same point, and to a large extent they are, but they are built differently, and the difference matters for where we locate subjectivity. The Mary case is diachronic, that is, it is a story about one subject acquiring knowledge over time. Before her release, Mary lacks something, and her subsequent experience allows her to gain what she was missing. While The Fred case is synchronic, that is, it compares two subjects at the same moment. Fred and I can look at the same tomato, under the same light, at the same time, and he sees red 1 where I see only red.

Now, consider what is held fixed and what varies in each case. In the Mary case, the subject is held fixed. Mary is an ordinary human perceiver with an ordinary visual system, all she lacks is the right stimulus. Because the subject stays constant, it is natural to conclude, as Jackson does, that what Mary gains is knowledge of a property of the experience. The subject's point of view never comes into view as a variable, so it never looks like the place where subjectivity could lie. In the Fred case, it is the other way around. The object and the conditions are held fixed, and what varies is the subject. Nothing about the tomato, the light, or the external scene/conditions differs between Fred and me. The only difference is in who is looking. If something is available to Fred and not to me, the source of that difference must be found in Fred. So, the relevant question becomes, how do we explain that difference? I am claiming that that difference can best be explained by returning to the notion of point of view.

Jackson himself gestures in this direction. When he considers how we might come to know what red1 is like, his answer is not that we should study the tomato more closely or

learn more about the light it reflects. It is that we would have to acquire something of Fred's visual system, so that we could see as Fred sees (Jackson 1982, 129). But this is just to say that to see as Fred sees requires us to take his point of view. The Fred case thus suggests that even if subjectivity shows up in the qualities of experience, it does not originate there. It originates in the subject for whom those qualities are presented. The Mary case conceals this because it holds the subject fixed, but the Fred case reveals it because it varies the subject and holds everything else constant. Jackson's account, then, needs a point of view just as much as Nagel's does. What remains is to say how point of view can account for the subjectivity of experience, a question Biro takes up in a way that leads him to deny that a point of view can support the sort of "radical subjectivity" Nagel argues for, but who is nonetheless worth engaging with carefully because of what his critique reveals.

2.2 Biro's critique

Biro argues that Nagel's notion of a point of view, on closer inspection, cannot in fact explain why experience is subjective. Biro makes the stated argument by considering various construals of the notion of point of view and then arguing that none of them adds anything to the content of a point of view. The first construal Biro tackles is a point of view as a fixed location, which he considers in three forms, spatial location, attitudinal space, and sensory location. Regarding point of view as a spatial location, he argues that it can in principle be occupied by anyone and hence cannot explain the subjectivity of experience. Regarding point of view as a location in attitudinal space, so as a set of beliefs, desires or attitudes more broadly, he argues that the content of point of view in this sense is fully specifiable in objective terms (as is made evident by the fact that we can convince others of our beliefs) and hence cannot be what accounts for the subjectivity of experience. And regarding point of view as a sensory location, fixed by a creature's perceptual mechanisms, he argues it cannot account for the subjectivity of experience because such mechanisms can in principle be shared. In each case, Biro concludes, the content of point of view remains specifiable in objective or third-person terms independently of whoever occupies it, and so there is nothing subjective about a point of view understood as a fixed location (Biro 2006).

Having shown that a point of view construed as a fixed location cannot account for subjectivity of the sort Nagel is after, Biro turns to what he calls the portable construal of a point of view. On this construal, a point of view is not a location but something that belongs essentially to a subject, individuated by the fact that it belongs to them rather than by any objective content. This construal feels closer to what Nagel means, a fact Biro acknowledges before arguing that it fails on two fronts, specifically ownership and indexicality. Regarding ownership, he argues that learning that a point of view belongs

to a given subject adds nothing to its content. It tells us that a certain relation holds between the subject and the point of view, but Biro takes this to be trivial, with no interesting psychological, epistemological or metaphysical consequences (Biro 2006, 8). Regarding indexicality, he argues that it, too, adds nothing to the content of point of view. Just like the place I call "here" is perfectly describable in non-indexical terms, so is the indexical character of experience. Hence, he argues that appeals to the indexical character of first-person experience cannot ground subjectivity. Biro ends by questioning the very coherence of the portable construal of point of view. He asks whether anything can really be said of a point of view beyond the fixed construal, which he takes himself to have shown can be easily objectified (Biro 2006, 9).

2.3 What survives Biro

I want to suggest that Biro's analysis shows less than Biro takes it to, but more than Nagel's defenders might like. It shows less because his arguments rest on two assumptions that, once made explicit, need not be granted. The first is that subjectivity, if it exists, must be a matter of content. Each of Biro's arguments considers a feature of a point of view, whether its location, the attitudes that make it up, the sensory apparatus that shapes it, its belonging to a subject, or its indexical character, and asks whether that feature contributes anything to the content of experience that cannot be specified in objective terms. In each case he argues that it does not, and I think he is right. Whatever is presented from a point of view can in principle be described objectively. But what this reveals, I take it, is not that there is no subjectivity, but that subjectivity is not and cannot be a matter of content. The question then becomes what it is a matter of. I want to propose that subjectivity is a matter not of what is presented, but of the fact that anything is presented at all and presented to someone. When Fred looks at the tomato, the color presented to him can be described objectively. But that the color is presented, that it is there for Fred, is not one more item alongside the color. It is the presenting itself, and since Biro's arguments only ask whether a feature adds to what is presented, the presenting will never show up in them. It is, so to speak, not in the picture, but the condition of there being a picture at all.

The second assumption is that subjectivity requires that a point of view be unshareable. Biro repeatedly argues that a point of view is not subjective because another subject could in principle stand where I stand, believe what I believe, or perceive with the capacities I perceive with. But uniqueness was never what was at issue, nor is it what I take Nagel to be claiming, since for him a point of view is a type, shared by creatures sufficiently similar to one another (Nagel 1974, 441). The Fred example makes the same point. That is, if we acquired Fred's visual capacities, we too could see red1. Hence, the fact that a point of view can be shared shows only that subjectivity does not consist in uniqueness. What

matters is not how many subjects can occupy a point of view, but that whoever occupies it, things are presented to them, and what is presented can be learned only by occupying it.

With these two assumptions set aside, Biro's arguments miss their target. Even if nothing about a point of view adds to what is presented, and even if a point of view can be occupied by many, neither content nor uniqueness was ever what made a point of view subjective. So, while Biro may have shown that a point of view, in the ways he considers it, cannot explain subjectivity, that is not to say that point of view cannot explain subjectivity at all. This is the sense in which his analysis shows less than he takes it to.

So how does Biro's analysis show more than Nagel's defenders might like? Well, consider other states in the body that could be understood as had from a point of view in the ways Biro considers, states such as digestion. My digestion takes place in a particular location, it is shaped by my physiology, and it belongs to me as surely as my seeing does. In fact, it even has an indexical character of sorts, since it is happening here, in me, now. So, in every sense Biro considers, my digestion could be said to be had from my point of view. Yet I may feel hunger or fullness, but the digestive process itself is not presented to me. It simply goes on in me, whereas when I see the tomato, the red shows up for me. The same holds for the bat, whose digestion likewise takes place somewhere, is shaped by its physiology, and belongs to it, and yet no one thinks the bat's digestion poses a problem for objective accounts.

Biro's arguments therefore do more than show that these features of a point of view add nothing to the content of experience that cannot be specified objectively. They show that these features cannot distinguish experience from digestion at all. And this is where Biro's analysis shows more than Nagel's defenders might like. That is, in their effort to characterize the subjectivity of experience by emphasizing the role of point of view, Nagel's defenders cannot simply appeal to the bat's point of view as though its location or its belonging to the bat were enough, since the bat's digestion has all of these too. More needs to be said if point of view is to be relied on to explain the subjectivity of experience. I am therefore arguing that what Biro's analysis leaves standing is the one feature his arguments are not designed to test, and the one feature digestion lacks, namely that experience presents what it presents to someone. This feature I call for-ness. For-ness, then, is not an assumption I bring to the argument but what is left when Nagel's account is put under the pressure of Biro's critique.

2.4 The Thin and Thick Point of View

For-ness can further be understood as what Nagel's notion of a point of view presupposes but does not isolate, and it is what makes point of view, properly understood, the sort

of thing that can account for the subjectivity of experience. To see why, recall Nagel's formula for consciousness, for Nagel, an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something it is like to be that organism, something it is like *for* the organism (Nagel 1974, 436). The formula is often quoted in its first half and passed over in its second, but it is the "for" that carries the weight. Yet Nagel never separates for-ness from other features of a point of view, Biro, by contrast, by further asking how we individuate points of view does separate these features or rather isolates them (Biro 2006).

His candidates, as we saw, are its location, the attitudes that make it up, the sensory apparatus that shapes it, its belonging to a subject, and its indexical character. What these have in common is that each can be specified without mentioning anything being presented to anyone. I will call any conception of a point of view built from features of this kind the thin conception. On the thin conception, a point of view is, roughly, a location or orientation from which something is registered, and so anything that registers information from somewhere has one, including a camera that captures a scene from a particular place and angle. The camera has a location, and an apparatus that shapes what it captures, and yet nothing is for the camera. Being tied to a point of view in the thin sense is therefore compatible with there being no subjectivity at all.

On the thick conception, by contrast, a point of view is the standpoint of someone to whom things are presented. When I look at the tomato, the redness is not merely registered from where I stand. Rather, it shows up to me. What distinguishes my point of view from the camera's, then, is not that mine is more detailed or more biologically complex, but that what is registered from it is presented to someone. The thick conception does capture subjectivity, but only because it already includes this further feature, and it is that feature, for-ness, rather than the point of view as such, that does the work. Nagel's account, then, already relies on the thick conception of a point of view. It simply does not isolate the for-ness that makes it thick. And this is why Biro's critique, for all its merits, does not reach the heart of the matter. In taking Nagel's notion apart, Biro examines only the features that make up the thin conception, and finding nothing subjective in any of them, concludes that nothing subjective is left. But what is left is precisely the "for," which Nagel's notion relies on throughout but never names.

An experience has for-ness, then, when it is an experience for someone, when what is presented is presented to a subject, rather than merely registered from a location or occurring in a bearer. It is worth being clear about how little this notion involves and how it relates to existing terminology. "For-ness" is my term, but the idea is not new. In the literature on the subjective character of experience, the standard label is for-me-ness, most prominently characterized and defended by Zahavi and Kriegel, who argue that "all conscious states' phenomenal character involves for-me-ness as an experiential constituent" (Zahavi and Kriegel 2016, 37).

I dropped the "me" deliberately, and here is why. Marie Guillot has shown that the label "subjective character" covers three notions that are often run together (Guillot 2017). The first is for-me-ness, roughly the fact that there is something it is like for the subject to have the experience. The second is me-ness, the experience's involving an awareness of the subject itself. And the third is mineness, the experience's being given to its subject as its own. Guillot argues that for-me-ness implies neither of the others. In the wider debate, moreover, for-me-ness is often read as involving the subject's awareness of the experience itself, a minimal form of self-consciousness (Kriegel 2009). I need none of this. My claim is only that experience presents what it presents to a subject. It is not that the subject is also aware of the experience, nor that the subject is aware of itself, nor that the experience is given as the subject's own. For-ness, then, is at most as strong as Guillot's for-me-ness and may even be weaker. Dropping the "me" lets me say precisely what I mean when I speak of experience being for a subject, without taking on commitments I have not earned and will not need in this thesis.

2.5 For-ness

At this point, a question that can be raised is what exactly it means to claim that an experience is for someone. In the sense I have been arguing for, an experience is for someone when what it presents is presented to them, rather than merely registered from a location or occurring in a bearer, as my digestion occurs in me. But even this leaves open how experience is related to the point of view from which it is had, and this is because there are several senses in which something can be for a subject. A view from a lookout is for the traveler who stands there, though it would be there whether or not anyone did. A lecture is for its audience in a stronger sense, since it cannot properly take place without one, though the audience is not part of the lecture. And a promise is for the one to whom it is made in a stronger sense still, since a promise made to no one is not a promise at all.

These senses suggest at least three ways of characterizing the relationship between point of view and experience.

A point of view might be external to experience, as the lookout is to the view, a condition of experience, as the audience is to the lecture, or constitutive of experience, as the one promised is to the promise. It is on this that the disagreement between Nagel and Jackson turns. The Fred case showed that Jackson's account needs a point of view just as much as Nagel's does. But if a point of view stands outside experience, or merely makes it possible, then locating subjectivity in a point of view still means locating it somewhere other than in experience, and we must choose between the two. If, however, a point of view in the thick sense is part of what experience is, then the choice disappears. To say, with Nagel, that experience is essentially tied to a point of view is already to say something about experience itself, and to say, with Jackson, that what escapes objective accounts is

a property of experience is not to deny that it is tied to a point of view. The property in question, though, is not the color presented, which, as Biro showed, can be described objectively, but the experience's being for someone, its for-ness. Nagel and Jackson can therefore be understood as each describing one side of a single structure.

What remains is to show that a point of view in the thick sense is in fact constitutive of experience, and this requires attending to the second side of for-ness, not that something is presented but that it is presented to someone. Here it helps to be precise. A point of view in the thick sense is a standpoint from which things are presented, and as Section 2.3 argued, such a standpoint can be shared, since anyone who acquired Fred's visual capacities would occupy his point of view and see red1. The self, by contrast, is not the standpoint but the one who occupies it, the someone to whom things are presented from there. Many selves may occupy the same kind of standpoint, but each occupancy is a particular self's, and it is this that makes the standpoint thick. To speak of a point of view in the thick sense is therefore always to speak of a self, not as one thing among others in view, but as the one for whom anything is in view at all.

Whether the thick point of view is constitutive of experience therefore depends on what that self is. The question of how Nagel and Jackson can both be right thus becomes a question about the self, namely what it must be for a point of view to be its standpoint, and how it can be present within experience without being one more thing presented in it. This is the task of the following section.

3 The Subject of Experience

Section 2 ended by turning the question of how Nagel and Jackson can both be right into a question about the self. If a point of view in the thick sense is constitutive of experience, then the disagreement between them dissolves, and whether it is constitutive depends on what the self that occupies it is. The task of this section is to begin answering that question. I will do so in three steps. First, I argue that every experience is for someone, so that there is no experience without a subject to whom it is presented (3.1). Second, I propose that this subject is the self and say what I mean by this (3.2). Third, I argue that the self cannot stand outside the experiences it is for, which gives us what I will call the internality condition, a condition any account of the subject of experience must meet (3.3). I end by showing how this condition puts pressure on two familiar views of the self, setting up the dilemma that Section 4 resolves (3.4).

3.1 Experience is never free-floating

The claim that every experience is for someone may sound too obvious to need defense. But it has been denied, or at least doubted, by a long line of philosophers, from Hume to

contemporary no-self theorists. Hence, in defense of the position that every experience has a subject, I offer two lines of thought. The first is conceptual. Try to conceive of an experience that is had by no one, a pain that hurts no one, or a red presented to no one. What we find, I think, is that we are no longer conceiving of an experience at all. We are conceiving of something else, a bodily disturbance, or a surface reflecting light at a certain wavelength. Each of these can occur unaccompanied, but none of them is an experience. An experience is therefore a presenting, and a presenting is always a presenting to someone. Subtract that someone, and what remains is not an unowned experience but the absence of experience.

The second is a direct response to Hume. Hume famously reported that whenever he entered most intimately into what he called himself, he always stumbled on some particular perception, and never caught himself without a perception, or observed anything but the perception (Hume [1739] 2000, 1.4.6.3). He concluded that the self is nothing but a bundle of perceptions. But notice what Hume was looking for. He was looking for the self as an item among the items presented in experience, one more object alongside the heat, the light and the pain. Not finding it there, he concluded it did not exist. For-ness, however, is not an item presented in experience. It is the structure of presentation itself, the fact that the heat, the light and the pain are presented, and presented to someone, and the self figures in experience only through this structure, as the one to whom things are presented.

Hume's search could not have found it, for the same reason that one cannot see one's own seeing by looking harder at what one sees. Additionally, Hume's report presupposes what it denies. It is Hume who enters into himself, Hume who stumbles on perceptions, Hume to whom they are presented. Even if no self is presented as the thinker, the thinking is for someone, or it is not thinking in the sense that matters here. These considerations do not show what the subject of experience is. But they do show that experience always has one. Experience is subjective, in the sense identified in Section 2, because it is never free-floating. Every experience is presented to a subject.

3.2 Proposing the self

What, then, is the subject to whom experience is presented? Several candidates suggest themselves, the experience itself, the brain, the organism, or the self. I propose that it is the self, and I want to say what I mean by this before Section 4 asks what the self is. I set aside the first candidate for now, since the view that the subject just is the experience is one of the two views I consider in Section 3.4. The brain and the organism are natural candidates because they are the bearers of experience in the sense that experiences occur in them. But they are bearers in the same sense that they are the bearers of digestion and cell division. To be told that the organism is the subject of experience is to be told where experience happens, not what makes it for someone. The question we are asking

is precisely why some of the organism's states are presented to it while others merely belong to it. Pointing to the organism locates the difference without accounting for it. "Organism" therefore names the subject under a description that leaves out what makes it a subject, in the way that "a collection of cells" names a heart under a description that leaves out what makes it a heart.

By "the self," then, I mean the subject under the description that captures what makes it the one to whom experience is presented. In the terms of Section 2.6, the self is the one who occupies a thick point of view, not the standpoint itself but the someone to whom things are presented from there. This is, in one sense, a minimal stipulation, and I want to be clear about what it does and does not commit me to. It commits me to the claim that there is something, whatever its ultimate nature, that occupies the role of that to which experience is presented, and that this something is properly called a self. It does not yet commit me to the claim that the self persists, that it is a substance, that it is distinct from the organism, or that it is aware of itself as a self. That being said, if the proposal that the subject of experience is the self is to be more than a renaming of the problem, those questions must be answered and answering them is the work of Section 4. But before turning to them, there is a condition that any account of what the self is must meet, the internality condition.

3.3 The internality condition

Consider a picture on which for-ness is a relation between two independently existing things, an experience on one side and a self on the other, where the self is the thing to which the experience is presented. In this picture, the experience considered in itself would be a complete item, and its being for someone would be a further, relational fact about it, like its being next to some other item or its being owned by someone.

I think this picture cannot be right. If the experience were complete without its subject, then the experience in itself would lack for-ness. Its subjectivity would be added from outside, through its relation to something else. But Section 3.1 argued that there is no such thing as an experience that is not for anyone. An experience considered apart from its subject is not an experience lacking one of its relations. It is not an experience at all. So, for-ness cannot be a relation the experience bears to something wholly outside it. It must be part of what the experience is.

There is a second reason to resist the external picture. If for-ness were an external relation between an experience and a separately existing self, it would be exactly the kind of relation Biro considers, a relation of ownership or belonging, of the kind my digestion bears to me. And as Biro showed, this relation does not suffice for subjectivity. If the self that accounts for for-ness stood outside experience, the relation between them would

collapse into mere belonging, and the distinctive character of experience would be lost. I will therefore adopt the following condition.

The internality condition. Whatever accounts for the subjectivity of experience must be part of experience, not a separate fact existing outside it.

The condition does not say that the self is nothing but experience. It says that whatever accounts for subjectivity must figure in experience, rather than standing behind it or alongside it. As Section 3.1 put it, the self is in experience not as an item presented but as part of the structure of presentation itself. In this sense the self is constitutive of experience, not an addition to it. Removing it does not leave a subjectless experience. It leaves no experience at all. And since a point of view in the thick sense is the standpoint a self occupies, and is thick only because a self occupies it, a point of view in that sense is constitutive of experience too, which is the antecedent Section 2 left open.

3.4 Two views of the self

The internality condition puts pressure on two familiar answers to the question of what the self is. On the first, the self exists only when there is experience and lasts no longer than a single episode of it. Galen Strawson has developed the most thorough version of this view (G. Strawson 1997, 2009). On his account, the self is a thin subject, a subject of experience that exists only if there is experience for it to be the subject of, and so normally lasts only a short time. Strawson goes further still, arguing that the thin subject is in fact identical with the experience of which it is the subject, and with that experience's content (G. Strawson 2009). This view meets the internality condition easily, since a subject identical with its experience could hardly stand outside it. Nor does Strawson deny for-ness. On the contrary, he begins from it, holding that there cannot be experience without a subject, because experience is necessarily experience for someone. The difficulty is rather that his conclusion seems to undo his starting point. For-ness has two sides, something presented and someone to whom it is presented, and Strawson himself takes this polarity to be essential to experience. But if the subject is identical with the experience and its content, then what is presented and the one to whom it is presented turn out to be one and the same thing, and it becomes hard to see what the "for" in experience-for-someone still marks. Either the polarity is real, in which case the subject is not simply identical with its experience, or the identity holds, in which case the polarity begins to look merely apparent.

On the second answer, the self is a persisting subject, perhaps a substance, which has experiences and exists before, after and between them. This view seems well placed to account for for-ness, since it keeps the two sides of the relation apart and gives us something to which experience can be presented. But a self that exists independently of its experiences looks exactly like the separate fact the internality condition rules out,

and its relation to its experiences threatens to collapse into Biro's ownership. This is the dilemma the rest of the thesis must resolve. The view that meets the internality condition seems to collapse the two sides of for-ness into one, and the view that keeps them apart seems unable to meet the internality condition.

4 Accounting for the Self

Section 3 ended with a dilemma. A self that is nothing more than experience meets the internality condition, but it seems to collapse the two sides of for-ness into one. A self that has experiences, and persists before, after and between them, keeps those two sides apart, but it appears to stand outside experience in violation of the internality condition. This section examines each view in turn and argues that each is partly right. The self the momentary view describes is real, and so is the self the persisting view describes. They are not two selves, but one subject described in two senses. I then show how this subject meets the internality condition while persisting. Next, I consider the objection that there is no self at all, an objection which, if sound, would be fatal to my view. I end the section by showing how my account grounds the subjectivity of a point of view, and with it the subjectivity of experience.

4.1 The self as experiences

The most developed contemporary version of the first view is Galen Strawson's (G. Strawson 1997, 1999, 2009). Strawson argues that whenever there is experience, there is a subject of experience, but that this subject need not, and typically does not, last longer than the stretch of experience it is the subject of. Human consciousness, on his account, is not a continuous stream but a series of brief episodes, each a few seconds at most, punctuated by breaks and resettings. Each episode has its own subject, which Strawson calls a "thin" subject, a subject that exists only when, and only as long as, there is experience. Strawson captures the view with an image, which he calls the Pearl view. Selves exist one after another, like pearls on a string, but the string, whatever continuity the brain or the organism provides, is not itself a self. In his later work Strawson goes further, arguing that in the thin sense the subject of an experience is identical with the experiencing and with its content, so that they are not two things at all (G. Strawson 2009).

The view has real strengths. It takes the phenomenology of experience seriously, since in any given stretch of experience the subject is present as the one to whom things are presented, and the view says exactly this. It requires no subject beyond what experience itself reveals, so it answers Hume's challenge on Hume's own terms. And it meets the internality condition without effort, since the thin subject exists only in and with experience. Indeed, I think Strawson's thin subject is a correct description of something

real. It describes the subject as it is present within a given experience, which is what I will call experiential subjectivity.

But I do not think the thin subject is the whole story, for two reasons. The first concerns what experience presents. Consider Fred again. When Fred sees a tomato, what is presented to him is not simply red but red1, a color distinct from red2. This is possible only because Fred has a standing capacity to discriminate red1 from red2, a capacity he had before this experience and will have after it, during the long intervals in which he sees no red at all. What is presented to Fred in a given moment is shaped by what Fred is across moments. The same holds for each of us in less striking ways. A trained musician hears an interval as a minor sixth, whereas an untrained listener hears two notes. I am therefore claiming that the content of a momentary experience depends on capacities that are not themselves momentary. If the subject of the experience existed only for the length of the episode, it would be unclear why the experience should present what it does. The thin subject has to inherits its way of being presented with things from something that outlasts it.

The second concerns gaps. On Strawson's view, the subject who falls into dreamless sleep does not wake up. A new subject begins with the first experience of the morning, and Strawson accepts this consequence. But it sits poorly with the first point. The subject of the morning's first experience sees red1 as red1, hears the minor sixth as a minor sixth, and recognizes the room as its own. It is presented with things in ways that depend on capacities that were present, unexercised, through the night. Strawson can of course grant that something carried those capacities across the gap, namely the brain or the organism, the string on which his pearls are strung. What he denies is that this string is a self. Yet whatever carried those capacities across the gap has a strong claim to be the subject to whom the morning's experience is presented, and whether it does is the question Section 4.3 takes up. None of this shows that Strawson's thin subject is unreal. It shows only that the thin subject is not the whole story. The subject as present in experience depends on something that does not come and go with experience. The pearls are real, but they are shaped by something that runs through them.

4.2 The self as what has experiences

The second view holds that the self is the sort of thing that has experiences. In its traditional form, it is a substance, a persisting thing that underlies its experiences, as Descartes' thinking thing underlies its thoughts. In more recent forms, the self has been argued to be a simple subject of experience distinct from its body (Lowe 1996), or a person to whom both mental and physical states are ascribed (P. F. Strawson 1959). This view captures exactly what the momentary view leaves out. A persisting subject carries Fred's capacity to discriminate red1 from red2 from one experience to the next. It spans the gaps

of dreamless sleep. It explains why the subject of the morning's experience is presented with a room it recognizes as its own. And it gives us something to which experience can be presented, a recipient for for-ness, distinct from the experience itself.

But the view faces three main difficulties, each a version of a problem raised in Section 3. The first is Hume's. If the self is a thing that exists before, after and between its experiences, it is not something we encounter in experience. We encounter colors, sounds and pains, and we encounter them as presented to someone, but we do not encounter a substance underlying them. The persisting self, on this picture, is postulated rather than found. Section 3.1 argued that what Hume could not find was not an item at all but the structure of presentation itself. The substance view cannot take advantage of this answer, since it places the self behind experience rather than in that structure.

The second difficulty is the internality condition. A self that stands behind its experiences, existing independently of them and merely having them, is a separate fact existing outside experience. If the experience is complete in itself and the self is a further thing to which it is related, then the experience considered in itself lacks for-ness, and we have already seen that there is no such experience. The third is Biro's. A self that has its experiences in the way a substance has its properties relates to them in the way the organism relates to its digestion. This is the relation of belonging, not of presentation. It therefore becomes apparent that while the persisting self explains why experiences have a bearer, and why the same bearer has many experiences. It does not, by itself, explain why experiences are for their bearer rather than merely in it.

4.3 One subject, two senses

Each view therefore captures something the other misses. The momentary view captures the subject's presence in experience. The persisting view captures the subject's persistence through and between experiences. The dilemma of Section 3 arises only if we assume that these are features of two different things, a momentary subject inside experience and a persisting subject outside it. My proposal is that they are features of one subject described in two senses.

In the first sense, which I call existential subjectivity, the subject is that which has the standing capacity for experience. Being a subject in this sense is being the kind of thing for which experience is possible, having the dispositions whose manifestation is experience. Fred's ability to discriminate red1 from red2 is one such disposition, the musician's trained ear is another, and the most basic is the capacity for anything to be presented at all. Existential subjectivity persists through and between experiences, just as dispositions persist through intervals in which they are not exercised. A sugar cube remains soluble while dry. In the second sense, which I call experiential subjectivity, the subject is the one to whom a given experience presents what it presents. Experiential subjectivity is what

Strawson's thin subject describes, and it exists only as long as the experience does. It is also the self as the occupant of what Section 2 called a point of view in the thick sense, the one to whom things are presented from that standpoint.

A clarification is needed here, since the language of capacities can mislead. When I speak of existential subjectivity in terms of a persisting capacity for experience, I do not mean that the self is a capacity, as if solubility itself were the thing that dissolves. Capacities are not recipients, and nothing is presented to a disposition. The self, in the existential sense, is rather the bearer of the capacity for experience. But it is the bearer picked out in a particular way, namely as the thing that has this capacity, and not under some other description that leaves the capacity out, as biology describes the organism. The difference is not between two things but between two ways of picking out one thing, and only the first picks it out as a self. This is the same point I made in Section 3.2, where I said that "organism" names the subject under a description that leaves out what makes it a subject.

This might seem to return us to the substance view of Section 4.2, since that view, too, posits a persisting bearer. But the two differ in two respects. First, the substance view characterizes its bearer independently of its experiences, as a thing that would be what it is whether or not it ever had them. The existential self, by contrast, is characterized by its capacity, and the capacity is individuated by what its exercises are, namely presentings. There is no way to say what the existential self is without saying what kind of experience it is capable of. Second, and more importantly, the substance view gives the bearer the wrong role in its experiences. A substance figures in its modes as their site. The existential self figures in the exercise of its capacity as the recipient of what that exercise presents.

The relation between existential and experiential subjectivity, I am therefore proposing is that of a capacity to its exercise, or a disposition to its manifestation. Each experience is the exercise of the subject's standing capacity for experience. And a manifestation is not a separate thing from what manifests it. When a glass breaks, the glass is not standing behind the breaking, related to it from outside. Rather, the glass is what breaks. In the same way, the subject whose capacity is exercised in an experience is not behind the experience but in it, as the one whose capacity is being exercised. Experiential subjectivity just is existential subjectivity as it figures in a particular instance.

Notice, too, that this keeps apart what Strawson's identity thesis collapsed. The glass is present in the breaking without being identical with it, and in the same way the subject is present in each experience without being identical with the experience or its content. It is in the experience as the one to whom the experience presents what it presents, and so the two sides of for-ness remain two. This is how the persisting subject meets the internality condition. The subject is part of each experience, since each experience is that subject's capacity in exercise, and a capacity cannot be exercised without the thing whose capacity it is being present in the exercise. Yet the subject is not confined to any one

experience, since the capacity outlasts each of its exercises. Hence, returning to Strawson's image, the self is not a string on which pearls are hung from outside, and it is not a series of pearls whose string is no self at all. It is a string that runs through every pearl, so that it is wholly present in each without being exhausted by any.

The proposed view also lets us say exactly where the two views are right and where they go wrong. Strawson is right that whenever there is experience there is a subject present in it, and that this subject, considered as present in that experience, lasts only as long as the experience. He is wrong to conclude that this is all there is to the subject, and wrong to identify the subject with the experience in which it is present. The persisting view is right that the subject outlasts its experiences and carries its capacities across them. It is wrong to locate this subject behind experience, as a substance that merely has its experiences. There is one subject, which persists as the bearer of a capacity and is present in that capacity's exercise.

This also answers a worry from parsimony. For-ness, one might say, requires only that each experience be presented to someone at the time it occurs, and Strawson's thin subject is enough for that, so why posit a self that persists across experiences? But a principle of parsimony counts against positing entities that do no explanatory work, and my account posits nothing that Strawson's does not already grant. Strawson accepts that something persists across the gaps between experiences, namely the brain or the organism, the string on which his pearls are strung. He denies only that this string is a self. My account adds no further thing. It claims only that the string, considered as the bearer of a capacity for things to be presented, is the self in the existential sense, and that it is present in each exercise of that capacity as the one to whom things are presented. Nor does the momentary view gain any economy by keeping its subjects short-lived. It must still explain why the morning's first experience presents red1 as red1, and it can do so only by appealing to the persisting string. Where both views posit the same things, the charge of parsimony has no basis, and the question becomes which view describes those things better.

4.4 No-self views

Before drawing out what this account implies, I consider a challenge to its starting point. One could reject my whole argument by denying that there is a self at all. Thomas Metzinger, for instance, argues that no one has ever been or had a self (Metzinger 2003, 2011). According to Metzinger, what exist are self-models, representations that a system constructs of itself, and the sense of being a self-arises because the system cannot recognize its self-model as a model (Metzinger 2011, 12). Hence the self, on this view, is merely phenomenal.

My reply has two parts. First, Metzinger's argument targets a different notion of self from mine. What his self-model explains is the experience of being a self, which is closest to what Guillot calls me-ness, an experience's involving an awareness of the subject itself, here as a unified, bounded, persisting individual. My claim concerns for-ness, which is presupposed by any experience at all, including the experience of being a self. Even if Metzinger is right, the self-model must be presented to someone, since otherwise there would be no sense of self, illusory or not. So, the no-self view, in Metzinger's form, presupposes the subjectivity it might seem to deny. Second, the description of the self as "merely phenomenal" should not be read as a demotion. Experience is part of reality. If the sense of self is a feature of experience, it is a real feature of the world, and the question is not whether it exists but what it consists in. My account offers an answer.

A subtler no-self position grants subjectivity but denies that it amounts to a self. Miri Albahari (2006) argues that there is an unbroken witness-consciousness, but that it lacks the boundaries and sense of ownership that the concept of a self requires, so that the self is a construction superimposed on it. Albahari's witness-consciousness plays a role close to the one I give existential subjectivity, since both are what persists beneath the coming and going of particular experiences. The two differ in kind, however. For Albahari, witness-consciousness is itself a form of awareness, whereas existential subjectivity, on my account, is a standing capacity for awareness. Where we agree, our disagreement is partly verbal. I call the subject of for-ness a self because being that to which experience is presented is what we most basically mean by being someone, while Albahari reserves "self" for something with additional features. On the substantive question, whether there is something persisting that grounds the for-ness of experience, her view and mine agree.

5 Objections and Replies

I have argued that what escapes objective accounts of reality is the self's presence in each experience as the one to whom that experience presents what it presents. In this section, I consider three objections to this claim. The first asks how the self's presence could be known at all, if the self is never something presented (5.1). The second asks how what escapes can be both shareable, as I argued in Section 2.3, and particular to each self (5.2). The third holds that the self's presence belongs only to how the world is represented, and not to what the world contains (5.3).

5.1 Where is the self? The access objection

The first objection grants that experience has for-ness but asks how I could know that the self is present in experience at all. Put simply, I seem to have said two things that are hard to hold together. On the one hand, I have claimed that the self is present in each

experience, as the one to whom that experience presents what it presents. On the other hand, I have claimed that the self is never itself something presented. The objector then poses a dilemma. Either the self's presence shows up in experience in some way, or it does not. If it does, then it is presented after all, and my claim that the self is never an item in experience fails. If it does not, then I can only know about the self by inferring it, perhaps from the structure of experience, in which case the self is a theoretical posit, something we postulate to explain what we find. But theoretical posits are exactly what objective accounts handle well. A self known only by inference could be grasped from no standpoint in particular, and so it would not escape objective accounts at all.

The objection has added force given what I said in Section 2.5. There I deliberately dropped the "me" from for-me-ness, so as not to commit myself to the claim that experience involves any awareness of the subject, whether of itself or of its experiences as its own. Yet the most familiar way of answering the objection is to appeal to what Zahavi calls pre-reflective self-awareness, a kind of awareness in which the self is given in experience without being given as an object (Zahavi 2005). This answer, however, seems to bring back exactly what I set aside.

I think that the dilemma rests on an assumption that should be rejected, namely that there are only two ways for something to be present in experience, either by being presented or by being inferred. There is, I think, a third way, which is by being lived through. Consider the eye. The eye is not among the things we see, and neither do we infer it from what we see. Rather, we see with it, and so it is present in every act of seeing as that through which the seeing happens. The self's presence in experience is like this. That is, it is not an awareness of the self, and so it does not bring back me-ness or mineness. It is simply the self's being the one to whom things are presented, which is not a way of knowing the self but a way of being it. In other words, each time something is presented to me, I am present in that presenting as the one who receives it, and I am present there whether or not I ever attend to myself, reflect on myself, or experience the experience as mine.

What, then, do I claim to know, and how do I know it? I do not claim to know the self as an object, whether by introspection or otherwise. Rather, what I claim to know is a structural feature of experience, namely that every presenting is a presenting to someone. This I argued for in Section 3.1 on conceptual grounds, by showing that an experience presented to no one is not an experience at all. Now, that argument can be followed from no standpoint in particular, and so it is, in the relevant sense, objective. But notice what it establishes. It establishes that there is, in each experience, someone to whom things are presented. It does not, and could not, tell us what it is to be that someone. And this is exactly the asymmetry this thesis has been concerned with all along. An objective account can know that for-ness is there, and even why it must be there, but only by referring to it, never by capturing it. Hence, the access objection does not undermine my claim that

something escapes objective accounts. If anything, it restates it. We can know objectively that the self is present in experience, but we can know what that presence is only by being the self whose presence it is.

5.2 Shared or particular? The Shareability objection

The second objection charges my account with inconsistency. Put simply, I seem to have said two things that cannot both be true. On the one hand, I argued in Section 2.3 that a point of view can be shared. If we acquired Fred's visual capacities, we too would occupy his point of view, and we too would see red1. So, what escapes objective accounts, on this picture, is something anyone could come to know, provided they occupy the right standpoint. On the other hand, I have also argued that what escapes objective accounts is the self's presence in experience, and a self's presence is always some particular self's presence. Mine is mine, and Fred's is Fred's. But if that is right, then even someone who acquired Fred's capacities could only ever grasp their own presence, and never Fred's. So, it seems that what escapes objective accounts cannot be both shareable and particular, and my account must choose between the two.

I think, however, that there is no real conflict here, once we distinguish between two things that the objection runs together, namely what is presented and someone's being the one to whom it is presented. Consider two people standing at the same lookout. They see the same view, and each could tell the other what it looks like. Yet each one's seeing is still their own. The view is shared, but the seeing is not. The same holds for Fred. What red1 is like belongs to the standpoint, and so anyone who comes to occupy that standpoint can come to know it. That is the sense in which what escapes is shareable. But someone's being the one to whom red1 is presented belongs to whoever occupies the standpoint, and each occupant has that only for themselves. That is the sense in which what escapes is particular. In other words, what escapes objective accounts is the same kind of thing for everyone who occupies a given standpoint, and yet a particular instance of it for each. This is why acquiring Fred's capacities would teach us what red1 is like without making us Fred. And it is also why no objective account could teach us either. What is shared is a standpoint, and a standpoint can only be known by occupying it. What is particular is a self, and a self can only be known by being it.

5.3 Only a center? The centered-worlds objection

The third objection is the most deflationary of the three. It grants that there is such a thing as being the one to whom something is presented, but denies that this is a further feature of reality. Rather, it holds that it is simply a matter of perspective, of the kind captured by what philosophers call self-locating knowledge. Lewis's two gods illustrate the idea (Lewis 1979). Imagine two gods who know every fact about the world they live

in, and yet neither knows which of the two gods it is. What they lack, it seems, is not a fact about the world but their own place in it. And no one would conclude from their ignorance that the world contains some further fact that they are missing. Perhaps, the objector says, the self's presence in experience is like this. That is, perhaps being the one to whom red1 is presented is a matter of where one stands, rather than of what there is.

In its simplest form, this objection is easily answered. The gods' ignorance is ignorance of where they are in the world, and it disappears the moment each learns which god it is. Mary, by contrast, knows exactly who she is, where she is, and when it is, and yet she still learns something when she leaves her room. So, whatever she lacked, it was not her place in the world. However, a more sophisticated version of the objection grants this, and argues instead that being the one to whom something is presented is still only a feature of how the world is represented, and not of the world itself. On a broadly Lewisian picture, for instance, the content of what someone believes, or experiences can be modeled as a centered world, that is, a world together with a marker indicating which subject, and which moment, is at its center. Think of a map with a marker reading "you are here." The marker tells you where you are, but it is not itself part of the territory the map describes. In the same way, the objector says, a complete objective description of the world, together with such a marker, would leave nothing in the world out. Being the one to whom red1 is presented would just be Fred's world with Fred marked as its center, and the marker belongs to how the world is represented, not to what the world contains.

My reply turns on the internality condition. The centered-worlds picture treats the center as something added by a representation, much as the "you are here" marker is added to a map of a territory that is complete without it. That would be right if for-ness were a feature of how experiences are described. But experiences are not merely representations of the world. They are themselves events in it, and as I argued in Section 3.3, for-ness is part of what these events are, not a further fact about how they are described. In other words, when red1 is presented to Fred, nothing needs to mark Fred as the center for the presenting to be a presenting to him. It already is one, and it would be one whether or not anyone, Fred included, ever represented it. So, the center, in this case, is not a marker added to a map. It is part of the territory itself. And so, a description of the world that leaves it out, and adds it back only as a marker on a representation, has left out part of what actually happened.

Each of these objections, then, presses on a different side of the same claim, namely how the self's presence is known, whose presence it is, and whether it belongs to the world at all. And in each case, answering the objection brings the claim into sharper view rather than undermining it. The self's presence can be known to be there without being captured, it is shared in kind but particular in each instance, and it belongs not to how experience is represented but to what experience is. What this implies for the project of giving a complete account of reality, and what it leaves open, is the subject of the conclusion.

6 Conclusion: Some Remarks on Being Someone

This thesis began with a disagreement. Faced with the knowledge argument, Jackson's framing invites us to locate the subjectivity of experience in experience itself, in its qualitative character, whereas Nagel's invites us to locate it in the point of view from which experience is had. I have argued that, once we are clear about how point of view and experience are related, Jackson and Nagel turn out to be describing two sides of a single structure.

To make this case, I first used the Fred case to argue that subjectivity is located in a point of view, since what separates Fred's experience from ours cannot be found in the tomato, but only on the side of the one who sees. However, drawing on Biro's critique, I then argued that no feature of a point of view, whether its location, its sensory apparatus or its belonging to a subject, can by itself make experience subjective, since my digestion has all of these too. What makes a point of view subjective, then, is not what it presents but the fact that it presents it to someone, a feature I called for-ness. From there, I argued that experience is never free-floating, and that whatever accounts for for-ness must be part of experience rather than standing behind it. Hence, I proposed that the self is one subject described in two senses, as the persisting bearer of a capacity for experience, and as that same subject present in each exercise of the capacity, as the one to whom things are presented. And so, what escapes objective accounts is the self's presence in each experience, something such accounts can refer to but never capture, since to grasp it as what it is is to be it. If this is right, then the knowledge argument's conclusion survives, though in a different form from the one Jackson gave it. What objective accounts leave out is not a further fact about red, but someone, the one to whom the red is presented.

What follows from this? The most immediate implication concerns the project of giving a complete account of reality. If what escapes objective accounts is the self in its role as subject, then a complete account cannot be reached simply by extending the objective method further. More physics or more neuroscience would tell us more and more about the world, but none of it would bring us closer to what it is to be the one to whom red1 is presented. That is, the incompleteness is not a gap waiting to be filled, but a consequence of what objectivity is. This does not mean we should abandon objectivity, nor that we must posit a second, non-physical realm, since my account leaves open what bears the capacity for experience and is compatible with its being the organism. What it requires instead is a change in how we picture completeness. If some parts of reality can be grasped only by being them, then no single account, however detailed, could contain everything there is. A complete picture of reality, then, is not a single view from nowhere (Nagel 1986). It is a view from nowhere that knows its own limits, and that recognizes that the world also contains, wherever there are subjects, views from somewhere.

Of course, I have not addressed every challenge to the claim that anything escapes objective accounts, most notably illusionism, which denies that there is any for-ness to begin with. But beyond such challenges, an account of this kind also leaves several questions open, and I want to name three. The first concerns the bearer of the capacity for experience. I have said what it is to be a subject in the existential sense, namely, to have this capacity, but not what has it, whether the organism, the brain, or something else. The second concerns the boundaries of for-ness. I drew the distinction between thin and thick points of view using clear cases, the camera that registers and the subject to whom things are presented. But many cases are not clear. Does the bat's sonar present the world to someone? Does a fish's lateral line? And as artificial systems come to represent and report on their own states in ever more sophisticated ways, the question of whether anything is presented to them becomes less and less hypothetical. My account does not answer these questions, but it does say what they are about. They are not questions about how much a system can represent, but about whether there is anyone to whom what it represents is presented.

The third question concerns the persistence of the self. If the self in the existential sense is never presented, not even to itself, then where do we go between experiences? My answer has been that we go nowhere, that we persist as a capacity not being exercised, the way sugar remains soluble while dry. But what it means for someone to persist while nothing is presented to them, and whether such a self is still someone in the sense that matters to us, deserves more attention than I have been able to give it here.

This last question brings me to what I take to be the most personal implication of this thesis, and the one its title points to. If I am right, then being someone is not a matter of being a thing in the world that happens to have experiences, nor of being a stream of experiences that happens to hang together. Rather, being someone is being the one to whom the world is presented. And no description, however complete, can capture this. Anyone can understand a true sentence about me, but understanding it is not the same as being me, the one to whom my world appears. There is a kind of solitude in this. However much we share with one another, even a point of view, each of us lives our own experience alone.

But I do not think this is a lonely conclusion. After all, the same argument that shows my presence cannot be captured shows that yours cannot be either. Every person I meet is, like me, someone to whom the world is presented, and no amount of knowledge about them could tell me what it is to be them. This, it seems to me, is a reason for a certain kind of humility, and perhaps for a certain kind of respect. To recognize someone as a subject is to recognize that there is something about them, I can know is there but never fully grasp. They are not only part of the world I see. They are also someone to whom a world is shown.

Philosophy has often aspired to the view from nowhere, and with good reason. But if this thesis is right, what matters most about us is precisely what that view must leave behind. We are not only things in the world. We are, each of us, the one for whom the world is there.

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