

Expressivism, Self-Knowledge, and Critical Rationality

I. The Problem of Self-Knowledge: Some Asymmetries Between Self- and Other-Ascriptions

Our first-person present tense ascriptions of contentful mental states (for example, of belief, desire, intentions), and phenomenal states (such as pains and the like) are thought to differ in a number of significant and fundamental ways from our ascriptions of those states to others.

propositions and rational relations among them. ... For reasoning to be critical, it must sometimes involve actual awareness and review of reasons; and such a reviewing standpoint must normally be available. ... [T]o be fully a critical reasoner,

What does this involve? Say a subject believes that p for reasons q and r . First of all, if she is to reflect on her belief that p and her reasons for it she must know what that belief and reasons are – she must form true second-order beliefs about them. She then deliberates on the soundness of the first-order belief by examining those beliefs that serve as reasons for it, as well as the reasoning that connects them to it. This includes judging if they themselves

her belief that p , the subject may arrive at a second-order belief that those reasons are (or are not) sufficient for that belief. And this second-order belief is what ultimately motivates the belief that p for which she may be held responsible. However, if a reasonable belief that p is one that is motivated by an awareness of sufficient evidence for that belief, then a problem arises. For, as Owens points out, reflection on strictly evidentiary beliefs that justify the belief that p may not determine whether or not those evidentiary beliefs are sufficient to rationally motivate the belief that p (Owens, 25). We may agree that the formation of a rational belief that p or not- p should be determined by the balance of evidence for or against p . However, what determines what constitutes a sufficient level of evidence cannot be decided by deliberation on evidence alone. Rather, the point at which one judges that evidence to be sufficient for the formation of a belief will be determined partly by the subject's non-reflective sense of non-evidential considerations – for example, of the importance to the subject of the matter in question, or how much of his cognitive resources he is willing to devote to it. The fly in the ointment for the proponent of reflective control is that reflection on such justifying

they play. But, we might ask, what explains the fact that our second-order judgements and reasoning about the first-order states we judge ourselves to have are so reliably correct? Burge argues that the rationality of a subject's first-order states is maintained by the supervisory function of second-order judgments. But this presupposes that those second-order judgements are themselves in accord with the norms of reason. But what explains this? That our first-order states are in accord with reason is explained by the supervisory activity of our second-order judgements. But what explains how those second-order judgements are normally sound? That they must be is dictated by the role they are said to play. However, to make this point is not to explain how they remain so. If our second-beliefs were not 98-2 (a) 2 (l) Q Q q 12 9(m) -ose

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