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THE PROBLEM OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE BUILT ON SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE LIGHT OF EXTERNALISM

Abstract. This article will put forward the thesis that self-knowledge should not be seen as a higher level of self-consciousness but rather as separate and independent from the act of self-consciousness. Only in such an account may self-knowledge avoid the problem of errors in self-identification emerging from all sorts of bodily illusions such as BSI, RHI, and FBI, as well as mental ones, based on a misidentification of propositional attitudes. In the light of the considered conception arguments against resting self-knowledge on self-consciousness will be discussed, leading to the depiction of self-knowledge as compatible with externalism and appealing to the distinction between self-others, although this will not be a distinction referring to bodily self-consciousness but rather ascribing beliefs to others.

Keywords: self-knowledge, self-consciousness, self-illusions, externalism, e-theories, first-person authority.

Introduction

The main objective of this paper is to offer an alternative approach to self-knowledge to the one built on self-consciousness. The reason to search for such a conception is the need to obtain a solution to the problem of the clash between self-knowledge guaranteeing first-person authority (FPA) over a subject's own mental states and broadly understood externalism, which accompanies e-theories presenting an ecological approach to self and claiming that the mind is embodied and cognition is extended and enactive. The attractiveness of such a conception lies in treating self-knowledge as knowledge, yet of a special kind. Already existing conceptions contain externalism in a restricted form. Mostly it is content externalism claiming that the content of mental states has relational properties. In the presented approach to self-knowledge, psychological external-

ism will be proposed, claiming that not only meanings but also minds are not in the head. This is a version of active externalism stating something similar, namely that cognition is not in the head. The general challenge of such bipolar (i.e. FPA vs. externalism) conceptions of self-knowledge lies in the question how to combine self-knowledge with externalism without the need to remove either of them. Despite these problems, in the case of self-knowledge externalism is desired as a reflection of our beliefs in the beliefs of others. Thus, it is psychological externalism existing in the sphere of the mental where the mental is understood as an intersubjective sphere. In such an account self-knowledge is constituted in the interactions between the subject and her social (containing other minds) world.

The problem of immunity to error in self-knowledge

In general, the problems of self-knowledge concern the question why, having privileged access to our own mental states, we can still be wrong about them. This confusion is caused by phenomena observed in everyday life: on the one hand people somehow believe that they know themselves the best. For example, no one else than George Bush knows better what it is like to be George Bush. Only George Bush can directly know what he feels because of his direct access to his own phenomenal states. And only George Bush can directly know what he thinks because of the direct access to his own mental states with propositional content. This privileged access to one's own mental states assures so-called first-person-authority (FPA), characterized as:

- a. Infallibility of our judgements about our own mental states – If I am in pain, I cannot be wrong.
- b. Incorrigibility – our judgements about our own mental states cannot be corrected by others.
- c. Self-intimation – our mental states are transparently available to us (Guttenplan 1994: 91).

The contemporary account of FPA has its antecessor in Descartes's conception, where he describes:

- a'. Transparency of the Mental: All of my thoughts are evident to me (I am aware of all of my thoughts), and my thoughts are incorrigible (I cannot be mistaken about whether I have a particular thought).
- b'. Reflection: Any thought necessarily involves knowledge of myself.
- c'. Intentionality: My thoughts come to me as if representing something.

Descartes's paradigm for self-knowledge was *Cogito*. According to Descartes the report 'I think' leaves no place for scepticism about me as a subject who makes statements about its propositional attitudes (Cf. Descartes, 2009). These sorts of judgements constitute knowledge by virtue of being made by the subject who is the owner of the expressed thought. According to FPA judgments constituting a subject's knowledge about his own mental states have a different epistemic status than judgments constituting knowledge about the external world. The statement: 'I believe' is self-verifying, because a thinker cannot be wrong about it. If one has a belief, then they know that they have it. In such an account the subject should be immune to error regarding her own mental states.

On the other hand, empirical findings show cases of self-illusion, which challenge self-knowledge and FPA. The problem of immunity to error in self-identification can be divided into the following groups under one common name of 'Self-illusions'. These are:

1. Bodily self-illusion (misidentification of a subject's own physical states)
2. Illusion of mental ownership (misidentification of the Self)
3. Mental self-illusion (misidentification of the subject's own psychological states)

Ad 1. Bodily self-illusions are disorders of the first-person-perspective, which refer to error in the identification of a subject's own physical states consisting in misidentification of the whole body or limbs (Blanke et al., 2008; Petkova et al., 2008; Ionta et al., 2011). This problem with self-identification can be illustrated with the Rubber Hand Illusion (RHI), Full Body Illusion (FBI), and Body Swap Illusion (BSI), showing that the integrity involved in being a persistent subject can be destroyed. These experiments are induced in healthy persons and belong to a group of illusions misleading the sense of proprioception. In RHI, the subject experiences a false hand, in BSI the subject takes the first-person perspective from the position of another person, while in FBI the subject feels as if she were embodied in another object (a mannequin, robot, or avatar). In short, these experiments force the conclusion that a person localizes herself where she sees her body (Petkova et al., 2008). Or, in a stronger account, a person localizes herself where she feels her body (Ionta et al., 2011).

Ad 2. According to Rosenthal, mental ownership is necessarily connected to the conscious experience of a state (Rosenthal, 2010). If the subject experiences a state, then she knows that she is the person who experiences it. She knows that she is the subject of the experienced state. This is in fact a version of the Cartesian approach emphasizing the reflective character of thoughts by saying that any thought necessarily involves knowledge of the

thinker's Self. Rosenthal claims quite the same, namely that the consciousness of a current state presupposes the subject of the state (the bearer). This standpoint has been criticized by T. Lane and C. Liang (Lane, Liang, 2010). They argue that pathological cases like somatoparphrenia prove that 'the conscious awareness of a mental state does not guarantee first-person ownership' (Lane, Liang, 2010, p. 1). The researchers try to demonstrate that higher order thoughts, making up the content of self-knowledge, can be misleading in the mental ownership because they can misrepresent not only the content of first-order mental states but also the subject of these states. Hence, it is arbitrary to ascribe to oneself the status of being a subject of a mental state (Lane, Liang, 2010: 3).

Ad 3. The case of mental illusions concerns the problem of identifying the modality of a mental state. That is, the subject can ask herself, for example, whether the mental state she is experiencing should be identified as a belief or a desire, and mistakenly takes her desire for her belief. Thus, the problem concerns the mingling of propositional attitudes. This problem is different in nature from the other two mentioned issues. The problem of mental ownership – Is it me who experiences x ? – and the problem of the state experience – Do I really know best what I feel? – are somehow still rooted in phenomenal content. Their source lies *de facto* in the processing of information coming from the senses, and thus is a case of transformation of phenomenal content into propositional. In the problem of misidentification of the modality of mental states, the said processing is performed only on the mental level and, therefore, only on the propositional content. The question is how does it happen that on the mental level – the level of self-knowledge – the mingling of the mode of one's own mental states is possible?

Summarizing, according to the order given above, the first problem of subjective misidentifications concerns content-identification, the second is the problem of subject-identification, and the third is about the identification of the state-mode. These problems challenge the account of self-knowledge based on first-person authority and are the reason for a search for better conditions for self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge as a higher level of self-consciousness

One of the accounts of self-knowledge indicates the existence of a natural passage between self-consciousness and self-knowledge (Chisholm, 1981, Schooler, Schreiber 2004). According to Chisholm, a subject that directly

grasps the content of mental phenomena automatically (so to speak) reaches the next level of consciousness, namely – self-knowledge. In Chisholm's opinion, self-consciousness is a kind of attention directed at experienced psychological states; thus mental properties must appear in the field of consciousness (Chisholm 1981: 80). So the act of grasping mental content is therefore an act of self-knowledge. Hence, the boundary between self-consciousness and self-knowledge is very fluid.

In all cases, where gaining self-knowledge lies on the method of introspection, the passage from self-consciousness to self-knowledge seems to be natural. For reasons given in the conditions for first-person authority to occur, there should not exist any gap or break between self-consciousness and self-knowledge. This passage is possible only if self-consciousness shows some properties characteristic also for self-knowledge, and vice versa. The properties are links allowing the transformation of the content of self-consciousness into the content of self-knowledge. However, cases of self-illusion deny such an account of authority because, generally speaking, if the content of self-consciousness is false then self-knowledge inherits an error. In other words, sometimes introspective self-cognition generates false judgments.

For the purpose of this article two conceptions resting self-knowledge on self-consciousness – one psychological and one philosophical – have been chosen. The first one explains cases of self-illusion by pointing out the dissociation between consciousness and meta-consciousness, where translation dissociations are defined as the meta-conscious misrepresentation of an underlying experience (Schooler, Schreiber, (2004: 22)). Meta-consciousness is defined here as one's explicit knowledge of the current content of thought. The definition of self-knowledge is the same: it is the subject's knowledge of her own mental states. So what allows us to state that the presented conceptions – psychological and philosophical ones – are comparable, is the definition of self-knowledge and meta-awareness, as they have the same definiens.

Schooler and Schreiber list three probable causes of such dissociation, namely detection, transformation, and substitution. The problem of detection is connected to the stimulus strength, which is available in introspection. If the stimulus is too weak to identify, then it can be misinterpreted in introspective reports (Schooler, Schreiber, (2004: 32)). The problem of transformation lies in the nonverbalisability of many experiences. If a holistic non-verbal experience is translated into words, the description can be imprecise because of a lack of proper correspondence to the stimulus (Schooler, Schreiber, (2004: 32)). The problem of substitution refers to the additional content of beliefs. A memory of a conscious experience may be blurred by

expectations and motivations, which become a part of the beliefs occurring in meta-consciousness (Schooler, Schreiber, (2004: 33)).

The explanation given by the authors corresponds with the problem of self-delusions caused by a misidentified phenomenal experience, but it does not explain the confusions of propositional content. The authors assume that the gap between self-reports and objective third-person-evidence comes from the imperfect cognitive system of a subject, and, hence, the authority belongs to the measuring tools. The tools, however, give an image of physical states, which of course can be misinterpreted or inadequate for propositional translation. The partial loss or falsification of data can be explained by the switching that occurs between ontological levels, and hence by the change in information processing and access to this information.¹

In fact, the account proposed by psychologists i.e. Schooler, Schreiber, is the same as the one proposed by philosophers (e.g. Chisholm). In both approaches self-knowledge is built on self-consciousness. Indeed, in the psychological version self-knowledge is absent because information processed at the subpersonal level gets into self-consciousness and therein it is stopped.

A very interesting philosophical conception of self-knowledge, which preserves the features of first person authority, i.e.: incorrigibility, infallibility, and transparency, is presented by Dorit Bar-On. First of all, the attractiveness of Bar-On's conception lies in treating self-knowledge as knowledge, yet of a special kind. The second important assumption is the acknowledgement of the content externalism by claiming that the content of mental states has relational properties. However, these assumptions lead to the conclusion that if Bar-On's argumentation is right then, *de facto*, what she refers to is self-consciousness, not self-knowledge.

Briefly speaking, according to Bar-On (2004) we can avoid the conflict between first-person authority and externalism by assuming that first-person reports are avowals expressing privileged knowledge about a subject's own mental states. Hence, the approach of Bar-On is called 'Neo-Expressivism'. In other words, I-sentences have the same status as expressions like 'Aww!', although they are not followed with an exclamation mark. Despite this small linguistic difference, they both directly express the mental state of the subject, which means that being in pain and having a propositional attitude have the same status in the avowal – they are both first-person reports.

It has been underlined that in the conception of Bar-On, self-knowledge has a special character as avowals are made on a non-epistemic basis (Bar-On (2004b)). They are not judgements, so they cannot be judged as true or false. And it is obvious that they cannot have an epistemic value if they

are expressions. Thus, Neo-Expressivism is a version of Emotivism, which leads to the question whether in the account of avowals as expressions self-knowledge preserves its status of knowledge. Maybe, if it is of a special kind, it has no propositional but rather a phenomenal character? But then would we still speak of knowledge in such a case?

Facing these problems, one can ask whether the same linguistic status (i.e. classification on the level of language) means or even determines the epistemological status. Hence, what are the epistemological, or even ontological consequences for self-knowledge if we claim that avowals are in fact expressions? And here is an answer: This claim (of course supported by the proper argumentation present in Bar-On's paper) solves the epistemological problem of direct access and first-person authority. In other words, it supports the standpoint that subjects are immune to the error of self-identification. Still, one can also ask whether in the account of avowals as expression self-knowledge preserves its status as knowledge. Avowals of course play an important cognitive role, but as expressions of experiences, thus as reports from self-consciousness. They are also evidence for the privileged access to one's own internal states as far as they are made from the first-person perspective. But being evidence for subjective experience does not mean yet being evidence for self-knowledge. Avowals neither have satisfaction conditions, nor are they reports of self-knowledge.

As was assumed above, the propositional form of content is not reserved only for self-knowledge, but can also appear in self-consciousness, which can be both phenomenal and propositional. If it can be claimed for the traditional account of self-knowledge, where first-person reports are judgments, then it is even easier to claim it on the basis of Bar-On's account. If avowals are expressions, then they are reports of experience and not of knowledge, hence they refer to the content of self-consciousness. So, although Bar-On claims that in her conception self-knowledge is treated as knowledge, she rests it also on self-consciousness.

Another problem lies with externalism. Is it kept or eliminated in light of Bar-On's conception? It seems as if it were eliminated because as far as avowals are expressions there is no need to claim that the content of avowals has relational properties. One can of course argue that this content still has relational but intrinsic properties. Then, however, internalism would be introduced to the scene, but it is not welcome for many reasons mentioned later in this article and of course because of Bar-On's own approach. Also the option of solving the problem by eliminating its cause is quite dubious due to its destructiveness. So maybe a more constructive attitude would

consist in searching for a way out, where the cause of the problem turns into the cause of the agreement. The provision of such a solution, however only as a general conception, will be the last aim of this article.

Concluding this part of the considerations, it is necessary to say that the problem of the collapse of first-person authority caused by cases of self-illusion will not be solved as long as self-consciousness will be taken for the foundation for self-knowledge. In other words, self-knowledge built on self-consciousness as its higher level is still self-consciousness, even if it is presented in a propositional form. So, it is assumed here that the propositional form of content is not reserved only for self-knowledge but can also appear in self-consciousness, which can be both phenomenal and propositional.

Self-knowledge as knowledge

Following the postulate of Paul Boghossian, it is claimed in this paper that self-knowledge should be taken reasonably seriously. It should be defined not only as a true but also justified belief about one's own mental states (Cf. Boghossian, (2008: 139)). Differently from Boghossian's, this claim does not lead to the refutation of self-knowledge but motivates the search for such a justification in self-knowledge. However, many can say that it is futile for the following reasons:

1. If self-knowledge is knowledge, then it should rest on justified true beliefs.²
2. To have justified true beliefs one has to be in the propositional attitude with content.
3. The content of such beliefs should be verifiable.
4. To be verifiable, the content should be relational.
5. To be relational the content should refer to external objects.
6. The reference to external objects means external justification.
7. External justification can be partially unknown.
8. If justification in self-knowledge can be partially unknown then self-knowledge cannot be privileged.

This reasoning shows where the main problem lies with self-knowledge. It concerns the question, how to combine self-knowledge with externalism. Christopher Peacocke formulates the problem in a more interesting way. He says that a subject has knowledge about the intentional contents of her attitudes without first checking their environmental relations, but such knowledge is possible only when there is a content constituting the propo-

sitional attitudes. Thus, the subject has certain beliefs only if she stands in a certain relation to the environment (Cf. Peacocke, 1999: 203). Peacocke's standpoint clearly represents externalism. And externalism forces the assumption that the relational properties of the content must exceed this content. This need has a reason: cognition is constituted in the interaction of the subject with her environment. It is obvious. But only the models of cognition which show the necessary involvement of external factors in the constitution of the content of a subject's beliefs about the world are proper. If this is so, if the relational properties are not enclosed within the borders of the content, i.e. if they are not intrinsic, then self-knowledge will encounter the same problems as knowledge about the external world, because to constitute knowledge it must satisfy the condition of being a justified true belief.

Such a model is offered by Christopher Peacocke, who defends the position that self-knowledge can be combined with externalism. In short, for Peacocke this is possible on the basis of possession conditions for concepts, which constitute the propositional content of mental states. Concepts are individuated through their possession conditions, which determine the semantic value of each concept in such a way that a subject knowing the possession condition for a concept will form correct beliefs containing this concept (Peacocke, 1992: 19).

These possession conditions together with determination theory tell how a given concept's semantic value is fixed, and guarantee the rational sensitivity of a subject (Peacocke, 1992: 17).

In fact, Peacocke sets the theory of self-knowledge on the theory of concepts, which is the major difference between him and Bar-On, as according to him first-person reports are beliefs containing judgments; hence they are made on an epistemic basis. Namely, possession conditions not only determine a concept's semantic value, but also guarantee the rational sensitivity of a subject. This sensitivity is required for somebody who attributes propositional attitudes with a particular content to himself/herself or another. In other words, rational sensitivity is sensitivity to the satisfaction of the possession condition for the concepts in the content attributed.

If a thinker possesses the concept of belief, then when he has a conscious belief that *p*, he finds it primitively compelling that he believes that *p*, and he does so because he has that conscious belief that *p*. That conditional is necessary and a priori if the first-person clause of the possession condition is necessary and a priori (Peacocke, 1992: 158).

Peacocke’s way seems to be the right way if one wants to take self-knowledge seriously. It is possible only if the first-person reports are considered as judgments having a value. Peacocke’s model of self-knowledge is constructed as shown in the picture below:

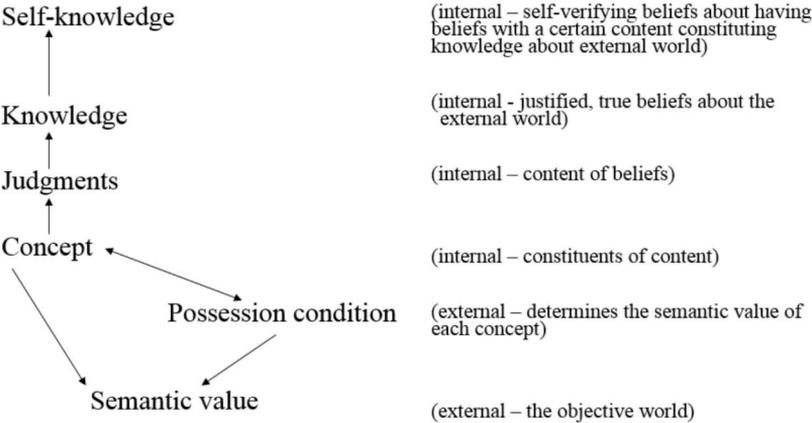


Figure 1. Peacocke’s Model of Self-knowledge³

However Peacocke’s model also encounters certain problems. Namely, his conception explains quite well the process of gaining self-knowledge, but fails in the explanation of the passage from first-order beliefs to second-order beliefs, yet it ends with the right postulate that self-knowledge should involve understanding, hence it should be displayed within the space of reason. According to Peacocke’s account the foundation of self-knowledge rests on the ‘primitively compelling’ description, which means that if a subject has a belief then she knows that she has it. But this reasoning can be misleading. Having a belief does not involve knowledge about having this belief but rather consciousness of it: if a subject has a belief then she is conscious of it, or better, she consciously grasps this belief, which means that she also grasps the act of believing.

For Peacocke this kind of grasping is enough to speak about self-knowledge as it is involved in the network of mechanisms allowing correct inferences. If one has a belief then one also needs to have a concept of BELIEF. The concept of belief is individuated by its possession condition, which determines the semantic value of this concept. Hence, the first-person reports can be considered as judgments having value, and this means that they constitute knowledge. With this regard, what is lacking in Peacocke’s conception of self-knowledge?

Peacocke makes it explicit how self-knowledge is built on the personal level of information processing, i.e. on the level of mental states with propositional content. But he is not interested in explanations how to combine the subpersonal level of information processing with the personal level. Instead, he asks what it means that we know our own mental states. And he answers that it means that to know one's own mental states, a subject needs to truly understand that she is in the state, e.g. that she believes, desires, or wishes. To do so a subject needs to be able to recognize the kind of state (e.g. a belief) and to refer it to herself using the pronoun 'I' (Cf. Peacocke, 2003). These two abilities have a conceptual character. What makes a subject feel like the owner of the state is the question of phenomenology, which for Peacocke is of secondary importance:

On my account, the content of the subintentional state has a correctness condition on the external, objective world. The sensation does not (or at least does not have a correctness condition of that kind) [...] Absence of conceptual content does not mean absence of all genuine content (Peacocke, 1992: 93).

Obviously, Peacocke is interested in the investigation of propositional attitudes but not of sensations, which are subjective, internal, and do not constitute self-knowledge. Of course propositional attitudes are also subjective, hence internally accessible, but have a semantic value, which means that they refer to the external world. Thus, Peacocke in his account of self-knowledge exposes how to combine FPA with externalism. It is possible because of the possession conditions of concepts. However, the said model lacks two things: first, the argument for externalism in self-knowledge. Peacocke did not explain why there is a gap between the external determinants of the content of knowledge and the internal character of self-knowledge. Second (and which follows from the first), the explanation of the mechanism of the interaction between the subject and the world in terms of internal/external information.

In the considerations presented below a conception of self-knowledge will be proposed which tries to fill the gap between the passage from first-order beliefs making knowledge about the external world to second-order beliefs making self-knowledge, however without resting it in self-consciousness. The binder here, maybe surprisingly, will be externalism.

Externalism for self-knowledge

Above, chosen approaches to self-knowledge have been considered which combine FPA with externalism. In the case of Bar-On's conception it has

been argued that if externalism is eliminated by the claim that avowals are expressions – hence that they have no truth-conditions – then self-knowledge understood as justified true belief is eliminated as well. Avowals as expressions of experience have a cognitive status in the sense that they constitute reports from self-consciousness, hence they are evidence of a subjective experience to which the subject has a privileged access. But being evidence for one's consciousness does not yet mean serving as evidence for self-knowledge even if the first-person perspective guarantees direct access to one's own internal states.

Avowals neither have satisfaction conditions nor are they reports of self-knowledge. In the case of Peacocke's model of self-knowledge the content of knowledge preserves its relational character, thus is externally determined by the possession conditions of concepts. The next level of knowledge, namely self-knowledge, inherits the same mechanism: one has a belief when one has the concept of a belief. Possession conditions of concepts determine also the content of self-knowledge. However, Peacocke's model shows symptoms of the Cartesian Paradigm because it refers to certainty of a special kind when it concerns internal states. A subject finds it 'primitively compelling' that she is in the state. She cannot be wrong.

The motivation for searching for models of self-knowledge different from the Cartesian account consists in the following reasoning: if self-knowledge is to be treated as built on an epistemic basis, then externalism cannot be avoided. In this point one question should be asked in particular: Why should externalism be avoided at all? And the answer is almost automatic: Because otherwise first-person-authority fails. In the traditional Cartesian or Chisholmean account, FPA rests on the infallibility, incorrigibility, and transparency of our judgments. However, this kind of first-person authority refers to self-knowledge built on self-consciousness, which means that self-knowledge is the highest level of self-consciousness. And it was argued above that this kind of construction should be refused. Self-knowledge should be something more. And its model should show its connection to the external world as a necessary factor constituting cognition.

So here is the proposition to construct a model of self-knowledge based not on self-consciousness but on knowledge itself. Self-knowledge should be an understanding of the subject's own mental states, not just a report about these states. It should be constituted in the relation me-others by taking the perspective of the subject in looking upon one's own mental states and accepting or refusing them. The system of the subject's beliefs in self-knowledge should correspond with the external world, but it should be also intrinsically coherent, hence considered as a whole system, where if one be-

belief changes it involves a change in other beliefs. The justification of the thus constituted self-knowledge is to be found in the distinction me-others, where the core of this distinction is an understanding of oneself through understanding others. The other subject means this external necessary element in the cognitive model of self-knowledge. The first step in such self-knowledge is to take the perspective of the other subject. The second step is to internalize it, which requires a higher cognitive ability possessed by human beings, yet not necessarily used in every day life.

The suggested model of self-knowledge should be like the general model of cognition. It should be made for e-cognition and on the assumptions of e-theories, i.e. on the assumption that cognition is embodied, extended, enactive, and involves externalism. The necessary element of such a model, regardless of whether it is made for self-knowledge or for cognition in general is the external element which belongs to the model and only with this external element can the model work and be complete. That is why I call it the 'E-model'.

This external element is input from the environment of the subject. The frames for the model could be delivered by a conception of Christoff and colleagues (Christoff et al., 2011). They have presented the conception of self-experience which is constituted on the basis of the primary relation between the subject and her environment. This relationship is determined by the processes occurring in the nervous system, i.e. at the subpersonal level, and therefore inaccessible to the subject. These are the so-called self-specifying processes that specify the self through the implementation of a functional distinction between the self and non-self in perception, action, cognition, and emotion (Christoff et al., 2011: 104). In the model of sensory integration the self as self-experience is constituted on the basis of the basic neuronal processes occurring in the central nervous system in identifying the expected sensory information after the movement.

The self-experience of being an embodied agent depends on the sensorimotor mechanisms that integrate efference with reafference. A basic level mechanism allows efferences to be systematically related to their reafferent consequences. This anchoring of efference to reafference implements a functional self/non-self distinction that implicitly specifies the self as a bodily agent (Christoff et al., 2011: 106).

Afferent signals are the result of the subject's own cognitive activities, and the signals external to the body, indicating the level of conflict on the basis of the features of stimuli coming from the environment of the subject, provide information on the non-self (Cf. Christoff et al., 2011: 105).

The mechanism of self-knowledge should work in the same way, namely analogously to the distinction of self/non-self. Of course it does not refer to the neurological basis of self-constitution as the external determinants of cognition are different from sensory stimuli. In the model of self-knowledge the distinction of self/non-self should be made at a higher level of cognition, namely me/the others, where the others reflect other subjects having their own beliefs and perspectives.

The other subjects are other minds. Only then does the subject gain self-knowledge when she is able to take the perspective of the other subject and verify her own beliefs in light of the other perspective. The perspective of others is necessary because the subject has to be ready for the possibility that she can be wrong about herself even if she feels different, as in the cases of somatoparaphrenia or self-illusions. E-theories say that the content of a subject's mental states is deeply rooted in the body's interactions with the environment because the whole of cognition is. According to e-theories, a subject is a system for which the self is necessary for proper functioning, and consciousness allows the system to control and monitor these functions. As Thomas Metzinger writes:

Subjective experience has not been developed in pursuing the old philosophical ideal of self-knowledge, but it has been evolutionarily successful, because it has enabled a more flexible form of action control (Metzinger, 2004: 175) .

That is why to understand cognition we must study the subject and her environment together as a single, unified system (Cf. Wilson, 2002: 625). In the e-model of self-knowledge, maybe the subject and the world should not necessarily be considered as a unified system, because the problem lies in unification as such, but rather as influencing each other. In this paper such an influence is called 'e-system'. The e-system is the internal-external looper as it is presented in figure 2.

It is not the subject divided into the mind and the body, but the world divided into social and physical spheres. Already in the comparison between me and the other, the separated sphere of the mental (without the physical) is visible. When a subject observes herself she sees a continuum of the influence of mind and body. But when she considers herself while assuming the perspective of others, she sees only other minds. Even the space of the mental as far as it concerns others is external to the subject. The same applies to the physical. A subject is also physical and what happens in her body is internal. But what happens out of her body is still physical but external.

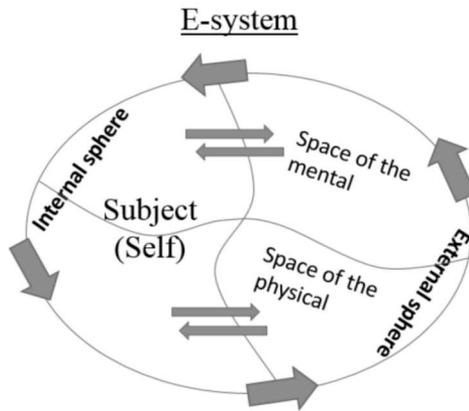


Figure 2. E-model of self-knowledge

Concluding the idea presented in the paper which should answer the question of how to combine self-knowledge with externalism:

- The system of a subject's beliefs in self-knowledge should correspond with the external world but it should be also intrinsically coherent, hence considered as a whole system, where if one belief changes then it involves a change in other beliefs.
- The justification of such constituted self-knowledge is to be found in the distinction me-others, where the core of this distinction is an understanding of oneself through understanding others.
- The other subject means this external necessary element in the cognitive model of self-knowledge.
- The first step in such self-knowledge is to take the perspective of the other subject.
- The second step is to internalize it, which requires the higher cognitive ability possessed by human beings, yet not necessarily used in every day life.

Summary

It has been stated that if self-knowledge is to be taken seriously, it should not be built on self-consciousness. Its reports should be considered as judgment with satisfaction conditions. Such an account of course generates problems with externalism, but in the case of self-knowledge externalism is desired as the reflection of our beliefs in the beliefs of others. Therefore, in the case of self-knowledge it is psychological externalism existing in the

sphere of the mental, where the mental is understood as an intersubjective sphere. In such an account self-knowledge is constituted in the interactions between the subject and her social world.

N O T E S

¹ I have used this description of Schooler and Schreiber's conception also in another article; however, I developed it in another way. See: (Pacholik-Żuromska, 2015).

² Of course there is an on-going debate concerning the definition of knowledge as JTB, which can be challenged for instance by the Gettier problems. The notion of knowledge as a justified, true belief has been assumed and applied to self-knowledge because of the propositional character of this kind of knowledge (belief), its satisfaction conditions (truth), and reason to consider them to be true (justification). The proposed account of self-knowledge as JTB rightly suggests that mental states are real.

³ The first level of the model (the relations between concepts, possession condition and semantic value) based on the (Peacocke, 1992: 17). The rest of the model created by the author of this paper.

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