

## **Either/or: Subjectivity, Objectivity and Value**

Katalin Balog

(Draft)

“If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.”

–William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

In this paper, I propose a novel framework in the philosophical psychology – one that is based on an underappreciated distinction made by Kierkegaard in a number of his major works – to shed new light on central questions in ethics. The main theme of this project is that since subjectivity, in ways that have not been widely appreciated, plays a key role in constituting value, the process of finding meaning, pursuing worthwhile projects and developing as persons is inextricably linked to a kind of thought – of which contemplation and reflection are examples – that is distinct from conceptual thinking and that has received too little attention in understanding the mind. My conclusion is that cultivating this kind of thought is necessary in the pursuit of a good life.

To establish this, I start by outlining the framework of objective versus subjective thought following Kierkegaard’s (1849/1980, 1843/1983, and 1846/1992) underappreciated use of the distinction. In the next section, I argue that all value is constitutively linked to experience. Finally, I explain why, in light of this, cultivating subjective thought is necessary in the pursuit of a meaningful and good life; as well as what this all means for the role of deliberation in this same pursuit.

### *1. Subjective and objective*

“the way...is to become subjective, ...to become subject.”  
(Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*)<sup>1</sup>

These terms have been used in philosophy in various ways; Kierkegaard uses them to demarcate a difference in thought process.<sup>2</sup> His distinction, implicit in his religious writing, is not concerned with epistemic bias or the lack of it, instead it highlights different cognitive styles in our thinking. What follows is my explication of it.

Subjective thought involves perceptual, sensory, or emotional experience; whereas objective thought employs abstract concepts linguistically structured. In Sinan Antoon’s<sup>3</sup> novel on the Iraq war, *The Corpse Washer*, the protagonist describes his job in this way:

If death is a postman, then I receive his letters every day. I am the one who opens carefully the bloodied and torn envelopes. I am the one who washes them, who removes the stamps of death and dries and perfumes them mumbling what I don’t entirely believe in. Then I wrap them carefully in white so they may reach their final reader – the grave.

---

1 Kierkegaard (1992), p. 109.

2 Kierkegaard never explicitly defines these terms. My use of this terminology is more explicit than his, and I believe it is a plausible elaboration of what Kierkegaard had in mind.

3 Antoon (2014).

The corpse washer, as a function of his occupation, has a more direct, subjective perspective on war's destruction than those who learn about it from the news through the sanitized expressions "civilian casualty" or "collateral damage". He sees the bodies, maimed, drained of life, he touches them, his seeing and sensing intertwined with his own terror. His way of thinking about it leads to an understanding of the significance of those events that separates him from a detached observer. This difference in understanding is manifest in debates, for example, between survivors of mass shootings and politicians in charge of gun laws.

Concepts can be more or less subjective, or objective; this distinction has a philosophical pedigree going back at least to the philosophy of Descartes and Kant. It has recently been brought back into contemporary philosophical discourse by Thomas Nagel who, in a number of essays<sup>4</sup>, spells it out in terms of the degree to which concepts abstract away and are removed from experience. Concepts like "what a gunshot wound looks like", formed in the experience of it, are the most subjective. They can be formed from perceptions, sensations, moods, emotions, etc. Concepts like "collateral damage" are more objective, whereas scientific concepts such as "electron", are toward the farthest end of the spectrum, being far removed from experience.<sup>5</sup>

This is not a binary distinction; our mental states constitute a continuum along which they differ in how subjective or objective their conceptions are. Introspective concepts of our sensations, moods, emotions, daydreams or thoughts are the most subjective. When I apply these concepts to others in attributing to them joy, pain, excitement or jealousy based on remembered or imagined experiences of my own, I am still thinking mostly subjectively. Many of our recognitional concepts – like "blackbird" or "rainbow" or "blood" – are closely tied to perception, and for that reason are also toward the subjective end of the spectrum. Concepts like "carburetor", "citizen", or "collateral damage" – characterized by a high level of abstraction – are typically more objective; and concepts such as "charge", "electron", etc. are the most objective, the farthest removed from experiential concepts. On the one end of the spectrum are introspective concepts capturing current experience, on the other are physicists' concepts of particles and fields.

Kierkegaard, however, has something broader in mind than just a difference in concepts deployed. I propose to spell out the distinction between objective and subjective thought in terms of differences in the kinds of representations involved, as well as the thought processes characteristic them.

Objective thought has conceptual content,<sup>6</sup> it is linguistically structured, and typically involves reasoning. The thought *that a lot hangs on the upcoming elections* is composed of concepts *election*, *hangs on*, etc, it is linguistically structured, and shows up in reasoning that, for example, leads to the conclusion that one ought to go canvassing soon. The inner monologue in our minds is often of this

---

4 E.g., Nagel 1974, 1986.

5 Though objective concepts, even abstract scientific ones, can be "infected" by experiential content (for example, my concept of electron might be tied to perceptual images, or even emotional valence).

6 Gareth Evans (1982) introduced the term 'conceptual vs. 'non-conceptual' content into contemporary philosophical discussion where the latter characterizes perceptual and certain other mental states including the mental states of certain animals. His idea was that these states are like thoughts in so far as they are representational. But they are unlike thoughts in that where a thought, say *that the cat is hungry*, has a *conceptualized content* composed out of the concepts *cat* and *is hungry*, a person's visual perception of the cat is not composed out of concepts and represents the cat in some other way. Since Evans, there is no agreement among philosophers whether the conceptual/non-conceptual distinction characterizes two kinds of content or characterizes two ways of possessing content, or both, or something else. I am not going to adjudicate this issue here. Correspondingly, there is also disagreement as to whether there is any non-conceptual content at all. Some philosophers (McDowell 1994) think that 'non-conceptual content' can be shown *a priori* to be a philosophical oxymoron. I am going to go on the assumption here that our experiences have non-conceptual content.

sort as we deliberate over our next step or think constructively about a problem. Though reasoning is typical of objective thought, it also can be associative, as, for example, in mind wandering or when we ruminate on past wrongs and future hopes.

To call it objective, however, is not to suggest that it is objective in the sense of avoiding bias, weighing the evidence rationally, etc. Kierkegaard did assume that people who orient themselves primarily via objective thought will aim for objectivity as an epistemic norm; his main exemplars of such an orientation were scientists and scholars. But my use of the term doesn't imply anything about the epistemic virtues of the thinker. It is simply a term to designate conceptual thought that is typically based on reasoning, whether good or bad. Scientific thought of all kind is an example of objective thought; but so is, for example, political demagoguery designed to inflame rather than to enlighten.

Paradigm examples of subjective thought, such as contemplation of nature, reflective engagement with art, or meditation, on the other hand, involve experience, such as seeing a jaguar, hearing a song, sensing warmth, imagining boredom, remembering anger. These experiences are non-conceptual representations (though our concepts may play a role in what we experience), and they do not have a linguistic structure. Subjective thinking does not rely on reasoning but rather on association between experiences, memories, thoughts and imaginings. It is the kind of thought appreciation of literature, music or art requires. Take the example of reading a poem and contemplating it and compare that with merely thinking objectively about the same content.

At the entrance, my bare feet on the dirt floor,  
Here, gusts of heat; at my back, white clouds,  
A stare and stare. It seems I was called for this:  
To glorify things just because they are.<sup>7</sup>

Objective thought alone will not crack the poem open; it is necessary to contemplate the feelings, memories, and images evoked by the poem. Such contemplation captures the deep structure of experience; uncovering its resonances and dissonances. Only then – and only partially – can one's understanding be put to words and thought about objectively.<sup>8</sup> The poem's imagery mixes with experiences you remember or imagine creating the sense of awe it expresses.

Attention and self-awareness are crucial to subjective thought. Attention brings experiences into sharper focus, so they can be contemplated. This often is accompanied by self-awareness. When I turn my attention to a feeling of warmth in a certain way, the feeling itself is both the thought and the subject of thought at the same time.<sup>9</sup> Attention both amplifies experience, and brings previously inaccessible features of it to view, making the experience richer, and more apt to yield connections to other experience. There are different ways in which attention can be deployed; for example, attention can be narrowly focused or dispersed evenly over the field of experience.<sup>10</sup> The intensity of attention, and the intention that sustains the attention can wax and wane. It might be interwoven

---

7 From "Blacksmith shop", by Czeslaw Milosz, in *Provinces*, The Ecco Press, 1991.

8 This distinction between objective and subjective thought has strong affinities with psychologist John Teasdale and Philip Barnard's account of "propositional" and "implicational" subsystems in working memory. They call their account the "interactive subsystems" model (see Barnard and Teasdale 1991, Barnard 2007).

9 See Strawson (2011) for an account.

10 See Lutz et al. (2008) for the distinction between *focused attention* and *open monitoring*, which they correlate with different meditation techniques, but it applies to contemplation more generally.

with objective thought or be entirely separate from it, etc. Objective thought can also involve attention to perceptual experience; as in, for example, forming perceptual demonstratives, but attention to experience in objective thought is typically transient and not focal; subjective thought, on the other hand, lingers on and inhabits experience. This is not to say that engaging with experience in subjective thought is an exercise in inward directed focus. Engaging with experience, to a large extent, is engaging with what the world is like from an experiential perspective.<sup>11</sup> Psychoanalysis and meditation are two widespread techniques that provide training in subjective thought.<sup>12</sup>

There is, furthermore, a whole range of skillful activities – such as playing sports, making music, or dancing – that, when performed with focus rather than on auto pilot, involve engagement with subjective experience. They are intuitive, automatic activities that are impaired by conscious thought or planning, but nevertheless involve conscious effort in maintaining focus,<sup>13</sup> including paying attention to both the perceptual and the proprioceptive-motor aspects of experience. They are instances of “contemplation in action”. As with subjectivity in thought, here there are also degrees of subjectivity in skilled action. A beginner basketball player or musician, for example, will exhibit a low level of subjective engagement. They will be preoccupied with making a conscious effort, keeping the relevant instructions and rules in mind. A player with high skill, on the other hand, might perform “in the zone”, or, in Csikszentmihalyi’s term, have a “flow” experience. They do not need to rehearse rules and techniques. They focus on the ball or on their instrument through their experience, rather than through a conceptualization of it. In such a state, a musician might have a sense of unimpeded activity; that there is nothing that stands between them and the music.

Objective and subjective thought interacts and intermingles. People often oscillate between the two. Whether one gravitates towards one or the other is an important measure of one’s character. Some people engage the world mostly by thinking about it. They are engaged in their thought processes and tend to pay little attention to their experience. As we have said in the beginning, objective, conceptual thought can *itself* differ in the degree to which its constitutive concepts are objective or subjective. Such people tend to think in terms of concepts that are more toward the objective side of the division. On the other hand, a highly contemplative person, for example, a monk or well-trained meditator, is well attuned to their experience as it unfolds moment to moment, and spends much less time thinking discursively. A person with such an orientation pays very close attention to what the world seems like and feels like. In their objective thought, they tend to think in terms of concepts that are more toward the subjective side of the divide. Most people are somewhere in between those two extremes. In the novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, two of the brothers, Ivan and Alyosha share the Karamazov “sensuality”, a certain intensity of experience; but Ivan reacts by repressing his feelings and withdrawing into the objective stance of a cynical, witty observer, while Alyosha cultivates and channels the richness of his inner life through religious training, and views the abstractions of politicians and “learned people” as “wicked nonsense”.

We understand thought primarily as objective, conceptual. I want to highlight that there is another

---

11 Possible exceptions are features of experience that arguably characterize only the subject and not the world (such as some bodily sensations, or perceptual disturbances like blurry vision), as well as the subjective features of thought itself (such as its clarity versus confusion, its certainty versus doubtfulness, or the phenomenology of its content).

12 See, e.g. Lutz et al. (2015), and Grossenbacher et al. (2017) for an account in cognitive neuro-science of various contemplative practices.

13 See Bermudez (2017), Papineau (2013, 2015); but see for a partially contrary view on the relationship between skillful action and conscious thought Montero (2010, 2015).

kind of thought, that is subjective and non-conceptual, and that plays a very important role in our mental life. While contemplation is generally regarded as a preoccupation for introverts; and the best-known practices of it – such as meditation and psycho-therapy – are considered mainly in the context of relaxation, stress management, pain relief, or mental illness, I will argue that it is of vital importance for anyone interested in living a good life.

## 2. *Value and experience*

“Contemplated by different people, [the] same glass can be a thousand things, however, because each man charges what he is looking at with emotion, and nobody sees it as it is but how his desires and state of mind... see it.” (Luis Buñuel (1958))

I propose that value and meaning is in part grounded in subjective experience<sup>14</sup>. We can see it by looking at the different kinds of content of experience. Subjective experience is qualitative. There is something it is like to see a flower, a landscape, or a human face, hear someone banging on a can, etc., but an experience also typically represents the world as being thus and so. Experience has two kinds of content: *representational* and *qualitative*.<sup>15</sup> My experience of a flower represents it as having certain physical properties such as color and shape and being located in a certain way in my field of vision, as well as perhaps some other properties, such as being a flower, etc. Let’s call this its *representational* content. This content can be shared, for example, with an Inverted Twin who experiences the color blue in the same way I experience the color yellow, but nevertheless represents the flower as having the same shape and color as I do.

But an object of perception such as a flower is not only pink or fragrant, but also pleasurable, beautiful and refreshing. An apprehension of beauty is as much part of my experience of the flower as is the experience of its color or shape. This second kind of content has to do with its experiential qualities, what is called *qualitative* content. Most, or perhaps all of our experience represents the world as meaningful and value-laden – things are rarely entirely neutral from our point of view. People, objects, landscapes, food, work, activities and entertainment are taken as good or bad, threatening or friendly, beautiful or ugly, exciting or enervating, deep or shallow. In some cases, experience has a clear emotional aspect, such as when we get scared of a person in a dark alley or feel compassion for someone’s misfortune. But even when that is not the case, even when it is not obvious or easy to discern, experience is suffused with apprehension of value. We see, hear, touch, smell and sense things that we find in myriad ways attractive or repellent. Value is many faceted, and often resists easy categorization as aesthetic, prudential, or moral.

Doubtlessly, experience itself has value (or disvalue) which is most obvious in the case of pain and pleasure. Moreover, since there is something it is like, for example, to suddenly understand an argument, to be confused by someone’s words, or to be excited by a discovery, thought itself as well can have value or disvalue.

But it is the flower that is beautiful, not my experience of it; even though the experience, being pleasurable, is to that extent valuable as well. Unlike Utilitarianists – who otherwise share with me a

---

14 See, e.g., Scheler (1916/1973), and Dewey (1916) for similar ideas. Laurie Paul (2015) also raises the notion that some values are based in experience. My point is that *all* values are ultimately grounded in subjectivity.

15 The distinction between representational content and qualitative content was introduced by Shoemaker (1981) and Block (1990).

concern about the role experience plays in grounding value – I do not think that pleasure or any other kind of positive experience is the sole, or even the main kind of good in the world. I take Robert Nozick’s Experience Machine thought experiment – involving a virtual reality machine that offers a life of pure, but entirely simulated, pleasure – as having refuted hedonism.

Nevertheless, beauty does not lie solely in the flower; it is grounded in part in the way I experience it. A creature with a different sensory system might find very different things beautiful. It is conceivable that I have an inverted twin whose experience of the flower systematically differs from mine in terms of qualitative content both with respect to color and with respect to aesthetics. For example, she could experience the color the same way as I would experience a hideous lime green, whereas I see it as a sublime cobalt blue. I and this creature could nevertheless share the *representational* content of our experience – we could both correctly perceive the same flower –, while the *qualitative* content of our experience would differ. This difference makes the flower beautiful for me, but ugly for her.

Another thought experiment can further reinforce my central point – i.e., that all value is at least partly grounded in the qualitative content of experience. Suppose there was a super-intelligent organism — in a twist on Frank Jackson’s famous Knowledge Argument<sup>16</sup> — that lacked any feeling or experience, a creature of pure thought. Such a creature could know a vast amount about the world in representational terms, but would arguably know nothing of value, meaning, and human significance. For value and meaning to show up in the world, there need to be creatures like us, who experience the world, and, in doing so, give significance to it.

There are many questions about this account that need to be answered. What is the role of rationality and reason in constituting value? How does this account explain the very different kinds of value such as the ones we ordinarily consider moral from the ones that we consider prudential, for example? How does it avoid relativism? I leave questions like these for another paper and proceed instead to explore the connection between this account value and the role of objective and subjective thought in a good life.

### 3. *Subjective thinking and the good life*

“I began to have an idea of my life, not as the slow shaping of achievement to fit my preconceived purposes, but as the gradual discovery and growth of a purpose which I did not know” (Marion Milner, *A life of one’s own*)

I now want to argue that to live a good life<sup>17</sup>, which essentially involves finding meaningful pursuits and relationships, requires the cultivation of subjective thinking. Objective thought is necessary and important to cultivate. However, in light of the connection between value and subjectivity, to engage in it to the exclusion of developing subjective thought proves detrimental to human flourishing. My conclusion is that we, as individuals, and as a culture, need to cultivate subjectivity.<sup>18</sup>

---

16 Jackson (1982).

17 I won’t give an explicit account of the good life. I will simply assume in the ensuing discussion that finding meaningful pursuits and relationships is an essential part of it.

18 Laurie Paul, in her (2015) book *Transformative Experience*, discusses the relevance of subjective experience to decision making. She argues that when we are faced with big decisions – of the sort that she calls transformative, such as having a child, or choosing a profession – we cannot make them authentically. One of her central claims is that experience itself has what she calls subjective value that has to be taken into account when making decisions from a first-person point of view, but in transformative choices this cannot be done. In this paper, I have extended Laurie’s considerations regarding

Why do we need to cultivate subjective thinking? Value is not only partly constituted by subjective experience, it is also the case that it can only be directly appreciated from an experiential perspective. No blind person can appreciate the beauty of a flower, no matter how much this person learns about the flower by means other than vision. *Mutatis mutandis*, this holds for other values as well. Consequently, you can only apprehend and orient toward the value of whatever pursuit, relationship or thing in the world you are engaging, if you make a subjective contact with it. And subjectivity comes into focus primarily, and indispensably, in subjective, experiential thought, such as contemplation, meditation, or reflection, as we have defined it in the first section.

It is of course also true that objective – i.e., conceptual – thought can be more objective or subjective, depending on the kinds of concept that figures in them. The thought “drone strikes are susceptible to causing collateral damage” is more objective than the thought “this drone-struck person has a horrific looking wound” (where the concept for “this person” and “wound” have visual demonstrative elements). And so objective thinking that employs more subjective concepts – let’s call it objective<sub>s</sub>, as opposed to objective<sub>o</sub> thought – puts one in closer touch with values that objective<sub>o</sub> thought. But objective<sub>s</sub> thought cannot entirely replace subjective thought – contemplation, reflection, etc. – in a pursuit of meaning and value. We are often not aware of what we really desire<sup>19</sup>; we struggle to find we really value. Though we can think about these issues objectively, objective thought – even objective<sub>s</sub> thought – has limited contribution to their resolution. What is needed to engage them is a process of self-discovery. That requires sustained focus and attention on our experience of the world. There are many ways that different cultures developed to foster this kind of self-discovery. The Chinese book of divination, the I Ching, guides decisions not by providing practical solutions, but by offering an opportunity to contemplate one’s mind in an open-ended, experiential manner.

But the cultivation of subjectivity requires a certain amount of self-denial: it requires the acceptance of one’s inner world as it is, with all the pain as well as joy it contains, instead of seeing and presenting it in the most pleasant and flattering light. This runs against strong forces in human nature. As Freud has described, the mind has powerful built-in mechanisms that turn us away from unwanted experience: repression, dissociation, sublimation, etc. Most commonly, we turn our back on subjectivity to escape from pain. Suffering, one’s own, or others’, might become bearable, one hopes, when one takes a step back and views it objectively, conceptually, abstractly. It is safer to consider the “facts” than dwell on the experience.

One of Buddhism’s discoveries is that subjective participation in one’s life – that is, a willingness to think about it subjectively, to dwell in the experience – is not automatic, it is an achievement. As a matter of fact, most of us most of the time do not participate – instead we spend most of our time lost in thought, e.g., in ruminations about the past or the future, plotting our next move, our next meal, next purchase, next vacation or next paper to write.

However, filling our lives exclusively with these kinds of thoughts is counterproductive. Buddhist psychology holds that a preoccupation with thinking and planning is based on a misunderstanding

---

subjective experience and choice. I have proposed that subjective experience is partly constitutive of value *in general*, not just that it has value in itself as she claims, and that therefore its significance for action theory and ethics spreads even farther than the problem raised in her book.

<sup>19</sup> Brewer (2009) argues that desires are experiences or “apprehensions” of value. His approach, especially, his treatment of desire, has clear affinities with my views concerning value and experience.

about the nature of reality. We orient toward thought and planning because – to put it a bit overly succinctly - we do not want to accept the impermanence of our condition, the unpredictability of the future and our basic lack of control over it. But the very activities that are supposed to promote our happiness and safety actually make it impossible to achieve real happiness and harmony with our life. The Tibetan meditation master, Chogyam Trungpa (2009) says:

Free passion is radiation without a radiator, a fluid, pervasive warmth that flows effortlessly. It is not destructive because it is a balanced state of being and highly intelligent. Self-consciousness inhibits this intelligent, balanced state of being. By opening, by dropping our self-conscious grasping, we see not only the surface of an object, but we see the whole way through. We appreciate not in terms of sensational qualities alone, but we see in terms of whole qualities, which are pure gold.

According to Buddhist psychology<sup>20</sup>, objective thought, when it becomes predominant, can lead to depressive emptiness. Subjective thought, on the other hand, allows you to drop your “self-conscious grasping”. It keeps you firmly rooted in the experience of your life which is a more stable source of contentment, joy and equanimity. Buddhist forms of meditation provide training in sustaining awareness of experience without turning away from any aspect of it or trying to change it to something else. They provide a training in subjective thought. Subjective thought helps you discover aspects of experience that you were previously unaware of. It gives you a chance to deepen your understanding of what you truly value and what you deplore. Consequently, it is indispensable for living an ethical life.

When it comes to decisions, especially important ones, subjective thought allows for decisions to emerge slowly and authentically. Decisions sometimes happen as a result of a familiar consideration presenting itself over and over again – as, for example, in the case of having to deal with an untrustworthy friend or lover. You might have understood, in an abstract sense, what is happening, and may have been at the point of trying to draw the consequences. But your decision never stuck. However, once you allow yourself to fully experience your friend’s behavior – putting aside any effort to find excuses – you will likely come to a point where you can act. As Kierkegaard puts it in *Either/Or*,

Ask yourself, and continue to ask until you find the answer. For one may have known a thing many times and acknowledged it ... and yet it is only by the deep inward movements, only by the indescribable emotions of the heart, that for the first time you are convinced that what you have known belongs to you ... for only the truth that edifies is truth for you.

Subjective thought is a vital part of a good life, or so I have argued. I propose that we make the distinction between objective and subjective thought part of our philosophical psychology. My goal has been to begin the process of exploring central questions in ethics within the framework it provides.

## References:

Antoon, Sinan (2014). *The Corpse Washer*, Yale University Press.

---

<sup>20</sup> See also, e.g., Teasdale 2011a and 2011b.

- Armstrong, Karen (2014). *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*, Anchor Books.
- Auden, W.H. (1994). New Year Letter, 1940, in *Collected Poems*, Edited by Edward Mendelson, London: Faber, 203-4.
- Barnard, PJ and Teasdale, J (1991) Interacting cognitive subsystems: A systemic approach to cognitive-affective interaction and change, *Cognition and Emotion*, 5(5).
- Barnard, PJ, Duke, DJ, Byrne, RW & Davidson, I (2007). Differentiation in cognitive and emotional meanings: an evolutionary analysis. *Cognition and Emotion* 21(6) 1155-1183.
- Bermudez, Juan Pablo (2017), “Do we reflect while performing skillful actions? Automaticity, control, and the perils of distraction”, *Philosophical Psychology* 30(7) 896-924.
- Block, Ned (1990), “Inverted Earth”, *Philosophical Perspectives*, Vol 4, *Action Theory and Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 53-79.
- Brewer, Talbot (2009), *The Retrieval of Ethics*, Oxford University Press.
- Buñuel, Luis (1958). “The Cinema, Instrument of Poetry”, in *Cuadernos de la Universidad de México*, 4, December 1958.
- Chang, Ruth (2017). “Hard Choices”, *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, 3(1), 1-21.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (1990). *Flow: the psychology of optimal experience*, Harper and Row.
- Dewey, John (1916). *Essays in Experimental Logic*, University of Chicago Press.
- Evans, G. (1982). *The Varieties of Reference*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fodor, J. (2007). “The Revenge of the Given”. In: B.P. McLaughlin and J. Cohn, (eds.) *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Mind*, Blackwell.
- Jackson, F. 1982. “Epiphenomenal Qualia”, *Philosophical Quarterly* 32: 127-36.
- Grossenbacher, P. G., & Quaglia, J. T. (2017). “Contemplative cognition: A more integrative framework for advancing mindfulness and meditation research”, *Mindfulness*, 8(6), 1580-1593. DOI 10.1007/s12671-017-0730-1
- Harcourt, Bernard E. (2015). *Exposed: Desire and Disobedience in the Digital Age*, Harvard University Press.
- Harris, Sam (2014). *Waking up: a guide to spirituality without religion*. Simon and Schuster, New York.
- Irving, Zachary and Thompson, Evan (2018), “The philosophy of mind-wandering”, in Kieran C. Fox and Kalina Christoff, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Spontaneous Thought*. Oxford University Press.

- James, William (1902/1983). *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co.; reprinted in Penguin.
- Kierkegaard, Soren (1843/1983). *Fear and Trembling*, Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, Soren (1845/1978). *Two Ages*, Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, Soren (1846/1992). *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, Soren (1849/1980). *The Sickness Unto Death*, Princeton University Press.
- C.S. Lewis (2011). Introduction to D.E. Harding, *The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth*, The Shollond Trust.
- Lutz, A., Slagter, H. A., Dunne, J. D., & Davidson, R. J. (2008). Attention regulation and monitoring in meditation. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 12(4), 163–169. doi:10.1016/j.tics.2008.01.005
- Lutz, A., Jha, A., Dunne, J., Saron, C. (2015). “Investigating the phenomenological matrix of mindfulness-related practices from a neurocognitive perspective”, *American Psychologist*, 70(7), 632-658. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0039585>
- McDowell, J. (1994). *Mind and World*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Milner, Marion (1934/2011). *A life of one's own*, Routledge.
- Montero, B. (2010). “Does bodily awareness interfere with highly skilled movement?” *Inquiry* 53:2, 105-122.
- (2015). “Is monitoring one's actions causally relevant to choking under pressure?” *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 14, 379--395.
- Nagel, Thomas (1974). What Is It Like to Be a Bat? *Philosophical Review* 83:435-50.
- Nagel, Thomas (1986). *The View from Nowhere*. Oxford University Press.
- Nagel, Thomas (20010). *Secular philosophy and the religious temperament*. Oxford University Press.
- Paul, L. (2015). *Transformative Experience*. Oxford University Press.
- Papineau, D. (2013). “In the zone.” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 73, 175--196.
- (2015). “Choking and The Yips.” *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 14:2, 295--308.
- Pinker, Stephen (2018). *Enlightenment now: the case for reason, science, humanism and progress*, Viking Press.

- Scheler, Max (1916/1973). *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A new Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism* (Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy), Northwestern University Press.
- Setiya, Kieran (2017). *Midlife: a philosophical guide*, Princeton University Press.
- Shoemaker, Sidney (1981). "The Inverted Spectrum," *The Journal of Philosophy* 74 (7), 357-81.
- Strawson, Galen (2011). "Radical self-awareness", *Self, no self?*, in Mark Siderts, Evan Thompson, and Dan Zahavi, eds., Oxford University Press.
- Suzuki, D T (1956). *Zen Buddhism*. Anchor Books.
- Taylor, C. (1992). *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Teasdale JD and Barnard PJ (1993). *Affect, Cognition, and Change*. Lawrence Erlbaum; Hove.
- Teasdale JD and Chaskalson M (2011a). "How does mindfulness transform suffering? I: the nature and origins of "dukkha"", *Contemporary Buddhism*, 12(1), 89-102.
- Teasdale JD and Chaskalson M (2011b). "How does mindfulness transform suffering? I: the transformation of "dukkha"", *Contemporary Buddhism*, 12(1), 103-124.
- Trungpa, Chogyam (2009). "Love Story", *Tricycle*, Winter 2009.
- Wajcman, Judy (2014). *Pressed for Time: The Acceleration of Life in Digital Capitalism*, University of Chicago Press.
- Weber, Max (1963). *The Sociology of Religion*, Beacon Pres.

