

Some (Philosophical) Problems for Consciousness as a Neural Capacity for Objectivity

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RECEIVED: 15-02-2015 • ACCEPTED: 30-05-2015

ABSTRACT: This paper is a critical appraisal of the most recent attempt from cognitive science in general, developmental and evolutionary biology in particular, to understand the nature and mechanisms underlying consciousness as proposed by Anton J.M. Dijkster. The proposal, briefly stated, is to view consciousness as a neural capacity for objectivity. What makes the problem of consciousness philosophically and scientifically challenging may be stated as follows: If consciousness has a first-person ontology and our best scientific theories have a third-person ontology, how can we come up with a satisfactory theory? Moreover, if the reduction of one to the other is impossible, what are we supposed to do? By neglecting what Chalmers calls the “hard problem” of consciousness, Dijkster’s proposal seems unable to respond to the foregoing questions, and these questions, I maintain, are the very motivations that most of us have when we inquire about consciousness.

KEYWORDS: Consciousness – objectivity – subjectivity – qualia – mind.

0. Introduction

The *mind* is interesting both as a *phenomenon* and as a *problem* – not only for philosophy but also for the empirical sciences. One might say that it is both *familiar* and *strange*. It is familiar in the sense that the activity of thinking constitutes a huge portion of our lives. It is strange in the sense

that we find it difficult to provide definitive answers to our most important questions about it. The same observation might be said about *consciousness*. For instance, what could be more familiar than the fact that I am conscious right now and that I am writing this paper? What could be more familiar than the fact that I am experiencing something, e.g. seeing the distinct greenness of the leaves of the mango tree (at this time of the year) just outside my study? It is important to note that for philosophers and reflective persons in general, the *science* behind the process of visual perception is not the problem since most of us are already aware of it (e.g. how vision requires light, how light passes to the different parts of the eye (e.g. cornea, lens), the role of photoreceptors in gathering visual information which is then sent to the brain via the optic nerve as electrical signals). Moreover, the science behind visual perception and many other physical/biological processes is not in any way a potential source of perplexity for most of us. What *can* be perplexing about all this may best be summarized by a question: “Why should any experience emerge from molecular-biological processes?” (Kim 2011, 4) At this point, we find ourselves confronted with conflicting intuitions – an experience that is characteristic of the intellectual activity we call *philosophy*.

This paper is an assessment of the most recent attempt from cognitive science in general, developmental and evolutionary biology in particular, to understand the nature and mechanisms underlying consciousness as proposed by Anton J.M. Dijkster. The proposal, briefly stated, is to view consciousness as “a neural capacity for objectivity” (see Dijkster 2014). For philosophers in general, the idea that scientists can now confidently venture into studying consciousness is a breath of fresh air. Searle, for instance, recounts his personal experience when he first became interested in the problem of consciousness. He says that “most people in the neurosciences did not regard consciousness as a genuine scientific question” (Searle 1997, 193). Indeed, times have changed, and this is a good thing. At present, studies about the mind and consciousness are now done in a more inter/multidisciplinary manner which brings together people from different fields (e.g. biology, neuroscience, psychology, philosophy).

The paper consists of three main parts. The first part is expository. It provides a summary of Dijkster’s proposal to view consciousness as a neural capacity for objectivity, its theoretical underpinnings and some of its alleged achievements (e.g. the explanation and integration of intelligence, morality,

and esthetics). The second part constitutes the analysis and appraisal of Dijkers proposal. It identifies some philosophical problems and provides arguments that need to be addressed if Dijkers proposal is to count as an acceptable (or at the very least, a coherent) account of consciousness. It also includes responses to some anticipated objections to the arguments that have been presented. The third part – the conclusion – provides a synthesis and a criterion/condition that any theory of consciousness (whether scientific or philosophical) must meet in order to be considered acceptable.

1. Consciousness as a neural capacity for objectivity

Dijker offers a new way to look at consciousness – as “the brains most adaptive property” which may be described as “a neural capacity for objectivity” (Dijker 2014, 1). As might be expected, how Dijker defines a “capacity for objectivity” is crucial not only for a fuller understanding of his proposal but also for properly assessing it. How then does Dijker define a “capacity for objectivity?” Dijker clearly states it in the following:

The answer proposed here is: a capacity for objectivity, to be defined as the capacity to produce *states* of objectivity that internally represent objects and their dispositional properties (as well as movements and behaviors predicted by these dispositions) in relatively stable, accurate, increasingly complete, perceiver-independent and neutral ways, unbiased by specific needs, motives, and anticipation of instrumental aspects and rewards. (Dijker 2014, 2)

The foregoing passage highlights the idea that for Dijker, a “state of objectivity” is a state where “subjective aspects are *absent* and one is “just looking” at the world as it really is and can be” (Dijker 2014, 2). For a fuller understanding of viewing consciousness as a neural capacity for objectivity, it is imperative that we discuss its theoretical underpinnings and identify some of the arguments that support it. *First*, as might be noticed from the foregoing definition of a capacity for objectivity, it appears that in general, Dijker adopts a *realist* framework. If we want to be more specific, Dijker adopts a *naïve realist* framework. It is important to note that naïve realism is usually associated with *common sense*. To help us better understand naïve realism, Audi provides us with the following example and description of the view:

One natural thing to say about what it is for us to see the green field is appealingly brief. We simply see it, in an ordinary way: it is near and squarely before us; we need no light to penetrate a haze or a telescope to magnify our view. We simply see the field, and it may normally be taken to be pretty much as it appears. This sort of view, called *naïve realism*, has been thought to represent common sense: it says roughly that perception is simply a matter of the senses telling us about real things ... it is a form of realism because it takes the objects of perception to be real things external to the perceiver, the sorts of things that are “out there” to be seen whether anyone sees them or not. (Audi 2011, 38)

That Dijker adopts a naïve realist framework is unexpected (but I will discuss the reasons why in the next part of the paper). The *second* important theoretical component of Dijker’s proposal involves a combination of a developmental and an evolutionary view on a capacity for objectivity. This theoretical component is important because it allows Dijker to identify the underlying *mechanisms* that can help explain human beings’ ability “to integrate intelligence, morality, and esthetics” (Dijker 2014, 3). It is important to note that this integration is supposedly one of the important *achievements* of Dijker’s proposal. This is done by linking together the capacity for objectivity with various behavioral manipulations such as exploration, play, and a mechanism of care (Dijker 2014, 6). Consider what Dijker says in the following:

[S]tates of objectivity are not only realized by brain mechanisms of a subject trying to make sense of a pre-existing objective world, but also by behavioral attempts to make objects themselves permanent by preserving, protecting, perhaps even constructing and beautifying them. These attempts most likely are motivated and controlled by a specific motivational mechanism with a social origin. (Dijker 2014, 6)

As the foregoing passage shows, our initial observation is correct (i.e. that Dijker adopts a naïve realist framework). However, what needs to be emphasized in the foregoing passage is the mechanism itself which links together the various behavioral attempts mentioned (e.g. preserving, protecting, beautifying). This mechanism is *care*. How exactly does the care mechanism work and how does it link together intelligence, morality, and esthetics according to Dijker’s account? To see how such a mechanism works, Dijker needs another important concept: *vulnerability*.

From an evolutionary perspective, vulnerability can be defined as the disposition or likelihood of living things to change into a state of lowered fitness (a state inconsistent with their “design specification”) when exposed to certain conditions. (Dijker 2014, 7)

For Dijker, the vulnerability of both the perceiver and the object being perceived, for instance, in a state of exploration or play, allows for *modifications* in the perceiver’s behavior. For example, we tend to be gentle or careful in handling things or other living things which we perceive to be fragile.

The *third* crucial element in Dijker’s proposal involves ideas presented by Merker (2013) concerning significant interactions of three things: brains, bodies, and their world. Dijker notes that for Merker, a conscious state “allows the organism to be primarily concerned with the objective aspects of its environment and not to be bothered by the sensations that might be produced by underlying perceptual and behavioral mechanisms” (Dijker 2014, 6). As noted by Dijker himself, his proposal is distinct from Merker’s in the sense that it further adds that “a conscious state requires awareness of the possibility of multiple looks or behavioral manipulations, and the inhibition of motivational systems that could bias perception” (Dijker 2014, 6).

Mindful of the underpinnings of consciousness as a neural capacity for objectivity, we are now in a better position to describe how such a capacity, according to Dijker, can *integrate* intelligence, morality, and esthetics. As Dijker optimistically remarks:

Perhaps, a capacity for objectivity and its foundation on a care mechanism are the key to the century-old philosophical puzzle of how judgments of truth, moral goodness, and beauty are related. (Dijker 2014, 8)

For a rough sketch of the idea, it is important to note that the integration is made possible by the following: vulnerability, care mechanism, and the distinct aspect of Dijker’s proposal: *multiple looks*. Let us begin with intelligence:

States of objectivity are necessary for the kinds of problem solving that we tend to consider intelligent and creative. When in a state of objectivity, one tries to be as complete as possible, by looking at objects from multiple perspectives and performing small, virtual what-if experiments, thereby coming to understand or “grasp” the many relationships among

objects and their properties that are possible ... To illustrate, briefly consider an experiment performed with crows to demonstrate how previously acquired knowledge of object or tool properties and corresponding skills are used in a novel context, suggesting perceiver-independent or objective internal representations. (Dijker 2014, 8-9)¹

One of the results (although admittedly controversial) of the research in the abovementioned passage is that the success of the crows can be attributed to their cognitive ability which involves knowledge (of some sort) of abstract causal rules. Relying on recent data on the problem solving skills of certain animals, Dijker maintains that “it is very difficult to imagine how this ability is possible without the birds having acquired a perceiver-independent and objective representation of the total configuration of objects and their individual but interrelated physical properties” (Dijker 2014, 9). Take note that in the foregoing passage, Dijker includes the ability of looking at objects from multiple perspectives. This suggests that (at least as Dijker sees it), the capacity for objectivity is a *necessary* condition for both intelligent and adaptive behavior. In the following, Dijker attempts to explain the concept of *conscience* using his proposal (take note of the employment of vulnerability, care mechanism, and multiple looks (or perspectives) in the overall explanation):

It may be proposed that the concept refers to the accurate or objective perception of a vulnerable object (i.e., to being conscious of a vulnerable object), activation of a care mechanism, and perception or anticipation of the different negative consequences of one’s own behavior for the object’s well-being or fitness, typically experienced as the emotion of guilt. Thus while tenderness is a response to observing that a vulnerable object is in the desirable state of good health, guilt implies the causal attribution to the self of an observed or anticipated decrease in health.

¹ The experiment that Dijker mentions concerns crows’ successful performance of obtaining food (meat in particular) through a hole inside a box that could only be obtained by using not just one but *several* tools. The said experiment is setup in the following way: The meat is placed inside a box. The meat can only be obtained by inserting a stick through a hole in the box that is long enough to reach it. Such a stick is available but it is visibly contained in another box. The stick can only be reached by using another tool – a shorter stick – which is attached to a string from a branch. For further details, see Taylor et al. (2010).

Other moral emotions more strongly focus on the harmful behavior of third parties (e.g., moral anger) or the undesirability of the object's lowered fitness and suffering. (Dijker 2014, 10)

As is well-known, human beings are toolmakers and users. Dijker capitalizes on this idea and explains how states of objectivity integrate *esthetic experience* in the following:

A state of objectivity integrates esthetic experience, tenderness, care, and specific motor aspects. Hence there may be a close association between making beautiful things (art), craft, and tool making. In particular, during the initial stages of tool making, the tool is perceived as a vulnerable object that needs to be treated with care and brought into a less vulnerable and more mature shape by allowing it to "grow" or develop according to its inherent material properties, with the tool maker facilitating this with a gentle and protective attitude (involving activities such as cleaning, polishing, inspecting, touching, testing, and reshaping). (Dijker 2014, 10)

Earlier, I mentioned that one of the supposed achievements of Dijker's proposal (i.e. to view consciousness as a neural capacity for objectivity) is the integration of intelligence, morality, and esthetics. In general, Dijker accomplishes this by combining a naïve realist framework, a combination of a developmental and an evolutionary view, and Merker's work on the interactions of brains, bodies, and their world with an additional requirement: the possibility of multiple looks (or perspectives).

I hope that the foregoing discussion clearly shows the significant concepts that Dijker's proposal employs: vulnerability, care mechanism, and multiple looks (or perspectives). At this point, the expository part of the paper is complete. The next part is concerned with the appraisal of Dijker's proposal and its proper place in our continuous attempts to understand (or make sense of) the nature and underlying mechanisms of consciousness.

2. Some (Philosophical) Problems for Consciousness as a Neural Capacity for Objectivity

Novel theories are always welcome in our continuous efforts to understand the nature and underlying mechanisms of consciousness, but not, we

hope, at the expense of oversimplifying or ignoring important *theoretical*, sometimes *philosophical*, questions that make it a difficult problem in the first place. While past and current empirical researches on various aspects of consciousness may prove to be helpful, it is important to be able to weave together their various results under a cogent theoretical framework. As usual, in both philosophy and science, we need both theory and evidence to mutually support each other.

For a short but helpful background on the issue, it is best to begin with *conscious mental states*. That an organism has conscious mental states means that “there is something it is like to be that organism” (Nagel 1979, 166). In contrast, there is nothing, in the relevant sense, of what it is like to be a book, a table or a chair. If this is correct, then conscious mental states are characterized by a kind of *qualitative feeling* or by “the subjective aspects of experience” (Campbell 2005, 189). This is what philosophers mean by the term *qualia* (in singular form, *quale*).

Philosophers and psychologists also distinguish between two levels of consciousness: (1) *simple awareness* (i.e. nonreflective conscious functioning) and (2) *reflective consciousness* (i.e. reflective conscious functioning) (cf. Martí – Rodríguez 2012, 103-104). The first level involves *representations* (e.g. percepts, consciousness of an object’s properties (e.g. ‘red’)). The second level involves *metarepresentations* (e.g. reflection about the experience of ‘red’). The difference between the two levels is that on the first level, “the subject is a mere spectator of his functioning” whereas on the second level, the subject is “also an observer of his functioning” (Martí – Rodríguez 2012, 104).

Before I provide some theoretical or philosophical problems with consciousness as a neural capacity for objectivity, let me state that the attempt by itself of integrating intelligence, morality, and esthetics is commendable. I do acknowledge that it is a difficult task. While I acknowledge these things, I think Dijker’s proposal still needs further refinement for it to be considered as a tenable position to take. Let me state the reasons why. *First*, an acceptable theory of consciousness should be responsive to the “hard problem of consciousness” (Chalmers 1996, xii) and this problem takes the *subjectivity* (e.g. first-person account) of consciousness seriously. Unfortunately, Dijker’s proposal *neglects* them both. Neglecting this problem has important implications for viewing consciousness as a capacity for objectivity: (1) consciousness is usually understood as having a “first-person

ontology” (cf. Searle 1997, 212); (2) that consciousness has a first-person ontology poses a difficult problem for any theory that seeks to explain consciousness in physicalist (or materialist) terms (This is because physicalist accounts have a third-person ontology. It is important to note that even our usual understanding of knowledge makes use of the third-person perspective.); (3) we cannot reduce first-person subjective experiences to third-person phenomena, and vice versa (cf. Searle 1997, 212). It is important to note that it is precisely for these reasons that the problem of consciousness is perplexing in the first place. Mindful of these points, we can understand, for example, why philosophers of mind observe that “we are entirely in the dark about how consciousness fits into the natural order” (Chalmers 1996, xi). Many philosophers of mind will agree that it is precisely the *subjectivity* of consciousness and the supposed *objectivity* of the natural order which makes it difficult for us to come up with a satisfactory theory of mind (whether *scientific* or *philosophical*).

Dijker’s neglect of such an important aspect of consciousness is unfortunate because consciousness is a “natural phenomenon” (Chalmers 1996, xiii) or a “biological phenomenon” (Searle 1997, 6). My complaint about Dijker’s proposal is simple: If consciousness is primarily characterized by subjectivity, then our theory about consciousness should be able to accommodate it and not neglect it. Dijker’s neglect of subjectivity is also unfortunate for another reason: There is an available option which actually tries to accommodate subjectivity in describing a consciousness like ours:

By ‘consciousness like ours,’ we mean *the subjective experience of a suitably neurobiologically complex living organism*. Such consciousness is subjective insofar as it necessarily involves an egocentrically centered, single point of view that is spatio-temporally located wherever and whenever one’s body is located. (Maiese 2011, 11)

At this point, let me provide some possible objections that might be raised against the argument that I have presented so far. It might be argued that Dijker actually discusses a certain kind of subjective experience in his work: the experience that “one is ‘just looking’ at the world as it really is and can be” (Dijker 2014, 2). This brings me to my *second* point: Dijker’s account of subjective experience *deviates* from our usual understanding of the kind of subjectivity that is involved in theorizing about consciousness. Such deviancy therefore needs to be *justified* (or at the very least, explained).

In the article, Dijker clearly describes “states of objectivity” as states where “subjective aspects are *absent* and one is “just looking” at the world as it really is and can be” (Dijker 2014, 2). If this is the kind of subjective experience that Dijker is discussing, then this is simply problematic. It is difficult, even to imagine, a subjective experience where “subjective aspects are *absent*.” This entitles us to say that even if such an account of subjective experience is included in Dijker’s work, it is plausible to maintain that such an account is prone to the charge of being internally *inconsistent*. The import of the discussion so far is that we need a theory which can maintain the subjectivity of consciousness and the sort of objectivity that is required by our best scientific theories in accounting for conscious phenomena.

Another objection that might be raised against the points presented so far concerns the two levels of consciousness discussed earlier. Will such a distinction help Dijker’s proposal? To a certain extent, it can, but only if we do not take the hard problem of consciousness seriously. If we take the hard problem of consciousness seriously, we cannot easily appeal to the familiar distinction that we have between *appearance* and *reality*.

For example, the sun appears to set but the reality is that the earth rotates. But you cannot make this move for consciousness, because where consciousness is concerned the reality is the appearance. (Searle 1997, 212-213)

This means that we cannot isolate *qualia* from *consciousness*. “There are not two types of phenomena, consciousness and qualia. There is just consciousness, which is a series of qualitative states” (Searle 1997, 9). If this is correct, then what do we mean by “just looking at the world as it really is” as described by Dijker? The most charitable interpretation of the aforementioned phrase from Dijker is an interpretation which contextualizes it in a naïve realist framework. It is in that framework, we might say, where it does have (or makes) sense.

Here then is the *third* point: It is clear that Dijker adopts naïve realism and this, as I mentioned earlier, is unexpected. I take it as uncontroversial (i.e. that it is common knowledge) amongst philosophers in general, epistemologists and philosophers of mind and science in particular, that naïve realism is problematic. It is prone, for instance, to problems that range from the simpler (e.g. problems associated with visual perception and hal-

lucination) to the more complicated ones (e.g. several experiments in quantum mechanics (e.g. double-slit, quantum erasure, EPR pairs)). Clearly, Dijker is *silent* on these problems. On the extreme, some philosophers might even say that naïve realism has been discredited already.

The *fourth* point is devastating and it is a corollary of the arguments that have been presented so far: If we start with the Searlean premise that “[t]here are not two types of phenomena, consciousness and qualia. There is just consciousness, which is a series of qualitative states” (Searle 1997, 9), then does it not follow that we have a genuine problem for viewing consciousness as a neural capacity for objectivity, more especially so given that such a view is grounded in naïve realism?

The *fifth* point may be summarized as follows: Dijker’s proposal makes use of *multiple looks* but this strategy seems to get the order of explanation *backwards*. What this means is that the very possibility of multiple looks is intelligible only through the prior recognition of my point of view as a view among many other points of view. This means that it is the concept of subjectivity that can help explain objectivity and not the other way around. If this is correct, then subjectivity (in the relevant sense) must be incorporated (and not neglected) in our theory of consciousness. It is important to note that I do not intend to show that human beings have no capacity for objectivity. Indeed, we have such a capacity. But such a capacity is only possible because consciousness is subjective by *default* (e.g. in visual experience, it is precisely because of my *situatedness* and *physical constitution* that I see an object as thus-and-so).

Let me expound on the fifth point. We can begin by taking note of two familiar facts about beings like us: (1) that we have certain views or perspectives, and (2) that our thoughts always have certain objects. In a sense, we can say that our thoughts are always directed at something (or they are always about something). Let me begin by expounding on (1). What does it mean to have a view or a perspective? In order to make sense of this question, we have to recognize how it is even possible for beings like us to have a view or a perspective. The answer seems readily available to us: It is possible for us to have views or perspectives precisely because we are in such a position that we can have them. This means that to have a view or a perspective entails a prior recognition that we are occupying a particular position in the world (or the universe) – like a particular dot in a coordinate system. Being situated in this sense allows for the possibility of (1) and

thus serves as some kind of grounding for it – comparable but not entirely identical to Kant’s categories of space and time and their significant roles to fulfill in the very possibility of experience (see Kant 1992). There is more to be said about (1) and it is deeply connected to (2). The previous analogy concerning a dot in the coordinate system does not really tell us the whole story. It certainly provides us with a picture but it is obviously an incomplete one which can easily lead us into error if we are not careful. Being situated, by itself, certainly would not be sufficient for something to have a view or perspective. The being in question, must therefore be configured in a particular way – or have some sort of functional organization – such that it can have a view or a perspective. In other words, the being in question, must possess a mind (or anything which functions like one) or if we want to make a bolder claim, the being in question must be a mind. We can ignore the other difficult issues concerning the previous remark (perhaps we can deal with them in another paper). For now, it is enough that when we think about what it means to have a view or a perspective and appreciate the intentional character of our thoughts, these familiar facts about ourselves point us directly to the complex phenomenon that is the *mind*.

If, as the foregoing discussion suggests, we can only make sense of the idea that to have a view entails being situated, does it mean that the mind will always be trapped in its own subjectivity, that it can only know, for instance, the world or the self from its own subjective point of view and experiences? No, it does not in any way mean that. (If that is what it means, then we commit ourselves to solipsism and I think that there are better positions to take than that of the solipsist.) Even if our primary means for experiencing or even discovering the world or the self is our own point of view (and thus, subjective), we can (and with good reasons) say that we are capable of achieving something more – an objective view of the world and of the self as a point of view among many others that are included in our conception of the world.² In my estimation, this is made possible by the mind’s capacity for *imagination* and *abstraction*. It is not difficult to see that we can and we do place ourselves in the place of others (e.g. when we want to understand the reasons why a person acted in a particular way). These are cases that adults like us are all familiar with, and in these cases, we can say that it is possible for us to *transcend* our subjective point of view and

² Here, I am following Nagel (1989).

think *as if* we are the other person. These cases demonstrate that the mind is capable of stepping back, and moving from a mere subjective standpoint to a more objective one. It is important to note that our capacity for *empathy* shares the same general feature.

The foregoing discussion lays the basis for the *sixth* point: the employment and requirement of multiple looks in Dijker's proposal (which for him constitutes the distinct aspect of his proposal) appears to be more suited for characterizing objectivity not as a neural capacity but as "a method of understanding" *à la* Nagel (cf. Nagel 1989, 4). Surely, we cannot equate consciousness with a method of understanding. It is important to note that Dijker is not simply saying that consciousness has a feature, call it a neural capacity for objectivity. He is saying that consciousness is a capacity for objectivity. The relevant use of 'is' in Dijker's proposal is therefore the 'is of identity' and not merely the 'is of predication.' As such, I am expecting to find a set of necessary and sufficient conditions from Dijker's discussion. Such conditions however are nowhere to be found.

Another important point worth emphasizing is that language might provide us with a clue as to how it is possible for beings like us to achieve an objective view about the world or the self in relation to that world. (Perhaps *language* does not merely provide us with a clue but actually serves as the vehicle in which we are able to achieve an objective view of the world or the self.) For instance, I might start with my subjective views and experiences. From these subjective views and experiences, I am able to abstract that all the *impressions* (or *sense data*, if we like) that I encounter always involve the 'I' (*à la* Kant's transcendental unity of apperception) as the 'subject' of those impressions. In other words, these impressions are all subsumed under one consciousness. In these examples, I wish to highlight something that might easily go unnoticed: The fact that I can think about myself 'as if I am not myself shows that the 'I' can be the 'object' of my inquiry (again, 'as if' the 'I' (which is the object of inquiry) is distinct from the other 'I' (which conducts the inquiry)). If this is not a manifestation of a human being's capacity for objectivity (in the relevant sense) made possible by language and our capacity for imagination and abstraction, then it is difficult to see what can count as one. I hope that it is clear from the foregoing discussion that the capacity for objectivity is only made possible because consciousness is subjective by default. Unfortunately, it is this same characterization of consciousness that Dijker's proposal neglects.

Finally, the foregoing points (or problems) taken collectively, are what I have in mind when I said at the outset that we should not ignore important theoretical, sometimes philosophical, questions that make the problem of consciousness a difficult problem in the first place. Surely, the foregoing problems are theoretical (or philosophical) problems that most philosophers will encounter when they read Dijker's proposal to view consciousness as a neural capacity for objectivity.

3. Conclusion

Any philosophy (or theory) of mind worth taking seriously must include two important things: (1) the phenomenon of consciousness and (2) a satisfactory explanation (or solution) to the hard problem of consciousness. These requirements, I maintain, should not be neglected. To expound on these requirements, it is important to note that (1) entails the recognition that consciousness is to be treated as part of this world and not something outside it. This requirement sits well with science in general. As might be expected, the situation is different with philosophy. I can only hope that people from both science and philosophy can begin to realize that they cannot continue ignoring each other. In addition, (2) entails the recognition that it is the subjectivity of consciousness that is responsible for our current inability to fit consciousness into the natural order. While Dijker's proposal might not have significant problems with the first requirement, I hope that it is clear from the arguments that have been presented that the proposal suffers from significant problems with the second requirement.

Let me end this paper with the following remark about the problem of consciousness. If we appreciate the problem of consciousness in its full complexity, then we are left with the difficult problem of choosing between two standpoints that stand in diametrical opposition with each other: the *subjective* and the *objective*. The prospect of a *rapprochement* between these standpoints seems to be the first business of any serious philosopher of mind because simply choosing one and leaving out the other seems incorrect (or at the very least insufficient) for what we seek in general is *understanding*. Since the early beginnings of the philosophy of mind in the 20th century, we have become more knowledgeable about many things, ourselves

and the world included. It is therefore surprising that now, more than ever, we feel the great burden of trying to make sense of the apparent conflict between our best scientific theories on the one hand, and our conception of ourselves on the other.

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