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Seeing, Knowing, Understanding: Philosophical Essays by
Barry Stroud (review)

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The Review of Metaphysics, Volume 73, Number 4 (Issue No, 292), June 2020,
pp. 860-861 (Review)

Published by The Philosophy Education Society, Inc.



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STROUD, Barry. *Seeing, Knowing, Understanding: Philosophical Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. vii + 277 pp. Cloth, \$65.00—*Seeing, Knowing, Understanding* is the fourth collection of Barry Stroud's essays. It comprises nineteen essays, seventeen of which have been published previously and were written between 2001 and 2017. The first pair of essays concerns the nature of philosophy itself and includes the Dewey Lecture that Stroud gave at the 2008 meeting of the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association. Essays three through nine concern questions about human knowledge and focus on perception's role in our acquisition of knowledge of the external world. The remaining eleven essays cover a range of philosophical subjects: intentional action, self-consciousness, Kant, color, sensation, logical necessity, meaning, understanding, and much more. Given that Stroud's views on the nature and epistemology of perception (including sensation and color) are well known, I would like to highlight one of his contributions in this volume to an area that occupies the periphery of his philosophical interests.

In "Doing Something Intentionally and Knowing that You are Doing it," Stroud focuses on an agent's knowledge that he is doing something intentionally. This variety of knowledge is peculiar in that it is neither a priori nor empirical. It is not a priori because what an agent knows is contingent and can often be known observationally by others who witness what the agent does. It is also not empirical knowledge insofar as there is no kind of experience that is separable from what the agent knows that serves as the knowledge's basis or ground. Experience does not explain an agent's knowledge of what he is doing intentionally; it neither informs the agent nor indicates something to the agent that would serve as evidence for his judgments. Agents, Stroud contends, have immediate, nonderivative knowledge of what they are doing intentionally, and this knowledge is not explained by the agent's being aware of something that is present whenever he acts.

How, then, does an agent know that he is intentionally doing such-and-such? Stroud proposes a radical reorientation of the approach we should take to this sort of epistemological question. We must "proceed from the top down, so to speak, and begin with what an agent or a perceiver must know, and what thoughts, reasonings, and activities he must be capable of, even to qualify as having the intentions and beliefs that are necessary for the kind of knowledge in question." That is, one must focus on the capacities and competences that are the conditions a human being must satisfy to be an agent of intentional action at all.

An agent must, among other things, be capable of understanding, through an accumulation of experience, the kinds of actions he can perform, be able to ascribe an action to himself in a distinctively first-personal manner, and be capable of assessing reasons to act and be able to bring those reasons to bear on what he knows he is capable of doing. It is through the competent exercises of those capacities essential to intentional action that an agent's knowledge of what he is doing intentionally becomes possible, and we understand this special variety of

knowledge only so far as we understand this rich network of abilities that is involved whenever a human being acts intentionally.

We have all rightly come to expect both clarity and insight in Stroud's work. These qualities are present not only in the essays about those topics to which he devoted the larger part of his career but also, I hope to have indicated, in any philosophical inquiry he chose to engage. In the collection's first essay, "What is Philosophy?", Stroud rejects as unilluminating any completely general answer to its guiding question. To understand philosophy, we must participate in the activity of philosophy, and this activity is always directed upon particular issues. For "in philosophy we have to look at each problem or issue or phenomenon, and respond to it authentically as it presents itself to us at the time, without denying or dismissing what we honestly cannot deny or dismiss." Each of the essays in this collection is an exceptional example of philosophy as Stroud conceives it.—Christopher Frey, *University of South Carolina*

TALLIS, Raymond. *Of Time and Lamentation: Reflections on Transience*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2019. x + 726 pp. Cloth, \$90.00; paper, \$30.00; ebook, \$30.00—Raymond Tallis's recently published work, *Of Time and Lamentation*, argues that time has largely been misunderstood as a topic of philosophical as well as scientific analysis. The charges that Tallis levies in this regard are largely directed at what he sees as reductionist/eliminativist tendencies to treat time as a "fourth dimension" of a space-time continuum or as though it were nothing at all. He is especially concerned to redeem time from the analytic tendency to treat experienced-time, that is, "tensed time," as an illusion to be dispelled or explained away by the physicist, the physiologist, and the neurobiologist from their privileged scientific "view from nowhere." By redeeming tensed time from its eliminativist exclusion in the literature, Tallis does not merely hope to clarify the nature of time as a philosophical problem once more. Rather, since the analysis of time in *Of Time and Lamentation*, as anywhere else in philosophical literature, "is an indirect way of meditating on our mortality," as Tallis insists, and since mortality is of deeply personal significance, we cannot be content with only the cold, third-personal diagnosis of the physicist who explains that time as it is lived is illusory. Rather, philosophy must confront time as personally significant. In that light, meditation upon time becomes, in Tallis's masterful and monumental treatment, an occasion for forays into the depths of the philosophy of science, metaphysics, philosophical anthropology, epistemology, metaethics, and the philosophy of religion. Time is, then, the central pole of a philosophical hermeneutic that promises, through Tallis's analysis, to open up all the major themes of philosophy in fresh new ways.