



# On Reflection

*Hilary Kornblith*

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## **On Reflection** Hilary Kornblith

Hilary Kornblith presents a new account of reflection, and its importance for knowledge, reasoning, freedom, and normativity. Philosophers have frequently extolled the value of reflective self-examination, and a wide range of philosophers, who differ on many other things, have argued that reflection can help to solve a number of significant philosophical problems. The importance of reflecting on one's beliefs and desires has been viewed as the key to solving problems about justification and knowledge; about reasoning; about the nature of freedom; and about the source of normativity. In each case, a problem is identified which reflective self-examination is thought to address.

Kornblith argues that reflection cannot solve any of these problems. There is a common structure to these issues, and the problems which reflection is thought to resolve are ones which could not possibly be solved by reflecting on one's beliefs and desires. More than this, he suggests that the attempt to solve these problems by appealing to reflection saddles us with a mystical view of the powers of reflective self-examination.

Recognition of this fact motivates a search for a demystified view of the nature of reflection.

To this end, Kornblith offers a detailed examination of views about knowledge, reasoning, freedom, and normativity in order to better understand the motivations for extolling self-reflective examination. He explores both the logic of these views, and the psychological commitments they involve. In the final chapter, he offers a more realistic view of reflection, which draws on dual process approaches to cognition.

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