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# **RESEARCH ARTICLES**



# Can It Be that Tully=Cicero?

Alex Blum

**Abstract:** We show, that given two fundamental theses of Kripke, no statement of the form “a=b’ is necessarily true’, is true, if ‘a’ and ‘b’ are distinct rigid designators.

**Keywords:** =, K, necessary, proper name, rigid designator

We are told that Tully and Cicero were one and the same person. But how could that be for it is necessarily true that if ‘Tully=Cicero’ is true then ‘Tully’ and ‘Cicero’ refer to the same entity. And since ‘Tully’ and ‘Cicero’ are rigid designators, being proper names of Tully and Cicero, ‘Tully = Cicero’ is necessarily true. But if ‘Tully = Cicero’ is necessarily true then ‘Tully’ and ‘Cicero’ necessarily refer to the same entity.<sup>1</sup> But no distinct pair of proper names refer jointly necessarily to any entity. For no proper name implies another or names its bearer necessarily. Hence, Tully and Cicero need not have been one and the same person and therefore could not have been one and the same person.<sup>2</sup> Which of course is absurd.

The argument assumes two classical theses of Kripke, that proper names are rigid designators<sup>3</sup> and that any statement of the form ‘a=b’ is necessarily true, if ‘a=b’ is true and ‘a’ and ‘b’ are rigid designators.<sup>4</sup> The argument would have significant force even if it would turn out that ‘Tully’ and ‘Cicero’ are not rigid designators. For we have a proof for the second premise,<sup>5</sup> and the argument shows independently of the first premise that if ‘a’ and ‘b’ are distinct rigid designators no statement of the form “a=b’ is necessarily true,” is true.

We now turn to the claim that no proper name refers necessarily to its bearer. ‘Tully’ or ‘Cicero’ is in fact our name for Tully. But clearly we could have used the names ‘Tully’ and ‘Cicero’ to name distinct entities or to name someone other than Tully. Or, in model theoretic terms, there is a possible world in which the proper names ‘Tully’ and ‘Cicero’ as used in that world refer to distinct entities. But given Kripke’s two classical theses, this cannot be (Appendix step 4).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We restate the argument from ‘Tully=Cicero’ is true, in more detail in the appendix.

<sup>2</sup> A consequence of the theorem that if an identity is possibly false then it’s necessarily false.

<sup>3</sup> See Kripke (1980, 6, 40-9). For the theory in the making see Kripke (1971, 140, 143, 145).

<sup>4</sup> See Kripke (1971, 140, 144-5), Kripke (1980, 3).

<sup>5</sup> See Kripke (1971, 140), Kripke (1980, 3), and Burgess (2014, 1577).

<sup>6</sup> I am deeply grateful to Laureano Luna for his intense correspondence on the paper. I must also thank Yehuda Gellman, Peter Genco and Asa Kasher for the conversations over the years on Kripke.

## Appendix

1.  $\Box$  'Tully=Cicero' is true Assumption
2.  $\Box$  [ $\Box$  'Tully=Cicero' is true  $\supset$  'Tully' and 'Cicero' refer to the same entity] Assumption
3.  $\Box$  'Tully=Cicero' is true  $\supset$   $\Box$  'Tully' and 'Cicero' refer to the same entity' 2, K
4.  $\Box$  'Tully' and 'Cicero' refer to the same entity 3, 1

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# Companions in Guilt Arguments and Moore's Paradox<sup>1</sup>

Michael Campbell

**Abstract:** In a series of articles Christopher Cowie has provided what he calls a 'Master Argument' against the Companions in Guilt (CG) defence of moral objectivity. In what follows I defend the CG strategy against Cowie. I show, firstly, that epistemic judgements are relevantly similar to moral judgements, and secondly, that it is not possible coherently to deny the existence of irreducible and categorically normative epistemic reasons. My argument for the second of these claims exploits an analogy between the thesis that epistemic norms are non-categorical and G.E. Moore's paradox concerning first personal belief ascriptions. I argue that the absurdity of the assertion "I have evidence that  $p$  but no reason to believe it" shows that the norms of belief are categorical. I then consider the counter-argument that this categoricity is a 'conceptual' rather than an 'objective' requirement. By drawing on the work of Hilary Putnam and Charles Travis, I show that this counter-argument is unsuccessful. Putnam is one of the original proponents of the Companions in Guilt strategy. Thus, by supporting the CG argument through appeal to other Putnamian theses, I show that its insights can only fully be appreciated in the context of broader metaphysical and semantic lessons.

**Keywords:** Companions in Guilt, epistemic reasons, error theory, meta-ethics, moral objectivity, normativity.

## 1. Introduction

The Companions in Guilt (CG) strategy seeks to rehabilitate some supposedly problematic class of judgements by showing how its claims are relevantly similar to another, less contentious area of discourse (Lillehammer 2007). For an area of discourse to be problematic it must simultaneously lay claim to a standing and yet fall short of it. Let the area of discourse in question be morality and the standing in question be objectivity. Moral realists aim to show that – appearances to the contrary – moral judgements can be objectively true. Moral irrealists, by contrast, deny this in one of two ways. On one flank are expressivists, who re-evaluate the commitments of moral discourse so that moral judgements do not in fact aim to reflect some fact about stance-independent reality. On this view, since moral judgements have as their function

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the expression of a subject's mental state, they involve no commitment to objective truth and thus embody no error.<sup>2</sup> On the other flank are error theorists, who take the objective purport of moral claims at face value, but insist that the world simply cannot be as it would have to be for a moral judgement to be true. On this view, moral claims are necessarily uniformly false.

The plausibility of each of these views turns crucially on one's understanding of both the relevant subject matter (the nature of 'morality') and the standard (what it is for something to be 'objective'). For those with a very permissive conception of objectivity, morality could only be debarred from meeting its demands if it were shown to be highly peculiar. On the other hand, for those with a very demanding conception of objectivity, morality will likely fail to meet its standards, irrespective of how it is understood.<sup>3</sup> The irrealist task thus gets easier as our conception of objectivity becomes more demanding, and *vice versa*.

A stance must be taken on these issues at the outset, even if it is only provisional. This is problematic, however, as it is very hard to define our terms in ways that do not load the dice in favour of one side or the other. Later on I will argue that the CG strategy works by correcting some persistent distortions in our conception of objectivity. For this reason we cannot begin with a definition of the concept which is satisfactory to all parties. As a generally acceptable gloss on the concept we must confine ourselves to the following: for a claim to be objective, it must disclose some aspect of the world as it is in itself, rather than merely as it appears to the subject. Let's take morality to be a form of thought, the truth of the claims of which depends on the existence of categorically binding and action guiding reasons.<sup>4</sup> Then, for morality to count as objective moral judgements must be capable of expressing a true thought concerning some feature of the world while at the same time providing suitably placed agents with categorical reasons for action. Of course, what it means to 'express a true thought' can be given a more or less demanding interpretation.<sup>5</sup> For dialectical purposes we may begin by ceding to the irrealist the right to interpret this condition however they want, on the proviso that they recognize another area of discourse which includes judgements that are objective in this sense. This proviso leaves the space that the CG strategy exploits. By showing the companion

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<sup>2</sup> On this understanding of expressivism see (Schroeder 2008).

<sup>3</sup> This explains why error theorists, with their highly demanding conception of what it takes for a judgement to be objectively true, generally spend little effort characterizing the nature of morality. Given their assumptions, any discourse which entails the existence of categorical action-guiding reasons will *ipso facto* be debarred from objectivity.

<sup>4</sup> This is not of course intended to be complete as a definition, but it is sufficient to motivate the irrealist position. See Cuneo (2007) and Joyce (2001) for related discussions.

<sup>5</sup> See Blackburn (1993, ch.6) and Dreier (2004) for discussion of some of the issues here.

area of discourse to be relevantly similar to morality, we can thereby rehabilitate the objectivity of morality.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Cowie's 'Master Argument'

The CG argument is a method for defending morality against construal in irrealist terms. It works by showing that the rejection of moral objectivity would incur an unacceptable theoretical cost; that the same considerations which purport to justify such a rejection would entail the rejection of objectivity in some other, apparently unproblematic, context. From here on I will follow standard procedure and take the other context in question to be the class of epistemic judgements. The CG theorist then reasons as follows: "It is implausible to hold either that epistemic reasons are merely subjective, or that judgements making normative epistemic claims necessarily fall short of objective truth. Therefore, since we tolerate the existence of objective epistemic reasons, we ought to tolerate the existence of objective moral reasons also."<sup>7</sup>

In a series of articles (2014, 2016) Christopher Cowie has argued that the CG defence cannot work.<sup>8</sup> Cowie paints the following picture of the landscape. The error-theoretic argument runs as follows:

*Conceptual premise:* Moral judgements presuppose for their truth the existence of categorical reasons for action, where for a reason to be categorical is for it to obtain independently of contingently held desires or mere convention.

*Metaphysical premise:* Reasons exist only where there is some desire or social convention to explain their existence. (2016, 116)

*Conclusion:* Therefore, moral judgements cannot be true.

Against this, the CG theorist provides the following counter-argument:

*Parity Premise:* The metaphysical premise of the moral error-theoretic argument entails that there are no categorical epistemic reasons for belief.

*Epistemic Existence Premise:* There are some categorically normative epistemic reasons for belief. (2016, 116)

*Conclusion:* Therefore, the metaphysical premise of the error-theoretic argument is false.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> On this understanding, it is not sufficient for a judgement to count as objective that it be such that it would be converged upon by ideal deliberators. Objectivity is a matter of a judgement's revealing some aspect of the world to us. The notion of a judgement's being world disclosing should be understood as neutral between those like Cuneo (2001) who take moral realism to require that moral properties be mind-independent and those like McDowell (1985) for whom moral judgements can be objective even if moral properties are mind-dependent.

<sup>7</sup> The term 'companion in guilt' was coined (I believe) by Putnam in his (1982). The most influential recent statement of the approach is Cuneo (2007).

<sup>8</sup> In my exposition of Cowie I will confine myself largely to the refined version of the argument presented in his later article (2016).

Cowie thinks that the underlying logic of this defensive maneuver is fundamentally flawed. He thus believes not only that its extant instances are unpersuasive, but that the approach as a whole simply cannot yield a convincing defence of moral objectivity. His justification of this striking view is what he dubs his 'Master Argument' against the CG strategy. Its centerpiece is the claim that the parity and existence premises stand in tension with one another, such that any position that established the truth of the parity premise would permit rejection of the existence premise, and *vice versa*. Cowie aims to demonstrate this by showing that a CG argument involving epistemic reasons succumbs to this dilemma. He then takes it that this result will generalise to any other potential companion in guilt. His Master Argument runs as follows. (The example is my own.)

Suppose that walking through the forest Abe discovers a distinctively shaped paw print and judges on the basis of this that there is a tiger nearby. The paw print is then (being taken as) a piece of evidence for the proposition that there is a tiger nearby. Let an 'evidential support relation' (ESR) be a probability raising relation that holds between some given piece of evidence  $e$  and a given proposition,  $p$ .<sup>10</sup> (2016, 117) How does the fact that  $e$  makes  $p$  more likely relate to Abe's reasons to believe that  $p$ ? Cowie constructs the following dilemma:

Either categorically normative epistemic reasons for belief *are* evidential support relations or they are not. If they are, then the parity premise is false. If they are not, then the epistemic existence premise isn't established. (2016, 127)

Suppose that categorical normative epistemic reasons for belief are identical with evidential support relations. Why does this render the parity premise false? Because, Cowie holds, this identity enables a reduction of epistemic reasons to 'non-normative (i.e. 'descriptive') facts or properties' (9), when no such reduction is available in the moral case. Supposing this to be feasible, then the considerations that support the error theory's metaphysical premise do not generalise to the epistemic context. And so:

epistemic reasons may be categorical without being metaphysically and epistemologically problematic. This would warrant rejection of the parity premise. (2016, 123)

This yields a mixed view, a combination of epistemic realism and moral irrealism. On this view, we are to admit the existence of objective and categorical reasons, but to deny that any moral reasons are to be found amongst them.

On the other hand, suppose that categorical normative epistemic reasons for belief are not (identical with) evidential support relations. In this case, the

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<sup>9</sup> His exposition here follows that in Cuneo (2007).

<sup>10</sup> For ease of exposition I have substituted 'proposition' (represented by the dummy variable  $p$ ) for Cowie's 'hypothesis' (and his dummy variable  $h$ ).

epistemic existence premise is undermined, according to Cowie, because the error theorist can simply bite the bullet and deny the existence of categorically normative reasons for belief. This means granting that probability raising relations hold between states of affairs, but denying that such facts in themselves entail any conclusions about a subject's reasons for belief. Abe has a reason to form beliefs on the basis of evidence only given her possession of an independent and extra-rational desire to attach credence to beliefs in proportion to their likelihood. This yields a denial of categorical reasons across the board; epistemic and moral irrealism.

This uniformly sceptical position denies the epistemic existence premise of the CG argument. This premise is a conjunction of an existence claim and a conceptual claim. The former is the claim that there are (or must be) some epistemic reasons. The latter is that these reasons are (or must be) categorical. There are therefore two strategies open to the epistemic irrealist. The first of these is to deny that there are any epistemic reasons. This is *epistemic nihilism*. The second is to accept that there are epistemic reasons, but to maintain that they bind on us only hypothetically (in Kant's sense of that term).<sup>11</sup> This is *epistemic subjectivism*. For the sake of argument I will follow Cowie's lead and assume that epistemic nihilism is not a going concern.<sup>12</sup> Epistemic irrealism is then equivalent to epistemic subjectivism.

This leaves us, then with two positions which can be adopted against the CG theorist. On the one hand, there is epistemic realism buttressed by the provision of a non-sceptical reduction of epistemic reasons to non-normative facts. On the other hand, there is epistemic irrealism, in the form of a construal of epistemic reasons as binding only given a subject's interests. Cowie claims that the considerations which support the existence premise with respect to epistemic reasons undermine the parity premise, and *vice versa*. Since the only considerations that support epistemic realism ruin the putative analogy between the epistemic and the moral, the CG defence cannot succeed.

Cowie's Master Argument nicely brings out how daunting the CG theorist's task is. In order for a CG maneuver to be effective one must show both that judgements in moral and epistemic contexts are relatively similar, and that scepticism regarding the latter is not a going concern. Keeping this many balls in the air at once requires significant dexterity.

In order to undertake such a defence, I will argue as follows. Firstly, if the error theorist admits the existence of evidential support relations, she is thereby committed to the existence of categorical epistemic reasons.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the

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<sup>11</sup> This mirrors Cuneo's distinction between epistemic irrealists who deny the content and authority platitudes of epistemic norms, respectively (2007, 36-9).

<sup>12</sup> But see Streumer (2013).

<sup>13</sup> For a related approach see (Evers 2015). Evers notes the possibility of giving a 'non-hypothetical reading' of epistemic conditionals, but does not advance any arguments in favour of such an account. What follows can be understood as an attempt to fill this lacuna.

epistemic existence premise is true. Secondly, like moral reasons, epistemic reasons cannot be reduced any collection of non-normative facts or properties. Thus, the parity premise is true. So, the CG strategy succeeds after all. I will take these points in turn, but with particular focus on establishing the epistemic existence premise. My defence here takes the form of a negative argument: I show that the epistemic existence premise cannot coherently be denied, because we can neither deny that there are epistemic reasons, nor understand such reasons as only hypothetically binding. I then show that the apparent plausibility of epistemic irrealism depends on a mistaken thesis about the relation between mind and world, which (following Putnam) I dub *metaphysical realism*. I leave discussion of the parity premise to §8. There, I argue that both moral and epistemic reasons may (in some sense) be 'grounded in' non-normative facts, but we have no reason to think in either case that it is possible to give a non-sceptical reduction of reasons to their non-normative bases.

My strategy here closely follows Cuneo's, whose pioneering work a decade ago first popularised the CG strategy (Cuneo 2007). However, there are two important differences between my approach and his. Firstly, I emphasise more strongly the role of the Moorean paradox in showing the untenability of epistemic irrealism. Secondly, I tie the defence of moral objectivity to broader metaphysical issues concerning the nature of objectivity. These two points are connected. Cuneo is limited in the use that he can make of the Moorean paradox precisely because he is committed to metaphysical realism. Witness his definition of the moral realist view that he defends:

It is in virtue of a fact's sharing the same 'informational content' as a given proposition that that fact guarantees that the proposition in question is true. Or to put the point in an admittedly more stilted manner: According to the alethic realist's position, for any true proposition that *p*, what the proposition that *p* is a proposition *that* is the same as what the fact *that p* is a fact *that*. It is this phenomenon of proposition and fact sharing the same content that ensures that there is the right sort of satisfaction relation between a particular proposition and fact. (Cuneo 2007, 28)

Although Cuneo is agnostic as to whether the relation between true propositions and facts should be understood in terms of a relation of correspondence, he is clear that propositions are made true solely by virtue of their standing in a particular relation (viz., 'sharing the same content') with the world. This is metaphysical realism in essence. As a result of his commitment to this view he is forced to see the Moorean paradox as arising from the commitments of the speech-act of assertion (Cuneo 2007, 43). Since there is no contradiction in A's believing that *p* when *p* is false, if there is a contradiction in A's asserting the conjunction of these facts then that must be a product of the rules of assertion.

This view prompts the objection that, by arguing from the commitments of our speech acts to the existence of entities which can function as truth makers for the propositions embedded in them, Cuneo is gaining ontological

commitments too cheaply. By contrast, the reason that the Moorean paradox fascinated Wittgenstein was not that it teaches us something about the 'commitments of our discourse,' but rather that it teaches us something about the nature of content itself (Wittgenstein 1972; Winch 1998). The moral of the Moorean paradox, I will suggest, is that it calls into question the metaphysical realist's picture of content, according to which content is something that is born by propositions, themselves understood as abstract entities which can be understood without reference to the attitudes of their bearer.

### 3. Indifferent Judgers and Moore's Paradox

Before turning to broader issues concerning metaphysical realism, we must first examine the role that the Moorean paradox plays in the defence of the epistemic existence premise. To hold that ESRs exist but do not entail categorical reasons for belief means holding that the relation between facts (including probability raising facts) and beliefs is dependent on the interests of the subject in question. In Cowie's terms, facts provide us with 'non-normative,' 'institutional' reasons for forming beliefs. These are like "the reasons associated with games and sports, etiquette and the law" (2016, 121) which are supposed to apply to an individual only given their possession of a relevant interest in them.<sup>14</sup> On this view, the existence of an ESR in favour of  $p$  provides grounds to believe that  $p$  only given that this entailment is consistent with the interests of the judger. It would be coherent for one to possess evidence for a proposition but no reason to believe it – if one were to have no "reason to engage in the business of believing (the truth) with respect to that proposition." (Cowie 2016, 121) This view is not unique to Cowie. Sharon Street gives a similar account:

Assume, for example, that all previously encountered tigers were (...) carnivorous. My claim will be that the status of this fact as a normative reason to believe that the next tiger will also be carnivorous ultimately depends on our evaluative attitudes, and in particular on the evaluative attitudes of the agent whose normative reasons are in question. (Street 2009, 218)

Cowie's rejection of the epistemic existence premise depends on the feasibility of construing epistemic norms in these terms. On this view, ESRs provide reasons for belief only given a suitable evaluative profile on the part of the believer. This profile must be independent of both the ESR and the belief, such that it would be possible for there to be an individual in relevantly similar circumstances who has access to the same ESR but who lacks any corresponding reason. The evidence that this person has for a given belief provides them with no normative guidance as to its appropriateness. If they are reflective, they may

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<sup>14</sup> Cowie implies that the members of this group are similar with respect to their normative force. Accordingly, in what follows I will take the norms inherent in games to be representative of the broader class of 'institutional norms' as a whole. Should the irrealist take issue with this, the burden is on them to specify in what the disanalogy consists.

say to themselves “*e* counts in favour of *p*, but since I don’t care about it, I have no reason to believe it.” Call this person the *indifferent judge*. The feasibility of an irrealist construal of belief depends on our being able to vindicate the possibility of such a figure.

Such vindication is immediately rendered problematic by the apparent contradiction in accepting something’s being evidence without taking it to have reason-giving force. Just as there is something amiss in accepting the truth of a claim but refusing to believe it, there seems to be something amiss in accepting evidence for a proposition without granting that one has reason to believe it. The indifferent judge thus exemplifies an analogue of the Moorean ‘absurdity’ of an individual who sincerely judges “*p* but I don’t believe it” (Moore 1942, 540–543). In the case of evidence, the analogous claim is as follows:

(E) I have evidence *e* that *p*, but I have no reason to believe it.

The challenge for the irrealist is then to defuse the challenge posed by (E) in a way which validates the possibility of the indifferent judge. At the outset it should be noted that (E) is in fact more troubling than the typical Moorean statement. The reason that Moore calls his observation a ‘paradox’ is that the state of affairs picked out by the absurd statement (*viz.*, someone’s falsely believing that *p*) is easily conceivable. (This in turn makes it seem that the problem has something to do with the self-attribution of beliefs, or to do with semantics or pragmatics of belief assertions.) By contrast, one may doubt whether (E) expresses a possible state of affairs at all. While the relation between belief and truth is such that it is uncontroversial that a subject can believe that *p* when *p* is not the case, it is unclear whether it is possible to have evidence that *p* without reason to believe it. The irrealist’s defence must therefore involve two steps. Firstly, they must show that (E) expresses a conceivable state of affairs. Secondly, they must account for the absurdity of (E) in terms of practical rather than theoretical failure.<sup>15</sup> Let us take these in turn.

#### 4. The Nature of Evidence

We have seen that a defence of epistemic irrealism must begin with a demonstration that (E) refers to a possible state of affairs. Two such demonstrations may be discerned. The first proceeds by appeal to intuition – cases can be constructed where it seems natural to say that a subject has evidence for *p* but no reason to believe it. The second proceeds by appeal to the (supposed) nature of evidence.

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<sup>15</sup> See (Green and Williams 2007, ch.1) for this distinction in the context of Moorean sentences and for a useful overview of the different approaches to the problem.



Irrealists often point to so-called 'trivial truths' as evidence for the conceivability of (E).<sup>16</sup> A trivial truth is a true judgement, belief in which has no practical relevance for a given individual (Treanor 2012). (What truths count as trivial will therefore depend on both the nature of the truth and the interests of the subject, relative to their circumstances.) Someone might have evidence for a trivial truth, but no interest in believing it. This is put forward as an instance of someone's being in the situation described by (E).

It is undeniable that truths can be more or less interesting, and as such will legitimately command an individual's attention to varying degrees. There are two lessons we can draw from this fact. The first is that world's being as it is does not in itself give the agent a reason to judge of it that it is that way. Things do not somehow 'call out' for acknowledgement.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, inquiry is not a process of simply registering facts about the world, without discrimination due to interest or inclination. The claims we make and interrogate, and the evidence we gather and test, are affected by factors which are peculiar to us as both human beings and individuals.

But we can accept these points without conceding that the existence of trivial truths proves that (E) is conceivable. A realist ought to dig their heels in at this point and insist that if a subject has evidence for  $p$  then *ipso facto* they have an interest in believing it, whether they would recognize that interest or not. If interests were not objective in this sense, it is hard to see how we could avoid unpalatable conclusions such as that a child with no interest in mathematics has no reason to believe that  $2+2=4$ . Thus, the insights to be found in the example of trivial truths are best captured in a realistic construal of epistemic norms, as follows: although it is up to the subject whether or not to investigate whether  $p$  is true, if she has  $e$  that  $p$  then (it is an objective fact that) she has a reason to believe it.<sup>18</sup>

Changing tack, an irrealist may try to argue to (E) from the supposed nature of evidence. The underlying thought here is contained in the irrealist's definition of ESRs as objective (probability raising) relations that hold between states of affairs. This innocuous looking phrase implies that there is an equivalence between the statements "there is evidence  $e$  for  $p$ " and "the state of affairs picked out by  $e$  stands in a probability raising relation to the state of affairs picked out by  $p$ ." In this formulation, reference to a subject is conspicuous by its absence. Evidential relations are subsumed under a quasi-causal model, as

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<sup>16</sup> This is somewhat of a misnomer since this is not the logician's sense of 'trivial'. Rather, truths are 'trivial' in the relevant sense if they are pieces of trivia, i.e. uninformative or uninteresting.

<sup>17</sup> This is what Street calls the denial of 'Cliffordian normativity' (2009, 218-221).

<sup>18</sup> An analogy can be drawn with the moral case, as follows. It is up to the individual whether or not to incur certain special duties, e.g. whether or not to make a promise to someone else. However, once the duty is incurred, it then binds on that individual categorically, without reference to their desires.

relations between states of affairs. From here, what it is to possess a piece of evidence can be defined as follows: A has *e* for *p* iff A stands in a suitable relation of epistemic access to *e* (for instance, its being the case that A would be aware of *e* if she attended to it). On this picture, in judging that there is *e* for *p* we are simply registering a connection that holds between two subject-independent features of the world (two facts). It seems queer to think that such a relation should (uniquely amongst natural relations) be automatically reason-conferring. This therefore licenses the third person analogue of (E):

(E\*) A has *e* for *p* and A has no reason to believe that *p*.

But if (E\*) describes a coherent state of affairs, then the state of affairs in (E) must be coherent also, as A in (E\*) and the first personal pronoun in (E) are co-referring. Thus is the analogy with the Moorean paradox to be secured.

One way to push back against this argument would be to argue that epistemic access relations bring with them categorical norms; in other words, to hold that registering probabilistic connections between facts involves commitment to acting in certain ways.<sup>19</sup> But rather than pursue this possibility, I would rather call into question the account of ESRs as objective relations holding between states of affairs. This account takes for granted that propositions are related to the world in such a way that things, by virtue of being as they are, call for a certain determinate set of judgements. Following Putnam, let's call this view *metaphysical realism*. Without this assumption we could not speak of 'the state of affairs picked out by *p*' as standing in an objective relation with something else. On the metaphysical realist account, truth is a matter of correspondence between two states of affairs; a representing fact (the judgement) and a fact represented (a state of the world).<sup>20</sup>

The fine details of such a picture may vary, but the broad strokes will not, and it is the broad strokes with which I will take exception. The following illustration will therefore suffice for my purposes. Take two states of affairs. To say that these stand in a relation of probabilification is to hold that if the former obtains then the chance of the latter obtaining is modified to some degree *n*, where *n* ranges between 0 (impossible) to 1 (certain). A limiting case of probabilification is entailment, where one state of affairs makes another metaphysically certain. Along with relations of probabilification there are

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<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, McDowell's contention that judgements of matter of fact bring in reasons for action in the activity of conceptualization rather than in their content (1979).

<sup>20</sup> For a contemporary endorsement of this sort of 'correspondence view' (albeit by moral realists) see (Cuneo and Shafer-Landau 2014). Both parties to the contemporary realism/anti-realism debate share a (usually implicit) commitment to both the correspondence view and the metaphysical realism that underwrites it. The implausibility of fitting categorical norms into the world as conceived in metaphysical realist terms leads anti-realists to reject the possibility of categorical normativity. My aim is to show how objectivity may be rehabilitated not through the vindication of a correspondence view but rather through the rejection of the metaphysical realism that makes it seem necessary.

relations of instantiation. According to the picture we are sketching, the instantiation relation is in fact a special case of the entailment relation. Things being as they are instantiates some propositions (i.e. some ways that things can be described as being) and not others. If instantiation relations can be understood as objective relations holding between judgements and states of affairs then we may say that, for a given state of affairs, there is a given class of judgements which are true of it. A complete description of a state of affairs consists of the conjunction of all general descriptions which it instantiates. Each of these judgements will capture some aspect of the state of affairs, potentially relevant to the truth of some judgement with respect to those further states of affairs to which this state stands in a relation of probabilification.<sup>21</sup> In this way we can move from objective relations between states of affairs to objective relations between a given state of affairs and a given class of judgements, and so in turn to a characterisation of evidential support relations in non-subject-involving terms.

On this picture, the obtaining of the fact *all previously encountered tigers were carnivorous* makes it objectively more likely that the fact *this tiger is carnivorous* will obtain.<sup>22</sup> In turn, the obtaining of this latter fact objectively warrants the judgement that "this tiger is carnivorous." Since both connections are objective, there is thus an objective connection holding between the fact that *all previously encountered tigers were carnivorous* and the judgement "this tiger is carnivorous." In this way, the appropriateness of a given factual judgement is determined simply by how the world is, and the role of the judge is confined to making themselves receptive to relations which hold between facts.

With this in place epistemic subjectivism heaves into view, exploiting metaphysical realism's distinction between truth and the norms of truth-tracking. If truth is defined in terms of a content-bearing state's standing in an appropriate relation with the state of the world that answers it, then we are free to see the norms of truth-tracking as garnish; desirable but dependent on the subject's interests.

However, and crucially, this argument for epistemic irrealism turns on an acceptance of metaphysical realism. In the absence of such a commitment there would be no way to move from objective relations between features of the world to objective relations between the world and propositions concerning it. In other words, we will not be warranted in seeing the instantiation relation as a limiting case of entailment. If we reject this conception then the irrealist's conception of evidence falls by the wayside. The conceivability of (E) thus cannot be

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<sup>21</sup> Generalising, we can represent the class of true judgements which this state of affairs instantiates as standing in objective probabilification relations with the total set of all the sets of judgements instantiated by all and only the states of affairs probabilistically related with this one.

<sup>22</sup> I am bracketing here substantial complications to do with the status of facts involving quantification, indexicalisation and temporal reference.

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demonstrated in advance of settling broader controversies surrounding the nature of truth and evidence. So, appeal to (E) in defence of epistemic subjectivism can only beg the question.

## 5. Practical Versus Theoretical

So far I have shown that the conceivability of (E) – and thus the fate of epistemic subjectivism – depends on the truth of metaphysical realism. I now turn to attempts by the epistemic subjectivist to explain the problematic nature of (E) in terms of practical inconsistency. The most promising of these accounts invokes normative requirements that are built into the concept of believing but that do not bear on belief's being a representational state.<sup>23</sup> On this view, it is a criterion of believing that  $p$  that one takes evidence that  $p$  to give one reason to believe it. The introduction and elimination rules for belief simply do not permit the acknowledgement of evidence without its bearing on belief, any more than the rules of chess permit castling through check. But, the irrealist insists, this framework in turn binds on us only because of our interest in it. The requirement that beliefs track truth is, in Street's terminology, merely a 'conceptual' rather than an 'objective' requirement (Street 2009, 243).

What it means to call belief an 'institution' or a 'game' is intimately bound up with this contrast between conceptual and objective requirements. It depends on our being able to see the requirement in question as in some sense non-compulsory; such that an individual, in the same circumstances, might without error comport themselves according to a different rule. One way of expressing this point is to imagine an alternative conceptual scheme with different conceptual requirements, and to demonstrate that the (hypothetical) choice between these two schemes can only be made on pragmatic grounds.

In the case of a game such as chess, that would mean having a variant on chess – call it chess\* – in which (say) castling through check is permitted. In the case of belief it would be for there to be a rival concept of belief – call it belief\* – on which evidence in favour of  $p$  does not provide a subject with a reason to believe\* that  $p$ . If it can be shown that the only grounds for preferring chess over chess\* are pragmatic ones, it would follow that there is no cognitive deficiency in preferring the chess\* concept. And so, *mutatis mutandis*, for belief. In that case, our adherence to belief rather than belief\* could only be justified on practical grounds.<sup>24</sup>

However, chess\* counts as a game only if it can be played, in other words, only if it can be substituted for chess without undermining the status of

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<sup>23</sup> Other approaches include the claim that (E) leads to a kind of pragmatic contradiction arising from the conversational implicatures of assertion. Further elaboration and criticism of such an account can be found in (Heal 1994).

<sup>24</sup> For example, in terms of the greater evolutionary success of beings whose beliefs track evidence (Street 2015, 240).

participants as players of a game. Analogously, belief\* counts as a cognitive state only if it can be substituted for belief in an individual's conceptual repertoire without undermining their status as a thinker. Thus, the plausibility of this irrealist argument turns on the tenability of the belief\* concept. Beliefs\* must represent states of affairs without encoding any norms governing relations between belief and evidence. The belief\* concept is plausible only if there can be a representational state the content of which is settled without reference to the attitudes of the judging subject. And so, the belief\* concept and metaphysical realism stand and fall together.

In this way, both parts of the defence of epistemic subjectivism depend on the truth of metaphysical realism. This should be unsurprising, for in order to deny that the failure in (E) is 'theoretical,' one must either deny the existence of evidential relations entirely, or else slough them off into the realm of the objectual. In this way, the doctrine of (E) as a form of practical failure is simply a variant on the thesis that epistemic access relations are subjective relations, logically derivative on the prior, non-subject-involving relation of something's being evidence for something else.

## 6. Metaphysical Realism and Epistemic Irrealism

We are now in a position to see how epistemic irrealism might be undermined. Here is the argument in a nutshell. If the content of a belief always depends implicitly on the attitudes of the believer (specifically, on what they are willing to countenance as evidence in favour of their belief), then to hold that A has *e* for *p* is to make a claim which is implicitly subject involving: it depends for its truth on A's acceptance of a particular understanding of what counts as *p*. Clarifying the meaning of an utterance means determining more precisely range of circumstances under which it would be true. This fixes in turn what can count as evidence for the proposition. Accordingly, to take *e* to bear on some claim is *inter alia* to endorse one understanding of *p* out of many possible. The norms of evidence are therefore norms of representation. And so the absurdity in (E) stems from its being self-contradictory; to attempt to have a representational state without the norms of representation is to try both to have one's cake and eat it.

This view of content involves the rejection of metaphysical realism, and is supported by arguments that show the implausibility of the metaphysical realist account of content. Recall that the metaphysical realist holds that the content of content-bearing states can be fixed independently of the attitudes of the judger.<sup>25</sup> When a state's content gives it truth conditions, then its being true (or false) is determined entirely by the ordered pair of the properties of the content-bearing state as related to the properties of some state of the world.

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<sup>25</sup> A natural way to imagine this is to think of belief as a sub-personal state of an agent. But we do not have to make this supposition in order to accept the general point.

Bearing this in mind, we can construct an argument against the feasibility of metaphysical realism as follows. Take the judgement that all tigers are carnivorous. Whether it is true depends, *inter alia*, on what is meant by 'tigers.' Suppose that all large cats on earth are carnivorous, but that on Alpha Centauri there lives a species of herbivorous large cats, genetically similar to tigers but evolutionarily unrelated to them. Imagine now that upon returning from a jungle expedition, Abe declares "all tigers are carnivorous." Did she speak truly? This depends on whether the extension of her expression 'tigers' includes all large cats genetically similar to earth-tigers, or whether it includes earth-bound species only.<sup>26</sup>

Determining whether the large cats of Alpha Centauri count as tigers is part of the process of clarifying the content of Abe's belief. How are such matters to be settled? We can imagine two different concepts of 'tiger,' one of which includes space cats within its extension and the other of which excludes them. Before she had encountered Alpha Centauric creatures, Abe could not have had those particular individuals in mind when she made her judgement (Travis 2006, 130-135). She could thus have intended neither to include nor to exclude them from consideration. Hence, no property of Abe at the time of her utterance settles which concept is in play in her judgement.

We can use the very same form of words to express different thoughts on different occasions. In certain circumstances, the thought that Abe expresses with the statement "all tigers are carnivorous" will be such as to turn on the dietary habits of creatures from Alpha Centauri (if, for instance, she forms an extra-terrestrial exploratory team which is then confronted by a hungry looking space-cat.). On other occasions, the thought may turn only on the properties of animals that are closer to home. Her intentions in making the judgement are relevant to determining which thought she expresses, hence whether or not her judgement is true. In this way for any given belief the content of the belief depends in part on the attitudes of the believer, and in particular on what they are willing to countenance, on some particular occasion, as things being as they took them to be.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For an elaboration of this point see (Putnam 1975; Travis 2011, 130-143). Although the case is outlandish, the general insight is not. As Travis puts it: "For any way there *is* for things to be, things being as they are *may*, in point of grammar, count as that way on some understandings of so being and not that way on others." (2011, 135).

<sup>27</sup> See (Travis 2006, 26ff) for an elaboration of this point, in particular: "'is blue' does not, in naming what it does (in speaking of (something's) being coloured blue), acquire the function of being true of things. That is *not* its function. The function it acquires is, rather, that of speaking, on an occasion, of something's being blue when used, on that occasion, as naming what it does. It may do that while functioning as a move in any of indefinitely many language games. Which is, here, just an imagistic way of saying that it may do that while subject to any of indefinitely many mutually incompatible conditions on the correctness (truth) of what is thereby said." (2006, 28-9).

But although Abe's intentions are relevant, they are not decisive. In responses to novel cases we are constrained by our answerability to the community (Travis 2011, 10-12). Not everything can count as a reasonable interpretation of what it is to be a tiger; not everything can count as a reasonable response to a novel case. (Compare: "by 'tiger' I mean 'all felines except those that don't eat meat'.") In judging that  $p$  one incurs normative commitments; namely answerability to shared standards for determining, on a given occasion, whether things being as they are counts as an instance of things being that  $p$  or not.

We have here in highly compressed form a familiar argument for the irreducible normativity of content. The normativity comes from the fact that content is made possible only by virtue of our standing as answerable to the indefinite community of thinkers, as that which ensures that some understandings of the rules by which we proceed are ruled in and others ruled out. The irreducibility comes from the fact that any specification of the extension would be open to a further question of interpretation. If these standards cannot be given a reductive specification, there is no possibility of eliminating normative commitments in the determination of the content, for some given occasion, of the speaker's judgement.<sup>28</sup>

This is a point about the specification of content in the first instance, and not about the relationship between a given belief and evidence that bears on it. But the evidence that counts in favour of a given belief is dependent on the belief's content, in the following way: to specify what counts as things being in accordance with a belief is to delimit what counts as evidence in favour of the belief. If, for instance, we specify that only creatures with appropriate evolutionary links to our paradigm large cats count as tigers, then facts about evolution become evidence that bears on the truth or falsity of the claim that all tigers are carnivorous. *Mutatis mutandis*, if we treat facts about evolution as relevant to settling of an object whether or not it is a tiger, then our concept of tiger is a biological category, such as to rule out of court a stuffed animal of the right appearance counting as an instance of the relevant kind. Thus, to present  $e$  as evidence for  $p$  is to hold that  $p$  ought to be understood in one way rather than another.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> One argument against the possibility of such a reduction runs as follows. A reductive specification of normative standards would lead to an infinite regress: take any specification of a rule for determining whether or not  $p$  holds. We may then ask "what counts as things being in accordance with that rule?" Any further specification will simply invite the same question (Wittgenstein 2009, §185ff.).

<sup>29</sup> This view ought not to be confused with the doctrine of evidentialism, which in its strongest form holds that to believe that  $p$  entails judging oneself to have evidence adequate to the truth that  $p$  and *vice versa*. (Adler 2002: 32) On this view one's evidence exhaustively determines the content of one's beliefs. But this is surely false. It seems clear that one can believe that  $p$ , without having any evidence for the truth of  $p$  and even without having any very clear notion of what could count as evidence for or against  $p$ . This is one of the chief insights of Putnamian

How does this relate to the putative normative requirement that if one accepts that one has evidence for a proposition, then one must take oneself to have a reason to believe it?<sup>30</sup> To present something as evidence is to say that things are a certain way, and that in being that way, they are another way too (if there is a paw print in the mud, then there is a tiger nearby.). Thus in presenting evidence for some claim we fix an understanding of it by endorsing it. This seems to be part and parcel of how evidence works, and explains how it is that we can determine not only the truth of a belief but also its content by interrogating what is to be counted as evidence in favour of it. If this is correct then we cannot hold onto the notion of evidence while suspending commitments to beliefs across the board.

## 7. Belief and Institutional Norms

When Abe encounters Alpha Centauric space cats she learns something new about the world. Suppose that experts agree that these creatures are indeed tigers. Then her knowledge is a discovery about the nature of tigers; namely, that some of them are herbivores.<sup>31</sup> The possibility of this kind of discovery depends on the determination of the extension of our concepts being to some extent out of our own control. This in turn helps to explain why we cannot define the norms of belief as we do institutional norms such as games. In the latter case, the question may, in a given circumstance, arise as to whether a certain state of affairs counts as a violation of a given rule. In such cases, a judgement call will be required. In that respect institutional norms also depend on the attitudes of the participants; rules need to be applied (Wittgenstein 2009, §185ff.). But although there is similarity between the cases in that respect, there are also crucial

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semantic externalism. If meaning were fixed by psychological states (whether of the subject or of the community as a whole), then firstly communication between people with different standards of verification would be impossible, and secondly genuine discoveries about the world would be impossible. See (Diamond 1999) for exposition of this strand in Putnam's work. We could not discover, say, that water is in fact H<sub>2</sub>O since that identity, by changing the methods of verification, would change the meaning. By contrast to Adler, all I am committed to here is the weaker claim that to fix the content of one's belief is to specify what counts as evidence for it, and *vice versa*. This is enough to ensure that possession of a belief entails commitment to a norm of evidence, presuming that there is an internal connection between 'having a belief' and being prepared to specify its content.

<sup>30</sup> Using 'normative requirement' in John Broome's sense. A normative requirement differs from a reason in the following sense: if *e* is not in fact evidence for *p* then one has no reason to believe that *p*, but if one takes something to be evidence for *p* and yet fails to take oneself to have a corresponding reason to believe that *p*, one violates a normative requirement and so is "not as one ought to be'." (Broome 1999)

<sup>31</sup> Compare; learning that water is H<sub>2</sub>O was a discovery about the nature of water. As a result of this discovery our use of the term 'water' changed; we can now distinguish between water and superficially similar liquids (like Twin Earth's XYZ) (Putnam 1975).



differences. One difference which is particularly important is that in the case of a game settlement of novel cases can only proceed through fiat.

Abe thinks that Alpha Centauric cats are tigers; Mie disagrees. There are indefinitely further considerations that each can appeal to in settling the issue; various branches of science, common knowledge, the purpose for which the judgement is being made, and so on. Any particular interpretation of the content of a belief will have knock on effects on other beliefs. Cognitive states ramify indefinitely. Suppose Alpha Centauri large cats have blue coats. Abe is therefore committed (whether consciously or not) to the proposition that some tigers have blue coats. Thus to the proposition that some animals do. And so on. This prevents Abe's reaction to a novel case from being arbitrary. When she decides whether to endorse or abandon her belief, she must weigh up the relative costs and benefits of each option, comparing the losses in terms of disruption to the established order, to benefits in terms of a new capacity for ordering or coping with novel or recalcitrant experiences.<sup>32</sup>

By contrast, suppose that in a game a controversy arises as to the interpretation of a certain rule. Abe thinks that the ball is out of play if caught by a player in the air over the line of touch. Mie disagrees, holding that the ball is only out of play if that player makes contact with the ground out of the field of play. Abe may appeal to any number of considerations in favour of her proposal, for instance that a game played by her rules would be more entertaining. But the only considerations that Mie must accept as relevant to the issue are those provided for by the nature of the game itself, and *a fortiori* these do not settle the issue. If Mie chooses to take Abe's considerations as relevant to the issue at hand, that is a matter of her sentiments – of her sharing with Abe a conception of the importance of the game's being entertaining, or elegant, or what have you. Since neither alternative is forced on either Abe or Mie, neither is vulnerable to the accusation of perversity.<sup>33</sup>

This divergence has knock on effects on the status of disagreements between players of games and between believers, respectively. A disagreement constitutes a problem in a game only if it is a practical impediment to playing

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<sup>32</sup> There are of course a number of different ways of unpacking this holistic requirement. A *locus classicus* is (Quine 1951). But, as Travis (2011, 101) warns, we must be careful not to hold that any belief may be accepted given radical enough changes to surrounding assumptions and come what may. The upshot of this would be to deprive ourselves of the notion of a content to belief (of its being *about* something) entirely. Thus in some (perhaps most) cases, there will be nothing else for an individual to think other than that things are as they appear on face value to be. For attempts to reconcile this role for experience with holism see (Travis 2006, 30; McDowell 1996).

<sup>33</sup> Or, rather, the sense in which one may be accused of 'perversity' changes. One wants to say that in the belief case there is an impersonal necessity which resolves conflicts between disputants. But in the case of a game, human nature may make certain arrangements and not others compelling, and this too may have the force of an 'impersonal necessity' (if, for instance, beings such as us cannot help but find games of this kind compelling).

and, accordingly, the resolution of the issue can only be a pragmatic matter. Suppose Abe and Mie cannot agree about the interpretation of the 'out of play' rule in their game. The resolution of the issue would involve a further specification of the rules to cover problematic cases, for instance: "the ball is deemed out of play only when it touches the ground outside of the field of play." If Abe does not agree to the new rule, then she can go off and form a new group, playing with her own house rules. Abe and Mie would then no longer be disagreeing; they would simply be playing different games.

On the other hand, suppose that Abe and Mie cannot agree over the extension of the concept 'tiger'; over whether that blue coated space-cat counts as a tiger or not, and thus (generalising) over the truth of such claims as that "some tigers have blue coats." There is no analogue to the concept of 'house rules' in this case. Unlike in the case of the game, the possibility of controversy arising between two competent subjects does not call into question it being the case that they are speaking of the same thing.<sup>34</sup> Thus, rather than settling controversies before conversation can proceed, points of controversy become points of conversation. Even if the discussants conclude that they mean two separate things by 'tiger,' and resolve by disambiguating, neither goes off to "play their own game." Rather, both senses are incorporated into their common conceptual repertoire.<sup>35</sup>

These disanalogies cast doubt on the adequacy of an account of the norms of belief as merely 'conceptual' requirements. The deployment and refinement of a game's concepts can only ultimately be justified by reference to our own amusement. In the case of beliefs about the world, the deployment and refinement of our concepts is geared towards the growth of a subject's understanding. And this difference, in turn, explains the different status enjoyed by normative requirements in the two contexts.<sup>36</sup>

This concludes my defence of the epistemic existence premise. I have tried to show that the irrealist is tacitly endorsing the following principle: either the world, solely in virtue of being as it is, gives us reasons to make certain judgements and not others, or else the norms governing the making of judgements are merely subjective. I have argued that the correct response to this challenge is not to try to rehabilitate the notion of an 'objective forcing' (understood in the irrealist's terms) but rather to deny the dichotomy. Then, we may say that although the world alone does not make any particular judgement

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<sup>34</sup> This raises difficult issues concerning the limits of the analogy between languages and games. See (Wittgenstein 2009, §1ff.; Rhees 1959). A relevant point here is that we can speak of translation between languages whereas we do not talk about translation between games.

<sup>35</sup> This is part of the process by which we grow in understanding through conversation; a phenomenon which has no analogue in the case of a game (Rhees 1959).

<sup>36</sup> Thus games are constrained by the laws of nature, but are not answerable to them. A legitimate move in a computer game may involve a character within the game violating the laws of physics.

obligatory, it doesn't follow that the choice of whether or not to hold a certain belief on some given occasion is dependent on the subject's interests.

On the rival picture that I have (very roughly) sketched, things, in being as they are, give us neither a categorical nor a hypothetical reason to form any particular belief, because any way for things to be is, in principle, consistent with a range of different and mutually exclusive beliefs.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, there is a relation between the world's being as it is and our beliefs, as follows: when the question of whether or not to endorse a particular belief is opened, or when the world, in being as it is, is taken as evidence for a certain belief, then whether to form or maintain that belief is not dependent on the subject's interests. Things being as they are, given the background on which the judgement occurs, delimits the range of beliefs appropriate to it. If we are lucky it may even determine, exclusively, one belief or set of beliefs as the only ones that can reasonably be held. As Putnam stresses, this determination depends on both the discretion of the subject and their background of shared commitments. But to depend on the discretion of the subject is not the same as being relative to the subject's interests, for the scope of the subject's discretion is constrained by the overall aim of understanding.<sup>38</sup>

## 8. Reduction and Grounding

This brings us, finally, to the argument in favour of the parity premise. Here, we can take a shorter line. Recall that the 'Master Argument' takes the form of a dilemma. Its two horns represent two kinds of moral irrealist. Those who choose the first horn deny the existence of categorically normative reasons across the board. Those who choose the second horn are committed to the existence of some categorically normative reasons, but refuse to include moral reasons amongst that class. We have already seen that the former position is untenable; the denial of the existence of categorical reasons for belief is self-contradictory.

That leaves, then, the latter position. This view is concessive in that it accepts that categoricity *per se* is not a bar to the objectivity of a given judgement, so long as that judgement possesses some further feature to render it unproblematic. In this case, the further feature, apparently possessed by

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<sup>37</sup> Nor is there a reason to form some belief (understood non-specifically), as the case of trivial truths shows us.

<sup>38</sup> Of course, a comprehensive defence of the Putnam-Travis view would have to do more. In particular it would have to address the following two concerns. Firstly, cases can be constructed where it seems that an individual has a belief even though nothing would count as evidence for or against it (belief in God may be an example of this.). Secondly, it may be urged that animals can form beliefs about their environment even though they lack the ability to reflect on the evidence base of their beliefs or on its content. If the Putnam-Travis view is correct an explanation must be given of these cases which is consistent with the claim that there is an internal relation between a state's being representational and the judger's commitment to evidential norms.

epistemic but not moral judgements is the possession of a suitable 'reductive-base'; epistemic reasons can be reduced to some collection of non-normative facts or properties.<sup>39</sup>

I suspect that only a tacit acceptance of metaphysical realism could make a reduction of epistemic norms seem feasible. Reasons are relational properties, one term of which is a (judging or acting) subject. Probabilification relations that hold between two facts or states of affairs make no reference to subjects. For this reason, any account of the former in terms of the latter would seem of necessity to be incomplete.<sup>40</sup> The only grounds for holding that reasons for belief can be defined in terms of probabilities that hold between states of affairs, it seems, is a prior conviction that reality can be exhaustively characterised in terms of a collection of mere happenings. But, as Putnam himself has long urged, it is hard to see how that picture could make room for the notions of judgement or truth at all (Putnam 1981, ch.2).

There is a second problem for this form of concessive irrealism, related to the first. As Heathwood notes, if we were to pull off a reduction of epistemic reasons to collections of non-normative facts, the upshot would seem to be scepticism about epistemic normativity:

If epistemic normativity is characterizable in purely descriptive terms, this suggests that, in some sense, epistemic normativity is not *real* normativity. If some belief is unreasonable, we do not *really have* to stop holding it. True, it would be epistemically irrational not to, but this is to say no more than that the belief is not likely to be true; it is not to say that we *really must* stop believing it. (Heathwood 2009, 96)<sup>41</sup>

In this way, the postulation of a reduction-base for epistemic norms sets us back into either nihilism or subjectivism, both of which are non-starters. An awareness of this danger may explain the ambivalence that error theorists sometimes display towards the prospect of providing a 'reductive-base' for epistemic norms. It is sometimes suggested that the relevant relation may be not 'reduction' but 'grounding'. But an explanation is then owed of the nature of this 'grounding' and its relevance to the metaphysical premise of the error theory. For, many, if not most, moral realists will accept that moral norms are (in some sense) grounded in natural facts. For instance, most moral realists accept at least a weak form of supervenience, according to which there can be no change in the

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<sup>39</sup> One such reduction, suggested by Chris Heathwood and endorsed by Cowie, is an account of epistemic reasons as facts about likelihoods, themselves characterisable in non-normative terms (Heathwood 2009, 92).

<sup>40</sup> This point is obscured by Cowie's use of the concepts of 'evidence' and 'hypothesis,' both of which make implicit reference to a subject, and are, for that reason, not fit candidates to feature in a naturalistic account of probabilities.

<sup>41</sup> Note, however, that Heathwood himself does not find a denial of the reality of epistemic norms troubling.

distribution of moral properties without a corresponding change in the distribution of natural properties.<sup>42</sup>

In conclusion, in the absence of a satisfactory account of the 'reductive base' of epistemic norms, the concessive error theoretic position fails to mark out any relevant distinction between epistemic and moral reasons. It therefore fails to provide grounds for rejecting the existence of the latter. In other words, the parity premise is secure.

## 9. Conclusion

For the reasons canvassed above, Cowie's 'Master Argument' against the CG strategy is unsuccessful. But there is a broader moral here. The point of the CG defence is to bring our standards for objectivity back to earth, by showing to be overly demanding the metaphysical strictures upon which the irrealist relies. Cowie thinks that the irrealist can avoid this charge, either by 'biting the bullet' and denying the existence of categorical reasons for belief, or else by finding some further, metaphysically reassuring feature unique to epistemic reasons. I have shown that both of these responses rely on the same questionable metaphysical picture of what it takes for a judgement to be objectively true. What is really doing the work in the CG argument is thus an underlying debate about the relationship between the world and our judgements about it. Once this is accepted, we will see that there is no need to head off into the hills in pursuit of some further metaphysically reassuring feature possessed by moral reasons. No metaphysical reassurance will be forthcoming, but none is required.

What, then, ought we say about the relation between ESRs and categorical epistemic reasons – are they identical, or not? The question conflates identity as understood at the level of types and at the level of tokens. There is no type-identity between ESRs and categorical reasons for belief, and thus no possibility of reducing one category to the other. However, there may be an identity that holds between token instances of ESRs and categorical reasons, as follows: if *e* provides evidential support for *p*, then for a suitably placed subject, *that very fact* is a categorical reason in favour of their believing that *p*. But this identity holds only given an understanding of *p*, which is an occasion-sensitive matter. In this way the subject, in meaning their words, transforms facts into reasons.

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<sup>42</sup> This is a very rough statement of supervenience; for a more careful discussion see (Shafer Landau 2003, ch.4).

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# THE PROMETHEUS CHALLENGE REDUX

Arnold Cusmariu

**Abstract:** Following up on its predecessor in this *Journal*, the article defends philosophy as a guide to making and analyzing art; identifies Cubist solutions to the Prometheus Challenge, including a novel analysis of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)*; defines a new concept of aesthetic attitude; proves the compatibility of Prometheus Challenge artworks with logic; and explains why Plato would have welcomed such artworks in his ideal state.

**Keywords:** aesthetic attitude, Cubism, Impressionism, Locke, mimesis, Monet, perceptual relativity, Picasso, Plato, primary and secondary qualities.

## First, Some Explanatory Background

**Question:** Cusmariu 2017 gave the impression that your artwork consists only of sculptures that meet the Prometheus Challenge. Is this impression correct?

**Answer:** No. Below are four pieces I made after learning stone carving at the Art League School in Alexandria, Virginia in 1998. *Family* was made the same year as *Counterpoint 1*. The transition to Mereological sculpture and a new paradigm occurred in a matter of months.



**Question:** What considerations guided the sculptures you created before applying philosophical theories such as Phenomenalism and Mereology?

**Answer:** I realized very early that sculpture could go in a new direction based on an elementary fact about vision: what we see depends on where we stand. That is, objects such as tables and chairs present one appearance from one viewing

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angle and a different appearance from another viewing angle.<sup>1</sup> This fact is not a cause for confusion. There is no need to walk all the way around a car, for example, to make sure that it is a car or that it is the same car. This lead to the following argument.<sup>2</sup>

### Argument A

A1. The appearance an ordinary object *X* presents at any viewing angle is consistent with the concept of *X*.

A2. If the appearance *X* presents at any viewing angle is consistent with the concept of *X*, the appearance *X* presents at a specific viewing angle is a basis for inferring appearances not presented at that viewing angle.

Therefore,

A3. The appearance an ordinary object *X* presents at a specific viewing angle is a basis for inferring appearances not presented at that viewing angle.

While figurative sculptures such as Michelangelo's *David* and abstract sculptures such as Archipenko's *Woman Combing Her Hair* are not ordinary objects, nevertheless, A1 and A2 are true of them and the argument to A3 goes through.

Moreover, it became fairly obvious that A3 has an aesthetic counterpart that is true of traditional as well as modern sculpture.

A3\*. Aesthetic attributes of the appearance an art object presents at a specific viewing angle are a basis for inferring aesthetic attributes of appearances not presented at that viewing angle.

The question at this point became whether sculpture could be composed such that A3 and A3\* were not true of them.

**Question:** Would you illustrate with examples?

**Answer:** *Bagatelle I* and *Bagatelle II* are my earliest experiments in perceptual relativity.

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of perceptual relativity can be traced as far back as Plato's *Republic*, specifically 598a5-a8 (Cooper 1997, 1202). See the section below on Plato's critique of art.

<sup>2</sup> Standard lighting conditions may be assumed for purposes of this argument. I realize that this assumption raises complications in the analysis of Cubist artworks where light is an aesthetic factor in its own right but they are not relevant to Prometheus Challenge artworks analyzed here and in Cusmariu 2017.



Thus, physical and aesthetic attributes of View-Ia are not inferable from those of View-Ib and vice-versa. The same is true of View-IIa and View-IIb.

**Question:** Did you make stone sculptures that built on the Bagatelles?

**Answer:** Yes. It is easy to see that A3 and A3\* do not hold for the two views of *Cleo* (2001) and *Nici* (2002), which are 180 degrees of arc apart.



**Question:** What other arguments define your Prometheus Challenge sculptures?

**Answer:** Arguments B and C express key aspects of these sculptures.

### Argument B

B1. If the appearances objects present are treated singly, their physical and aesthetic attributes can be treated singly.

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B2. If physical and aesthetic attributes are treated singly, one set of physical and aesthetic attributes can be apparent at one viewing angle and an incompatible set of attributes can be apparent at another viewing angle.

Therefore,

B3. If the appearances objects present are treated singly, one set of physical and aesthetic attributes can be apparent at one viewing angle and an incompatible set of attributes can be apparent at another viewing angle.

B4. In Phenomenalist and Mereological sculptures, appearances presented are treated singly.

Therefore,

B5. In Phenomenalist and Mereological sculptures, one set of physical and aesthetic attributes can be apparent at one viewing angle and an incompatible set of attributes can be apparent at another viewing angle.

## Argument C

C1. If  $X$  is an ordinary physical object, the appearances  $X$  presents displayed on a rotating carousel form a continuous set.

C2. The appearances Phenomenalist and Mereological sculptures present displayed a rotating carousel do not form a continuous set.

Therefore,

C3. Phenomenalist and Mereological sculptures are not ordinary physical objects.

## Philosophy as a Guide to Art and its Analysis

**Question:** In the abstract of Cusmariu 2017, you stated that you were able to make progress in sculpture thanks to philosophical analysis, which you described as “probably a first in the history of art” (Cusmariu 2017, 17). Were you implying that no other analytic philosophers have produced art?

**Answer:** No. I was aware that two analytic philosophers, Arthur Danto and Keith Lehrer, had also produced art – paintings and drawings. Danto worked on aesthetics and was also an art critic. He came to Brown for a talk when I was in graduate school. Lehrer is also a Brown Ph.D. Danto’s artwork can be viewed at [http://artcollection.wayne.edu/exhibitions/REIMAGINING\\_SPIRIT.php](http://artcollection.wayne.edu/exhibitions/REIMAGINING_SPIRIT.php) and Lehrer’s at <http://www.keithlehrer.com/>. As far as I could determine, their artwork does not reflect identifiable theories of analytic philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

**Question:** While it is surprising that analytic philosophers who made art apparently did not find it necessary or useful to look to their own discipline for

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<sup>3</sup> In 1927, Wittgenstein carved a terra cotta statue of a young girl’s head that likewise does not reflect any philosophical theories or the influence of developments in 20<sup>th</sup> century sculpture such as Cubism. An image of this sculpture can be seen at <http://www.flashq.org/pix/sculptur.jpg>. Accessed 24 August 2017.

guidance, the fact that artists have not done so is not surprising. What is your explanation?

**Answer:** Reasons such as the following may be cited:

- Artists have expressed serious doubts that philosophy can yield anything they would consider useful or even relevant.

Tristan Tzara (1951, 248), chief provocateur of the Dada avant-garde, pointedly asked: "What good have the philosophers done us? Have they helped us to take a single step forward?" Barnett Newman went even further. Speaking in 1952 at the Fourth Annual Woodstock Conference, Newman famously quipped: "Aesthetics is for me like ornithology must be for the birds," adding that he considered "the artist and the aesthetician to be mutually exclusive terms." Anatole France (1895, 219) rejected the legitimacy of aesthetics on grounds that intellectual reasoning could never provide a basis for preferring one aesthetic judgment to another, adding "*les œuvres que tout le monde admire sont celles que personne n'examine.*" (The works that everyone admires are those that no one studies.) Wallace Stevens (1981, 488) poked not-so-gentle fun at "... the swarming activities of the formulae ... a philosopher practicing scales on his piano."

- Familiarizing non-philosophers with the increasingly technical contexts of philosophy is not considered a high priority in academia.

Philosophy departments offer courses in the philosophy *of* art and occasionally philosophy *through* art but not philosophy *for* artists explaining how art can be *based on* philosophy. The divide between art and philosophy is especially wide in the case of what has come to be called, since the publication of Bertrand Russell's "On Denoting" in 1905, analytic philosophy. Artists will find Russell's analysis of "the so-and-so is *F*" utterly mystifying, likewise the puzzles (Russell's term) it was intended to solve. Other key achievements will not fare any better, e.g., Tarski's semantic conception of truth (Tarski 1944); Wittgenstein's private language argument (Wittgenstein 1953); Quine's critique of the analytic-synthetic distinction (Quine 1951); and Kripke's attack on the identity theory of mind (Kripke 1980). The fact that most artists would find these milestones inaccessible does not lessen their significance, of course, but it is a strong indication that the conceptual divide between art and analytic philosophy is not easily bridged.<sup>4</sup>

- Logic, analysis and methodology in general are often seen as detrimental to the creative process in art.

The author of a book on Henry Moore reportedly offered to share his analysis with the sculptor, who demurred – the 'paralysis by analysis' syndrome that professional athletes also dread. Here is Tzara again, in the context of explaining Dada (Tzara 1989, 250): "There is no logic ... Any attempt to conciliate an inexplicable momentary state with logic strikes me as a boring kind

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<sup>4</sup> An attempt by the conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth to bridge this gap is discussed below.

of game.” Kandinsky went even further (Lindsay and Vergo 1982, 827): “Nothing is more dangerous in art than to arrive at a ‘manner of expression’ by logical conclusions. My advice, then, is to mistrust logic in art.” In a 1964 interview (Merkert 1986, 166), David Smith stated “I think the minute I see a rule or a method or an introduction to success in some direction, I’m quick to leave it – or I want to leave it.” The first of Sol LeWitt’s “Sentences on Conceptual Art” (LeWitt 1973, 75-6) reads: “Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach.” In “Lamia,” Keats famously wrote (Keats 2001 [1820], 205):

... Do not all charms fly  
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?  
... Philosophy will clip an Angel’s wings  
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,  
Empty the haunted air ...  
Unweave a rainbow.

- Philosophers themselves have rejected the idea that, to be worth studying, their subject must show practical impact.

The following comments exemplify the point regarding aesthetics:

(Bosanquet 1892, xi): “Aesthetic theory is a branch of philosophy, and exists for the sake of knowledge and not as guide to practice. ... It is important to insist that the aesthetic philosopher does not commit the impertinence of invading the artist’s domain with an *apparatus belli* of critical principles and precepts.”

(Carritt 1914, 3): “Philosophical reflection upon our activities proposes neither an improvement of them nor a final formula which will save us from exercising them. It proposes simply to think about those activities, and the process of thinking is the valuable result. Aesthetics is for aesthetics’ sake.”

(Vivas 1955, 192): “Contemporary aesthetics tends to be an autonomous discipline concerned chiefly with problems of philosophic method and with epistemological issues, and to ignore the problems of criticism and the contemporary situation in art.”

- Expanding on Vivas’ comment, no philosophical discipline considers it to be within its purview to provide even basic conceptual guidance to artists.

The sort of analysis undertaken here and in Cusmariu 2009, 2015A, 2015B, 2016 and 2017 is without precedent.<sup>5</sup> While books and articles on philosophical

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<sup>5</sup> It would take us too far afield to determine the extent to which (if any) philosophical theories influenced other writers on art and as such might have preceded my efforts. I must leave for another time analysis of Arthur Danto’s contributions to art criticism, (e.g., 1988, 1997, 2005), who was a philosopher as well as an art critic; or the writings of influential art critics who were not philosophers such as Leo Steinberg (1972), Meyer Shapiro (1978 and 1997), Robert Hughes (1980), and Clement Greenberg (1961 and 1999). From a methodological point of view, however, my precedent claim is justified. Art criticism, including Danto’s, is descriptive and sometimes critical but not argumentative in the formal logical sense exemplified by, for

aesthetics discuss metaphysical issues such as the ontology of artworks and the meaning or justification of aesthetic judgments, philosophers consider it inappropriate to offer conceptual guidance to artists, not even by way of suggestions as to where artists might look if they wished to 'get smart' on what philosophy has to offer.

**Question:** What about David Smith's comment (Merkert 1986, 166) that "the minute I see a rule or method, I'm quick to leave it."?

**Answer:** The French poet Charles Baudelaire is closer to my way of thinking on the matter. As he famously remarked (1976 [1863], 715), "everything that is beautiful and noble is the result of reason and calculation." Phenomenalism and Mereology are relevant to sculpture as conceptual guidance on how to think about physical objects, not as 'rules or methods' on how to make art. Sculpture should find such guidance valuable. After all, it is about creating objects with aesthetic properties.

**Question:** What about Sol LeWitt's comment that "conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists"; that such artists "leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach," which seems to be amplifying the point that Tzara was trying to make?

**Answer:** We should not confuse the process of discovery with its outcome. Just because the process of discovery often does not follow a predictable sequence of steps logically related to one another, does not mean that logic cannot fathom the discovery itself.

There may well be a sense in which LeWitt followed a path in creating his artworks that is not easily explainable in rational terms. The outcome, however, is predictably geometric. Moreover, placing his structures (as he called them) on a construction site might well render them indistinguishable from materials already there such as scaffolding or neatly stacked piles of iron bars. Not only that, the structures show an extremely rudimentary understanding of mereology's aesthetic potential, which is also true of Donald Judd's piles of bricks. David Smith's steel volumes welded on top of one another at various angles are mereologically superior to LeWitt's grids and Judd's bricks but are still relatively elementary explorations of Mereology's aesthetic potential.

**Question:** You would have to agree with Kandinsky that your sculptures exemplifying discontinuous attributes and interweaving forms owe their 'manner of expression' to philosophical theories about physical objects grounded in logic, such as Phenomenalism and Mereology (P&M), respectively. How would you persuade him that logic has not thereby set a 'dangerous' precedent in art and should not be 'mistrusted'?<sup>6</sup>

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example, Arguments A-C above; or theoretical to the degree exemplified here and my other cited work.

<sup>6</sup> Kandinsky studied law and economics at the University of Moscow in the late 1880s and eventually became a professor. What exposure to logic he may have had is unclear; most likely Aristotelian logic. It is also unclear whether he studied philosophy at any point.

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**Answer:** Kandinsky's concerns can be allayed by noting that P&M sculptures block key physical and aesthetic inferences, of which there are three types: (a) within a single sculpture belonging to either solution category; (b) across sculptures within either solution category; and (c) across sculptures belonging to different solution categories.

**Question:** Would you illustrate each type with specific examples?

**Answer:**



(a) Physical and aesthetic attributes in *Alar-1* & 2 are not inferable from one another. This is also true of *Peace-1* & 2, *Counterpoint-2a* & 2b and *Counterpoint-4a* & 4b.

(b) The transition from wing to flame in *Alar-1* to *Alar-2* does not imply the transition from wing to bird in *Peace-1* to *Peace-2*. Likewise, the transition from the interweaving forms of *Counterpoint-2a* to those of *Counterpoint-2b* does not imply the transition from the interweaving forms of *Counterpoint-4a* to those of *Counterpoint-4b*.



(c) We are justified in generalizing and stating that the design of discontinuous attribute sculptures does not imply the design of interweaving form sculptures, and vice versa. This is not surprising because Phenomenalism and Mereology are not equivalent theories.

These points also address Tzara's concern that logic in art would be 'a boring kind of game.' Sculptures based on theories about physical objects from analytic philosophy certainly do not come across as 'a philosopher practicing scales on his piano' (Stevens); nor is it the case that 'all charms fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy' (Keats.) There is nothing boringly repetitive or dry-as-dust about them; there is not even a hint of a (predictable) distinctive style, which is often associated with a specific artist.

On the other hand, with all due respect, Henry Moore's reclining figures and Alexander Calder's mobiles are such that 'if you've seen one, you've seen them all.' Inferences from what is seen to what is not seen easily go through each time. If I may put it this way, the aesthetic 'delta' from one piece to the next is remarkably small.<sup>7</sup>

**Question:** Degas, Manet, Dali, Picasso and Lipchitz proved that incompatible attributes can be combined in an artwork without explicit awareness of the concepts and techniques involved. Isn't this true?

**Answer:** Yes, but ... Degas and Manet each made only one painting that applied mirror imaging. Dali made none<sup>8</sup> and only a few seeing-as pictures.<sup>9</sup> Lipchitz's output was prodigious but he made only one seeing-as sculpture. None of his Cubist sculptures meet the Prometheus Challenge.<sup>10</sup> Picasso produced only one other seeing-as sculpture, *Goat Skull and Bottle* (1951)<sup>11</sup> and only very few that meet the challenge, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907) being the most famous (see next section).

The real issue is whether more Prometheus Challenge artworks would have been created had artists been aware of the concepts and techniques involved instead of going entirely by talent and intuition. I believe so. I see no reasons why what was true of me couldn't be true of others as well.

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<sup>7</sup> Compare Henry Moore's *Reclining Figure 1936*, which can be seen at <https://gerryco23.wordpress.com/2011/08/19/the-hepworth-wakefield/henry-moore-reclining-figure-1936/> with one made more than thirty years later, *Reclining Figure 1969-70*, which can be seen at <https://static01.nyt.com/images/2016/04/05/arts/05COLUMBIA-web/05COLUMBIA-web-jumbo.jpg>.

<sup>8</sup> Dali's use of mirrors in a 1971 stereoscopic experiment does not solve the Prometheus Challenge. Image available at <https://www.salvador-dali.org/en/museums/dali-theatre-museum-in-figueres/the-collection/124/dali-seen-from-the-back-painting-gala-from-the-back-eternalized-by-six-virtual-corneas-provisionally-reflected-by-six-real-mirrors>. Accessed 5 July, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> See Descharnes and Néret 2013.

<sup>10</sup> See Wilkinson 1996 and Wilkinson 2000.

<sup>11</sup> See Spiess 1971, 178 for a photo of *Goat Skull and Bottle*.

**Question:** The conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth claims to have found useful guidance in analytic philosophy (Harrison & Wood 2003, 852-860). What about that?

**Answer:** While I applaud the effort, it is evidently possible to pick the wrong guidance or misunderstand it, as the following passages from Kosuth's essay "Art after Philosophy" show.

(Harrison and Wood 2003, 857): Works of art are analytic propositions. That is, if viewed within their context – as art – they provide no information whatsoever about any matter of fact. A work of art is a tautology in that it is a presentation of the artist's intention, that is, he is saying that that particular work of art is art, which means, is a definition of art. Thus, that it is art is true a priori (which is what Judd means when he states that 'if someone calls it art, it's art') ... To repeat, what art has in common with logic and mathematics is that it is a tautology; i.e., the 'art idea' (or 'work') and art are the same and can be appreciated as art without going outside the context of art for verification.

There is only space to indicate some of the problems with these comments.

- As the main philosophical source for his views, Kosuth uses A.J. Ayer's book *Language, Truth and Logic*, which he cites in a footnote but without giving the publication date (Harrison and Wood 2003, 860.) Thus, he fails to mention that he is quoting from a 1952 reprint of the 1946 second edition in which, with typical British understatement, Ayer admits (1952, 5) that he had underestimated the difficulty of the questions addressed in his 1936 first edition.
- Kosuth either was unaware or simply ignored the fact that by 1969, when his article was published, logical positivism had been battered by decades of criticism and was dead. Second, Quine 1951 presented serious objections to the analytic-synthetic distinction, one of the 'two dogmas of empiricism.' Third, Ayer held (1952, 113) that aesthetic judgments "express certain feelings and evoke a certain response" and would not have agreed with Kosuth's use of 'analytic,' 'tautology' and 'a priori' to characterize aesthetic judgments. Fourth, Kosuth's application of these terms to aesthetic judgments is non-standard and as such is philosophically suspect. Finally, quoting the views of a philosopher as the last word on an issue, e.g., "as Ayer has stated" (Harrison and Wood 2003, 858), is appealing to an authority that no philosopher would ever claim to possess.
- Kosuth's 'copy-paste' approach is naïve to say the least. Correct application of philosophical concepts to artmaking requires technical competence in the subject as well as awareness of the larger

controversies at stake. If Kosuth's conceptual art is based on logical positivism, so much the worse for it.<sup>12</sup>

**Question:** Okay, logical positivism is a dead end in art. What other philosophical theories can help artists 'take a step forward'?

**Answer:** As already noted, philosophical theories about physical objects such as Phenomenalism and Mereology make possible a sort of physical deconstruction of objects, which is but a short step from the sort of aesthetic deconstruction at the foundation of much modern art. Awareness of these theories would have enabled artists to move in new and exciting directions much earlier, independently of meeting the Prometheus Challenge.<sup>13</sup>

Potentially fruitful guidance from other philosophical sources can be cited as well – beginning, in fact, with Plato. For example, I show below in the section on Plato's critique of art that he was aware of perceptual relativity and made a point that has since become the merest commonplace in figurative art: the focus is on how objects appear; specifically, how they appear to the artist. As Argument B above showed, from this it is only a short step to taking the appearances objects present singly, as entities in their own right, and then combine them to produce artworks that no longer exemplify correspondence to reality – which explains much modern art. Artists could have gotten away much sooner from the mimetic, 'copy' mentality Plato criticized.<sup>14</sup>

Artistic guidance could have been obtained from Plato's solution to the problem of universals, his Theory of Forms.<sup>15</sup> The sharp ontological distinction between existence and exemplification has an aesthetic counterpart: artists can

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<sup>12</sup> Evidently thinking he was being original, the art critic Jacques Rivière wrote in 1912 (Harrison and Wood 2003, 191): "The knowledge we have of an object is, as I said before, a complex sum of perceptions."

<sup>13</sup> In an article titled "Art and Objecthood" (Harrison and Wood 2003, 835-846), Michael Fried never mentions philosophical theories about objecthood, nor does he define "objecthood." Philosophers have grappled for a long time with questions about the nature of substance, the distinction between substance and attribute, the relation between substance and attribute, the nature of attributes, and so on. In analytic philosophy, these questions quickly become technical and require advanced training to even comprehend. Second-order logic makes precise quantification over properties and relations. See Shapiro 2000.

<sup>14</sup> As far as I have been able to determine, artists have not attempted to deal with Plato's critique of art, certainly nothing comparable to Elizabethan poet Philip Sidney's celebrated *An Apology for Poetry* (Katherine Duncan-Jones 2009 [1583]). For example, the voluminous collection of Kandisky's writings on art, which is nearly 1,000-pages long, does not even mention Plato in the index (Lindsay and Vergo 1982, 922). The same is true of Motherwell 1951, a 400-page volume that includes selected writings of Tristan Tzara and other Dada painters and poets. Marius Hentea's biography of Tzara (Hentea 2014) also makes no mention of Plato. I have not found evidence that Tzara ever read philosophy books.

<sup>15</sup> In a 1912 essay (Harrison and Wood 2003, 188), Guillaume Apollinaire observed: "The young painters offer us works that are more cerebral than sensual. They are moving further and further away from the old art of optical illusions and literal proportions, in order to express the grandeur of metaphysical forms."

treat properties as entities in their own right and then combine them without exemplifying correspondence to reality.

Awareness of later philosophical developments such as the distinction between primary and secondary properties<sup>16</sup> (Locke 1924 [1690], Berkeley 1979 [1713], Nolan 2011) and Kant's critique of it<sup>17</sup> would have enabled painters to 'take a step forward' much sooner in their treatment of picture space. Primary properties such as shape and volume can be treated for artistic purposes as if they were secondary properties, the paradigm case being color, which became an end in itself in modern art.

**Question:** What specific philosophical theories can shed new light on key developments in art other than Phenomenalism and Mereology?<sup>18</sup>

**Answer:** Berkeley's understanding of the distinction between primary and secondary properties can be used to explain several developments.

- In *Impression, Sunrise* (1872), from which Impressionism derived its name, Monet did away with the centuries-old concept of a painting as a line drawing with color on it. He defined primary properties such as the shape and size of his boats and the space between them by means of patches of color.<sup>19</sup>
- Following Monet's lead, Seurat used thousands of tiny colored points to define the contents of picture space, including shape, distance, and perspective.
- In his landscapes, Cezanne also defined picture space by means of secondary properties, though his color patches are more sharply defined than Monet's.
- Rothko's multiforms push the relationship between color and space to the point of synonymy, as do paintings of other abstract expressionists such as Pollock.

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<sup>16</sup> As drawn by Berkeley (but not by Locke), the distinction is between properties that are said to "exist really in bodies" (primary) and properties that are said to "exist nowhere but in the mind" (Berkeley 1979, 22, First Dialog). The sweetness of honey is secondary while its viscosity is primary.

<sup>17</sup> Kant (1950 [1783], 37) rejected Locke's distinction, writing (original italics) "*all the properties which constitute the intuition of a body belong merely its appearance.*" A careful analysis of Kant's contributions to metaphysics and epistemology is Van Cleve 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Danto writes (2005, 152): "Giacometti was passionate about philosophical conversation but mainly about the phenomenology of perception. We used to discuss Bertrand Russell's idea that physical objects are logical constructions out of sense data." Giacometti's *Walking Man* sculpture series, for which he is most famous, seem to me to exemplify Solipsism rather than Phenomenalism.

<sup>19</sup> The cubist painter Fernand Leger (1881-1955) would have agreed with my analysis of Impressionism, writing (Harrison and Wood 2003, 202-3): "For the impressionists, a green apple and a red rug is no longer the relationship between two objects, but the relationship between two tones, a green and a red."

**Question:** What specific criteria would you use to argue that your Prometheus Challenge artworks that apply philosophical theories represent 'a step forward?'

**Answer:** Here are two criteria relative to the *Counterpoint* series: (1) whether the interweaving forms concept has been productive; (2) whether there is discernible progress from one artwork to the next in regard to basic aesthetic criteria such as composition and execution.

The productiveness of the interweaving-forms concept is easy to show. There are photos of ten *Counterpoint* sculptures in the Appendix of Cusmariu 2017 (47). I have seven more sculptures in the works, of which three have been completed. Seventeen artworks (three more to come) based on the same philosophical theory is evidence of productivity perhaps comparable to series of sculptures by artists such as Lipchitz's *Variation on a Chisel* (Wilkinson 2000, 53-57) and Smith's *Cubi* (Merkert 1986, 95-97).

As to discernible progress, let us compare photos of *Counterpoint 2* (C2, left) and *Counterpoint 10* (C10, right), made only about a year apart in 2002 and 2003.



The level of skill required to carve (and polish) C10 is significantly greater. C10 includes a lot more figures. C2 figures are all vertical but that is not the case in C10, which means more and more difficult compositional problems had to be solved. C2 figures appear locked in an embrace as the principal relationship, whereas the relationships exemplified in C10 are much more varied and there are more of them. C10 combines figurative as well as abstract volumes, whereas C2 volumes are largely figurative. Grain and color were fairly uniform in C2 but that proved not to be the case when I started to carve C10, which posed additional problems. These comparisons will yield similar conclusions about discernible aesthetic progress in other *Counterpoint* sculptures.

## Cubism and the Prometheus Challenge

**Question:** Does Picasso's 1907 masterpiece *Les Femmes d'Alger*<sup>20</sup> (LDA), which is considered to have launched Cubism, meet the Prometheus Challenge?

**Answer:** Yes. I only realized this while working on this article.

- It is now possible to answer correctly for the first time a fundamental question about LDA that sheds new light on this famous picture.
- I disagree with Arthur Danto that "nobody really understands it [LDA]" (2005 [2001], 124). Prometheus Challenge analysis does that.
- I disagree with Danto that "nobody is even able to say whether it is a success or a failure" (2005 [2001], 124).
- I disagree with Clement Greenberg that "[t]he *Femmes d'Alger*, superb as it is, lacks conclusive unity" (1961, 63).
- LDA is more than a success; it is a *tour de force*. The Prometheus Challenge is met by means of several solution types: mirror-imaging, image overlapping and seeing-as vision, giving the picture an extraordinary degree of 'conclusive unity.'
- I disagree with received opinion concerning LDA's alleged resemblance to pictures by Cezanne (*Les Grandes Baigneuses*), El Greco (*Opening of the Fifth Seal*) and Matisse (*Le Bonheur de Vivre*), the last of which is supposed to have prompted Picasso to paint LDA. As a Spanish painter, Picasso most likely saw himself in competition not with two Frenchmen and a Greek but rather with his compatriot Velazquez and his most famous picture, *Las Meninas* (1656). LDA gives 'las meninas,' 'ladies in waiting,' an entirely different meaning.

The basic question that has yet to be answered correctly is this:

### ***How many figures does LDA show?***

Danto summarized the standard answer (2005 [2001], 124):<sup>21</sup>

Here are five women in all – three classical figures to the viewer's left, two masked women to the right, one of them, her back to us, squatting.

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<sup>20</sup> Though completed in 1907, LDA went on public display in 1916. It is now at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and can be viewed online at <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79766?locale=en>.

<sup>21</sup> The standard answer may also be found in the following: Andersen 2002, ix; Blereau 2015, 14; Bois 2001, 37, 48; Chave 1994, 599; Cohen 2015, 25; Fry 1966, 12-15; Garb 2001, 55, 56; Gersh-Nešić 2015, 17; Golding 1988, 33-49; Golding 2001, 22, 26; Green 2001A, 5; Green 2001B, 129, 134, 135; Leighten 2001, 93; Lomas 2001, 104; Richardson 1996, 11; Rosenbloom 2001, 15; Rubin 1994, 69; curator Ann Temkin on the Museum of Modern Art website <https://www.moma.org/>; and Wikipedia.

### An Internalist<sup>22</sup> Analysis: Six Figures

*LDA* combines as well as anticipates several techniques exemplified in later Picasso pictures that meet the Prometheus Challenge.

- *The Three Dancers* (1925) contained an ambiguity in the middle figure that required special vision to detect (Cusmariu 2017, 34).
- *Bust of a Young Woman* (1926) shows overlapping images and shared body parts (Cusmariu 2017, 27).
- *Girl before A Mirror* (1932) used mirroring to show images inconsistent with one another and with the concept of mirroring itself (Cusmariu 2017, 27).

The number of figures *LDA* shows has been misunderstood because a key detail of the squatting figure has been misunderstood. The detail concerns what appears as the head of the figure, which has been interpreted as a 'mask' by Danto and many others. There are three sources of incompatibility here and as such three possible solutions to the Prometheus Challenge.

Incompatibility A: The head belongs to a customer in the act of having sex with the prostitute on top of him, her body completely obscuring his. A male head 'glued' atop a female body creates a jarring incompatibility and also comments on the revolting nature of bordello sex. The woman is shown without a head and the man with only a head. The implication is that neither is 'all there' as copulation is taking place.

Incompatibility B: The head is a mirror image of a customer sitting in a chair outside picture space trying to decide which prostitute to pick. Judging by the man's bewildered look, he is either a first-time visitor and dreads the experience ahead, or else is revolted by the appearance of the women available. The head bears some resemblance to Picasso as he looked in his 1907 self-portrait (currently at the National Gallery of the Czech Republic in Prague), who was known to have frequented bordellos.

Incompatibility C: The head image is ambiguous, being an overlapping male-female composite. To see the female aspect, block the right eye (on the viewer's left) and then compare the result with the head of the right-most figure, whose face appears scarred by venereal disease: The slope of the nose, the jaw line and the mouth all match.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Internalism in art criticism is what others have called formalism, i.e., an artwork is to be interpreted in terms of its aesthetic properties. Zangwill 2001 and Mitrović 2011 discuss formalism in aesthetics.

<sup>23</sup> Brassai 1999 [1964], 32 asks whether African art played a role in the creation of *LDA* and answers on behalf of Picasso that the painter saw African sculptures "only after he had completed the canvas."

### An Externalist<sup>24</sup> Analysis: Two Figures

Here is an analysis of *LDA* unrelated to the Prometheus Challenge based on the Christian doctrine of The Fall of Man (Genesis 3).

Eve is a prostitute in the Garden of Eden bordello, a postlapsarian 'fallen world.' On left, she is the welcoming madam holding open the curtain. The two nubile figures in the center are Eve using her charms to lure Adam. Next, Eve's face is scarred by venereal disease as punishment for biting the apple. As the squatting figure, she is servicing Adam trapped under her, his face distorted in climax.<sup>25</sup> In the foreground is a medley of forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. The serpent has slithered away.<sup>26</sup>

**Question:** Can you cite other Cubist solutions to the Prometheus Challenge?

**Answer:** Let us have a look at two Cubist artworks exemplifying image overlapping by Jean Metzinger (1883-1956). Metzinger was also a prominent art theorist (see Harrison and Wood 2003, 184-85, 194-201.)

Painted in 1913, Metzinger's *Woman with a Fan* is at the Art Institute of Chicago and can be seen at <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/9527> (accessed 19 September 2017).<sup>27</sup>

- Several views of a woman are superimposed a few degrees of arc apart.
- In the foreground view, she is shown in profile wearing a bowler hat, a heavy overcoat, and a colorful tie.
- In the middle-ground view, her head has been rotated clockwise slightly toward the light source. The right eye is shared with the foreground view, as are the lips. Wavy hair is now visible on left.
- In the background view, her head has been rotated clockwise again until she faces the viewer, some 90 degrees of arc away from the profile view. The wavy hair is now in upper right.

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<sup>24</sup> Externalist art criticism asserts the conditional "if non-aesthetic factors (psychoanalytic, political, social, religious, historical, etc.) are assumed, artwork *X* means *Y*." *Modus tollens* can show that the antecedent of this conditional is problematic by showing that "artwork *X* means *Y*" is problematic for various reasons, e.g., inconsistency with the artist's stated or implied intent. Outlandish forms of externalist art criticism are skewered effectively in Kimball 2004. The deeper issue is whether externalist art criticism commits the Naturalistic Fallacy (Moore 1903).

<sup>25</sup> Brassai writes (1999 [1964], 223): "Art is never chaste,' he [Picasso] tells me one day."

<sup>26</sup> This interpretation is consistent with Picasso's rebellious nature. He lived to be 91 and flouted a lot more than artistic conventions during his long life.

<sup>27</sup> Metzinger superimposed images a few degrees of arc apart in three other pictures: *Woman at the Window* (1912), *Nude in Front of a Mirror* (1912), and *The Smoker* (1914). Metzinger was a Pointillist early on, e.g., *Nude in a Landscape* (1905), *Woman with a Hat* (1906), and *Bacchante* (1906).



- The three views also share clothing attributes, e.g., the hat, the coat, and the fan.
- The three views could be superimposed over one another as animation cells and 'flipped' to simulate motion, resulting in a dynamic picture.

Painted in 1916, Metzinger's *Lady at Her Dressing Table* is in a private collection and can be seen at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Femme\\_au\\_miroir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Femme_au_miroir) (accessed 19 September 2017.)

- A woman standing in front of a dressing table and holding a mirror appears simultaneously clothed and unclothed – note the bellybutton.
- Her left breast is seen from the front and from the side simultaneously.
- The right side of her face is flat and seems to be a mirror reflection, while the left side reflects the colors of her clothing.
- The rectangular shoulders and cylindrical neck contrast and are incompatible with the slender and realistically painted arms.
- Overlap between images associated with the woman and background shapes serves to provide balance and aesthetic unity.

### The Prometheus Challenge and the Aesthetic Attitude

**Question:** Is there a difference between the experience of perceiving artworks such as sculptures and the experience of perceiving ordinary physical objects? If so, is this difference to be described in terms of adopting an aesthetic attitude? How do you respond to objections to the effect that the aesthetic attitude is a myth?

**Answer:** George Dickie's critique of the aesthetic attitude in his well-known paper (Dickie 1960) seems to have withstood the test of time according to one recent writer (Zemach 1997, 33). Here is Dickie's case stated in proper argument form:

1. The aesthetic attitude has been defined in terms of 'distancing,' the mental state of 'being distanced,' and the mental state of 'disinterested attention.'
2. 'Distancing,' 'being distanced' and 'disinterested attention' mean nothing more than ignoring sources of distraction and focusing on the matter at hand – a play, a painting, a poem, a piece of music, and so on.
3. Therefore, adopting an aesthetic attitude means nothing more than ignoring sources of distraction and focusing attention on, or paying attention to, the matter at hand – a play, a painting, a poem, a piece of music, and so on.
4. If adopting an aesthetic attitude means nothing more than ignoring sources of distraction and focusing attention on, or paying attention to, the matter at hand, then, any sentence about adopting an aesthetic attitude can be paraphrased into an equivalent sentence in which the term 'aesthetic' only has non-aesthetic meaning.

5. If any sentence about adopting an aesthetic attitude can be paraphrased into an equivalent sentence in which the term 'aesthetic' only has non-aesthetic meaning, then, belief in an aesthetic attitude is a myth.
6. Therefore, belief in an aesthetic attitude is a myth.

Let us link this argument structure to comments Dickie makes in the course of making his case.

Step 1 is based on Dickie's summary (56) of the way attitude theorists such as Sheila Dawson (Dawson 1961) and Jerome Stolnitz (Stolnitz 1960) defined 'aesthetic attitude.' Step 2 is based on Dickie's analysis of the concepts "distancing" and "being distanced" (57) and on his analysis of the concept "disinterested attention" (58). Step 3 follows logically from Steps 1 and 2. Dickie does not assert Step 4, though he hints at it in his comment (64) that "the aesthetic attitude collapses into simple attention." Dickie also does not assert Step 5, though it is needed to validly infer Step 6.

One way to deal with this argument is to note that 'one man's *modus ponens* is another man's *modus tollens*.' Accordingly, here is an equally valid argument that starts with the negation of Dickie's final conclusion, step 6:

- 1\*. It is not the case that belief in an aesthetic attitude is a myth.
- 2\*. Therefore, it is not the case that any sentence about adopting an aesthetic attitude can be paraphrased into an equivalent sentence in which the term 'aesthetic' only has non-aesthetic meaning – from 1\* and 5 by *modus tollens*.
- 3\*. Therefore, it is not the case that adopting an aesthetic attitude means nothing more than ignoring sources of distraction and focusing attention on, or paying attention to, the matter at hand – from 2\* and 4 by *modus tollens*.
- 4\*. Therefore, 3 is false. 1 or 2 or both are also false.

This strategy is moot unless it is shown that the argument from 1\* to 4\* is sound.

A basic distinction in the philosophy of mind is between an act (in the occurrent or the dispositional sense) and the object it is directed upon. Leaving aside whether the mental is the physical, we may legitimately speak of a mental act, such as perceiving, as distinct in some sense from a physical object, such as a tree, that the act of perceiving happens to be directed upon. Similarly, we may legitimately speak of the mental act, such as focusing attention, as distinct in some sense from the physical object or event that the act of focusing attention happens to be directed upon.

Regardless of one's theory about the nature of perception, it can be acknowledged that 'perceiving an object *X*' is shorthand for 'perceiving some property *F* that *X* has.' Similarly, focusing attention on an object or event *X*, at least in part, can be understood as shorthand for focusing attention on some property *F* that *X* has.

We can focus attention on aesthetic as well as non-aesthetic objects and events. Likewise, we can focus attention on aesthetic as well as non-aesthetic

properties of an object or event. For example, if one is focusing attention on the way compositional details are related to one another in a painting, one is focusing attention on an aesthetic property of a painting; while focusing attention on the relative height of the actors on the stage is focusing attention on a non-aesthetic property of the performance of a play.

Under what conditions is the act of focusing attention, which is neutral taken in the abstract, uniquely aesthetic? The answer seems to be that the act of focusing attention on an object or event is uniquely aesthetic provided that it is directed upon the aesthetic properties of an object or event to the exclusion of other properties. This leads to an intuitive account of adopting a uniquely aesthetic attitude toward an object or event: It means focusing attention on aesthetic properties to the exclusion of other properties the object or event may have.

So, on this understanding of 'uniquely aesthetic attitude,' we have the following:

- Premise 3\* is true because adopting a uniquely aesthetic attitude toward an object or event means more than 'ignoring sources of distraction and focusing attention on the matter at hand.'
- Premise 2\* is true because sentences about adopting a uniquely aesthetic attitude in the sense just explained cannot be paraphrased into an equivalent sentence in which the term 'aesthetic' only has non-aesthetic meaning.
- Finally, the aesthetic attitude as understood here does not entail 'disinterested attention' as some theorists have suggested. On the contrary, adopting a uniquely aesthetic attitude in my sense entails focusing attention on the aesthetic properties of an object or event to the exclusion of other properties.

Note that adopting a uniquely aesthetic attitude toward sculptures that meet the Prometheus Challenge is conceptually more complex. This is the case because special vision is required to focus attention on the aesthetic properties of such sculptures, namely, directional vision or seeing-as vision (or both), to the exclusion of other properties they might have.

Here is the definition of 'adopting a uniquely aesthetic attitude' I am proposing:

Person *S* adopts a uniquely aesthetic attitude toward *X* =df Either (a) *S* focuses attention on aesthetic attributes of *X* by means of standard perception, ignoring other properties *X* might have,<sup>28</sup> or (b) *S* focuses attention on aesthetic attributes of *X* by means of special perception such as directional vision or seeing-as vision (or both), ignoring other properties *X* might have, including

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<sup>28</sup> For a Platonic concept of aesthetic vision in the context of film analysis, see Cusmariu 2015B, 109-111.

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aesthetic properties on which attention could be focused without special perception.<sup>29</sup>

Someone sympathetic to Dickie's critique might respond that this definition must further specify what it means to focus attention on aesthetic properties, otherwise it is incomplete. For present purposes, however, operating at an intuitive level is sufficient.<sup>30</sup>

**Question:** What about Vincent Tomas' version of the aesthetic attitude, i.e., his concept of aesthetic vision (Tomas 1959)?

**Answer:** Capturing aesthetic content by means of seeing-as vision refutes Vincent Tomas' view on the nature of aesthetic vision. Here are two key passages:

When we see things aesthetically our attention is directed toward appearances and we do not particularly notice the thing that presents the appearance, nor do we care what, if anything, it is that appears. Put somewhat differently, in aesthetic vision the 'what' or 'aesthetic object' that we attend to when, as Schopenhauer says, we look 'simply and solely at the *what*,' is an appearance, and the question of reality does not arise (Tomas 1959, 53).

In every case of aesthetic vision, what is attended to is an appearance, and the question of what actual object – a picture, a mirror, or a man – presents that appearance does not arise (Tomas 1959, 58).

In *Slave Market with the Disappearing Bust of Voltaire*, Dali was only suggesting we are seeing images of Voltaire and two women. But from this it does not follow that "the question of reality does not arise" when we attempt to capture the aesthetic content of this picture. Dali put Voltaire's name in the title for a reason, so "the question what actual object presents that appearance" does indeed "arise." We should and do "care what it is that appears."

The aesthetic content of this and every other picture Dali made exemplifying the same kind of ambiguity cannot be captured by looking "simply and solely at the *what*." We must *see* the women's dresses *as* Voltaire's neck and vice-versa, as well as *see-as* the many other ambiguous details Dali put into this picture.

Seeing-as vision is indeed a form of aesthetic vision, as is directional vision. What else would they be, considering that they are necessary for the purpose of capturing the aesthetic content of works by Picasso, Dali and Lipchitz as well as my own?<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> This view of the aesthetic attitude assumes that there are such things as aesthetic properties (and relations). A defense of this position can be found in Cusmariu 2016.

<sup>30</sup> See Cusmariu 2016 for refutations of attempts to dispense with aesthetic properties.

<sup>31</sup> The Picasso, Dali and Lipchitz artworks under discussion all predate Tomas' article, so he had ample opportunity to test his views. None are mentioned in his article as potential counterexamples.

## Laws of Logic and the Prometheus Challenge

**Question:** Characterizing the Prometheus Challenge as combining incompatible attributes seems to suggest that artworks that meet the challenge assert that contradictions are in some sense true, which would be an undesirable consequence. How do you avoid this consequence?

**Answer:** Let us consider the six solution categories in turn and show that none assert that contradictions can be true.<sup>32</sup>

### Category 1, Mirror Imaging

- On my interpretation, the male mirror image in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (LDA) is not, inconsistently, intended to be literally glued atop the image of the crouching female figure. Rather, this is a compositional device meant to suggest the presence of someone outside the picture space looking at the women inside it.
- Degas, Manet and Picasso combined incompatibilities between base and mirror images to make psychological points. They were not suggesting that the concept of mirroring and the relationship between base and mirror images shown in their pictures correspond to reality.

### Category 2, Image Overlapping

- As noted above, a male head atop a female body in LDA is also not intended as a literal depiction. Overlapping body parts suggest disembodied figures by way of commentary on the revolting nature of bordello sex.
- Also as noted above, seeing-as vision is required to notice the fact that the head on top of the croucher is an ambiguous male-female composite and serves to identify the two sexual partners.
- Image overlapping in the Walter, Maar and Roque pictures conveys a psychological reality rather than a physical one. Picasso is showing how he perceived his relationship these three very different women and how they perceived their relationship to him. He was famous for being brutally honest in his artwork, even if it meant portraying himself and the people he loved in an unfavorable light.

### Category 3, Seeing-As Vision

Ambiguity is a simple way of dispelling the appearance of inconsistency. To cite a famous example from art, consider Magritte's painting *Treachery of Images* (1929), showing a pipe with an inscription underneath that reads "Ceci nest pas

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<sup>32</sup> In logic, the operative concept is 'inconsistent sentence,' which has a syntactic and a semantic meaning. Such technical subtleties do not matter for present purposes.

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une pipe” (“This is not a pipe.”)<sup>33</sup> The inscription will seem contradictory until it is realized that the demonstrative pronoun is ambiguous. ‘This’ can be taken to refer to the pipe in the picture, in which case the inscription is false; or it can be taken to refer to the fact that we are looking at a picture of the pipe, in which case the inscription is true. Magritte clearly meant the latter.<sup>34</sup> Once the ambiguity is realized, the appearance of paradox disappears.

Artworks requiring seeing-as vision to capture aesthetic content are ambiguous in the same way. Thus, Dali was not suggesting in *The Image Disappears* that a woman’s breast can literally be a man’s nostril; Picasso was not suggesting in *Bull’s Head* that a bicycle’s handlebars could literally be a bull’s horn; Lipchitz was not suggesting in *Mother and Child, II* that a child’s legs could literally be a bull’s ears; and I was not suggesting in *Ariel* that a ball a seal was balancing could literally be a person’s head. Visual ambiguity is exemplified in all these cases; contradictions are not being asserted as true. This is realized once special vision is applied.

#### Category 4, Directional Vision

Directional vision removes the appearance of contradiction by requiring viewers to shift focus from one direction to another. Once they do so, ambiguity becomes apparent.

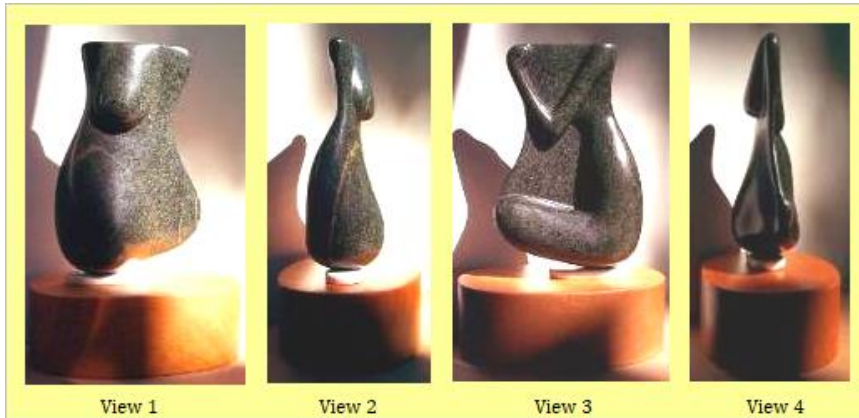
*My Prometheus* (left) suggested pride if seen from left to right and horror if seen from right to left. Both cannot be seen at the same time, so there is no inconsistency. Similar points apply to my *Leda* (middle) and my *David* (right).



<sup>33</sup> Image available at <http://collections.lacma.org/node/239578>, accessed 3 July 2017.

<sup>34</sup> For Magritte’s comments on this painting, see Torczyner (1979, 71).

Category 5, Discontinuous Attributes



Sense data are necessarily indexed to a perceiver at a time. The four views of *Eve* were shown as a sequence for the purpose of explaining a concept. The images were taken one after the other 45 degrees of arc apart and thus do not correspond to simultaneous sense data. Thus, I was not implying that *Eve* is simultaneously pregnant (View 2) and not pregnant (View1); or holding an apple (View 3) and not holding an apple (View 4). Discontinuous attributes sculptures do not assert that contradictions can be true. Moreover, because the sculpture is best viewed on a rotating carousel and is thus an event, incompatible events are being viewed sequentially and not simultaneously.

Category 6, Interweaving Forms

The appearance of contradiction can be dispelled by recalling that sculptures under this solution require seeing-as and directional vision to capture aesthetic content. The reliance of these modes of vision on ambiguity means that contradictions are not being asserted. *Counterpoint* sculptures are best viewed on a rotating carousel.

**Plato's Critique of Art and the Prometheus Challenge<sup>35</sup>**

**Question:** Would Plato have banned Prometheus Challenge art from his ideal state?

**Answer:** As a metaphysical Platonist,<sup>36</sup> I could neither ignore nor postpone this question. However, I am able to answer it here only for my own Prometheus Challenge artworks.

<sup>35</sup> There is a large and growing literature on this topic. See, *inter alia*, Tate 1928, Grube 1980 [1935], Verdenius 1949, Golden 1975, and Janaway 1995. Janaway's book has an excellent bibliography. I will not be engaging in any sort of polemic with other interpretations or make an extensive effort to justify my own.

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Here is an outline of what I take to be Plato's argument against art in Book X of *Republic* (Cooper 1997, 1199-1223):

1. Art has property *M*.
2. Experiences of viewing something that has property *M* have consequence *H*.

Therefore,

3. Experiences of viewing art have consequence *H* – from 1, 2.
4. If experiences of viewing art have consequence *H*, then experiences of viewing art taken collectively probably would damage the health and welfare of the ideal state.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore,

5. Experiences of viewing art taken collectively probably would damage the health and welfare of the ideal state – from 3, 4.
6. If experiences of viewing art taken collectively probably would damage the health and welfare of the ideal state, then experiences of viewing art should be banned in the ideal state.

Therefore,

7. Experiences of viewing art should be banned in the ideal state – from 5, 6.

This outline makes it easier to understand what Plato found problematic and how he suggested the problem should be handled in his ideal state.

First, the outline makes clear that Plato's critique of art is not aimed at art as such.<sup>38</sup> After all, art that no one ever sees is causally inert. Thus, the argument could not have used (2\*) instead of (2) because (2\*) is false:

- 2\* Something that has property *M* has consequence *H*.

Second, it is also clear that *H* is unlikely to have the sort of impact that premise (4) claims if 'viewing' means sporadic, isolated or otherwise limited exposure to art, e.g., artist colonies and the like. Thus, Plato must be taken to argue that harmful consequences would arise at the societal level only if art (a) were to be made available to the general public and (b) unrestricted viewership

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<sup>36</sup> My interest in Plato's metaphysics began in graduate school and led to a Ph.D. dissertation at Brown University in 1977 titled "A Platonist Theory of Properties." Material from the dissertation eventually became journal articles. See Cusmariu 1978A, 1978B, 1978C, 1979A, 1979B, 1980, 1985 and 2016.

<sup>37</sup> As Grube points out (1980 [1935], 189), the critique of art is aimed at legislating for the ideal state envisioned in *Republic*, which "exists in theory, [not] anywhere on earth." (Cooper 1997, 1199, 592b)

<sup>38</sup> Art training in drawing could be useful in architecture and building construction, while stone carving could be useful in masonry. They would not be banned in the ideal state.



was permitted. It is this that the ideal state must prevent by passing laws banning displays of art. Plato, in effect, advocates censorship.<sup>39</sup>

**Question:** What are M and H?

**Answer:** M is mimesis. H is epistemic harm that Plato argues is caused by exposure to M.

**Question:** What is mimetic art?

**Answer:** Here are some relevant passages from Book X of Republic:

Yet, in a certain way, the painter does make a bed, doesn't he?

Yes, he makes the appearance of one. (*Republic* 596e8-9, Cooper 1997, 1200)

Now, consider this. We say that a maker of an image – an imitator – knows nothing about that which is but only about its appearance. Isn't that so?

Yes. (*Republic* 601b7-c2, Cooper 1997, 1205)

Then what do you think [a painter] does to a bed?

He imitates it. He is an imitator of what others make. (*Republic* 597d8-9, Cooper 1997, 1201)

If you look at a bed from the side or the front or from anywhere else is it a different bed each time? Or does it only appear different, without being at all different? And is that also the case with other things?

That's the way it is – it appears different without being so. (*Republic* 598a5-a8, Cooper 1997, 1202)

Then consider this very point: What does painting do in each case? Does it imitate that which is as it is, or does it imitate that which appears as it appears? Is it an imitation of appearances or of truth?

Of appearances. (*Republic* 598a9-b3, Cooper 1997, 1202)

These passages suggest the following definition applicable to visual mimetic art:<sup>40</sup>

D1. A work of visual art *W* about *X* is mimetic-1 =df *W* is a representation<sup>41</sup> of the appearance *X* presents.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Movies also have consequence *H* even though this "river of shadows" (Solnit 2004) is by and large intended as entertainment. For Platonist themes in the context of film, see Cusumariu 2015B.

<sup>40</sup> However, Janaway writes (1995, 106): "We cannot hope for a single definition of mimesis covering all uses Plato makes of the term."

<sup>41</sup> The term 'representation' covers more examples of visual art and is therefore preferable to Plato's term 'imitation.' Defining 'representation' is too complicated to be attempted here.

<sup>42</sup> *X* could be a real or a fictional object and the appearance represented in *W* might not be contemporaneous with the date of *W*. Thus, historical or religious artworks as well as artworks depicting fictional objects can be mimetic according to D1. *W* could be about multiple objects and still be mimetic. See D2 below.

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**Question:** Why not define mimetic art in terms of resemblance or approximation with respect to how an object appears rather than representation?

**Answer:** Here is that definition:

D1\*. A work of visual art *W* about *X* is mimetic-1\* =df *W* resembles or approximates the appearance *X* presents.

This won't do. (a) Plato's paradigm case of *mimesis* is 'copy' or 'imitation' in part because 'art is a copy of a copy' entails 'art is twice removed from the truth' but does not entail 'art resembles a copy'; (b) it is unclear whether viewing 'resemblance art' would have consequence *H*; hence, (c) should be banned in the ideal state.

**Question:** Are your Prometheus Challenge artworks mimetic according to D1?

**Answer:** There are four categories of solutions to consider.

### Category 1. Seeing-As Vision



*Ariel* can be seen-as a seal and also as a spectator at the circus. Neither is (or was intended to be) a representation of the appearance a seal or a circus spectator presents. I used visual ambiguity to suggest that viewers consider circumstances in which they are prone to 'act like a trained seal.' My other seeing-as sculpture, *Swan Lake*, is also not D1-mimetic because no swan presents an appearance that includes the wake it leaves behind gliding on a lake as part of its body.

### Category 2. Directional Vision



My *Prometheus* and my *David* are abstract art, so D1 does not apply. *Leda* is based on Greek mythology. The attributes apparent from opposite directions – before the swan (Zeus) from left-to-right, and months later from right-to-left – cannot meaningfully be said to be representations of the appearance of a mythological being. The two views at most resemble the female figure in profile, which does not mean that *Leda* is D1-mimetic.

### Category 3. Discontinuous Attributes

Phenomenalist sculptures are obviously not D1-mimetic. However, perhaps a definition of *mimesis* for such sculptures can be formulated that is consistent with Plato's paradigm case of mimetic art.

D2. A sculpture *W* is mimetic-2 =df Sense-data in *W* correspond to sense-data associated with familiar objects of experience.

It might seem that a Phenomenalist sculpture such as *Alar* satisfies D2.



However, 'correspond' cannot be understood literally here. The views shown only suggest association with familiar sense data under an interpretation. Views 1-4 do not literally correspond to sense-data associated with actual bird wings, while View 5 does not literally correspond to sense-data associated with a blade of fire. Real wings consist of feathers attached to bones linked together in various ways and do not literally look like what we see in Views 1-4. These views are an artist's concept of a wing rather than strict correspondence in the 'copy' sense Plato intends. The same is true of View 5: A blade of fire is not a solid object. Finally, *Alar* shows an aesthetic relationship between the alabaster stone and the three-part base underneath, not a literal relationship. Wings are attached very differently to the body of a bird.

Note that D2 requires all sense-data of a Phenomenalist sculpture to correspond to sense-data associated with familiar objects of experience. Therefore, Phenomenalist sculptures are not D2-mimetic.

**Question:** Why must correspondence hold for all sense data? Isn't it sufficient for the sculpture to be mimetic provided that correspondence holds for some sense-data?

**Answer:** Here is that definition:

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D2\*. A sculpture *W* is mimetic-2\* =df Some sense-data in *W* correspond to sense-data associated with familiar objects of experience.

D2\* entails that a Phenomenalist sculpture can 'go in and out' of *mimesis*, so to speak, from one viewing angle to the next. It seems clear, however, that *mimesis* is an all-or-nothing concept for Plato. To use Plato's example, this means that one and the same bed cannot present mimetic as well as non-mimetic appearances from one viewing angle to the next. If it did, we could not identify it as a bed or as the same bed.

#### Category 4. Interweaving Forms

Mereological sculptures such as *Counterpoint 8* are not mimetic-1 or mimetic-2; therefore, a new definition is needed.

D3. A sculpture *W* is mimetic-3 =df All part-whole relationships exemplified in *W* correspond to relationships exemplified by familiar objects of experience.



While some volumes in *Counterpoint 8* are identifiable as representations of female figures, part-whole relationships seen in their totality and from every viewing angle do not correspond to those exemplified by familiar objects of experience. Thus, Mereological sculptures are not D3-mimetic.

Because my Prometheus Challenge sculptures are not mimetic according to any of the Platonist definitions considered, it is reasonable to conclude that premise (1) of the argument outline is false if *M* is *mimesis*, hence the resulting argument is unsound.

**Question:** Perhaps your Prometheus Challenge sculptures should be banned because the experience of viewing them is epistemically harmful. What about that?

**Answer:** The True and The Good were fundamental Forms for Plato, so he probably would have been sympathetic to W.K. Clifford's "ethics of belief" (1879, 163-205), which can be construed as an attempt to combine the two Forms. Thus, Plato probably would have agreed that there is a *prima facie* duty for citizens of his ideal state to acquire true or rational beliefs as well as a duty to avoid false or

irrational beliefs. Therefore, he probably would have regarded as epistemically harmful experiences that would interfere with carrying out these duties. This suggests the following definition:

D4. Having experience *E* is epistemically harmful for person *S* =Df (i) Having *E* would discourage *S* from acquiring true or rational beliefs, or (ii) having *E* would encourage *S* to acquire false or irrational beliefs.

Here is a revised version of Plato's critique of art that relies on D4.

(3\*) Experiences of viewing art are epistemically harmful.

(4\*) If experiences of viewing art are epistemically harmful, then experiences of viewing art taken collectively probably would damage the health and welfare of the ideal state.

Therefore,

(5) Experiences of viewing art taken collectively probably would damage the health and welfare of the ideal state – from 3\*, 4\*.

(6) If experiences of viewing art taken collectively probably would damage the health and welfare of the ideal state, then experiences of viewing art should be banned in the ideal state.

Therefore,

(7) Experiences of viewing art should be banned in the ideal state – from 5, 6.

**Question:** This argument is valid. Which premise do you deny?

**Answer:** Grube writes (1980 [1935], 187):

Plato extends the meaning of artistic, cultured in art, far beyond art itself, to apply to the lover of all beauty, who (we may supply the thought from later passages) is again none other than the philosophos, the thinker. Such a one, were he an artist, Plato would accept and indeed welcome. There is nowhere any description of the type of work that he could create beyond the general principles mentioned already. That such works however are not impossible, and that they would be far more than a mere copy of things, we gather from scattered references: the artist could in the first place combine differently what he sees in nature, though one doubts whether any great art could result from this.<sup>43</sup>

According to Grube, Plato seems to have been confident that a philosopher-artist would understand the need to avoid *mimesis* and, moreover, would produce artworks that were “far more than a mere copy of things.” For purposes of the above argument, however, this is irrelevant. After all, artworks that are ‘far more than a mere copy of things’ may still be epistemically harmful in the sense of D4. The same may be true of non-mimetic artworks based on a philosophical theory such as Phenomenalism or Mereology; artworks that were created by “combining the features of different things,” as Plato put it at *Republic*

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<sup>43</sup> George Grube died in 1982.

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488a5 (Cooper 1997, 1111); and even artworks that incorporated Plato's notion of interweaving forms from *Sophist*. Unless it is shown that viewing such artworks is not epistemically harmful in the sense of D4, the above argument goes through and the ideal state would have no choice but to ban them despite their unique lineage.

To decide the issue with respect to my Prometheus Challenge sculptures, we need one more definition:

D5. Having experience *E* is epistemically helpful for person *S* =Df (i) Having *E* would encourage *S* to acquire true or rational beliefs, or (ii) having *E* would discourage *S* from acquiring false or irrational beliefs.

I'd like to show that, under their intended interpretations, my Prometheus Challenge sculptures are epistemically helpful. Therefore, premise (3\*) of the above argument is false and this argument is also unsound.

#### Category 1: Seeing-As-Vision

*Ariel* is epistemically helpful. Using the spectator-trained seal combination of attributes, the piece invites the viewer to ponder hard questions: To what extent is free choice present in our lives? Are we acting out of desires that are genuinely our own or are we caving to outside pressures, perhaps without even realizing it? Is self-deception ever a part of the decision-making process?

#### Category 2: Directional Vision

*David* is epistemically helpful. The sculpture is intended to encourage admiration toward acts of heroism while recognizing as legitimate and even rational the visceral fear experienced on the battlefield at the prospect of violent death.

*Prometheus* is epistemically helpful. The sculpture is intended to encourage admiration toward acts of defiance in the service of conscience while recognizing as legitimate and even rational the rage felt at the cruelty of the punishment imposed.

#### Category 3: Discontinuous Attributes

*Alar* is epistemically helpful. The sculpture invites viewers to consider that something beautiful might also be dangerous, e.g., 'every rose has thorns.'

*Eve* is epistemically helpful. Viewers can ponder the moral implications of the Biblical story as the pieces turns slowly on a carousel, e.g., the consequences of disobeying a divine command and yielding to temptation.

#### Category 4: Interweaving Forms

*Counterpoint* sculptures were epistemically helpful for me because each one encouraged a true belief about a potentially productive aesthetic relationship between two forms of art with an event ontology, (my) sculpture and music. This

belief began with *Counterpoint 1* and was confirmed by subsequent sculptures that also “combine the features of different things” in a way that resembles how voices are combined in music to produce a unified, coherent whole.

In conclusion, Plato should “accept and indeed welcome” my *Prometheus* Challenge sculptures in his ideal state, as they are “far more than a mere copy of things.”<sup>44</sup>

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# Ambivalence, Emotional Perceptions, and the Concern with Objectivity

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**Abstract:** Emotional perceptions are objectivist (objectivity-directed or cognitive) and conscious, both attributes suggesting they cannot be ambivalent. Yet perceptions, including emotional perceptions of value, allow for strictly objectivist ambivalence in which a person unitarily perceives the object in mutually undermining ways. Emotional perceptions became an explicandum of emotion for philosophers who are sensitive to the unique conscious character of emotion, impressed by the objectivist character of perceptions, and believe that the perceptual account solves a worry about the possibility of a conflict between an emotion and a judgement. Back into the 1980s Greenspan has argued that emotional ambivalence is possible, her reasons implying that objectivist accounts of emotion are inconsistent with ambivalence. Tappolet has more recently replied that perceptual accounts allow for emotional ambivalence since the opposed values seen in ambivalence are good or bad in different senses. The present paper identifies strict objectivist ambivalence between judgements and between emotional perceptions by contrasting them with such ambivalence of separate values such as evoked by Tappolet.

**Keywords:** cognitivism, internal conflict, judgements, non-cognitivism, perception, perceptual account of emotion, value.

## 1. Introduction

Let us say that a person, *S*, is ambivalent if she maintains two opposed attitudes towards *A* (*A* can be a person, a thing, an action and so forth).<sup>1</sup> Ambivalence, also referred to as ‘internal conflict,’ ‘mixed feelings,’ etc., is an ordinary and frequent phenomenon, and yet it has a bad reputation in philosophical quarters. It seems as if definitions such as the above depict the notion of ambivalence as incoherent. Ambivalence appears even more problematic, however, when it is about truth or value, for here the attitudes appear to be accepting opposed objective states of affairs – and what would that mean? This worry informs for example various accounts of ethics: the possibility that a person *ambivalently* judges her *A*-ing

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<sup>1</sup> The poles must be opposed in a sense that implies that in holding any of them, *S* holds it as opposed to the other pole. We shall come back to this. The definition above is partial, and in particular ambivalence can (complementarily) be seen as a single tension-fraught attitude. See Razinsky 2016.

bad and good, or that she ambivalently judges her action bad and judges that it is not bad, is hardly ever permitted.<sup>2</sup>

In an influential paper, Greenspan (1980) has argued that emotional ambivalence is possible and rational. Her main strategy is to distinguish emotions from judgements: in holding an emotion, we take it to be appropriate, somewhat similarly to how a judgement is taken as true and as justified. Yet, Greenspan says, appropriateness has a very different logic from that of truth and justification and in particular it does not follow from the fact that an emotion is appropriate that the opposed emotion is inappropriate. This could never be the case – her contrast with judgements makes clear – were emotions the kind of attitudes that are concerned with how their object is. When a person is happy that her friend has won a competition, for example, her happiness is appropriate, but this is not a way to say that the emotion is justified in taking the friend's winning to be such and such, e.g., good. Emotions do not take things to be such and such, on Greenspan's account, and hence emotional ambivalence does not face the problems of accepting two contradictory truths.

What, then, if emotions are about objectivity? In asking this question, Tappolet's main concern is with perceptual accounts of emotion (2005). Does it follow from the phenomenon of emotional ambivalence that emotions cannot constitute perceptions? In perceptual accounts, to have an emotion is to perceive a value – for example, to fear or be enthusiastic as regards a journey would be to 'see' that the journey is dangerous or that it is attractive.<sup>3</sup> Let us name such accounts, as well as those that analyse emotions in terms of judgements, *objectivist*: emotions are here understood as objectivity-directed or cognitive.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, objectivist accounts appear to make ambivalence impossible. Even if a person can somehow judge or perceive both ways, it appears that her attitudes must be unrelated for her as in cases of inadvertent self-contradiction, and, thus, that she must not be ambivalent between her attitudes. One way or the other, an objectivist account of emotion, and in particular a perceptual account, would appear to bar out emotional ambivalence. For as 'perceptions,' the opposed emotions involved in ambivalence would be explicated in terms of the person 'seeing' contradictory things. Tappolet takes the possibility of the perception of contradictory things as itself self-contradictory, but argues that

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<sup>2</sup> Such ambivalence is permitted by Carr (2009), Foot (1983), Kristjánsson (2010), Nussbaum (1985), Rorty, (2010), Smilansky (2007), Stocker (1990, Ch. 4), Wong (2006), and Zimmerman (1993).

<sup>3</sup> Perceptual accounts of emotion are proposed by Johnston 2001, de Sousa 2002, Döring 2003, and Prinz 2004. Wedgwood (2001, Part II) proposes an objectivist account of emotions. Nussbaum (1990) understands value perception as bound up and partly constitutive of emotions.

<sup>4</sup> I prefer the term 'objectivist' because the term 'cognitive' has been connoted with modelling value judgements on factual judgements.

In taking judgements to be objectivist I make a discursive or logical point, rather than supposing some extra-discursive realm of objectivity or truth.

this is not how emotional ambivalence should be interpreted on the perceptual account. Rather, she explains, the opposed values seen in ambivalence are good or bad in different senses.

Tappolet's solution echoes the account for ambivalence of value judgement that is given by the few studies that recognize ambivalence of value judgement and think of the opposed judgements in objectivist terms.<sup>5</sup> Thus, Zimmerman (1993) makes a 'plea for ambivalence' in virtue of the separate scales constituted by different values, while Foot (1983, section II) allows for ambivalence between opposed judgements since they apply alien values. Similar accounts are proposed by Nussbaum, Stocker (Chs. 6 and 8) and more recently Carr and Kristjánsson.<sup>6</sup>

This paper follows Greenspan and Tappolet in acknowledging emotional ambivalence. I do not accept a completely objectivist account of emotion and one reason for this is presented in section 5. However, I agree that emotions can have perceptual and judgemental dimensions, and in particular this paper establishes that ambivalence between emotional perceptions is possible. Furthermore, perceptual accounts enable us to understand important forms and aspects of emotional ambivalence. This is not, however, because, as Tappolet claims, ambivalence between objectivist attitudes does not have to be understood in a way that would make it impossible or irrational. Rather, objectivity-aiming does not imply the impossibility and irrationality of ambivalence between objectivist attitudes, while *ambivalence can be objectivist* in a strict sense. By this I mean that ambivalence can be such that (i) each of the opposed attitudes that constitute its poles is objectivist, but moreover that (ii) the opposed attitudes are opposed as regards the objectivity concerned.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, though, (iii) objectivist accounts of emotions will fail if they are seen as exhaustive.

## 2. There Is Such a Thing as Objectivist Ambivalence: A Dissimilarity Argument

Although objectivist ambivalence seems paradoxical, such ambivalence, I shall argue, does exist. Supposing that one acknowledges ambivalence in general, it remains to show that some admissible cases of ambivalence are different from other such cases, and that they are different precisely in being objectivist. I will distinguish ambivalence from certain other phenomena, and describe the examples of both forms of ambivalence in a way that reveals their ambivalent character, but a detailed demonstration of ambivalence as such goes beyond the

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<sup>5</sup> So far as judgements are not conceived as objectivist, one can argue, as Williams (1973) has done that ambivalence between value judgements is possible since they are similar to desires rather than to beliefs.

<sup>6</sup> Rorty (2010) proposes a view of evaluative ambivalence that does not rely on judging the object by different values.

<sup>7</sup> Consider also Döring's definition of 'rational conflicts' as 'conflicts in content about how the world actually is' (Döring 2009, 241).

scope of this paper. My primary aim will be to establish objectivist ambivalence. In doing this, I shall appeal to the difference between such ambivalence and *ambivalence of separate values*, where ambivalence of separate values requires that while (i) each of the opposed attitudes that comprise the ambivalence's poles is objectivist, (ii) the attitudes at the poles are not opposed as regards the objectivity concerned.

Regardless of whether emotions are objectivist, value judgements allow both objectivist ambivalence and ambivalence of separate values. In a central form of objectivist ambivalence of value judgement, the person affirms and yet denies a single value in regard to the object of ambivalence. Thus a person can be ascribed with such ambivalence by saying that she judges (at the same time) both that A is *v* and that A is not-*v*. We should be cautious, however. The same pattern can be used to attribute ambivalence of separate values (where '*v*' takes different senses in the two poles of the ambivalence) as well as non-ambivalent judgements and non-ambivalent combinations of value judgements.<sup>8</sup>

Suppose Sarah ambivalently judges a certain paper as interesting and yet also judges the paper uninteresting. Before turning to the objectivist character of her ambivalence, we may stipulate that Sarah's case is one of ambivalence if and only if (i) she actually holds both judgements and (ii) each of them is held by Sarah as opposed to the other one.

The first condition requires that Sarah judges the paper interesting and judges it uninteresting, rather than merely maintains certain reasons for and against the paper's interest. That is, it is not the case that Sarah judges only that something stands for both judgements. Nor are we concerned here with what may be called first-person confusion, in which Sarah 'does not know what to think.' To ascribe such confusions, we would not so much say that Sarah holds both judgements but that she would hold a judgement that the paper is interesting were this judgement not defeated and vice versa. Finally, condition (i) implies that we are not concerned with cases in which the formulation of two judgements in fact describes one actual judgement that is harmonious with the grounds for a rejected opposed judgement. For instance, Sarah may judge that a paper is interesting in a way that accepts that it is only of moderate interest. Thus her judgement may be that the paper is quite interesting due to the author's new presentation of the theme, even though the claims themselves are not original.

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<sup>8</sup> Objectivist ambivalence can also refer to different values, i.e., the agent may entertain objectivist ambivalence by judging that A is *v* but also that A is *w*. What is required is that the predication of *v* undermines the predication of *w*. Another pattern for attributing non-ambivalent composite judgements, non-objectivist ambivalence, but also and importantly, some objectivist ambivalence, is "the person judges that A is *v* and yet not-*v*."



The second condition adds that ambivalence involves opposition in a sense that requires that the opposition is moored in the person's own point of view. The second condition entails, first, that the attitudes are opposed. This sub-condition fails, for example, when a person judges in a non-ambivalent way that the paper is interesting generally speaking, but is not professionally interesting. Such may be the case, for instance, if she is glad she read the paper and may recommend it to certain people, but does not intend to discuss it in her own writing and does not feel that it extends her understanding in her areas of special concern. Condition (ii) also excludes opposition from a *merely* external point of view, namely such that does not imply that the attitudes are opposed from the person's own point of view. This is not to say that (ii) requires that the opposition must be conscious or available to consciousness (in Freudian terms perhaps) and again (ii) allows that the agent is unable to assert that she has opposed attitudes, or reflect on it, or have explicit knowledge of it (though sometimes ambivalence is conscious and, in particular, is experienced in a stroke of momentary consciousness,<sup>9</sup> and sometimes it is explicitly acknowledged, reflected on and asserted). The point is rather that the opposition between the attitudes is part of the intentional character of the ambivalence: one is ambivalent *between* these two attitudes. In holding one of the attitudes, one holds it as opposed to the other. And in ascribing ambivalence to a person, this interlinkage is part of what we take to be expressed in her thoughts, feelings, behaviour, further attitudes or whatever. By contrast, Sarah's attitudes are opposed from a merely external point of view, when she judges an anonymous paper she reads for a journal uninteresting, but also takes the same paper to be interesting – since the author is someone she admires – when she accidentally comes across the title without realizing that she has read the paper. In this case, Sarah's opposed judgements do not constitute ambivalence on her part.

While there are various ways for conditions (i) and (ii) to fail to fit a case, sometimes we do *ambivalently* judge that A is *v* and that A is not *v*. In the typical case, such ambivalence would be objectivist. It may as such be compared with a case in which Sarah ambivalently judges a paper as important and as tedious. Ambivalence thus described is often of the sort that comes, so to speak, after the opposed judgements. Sarah, we may assume, is settled both about the importance of the paper and its tediousness. As she sees it, neither of her conflicting judgements undermines the truth of the other: importance is one thing (so far as the case goes) and boredom another. Yet as is not unusual with such judgements, in holding them both Sarah is ambivalent towards the paper. She may, for example, hold that it is good that she has read the paper, yet have to force herself to give it a further thought, or she may be devoting a discussion essay to it, constantly yawning while she is working on it, or perhaps she is

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<sup>9</sup> See Razinsky 2016, Ch. 5.

looking for some 'victim' to replace her in reviewing it. However, while Sarah is ambivalent about the paper, she is not ambivalent as to its importance.

Yet in other cases, it is precisely the application of the value (or values) to the object that stands at the heart of Sarah's ambivalence. For example, she judges the paper as interesting – it has a fresh approach, etc. – and yet this judgement is undermined by a contrary one. For overall, the paper is vague (so Sarah thinks), and it is not clear what, if anything, it is about: it is not really interesting. Now, in the cases that interest us, Sarah is ambivalent, i.e., her judgement that the paper is interesting has not been destroyed by being undermined. Instead, each of her opposed attitudes is constituted as part of the particular objectivist ambivalence. Sarah sees, for example, that a vague paper makes one reflect on what the paper's claims would mean concretely and is perhaps particularly interesting for this reason. But this again does not settle things for her and we may go on suggesting how Sarah's opposed judgements further (i) undermine and shape one another and (ii) by the same token, contend on how interest should be understood in judging the interest in that paper.<sup>10</sup> It is not that Sarah must be involved in any actual internal monologue;<sup>11</sup> however, such a possible monologue elucidates Sarah's ambivalence between two more or less incompatible objectivist attitudes. Her monologue brings forth the aspect of the opposition, according to which each judgement raises the question whether the other is right. In a typical case, this takes the form of each judgement raising the question whether the value of being interesting should be taken as it is taken in making the opposed judgement true. The way Sarah behaves and her further attitudes and thought participate in expressing the fact that *she entertains both judgements as opposed in an objectivist way*. Perhaps her mind strays every other minute and each time she tries to return to the paper. Perhaps she does not come back to it for months, but will not remove the hard copy from her desk; or she may be busy with the question raised therein, but avoid considering the paper directly, and so forth.

Though Sarah is ambivalent, her case cannot be interpreted as similar to the above case of ambivalently taking a paper to be important and yet boring. In order to be thus interpreted, Sarah's judgement that the paper is interesting

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<sup>10</sup> While (i) is crucial for objectivist ambivalence, I suggest that it is central to the logic of value that typical cases of objectivist ambivalence also obey (ii). In so far as only the first element is present, the opposed poles (separately) accept contradictory things. The second element reveals, however, that the notion of contradiction is not completely appropriate for the discussion of value judgements. When a value applies to some object, this does not exclude, but rather stands in tension with, that value not applying to the object. For a positive explication of objectivist ambivalence and its implications for the logic of value, see Razinsky 2016, Ch. 8.

<sup>11</sup> And such a monologue by itself would not necessarily express full-blown ambivalence rather than uncertainty. I show in Razinsky 2016, Ch. 8 that objectivist ambivalence and states of deliberation in which a person is uncertain which position is right are not reducible to each other.

would have to be taken as affirming another value than that denied in her opposed judgement. Tappolet presupposes this must be possible. She writes:

[I]t could well be the case that being happy that  $p$  is appropriate just if  $p$  is good in a way. But this would be perfectly compatible with the claim that unhappiness about the same  $p$  is also appropriate: something good in some way can also be bad in some other respect. (232)

We have, however, seen that it is not the case that Sarah ambivalently takes a paper to be interesting-in-one-respect and yet uninteresting-in-a-second-respect. Although we can say that the two poles of Sarah's ambivalence inflect the value of interest differently, it is impossible to identify any particular emphasis they make that would contribute to splitting the value into two. On the contrary, any emphasis as to how being interesting should be understood that is implied in one pole of Sarah's ambivalence is relevant for the opposed judgement as well, which may question the legitimacy of the emphasis made by the other judgement, and also partly admit it.

### **3. Objectivist Ambivalence: Implications for the Logic of Belief and the Logic of Value**

The argument from dissimilarity has let us identify two different forms of ambivalence between objectivist attitudes. While ambivalence is by definition such that each of the attitudes is held as opposed to the other – connecting the person to the object in a way challenged by the other pole – when the ambivalence consists in applying two separate values to the object, the attitudes do not challenge each other in regard to their objectivist application of the values. Objectivist ambivalence, by contrast, is such ambivalence in which the judgements are opposed as claims to objectivity. The general structure of objectivist ambivalence consists in two objectivist attitudes that undermine each other. Each of them ought to be understood as a part of their concrete relation of mutual undermining.

We have identified both objectivist ambivalence and ambivalence of separate values within the range of ordinary forms of intentionality. This suggests, moreover, that ambivalence, including objectivist ambivalence, is basically rational. To briefly support this claim, let me propose that basic rationality characterizes engagements – mental attitudes, behaviour, feelings, thoughts, etc. – as connected to other engagements of the person (and open to reconnection), such that an engagement makes sense in terms of its mental interlinkages. The above explication can be seen as a reconstruction of Davidson's analysis of rationality, yet Davidson assumes that the interlinked attitudes must be harmonious or, as he calls it, 'consistent,' to lend sense to each other (e.g., Davidson 2004a, 2004b). This assumption is, however, unjustified unless ambivalent interlinkages are by definition ruled out. In particular, if they are not disallowed by definition, objectivist ambivalence as exhibited through

the dissimilarity argument is no exception to basic rationality, but is rather a mode of basically rational interlinkage between (objectivist) attitudes.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the examples in this paper indicate that objectivist ambivalence can be highly rational, and especially that to the extent that we can say of some judgements and perceptions that they are right, ambivalent judgement and perception is sometimes as right a way to judge or perceive the object as is possible.

In claiming that objectivist accounts of emotion allow for ambivalence, Tappolet rejects Greenspan's explanation of the possibility of emotional ambivalence in terms of a crucial difference between the objectivist (basic and high) rationality of judgements and the rationality of emotions. As regards the rationality of judgements, however, Greenspan and Tappolet both share (i) the received view that objectivist attitudes (given that the agent is basically rational in holding them both together) entail their conjunction; and that, accordingly, when one finds opposed values to hold for some object, one's opposed attitudes entail the perception or belief of a contradiction. Greenspan also shares with Tappolet and many others (ii) a second presupposition, according to which for value judgements (and perceptions) to be objectivist it is required that their logic is the same as that of factual truth and belief. These two assumptions invite philosophers to re-interpret cases of objectivist ambivalence either as non-ambivalent,<sup>13</sup> or as irrational, or more rarely as non-objectivist ambivalence. However, given that the dissimilarity argument shows that objectivist ambivalence *is* possible (and implicitly that it is basically rational), the two assumptions must be ill-conceived. If they are, it may be less surprising that objectivist ambivalence can also be highly rational and epistemically successful.

The first assumption has to do with the way that objectivist attitudes are supposed to be related (if they are to aim at objectivity). The thought is that they are related by forming together an attitude affirming the conjunction of their contents. However, in identifying objectivist ambivalence, we see in fact that objectivist attitudes can be related, instead, by mutual undermining, such that for one attitude to be held is for the other to be doubted and vice versa. Thus, against the first assumption, objectivist ambivalence calls for rethinking the objectivist logic of belief, value judgement and perception.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> I analyse basic rationality and defend the view that the opposing poles of ambivalence are connected in a basically rational manner in Razinsky 2016. Ch. 7 considers the rational character of the interlinkage between the poles of objectivist ambivalence.

<sup>13</sup> Examples are innumerable, but see for instance Kant's interpretation of ambivalence in terms of grounds for opposed judgements (1999, 17-1), Mill's interpretation in terms of judgements of different values that constitute grounds for a harmonic value judgement (1968, 298), and Davidson's explication of the opposed value judgements in weakness of the will as judgements that such-and-such evidence supports each of the opposed conclusions (1980, 21-42).

<sup>14</sup> The basically rational relation of mutual undermining allows also for ambivalence of factual belief, as well as self-deception. See Razinsky 2016, Ch. 7.

In addition to the implications for objectivist rationality, when objectivist ambivalence has to do with the character of a value, it also challenges the second assumption, which concerns the logic of the objectivity believed, judged and perceived. Although the logic of objectivity is usually supposed to involve a clear notion of contradiction, such a notion is suitable only in so far as the character of the relevant concepts – value concepts included – is presupposed by the objectivist attitude, i.e., in so far as the judgement (or perception) applies a pregiven concept without contributing to its character. This requirement has an important role in regard to the logic of factual belief, but it is highly misleading as a guide to the relations of evaluative attitudes and value concepts. Thus, for Sarah to judge the paper she reads interesting, is, by the same token, to judge what it would be for it to be interesting. In such cases, we find ourselves with opposed judgements such that the judged propositions may not be satisfactorily described either as contradictory or as mutually consistent.

When the opposing evaluative attitudes are undermining each other in a way that has to do with how the value concept ought to be understood in the relevant context, the two judgements (and similarly for perceptions) often also form together a unitary judgement in which the person ambivalently holds that a tension-fraught value, 'v and not v,' applies to the object. Once (i) and (ii) are not taken for granted, there is no need to deny that people often meaningfully judge (or perceive) an object in this way; and if they do so, why won't epistemic success be also as open to such judgements as to wholehearted ones? In any case, we do not take them as always wrong, except when theoretically insisting on assumptions (i) and (ii). Other than that, a piece of art for example may well *invite* us to ambivalently evaluate it as beautiful yet ugly, such that the application of beauty is questioned by the conflicting attitude and vice versa; and ambivalently regarding a particular policy or social approach as progressive-and-yet (in the same sense in which it must be progressive) non-progressive may appear as fair as possible to the character of the policy or approach.

#### 4. Objectivist Ambivalence in Perception and Emotion

Tappolet's account of emotional ambivalence does not allow for what I have tried to show are phenomena of objectivist ambivalence. Yet similarly to ambivalence of value judgement, emotional ambivalence is also in some cases objectivist, while in some other cases it comprises ambivalence of separate values.<sup>15</sup> The possibility of objectivist emotional ambivalence does not tell against an objectivist account of emotion. If anything, it lends support to the view that emotions are objectivity-directed: Not only is such ambivalence possible only for objectivist emotions, but objectivist ambivalence presents the objectivist character of emotions as central to them.

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<sup>15</sup> For further possibilities for emotional ambivalence, see Razinsky 2016, Ch. 3.

The existence of objectivist ambivalence also has direct bearing on the investigation of the perceptual character emotions might have, as certain aspects of perceptual accounts of emotion require or strongly propose it. Two central points in De Sousa's account in 'Emotional Truth' may be of special interest in this regard. Firstly, De Sousa emphasizes that emotions access objectivity directly rather than by accepting the truth of propositions. It follows that instances of objectivist ambivalence may not be assimilated to the harmonious consideration of the truth of two competing propositions. Any case of objectivist opposition must involve actual objectivist ambivalence. As De Sousa writes, "[D]espite the fact that standards of contrariety for emotions are, as we have seen, obscure, it is principally emotions themselves, and not propositions, which are weighed against one another in the quest for reflective equilibrium" (259).

Secondly, De Sousa compares a true emotion with an analogue rather than digital representation, contrasting emotional evaluative perception with the instantiation of pre-given determinate pairs of signifier and signified. Now, as it stands, De Sousa's comparison excludes ambivalence, as no clocks – not even analogue ones – show two times at once. At the same time, the interpretation of emotions as analogue captures the fact that objectivity that is not completely independent of attitudes (260) may disagree with the logic of ideal facts.

In a related account, Salmela writes in that "persistent and warranted emotional ambivalence is possible for an individual belonging to two or more communities of sensibility whose feeling rules contradict each other" (Salmela 2006, note 27). This note in fact regards emotional ambivalence, or at least the ambivalence it considers, as ambivalence of separate values. However, the main text (400–1, 403) suggests that communal standards are open to correction in which its values are re-appreciated, which would make ambivalence potentially objectivist.

It would be useful to reproduce the argument from dissimilarity in regard to perceptual emotions. In fact, although we cannot dwell on it here, ambivalence of perception, and in particular objectivist ambivalence, pertains also to less evaluative and emotional contexts. For example, one can be ambivalent between seeing someone as 'less than 30 years old' and as 'much older.' This is to be contrasted with seeing a Gestalt-shift picture both as an old woman and as a young woman (or as a duck and as a rabbit). Unlike the alternating perception of Gestalt shifts perceptual ambivalence as to someone's age can be held in one stroke of consciousness. There is however another and more crucial difference to note: Seeing the picture in two ways does not constitute ambivalence as to how the picture is. The fact that the combination of shapes and colours depicts a duck or an old woman is not opposed to the fact that the picture depicts a rabbit or a young woman, and perceiving there a duck would not as a rule challenge for

the perceiver her opposed perception.<sup>16</sup> A person may, however, be ambivalent as to what she sees. This would be the case, for example, if everything about the other person – the eyes and hair, the posture and muscles – tells her he is rather young, and yet some strain is also there for her to see, impairing the young impression. She being ambivalent, this is also undermined: after all, the strain is not always present and the young looks are then beyond reproof, and even when a tint of strain is visible, you might well be merely seeing a fatigued young man...<sup>17</sup>

Peter Goldie supports perceptual accounts of emotion with the claim that they are especially suitable to accommodate conflicts between emotions and judgements (2007, 935). The visual ambivalence encountered above might help to make clear how different objectivist ambivalence between emotional perceptions is from the view underlying Goldie's claim. Goldie takes the emotion in such conflicts – for example being insulted by someone's behaviour although you judge that in truth there was nothing insulting about it – to be similar to a visual illusion. The emotion can on this view be maintained together with the judgement to the contrary, just as one can have the impression of a broken spoon in a cup of water while believing that the spoon is not broken (Goldie 2002, 74ff.). But are 'emotional conflicts' really accommodated – rather than explained away – by this analogy? The whole point of the analogy is that the person who experiences the illusion does not at all believe the appearance, and does not at all *see*, in the ordinary and objectivist sense of the word, a broken spoon. In other words, such cases are taken to be devoid any real conflictuality.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Goldie interprets the visual illusion analogy as consisting in the emotion and the judgement having contents of different types (Goldie 2002, 61ff.), thus adding another dimension to the absence of conflict, while according to others, such as Döring (2009), the analogy consists in holding an unbelieved-perception that not-P (a non-objectivist attitude similar in this respect to imagination) and a judgement that P. One way or the other, no room is left for ambivalence.<sup>19</sup> In

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<sup>16</sup> Nor is subjectively seeing in the combination the figure of an old woman opposed as a rule to seeing there a young woman. Ambivalence however can be conscious also when it is not objectivity-directed. I also note that although Gestalt shift does not imply ambivalence, there are phenomena of Gestalt shift that demonstrate also perceptual ambivalence.

<sup>17</sup> The example suggests an objectivist ambivalence that consists in the appreciation of evidence. In other cases perceptual ambivalence about age would involve ambivalence about what 'rather young' ought to mean in the relevant context.

<sup>18</sup> As I see it, although disbelieved visual illusions can lose their epistemic character completely, such perceptions often preserve some epistemic character that undermines the disbelief, forming at least a touch of ambivalence. This does not make illusion an adequate model for any kind of ambivalence, since in as much as the perception is non-epistemic there is no conflict.

<sup>19</sup> It should be added that Döring, like others who use the analogy with visual illusion, analyse emotions as generally objectivist. Döring also holds that emotional perceptions and judgements have different kinds of content. She is aware of the problem of the lack of

their discussions Goldie and Döring move between a famous example by Hume, a version of which would be a case of height fear being maintained despite judging that one is completely safe, and such cases as being disgusted by something judged not disgusting. It might be that in some cases, such as height fear, emotions to which an emotional perception that P would otherwise be central do not have an objectivist dimension (either because the emotional value perception has the character of an unbelieved perception, or because the emotion does not include an emotional perception). This would mean that the emotion and the 'opposed' judgement stand in harmony, or else that the ambivalence they form is not objectivist. In fact, at least some 'Humean' cases would be better described as marginal cases of objectivist ambivalence, but this is only to say that the emotion has not completely lost its objectivist dimension. In many other cases, emotions and judgements form objectivist ambivalence. These cases are easy to handle once the analysis of objectivist ambivalence of emotional perception is added to that of objectivist ambivalence of value judgement.

Moving, thus, to consider ambivalence between emotional perceptions of value, here our examples should be of emotional ambivalence, in which (i) the emotions are elucidated by describing them as (partially) comprising perceptions of value towards the object of the ambivalence; and (ii) the ambivalence constitutes in an interesting way ambivalence of value perceptions. The phrase 'in an interesting way' is added so that (ii) would not apply to any ambivalence whose poles are emotions that perceive value. What we look for, rather, is ambivalence that constitutes a perceptual conflict.

Consider, first, a case of objectivist ambivalence between emotional perceptions: Sarah may ambivalently both dislike John and like him, seeing him ambivalently as unkind and as kind. Perhaps she hardly knows John and her ambivalence consists in ambivalent perception of his eyes and face both as unkind and ugly and as kind and even beautiful. Or we may imagine another form for her ambivalence: In this version Sarah is impressed by the way John listens to people. She likes him, seeing that he cares, listening to others with full attention, but then, ambivalently, the same readiness to listen is seen by Sarah as objectifying and aloof, making her dislike John. Is it kindness that one may perceive in the way John listens, or rather the contrary? Sarah ambivalently answers both ways: her perceptions tell against each other.

Now compare Sarah's objectivist emotional ambivalence towards John with such emotional ambivalence of separate values as she may feel towards Jack. Sarah likes Jack, seeing kindness in him, but, at the same time, she dislikes him, perceiving that he is egocentric. It may be the case that these judgements do not undermine one another for Sarah. As she may express it, some people just

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opposition between an unbelieved perception and a judgement, but attempts to solve it. Salmela (2006) (referring to an earlier work) also criticizes this aspect of Döring's solution.



are both kind and egocentric. Yet even if kindness and egocentrism can comfortably both be true of Jack, Sarah's perception of the one value in Jack stands in conflict with her perception in him of the other value.

We may thus conclude that objectivist ambivalence of perceptions, value perceptions, and emotions all do exist, and that they are clearly dissimilar from ambivalence of separate values.

We can conclude this part of the discussion by considering a way that the character of objectivist ambivalence ought to change perceptual accounts of emotion. Mark Johnston argues that we affectively perceive in things fully determinate sensuous values, and that such affective perception constitutes a central aspect of our life. As affects can 'disclose an enormous variety of demanding goods,' practical ambivalence may be expected, though Johnston's point is that evaluative beliefs serve to limit it (Johnston 2001, 213-4). In any case, forms of objectivist ambivalence show more than that some ambivalence is possible, namely they show that the affects can conflict as to whether a certain good applies.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, such conflicts typically involve ambivalence about the character the value should take. Johnston discusses the example of a person who sees the sweetness of his kissing partner. Now, there are occasions in which one ambivalently both sees sweetness and also sees it lacking in one's partner. Moreover, one would then be ambivalent not as to whether one's partner's conduct testifies to sweetness, but rather whether this conduct should count as sweet. This, however, entails that the values sensed cannot be understood as fully determinate. Here Johnston might reply that the kissing partner is seen as sweet-in-a-particular-way, but not in another. Such a reply would however simply ignore the dissimilarity of ambivalence regarding sweetness from ambivalence of separate values. I shall not elaborate this point further, but let me emphasize what is at stake: it is not only that the value applied and denied in such objectivist ambivalence is not univocally determinate, but it may further be argued that sensed values are never determinate since they could be involved in such ambivalence.

## 5. Ambivalence of Separate Values and Objectivist Attitudes

Let us again abstract from perceptual ambivalence to objectivist ambivalence. We have seen that the phenomenon of ambivalence of separate values cannot serve to explain how an objectivist account of emotions is compatible with the phenomenon of ambivalence. Even though some ambivalence is of separate values, Tappolet's solution must be rejected, for a clearly dissimilar phenomenon of objectivist ambivalence must also be acknowledged. The existence of

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<sup>20</sup> Johnston's account of possible conflicts between an evaluative belief and an affect seems to vacillate between two interpretations. On the one hand, such conflicts are explicated in terms of opposed desires, and, on the other, they are understood as objectivist conflicts of a judgemental (rather than perceptual) sort, which are based on evidential confusion.

ambivalence of separate values is thus a side issue in relation to the fact that the logic of objectivist attitudes allows for ambivalence that is concerned with the application of a single value to its object. However, the argument from dissimilarity has shown that ambivalence of separate values is part of our lives. And here a surprising difficulty arises, namely that a purely objectivist account of the attitude in question makes such ambivalence impossible. Let me explain.

How does Tappolet describe her solution? She considers two kinds of emotional ambivalence (or two kinds of attribution of emotional ambivalence). In the one case the emotions are described in terms of different value predicates, while in the other case the same predicate is applied in one emotional perception and denied in the opposed emotional perception. As regards the first pattern she asks, "Does this pattern of ambivalent emotions make for a contradiction?" and answers, "It does not, for your emotions key you in to two compatible aspects of what you are about to do: its danger and its attractiveness" (230-1). To this, in a passage already quoted, she then adds the second pattern, according to which "something good in some way can also be bad in some other respect" (232). The problem is, however, that once the oppositions are explained in these two ways, it is not clear why such pairs of emotions form ambivalence. The first pattern may perhaps be transformed into the second pattern: to be attractive makes the journey good and to be frightening makes it bad or not good. How are we, however, to understand this second pattern? It might be that the ambivalence is in fact objectivist: Although to some extent the journey is seen as good in one respect and as bad in another, it is also part of the first perception that the attractiveness constitutes goodness in the relevant context and that the absence of fearfulness does not, while the opposite is true of the opposed perception. In such a case the person views the journey as good and as bad, and any of these poles undermines the other. Objectivist ambivalence can take this form, but we know that ambivalence of separate values is possible, so we cannot generally explicate the second pattern in this way.

We are hence brought back to square one: we learn that ambivalently seeing the object both as good and as bad is seeing it as good in one respect, e.g., as attractive, and as bad in another, e.g., dangerous. But under this explication, where is the ambivalence? We merely see two compatible values in the same object, and this is surely not enough to make us ambivalent.<sup>21</sup> We are not

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<sup>21</sup> More specifically this argument concerns ambivalence of consistent separate value concepts, but the notion of ambivalence of separate values can also refer to alien value concepts. I suggest that values are alien when one value is incomprehensible if considered from a perspective that endorses the other value (the same values may be alien in certain contexts and not in others). *Mutatis mutandis*, cases of completely alien values limit the objectivist account in the same way as cases of consistent separate values. However, it is fundamental to values that they tend to lose their alien relations when the thinking of them together becomes relevant, and especially when a person is ambivalent towards something in applying to it two values.

ambivalent when we see that John is kind and intelligent, and we do not have to be ambivalent when we see that he is kind and not very intelligent. Ambivalence is not involved in seeing that the journey one has taken has been both difficult and dangerous, and it can be absent from one's seeing both that the journey was too difficult and that it provided inspiring sights.

However, seeing a journey as difficult yet inspiring, or a person as kind and yet not intelligent, may indeed comprise ambivalence, and in particular emotional ambivalence. Moreover, sometimes the ambivalence described in such terms will not be objectivist and the opposed attitudes will not be opposed as to where the objectivity lies. However, if such ambivalence is not objectivity-oriented, it must be oriented elsewhere, and this strongly suggests that perceptions, judgements, and emotions are not exhausted by their objectivist character. Thus, it is easy to think of cases of looking back ambivalently at the journey, being happy and yet unhappy that we took it, even if the ambivalence is not objectivist and we are not ambivalent as to whether the journey was difficult, or inspiring, or of any more fundamental value. In ambivalently seeing the journey both as inspiring and as too difficult, we are ambivalent between opposed ways of living with it. Our actual course expresses this ambivalence: recommendations given but with a certain reserve, joy at looking at the photos taken, shrinking from the idea of repeating the journey yet showing some envy at those who are setting out to go there, etc.

Thus, the phenomenon of ambivalence of separate values leads us away from objectivist accounts of emotions to the non-objectivist dimensions of objectivist attitudes. If ambivalence between emotions does not have to be objectivist, then the poles are opposed from another perspective than that of having opposing claims to objectivity. They, thus, must have non-objectivist aspects, even if, like the poles of ambivalence of separate values, they also comprise objectivist attitudes. Moreover, the non-objectivist dimension of the poles of emotional ambivalence of separate values is carried over to perceptual emotions in general, as there is hardly anything about ambivalence that would suggest that objectivist attitudes acquire a non-objectivist dimension under ambivalence while being purely objectivist when they are not part of ambivalence.

Finally, let us note that nothing prevents us from applying the argument from ambivalence of separate values to value judgements as well. Ambivalence of separate values between judging John kind and judging him egocentric strongly suggests that the judgement that John is kind is opposed to the judgement that he is egocentric in the sense that these judgements involve the ambivalent agent with John in opposed ways. For instance, the agent likes John in an abstract way, but responds reluctantly when John approaches him. He will never speak ill of John, but will in some cases warn people about him – for which, however, he may feel regret. And here again, if such ambivalence constitutes opposition that centres on a non-objectivist dimension of the person's two

judgements, then we have to admit such a dimension for value judgements generally. Not only does a purely objectivist account leave us unable to account for an ambivalence which is not objectivist, but, furthermore, value judgements and perceptions must involve a dimension that is more like that of emotions and desires.

## 6. Conclusion

Objectivist attitudes, such as beliefs, judgements, and perceptions, appear to exclude the possibility of ambivalence; hence, the existence of emotional ambivalence appears to threaten the perceptual account of emotion. Tappolet has argued that this threat is overstated since the emotions that stand in conflict may perceive separate values. An argument from dissimilarity, however, demonstrates the existence of an ordinary phenomenon of objectivist ambivalence both between judgements and between emotional perceptions. In such cases, a person both applies and denies the same value to the same object, being ambivalent as to where the objectivity lies. Rather than frustrating objectivist accounts of judgement and emotion, objectivist ambivalence supports and characterizes them. At the same time, the fact that it is also possible to maintain ambivalence of separate values shows that such accounts cannot be exhaustive.<sup>22</sup>

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# **DISCUSSION NOTES/ DEBATE**





# In Defense of H.O.T. Theory: A *Second* Reply to Adams and Shreve

Rocco J. Gennaro

**Abstract:** In Gennaro (2016), I had originally replied to Fred Adams and Charlotte Shreve's (2016) paper entitled "What Can Synesthesia Teach Us About Higher Order Theories of Consciousness?," previously published in *Symposion*. I argued that H.O.T. theory does have the resources to account for synesthesia and the specific worries that they advance in their paper, such as the relationship between concepts and experience and the ability to handle instances of 'pop-out' experiences. They counter-reply in Adams and Shreve (2017) and also raise further objections to H.O.T. theory which go well beyond the scope of their 2016 paper. In this paper, I offer additional replies to the points they raise in Adams and Shreve (2017).

**Keywords:** autism, concepts, conceptualism, consciousness, higher-order thoughts, synesthesia.

In Gennaro (2016), I had originally replied to Fred Adams and Charlotte Shreve's (A&S hereafter, 2016) paper entitled "What Can Synesthesia Teach Us About Higher Order Theories of Consciousness?," previously published in *Symposion*. I argued that H.O.T. theory does have the resources to account for synesthesia and the specific worries that they advance in their paper, such as the relationship between concepts and experience and the ability to handle instances of 'pop-out' experiences. I will not repeat those responses here. But A&S have counter-replied in Adams and Shreve (2017) and also raise further objections which go well beyond the scope of their 2016 paper. In this paper, I offer additional replies to the points they raise in Adams and Shreve (2017).

## 1. Worries about Introspection

A&S first say that "Gennaro (2017) takes issue with our seat-pressure case. In that case we say that on the H.O.T. theory, the H.O.T. is supposed to make one's experience of the pressure being exerted conscious. He says this is an appeal to 'introspection' and, on his view, it is not introspection" (Adams and Shreve 2017, 129).

Reply: I was partly merely pointing out that their description of the seat-pressure case (e.g. 'one's experience of the pressure') was somewhat ambiguous between (1) consciously attending to the felt pressure, and (2) being unconsciously aware of the seat pressure. If they meant the former, e.g. when they said that "one's attention turns to that pressure" (2016, 251), then it seemed like an appeal to introspection and thus not an example of a *first-order*

conscious mental state according to H.O.T. theory (or any theory, for that matter). If they meant the latter, then the conscious feeling is presumably more like an outer-directed perception, albeit aimed at one's body to some extent.

Recognizing the potential for ambiguity to some extent, A&S (2017, 129) say that "it is a kind of 'extrospection' upon the pressure being exerted on the seat. Attention is directed at least partially outwardly." But this also illustrates the other related reason that I raised a concern, namely, there is the more complicated independent issue of just how to characterize 'bodily experience.' Perhaps feeling seat-pressure is more akin to outer perception but sometimes it seems to involve attention to a bodily *sensation* which might be better construed as introspecting the feeling itself. It is also not clear to me how one's attention can be partly inner- and partly outer- directed *at the same time* but I won't elaborate on that here. A&S are certainly correct in saying that "turning one's attention on *something* is not necessarily introspecting" (2017, 130, my emphasis) but my point was merely that turning one's attention *to a mental state* (e.g. a feeling of pressure) would be introspecting. Thus, the example they used was perhaps just more problematic than other clearer cases of outer-directed attention.

A&S then remark that "...by the way, Gennaro accepts the TP principle. TP says 'A conscious state is a state whose subject is, in some way, aware of being in it' (Rosenthal 2005). To us that sounds a lot like introspection." (2017, 130)

Reply: But A&S are here clearly conflating two readings of 'aware of' in TP. There is unconscious awareness of a mental state and there is conscious awareness of a mental state – it is only the latter which is introspection, according to H.O.T. theory. But when one has a conscious outer-perception, one is unconsciously aware of the perception. By the way, the 'aware of' in TP is also itself neutral between H.O.T. and H.O.P. (higher-order perception) but H.O.T. theorists give reasons as to why it is best to interpret 'aware of' as H.O.T. (Rosenthal 2004, 2005, Gennaro 2012, chapter 3).

A&S then state that "Gennaro also maintains that H.O.T.s are somehow 'presupposed' by any experience or conscious mental state. This is partly why he thinks that every experience is conscious and why he thinks the contrary view makes no sense. We have already explained above, why the contrary view makes sense to us, so we are still struggling with the idea that every experience or conscious state 'presupposes' H.O.T.s. We just don't understand the view." (2017, 132)

Reply: Once again, I think that H.O.T.s are presupposed by all conscious states because the concepts that are applied in conscious states are in the H.O.T.s and because the concept application is rarely itself conscious. But I don't say that contrary views 'make no sense' but rather that they are wrong if I am right. Another way to make the point is as follows: If H.O.T. theory is true, then there is a H.O.T. present for each first-order conscious state. But we are not consciously aware of such a H.O.T.; that is, it is an unconscious H.O.T. In addition, my own

view is that it is best to think of a H.O.T. as part of a complex state which also includes its target state. This is what I call the 'wide intrinsicity view' (WIV). So it is simply in this sense that I say that every conscious state *presupposes* a H.O.T.

## 2. H.O.T.s and Sub-Personal States

A&S again object to my claim that H.O.T.s can be sub-personal, unconscious, and higher-order. "...we don't see how this can be true. They might be able to be non-conscious. Most versions of H.O.T. theory allow for non-conscious H.O.T.s. This is one of our problems with them, viz. how can something non-conscious bestow something it doesn't have (consciousness) on something else (an experience or thought) that also lacks it?" (2017, 132)

First: All (not 'most') versions of H.O.T. theory allow for non-conscious H.O.T.s – that is central to the theory in so many ways and also why it is a (mentalistic) reductionist theory of consciousness. Thus, a H.O.T. can also be 'sub-personal' – all I mean here is that the subject is not aware of it since it is an unconscious mental state. Of course, some sub-personal states may not be mental states at all or purely 'informational' in some sense, but I am not referring to those when referring to H.O.T.s. In the end, I do think that the structure of H.O.T. theory is realized in the brain (Gennaro 2012, chapters 4 and 9).

Secondly, the final question in the above quote from A&S ("how can something non-conscious bestow something it doesn't have (consciousness) on something else (an experience or thought) that also lacks it?") seems more like a request to solve the "hard problem" (Chalmers 1995) or perhaps to bridge the explanatory gap (Levine 2001) between consciousness and something non-conscious. I do spend a significant portion of Gennaro (2012, chapters 4 and 9) on these very important challenges in an attempt to show that H.O.T. theory is immune to Chalmers' hard problem and that H.O.T. theory offers a plausible reductionist theory. I cannot adequately summarize those chapters here but, for example, I argue that

The solution is that H.O.T.s explain how consciousness arises because the *concepts* that figure into the H.O.T.s are presupposed in conscious experience. Let us stick to first-order perceptual states. Very much in a Kantian spirit, the idea is that we first passively receive information via our senses. This occurs in what Kant (1781/1965) calls our 'faculty of sensibility,' which we might think of as early perceptual processing. Some of this information will then rise to the level of unconscious mental states, which can also cause our behavior in various ways. But such mental states do not become conscious until the faculty of understanding operates on them via the application of concepts....Kant (1781/1965) urges that it takes the cooperation of both the sensibility and understanding to produce conscious experience. Regarding the sensibility and understanding: 'Objects are *given* to us by means of sensibility. . . . They are *thought* through the understanding, and from the understanding arise concepts' (A19/B33). (Gennaro 2012, 77-78)

Still, it would be good to know if A&S are saying that *no* reductionist account of consciousness is plausible. If so, then any potential solution will remain unsatisfying to them for one reason or another. If not, then what reductionist theory of consciousness do they prefer? How does it explain consciousness or 'bestow consciousness' on some mental states but not others? How would it fare against H.O.T. theory? I certainly don't expect to convince A&S that they should become H.O.T. theorists. Still, there are advantages and disadvantages (or objections) to all theories of consciousness. The difficult part is trying to make the case that the one theory is, overall, better off than others.

### 3. Conscious Experiences One is Not Conscious of Having?

A&S explain that

Gennaro asserts: For example, if I am having a conscious desire or pain, I am aware of having that desire or pain. Conversely, the idea that I could have a conscious state while totally unaware of being in that state seems very odd (if not an outright contradiction) (Gennaro 2016, 444)...[but] There are alternative views to H.O.T. theories on which this is not only not contradictory, but quite plausible. As Gennaro knows, Dretske's (1993) view of conscious experience makes it possible to be in a conscious state (state of seeing something) and not know one is in that state. Dretske gives several examples of...'change blindness,' where one is presented with a visual array and later presented with another different array...it could be a missing dot or even a missing engine on Boeing 747 (Adams and Shreve 2017, 130-131).

Reply: First, it is unlikely that one is consciously aware of *every aspect* of, say, one's visual perceptions. Indeed, this is part of the point of change and inattention blindness, especially in cases where I am experiencing dozens of objects or dots in an array or, say, all of the spots on a leopard. It is unclear that one is actually *experiencing* each of the dots and spots. It is not just *what* one is *in fact* experiencing but *the way* that one is experiencing it. Surely, none of us should hold that we *consciously notice* every single aspect or property in a single given visual scene. (I do discuss change and inattention blindness in Gennaro 2012, chapter 6.) Consider also Dennett's (1991) case of the Marilyn Monroe wallpaper, where you walk into a room with wallpaper containing hundreds of her portraits. Your initial sense might convince you that you are seeing hundreds of identical Marylins. But are you really? Dennett persuasively argues that the real detail is not in your head but in the world. We simply assume that all the pictures are of Marilyn Monroe; that is, our brains 'fill in' the rest of the scene. We thus mistakenly assume that all of the Marylins are represented in our experience (Dennett 1991, 354-355). This likely occurs often when we experience a number of similar-looking objects at the same time, unless one object is so different as to 'pop out' in the experience. You obviously do not focus in (or foveate) on each and every portrait. Indeed, it would seem that you are only peripherally aware of the vast majority of portraits at any given time. It is

unlikely that you would notice if, say, six or seven of the portraits were altered to contain portraits of another blonde female. Still, there is a sense in which we still might *say* that you are ‘experiencing dozens and dozens of Marilyn portraits.’ Indeed, all of the above phenomena are sometimes used to show that conscious experience is *not* as ‘rich’ as it might seem (Gennaro 2012, chapter 6).

But, second and more to the point at hand, A&S’s use of Dretske’s argument is easily refuted by a H.O.T. theorist. Actually, William Seager (1994), no friend of H.O.T. theory, pointed out long ago that there is a crucial and defeating ambiguity in several of Dretske’s arguments against H.O.T. theory. For example, the two following claims are not equivalent and neither one entails the other:

- (1) One can have a conscious state without being aware that one is in it.
- (2) One can have a conscious state without being able to tell the difference between it and another very similar conscious state.

A H.O.T. theorist would of course deny (1) but could easily accept (2) which is likely to occur often, as A&S also agree. To put it more positively, consider:

- (3) When one has a conscious state one is aware of being in that state.
- (4) When one has two conscious states at different times, one is aware of the *difference(s)* between those states.

Again, (3) would be endorsed by a H.O.T. theorist and is really just the TP, but (4) simply does not follow. Why should a H.O.T. theorist suppose that one would always *consciously notice the difference* between two conscious states? Even if we granted that one consciously experiences every single aspect of a complex visual scene, it wouldn’t follow that one would therefore consciously notice the difference between it and another very similar scene.

Indeed, A&S (2017, 131) themselves rightly point out that “you can be in a state which is the conscious experience of the difference in arrays, but not be conscious that it is *the difference* that you are experiencing.” If this simply means (2) above, then I agree. But then they say that “you are in a conscious state that you are not conscious that you are in” which is clearly a different claim and one which would be denied by any H.O.T. theorist given that it contradicts TP.

Seager explains the objection as follows:

Dretske is equivocating between what is, in essence, a *de re* and a *de dicto* characterization of consciousness. Would H.O.T. theories demand that S be conscious of the difference between any two distinct experiences *as a difference*? Clearly the answer is no, for S may simply have never consciously compared them. In such cases – quite common I should think – S need not be conscious of the difference at all. Well, should H.O.T. theories require that if any two of S’s conscious experiences are different and S is actually conscious of the difference (i.e. conscious of what is different between the two experiences) then S must be conscious of this difference *as a difference*? This also calls for a negative answer. To say that S is conscious of the difference in this sense is to

say that there is something different about the two experiences of which S is conscious; this puts no, or very few, restrictions on *how* that experience will be characterized in S's belief about it which, according to the H.O.T. theory, constitutes S's consciousness. That is, to say that S is conscious of the difference is, on the H.O.T. theory, to say that S believes that he is experiencing the difference. But in the case envisaged this is true only on a *de re* reading of this belief. A more precise specification of this belief that brings out its *de re* character is this: of the difference (between the two experiences) S believes of it that he is experiencing it. It does not follow that S is conscious of the difference *as* a difference.... In short, the H.O.T. theories of consciousness can admit the phenomena that Dretske points out without succumbing to the objections he believes they generate. (Seager 1994, 275-276)

There can be a difference between *what* one sees ('seeing that') and *how or the way* that one sees it ('seeing-as'). In any case, A&S haven't shown that "I could have a conscious state while totally unaware of being in that state." At best, they point out (and I agree) that I could have two somewhat similar conscious states at different times and yet be totally unaware *of a difference* between them.

#### 4. H.O.T.s and Conceptualism

A&S then explain that

it seems to us that there are cases where one has a conscious experience of a kind of thing for which one lacks a concept. Indeed, Gennaro himself (2012, 157) gives us this kind of case. He admits that one can see a whistle without seeing it as a whistle. Thus, one can have a basic visual perceptual experience of a whistle without applying the concept of a whistle. One can know what it (the whistle) looks like, even though one would not describe it as having the look of a whistle, because one lacks the concept of whistle or the concept of look of a whistle.....same with an infant in crib seeing a mobile.....(2017, 131)

Much the same from the previous section applies here. As A&S know, I use the whistle example in discussing visual agnosia where a subject (abnormally) is unable to recognize an object that would otherwise be very familiar. But these are simply more extreme cases of seeing or experiencing something which the subject does not recognize. Like the infant seeing a mobile or someone seeing an armadillo for the first time (more on this below), one can experience something *that is in fact* an X while not experiencing X *as an X*. Like Dretske, A&S trade on the ambiguity in the expression 'a conscious experience of a thing.'

A&S further explain that:

when one looks briefly at the words on a page one may have a visual presentation of each of the words. One consciously experiences them all. But one does not apply the concept 'word' to each and every single word on the page. Nonetheless, one consciously experiences every word. No higher order thought is required to generate the conscious visual presentation of the words on the page. There are too many words and too little time for higher order thoughts to produce each conscious element (2017, 132).

First, it is again doubtful that one consciously experiences every single word on a page when ‘one looks briefly at the words on a page.’ So there is no need to apply the concept WORD to each word on the page. It is more like briefly looking at the Marilyn Monroe wallpaper. Second, even when attending to a particular word, we need not consciously apply the concept WORD to the words on a page since the H.O.T.s are unconscious in such cases of outer-directed perception.

## 5. Concept Acquisition and Autism

A&S end with what they call two problems for my view: concept acquisition and autism. First:

On Gennaro’s view, when one consciously experiences X, one must have an H.O.T. of the form ‘I’m experiencing X.’ But this raises the problem of how can one acquire new concepts? Dretske (1993) gives the example of the first time he saw an armadillo. He had a conscious visual presentation of the armadillo, but didn’t know what it was. He used the incoming information about armadillos to form the concept of an armadillo. Gennaro’s view will require that to have a conscious experience of the look of an armadillo, one knows already what an armadillo is. Otherwise, one will consciously experience only an animal with a certain shape and moving in a certain way. But nothing specific to what it is to be an armadillo will be consciously experienced – because one doesn’t yet have the concept of what an armadillo is. So one can’t have an H.O.T. that one is having a visual experience of an armadillo (only of a creature or an animal or some such). So how does one ever consciously learn what an armadillo is or looks like? It seems to us this makes concept learning impossible for new empirical concepts. On our view, one must be able to receive new information about Xs and consciously experience Xs and their looks (perceptible properties) in order to form the concept of an X. Gennaro’s view might rely on some innate concepts (2012, 191-197), but none of those is going to be specific to what makes something an armadillo (as opposed to something else). So none of those innate concepts will generate the new empirical concept – armadillo. (Adams and Shreve 2017, 133)

Reply: As was explained in the previous two sections, one can see an armadillo for the first time without experiencing it as an armadillo. Still, I agree that concept acquisition is, in a way, the real hard problem. That is why in Gennaro (2012, chapter 7) I offer what I call the “TILT” (the implicit learning theory) of concept acquisition. The short answer to A&S concern here is that learning an empirical concept can take place both consciously and unconsciously, and that when one learns a new concept it can alter the very phenomenology of one’s perceptions. We can of course also learn about so many things via explicit conscious instruction and reasoning. But we can also unconsciously ‘receive new information about X’ and thus ‘form the concept of X.’ In some cases, this can happen fairly quickly. One can have a ‘conscious visual presentation of the armadillo’ but not initially experience the animal as an armadillo. With the help of the developmental psychology literature, I attempt to explain (at least to some

extent) how this can occur starting from a small set of innate concepts through to the formation of familiar empirical concepts (Gennaro 2012, chapter 7). The concept ‘armadillo’ is certainly not innate. Surely, however, infants and young children aren’t explicitly taught every single concept that they possess. Something has to explain how they have *acquired* the concept but acquiring an empirical concept is not necessarily always done consciously.

Regarding autism, A&S say that

subjects with severe forms of autism are susceptible to pop-out synesthesia of the kind that we described in our initial paper (Adams and Shreve 2016). Now a hallmark of severe autism is what Baron-Cohen (1997) called ‘mind-blindness.’ This is the inability to apply mental concepts to self or others. People with severe autism have no trouble understanding people as physical systems with physical properties that are explicable in terms of natural physical laws. But when it comes to beliefs, desires, intentions, hopes, fears, wishes and other mental causes, severely autistic individuals simply do not understand behavior originating from these causes. Such purposive behavior is a complete mystery to them. Thus, they do not engage in applying mental concepts to themselves or others. Consequently, when a person with severe autism consciously experiences the pop-out of synesthesia, it cannot be the result of applying an H.O.T. to their experience because they don’t employ H.O.T.s about mental states (of self or others). (2017, 133)

Reply: I think that the ‘mind-blind’ characterization of autism, even the more extreme cases, is mistaken or at least highly exaggerated. It is not at all clear to me that autistics cannot have or apply mental concepts to themselves or others (see Gennaro 2012, sec. 8.4). Much like with animals and infants, I think that critics of H.O.T. theory tend to make H.O.T.s seem more sophisticated than they need to be and also sometimes conflate reflection or introspection (= conscious H.O.T.s) with something more like ‘pre-reflective self-awareness’ or unconscious H.O.T.s. Here is a short quote from Gennaro (2012, 259):

One initial problem with the literature is that some authors who argue for a deficiency in ‘self-consciousness’ among autistic individuals leave the term undefined....self-consciousness, self-concepts, I-thoughts, and concept possession can come in degrees. At the most sophisticated level, there is introspection or reflection. Even if there are deficiencies in introspection, it does not follow that there are no I-thoughts or metacognitive states at all....it is one thing to suppose that autistic humans have *abnormal* or *impaired* self-consciousness, but quite another to claim that there is *no* self-consciousness at all. Indeed, even Frith and Happé (1999, 11-14) quote numerous cases of first-person reports from autistics [despite their skepticism regarding autistic self-consciousness].

A&S do say that “Gennaro (2012) thinks autistic individuals can have self-consciousness and that reflective self-awareness is not required for H.O.T.s. But how can it be a self-awareness if it is not reflective and self-aware? They must have something to make a thought self-referential (Adams and Shreve 2017,



133-134, fn 4).” Yes, non- or pre-reflective self-awareness still includes a self-referential element, namely, an ‘I’ as in “I am in mental state M.”

Overall, then, I think that H.O.T. theory can effectively handle the objections raised in Adams and Shreve’s 2017 paper though the focus has largely shifted away from synesthesia. To be sure, however, some readers may wish to look more closely at Gennaro (2012) and other related work (e.g. Seager 1994, Rosenthal 2004, 2005). Of course, many readers and A&S might still not be satisfied with my replies for various reasons. Nonetheless, this results in an interesting exchange of ideas and a better understanding of any deeper differences (and sometimes agreements) on these matters. (Indeed, many of these themes and related objections are also addressed in a 2013 *Journal of Consciousness Studies* symposium on Gennaro 2012, including my replies to William Seager, Robert Van Gulick, and Josh Weisberg.)

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# Artefacts as Mere Illustrations of a Worldview

Terence Rajivan Edward

**Abstract:** This paper responds to an argument against a kind of anthropology. According to the argument, if the aim of anthropology is to describe the different worldviews of different groups, then anthropologists should only refer to material artefacts in order to illustrate a worldview; but the interest of artefacts to anthropology goes beyond mere illustration. This argument has been endorsed by key members of the ontological movement in anthropology, who found at least one of its premises in Marilyn Strathern's writing.

**Keywords:** anthropology, artefacts, illustrations, ontological movement, worldview description.

This paper focuses on claims made by some members of a recent academic movement, in the discipline of social and cultural anthropology. The movement is known as the ontological movement, for reasons that we need not go into here. My focus below will not be on the recommendations that this movement makes for future anthropology, rather with an argument that has been made about the limitations of previous anthropology.

A key text for this movement is the book *Thinking through Things*. The authors of the Introduction to this book – Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad and Sari Wastell – tell us about the aim of previous anthropology. Previous anthropologists tried to describe the worldview of this or that cultural group (Henare et al. 2007, 9-10). A worldview is a set of representations of the world. The representations are typically of a highly general character and typically give an initial impression of coherence. To illustrate this point: the proposition that there are causes, the proposition that there are effects and the proposition that each effect resembles its cause are together part of some worldviews (Frazer 1925, 11).

I have said that according to the authors of the Introduction, the aim of previous anthropology was worldview description. Below is some textual evidence that this is how they understand previous anthropology:

After all, while matter (nature) just is what it is indifferently, mind (culture) can represent it in different ways. So, to the extent that anthropology takes difference as its object, leaving the study of the indifferences of nature to natural scientists, it cannot but be a study of the different ways the world (the one world of Nature) is represented by different people – and particularly by different *groups* of people. (Henare et al. 2007, 9)

In this passage, the authors do not use the term 'worldviews,' but they do use it elsewhere to capture what previous anthropology aimed to study (Henare et al. 2007, 10).

The authors of the Introduction do not want to pursue worldview description. They tell us that an anthropology which aims purely at worldview description will, if it keeps to this aim, only refer to material artefacts as illustrations or else not at all (Henare et al. 2007, 3). In other words, the material artefacts that an anthropologist becomes acquainted with will, at best, be referred to as examples to help others understand a worldview. There is no other reason to refer to material artefacts, given that the aim is worldview description. But the authors of the Introduction think that the interest of material artefacts for anthropology goes beyond merely being illustrations (Henare et al. 2007, 3). When making this argument, they commit themselves to the following two propositions:

- (i) The aim of (much) previous anthropology was to describe the worldviews of different cultural groups.
- (ii) If this is the aim of anthropology, there is no reason to refer to material artefacts, except as helpful illustrations of a worldview.

I disagree with both of these propositions. Even if proposition (i) is qualified so that it refers to much previous anthropology, it is a very misleading portrait of the history of anthropology. In the mid-twentieth century, British anthropologists were interested in describing social structures and interested in problems to do with social structures, problems which cannot be reduced to worldview description, such as how social order could be maintained without a central political authority (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, Jarvie 1967, 235-236). But I shall focus on proposition (ii) below.

The authors of the Introduction take this proposition from an essay by the influential anthropologist Marilyn Strathern (Henare et al. 2007, 3). I read Strathern as committing herself to this proposition when she writes:

Ever since the 1920s, much of Western anthropology has been concerned with approaching *others* through the elucidation of *their* worldviews. Part of our knowledge of material artifacts, for instance, must be our knowledge of their knowledge: it is taken for granted that we study the significance which such artifacts have for the people who make them, and thus their interpretations of them. Anthropologists, therefore, uncover meanings by putting people's own meanings into their social and cultural context... Making social (or cultural) context the frame of reference had one important result. It led to the result that one should really be studying the framework itself (the social context = society). The artifacts were *merely* illustration. (Strathern 1990, 37-38)

If the aim of anthropology is to describe the different worldviews of different groups, then Strathern thinks that there is no reason to refer to the material artefacts produced by a group, except as helpful examples for understanding a worldview. For instance, an anthropologist tells us that

members of a certain group believe that an effect resembles its cause. To illustrate this point, the anthropologist tells us that clay representations of people are injured in order to produce analogous effects in actual people (Frazer 1925, 13).

Even if we suppose that the sole aim of anthropology is worldview description, I do not think that artefacts are reduced to mere illustrations. I will note a couple of points to keep in mind before explaining why. The worldview of a group consists of representations that members explicitly or implicitly commit themselves to. Much of this worldview may be silently assumed by what is said, rather than explicitly stated. One point it is useful to keep in mind is that the representations that are part of a worldview can cover a variety of things: not just features of the material world, but also what non-material entities and qualities exist, if any.

It is also useful to keep in mind that, while the representations identified when describing a worldview are typically more general in character, this does not exclude the possibility that some components of a worldview refer to specific beings. For example, it is impossible to properly describe the Christian worldview without talking about the specific person of Jesus (Broad 1939, 132).

What about specific material artefacts? A literary scholar who tries to describe the worldview within the legends of King Arthur would have to say that being able to pull out the sword that was stuck in the stone reveals a person to be the true king of England. They might contrast this with present-day Western conceptions of what would reveal a person to have a right to command and be obeyed. The literary scholar does not introduce the sword in the stone as a mere illustration: a helpful yet dispensable example. One of the most important representations within this worldview is about the sword and so the scholar has to refer to it. Referring to it is essential for presenting the content of this worldview.

Similarly, an anthropologist may be studying a group who refer to a material artefact and it is necessary to tell readers about that material artefact if readers are to understand the worldview of this group. It has an important role in the way that the group represents the world and so has to be referred to. Both Strathern and members of the ontological movement miss this point. They think that if the aim of anthropology is worldview description, this inevitably reduces artefacts to mere illustrations. But actually whether they are reduced to this role or not very much depends on the worldview. Much as a single person may be very significant within a given worldview, so may a single artefact.

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