

can become morally indifferent. The point here is that subjectivity can enter in various ways into the making and perceiving of value, some of which may have no parallel at all with the involvement of subjectivity in secondary qualities.

In thinking about value it is altogether too easy to project, conflating the familiar and conventional with the natural and inevitable. One could write a pocket history of progress in moral sensibility in terms of the successive unmasking of such confections—with respect to slavery, inherited rule, the status of women, and the borders of tribe, “people”, or nation. Objectivity about intrinsic and moral good alike calls for us to gain critical perspective on our own actual responses, not to project their objects rigidly.

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Response-Dependence Without Reduction

1. Blackburn's dilemma for response-dependence

Many think that the mark of evaluative judgements of the form ‘It is right to ϕ ’ and ‘It is desirable to ϕ ’ lies in the internal or necessary connection between such judgements and the will (Hare 1952, Blackburn 1984, Korsgaard 1986, Lewis 1989, Gibbard 1990, Smith 1994). A judgement to the effect that ϕ -ing is right, or desirable, counts as evaluative only because, *inter alia*, absent weakness of will and the like, the person making the judgement has some motivation to ϕ .

Non-cognitivists famously argue from this internalist premise to the conclusion that such evaluative judgements express motivations, or dispositions to be motivated, rather than beliefs (Hare 1952, Blackburn 1984, Gibbard 1990). Their argument is that, since belief and desire are distinct existences, it is possible to combine believing that the world is a certain way, for any of the various ways it could be, with a pro-attitude towards its being that way, or indifference towards its being that way, or even a con-attitude towards its being that way. The attraction of non-cognitivism is then supposed to be that it alone tells us that the state expressed by an agent's evaluative judgement and that expressed by her motivations or dispositions to be motivated are not distinct existences, but are rather one and the same: there is simply the motivation, no belief at all.

Against this background many philosophers began to take an interest in response-dependent analyses of value in the 1980s (McDowell 1985, Smith 1986b, Wright 1988, Smith 1989, Lewis 1989, Johnston 1989). According to these theorists, the non-cognitivist's argument contains a crucial flaw. For

even if we do think of evaluative judgements as expressions of beliefs they argued that there would still be a necessary connection of sorts between evaluative judgement and the will if the beliefs in question were beliefs about the judge's own motivational responses to the world. There was therefore a scurry of activity as different theorists each tried to come up with a plausible response-dependent analysis of value, one which guaranteed the right sort of connection between evaluative judgement and the will but without, in the process, generating any counter-intuitive consequences of its own.¹ Before this work was all out, however, and before the work that was out had been properly assimilated, one very prominent non-cognitivist, Simon Blackburn, launched a potentially devastating attack on response-dependent analyses of value (1993).

In 'Circles, Finks, Smells and Biconditionals' Blackburn argued that, whatever their differences, those who favour response-dependent analyses of some concept, C, must believe that there is an *a priori* true biconditional of the form:

X is C iff X tends to elicit [reaction] from [persons] under [circumstances]

Moreover, notwithstanding the fact that many response-dependent theorists explicitly rejected the claim to be providing an analytic reduction of value, he argued that if such a biconditional is to do its job, its status as an *a priori* truth must in turn reflect a certain sort of dependency between the left hand side and the right hand side. An understanding of X's being C must consist, in some sense, in an understanding of X's having a tendency to elicit [reaction] from [persons] under [circumstances].

With just this much agreed about the project of analysing concepts in a response-dependent style Blackburn raised what he thinks is an unavoidable dilemma for response-dependence.

Suppose we stay with the goal of understanding the judgement that X is C. The... problem we meet is... one of navigating between two disasters, that I shall call Scylla and Charybdis. Scylla is that we falsify the kind of judgement that 'X is C' actually makes. Charybdis is that we get this right but at the cost of making the same kind of judgement at some place within the right hand side... This structure is familiar in the case of value. Scylla is that we go naturalistic or empirical;

1. Response-dependent theorists disagreed among themselves whether it would be counter-intuitive to suppose that belief and desire are not distinct existences. Contrast, for example, Smith (1987) and Lewis (1988) with McDowell (1978).

Charybdis that we make an ethical judgement on the right hand side. (Blackburn 1993, p. 272)

Let's consider the two horns in turn.

On the first horn, Scylla, [reaction], [persons] and [circumstances] are all specified in non-evaluative terms. Blackburn's own example is:

X is good if and only if X is such as to elicit desires from us as we actually are when we come across it (Blackburn 1993, p. 272)

But this biconditional is evidently false because we know that, as a matter of fact, we have all sorts of desires for things that are not good, and that there are all sorts of good things that we do not desire. Moreover, even if it did just so happen to be true that the good things are all and only those we, as we actually are, desire when we come across them, it would still be at best an *a posteriori* truth, not an *a priori* truth.

Nor is Scylla made tractable by coming up with more complicated formulations of the biconditional. Consider, for example, David Lewis's (1989) suggestion that:

X is a value if and only if X is what we would desire to desire under conditions of full imaginative acquaintance with X

The same sorts of problems arise. Whether the things we would desire to desire are or are not good is supposed to depend on the causal consequences of our imaginings. But, to the contrary, there is good reason to believe that our imaginations can distort our reactions in unjustifiable ways, a point well made by Mark Johnston.

Even if one is initially benevolent, complete awareness of the suffering of the mass of sentient beings would be horrifically depressing, and hardness of heart rather than valuing their release might well be the causal upshot. (Johnston 1989, p.152)

Moreover, even if it did just so happen that the good things were all and only those that we desired to desire under conditions of full imaginative acquaintance, that would once again be, at best, an *a posteriori* truth, not an *a priori* truth. The fact that vividly imagining X causes [reaction] is thus not constitutive of X's being a value at all. What matters is, at best, whether vividly imagining X *justifies* the [reaction]. At this point we therefore begin moving towards Charybdis.

On the other horn of the dilemma, Charybdis, we make an evaluative judgement in specifying what the relevant [reaction] is, or who the relevant [persons] are, or what the relevant [circumstances] are. Blackburn's examples are these (1993, pp. 272–3).

X is good iff X is such as to elicit desires from good people when they come across it.

X is good iff X is such as to elicit desires from people under the ideal circumstances, i.e. those under which people desire good things.

His objection on this horn is, accordingly, not that the biconditional is false or at best only *a posteriori* true, but rather that it makes no analytic advance.

It takes not observation but ethical judgement to determine whether something is such as to elicit desires from good people, since you have to judge who are the good people. Of course, in principle an advance within ethics could come about this way, since it might be somehow easier to judge who are the good people than it appears to be to judge X's. But this will not be an advance in our understanding of ethical judgement *per se*. It would be a strictly local advance in first order moral theory. (Blackburn 1993, pp. 272–3)

On Charybdis we therefore make no headway in our attempt to understand the nature of an evaluative judgement. If we were initially puzzled whether the judgement that X is good expresses a desire or belief, then being told that it is equivalent to the judgement that X is such as to elicit desires from people under the circumstances under which people desire good things is hardly going to help. We will simply be undecided whether that expresses a desire or belief.

If Blackburn is right then it seems that response-dependent analyses of value cannot help us block the argument from internalism to non-cognitivism. If the analysis is reductive, then though it succeeds in telling us which belief an evaluative judgement is supposed to express, it is evidently false that evaluative judgements express the beliefs thus identified. And if it is non-reductive then we make no analytic advance. The alleged analysis simply doesn't tell us that evaluative judgements *do* express beliefs. The argument for non-cognitivism thus remains intact.

My task in the present paper is to show that Blackburn's dilemma is no dilemma at all. I will argue that because Blackburn overlooks the role of platitudes in conceptual analysis he does not see that we can use these plati-

tudes to spell out the cognitive content of an evaluative judgement in non-reductive response-dependent terms. I begin at the beginning, by explaining what, precisely, the role of platitudes in an analysis is.

2. Platitudes and conceptual analysis: the case of colour

When we acquire mastery of any term in a language what we acquire is a certain sort of skill in the use of that term: we acquire a set of dispositions to make inferences and judgements along certain lines (Smith 1994, Ch.2). Let's call the description a theorist might give of these inferences and judgements a set of 'platitudes'. What might these platitudes be?

Consider, to begin, the case of colour, and in particular the concept of being red. What are the red-platitudes? The red-platitudes describe the inferences and judgements we make in virtue of being masters of the term 'red'. They therefore include platitudes about the relations between redness and the other colours. 'Red is more similar to orange than to yellow', 'Red is more similar to purple than to blue', 'Red is maximally dissimilar to green', 'Red is more similar to pink than to white', 'Red is more similar to plum than to black', and so on. They include platitudes about the relations between colour experiences and colour judgements. 'Someone who judges an object to be red in the presence of that object has an experience as of the object's being red, provided something unusual isn't going on', 'The colours of objects typically cause us to see those objects as the colours that they are', 'Most everything we see looks coloured', 'There's no seeing a colour without seeing an extended coloured patch', 'Blind people don't know what colours are', and the like. They include corrective platitudes linking real as opposed to illusory colours to features of perceivers and their environments. 'If you want to know what colour something is, have a look at it', 'Things don't usually look the colour they really are in the dark so if you want to see what colour something really is, take it into the daylight', 'If your eyes aren't working properly you might not be able to tell what colour things really are', 'Unperceived objects are still coloured', and the like. And, finally, they include platitudes about the ways in which we learn colour terms by linking them up with features of the world. 'If you want to teach someone what the word for red means, show her some red objects and then say the word for red', 'Teach what the word for red means at the same time as you teach what the other colour words mean', and so on.

To say that these are platitudes is not to say that their precise formulation is uncontroversial. On the contrary, it is presumably very controversial what the judgements and inferences we make as masters of the term 'red' are.² Moreover, the fact that we make the inferences and judgements that we do, as masters of the term 'red', is consistent with the possibility that we are wrong to do so. We would, for example, change our habits if we were shown that the judgements and inferences that we make as masters of the term 'red'—those captured by the platitudes themselves—were incompatible or inconsistent with each other. Importantly, however, it would take something like being convinced of such inconsistency to make us change our inferential and judgemental habits. And the reason why is easy enough to state.

At the limit, giving up on the inferences and judgements we make as masters of colour terms, in virtue of being masters, is to give up on using *colour* terms altogether. The platitudes that describe these inferences and judgements therefore have a *prima facie a priori* status, and gain *a priori* status simpliciter by surviving as part of the maximal consistent set of platitudes constitutive of mastery of colour terms. That this is so should not be surprising if, as I have already suggested, these platitudes together describe the pattern of inferences and judgements licensed by our colour concepts themselves. For, other things being equal, these inferences and judgements are themselves *a priori* knowable. Someone who has mastery of the term 'red', and who understands the red-platitudes, needs only to think the matter through carefully in order to assent to them.

If an account along these lines of what it is to have mastery of colour terms is on the right track, then a certain natural picture emerges of how we might go about giving an analysis of the concept of being red. Since such an analysis should tell us everything there is to know *a priori* about what it is for something to be red, it follows that it should give us explicit knowledge of all and only the red-platitudes: that is, the maximal consistent set of platitudes that describes the inferences and judgements we make as masters of the term 'red'. And this in turn suggests that an analysis of the concept of being red is itself simply constituted by, or derived from, a long conjunction of these platitudes. In this way an analysis helps to make the implicit explicit.

2. It follows that the formulations of the red-platitudes in the text may therefore be incorrect, a possibility that I will abstract away from in what follows.

3. Colour-platitudes and cognitivism

We have seen the materials from which we are to construct an analysis of the concept of being red, and we have seen what the goal of such an analysis is. Before we even attempt to construct such an analysis, however, we must first ask whether colour judgements in general are to be analysed cognitively or non-cognitively. For this will have a crucial effect upon the nature of our analysis.

It is a striking fact that nearly everyone agrees that colour judgements express beliefs about the colour properties possessed by objects. No one seems to think that they are mere expressions of our experiential reactions. But why? What justifies this cognitivist stance? The answer is: the colour-platitudes themselves (Smith 1993). For while the colour-platitudes force us to recognise an intimate connection between colour experiences and colour judgements, they also force us to recognise all sorts of ways in which our colour experiences can mislead us as to the real colours of objects. In this way they force us to make an *is/seems* distinction. Colour judgements thus purport to tell us about a stable property possessed by objects, a property objects can retain quite independently of various inconstancies in our experiences of them. Having a colour experience is thus neither necessary nor sufficient for making a colour judgement.

In this respect colour-platitudes contrast with the platitudes that describe the proper ways in which we are to use overtly expressive terms. Consider, for example, an expressive term such as 'ech', as in 'That tastes bitter. Ech!'. In learning to use this term we learn nothing that requires us to suppose that the unpleasant experiences which give rise to our saying 'Ech!' may in some way be mistaken. The ech-platitudes themselves thus in no way force us to make an *is/seems* distinction. Having an unpleasant experience is indeed both necessary and sufficient for the judgement 'Ech!' to be appropriate. This is why ech judgements, unlike colour judgements, are best construed non-cognitively, as mere expressions of our distaste for our experiences.

4. Colour-platitudes and the response-dependent analysis of colour

Now that we have seen that and why colour judgements in general are to be analysed cognitively, we are in a position to ask more specific

questions about the cognitive content of these judgements. In particular, we are in a position to ask whether we should analyse the cognitive content of colour judgements in response-dependent terms.

It seems to me that we most certainly should analyse colour judgements in response-dependent terms, and that once again it is the colour-platitudes themselves that justify this response-dependent stance. In order to see why, we need merely to look again at the red-platitudes, and, in particular, at the platitudes that connect our colour experiences with our colour judgements on the one hand, and the various corrective platitudes on the other. For these platitudes are remarkable precisely because they force us to make the is/seems distinction in a characteristic response-dependent way: that is, by telling us when it would and would not be appropriate to use the colour experiences of perceivers of a certain sort, in certain sorts of environmental conditions, as criterial of the real, as opposed to the merely apparent, colours of the objects perceived. They tell us that an object is red, as opposed to merely appearing to be so, just in case it has a property that causes it to look red to normal perceivers under standard conditions.

Of course, the terms 'normal perceivers' and 'standard conditions' do not themselves occur in a statement of the red-platitudes. But their role in the analysis is clear enough. They serve simply to help summarise the particular response-dependent way in which the red-platitudes enable us to make the is/seems distinction.

5. Can we give a reductive analysis of colour?

We have now seen that and why we are to give a response-dependent analysis of the cognitive content of colour judgements. We are therefore in a position to ask whether the response-dependent analysis on offer is reductive or non-reductive.

According to the response-dependent analysis an object's being red is a matter of its having a property that causes it to look red to normal perceivers under standard conditions. Someone who does not already understand the concept of being red is therefore in no position even to understand the analysis. And this means in turn that the analysis is most certainly non-reductive. For we have not been given a way of understanding what it is to be red in terms that do not themselves presuppose an understanding of what it is to be red (Smith 1986a).

Importantly, however, this does not in any way undermine the claim that the response-dependent analysis constitutes an *analysis*. For, to repeat, the task of an analysis of the cognitive content of judgements to the effect that an object is red is simply to give us more or less explicit knowledge of what we otherwise knew at best implicitly in virtue of being masters of the term 'red': that is, knowledge of the red-platitudes, the judgements and inferences we are disposed to make in virtue of being masters of the term 'red'. A non-reductive response-dependent analysis accomplishes this task. For it makes explicit the fact that an object's being red is a matter of its looking red to normal perceivers under standard conditions. It makes explicit the fact that the red-platitudes force us make the is/seems distinction in this particular response-dependent way.

The fact that the response-dependent analysis of the cognitive content of judgements to the effect that an object is red is not reductive does not show that no reductive analysis is possible, of course. But it seems to me that we can in fact provide an argument for this stronger conclusion. For the only technique I know of for deriving reductive analyses from platitudes is the technique described by David Lewis (1970, 1972, 1989). However, as we will see, judgements to the effect that an object is red elude analysis in Lewis's reductive terms. Let me explain why this is so.

In trying to provide a reductive analysis of the cognitive content of judgements to the effect that an object is red the first step is to rewrite all of the colour-platitudes so that every mention of red, blue, green and the rest is in property-name style.³ 'If you want to teach someone what the word for red means, show her some red objects and then say the word for red' becomes 'If you want to teach someone what the word for the property of being red means, show her some objects with the property of being red and then say the word for the property of being red', and so on. And each mention of the word 'colour' becomes mention of a big disjunction of all of the property-names of the colours. 'If you want to see what colour something really is, take it into the daylight' becomes 'If you want to see whether something really has the property of being red or the property of being green or the property of being blue or...., take it into the daylight'.

The second step is to conjoin all the platitudes, and to represent their long conjunction as a relational predicate 'T' true of all the various colour

3. My presentation of Lewis's style of analysis follows Jackson (1992).

properties. Where the properties of being red, green, blue and so on, are represented by the letters 'r', 'g', 'b' and the like, the conjunction will be represented by:

$$T[r\ g\ b\ \dots]$$

Once we have this long conjunction, the third step is to strip out each mention of each of the property-names of the colours and replace it with a free variable:

$$T[x\ y\ z\ \dots]$$

Once we have done this we can say that, if there are colours, the following must be true:

$$\exists x\ \exists y\ \exists z\ \dots\ T[x\ y\ z\ \dots] \ \&\ (x^*)\ (y^*)\ (z^*)\ \dots\ T[x^*\ y^*\ z^*\ \dots] \text{ iff } (x=x^*,\ y=y^*,\ z=z^*\ \dots)$$

In other words, if there any colours, then there are properties which are in fact related to each other and to the world in just the way that the big conjunction of platitudes says the colours are related to each other and the world.

If the variable 'x' replaced the property of being red when we stripped out all mention of the particular colours, then we can define the property of being red as follows:

$$\text{the property of being red is the } x \text{ such that } \exists y\ \exists z\ \dots\ T[x\ y\ z\ \dots] \ \&\ (x^*)\ (y^*)\ (z^*)\ \dots\ T[x^*\ y^*\ z^*\ \dots] \text{ iff } (x=x^*,\ y=y^*,\ z=z^*\ \dots)$$

What we have here thus purports to be a definition of the property of being red in terms of the network of relations this property bears to the other colours, and to all of the things that are mentioned in the platitudes about the colours: features of perceivers, features of the environment, and the like. Importantly, however, the analysis itself mentions no colour terms at all. No colour term is needed to say what 'T' means. It therefore purports to be a reductive definition of the property of being red, a definition in *non-colour* terms.

I said earlier that colour judgements elude a reductive analysis. But haven't I just explained, in schematic terms at least, how to provide such an analysis? The judgement that an object is red is simply the judgement that the object has the x such that $\exists y\ \exists z\ \dots\ T[x\ y\ z\ \dots] \ \&\ (x^*)\ (y^*)\ (z^*)\ \dots\ T[x^*\ y^*$

$z^*\ \dots]$ iff $(x=x^*,\ y=y^*,\ z=z^*\ \dots)$. The answer is that the schematic terms in which this analysis is given mask a serious flaw in the purported definition, a flaw whose nature emerges once we make explicit what 'T' really means.

'T' is simply a long conjunction of the colour-platitudes: the red-platitudes, the orange-platitudes, the yellow-platitudes, and so on. But now reflect for a moment on these platitudes. Remember, in doing so, that they include platitudes about the relations between the colours, platitudes that reflect our ordinary understanding of the colours as standing in certain similarity relations to each other, relations that can be captured on a continuous colour wheel. And remember also that they include platitudes connecting colour experiences with colour judgements, and also various corrective platitudes, platitudes that we have already seen can be usefully summarised in the manner of a response-dependent analysis.

Bearing all this in mind, the red-platitudes can then be seen to entail the following claims: the property of being red causes objects to look red to normal perceivers under standard conditions, and the property of being red is more similar to the property of being orange than it is to the property of being yellow, and so on. The orange-platitudes entail the following claims: the property of being orange causes objects to look orange to normal perceivers under standard conditions, and the property of being orange is more similar to the property of being yellow than it is to the property of being green, and so on. The yellow-platitudes entail the following claims: the property of being yellow causes objects to look yellow to normal perceivers under standard conditions, and the property of being yellow is more similar to the property of being green than it is to the property of being blue, and so on. And so we could go on.

Let's now make a substantial assumption. Assume that there are no platitudes about the colours that entail any claims beyond these about the properties of being red, or orange, or yellow, or the rest. I will have something to say about the plausibility of this substantial assumption presently. With this assumption in place, however, look at what happens to our reductive network style analyses when we make the meaning of 'T' more explicit. Simplifying somewhat, we find that:

$$\text{the property of being red is the } x \text{ such that } \exists y\ \exists z\ \dots \text{ objects have } x \text{ iff they look } x \text{ to normal perceivers under standard conditions, and } x \text{ is more similar to } y \text{ than it is to } z.. \ \&..(\text{uniqueness})$$

the property of being orange is the y such that $\exists z \exists u \dots$ objects have y iff they look y to normal perceivers under standard conditions, and y is more similar to z than it is to u . &..(uniqueness)

the property of being yellow is the z such that $\exists v \exists w \dots$ objects have z iff they look z to normal perceivers under standard conditions, and z is more similar to v than it is to w . &..(uniqueness)

and so on. But now look at the network of relations specified by the definitions on each right hand side. It is the *very same* network of relations in each case. Our so-called 'definitions' therefore fail to distinguish the colours from each other. The properties of being red, orange, yellow and the rest all turn out to have the same definition, and so to mean the same thing. Thoroughly reductive network style analyses of the various colours therefore lose *a priori* information about the *differences* between them. Let's call this the 'permutation problem'.⁴

Can we solve the permutation problem? In order to do so, there would have to be some additional platitudes we can use to enrich our understanding of 'T', platitudes which are such that, by adding them into the mix, we could distinguish the colours from each other. I have been assuming that there are no platitudes beyond those already mentioned. But is the assumption correct? It might be thought that the assumption is incorrect. After all, wouldn't claims like 'Red is the colour of blood', 'Orange is the colour of ripe mandarins', 'Yellow is the colour of a new born chicken', and the like, stop the permutations if only we made the meaning of 'T' depend, *inter alia*, on them? And aren't we entitled to make the meaning of 'T' depend on them, given that they are all platitudes, in at least one sense of the term 'platitude'?

The answer is that, though they would indeed stop the permutations, they are not platitudes in the relevant sense of the term 'platitude'. Claims like 'Red is the colour of blood', 'Yellow is the colour of a new born chicken', and the like, are certainly widely believed to be true, and in that sense they are indeed platitudes. But, unfortunately, being widely believed to be true is neither necessary nor sufficient for being platitudes in the relevant sense. Platitudes, in the relevant sense, have a *prima facie a priori* status because they constitute a description of the judgements and inferences we make in virtue of being masters of colour concepts. But claims like 'Red is the colour

of blood', 'Yellow is the colour of a new born chicken', and the rest, are at best merely widely believed *a posteriori* truths about the colours. We therefore cannot use them to enrich our definitions of the colours.⁵

As I see it, so long as we try to provide a thoroughly reductive network style analysis of colour, nothing short of adding *a posteriori* information of the sort described will allow us to solve the permutation problem. We have indeed added all the *prima facie a priori* truths into the mix. The only conclusion to draw, it seems to me, is that we should therefore give up attempting to provide a thoroughly reductive network style analysis of colour and make the meaning of 'T' depend instead, in some way, on information that is characterised in *colour* terms. And the way in which we should do so is plain.

What distinguishes the property of being red from the property of being orange? The answer is obvious: the property of being red is the one that typically causes objects with the property to look *red*, whereas the property of being orange is the one that typically causes objects with the property to look *orange*. But this is just what a non-reductive response-dependent analysis of red and orange tells us, and, as we have seen, these analyses are indeed *analyses*. It seems to me that we should therefore abandon the project of analysing the cognitive content of colour judgements in a thoroughly reductive network style, and conclude, instead, that a non-reductive response-dependent analysis is the very best that we can hope for.

6. Lessons learned by reflecting on the case of colour

We have considered the case of colour in some detail. Let's recap, and generalise the lessons we have learned.

First, we have seen that in order to decide whether to be cognitivists or non-cognitivists about a certain class of judgements, those involving a certain concept C, we should look at the platitudes that describe the inferences

5. Suppose the best theory of colour tells us that the colour wheel is not perfectly symmetrical—that, say, reds and blues have a feature that the other colours don't have. Might we use that feature of the reds and blues to solve the permutation problem? As is perhaps evident, the answer depends on whether it is plausible to suppose that it is *a priori* that reds and blues have the feature in question. My own view is that though it may be discovered that the reds and blues have a feature that the other colours don't have, it would be at best an *a posteriori* truth that this is so.

4. I owe this useful term to Philip Pettit.

and judgements we make as masters of C. If they enable us to make an is/seems distinction then it is plausible to suppose that the C-judgements have cognitive content, whereas if they do not then the C-judgements should be analysed non-cognitively.

Second, we have seen that in order to decide whether we should give a response-dependent style analysis of a concept C we should look at the platitudes that describe the inferences and judgements we make as masters of C in order to see whether they enable us to make the is/seems distinction in a characteristic response-dependent way. If the C-platitudes suggest that there are certain responses to objects, and certain conditions, which are such that the presence of that response, in those conditions, to the objects in question is criterial of the instantiation of C in those objects, then we should give a response-dependent analysis of C.

Third, we have seen that at least some concepts are to be given, at best, a non-reductive response-dependent style analysis. The fact that a certain concept is to be given, at best, a non-reductive response-dependent analysis does not call into question the status of the analysis as an *analysis*, however, because such an analysis may still do everything that an analysis is required to do. It may make explicit what we otherwise knew at best only implicitly in virtue of being masters of C: that is, it may make explicit the fact that the C-platitudes force us to make the is/seems distinction in a particular response-dependent way.

7. Platitudes and conceptual analysis: the case of value

Let's now consider the case of value. As with any concept, mastery of evaluative concepts is constituted by a disposition to make inferences and judgements along lines that can be described by a rich set of platitudes. In analysing evaluative concepts, then, our task will be to capture all and only these evaluative-platitudes. What are some of these platitudes?

Obviously enough there are platitudes about the internal or necessary connection between evaluative judgements and the will. 'If someone judges her ϕ -ing to be desirable, then, other things being equal, she will be disposed to ϕ ', 'Weakness of will, compulsion, depression and the like may explain why someone isn't moved in accordance with her evaluative beliefs', 'Reasons for judging acts to be desirable and undesirable are reasons for acting and refraining from acting accordingly', 'We sometimes do what we do because we judge we have a reason to do so', 'The reasons why acts are desir-

able are sometimes the reasons why people perform those acts' and so on. There are platitudes about the objectivity of evaluative judgements. 'When A says that ϕ -ing is desirable, and B says that it is not the case that ϕ -ing is desirable, then at most one of A and B is correct', 'Whether or not ϕ -ing is desirable can be discovered by engaging in rational argument', 'Provided A and B are open-minded and thinking clearly, an argument between A and B about the desirability or undesirability of ϕ -ing should result in A and B coming to some agreement on the matter', and so on. And, finally, there are platitudes concerning the procedures by which we can discover how to make the substance of evaluative judgements more precise. Rawls famously gave system to such platitudes when he described what he calls the method of 'reflective equilibrium' (Rawls 1951, 1971). For not only is it a platitude that desirability is a property that we can discover to be instantiated by engaging in rational argument—something we just saw in connection with the platitudes that relate to objectivity—it is also a platitude that such arguments have a characteristic coherentist form. 'Those evaluative principles that provide the most unified and coherent justification for A's evaluative judgements are the ones to which A is committed', 'Those evaluative judgements that do not cohere with the evaluative principles to which A is committed are the ones that he has reason to reject', and the like.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the platitudes describing the inferences and judgements we make as masters of evaluative concepts. They will, however, suffice for present purposes.

8. Evaluative-platitudes and cognitivism

How do the evaluative-platitudes bear on the debate between cognitivists and non-cognitivists? As I see it, much as in the case of colour, the evaluative-platitudes bear on that debate by giving support to a cognitivist rather than a non-cognitivist analysis of evaluative judgements.

This may seem surprising. After all, as I have said, the evaluative-platitudes do force us to recognise an important connection between evaluative judgement and motivation, and this is the internal or necessary connection between evaluative judgement and the will I described at the outset, the connection that provides the crucial premise in the argument for non-cognitivism. But the evaluative-platitudes also force us to recognise that there are all sorts of ways in which we may be motivated to pursue things that we do not even believe to be desirable, and to believe desirable things we are not in the

least motivated to pursue. Being motivated to ϕ is thus neither necessary nor sufficient for judging it desirable to ϕ . And the evaluative-platitudes also force us to recognise that there all sorts of ways in which, even when our motivations and our evaluative judgements do match up with each other, our evaluative judgements, and so our motivations, may yet be directed at something that is not desirable. Thus there is the possibility of weakness of will, compulsion, depression and the like on the one hand, and there is the possibility of correcting our evaluative judgements via the method of reflective equilibrium on the other.

In this way the evaluative-platitudes therefore force us to make an *is/seems* distinction in the case of value, an *is/seems* distinction much like the *is/seems* distinction in the case of colour. They do so by forcing us to recognise that both our motivations and our evaluative judgements may bear little relation to the real value of things. The function of an evaluative judgement thus seems to be not merely to give expression to a motivation, as the non-cognitivists tell us. Its function seems rather to be to report the value of that things have whether or not we are presently motivated to pursue them, and the value they have whether or not we are presently inclined to judge that they have it. Evaluative judgements should therefore be analysed cognitively, rather than non-cognitively.

9. Evaluative-platitudes and response-dependence

Now that we have seen that and why evaluative judgements in general are to be analysed cognitively, we are in a position to ask more specific questions about the cognitive content of these judgements. In particular, we are in a position to ask whether we should analyse the cognitive content of evaluative judgements in response-dependent terms.

It seems to me that we most certainly should analyse evaluative judgements in response-dependent terms, and that once again it is the evaluative-platitudes themselves that justify this response-dependent stance. In order to see that this is so, we need merely to look again at the evaluative-platitudes, and, in particular, at the various platitudes connecting evaluative judgements with our motivations and our reasons for action on the one hand, and the various platitudes associated with the method of reflective equilibrium on the other. For these platitudes are once again remarkable precisely because they force us to make the *is/seems* distinction in a characteristic response-dependent way: that is, in this case, by telling us when it

would and would not be appropriate to use the desires of an agent of a certain sort as criterial of the real value of the actions desired. In short, the evaluative platitudes seem to tell us that ϕ -ing in certain circumstances *C* is desirable just in case, if we had a maximally unified and coherent desire set—that is, if we were fully rational—we would desire that we ϕ in *C*.

Of course, the phrase 'the desires we would have if we fully rational' does not itself occur in a statement of the evaluative-platitudes. But, much as with the 'normal perceivers' and 'standard conditions' clauses in the analysis of colour terms, the role of this phrase in the analysis is clear enough. It serves simply to summarise the import of the evaluative-platitudes for us in a useful way: that is, it summarises the particular response-dependent way in which the evaluative-platitudes—as opposed to the colour-platitudes, say—enable us to make the *is/seems* distinction.

10. Can we give a reductive analysis of value?

We have now seen that we can analyse the concept of value in response-dependent terms. We are therefore in a position to ask whether the analysis on offer is reductive or non-reductive.

According to the response-dependent analysis, ϕ -ing in certain circumstances *C* is desirable just in case our fully rational selves would desire that we ϕ in *C*. The analysis itself therefore appears to be non-reductive, for someone who does not already understand what it is for something to be desirable would be in no position to understand what it is for something to be the object of a desire of her fully rational self: that is, a self who has a maximally unified and coherent desire set. For an understanding of the latter requires an understanding of the method of reflective equilibrium, and that in turn requires an understanding of what it is for something to be desirable. In order to see that this is so, look again at the explanation we gave of that method.

The mere fact that the response-dependent analysis of value is not reductive does not entail that a reductive analysis of value is impossible, of course. But it seems to me that we might even be able to construct an argument for this stronger conclusion. The argument would be that, given the holistic and symmetrical nature of our evaluative concepts—the fact that our concepts of the desirable and the undesirable, the better than and the worse than, the coherent and the incoherent, must all be interdefined while preserving the appropriate oppositions—it follows that a reductive network

style analysis of value, an analysis in the spirit of Lewis, would be vulnerable to a permutation problem, a permutation problem of much the same kind as that we found in the case of colour.

I will not attempt to construct such an argument here, however. For my present aim is not to argue that the only possible analysis of value is an analysis in non-reductive response-dependent terms. My aim is rather simply to insist, as against Blackburn, that the idea that this is so is at least coherent, if not plausible.⁶ As a matter of fact I do believe the stronger conclusion (Smith 1994: 54–6, 161–4). But it is not important for me to establish the stronger conclusion in the context of the present paper. The important point is rather this.

Even if value is to be given, at best, a non-reductive response-dependent style analysis, remember that this does not in any way undermine our claim to have provided an *analysis* of the cognitive content of evaluative claims. To repeat, the task of an analysis of the cognitive content of an evaluative judgement is simply to make explicit what we otherwise knew at best only implicitly in virtue of being masters of evaluative concepts: that is, its task is to give us more or less explicit knowledge of the evaluative-platitudes, the judgements and inferences we are disposed to make in virtue of being masters of the evaluative concepts.

A non-reductive response-dependent analysis succeeds in this task. It succeeds because it makes explicit the fact that the desirability of ϕ -ing in C is a matter of ϕ -ing in C being what our fully rational selves would desire. It makes explicit the fact that the evaluative-platitudes force us to make the *is/* seems distinction in this particular response-dependent way.

11. The argument for non-cognitivism again

Does the non-reductive response-dependent analysis of value we have been considering so far enable us to bring out the crucial flaw in the argument for non-cognitivism described at the beginning of this paper? It does indeed (Smith 1994, 1995a).

The argument for non-cognitivism is, in essence, that there could be no internal or necessary connection between evaluative judgements and the will if evaluative judgements were expressions of beliefs, whereas there could be such an internal or necessary connection if evaluative judgements were

expressions of motivations. In order to bring out the crucial flaw in this argument, it will be sufficient for us to show that if the beliefs in question have the non-reductive response-dependent content we have been considering so far, then there could indeed be such a connection. The task, then, is to show that someone who believes that she would desire that she ϕ s in circumstances C if she were fully rational—that is, if she had a maximally unified and coherent desire set—will, at least absent weakness of will and the like, desire that she ϕ s in C. How might we argue that this is so?

Note, to begin, that an agent who *both* believes that she would desire that she ϕ s in C if she had a maximally unified and coherent desire set *and* desires that she ϕ s in C, has a more coherent psychology than another who has the belief that she would desire that she ϕ s in C if she had a maximally unified and coherent desire set, but who doesn't desire that she ϕ s in C. Coherence is thus on the side of those who have evaluative beliefs, with their non-reductive response-dependent cognitive content, and corresponding desires, rather than the side of those who have evaluative beliefs but lack corresponding desires.

But if now we add in the additional, and plausible, assumption that an agent who is not suffering from weakness of will and the like is one whose psychology exhibits the sort of coherence just specified (Pettit and Smith 1993; Kennett and Smith 1994), then it follows immediately that those who believe that they would desire that they ϕ in circumstances C if they had a maximally unified and coherent desire set will, at least absent weakness of will and the like, desire that they ϕ in C. For the coherence in their overall psychological state *guarantees* a match between their evaluative beliefs and their motivations.

In this way the non-reductive response-dependent analysis of value enables us to do just what it was supposed to do. It provides us with a way of thinking of evaluative beliefs as beliefs about our desires, and so allows us to see why there is an internal or necessary connection between evaluative judgements and motivations. Moreover, the explanation it provides is consistent with the claim that belief and desire are distinct existences. Indeed, it entails that evaluative beliefs and motivations are distinct existences because it leaves open the possibility that someone whose psychology fails to exhibit the requisite coherence might believe it desirable to ϕ in C *without* desiring that she ϕ s in C.

6. I argue that value is best analysed non-reductively in Smith (1995b).

12. Blackburn's dilemma again

We are now in a position to reconsider Blackburn's dilemma for response-dependence. Does it still look like a dilemma? Granting Scylla, consider again Charybdis.

On Charybdis the response-dependent theorist claims to be giving us a non-reductive response-dependent analysis of the cognitive content of an evaluative judgement. Blackburn's complaint is, in essence, that we have no reason to believe that this is what we are really being given. Rather, as he sees things, because the analysis is non-reductive—that is, because an understanding of the analysis presupposes an understanding of the content being analysed—so the form of words used in the analysis may therefore be best analysed non-cognitively. This is why he concludes that we have made no analytic advance.

But this simply cannot be the right response. It would prove too much. After all, as we have seen, no-one seriously denies that colour judgements have cognitive content. Everyone thinks that colour judgements express beliefs. Yet we have also seen that the very best we can do by way of an analysis of the cognitive content of a colour judgement is an analysis in non-reductive response-dependent terms. Suppose someone offers us such an analysis. Would it be appropriate for Blackburn to complain that we have no reason to believe that the analysis is really an analysis of *cognitive* content? Certainly not. For Blackburn must think, along with everyone else, that colour judgements do indeed have cognitive content. He must therefore face the task, along with everyone else, of squaring this fact with the fact that a non-reductive response-dependent analysis of the cognitive content of colour judgements is the best that we can come up with. In short, then, Blackburn's argument on Charybdis fails because, if it succeeded, a parallel argument would show that colour judgements do not express beliefs. Since colour judgements do express beliefs, this constitutes a *reductio* of the argument on Charybdis.

More generally, however, it seems to me Blackburn's whole line of argument betrays his failure to recognise the crucial importance of spelling out platitudes when our task is to analyse a concept. If he had done so he might well have seen that, in the case of both colour and value, the platitudes themselves force us to make an is/seems distinction, and so force us to be cognitivists about both colour and value. And, if he had done so he might

well have seen that, in the case of both colour and value, the platitudes themselves force us to make the is/seems distinction in a characteristic response-dependent way, and so force us to give a response dependent style analysis of the cognitive content of both colour judgements and evaluative judgements. Finally, if Blackburn had recognised the crucial importance of spelling out platitudes when our task is conceptual analysis, he might well have seen that a failure to provide a reductive analysis of value is no criticism of the analysis *as an analysis*.

This last is the point that needs to be underscored. For, as we have seen, the task of an analysis of the cognitive content of an evaluative judgement is simply to make explicit what we otherwise knew at best only implicitly in virtue of being masters of evaluative concepts: that is, its task is to give us more or less explicit knowledge of the evaluative-platitudes, the judgements and inferences we are disposed to make in virtue of being masters of evaluative concepts. A non-reductive response-dependent analysis of the kind we have been considering succeeds in this task by making explicit the fact that the desirability of ϕ -ing in C is a matter of ϕ -ing in C being what our fully rational selves would desire. It makes explicit the fact that the evaluative-platitudes force us to make the is/seems distinction in this particular response-dependent way.

This point is worth emphasising, and not just because this particular analysis allows us to defeat the argument for non-cognitivism. It is worth emphasising because it allows us to agree with Blackburn that his own example of a non-reductive response dependent analysis of value is indeed as hopeless as he says it is. His own example, you will recall, is this:

X is good iff X is such as to elicit desires from people under the ideal circumstances, i.e. those under which people desire good things.

This is indeed hopeless because, as his own expansion of 'ideal circumstances' makes plain, the term 'ideal circumstances' is *not* being used as a summary of the various ways in which the evaluative-platitudes enable us to make the is/seems distinction, but is rather being used simply as shorthand for 'circumstances in which people desire good things'. Just as Blackburn says, the analysis in his example makes no analytic advance.

But this is where it is important to see just how different things might have looked to Blackburn if he had first spelled out the evaluative-platitudes in some detail. For he might then well have seen that a term like 'ideal

circumstances' can be used in another way, namely, as a summary of the particular response-dependent way in which the evaluative-platitudes enable us to make the is/seems distinction: that is, *inter alia*, as a summary of the various platitudes concerning the procedures by which we can discover how to make the substance of our evaluative judgements more precise. Perhaps then he would have seen that non-reductive analyses can indeed make an analytic advance. Such an advance is made, after all, when we analyse the desirability of ϕ -ing in C in terms of ϕ -ing in C being what our fully rational selves would desire.⁷

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7. My argument against Blackburn has had the form of an *ad hominem*. Even he must agree that colour judgements express beliefs, and even he must agree that a non-reductive response dependent analysis of colour is the only analysis available. It follows that he is therefore in no position to object, in principle, to the idea that evaluative judgements express beliefs, and yet that a non-reductive response-dependent analysis of value is the only analysis that is to be had. Yet his objection on Charybdis amounts to just that. But what if Blackburn decides to bite the bullet? What if he turns my argument around and concludes instead that, if a non-reductive response-dependent analysis of colour is the best that we can come up with, then colour judgements too must be analysed non-cognitively? What should we say then? My temptation—and I must emphasise that it is merely a temptation at this stage—is to argue that in that case Blackburn would have think that *all* judgements are to be analysed non-cognitively: that is, he would be forced to think, *incoherently*, that there are no *beliefs* at all. The argument I am tempted to give for this conclusion is that, in light of the rule-following considerations, *all* judgements must be analysed, *inter alia*, in non-reductive response-dependent terms. To have mastery of any concept C is to be disposed to find salient similarities among the Cs, at least under favourable conditions, where, as far as I can see, there is no prospect of giving a non-C characterisation of any of these conditions (compare Pettit 1990). Unfortunately, however, there is no space here to explore this particular argument for the possibility of non-reductive response-dependent analyses of cognitive content. Here we must rest content with the *ad hominem*.

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HUW PRICE

Two Paths to Pragmatism II

1. Introduction

Particular topics of conversation seem to be inaccessible to speakers who lack an insider's view of the subject matter concerned. The familiar examples involve sensory deficiencies: discourse about music may be inaccessible to the tone deaf, wine talk to the anosmic, the finer points of interior decorating to the colour blind, and so on. The traditional secondary qualities thus provide the obvious cases of concepts which seem to exhibit this form of subjectivity—this dependence on specific and quite contingent human capacities.

It is easy to think of further cases, resting on more specific perceptual and quasi-perceptual disabilities. (Could someone with no ball sense understand what it is like to be a batsman, for example?) But is this the end of the matter? How far does this phenomenon extend in language? How precisely should it be characterised? And what is its significance, if any, for the metaphysical status of the concepts concerned? Questions of this kind have been the focus of considerable attention in recent years. The original impetus for much of this work seems to have been the suggestion that there might be a useful analogy between moral concepts and the secondary qualities. This

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