

## C.D. Broad on Moral Sense Theories in Ethics

C.D. Broad's *Reflections* (as I will call it) stands out as one of the few serious examinations of Moral Sense Theory in twentieth century analytic philosophy.<sup>1</sup> It also constitutes an excellent discussion of the interconnections that allegedly exist between questions concerning what Broad calls the 'logical analysis' of moral judgments and questions about their epistemology. In this paper I make three points concerning the interconnectedness of the analytical and epistemological elements of versions of Moral Sense Theory. First, I make a general point about Broad's association between the Naïve Realist Moral Sense Theory (an epistemological view) and Objectivist Moral Sense Theory (a 'logical analysis'). Second, I raise doubts about one of Broad's arguments that Trans-Subjectivist Moral Sense Theory (logical analysis) can account for the apparent synthetic necessity of general moral propositions (epistemological). Third, I briefly discuss a view about logical analysis that should be of interest to contemporary Moral Sense Theorists – Neo-Sentimentalism – and respond to an argument whose conclusion is that this analysis is incompatible with a particular kind of epistemological view.

(1)

Broad says that all epistemological Moral Sense Theories endorse the view that there is a

“peculiar kind of experience which human beings are liable to have when they contemplate certain acts, and that this can take either of two opposite forms, viz., a pro-form and anti-form... this experience is of the nature of feeling, where 'feeling' is used to include both sensation and emotion as distinguished from thought.” (140)

Such experiences are allegedly responsible both for the formation of fundamental moral concepts, e.g., *moral rightness*, and the formation of singular moral judgments, e.g., 'that is right'.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Frankena, W., (1955) "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, and Raphael, D.D. (1947) *The Moral Sense*, OUP. For a twenty-first century defence see Filonowicz, J.D. (2008) *Fellow-Feeling and the Moral Sense*, CUP.

Some clarification is in order. By ‘experience’ I take Broad to be picking out a class of mental items that have *phenomenal character*, that we are to some extent *passive* in the face of, and which aren’t *based* upon other mental items. Visual experience is a paradigm (intentional) example. By alleging that moral experience is ‘peculiar’ Broad is following Moral Sense Theorists like Hutcheson<sup>2</sup> who seemed to think that moral experiences – approbation and disapprobation – had a distinctive *character* and *etiology*.

Regarding character: the approbation experienced when contemplating a benevolent action allegedly feels different from that had in response to a beneficial, self-interested action. Hutcheson took moral ideas (roughly: concepts) to be simple, i.e., not compounded out of simpler ideas. Given Hutcheson’s Lockean epistemology, moral ideas must therefore be direct ‘copies’ from a distinctive kind of experience. Further, simple ideas must be of properties rather than relations. Regarding etiology: moral experiences aren’t the product of the canonical sensory modalities, e.g., vision. Hutcheson famously talks explicitly of a distinctive moral sense although his criterion for ‘sense’ is permissive: “a determination of the mind, to receive any idea from the presence of an object which occurs to us, independent of our will”<sup>3</sup>. This is compatible with the moral sense being a mere disposition to undergo experiences, given certain stimuli. However, at other points, Hutcheson directly compares the moral sense and the canonical senses which might make us suspect him of positing a dedicated moral faculty, or at any rate, a faculty which has a distinctive ‘moral’ component.

Although Broad may not have noticed this, the specification that the moral experience is ‘of the nature of “feeling”’ is required to distinguish Moral Sense Theory from a version of Rational Intuitionism which conceives of moral experiences as intellectual experiences (‘intuitions’) that are in some way produced by our faculty of Reason, i.e., phenomenal states that are non-voluntary, baseless, etc.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Hutcheson’s own criterion for a sense is ambiguous between an empiricist and a rationalist construal. In passing, it is worth noting

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<sup>2</sup> See his *An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil* (1725) and *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions, with Illustrations Upon the Moral Sense* (1728), both in Raphael, D.D., *British Moralists 1650-1800*, Hackett.

<sup>3</sup> Raphael, D.D., pp. 264-5.

<sup>4</sup> For a recent defence see Chudnoff, E. (2013), *Intuition*, OUP.

that in recent years philosophers<sup>5</sup> have defended the view that ‘moral intuitions’ might actually be the manifestation of emotional dispositions.

Broad discusses two epistemological accounts available to Moral Sense Theorists: Naïve Realism and Dispositionalism.

Naïve Realism is the view that the moral sense is a power of perceiving non-dispositional moral properties. When the appropriate relation obtains between the moral sense and non-dispositional properties, the nature of those non-dispositional properties is revealed to subjects in experience or ‘sensation’ (143). According to Broad, Naïve Realism requires that subjects are acquainted with non-dispositional moral properties, where ‘acquaintance’ appears<sup>6</sup> to pick out something that is *non-conceptual*, which is in some way *direct* (144) and facilitates experiences that *resemble* the relevant perceptual objects (138).

Dispositionalists deny that the moral sense is a power of prehending non-dispositional moral properties. Instead, the moral sense is merely “an organ of emotional reaction”<sup>7</sup> to the non-moral properties of actions (Broad seems to be focused on particular actions and act-types in Reflections). There is no acquaintance with non-dispositional moral properties, although there may something worth calling acquaintance (non-sensory) with the phenomenal properties of the experience.

Regarding logical analysis, Broad seems to think that Moral Sense Theorists have two options. On the one hand they can endorse some kind of Objectivism, according to which moral judgments are about non-dispositional moral properties of actions or act-types. If Broad were following Hutcheson, he may have been assuming that the Naïve Realist thinks of moral properties as simple ‘empirical’ or ‘natural’ properties analogous to Moore’s view that goodness was a simple non-natural property. Note, however, that this claim is optional. It seems open to Objectivist Moral Sense Theorists to reject this Lockean framework and

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<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Dancy, J., ‘Intuition and Emotion’, forthcoming in *Ethics* and Kauppinen, A. (2014), ‘A Humean Theory of Moral Intuition’, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 43 (3): 360-81

<sup>6</sup> I am assuming that Broad endorses something like Russell’s view of acquaintance presented in chapter 5 of his (1912) *Problems of Philosophy*. In Reflections Broad also says things which are suggestive of these points.

<sup>7</sup> Frankena, W. (1955) p. 366

argue that some properties – of which moral properties are an example – are neither simple (like yellowness) nor complex (a whole decomposable without remainder into simple parts), but are instead consequential properties.

Alternatively, Moral Sense Theorists could adopt a Trans-Subjectivist Dispositional view according to which moral judgments are analysable in terms of the dispositions of normal human agents to undergo the ‘peculiar’ moral experience (emotional or sensational) in response to the contemplation of actions or act-types.<sup>8</sup>

I now focus on Broad’s association of Naïve Realism with Objectivism. Certainly, it seems that a Naïve Realist Moral Sense Theorist is committed to some form of Objectivism: after all, on their view we are supposed to be acquainted (which is a ‘success’ relation) with non-dispositional moral properties.

However, Broad has quite powerful objections to Naïve Realism (I limit myself here to discussion of Broad’s argument against Naïve Realism regarding the acts of other people). If moral sensing requires acquaintance, and if acquaintance requires that we stand in a direct relation to moral properties, then it is hard to see how there could be moral sensing. This is because we are never directly aware of the putative objects of moral sensing – intentional actions – since we are not directly aware of intentions. At best, we can conceive of intentional actions (143). But that introduces an indirectness that is apparently antithetical to acquaintance. To this we might add that, if something like resemblance between experience and property were a condition on acquaintance, and if perception requires acquaintance, then perception of moral properties would seem to be a non-starter.<sup>9</sup> Hence, if Objectivist Moral Sense Theory hinged on Naïve Realism, this would make Dispositionalism (in both its analytical and epistemological forms) the only game in town for Moral Sense Theorists.

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<sup>8</sup> A possibility that Broad wasn’t aware of is that emotional responses play a crucial role in fixing the reference of moral terms but moral properties are themselves *non-dispositional*. For this sort of view see chapter 4 of Michael Slote’s (2009) *Moral Sentimentalism*, OUP.

<sup>9</sup> Broad is, however, never clear about what directness or resemblance require. Perhaps there are weaker conceptions of both of these which would make moral sensing more plausible.

However, Objectivist Moral Sense Theory doesn't require that the moral sense be understood along the lines of Naïve Realism. Broad's discussion doesn't address what now seems a more attractive epistemological theory for Objectivist Moral Sense Theorists to adopt. Instead of claiming that the moral sense is a power of perceiving, where this requires acquaintance, Objectivist Moral Sense Theorists may instead hold the view that the moral sense is a power of perceiving moral properties which requires that subjects stand in a causal relation to those properties, which produces experiences (mental items that have phenomenal character, are passive, baseless) that (i) represent or present their instantiation, and, (ii) have some further property which is epistemologically relevant, e.g., reliability or special phenomenal character. Call this sort of view 'Representational Objectivism'.

There are two general ways this view could be developed.

Firstly, Representational Objectivists could develop an alternative account of moral sensing along Broad-inspired lines. According to Broad's full theory of the canonical sensory modalities – the complete statement of which can be found in his (1925) *The Mind and Its Place In Nature* – acquaintance is only a component of perception.<sup>10</sup> An overall perception also involves an 'external reference' which is in some sense 'based' (non-inferentially) upon sensation, but which can depict objects and properties that do not 'show up' in sensation. An example might be *a piece of gold*. One might therefore wonder whether a kind of moral sense theory could be developed whereby non-dispositional properties get depicted at the level of external reference. For example, consider Gilbert Harman's<sup>11</sup> oft-quoted example of observing hoodlums setting fire to a cat. One might think that, in response to this, normal subjects could have moral perceptions (visual) which represent the *wrongness* of what the hoodlums are doing.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps, though, this runs against both the letter and spirit of Moral Sense Theory, which has (historically) involved an appeal to some kind of feeling response.

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<sup>10</sup> Note, however, that Broad endorses a Sense-Datum theory, not Naïve Realism.

<sup>11</sup> Harman, G. (1977), *The Nature of Morality*, Princeton.

<sup>12</sup> See the work of Siegel, S. (2010) *The Contents of Experience*, OUP on 'high-level' perception and my own (2015) 'Perceptual Intuitionism', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 90 (1): 163-193 for discussion of moral perception

Further, the view would presumably require supplementation to deal with moral judgments that are not responses to perceived instances.

This brings us to the second option for Representational Objectivists, which is to adopt a view according to which the moral experience is emotional. Indeed, this is something like the view held by some contemporary perceptual theorists<sup>13</sup> of the emotions – according to which fear (for example) is a perception of danger, guilt a perception of wrongness, and so on – who can be thought of as defending a sort of Representational Objectivist Moral Sense Theory (although a Representational epistemology need not be paired with an Objectivist analysis<sup>14</sup>). To illustrate, consider again Harman’s cat case. Representative Objectivists might argue that in this sort of case subjects have a perception whose external reference – perhaps this is sort of seeming state, i.e., an experience with propositional content that has phenomenal character, is non-voluntary, baseless etc – is that the *hoodlums are setting fire to the cat*,<sup>15</sup> and have an moral experience of disapprobation in response to this which represents the *wrongness* of what they are doing. Perhaps the moral experience and external reference are in some way ‘integrated’ or mixed up with one another.<sup>16</sup>

Note that this view could accommodate emotional responses in response to cases that are not ‘directly’ perceived. One worry one might have about this sort of view is that it won’t ground a comprehensive Moral Sense Theory of moral concept formation since the relevant emotional representation will be conceptual in character. However, philosophers like Tappolet think that emotions – including moral emotions – are non-conceptual, in which case they could play a crucial role in moral concept formation.

These comments are of course very general. I am not endorsing Representational Objectivist Moral Sense Theory. Instead, I am simply highlighting that Broad’s objections to Naïve

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<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Tappolet (2012) “Emotions, Perceptions, and Emotional Illusions”. In Calabi Clotilde (ed.), *Perceptual Illusions. Philosophical and Psychological Essays*, Palgrave-Macmillan. 207-24

<sup>14</sup> Prinz, J. (2004) *Gut Reactions*, OUP defends something like a Representational epistemology allied with a Subjectivist analysis.

<sup>15</sup> Broad apparently thought that our concept of *physical object* is an ‘innate principle of interpretation’. This is the explanation for why physical objects show up in the external reference of perceptions. Perhaps one could make a similar point about *intentional actions*.

<sup>16</sup> For this idea see Audi, R. (2013) *Moral Perception*, Princeton.

Realism shouldn't be taken as a reason to reject Objectivism (although there may be other good reasons for doing that).

(2)

Broad goes on to defend a version of Moral Sense Theory which combines the Trans-Subjective Dispositional logical analysis and the Dispositional epistemological view. The most important objection that he grapples with is arguably the second (150-60). I'll briefly explain the objection and one of Broad's responses, raising some doubts about the persuasiveness of the latter.

The Trans-Subjective Dispositional analysis of the general moral proposition *promise-keeping is pro tanto right*<sup>17</sup> (hereafter 'moral analysandum') will amount to something like *normal people are disposed to feel a moral pro-emotion (approbation) when they contemplate acts of promise-keeping, in normal circumstances*.<sup>18</sup> However, whereas the moral analysandum is allegedly synthetic and necessary, the proposed Trans-Subjectivist analysans is contingent, and may indeed be false.

Broad's most intriguing response to this problem is to consider the claim that the Trans-Subjective analysans might be analytic and necessary. This would be true if the definition of *normal human being* made reference to dispositions to feel moral pro-emotions with regard to the relevant act-type(s), and *normal circumstances* were understood to be circumstances in which the disposition manifested.

However, even if this were plausible, Broad concedes that this won't satisfy those (Rationalists) who think that the moral analysandum is synthetic and necessary. In response Broad develops a complex argument (155-160), the broad thrust (pun intended) of which appears to be that (i) people are in error when they think that the moral analysandum is synthetic and necessary, and, (ii) this is precisely what we should expect if the Trans-

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<sup>17</sup> I speak of 'pro tanto' reasons rather than employing Broad's misleading talk of 'tendencies' of acts to be right.

<sup>18</sup> There may be some deadweight in Broad's characterisation of the Trans-Subjective Dispositional analysis: on plausible analyses of *dispositions*, they are manifested in *normal circumstances*. If that's right then there would be no need to make further reference to *normal circumstances* in the Trans-Subjectivist Dispositional analysis.

Subjectivist Dispositionalist analysis were true. In more detail, here is my attempted reconstruction of the argument (the reader is of course invited to see where I might have gone wrong – at some crucial stages Broad is uncharacteristically opaque, see especially the second paragraph on p. 159):

P1: If the Trans-Subjectivist analysis is true, then it can be expressed in tokens of the sentence type ‘any normal human being has a disposition to feel a moral promotion towards any act which he believes to be one of promise-keeping if he contemplates it when he is in a normal state’.

P2: Tokens of the sentence type that express the Trans-Subjectivist analysans are ambiguous between a proposition that is analytic and necessary and one that is synthetic and contingent.

P3: If P2 is true then tokens of the sentence type that expresses the moral analysandum will also be ambiguous between a proposition that is analytic and necessary and one that is synthetic and contingent.

P4: If the moral analysandum is ambiguous between a proposition that is analytic and necessary and one that is synthetic and contingent then it is likely that people should become confused into thinking that every instance of the sentence that expresses the moral analysandum expresses a proposition that is both synthetic and necessary.

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C: If the Trans Subjectivist analysis of the moral analysandum is true then it is likely that people should become confused into thinking that every instance of the sentence that expresses the moral analysandum expresses a proposition that is both synthetic and necessary.<sup>19</sup>

Some clarification is in order.

P1 doesn’t require explanation. Broad’s reason for P2 is that, whether the relevant sentence token is analytic or synthetic depends upon whether we define (either partly or wholly)

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<sup>19</sup> An alternative interpretation is that Broad grants that the promise-keeping sentence expresses a synthetic and necessary proposition and is arguing that, although the Trans-Subjective analysans is analytic and necessary, sentences expressing it are liable to be confused for synthetic and necessary propositions. I don’t interpret Broad this way as it seems to miss the point.

“Normal” relative to dispositions to have moral emotions or whether we do so purely in terms of non-moral dispositions. If the former, then the proposition will be analytic and necessary, if the latter, the proposition will be synthetic and contingent.

Broad’s reasons for thinking that P3 is true are less clear. One way of interpreting him would be that he thought that in considering a token sentence expressing the moral analysandum we have before our minds one of the ‘Trans-Subjectivist’ propositions, i.e., either the analytic and necessary proposition (their proposed analysans) or the synthetic and contingent proposition. But that seems pretty implausible.

Another way of interpreting Broad would be that he thought that, if sentences expressing the Trans-Subjectivist moral analysans are ambiguous, the relevant sentence expressing the moral analysandum must also be. However, it is not clear that this is a reasonable inference to make. This is because the Trans-Subjectivist sentence is but one way of expressing the Trans-Subjectivist analysis – there are surely other sentences expressing the analysis that are not ambiguous. Surely Trans-Subjectivists think that those disambiguated sentences mean the same thing as the promise-keeping sentence, in which case it not altogether clear what exactly the reason is for thinking that the promise-keeping sentence is itself ambiguous.

An alternative interpretation is that Broad thought that the points he made regarding the general liability for sentences to be ambiguous between analytic/necessary and synthetic/contingent propositions can find a direct application in the promise-keeping sentence. However, Broad doesn’t provide an account of what propositions the promise-keeping sentence is supposed to be ambiguous between (instead he spends lots of time discussing how the Trans-Subjectivist sentence could be ambiguous). This seems to be an important lacuna in Broad’s argument for P3.

Here is a suggestion inspired by some of the things Broad says (see 155 and 159). Prior to considering the promise-keeping sentence, it is plausible that subjects will have an incomplete idea of the sorts of act-types that ground pro-tanto reasons. Perhaps John would only think about acts of injury, while Lucy thinks also thinks of acts of gratitude etc.

Neither thinks about promise-keeping. Given this, perhaps when such people consider the promise-keeping sentence, they think that it is non-definitional or synthetic. However upon considering different cases of promise-keeping – and having moral pro-emotions in response (let's suppose that they are normal and are in normal conditions) – and failing to find counterexamples, they might come to make the hasty judgment that all acts of promise keeping are pro-tanto right. Subjects may make the even hastier judgment that they *must* all be right. In doing so they might come to think that the proposition expressed by the sentence is synthetic and necessary, despite its either being synthetic and contingent (because promise-keeping is not included in the 'definition' of pro tanto moral reason) or analytic and necessary (because promise-keeping is included in the 'definition' of pro tanto moral reason).

I doubt that this helps matters. First, one might think that the suggestion is just plain implausible. Second, even if it were plausible, it would only have a limited purchase as it (i) won't apply to all subjects, and (ii) wouldn't explain why subjects to whom it does apply persist in thinking that the promise-keeping sentence expresses a proposition that is both synthetic and necessary. Hence, in my view, P3 is inadequately supported by Broad.

Regarding P4, it is worth considering Broad's nice account of why we might be confused regarding sentences expressing the Trans-Subjectivist analysans. Roughly he claims that the propositions expressed by tokens of the sentence-type 'Any normal human being...' are founded on a whole mass of interconnected empirical generalisations about moral and non-moral dispositions. Broad thinks these suggest a strong (though contingent) positive association between moral normality and non-moral normality. Given this, when people consider a token of the sentence type, the ideas of moral and non-moral normality may come and go from the mental "foreground" (160), and creating the confusion that the proposition expressed is synthetic and necessary.

However, as was suggested in my discussion of P3, Broad doesn't provide a clear account of the propositions we are supposed to be confused between when considering sentences expressing the moral analysandum. Furthermore, and this is a general point: premises of arguments which require that reflective interlocutors are in a persistent state of confusion

about the status of a sentence invite the response: ‘well I’m not bloody confused!’ Hence, Broad’s strategy here, although ingenious, doesn’t strike me as likely to have much traction against opponents.

Although I’m unconvinced by this particular argument, this doesn’t mean that the Trans-Subjectivist can’t deal with the original objection, i.e., that their analysis is, at ‘best’, analytic and necessary, while the analysandum is synthetic and necessary. That said, the alternative strategies that Broad suggests (detailed in pp. 152-55) don’t seem likely to impress Rationalists either.

As a coda to this subsection it is worth very briefly mentioning that, although Broad provides something of a partial defence of Trans-Subjectivism in *Reflections*, he provides quite a scathing critique of it in his more famous work *Five Types of Ethical Theory*.<sup>20</sup> There he attributes a view like Trans-Subjectivism to Hume and claims that it has the consequence that moral disputes and moral inquiry are ultimately a matter of “experiment, observation, collection of statistics, and empirical generalisation”.<sup>21</sup> Broad thinks this is “simply incredible” (115).

One might think that Broad’s developments of Trans-Subjectivism in the latter stages of *Reflections* might serve to deal with this sort of problem. However, even if the Trans-Subjective analysans is analytic and necessary, things are complicated by Broad’s claim that the proposition is “founded on a whole mass of interconnected empirical generalisations” (158). Broad is unclear about what he means by “founded on”, e.g., whether he thinks that this implicates an epistemic dependency of the analytic proposition upon the empirical generalisations, or something weaker like semantic dependency (to my mind it would involve both). He is, however, clear about some of the generalisations he has in mind, e.g. “it is an empirical fact that the vast majority of men have a disposition to feel moral emotions... it is an empirical fact that there is very substantial agreement among men in the kinds of act which call forth moral pro-emotion and in the kinds which call forth moral anti-

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<sup>20</sup> Broad, C.D., (1934) *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner

<sup>21</sup> *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 115

emotion" (158). He also mentions generalisations about the sorts of conditions in which moral emotional dispositions are masked (160).

Given this, it may seem that Broad's amended Trans-Subjectivism falls foul of the objection that he raised against Hume, i.e., moral inquiry and dispute is ultimately a matter of empirical investigation and statistics gathering. As Frankena (1956) put it: even if the Trans-Subjective analysis is analytic, "a statistical study is involved at least at second remove".<sup>22</sup>

Whether or not one finds Frankena's worry at all potent, a complicating factor is that Trans-Subjectivism may be thought of or developed as version of the Ideal Observer Theory defended later in the twentieth century by the likes of Roderick Firth (1956), according to which moral propositions are analysable in terms of the attitudes of a suitably defined ideal agent.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Firth cites Broad's presentation of Trans-Subjectivism in *Reflections* as a forerunner of this view (there is also a case to be made for thinking that Hutcheson held an Ideal Observer account). If that's right, then maybe it makes it easier for Trans-Subjectivism to avoid Frankena's worry.

(3)

What Broad calls 'Trans-Subjectivism' can be thought of as a species of Sentimentalist logical analyses: it analyses moral propositions partly in terms of sentimental or emotional responses. In recent years Trans-Subjectivism has been eschewed among many Sentimentalists in favour of Neo-Sentimentalism: evaluative and moral propositions are analysed in terms of *merited* or *justified* emotional responses. This arguably addresses the worry that it is not inconceivable that we might think that the emotional responses of normal agents in normal circumstances are inappropriate. A Hutchesonian Neo-Sentimentalism might claim that the proposition that *acts of promise keeping are pro tanto right* is analysable as *approbation is justified/merited in response to the contemplation of acts of promise-keeping*.

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<sup>22</sup> Frankena, W.K. (1956), "Broad's Analysis of Ethical Terms", *The Philosophy of C.D. Broad*, New York, p. 560

<sup>23</sup> Firth, R. (1952) 'Ethical Absolutism and the Ideal Observer' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 12 (3)

Although Neo-Sentimentalism makes reference to emotions in the analysans, one might think that its adoption rules out the view that emotions could constitute perceptions of values as Representational theorists claim (an epistemological implication). Here are two reasons: Broad along with other contemporaries<sup>24</sup> discussed what I'm calling 'Neo-Sentimentalism' as a version of non-naturalism. Because of this they assumed that the way in which we recognise that certain kinds of emotional response are justified or merited is via Reason or intuition. Further, on this account emotions were not thought of as representations or perceptions of moral properties. One reason for thinking this is that this would threaten to introduce circularity in to the analysis, i.e., if approbation were a perception of rightness then the Neo-Sentimentalist analysans would be *acts of promise keeping merit perceiving them as right*. But now *right* appears on both sides of the biconditional.

Regarding this, two things are worth mentioning. Firstly, we need not think of Neo-Sentimentalism as a non-naturalist view. It has contemporary defenders who deny non-naturalism.<sup>25</sup> Even if non-naturalism necessitates a Rationalistic epistemology (something I'm unsure about) Neo-Sentimentalism need not entail this. Second, some proponents of Neo-Sentimentalism embrace the circularity described, adopting a No-Priority view.<sup>26</sup>

One might still think that Neo-Sentimentalism is incompatible with a Representational epistemology because the combination of the two views would entail that emotions could justify themselves.<sup>27</sup> On standard epistemological views about experience, perceptual experiences are sources of immediate justification. However, if approbation were a perception of rightness, and if Hutchesonian Neo-Sentimentalism were true, then approbation towards X would be a perception with content *approbation towards X is justified*. Subjects would thereby have immediate justification for believing that their approbation was justified. But no mental item can justify itself in this way.

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<sup>24</sup> A Fitting-Attitude analysis of value (which is, strictly-speaking, distinct from Neo-Sentimentalism) is endorsed by Ewing, A.C., (1953) *Ethics*, English Universities Press.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., Gibbard, A., (1990). *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings: A Theory of Normative Judgment*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., McDowell, J. (1998), *Mind, Value, and Reality*, Harvard

<sup>27</sup> For this claim see Brady, M. (2013) *Emotional Insight*, OUP.

In response to this, Hutchesonian Neo-Sentimentalists who are attracted to Representational Objectivism (for the purpose of readability I'll hereafter refer to this combination of views as 'Neo-Sentimentalism') might borrow a point that Broad makes in Reflections: it is generally false that "if the correct analysis of the proposition '*S is P*' is '*S is p1-and-p2*' then anyone who is believing the former proposition is *ipso facto* believing the latter... it is quite obvious that a number of persons who accept different and incompatible analyses of a proposition may all believe it" (163-4). Neo-Sentimentalists might simply apply this point to the case of emotional perceptual experience. Just because Neo-Sentimentalism is the correct analysis of evaluative and moral terms, this needn't entail that emotional experiences of moral properties have this content. So there need be no worry about self-justification.

However, it will likely be objected that even if this response is successful, it is still plausible that subjects who endorse the Neo-Sentimentalist analysis will be in a position to form judgments (perhaps immediately justified judgments) on the basis of experiences of approbation that do have this content. So there remains a problem of self-justification.

In response Neo-Sentimentalists should argue that they are in no worse a position to other theories which claim that experiences, e.g., sensory experiences, can immediately justify judgments. Let me explain. If, e.g., a visual experience of a red ball, can immediately justify a belief that *there is a red ball* then it seems that such experiences could justify subjects in believing that their experience is *accurate*. This is because their experience could also justify them in believing that *they are having an experience of a red ball*. Together with the justified belief that *there is a red ball*, they could easily infer and come to have a justified belief that *their experience is accurate*.

What does this have to do with Neo-Sentimentalism? There is controversy as to what the relevant sense of 'justification' is in the Neo-Sentimentalist analysis. Some philosophers<sup>28</sup> think that it simply amounts to *accuracy*. If that were right then it is far from obvious that Neo-Sentimentalists are therefore in a worse position than those who think sensory

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<sup>28</sup> See, e.g., Tappolet, C. (2011), "Values and Emotions: Neo-Sentimentalism's Prospects", Bagnoli, C. (ed.), *Morality and the Emotions*, pp. 117-134

experience can justify empirical beliefs. The only difference would be that the justification is more direct. But I'm not sure this makes a significant difference. Suppose instead that the relevant sense of 'justification' is a sui generis or distinctive emotional kind. Although there wouldn't be a strict analogy between this and, e.g., the sensory case, it is far from obvious that the problem becomes any worse (or any better) given the assumption that emotions can justify beliefs that they are (or the type of experience is) in some sense required by its object, e.g., promise-keeping.

Thus, I think that the 'self-justification' argument I have considered fails to establish that Neo-Sentimentalism and a Representational Moral Sense Theory epistemology are incompatible.