Section 1 (Introduction)

- McDowell’s paper is very dense and his style is convoluted. In particular, he uses words like “it” and “this” whose reference is far from clear. Additionally, it’s sometimes hard to tell whether he’s asserting something or denying it, or whether he’s saying that other people are asserting things or denying them. Hence, these notes will probably be longer than the paper itself.
- If any paper is suitable for a “close reading”, this paper of McDowell’s is!
- McDowell is writing in response to Mackie’s Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong (E), though he also refers, passim, to Mackie’s Problems from Locke (PFL) and Hume’s Moral Theory (HMT). He notes that he continues strenuously to disagree with the late Mackie, but doesn’t immediately state whether or not he is broadly in sympathy with Mackie’s ethical programme. It subsequently emerges that he’s against Mackie’s non-cognitivism.
- McDowell agrees with Mackie’s phenomenological thesis – that when we ordinarily evaluate things, it appears to us that we do so in response to aspects of the world.
- Philosophical non-cognitivism, inter alia, aims faithfully to describe that it’s like to experience values, or equivalently, what we mean when we evaluate things.
- However, whatever claims are made are not made on the basis of careful attention to what this evaluative thought or talk is like to live.
- Instead, it’s claimed that the very concept of the factual or cognitive rules out the possibility of it being evaluative. This is because there’s no possibility of an “undiluted” representation of how things are enjoying the internal relation to our attitudes or the will that would be needed if it were to count as evaluative.
- In a footnote, McDowell claims his aim above is to reduce Mackie’s single-minded focus on prescriptivity by including a stress on evaluation, which will be McDowell’s main topic in this paper. Mackie has discouraged many philosophers from making this important distinction, though David Wiggins does correctly distinguish:
  1. “Valuations”, … from
  2. “Directives”, “deliberative judgements” or “practical judgements”.
- On Mackie’s view just sketched, the phenomenology of value would be simply incoherent as it would be a possibility that tended never actually to be entertained.
- Mackie is, however, correct to deny that the factual is by definition neutral with respect to our attitudes and motivations. This allows us to accept (rather than reject a priori) his phenomenological thesis (that it appears that we’re responding to the factual when we make evaluative judgements). Consequently, as Mackie acknowledges, non-cognitivism has more to do than merely account for the phenomenology of value – it has to try to correct it.
- In a footnote, McDowell denies that Simon Blackburn’s quasi-realism is a real alternative to Mackie’s “error correcting” approach. The quasi-realist thinks that the values he deploys in a supposedly realist way are really the result of projecting attitudes into the world. In so doing he must have a concept of genuine reality that the world has but values lack. So, he ought to claim that it’s that genuine reality that the appearances entice us to attribute to values.

1 Mackie, of course, would say that – with respect to moral values at least – this appearance is deceptive – that we are in error in thinking we respond to things out there in the world when we attribute value to things.
The aim of McDowell’s paper is to show that Mackie gives a false picture of what one is committed to in resisting non-cognitivism, and that this gives non-cognitivism a plausibility that it wouldn’t otherwise merit.

Section 2 (Mackie’s “sitting duck” primary-quality realist perceptual model)

- So, since Mackie is correct about the phenomenology of value, anyone who wants to accept the appearances will be tempted to model his explanation on perception.
- The model Mackie thinks the realist must adopt is that of perception of primary qualities. However, this gives him too easy a target, as it makes it simple to argue that appearances are misleading.
- The reason for this is that it’s impossible to believe that something that is just there independently of human sensibilities – like primary qualities – should intrinsically (i.e. again independently of human sensibilities) elicit attitudes or states of will from those who perceive it.
- McDowell thinks also that the primary-quality model explains nothing about the epistemology of value. Strictly speaking, perception isn’t involved. The apprehension of value is an intellectual rather than sensory matter, since reason is involved in evaluative thinking. Given this, and the realist model’s insistence that values are just out there, we’re made to postulate a faculty of intuition that makes us aware of objective rational connections. But the model has nothing to say about how this faculty might work, nor how its conclusions should count as knowledge.
- Why should we take the model to be of primary rather than secondary qualities? Mackie follows Locke in taking secondary qualities to involve the very projective error that he’s supposing the realist is trying to get away from. According to Mackie, we’re prone erroneously to imagine secondary qualities in the same way as primary qualities. Correcting this error, when applied to perception of values, would be to give up on the reality of appearances.
- McDowell, however, considers the Locke / Mackie account of secondary qualities to be incorrect (and consequently, that secondary qualities can be used to give a realist account of values).

Section 3 (Primary and Secondary Qualities)

- What are secondary qualities? They are, of course, properties ascribed to objects. But these properties are correctly ascribed solely on the basis of their disposition to present certain perceptual appearances. Something is red if it looks red.
- This account is faithful to Locke’s identification of secondary qualities as “powers to produce various sensations in us”. McDowell (in his formulation of what secondary qualities are) has benignly corrected Locke’s use of “sensation” to

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2 McDowell just refers to “this thesis”, which I’ve assumed is Mackie’s non-cognitivism – though it may be Mackie’s programme of correcting our realist evaluative intuitions (if that is any different).
3 I.e. Presumably, again, that values have the appearance of objectivity (though Mackie thinks that appearances are deceptive).
4 Why is this so obvious? Is this objection at the root of Hume’s is/ought distinction? Not everyone finds this obvious.
5 Presumably Hume wouldn’t agree.
6 Need to (a) review lecture notes on Locke on Primary and Secondary Qualities and (b) read the Mackie passages on this subject in PFL.
“perceptual appearance”. The reason for this is that he thinks that the sensation of being stung by a nettle (for instance) lacks the *representational* character required of a *perception* of the power in it to produce the sensation in us. Hence, McDowell doesn’t include all “powers in bodies to produce sensations in us” as qualities, only those with a representational character.

- McDowell anticipates a “vicious circle” objection to his account of secondary qualities. He admits that it is circular (it’s implausible that looking red is intelligible apart from being red⁸), but denies that it’s vicious as he has no definitional or analytical aspirations.

- In describing secondary qualities, McDowell has written of what they are *understood* to be true in virtue of, not what is actually the case. Something is red because of certain microscopic surface textural properties, but the ascription of a secondary quality of redness has to be in terms of how a red thing *looks*.

- The experience of secondary qualities appears to the perceiver as of properties genuinely possessed by the object perceived. There’s no problem taking this at face value, though there can be illusions either because of malfunctioning of the senses or because the sensory conditions need to be right⁹. The property of being red is there independently of anyone actually perceiving the redness on a particular occasion. There are no grounds for thinking that appearances are misleading. Experiencing something’s being such as to look red just is to see it as red (in appropriate circumstances).

- Mackie’s⁸ account of taking something as red at face value – ie. as awareness of a property that really confronts us – is to take the property as “thoroughly objective” in a sense independent of the experiences the object is disposed to give. Nevertheless, this property must resemble redness as experienced, else the phenomenal character of the experience could be taken to be misleading (as would be the case if the “thoroughly objective” properties experience was aware of were microscopic surface textural properties).

- Hence, by using to explain secondary qualities the concept of resemblance that Locke uses to explain primary qualities, Mackie accuses a naïve perceptual consciousness of taking secondary qualities for primary qualities.

- Mackie thinks that it’s at least a *coherent* notion (though an incorrect one¹¹) to conceive of primary qualities as resembling colours as we see them¹². However, he thinks that empirical argument¹³ shows that nothing is characterised by such qualities¹⁴.

- McDowell, on the other hand, doubts whether the idea is coherent after all. He suggests that it would require two things, the first of which McDowell considers dubious and the second impossible:

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⁸ So, this thing is red because it looks red, and it looks red because it is red!
⁹ Eg. Red things seen in a blue light look black rather than red.
¹⁰ It looks as though Mackie has tried to reverse the collapse of primary into secondary qualities (as Berkeley had argued against Locke) and collapsed secondary qualities into primary ones.
¹¹ I’m confused again – has Mackie been supporting or opposing the view just attributed to him?
¹² I don’t understand – I thought we’d been talking about secondary qualities. This is an important turn in the paper, so I need to understand this!
¹³ McDowell returns to these arguments at the start of Section 4.
¹⁴ What does this last half-sentence mean? That there’s really nothing in the object that corresponds to primary qualities? It seems necessary to read PFL to see what Mackie was on about.

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1. Mackie’s account requires that colours don’t feature in perceptual experience as *essential* phenomenal qualities of objects – as qualities that couldn’t be adequately conceived other than in terms of how these objects *look*.

2. Mackie’s account requires that we have a concept of resemblance that enables us to construct notions of possible primary qualities from the “neutral” experiences described in (1).

- The problem with (2) is that (taking the example of redness) we are asked:
  a) To form the notion of a feature of objects that resembles redness, but that …
  b) Is adequately conceivable other than in terms of how red objects *look*.
  The reason for (b) is that if the feature of the object (“redness”) was conceivable merely in terms of how things look, it would be simply secondary.

- In the formulation above, (b) makes it totally mysterious how we’re to conceive of (a), since it denies that the resemblance is phenomenal, but what other sense can we make of resemblance to redness other than how things *seem* in our experience?

- If we can’t find an alternative, we’re left with redness as we experience it remaining phenomenal, which undermines requirement (1) above.

- McDowell takes himself as having shown that we can make sense of the thought that colours are authentic objects of perceptual awareness. Consequently, we can’t accuse perceptual common sense of problematic self-understanding\(^{15}\).

- McDowell now asks why Mackie wants to convict common sense of error? There are two ways of distinguishing subjective and objective (including reference to primary and secondary qualities) that are prone to be confused:
  1. Secondary qualities are considered subjective because they aren’t adequately conceivable other than in terms of subjective states. Primary qualities are, by way of contrast, not reliant on such subjective states, and so are objective.
  2. Mere figments of subjective states are subjective and objects that are really there to be experienced are objective.

McDowell says the first contrast above is *not* the distinction between illusory and veridical experiences. It’s not clear to me whether this distinction is supposed to be connected with the second contrast.

- Only if secondary qualities are taken as being subjective in sense (2) would Mackie be right to convict naïve consciousness of error. However, according to McDowell, secondary qualities are subjective only in sense (1), which gives no support to subjectivity in sense (2).

- McDowell thinks it at least makes sense (though he thinks it controversial) to think of veridicality as a resemblance between aspects of a picture and what is depicted.

- He chides Mackie for not supporting more strongly his own insight that the best hope for rehabilitating Locke’s “ideas” in a perceptual context is in terms of intentional objects. Ideas are aspects of representational content, aspects of how things seem to you during a perceptual experience\(^{16}\).

- However, he thinks Mackie is mistaken in thinking that the relation between a quality and an “idea” of it is that between a property of a picture’s subject and aspects of the picture itself.

- For, explaining “ideas” as intentional objects equates to the relation between how things are and how our experience represents them as being.

\(^{15}\) I.e. that naïve consciousness is in error, as Mackie suggests.

\(^{16}\) Re-read and “footnote” the relevant sections of (my notes on) Crane’s book!
• *Resemblance* isn’t what veridicality consists in, but rather identity\(^{17}\). Mere resemblance is what we make do with when we *haven’t got* veridicality.

• McDowell thinks Mackie’s appeal to resemblance fits something quite different. Mackie’s relation is between aspects of how things are (the world), on the one hand, and intrinsic aspects of the bearer\(^{18}\) of intentional content, on the other. That is, not between the world and how things are represented to be, but between the world and features of what does the representing. Particular aspects of the content are said to be carried by particular aspects of what it is intrinsically – i.e. non-representationally – *like* for that which does the representing\(^{19}\).

• McDowell agrees that perceptual experiences have representational content, but doesn’t think that Mackie’s account forces us to think of them as having content in this way\(^{20}\).

• In a footnote, McDowell claims that Mackie takes it for granted that features of experience can function as vehicles for aspects of content, and the equivocation between *content* and *bearers of content* appears in other contexts as well. McDowell again raises the issue of correspondence versus identity in Mackie, according to whom in a true statement the way things are only *correspond* to the way they are represented as being.

• Mackie, therefore, supposes that intrinsic features of experience act as vehicles for particular aspects of representational content. However, the representational significance supposedly carried by these features makes no distinction between primary and secondary qualities\(^{21}\). For, on Mackie’s view, both colour and shape figure alike in experience in being an experience’s having a certain intrinsic feature.

• If you want to retain Locke’s intuition that primary-quality experience is distinctive in disclosing the objective properties of things, you will be led to use his concept of resemblance. However McDowell doesn’t think any concept of resemblance can get us from an essentially *experiential* state of affairs to one in which we have the concept of a feature of an object that we can understand other than how it would *seem* to us to possess that concept (i.e. that is non-experiential).

• McDowell thinks this point tells equally against Mackie’s idea of primary qualities as analogous to “colours as we see them” and against Locke’s concept of shapes.

• If you give up Locke’s idea of resemblance, but retain the idea that primary and secondary qualities are experientially on a par, you end up supposing that all properties attributed to objects are *equally phenomenal*. That is, equally intelligible only in terms of how these objects are wont to *appear*.

• Objective properties then only feature in the “scientific image” (which McDowell contrasts with the “manifest\(^{22}\) image”), and hence Locke’s intuition that primary qualities are distinctive in being objective and perceptible is lost.

• McDowell thinks we should want to preserve Locke’s intuition, and that to do so we need to reject the idea that what it is for a quality to be experienced is for that

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\(^{17}\) So, being red is the experience?

\(^{18}\) I.e. the perceiver?

\(^{19}\) This paragraph tries to unpack a single McDowell sentence, *but I’m still not clear what he means.*

\(^{20}\) I.e. as described in the last sentence of the previous bullet. *I’d be clearer on what that meant if I knew why McDowell equates the intrinsic with the non-representational.*

\(^{21}\) Is this what McDowell says, and does it mean anything?

\(^{22}\) I.e. the image that appears to us.
experience to have some *intrinsic feature*\(^{23}\). We should reject intrinsic features as vehicles of content altogether.

- When we reject intrinsic features, colours and shapes figure in experience simply as properties that objects are represented as having; with colours being distinctively phenomenal and shapes not being so. This contrasts with Mackie’s approach where colours and shapes are the representational significance of equally intrinsic features of experience. Since these features are *equally subjective*\(^{24}\), it makes it difficult to see how their representational significance can differ in *objectivity*.

- Once we’ve jettisoned the notion of intrinsic features, we can see that experiences can represent objects as having properties that are not phenomenal. We can conceive of objects as having properties that can be conceived in the absence of dispositions to produce experiences.

- In a footnote, McDowell seems to endorse Evans’s suggestion that saying that primary qualities are not sensory is not to suggest that they are *unobservable*. Shapes are seen as *shapes*, which McDowell takes to be non-sensory properties\(^ {25}\). Experience can disclose *instantiations* of such properties, even if (as Evans thinks) it can’t furnish us with *concepts* of them.

- We must separate two notions:
  1. The *possibility of veridical experience*, shared by both primary and secondary qualities.
  2. That some properties that experience represents objects as having are *not essentially phenomenal*, which segregates primary from secondary qualities.

- These two notions contrast by way of objectivity in the two senses discussed by McDowell earlier in this Section:
  1. The first notion invokes objectivity in McDowell’s second sense (objectivity as real presence in the object).
  2. The second notion invokes objectivity in McDowell’s first sense (objectivity as freedom from conceptualisation in terms of subjective states).

- McDowell admits that we don’t need to deny intrinsic features of experience altogether in order to deny that a quality’s featuring in experience consists in intrinsic features. We could alloy such consisting with a further requirement, that the quality is the *representational significance* carried by that intrinsic feature.

- However, McDowell thinks this still won’t do because he doesn’t think such supposed vehicles of content cohere with a satisfactory account of perception. The reason is that, on this account, an experience represents things as one way rather than another for reasons *extrinsic* to the experience itself (because they are ex hypothesis additional to the *intrinsic* nature of the experience). McDowell thinks we can say that they are “read into” the experience. This results in (what\(^ {26}\)) being false to the phenomena.

- McDowell thinks this provides a third\(^ {27}\) role for Locke’s resemblances; namely, to use intrinsic representationality to avoid the threat of falsification of the phenomena. Locke’s “ideas” carry the representational significance they do in

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\(^{23}\) But, what are these *intrinsic features*?

\(^{24}\) In which of McDowell’s two senses?

\(^{25}\) Why is this so? They appear to be sensory (we see them), but they can be analysed mathematically, or represented on computers which have no phenomenal sensory experience. The redness of red is intrinsically phenomenal, however.

\(^{26}\) Indeed – what?

\(^{27}\) What were the first two?
virtue of what they are like\textsuperscript{28}. This “being like” can be unpacked (“glossed”) in two ways:-
1. How they are intrinsically.
2. What they resemble.

- McDowell takes it that we cannot use the concept of resemblance to project ourselves from features of experience to non-phenomenological properties of objects. Given this, he doubts that we can avoid the second horn\textsuperscript{29} of our dilemma by use of the metaphor of representational significance being “read in” to intrinsic features.

- McDowell asks some rhetorical questions:-
  1. How could representational significance be “read into” intrinsic features of experience so that what was signified didn’t need to be understood in terms of these intrinsic features?
  2. How could a feature of experience that’s not intrinsically representational acquire objective significance such that by virtue of having this feature it could count as a direct awareness of a property of objects that’s not essentially phenomenal\textsuperscript{30}.

- In a footnote, McDowell discusses what features are under consideration. They aren’t those of “physiologically specified states”, as these aren’t experienced. The features McDowell’s concerned with need to be aspects of what experience is like in order to carry aspects of the content presented to us by experience. Given this, why is it harder for a feature of experience to acquire objective significance than it is for a word to do so? McDowell thinks there’s no parallel because language isn’t concerned with how things look to be. He sees the special problem in our case being how to stop this “look” resulting in a supposedly intrinsic feature of experience getting absorbed into its own representational significance. If this happened, the significance would be purely phenomenal rather than primary\textsuperscript{31}.

- It’s a subjective matter how things strike someone as being. Things cannot be conceived in abstraction from the subject of the experience.

- What might motivate us to insist on the supposed “vehicles of aspects of content” that McDowell rejects? McDowell thinks it’s the aspiration to subordinate subjectivity to a fundamentally objective conception of reality. If we can’t incorporate aspects of content within elements in an intrinsic structure, we cannot eliminate their subjectivity.

- The hope might be to objectivise any essential subjectivity in those features of experience that aren’t intrinsically representational. This would be attempted by predicating special access to the subject to something in the world conceived in a broadly objective way. It’s important, though, that the presence in the world of this objectivity is not seen as being constituted by this special access.

- In this way, one can suppose that the phenomenal character of the “manifest image” can be explained in terms of “external reality” being processed through a “structured subjectivity” conceived in this objectivist manner, where “external reality” is supposed to be purely objective.

- McDowell thinks this captures Mackie’s approach to secondary qualities.

\textsuperscript{28} What does this mean? “Like” as how it seems to the perceiver or “like” in a representational sense?

\textsuperscript{29} These two options seem to equate to the two “glosses” that McDowell gives.

\textsuperscript{30} What dilemma are we supposed to be in?

\textsuperscript{31} This is, I think, clearer than McDowell’s formulation – but it’s still not very clear!

\textsuperscript{31} I.e. of a primary quality.
• But, what’s wrong with Mackie’s approach is that it threatens to cut us off from the primary qualities of perceptible objects (ie. from those properties that are not essentially phenomenal) in one of two ways:-
  1. Either, by making it impossible to disentangle an essentially phenomenal character from our conception of primary qualities – by appealing to resemblance, …
  2. Or, by making them inaccessible to perception – merely hypothetical.
• McDowell thinks we need to put a more radical construction on the essential subjectivity of experience if we are satisfactorily to understand experience’s openness to objective reality.
• McDowell thinks this more radical construction 32 removes an “insidious obstacle” to understanding how experience of secondary qualities can be genuine awareness of properties genuinely possessed by objects in a reality that’s not exclusively phenomenal 33. What makes the awareness genuine is that its phenomenal character doesn’t mislead us 34. McDowell claims that one foundation of this obstacle is Mackie’s idea that it isn’t simply wrong to count “colours as we see them” as items in our minds 35.

Section 4 (Application to Value and the analogy of Fearfulness)

• Early in the previous Section, McDowell had mentioned that Mackie had empirical grounds for failing to postulate “thoroughly objective” features resembling our ideas of secondary qualities. The ground Mackie gives in PFL is attributing such features to objects goes beyond what’s needed to explain our experience 36. Since McDowell thinks it’s incoherent to attribute such features, Mackie’s argument is unnecessary.
• However, McDowell thinks that pursuing the question may cast light on how explanatory tests for reality ought to be applied, since they are commonly understood to undermine claims for the reality of values. To do so, McDowell considers how arguments from explanatory superfluity fare against the “less extravagant construal” that he has suggested 37 concerning how secondary qualities genuinely characterise objects.
• McDowell notes that explaining an object’s looking red by saying that it is such as is disposed to look red is unenlightening 38. We need the structural ground for the disposition. Yet, however optimistic we are that we can explain the experience of colour in terms of surface textures, we can hardly claim that this explanation denies that a red object is such as to look red. So, the right test isn’t to ask whether the proposed explanation pulls its weight, but whether its reality can be denied; for, it may fail as an explanation without being explained away.
• Mackie frequently draws a parallel between secondary qualities and values, and it’s implicit in this parallel (given Mackie’s views on secondary qualities) that

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32 Which more radical reconstruction?
33 Ie. not Idealist?
34 As to what?
35 So, presumably McDowell thinks it is simply wrong to think this?
36 So he’s excised them with a swish of Occam’s razor in good empiricist tradition?
37 Where? And what construal?
38 He says it falls to a “virtus dormitiva” objection. This is the pseudo-explanation of why we fall asleep (or something like that) as being due to the “dormitive faculty”.

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values fail the test for reality. This failure is nearer the surface in his argument from queerness, and fully explicit in his patterns of objectification.\footnote{Both these arguments appear in Chapter 1 of (E).}

- McDowell thinks it’s even more obvious that values don’t have causal efficacy than that essentially phenomenal qualities don’t. This is because values couldn’t explain value-experience even remotely as adequately as the standard explanations explain primary-quality experience.

- But, McDowell thinks consideration of secondary qualities has already shown a difference between the above admission and any suggestion that values are not genuine aspects of reality, a point that’s reinforced by an important disanalogy between values and secondary qualities.

- Pressing the analogy\footnote{What’s this got to do with causal efficacy?} between values and secondary qualities stresses that evaluative attitudes (which McDowell seems to equate to “states of the will”) are like experiences of colour in being unintelligible apart from our sensibilities.

- McDowell uses admiration as an example of “value experience”. While the property of being admirable would be represented as present in the object admired, this property would be essentially subjective in much the same way as redness, which can only be properly understood in terms of human sensibilities.

- He now returns to the disanalogy. Virtues don’t just elicit the appropriate attitude, by analogy with colours causing appropriate experience, but are thought to merit it. This is what makes it doubtful whether merely causal explanations of value experience are relevant to the explanatory test. McDowell thinks that no-one could give such an explanation\footnote{What explanation?} while denying the values involved are real. The explanation needs to be of a different kind.

- McDowell now provides an elaboration using danger or the fearful. While not a value, it shares the crucial feature\footnote{What is the crucial feature?} with values. Fearfulness seems initially a suitable candidate for the projectivist treatment, which appeals to what Hume called the mind’s “propensity to spread itself on external objects”. This is because it at least involves no phenomenological falsification not to insist that what (on the projectivist account) is projected into the world is already (ie. objectively) there. McDowell thinks it “grotesque” to explain a case of fear in terms of a mechanical process initiated by an instance of “objective fearfulness”.\footnote{I wish McDowell would take the trouble to explain his examples. Is it just that tigers (say) aren’t objectively fearful because elephants or ants aren’t afraid of them?}

- But, if we’re trying to understand ourselves, we must acknowledge that, while a satisfying explanation of fear might well be causal, it won’t be merely causal in any case. We want something that, as far as possible, makes sense of what is to be explained. In particular, we want the sense of fear to be appropriate to its objects. The application of any theory of fear to particular cases must be subject to criticism; objects must merit a response of fear, or at least the response must be explicable as some intelligible dysfunction of such a propensity.\footnote{Presumably, the situation is similar for colours? Red objects must merit being called red. But, what’s the point? Presumably round objects should merit being called round? What’s the primary/secondary distinction?}

- For something to merit fear just is for it to be fearful. So, an explanation of fear that shows self-understanding must acknowledge that reality does contain what is

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properly denominated fearful. Denying this undermines the intelligibility of explanation.

- McDowell thinks that the shared crucial features of fear and value suggest a carry-over to the case of values of this debunking of a supposed explanatory argument for unreality. However, he finds another disanalogy – this time the contentiousness of values – but doesn’t think this spoils the argument. If we are to succeed in understanding our responses to questions of value, we must be prepared to attribute to at least some objects the properties that would validate our responses. McDowell thinks that what the disanalogy makes clear is that explanations that stop us denying the reality of these special properties supposedly discernible from an evaluative perspective are themselves constructed from this perspective. We allegedly had this in the case of the fearful, but the point is made particularly forcibly when the validation of the response is controversial.

- Not just any bootstrapped response purporting to be an undistorted perception of the relevant aspect of reality will do.

- McDowell thinks that the fact that values are contentious argues against unreflective contentment with one’s current critical outlook and for openness towards those with whom one might initially disagree. If we want to understand ourselves we have to be ready to change if our responses (to values) are unintelligible or defective.

- Even though no sensible person will take his evaluative outlook as incapable of improvement, this doesn’t imply that none of the objects of his evaluation really do merit the responses he gives. He can back up his evaluations with reasons. Even though his explanations share the contentiousness of the values whose reality they certify, since no-one thinks he ought to stop endorsing the contentious values, he likewise need not fight shy of accepting the explanations.

- McDowell admits that there’s an element of bootstrapping about all this. However, if we attempt to take an external standpoint for our explanations, we deprive ourselves of the very kind of intelligibility we’re after. He thinks the projectivists have given us no reason to think that a better understanding would arise were we to restrict ourselves to a viewpoint that excludes values.

### Section 5 (Conclusions)

- McDowell thinks it’s obvious how these considerations undermine the damaging effects of the primary-quality model.

- He thinks that the shift to a secondary-quality model makes it irrelevant to worry about how something that is just there could also stand in an internal relation to human sensibilities.

- The key idea is that values are not just there, independently of our sensibilities, any more than colours are. But, as with colours, this doesn’t stop us thinking that they are there independently of any particular experience of them.

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46 What was this argument?  
47 What does he mean? Is he making a virtue of necessity here? An objection to the reality of values is that people disagree about them. McDowell seems to be taking this as a point in favour of their reality.  
48 While these sentiments are all very laudable, what have they got to do with the objectivity of values?  
49 Is this supposed to be a cogent argument?  
50 Nothing in McDowell is obvious. Which considerations, which effects and it’d be useful to be reminded of how the primary-quality model is supposed to work.
• McDowell thinks that the epistemology of danger is a good model for the epistemology of value. He admits that fearfulness isn’t a secondary-quality, though the secondary quality model is available only once the primary-quality model has been dislodged. He also admits that secondary-quality models of value only succeed up to a point, but this was true also of the primary-quality models attacked by Mackie.

• Progressing with the analogy between value and fear, McDowell points out that giving up the primary-quality model for fearfulness would be equivalent to giving up the idea that fearfulness itself (assuming it to be real) should be seen as intelligible apart from the human propensity to feel fear.

• The same goes for the relations of rational consequentiality that fearfulness stands to more straightforward properties of things. He adds a footnote that Mackie’s E41 question “Just what in the world is signified by this “Because”?” involves a tendentious notion of “the world”.

• McDowell’s explanations of fearfulness would not just establish that some objects really are fearful, but would make plain on a case by case basis just what it is that makes them fearful. He thinks this would clear the mystery from how a fear response that is rationally grounded in awareness of these “fearful-making characteristics” can be counted as yielding knowledge that one is facing an instance of “real fearfulness”.

• McDowell accuses Simon Blackburn of attacking a “straw man” realist position. Blackburn writes from the ethical position of a “projectivist sentimentalist”, and suggests that the foundation for how to live is having our feelings trained, rather than cultivating some mysterious ability to spot the “immutable fitness of things”. McDowell thinks this misses the mark (with respect to the position that an anti-projectivist must hold) just as much as Mackie’s primary-quality model.

• McDowell spells out what Blackburn has done in a footnote. Blackburn has the realist evade his explanatory duties by making the world “rich” and having it simply place its mark on us (he has E22 as a similar approach). We’d be able to find (ethical) things out simply by letting one’s thinking be controlled by how things are. McDowell objects that this denies the opponent of projectivism the resources of analogy with secondary-quality perception by setting him out as holding that we’re aware of values by “pure receptivity”.

• McDowell invokes Aristotle’s notion of practical wisdom to suggest that the training of the feelings just is the cultivation of an ability to see the fitness of things. And, this ability loses its mystery because of its connection with the feelings. He’s even willing to allow Blackburn’s “immutable”, provided this doesn’t reintroduce the Platonism characteristic of the primary-quality model.

51 The “scientific ground” for colours is there, but not the colours themselves? By analogy, the grounds for making judgements are there, but not the judgements themselves?
52 I don’t understand the logic here.
53 So, what’s the advantage of secondary-quality models?
54 What “same goes”? What’s the point of this sentence?
55 Look this passage up to determine its relevance.
56 Look this up.
57 But, isn’t this what awareness of secondary-qualities is? Or does “pure receptivity” mean adding nothing to what’s perceived? I.e. in the case of red, the qualia of redness.
58 But McDowell doesn’t say in what sense “immutable” might thereby be being used.
• Mackie used to respond to the above by saying that it simply concedes his point, and that anti-projectivism is merely an inferior terminological variant of projectivism.
• McDowell, of course, rejects this response. His anti-projectivism would only be inferior if he was thereby obscuring some important truth in the projectivist framework. But, he claims there’s no such thing. He’s already refuted the argument for the projectivist’s “thin conception of genuine reality”, leaving only empty rhetoric expressing an unargued primary-quality model of reality. This has value-experience as being objective (in the sense of value-free) experience processed through a “moulded subjectivity”. A footnote warns us that we’ve got to be careful not to lend plausibility to the projectivist position be confusion over the two notions of objectivity that McDowell distinguished in Section 3.
• McDowell thinks this picture is just as questionable as the (faulty) picture of secondary quality experience on which it’s explicitly modelled, at least by Mackie.
• So, McDowell argues that projectivism is inferior. Without the “specious explanatory argument” it has nothing to sustain its “thin conception of reality”, onto which values are said to be projected, apart from “a contentiously substantial version of the correspondence theory of truth”. This would have the judge make no contribution at all to true judgements.
• The point McDowell wants to make is that even if projectivism was no worse off than McDowell’s realism from the perspective of metaphysics, metaphysical preference isn’t the only issue between them.
• From the projectivist perspective, what it is to have one’s ethical or aesthetic responses rationally suited to their objects just is to have acceptable functioning in the appropriate processing mechanism. These can be self-assessed, but projectivism views them as things that can be viewed as objects in themselves. They are things that can be stepped back from – at least one is supposed to be able to step back from any naively realistic values attributed to items in the world by the first-order application of the mechanism (though McDowell thinks that the projectivist needs to use his own processing mechanisms to assess themselves).
• McDowell now asks how we’re to understand this availability of the processing mechanism separated from the world of value as available for contemplation. He thinks there’s no alternative but to view it as a set of principles for imposing values onto a value-free reality.
• So, a search for a rational evaluative outlook reduces to a search for such a set of principles, namely a theory of goodness (or, in aesthetics, beauty). Intuitions are counted as respectable only insofar as they approximate to this ideal, which is what attempts to objectivise subjectivity are trying to do. McDowell takes a swipe at Mackie’s “inventing values” as utterly piecemeal.
• McDowell thinks that all such efforts are misguided. He doesn’t think we should be content with an “anything goes” irrationality, but thinks we should recognise that we can have rationality in evaluation and yet have some cases that don’t fit into the general picture. This is, he says, already available within his alternative to projectivism. He’d pointed out that a capacity to explain cases of fear accurately.
could result in having a theory of danger, but doesn’t think we need generalise this aspect.

- Evaluative realism needs the *explanatory* capacity for two things:
  1. Special objects that require certification as real.
  2. Responses to these that are certified as rational.
In order to do this, the *explanatory* capacity has to be as creative and case-specific as is the capacity to discern the objects themselves.

- There “two” capacities are, says McDowell, the same – there is no “stepping back” involved.

- McDowell thinks his approach raises questions of moral and aesthetic taste which, like any questions of taste, are capable of being argued about. Projectivism threatens to bypass the argument by invoking its metaphysical picture (whose adoption is far from compulsory, McDowell thinks). He thinks the question has been “settled” by prejudice masquerading as metaphysical good taste.