



Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

Judgment and Justification by William G. Lycan
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cludes many sentences linked to stimulation only very indirectly. So it seems that translation manuals must be sensitive to the connections—to the internal structure of theories. This is not to say that translation must take account of physiological facts as such. As Quine has said, “translators do not supplement their behavioral criteria with neurological criteria.” The point is rather that translation manuals must take account not only of dispositions to assent to and dissent from queried sentences, but of higher-order dispositions, including those to revise, acquire, or lose such dispositions. For example, they must take account of the kinds of dispositions which come into play when discussion induces people to reflect, revise their views, and arrive at new conclusions. Unlike the thesis which Hookway ascribes to Quine, the thesis that translation is underdetermined even by the totality of such dispositions is neither obviously true nor obviously false, and seems to have the interesting implications which Quine claims for his indeterminacy thesis.

Hookway himself seems to lean towards a Davidsonian approach to interpretation. His account of the contrasts between this approach and Quine’s is illuminating.

The philosophical vision of Hookway’s Quine is “rather narrow,” focused on the search for the ultimate laws governing the universe (p. 220). His chief importance is that “he has worked through what is involved in a physicalist empiricism more thoroughly and rigorously than any other post-positivist philosopher” (p. 219). I would argue for a more generous reading of Quine’s work. The last but one paragraph suggests that such a reading may be available for the particular case of the indeterminacy doctrine. I think it is also available for other key ideas, notably those of physicalism, realism and factuality. However, Hookway makes a strong case on the opposite side. His sophisticated discussions in this area are among the most valuable features of his book.

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The Philosophical Review, Vol. C, No. 3 (July 1991)

JUDGEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION. By WILLIAM G. LYCAN. New York, N.Y., Cambridge University Press, 1988. Pp. xiv, 236.

Judgement and Justification completes Lycan’s presentation of his views on cognition. With nine of the eleven chapters reworked from previously published articles, the book is not as cohesive or as deep as Lycan’s *Logical Form in Natural Language* (MIT/Bradford, 1984) or *Knowing Who* (with Stephen Boër; MIT/Bradford, 1986). Nevertheless, it is a useful addition

to the literature aiming to “naturalize” the mind by showing how cognitive phenomena fit into the (nonintentional, nonsemantic) “closed causal order.” Lycan is sensitive to the difficulties of this project, and he tackles them with vigor.

The book has two parts. Part I, on philosophy of psychology, has chapters on the ontology of belief, the semantics of belief ascription, tacit belief, and psychological laws. Part II, on epistemic justification, has chapters on reliabilism, inference to the best explanation, the realism/antirealism debate, and moral knowledge. I have space here for only a brief comment on each part.

I.

A belief, on Lycan’s representational view, is a sentence-in-the-head with a truth condition and a computational/causal role. Lycan argues forcefully that a narrow psychology that eschews semantic properties misses important generalizations, and that in psychological explanations of certain phenomena (for example, learning from authority), we need to ascribe beliefs individuated by truth condition (pp. 79ff.). But on Lycan’s model, a psychological (“homunculist”) law would take the form: “If an organism of type X receives an input of type Y while its Φ -er is in state A and its ψ -er is in state B (etc.), then (it is probable to degree n that) the organism will spit out an output of type Z” (p. 50).

This raises, but does not answer, a crucial question: If psychological laws take this form, just how do they accommodate belief *individuated by truth condition*? One may suspect that in order to accommodate such belief, the inputs and outputs must be specified intentionally or semantically, in which case the law loses its “naturalistic” credentials.

Perhaps Lycan will reply that the laws are causal, but not all explanations are causal; hence, explanations in terms of belief individuated by truth condition—call these “semantic explanations”—may not require causal laws as backing. But this suggests a dilemma: Either there are behavior-explaining psychological laws that are noncausal, or semantic explanations are not backed by psychological laws of any sort. The former, I think, would be unpalatable to one with a “naturalistic” account of scientific psychology; the latter would undercut the motivation for introducing semantic explanations into psychology in the first place.

These worries also suggest at least a limitation on Lycan’s “two-schemes” approach to belief ascription. Lycan is ecumenical: When we are interested in explaining and predicting behavior, we individuate beliefs in terms of computational/causal properties; but when we are interested in truth and reliability, we individuate in terms of semantic properties. Sometimes, however, when we want to explain some behavior based on

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what one has learned from authority, we seem to need individuation in terms of *both* semantic and causal properties.

II.

Now consider epistemic value. Lycan's view is "explanationism," that is, "crudely put, the doctrine that all justified reasoning is fundamentally explanatory reasoning that aims at maximizing the 'explanatory coherence' of one's total belief system" (p. 128). We begin with our spontaneous beliefs, which we accept as true at the outset. (Lycan emphasizes conservatism.) Then there are three further(?) kinds of explanatory coherence; the first two are consistency and incorporability into the system of one's previously justified beliefs. Beliefs that pass these tests are "tenable."

The third grade of coherence, needed for a belief to be fully justified, is characterized in nonequivalent ways. Tenable beliefs achieve coherence of the third kind if and only if:

- (a) The believer has explanations of the production of the beliefs as outputs of reliable mechanisms (p. 168)

or

- (b) The believer has explanations of the production of the beliefs, and each explanation "involves the truth of the belief" (p. 209)

or

- (c) The "beliefs achieve their coherence of the third kind purely through the roles they play in a maximally coherent explanatory system and not because of anything in particular to do with the mechanisms that produced them" (pp. 172–173).

The differences among (a)–(c) are important. (Clearly, the book would have benefited from a more careful reworking of the original papers.) Characterization (c) has earned Lycan the epithet "Hegelian fellow traveler." On characterization (b), Descartes's proof of the existence of God in Meditation III would seem to achieve coherence of the third kind, thereby rendering his belief in God "fully justified, perhaps to the point of counting as an item of knowledge" (p. 209). At best, (a) alone conforms to "naturalism."

Lycan makes a striking attempt to accommodate morality in his "naturalistic" picture. However, the differences in the characterizations (a)–(c) of coherence of the third kind prevent clear discussion of the justification

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of moral beliefs. Also, much more needs to be said about the supervenient status of moral facts. Simply to suggest that moral properties may be identical to properties “of a more or less nonevaluative sort” (p. 204) like “utility, harm and degradation” (p. 207), which, in turn, supervene on physical properties, is just a promissory note—all the more so in light of the ostensible value-ladenness of properties like degradation.

The last word is not in on these perplexing issues, but Lycan allows them to be raised in explicit and perspicuous ways. Whether or not Lycan’s framework finally proves successful, I would recommend this work to philosophers interested in philosophy of psychology or in epistemology. People unfamiliar with recent work in these areas, however, will find the book too schematic to stand on its own; frequently, instead of laying out arguments, Lycan relies on simply citing sources in lists.

Judgement and Justification features Lycan’s usual energetic style of writing. It is engaging and well informed, and readers who appreciate the enormity of Lycan’s task will find that it illuminates various aspects of cognition.

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ENLIGHTENED EMPIRICISM: AN EXAMINATION OF W. V. QUINE’S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE. By ROGER F. GIBSON, JR. Gainesville, Fla., University Presses of Florida, 1988. Pp. xix, 191.

Enlightened Empiricism is Gibson’s second book on the work of W. V. Quine. Its purpose is to develop the interpretation of Quine’s views offered in the earlier book, *The Philosophy of W. V. Quine: An Expository Essay*,¹ and to defend Quine’s position against some critics.

While no one doubts that Quine is a systematic philosopher, there is not a consensus on how to understand his arguments and doctrines. Gibson is addressing questions that have exercised Quine scholars for at least twenty years. He argues that Quine’s views on many topics, ranging from ontology to ethics, stem from a “central axiom,” which he calls “the naturalistic-behaviorist (NB) thesis.” The NB thesis is the view that language is

¹Gainesville, Fla.: University Presses of Florida, 1982.