READING RÖDL

ON *SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND OBJECTIVITY*

Edited by
James F. Conant and Jesse M. Mulder

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Introduction

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1 Analytic philosophy and German Idealism: a new alignment

Juxtaposing "analytic philosophy" and "German Idealism" in the way it is done in this section is likely to summon up familiar images of a chasm – that great but contested analytic/continental divide. Kant is often regarded as the figure in the history of philosophy to whom one must return if one wishes to identify a common source of these subsequently diverging traditions. On this picture, post-Kantian German Idealism represents a philosophical movement in a direction opposite to that in which the analytic tradition sought to advance beyond Kant. Faced with the legacy created by this divide, many philosophers have sought to draw our attention to a daunting task that now presents itself: we must seek to bridge the chasm, they tell us. This has given rise to any number of would-be bridge-builders on both sides: thinkers, rooted firmly in some branch of either the analytic school or the German philosophical tradition, who take an interest in what lies "on the other side". And it has often seemed to each of these sorts of philosopher to require a considerable effort on their part to bend their philosophical habits and sensibilities to such an extent that their philosophical "other" can be truly appreciated. But their shared hope has been that through such mutual efforts at fostering a philosophical détente, the foundations may be laid for a conversation which brings these two long-separated philosophical universes closer together.

Sebastian Rödl's way of doing philosophy offers an alternative to this conception of how to achieve the desired form of philosophical community. Not only because he aspires to a form of philosophical literacy which allows him to feel equally at home on both of the "sides" – for that is something which the aforementioned conception is happy to accommodate – but because in his hands analytic philosophy and German Idealism are to be shown to *coincide*. There *is* no divide. On the one hand, in discussing core figures of the analytic tradition, ranging from Frege, Wittgenstein, Quine, Davidson, Anscombe, and Ryle to its more recent representatives, like Gareth Evans, Thomas Nagel, Barry Stroud, John McDowell, and A.W. Moore, Rödl seeks *in the same breath*, on the one hand, to develop core themes and concepts of German Idealism (reason vs. intuition; thought vs. being; subject vs. object; and the absolutely foundational position of the "I think" or self-consciousness), while, on the other, explicating what he takes to be the key insights of the key figures in the analytical tradition. Indeed, these two poles of his endeavor do not pick out different strands within Rödl's philosophical work – if one were to attempt to compile two lists, one tallying up his texts engaging with analytic philosophy on the left, and one enumerating those engaging with the German philosophical tradition on the right, one would end up with two largely identical lists.

The aspiration to reveal the coincidence of what to many appear to be two distinct forms of philosophy, separated by a steep divide, can be traced throughout Rödl's philosophical *Werdegang*. Though he spent his student years exclusively in German institutions (first in Frankfurt am Main and then at Free University in Berlin), already in his PhD dissertation (FU Berlin, 1997, under the supervision of Albrecht Wellmer) the concept of *Selbstbezug* – self-reference – receives a treatment that draws equally on Kant and Hegel as well as classic figures in early analytic philosophy, and among contemporaneous philosophers, equally on Dieter Henrich and Ernst Tugendhat as on Strawson, Anscombe, Evans, and McDowell (Rödl 1998). Then, after a post-doctoral project at Pittsburgh University (working at first closely with Robert Brandom), Rödl comes to author his *Habilitation* (published in German in 2005; under the supervision of Pirmin Stekeler-Weithofer at Leipzig); translated and published in English in 2012 as *Categories of the Temporal*. Here Rödl set out to systematically develop and defend a broadly Kantian view (with a Hegelian twist) of the relation between thought and intuition, in which Kant's "Analogies of Experience", and their interpretation in various contemporary Kant studies (of both analytic and German origin), are developed in tandem with philosophical critiques of Frege's conception of logic, Quine's bald empiricism, Prior's tense-logical understanding of time, and Nagel's account of objectivity as aspiring to "The View from Nowhere".

Unsurprisingly, the phenomenon of such a frictionless marriage of analytic and German philosophy is naturally regarded by practitioners from both traditions as a *Fremdkörper*: it takes effort, equally for analytic philosophers as well as for those working in the German philosophical tradition, to recognize "one of their own" in Rödl's work. At this still relatively early point in his career, in his Introduction to *Categories of the Temporal*, Rödl himself explicitly "locates [his] work within the analytic tradition of philosophy" (Rödl 2012, p. 2) and explains what exactly that comes to on his understanding of the matter. He remarks that "it would be possible to write the history of this tradition as a history of the idea of logical form and its crisis" (ibid.). Here, the "idea of logical form", a notion that is readily recognized as central to the analytic tradition, is spelled out in terms of a conception of logic as the investigation of "the form of thought as such", which, in turn, takes the shape of an articulation of "what thought as thought knows itself to be" (ibid., p. 3), which again sounds more like pronouncements of a German Idealist style. It is thus in the very roots of the analytic tradition, and with the centrality of its concern with logical form, that this crucial Rödlian moment of coincidence in the traditions is to be found.

On Rödl's reading of him, Frege sought to articulate the universal form of thought in his *Begriffsschrift*, and thus took the deductive calculus presented there to *be* the form of thought. Yet, thanks to Russell's criticism, this calculus was soon widely recognized to be inconsistent – a story that figures at the center of analytic philosophy's self-understanding of its own origin. Now, by way of this failure, Rödl here contends, the aforementioned "crisis" in "the idea of logical form" emerges: "as Frege's thesis" – the thesis that his logical system captures the universal form of thought – "proves to be untenable, … logic confines itself to the study of [deductive] calculi, while, on the other hand, the broader conception of logic as the pure science of thought appears to be discarded along with the particular articulation it received in Frege" (ibid., pp. 3f). Thus, on this narrative, analytic philosophy lost from sight this task of comprehending the universal form of thought. Yet, as Rödl observes, a minority tradition within the analytic tradition has kept its eyes on this universal-logical aspiration of a "pure science of thought", which Frege explicitly endorsed, together with all the anti-psychologistic overtones we associate with it. After providing some examples of analytic philosophical projects, which all turn out to be concerned with furnishing a certain "form of description" or "logical grammar", Rödl charges that "Wittgenstein, Ryle, Anscombe and McDowell … do not tell us what they are investigating when they are investigating *forms* of description". Consequently, he sets himself the task of "supply[ing] this lack" by developing "a concept of *form* which is … the very one that the aforementioned authors employ" (ibid., p. 7). And, according to Rödl at this point of his career, it turns out that, with certain qualifications, this concept of *form* just *is* what we find in Kant's "transcendental logic" and in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. In this way, then, in his earlier work, Rödl picks up on the conception of logic as the pure science of thought that lies at the very roots of the analytical tradition, and undertakes to reveal it to be – or at least to require – the concept of logic central to the German philosophical tradition.

After *Categories of the Temporal*, which was originally published in 2005, Rödl completed a new monograph on the topic of his dissertation: *Self-Consciousness* (Rödl 2007b; this time the original was written in English and a German translation followed later, in 2011). In his Introduction to this book, he writes:

> It is a central thought of the German Idealist tradition that the philosophical study of action and knowledge must be pursued as part of an inquiry of self-consciousness. It would not be inept to read this book as an attempt to comprehend this tradition.
>
> (Rödl 2007b, p. viii)[1]
>
> 1 The "of" in "inquiry of self-consciousness" here is meant to express both the subjective and objective genitive: the inquiry is conducted through and by the exercise of the very capacity it seeks to understand.

The book thereby announces its aim to engage debates within contemporary analytic philosophy about the nature of action and knowledge in a manner that illuminates the significance of the fundamental methodological precept of German Idealism. This positions the analytic reader within a familiar landscape of topics, while attempting to arrange for the convergence of her own tradition with German Idealism by working through the "theory of self-consciousness" that the book unfolds. On the other hand, this theory is itself developed largely in direct conversation with recent currents in analytic philosophy: the book presents self-consciousness as "a manner of thinking of an object, or a form of reference" and takes its guidance from "a principle we find in the work of Gareth Evans, which says that forms of reference are to be understood through corresponding forms of predication" (ibid., p. vii). Briefly put, one could say that Rödl here develops self-consciousness as a "variety of reference", in line with Evans's (1982) project. It emerges, however, that this requires expanding the horizon of what counts as a form of reference considerably beyond anything countenanced in Evans's work: self-conscious reference, in Rödl's presentation, turns out to be neither "empirical" nor "receptive" but rather "spontaneous". This brings in another typically German Idealist theme, which Rödl here presents as follows:

> In contrast to receptive knowledge, which is of an independent object, spontaneous knowledge is identical with its object: my knowing first personally that I am doing such-and-such is the same reality as my

> doing it, and my knowing first personally that I believe that such-and-such is the case is the same reality as my believing it.
>
> (ibid., p. ix)

Yet again, when Rödl further elaborates this thought, we find him casting it in familiar analytic terms: spelling out how, in Fregean terms, the sense and reference of the first-person pronoun "I" are to be construed (see ibid., pp. 1–10).

Moving on, now, to the book that forms the central topic of this collection, *Self-Consciousness and Objectivity* (Rödl 2018b; henceforth *SC&O*), it is striking that both of the aforementioned central analytic tenets in *Self-Consciousness* – to wit, the Fregean framework of sense and reference and the Evans-inspired approach to self-consciousness as a "variety of reference" – now become targets of a fundamental critique. What this critique comes to will occupy us in subsequent sections of this Introduction.[2] What remains constant, however, is the guiding idea that philosophy, most fundamentally, articulates "what thought as thought knows itself to be", as Rödl put it in his Introduction to *Categories of the Temporal* (Rödl 2012, p. 3). Thought knows itself simply *by being what it is*, viz., thought, and thus neither through any form of empirical inquiry, nor through any faculty of "receptivity" (be it sensory or introspective). This guiding precept figured centrally in *Self-Consciousness* as well, and now, in *SC&O*, it recurs again: "The science of judgment is nothing other than the articulation of the self-consciousness of judgment", which spells out "what anyone always already knows, knows insofar as she judges at all" (*SC&O*, p. 40).

2 The "break" between *Self-Consciousness* and *SC&O* on these crucial points also plays a central role in the contributions to this volume by Dawa Ometto and Adrian Haddock.

However, in the earlier book *Self-Consciousness* the *contents* of this self-knowledge of one's own thought was explicated as knowledge *of something specific*, i.e., as knowledge of a "self-conscious subject", as opposed to knowledge of "nonrational substances" (cf. Rödl 2007b, p. 180).

Accordingly, this self-knowledge of thought was there presented as resting on a special "kind of causality" (ibid, p. 93) distinct from the "nonrational principle[s]" (ibid, p. 24) that causally govern nonrational substances. The resulting view could thus be characterized as a "true materialism" (a term which Rödl there took from Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*): "Our theory reveals the subject of action and the subject of belief to be, *in such a way as to know herself to be*, material, which knowledge is first personal and not empirical" (ibid, p. 14).

What thus formed the central doctrine of the earlier book now becomes, as indicated, a central target of *SC&O*: here, Rödl seeks to show how this entire picture of the *contents* of thought's self-knowledge is deeply flawed. Whereas his earlier "true materialism" positions thought as a peculiarly "spontaneous" rational capacity which sets us, the rational beings, who act on principles of rational causation, apart from *the larger realm* of nonrational natural beings acting on principles of nonrational causation, he now, in *SC&O*, characterizes the contents of the self-knowledge of thought as *absolute knowledge*. It is the central burden of the book as a whole to explain what this comes to. For now, we may simply indicate the following fundamental point of contrast with his earlier view: the relevant knowledge *cannot* be construed as knowledge that is limited to something specific, to something that in turn is positioned within some "larger realm". Or, to borrow Rödl's way of putting things in his *Replies* in this volume: judgment is not a "topic" (see *Replies*, §1; we return to this later in §4).

This preliminary indication of the break that occurs between *Self-Consciousness* and *SC&O*, despite the noted continuity, is likely to strike certain readers as quite puzzling at this point – how can the self-knowledge of thought *not* be about something specific? Isn't it obvious that it must indeed be about *thought*, and thus about *thinking beings* such as ourselves? To spell out what this really comes to and how it is that we are supposed to come to see this, we will first have to delve a little deeper into what we might call the "literary strategy" that *SC&O* employs.

2 "Judgment", "objectivity", "self-consciousness"

In full, *SC&O*'s title reads: *Self-Consciousness and Objectivity: An Introduction to Absolute Idealism*. The subtitle obviously indicates a substantially Hegelian ambition, in line with the aforementioned appellation of the self-knowledge of thought as "absolute knowledge", even though, again, *SC&O* directly engages predominantly with analytic writers, and in fact offers surprisingly little direct discussion of Hegel's works.

Still, to a reader with a background in analytic philosophy, it will soon become clear that the expression "judgment" (which is Rödl's preferred term in *SC&O*),[3] along with concurrent terms such as "objectivity" and "self-consciousness", cannot be read in the way she is used to read such terms in contemporary work in "mainstream" analytic philosophy. Rödl himself, however, will want to insist that his respective uses of these terms are not only *not* to be regarded as deviant, but that they are in fact fully faithful to the original German Idealist understanding of each of them, and that his reader's coming to find such ways of using them to be fully natural is a condition of her entering into that tradition of philosophical thought that he thereby seeks to inherit. This represents an unusual literary strategy – one in which the author attempts to philosophize in an analytic style and engage interlocutors from the analytic tradition, while at the same time refusing to acquiesce in their manner of deploying central philosophical concepts, on the grounds that, as soon as one begins to so acquiesce, one has already plunged oneself into the very philosophical errors which the book seeks to target.

3 "I use 'judgment' and 'thought' interchangeably, following ordinary usage: 'He thinks that things are so' represents him as judging, as holding true, that things are so", writes Rödl in *SC&O* (p. 4).

This literary strategy runs the risk of proving a fertile breeding ground for terminological confusions that can give rise to serious obstacles to a proper appreciation of *SC&O* – for instance, along the following lines.

Upon a first encounter, an analytic philosopher will be inclined to suppose that the word "judgment" must signify a species of a more generic genus of propositional attitudes, or mental states. On this supposition, it makes sense to say that judgment is "objective", in the following sense: a judgment that *p* is correct only if *p* is, objectively, true – which then, in turn, will have to be spelled out by some theory of truth, which captures how the relevant judgment on the one hand and the bit of reality it concerns on the other hand are related. Be that how it may, this characterization in terms of truth (partly) distinguishes judgment from other propositional attitudes, such as wondering whether *p*, or hypothesizing that *p*, or hoping, or fearing, or wishing, or wanting *p*. Likewise, on this supposition one will naturally construe the thesis that judgment is self-conscious along the following lines: when one judges, one always also knows *that* and *what* one judges, and so we must postulate for each judgment additional, "second-order" propositional attitudes to that effect. Or, at any rate, there looks to be ample scope for discussing various renderings of a self-consciousness thesis construed along those lines. Someone might suggest, for instance, that it suffices for a judgment to count as fully self-conscious if one merely *believes* that one judges what one judges. Or perhaps someone else will want to suggest that there is a variety of *kinds* of judgment that are to be distinguished: non-self-conscious basic judgments (where one "merely" judges), on the one hand, and self-conscious sophisticated judgments (where one also knows that one so judges), on the other hand (Rödl discusses this proposal in §3.5 of *SC&O*). If such construals of "judgment" and "self-consciousness" are in place, our imagined analytic reader will be working with a certain predetermined conception of what is involved in the task of making herself comfortably at home within the philosophical landscape of *SC&O*. And, thus (re)interpreted, *SC&O* in turn may be taken straightforwardly to present a contribution to a particular topic in the philosophy of mind, or epistemology, or both. In any case, such a reader will have already succeeded in positioning *SC&O* as concerned to focus on a specific topic amidst a broader range of more or less related and equally familiar philosophical topics, to be organized within a to-be-further-articulated framework of propositional attitudes and/or mental states.

In order to properly situate *SC&O*, it is crucial to recognize that it is not in *this* sense concerned with judgment. Following Rödl's *Replies* in this volume, we may say instead that *SC&O* takes judgment to be no "topic" at all. The reason for this – perhaps initially perplexing – pronouncement is that judgment, as it is understood in *SC&O*, circumscribes what it is for something to be a topic in the first place. Now, strange though this may sound to most ears trained in contemporary analytic philosophy, this is what one might have expected given the book's self-proclaimed aim of introducing "absolute idealism": whatever it is that lies behind this label, it is definitely not a *local* thesis concerning this or that philosophical topic or question. (Compare Hegel's *Science of Logic*, which unfolds the full spectrum of philosophical "topics" out of the inner dynamics of its starting point: the very idea of Being.)

"Judgment", in Rödl's hands, thus doesn't designate one propositional attitude within an overarching framework of mental states, of building blocks of the mind. Instead, we are invited to leave behind all such positionings of judgment within certain implicit or explicit theoretical frameworks, and to simply *observe what we know* in making any judgment whatsoever. Indeed, the role "judgment" here plays is similar to that which, within the tradition of German Idealism, notions like "reason" (*Vernunft*) or "idea" or "concept" play. This preempts the potential complaint that Rödl's discussion of judgment doesn't ever achieve sufficient specificity to secure its philosophical point, that it remains on too generic a level: the discussion *means* to stay on that level, at least at the outset, for only then can we arrive at a proper specification of the further distinctions we will eventually also need to make sense of – that is, only through our understanding of judgment itself.

On this basis, the claim that "judgment is objective" or that "judgment is self-conscious" obviously cannot be construed in anything like the "standard" analytical way we gestured toward earlier. One cannot explicate judgment's objectivity by drawing upon material that is *extraneous* to judgment – for instance, by juxtaposing the relevant judgment with the relevant "facts" or something of the sort – for this objectivity will have to be understood *from within* judgment itself. Likewise, one cannot explicate judgment's self-consciousness by calling to one's aid additional mental states *by which* a "given" judgment is then self-conscious. And so we find judgment's objectivity articulated as follows: "its validity depends on what it thinks alone and on no character of the subject thinking it", while its self-consciousness is characterized as: "a judgment *is* a consciousness of *itself* as valid" (*SC&O*, p. 4). Once we have made the necessary "shift" in our understanding of the terms involved here, the ensuing statement that "[t]he objectivity of [judgment] *is* its self-consciousness" may start to make sense in the way it is supposed to.

In this manner, then, Rödl's practice with these (and related) words in *SC&O* indeed constitutes a rather unique literary strategy: he positions his inquiries in the context of debates circling around words like "judgment" and "objectivity" and "self-consciousness" in analytic philosophy, yet he does not aim to contribute to those debates in *their* terms. Rather, he suggests that the very use of those terms in those debates, though still expressive of a genuine philosophical concern, have lost touch with what they are fundamentally about. The remedy, then, is to restore them to their original significance. Only when one follows *SC&O* in this maneuver will the book make sense (whether one agrees with its line of thought or not) – and only on this basis can it be seen in its capacity as belonging to both the analytic as well as the German philosophical world.

3 The chapters by O'Brien, Neta, and Peacocke

It is, of course, possible to question the shift in our understanding of the term "judgment", and related terms, which Rödl invites us to make by way of the literary strategy we outlined. Three of the contributions to this collection can be read as engaging with *SC&O* precisely on this point: those by Lucy O'Brien, Ram Neta, and Christopher Peacocke (which, for reasons that will become apparent in §4, we have grouped together under the heading *SC&O and naturalism*). We may thus indicate in which directions such questioning may be developed by briefly introducing these three chapters with particular emphasis on the way in which they seek to resist *SC&O*'s shift in how we should understand the term "judgment".

Lucy O'Brien: One act of mind

O'Brien's contribution expresses a certain sense of "anxiety" (50)[4] summoned, in effect, by *SC&O*'s unusual employment of the term "judgment". She encounters it in *SC&O* in the shape of its recurring and adamant insistence, from the very first pages onward, that judging *p*, and judging *I judge p*, are "one act of the mind and a single consciousness" (*SC&O*, p. 4). This "two-in-one" claim, as she calls it, gives rise to that anxiety because it remains completely obscure *what* exactly is claimed to be "one". As O'Brien puts it: "we are asked to accept the two-in-one thought long before we get any hint of a discussion of the metaphysics that might be involved in judgment" (58). And indeed, O'Brien goes on to identify such "hints", as they are to be found later in *SC&O* (especially from Chapter 7 onward): judgments spring from a power, a power to know. Moreover, judgments that thus sprang from the power to know can *themselves* be seen to be powers. This provides her with an entry point through which the unsettling "two-in-one" claim can be framed *without* having to make the mentioned shift in our understanding of the word "judgment". The power to know, she proposes, can be considered a "*power to use myself* – my acts, my states of mind, my judgments – in deliberation and reasoning" (59). On this basis, she suggests that, in the successful case (i.e., when I *know p*), there are "two powers coincident in [such an] act of judgment", viz., "the power to reason with *p*, and the power to reason from my judgments" (59). Now, crucially, what thus coincides in successful cases can also come apart, for instance in cases of error; O'Brien proposes to capture this divergence in terms of a metaphysical differentiation between "judgings" and "thinkings".

4 Isolated page references point to the page number within the relevant contribution to this volume.

Of course, O'Brien notes that "Rödl, himself, will not … accept a resolution of this form", most fundamentally because it consists in sketching "a metaphysics of mind" in terms of which we "try to make sense of the connection between self-consciousness and judgment". And the very possibility of such an endeavor, she notes, goes against Rödl's project in

SC&O, which “does not allow that connection to be explained by anything” (59f). Her contribution as a whole, then, brings out this most fundamental disagreement: whereas *SC&O* seeks to position *judgment* at this absolutely fundamental juncture, O’Brien urges that it is only through absorbing its theses on judgment into a broader framework, a “metaphysics of mind”, that these theses stand a chance of being more than, as her final word has it, “illusory”.

Ram Neta: How is thinking possible?

Neta attempts to get clear on *SC&O*’s project by casting it in the form of an apparently inconsistent triad (63):

(Objectivity) Thinking is essentially objective: its correctness depends upon its object.
(Self-Consciousness) Thinking is essentially self-conscious: to think that *p* is to think that you think that *p*.
(Realism) The object of your thinking is, in general, independent of your thinking it.

However, he is quick to observe, in line with *SC&O*, that “[t]o deny either Objectivity or Self-Consciousness is … to commit myself to thinking that I do not know what I’m denying” (64): these two do not express theses that one may either accept or deny; they are, rather, part of what Rödl in *SC&O* calls the “science without contrary”, which, as we have seen, “says only what anyone always already knows, knows insofar as she judges at all” (*SC&O*, p. 40).

The real dispute, therefore, is with what he calls Realism – a thesis which we may read as allocating for judgment a place alongside other things, things that may or may not become the object of judgment, and in this way resists the “shift” concerning the term “judgment” that *SC&O* encourages us to make. Neta’s main question now becomes: is Realism really inconsistent with the conjunction of Objectivity and Self-Consciousness? Now, in the course of presenting a series of questions on *SC&O* on this basis, Neta arrives at a possible reconciliation of the three theses. This reconciliation starts from his avowal that “although I accept that thinking that *p* involves thinking that one thinks that *p*, I do not yet see why we should take such ‘involvement’ to amount to identity” (67f). If this is right, then, of course, it will be possible to distinguish “the object of your thinking” from “your thinking it”, as Realism has it, while accepting a slightly adapted formulation of Self-Consciousness, viz., “to think that *p* *involves* to think that you think that *p*”.

Neta is of course aware that *SC&O* rejects this move. And he identifies, as the grounds for this rejection, *SC&O*’s rejection of the force/content distinction. This distinction separates *what* is judged (content) from the *act* of judging it (force), and thereby separates *p* from *I think p*. With these two separated, it becomes possible to view them as necessarily related in some way (the one “involves” the other, as Neta writes). And so Neta’s suggestion may be upheld if we can resist *SC&O*’s rejection of the force/content distinction. But it turns out, Neta observes, that this rejection itself rests on Objectivity and Self-Consciousness. Thus we have a circle: *SC&O*’s rejection of the force/content distinction and its insistence on Self-Consciousness (in the shape of the *identity* of *p* and *I think p*) turn out to depend on each other. Neta’s diagnosis is, ultimately, that what is missing from the picture is an account of the individuation of judgments: “whether the fact that I am thinking that *p* is identical to the fact that I am thinking that I am thinking that *p*, or the former merely ‘involves’ the latter, depends on how facts about my thinking are individuated, or how my acts of thinking are individuated” (@7). This, in effect, pictures judgments as a “topic” that is to be investigated. In this manner, then, Neta, like O’Brien, seeks to interpret *SC&O*’s pronouncements on judgment *without* making the aforementioned “shift”, and appears to conclude that we can only start to make sense of those observations once a suitable metaphysics (viz., a theory of individuation of thinking-(f)acts) is on the table.

Christopher Peacocke: Rödl on judgment, the first person, and perception

Peacocke focuses on four prominent strands of thought in *SC&O*:

1. its rejection of the force/content distinction and the concomitant idea that judging is a propositional attitude;
2. its rejection of a Fregean conception of the first person;
3. its conception of concepts; and
4. its conception of empirical judgments.

While in *SC&O* these four appear as natural consequences of making the mentioned shift in our understanding of the terms "judgment" etc., Peacocke's contribution seeks to resist that shift by sketching a philosophical view which stands a good chance of vindicating the force/content distinction and the Fregean conception of the first person, and which also yields a plausible view of concepts and of empirical judgments. Along the way, Peacocke enlists various conceptual or theoretical "resources" that are in principle available to such a view for dealing with various of *SC&O*'s arguments relating to 1–4. To give an idea of Peacocke's strategy, we briefly highlight some of his points relating in particular to 1, 3, and 4.

Crucially, the theoretical landscape Peacocke sketches in response to *SC&O* involves the thesis that one may be able to judge "without so much as having the concept of judgment" (71). If so, one's judgment that *p* will obviously not coincide with one's judgment *I judge p*, for the latter requires the concept of judgment. And, having separated these two conceptually, the force/content distinction is on the table again (as we just saw in the context of Neta's chapter). Yet Peacocke sees room for a different version of Rödl's insistence that these cannot be separated: "content cannot be explicated philosophically without mention of judgment, and correspondingly cannot be explicated without mention of force" (76), so that "there can be no deep dissociation between sense and force" (82).

We saw that O'Brien complains about *SC&O*'s insistence on the identity of judging *p* and judging *I judge p* "long before we get any hint of a discussion of the metaphysics that might be involved in judgment"

(O'Brien, 58). Peacocke voices a similar complaint, now not with an eye to questions about the identity of mental acts, but rather concerning content: *SC&O* does not provide any "substantive theory of what individuates particular intentional contents at the level of sense" (81), and yet it appears to make heavy pronouncements on the topic of contents and concepts. He remarks that "the need for a philosophical theory at this level seems to me non-negotiable"; furthermore, "[o]nce we have a theory of this that Rödl endorses" it will perhaps transpire that there is "no disagreement between us [viz., Rödl and Peacocke] on some central issues" (81).

Concerning empirical judgment, Peacocke sketches an account which centers on the "Factive Norm": "judge that *Fa* on the basis of your perceptual state only if that state is factive in respect of the content *Fa*" (82). The "factivity" involved must be independent of judgment, for it is supposed to be possible precisely to be in a factive state and yet wonder whether what one thereby takes in is something real, or rather an illusion of some sort. The resulting "factive-state-first epistemology" (83) provides a basis for Peacocke to position certain of *SC&O*'s pronouncements concerning judgment, such as, centrally, that "the formal object of judgment is reality" (*SC&O*, p. 103). For indeed, if perceptual judgment is bound to the Factive Norm, then, if all goes well, judging that *p* does reach all the way to how things are, and in that sense judgment is *objective*. Now, as we saw, Peacocke combines this with the thesis that one may judge without being in possession of the concept of judgment. Yet the norm for judgment, even in that case, is the Factive Norm, which thus cannot, in this case, be explicitly known – that would require one to employ the concept of judgment, after all. Here Peacocke suggests that, still, the Factive Norm may be present in the form of *tacit knowledge*. The self-consciousness of judgment, of which *SC&O* speaks, may now be framed as the necessary presence of this tacit knowledge in every judgment. And so Peacocke arrives at an analogue of *SC&O*'s thesis that self-consciousness and objectivity are the same: they coincide in the Factive Norm. Again, Peacocke in this way renders a central tenet of *SC&O* intelligible while resisting the shift in the understanding of "judgment" which *SC&O* insists upon.

Summing up

O'Brien, Neta, and Peacocke give us a rich array of perspectives on thought and judgment based on the sort of understanding of "judgment" that, as we argued in the previous section, *SC&O* invites us to abandon. They put these perspectives into conversation with certain of *SC&O*'s central pronouncements on judgment, its objectivity, and its self-consciousness. The connecting thread throughout these engagements with *SC&O* lies in their shared insistence on the task of philosophy as one of formulating a *theory* concerning the topic in question – a metaphysics of rational mental acts, or of contents (senses), or a principle of individuation of (mental) facts or of judgments. Departing from these perspectives, the lack of any such ambition of theory construction in *SC&O* must strike one as a lacuna, or shortcoming. Even though the exposition of the self-understanding of judgment that *SC&O* explicitly purports to present may contain valuable "data" for such theory construction, the results simply don't get a foothold in reality without it. In their diverse ways, O'Brien, Neta, and Peacocke all give expression to this diagnosis by proposing ways in which such a foothold may be provided.

4 "Naturalism" in analytic philosophy, and Rödl's understanding of its fundamental error

The shift in understanding the term "judgment" that *SC&O* puts forward through its unusual literary strategy is a radical one. Instead of plotting judgment within an overarching framework, as one among a range of types of mental states or propositional attitudes that certain creatures (including ourselves) typically display, it invites the reader to consider the idea that judgment itself *is* the framework, as we might put it. In this sense, one could say that, according to *SC&O*, judgment is *absolute*.

As we saw, questions can be raised as to what this pronouncement really comes to. On the other hand, putting things in this way also invites the converse question: the framework of mental states or propositional attitudes, which in some form may be said to comprise the common ground for most of contemporary analytic philosophy, itself forms part of a larger, overarching framework (one will be hard pressed, after all, to find analytic philosophers identifying the framework of mental states with *all of reality*). Once we have a firmer grasp on this larger, overarching framework, we will be able to contrast it with the understanding put forward in *SC&O*.

In search for the overarching framework that is at work in “mainstream” analytic philosophy, the term *naturalism* is likely to come to mind: judgment, mental states, and the mind are positioned within the larger framework of *the natural world*. In *SC&O*, we find the following articulation of such a picture:

> Judgment is a psychic endowment of a certain species, Homo sapiens … perhaps more advanced and more complicated, but no different in principle from the various forms of cognition enjoyed by the manifold species of animals. It has a determinate nature, which has been molded by evolutionary forces acting on our forebears. Accordingly the study of judgment falls within the province of the sciences that investigate the relevant species in general and specifically their cognitive powers: biology, psychology, cognitive science.
>
> (*SC&O*, p. 59)

Yet *SC&O* resolutely rejects this picture. And it is obvious why it should, given the aforementioned “shift”: instead of acknowledging judgment as the horizon against which everything is to be understood, this “naturalist” picture positions judgment as one of the items “in nature” that we might study and think about, philosophically or scientifically – judgment, on this picture, is simply one of many possible “topics”.

Does this mean that we must associate *SC&O* with some form of “non-naturalism” – with dualism, or “supernaturalism”, or maybe some unheardof, even more exotic version thereof? The answer is obviously negative. *SC&O* nowhere posits the existence of irreducible "supernatural" or "epiphenomenal" or "normative" or "mental" entities *alongside* the natural world.

This indicates that *SC&O* rejects naturalism not by favoring some version of non-naturalism, but rather by rejecting something more fundamental, something that underlies *both* naturalism *and* its usual contraries, such as dualism or epiphenomenalism. To identify that with which we may properly contrast *SC&O*'s fundamental philosophical orientation, we must thus take a step back and consider the overarching framework against which both naturalism *and* the usual examples of non-naturalism can be plotted.

One way of presenting this more generic framework is the following. Let us say that the target of our comprehensive intellectual endeavor, both in philosophy and in the sciences collectively, is *reality*, or *the world*. Then the defining feature of the overarching framework under which the entire opposition of naturalism vs. non-naturalism can be plotted is the assumption that this target, reality, is the big container within which our own thinking and judging, our science and philosophy, has its own little place. This assumption remains in place independently of whether the place-within-reality we accord to judgment, thinking, philosophy, and science is understood as "natural" or as in some way "non-natural". And this is exactly what *SC&O* opposes, when it insists upon the "absolute" status of judgment: it opposes this often implicit, highly generic philosophical framework, within which the various versions of naturalism as well as their various opposites can be plotted in the first place. Within such a framework, *either* judgment is in some sense ontologically continuous with the rest of nature, and/or methodologically accessible in the same way in which we can understand the rest of nature, *or* it lies outside of that natural sphere, so that we have some form of, e.g., dualism or "supernaturalism".

Now, for this Introduction I will follow Rödl in calling *this highly generic philosophical framework* "naturalism". In his *Replies* in this volume, he defines it as follows: "[naturalism] places thought among the objects of theoretical knowledge and in this sense in nature” (§1.3). He uses the word “nature” here as just another label for what we called “reality”, “the world”, or “the big container”. On this understanding of the term, then, *naturalism* will indeed encompass the fullest spectrum of “naturalisms” and “non-naturalisms” as these are found in most of the contemporary discussion on these matters. And, as will be clear from our earlier discussion thereof, even certain of Rödl’s own earlier views as articulated in his *Self-Consciousness* may then be identified as falling under this new understanding of the term “naturalism”.

The reader may have noticed that we here run into another instance of that “literary strategy” employed in *SC&O* which we discussed in previous sections: it will take considerable effort for those at home within analytic philosophy to follow Rödl in this deviant rendering of a term – “naturalism” – which they are so familiar with on the standard understanding; yet without making that shift it will be nigh impossible to get the philosophical point of *SC&O* into view.

To frame that philosophical point correctly, it is thus necessary to think through what that might mean: that judgment is not one topic among many others, but rather the very framework within which there can be talk of a topic in the first place. First of all, it follows that thinking about judgment has a quite special status: while you can turn your thought to any topic, and away from it to any other topic, you cannot turn *to* the topic of judgment, simply because there is no such topic. But perhaps it is better to say that you cannot turn your attention *away* from judgment to “other topics”, for judgment is self-conscious: to judge *is* to understand oneself to be judging; “the concept of judgment is at work in every judgment”, as Rödl puts it (*SC&O*, p. 57). Accordingly, that judgment is self-conscious is not something that we can *learn*, it is not something that we were first ignorant of and then came to know, in the way in which we find out that, e.g., caterpillars turn into butterflies. For, as long as we were judging, every one of our judgments already included this self-consciousness. It is just that we hadn’t bothered to put this into words yet. Or we may have been led astray by the naturalist supposition that judgment *is* some sort of topic ("naturalist" in our broad sense, i.e., irrespective of whether it is a "natural" or "non-natural" one in the usual sense), in which case we must first disentangle ourselves from the ensuing confusions before we can start formulating the self-consciousness of judgment properly. Either way, we will be able to see the point of Rödl's characterization of what he calls the "science" of judgment, which "says only what anyone always already knows, knows insofar as she judges at all" (*SC&O*, p. 40). *SC&O* is to be read as attempting to put *this* science, which we all already have, into words. (We will see shortly that there is then still room for disagreements over the content and status of this peculiar science of judgment.)

Now that we have explored this fundamental starting point of *SC&O*, we can see that it is properly contrasted with naturalism in our new, unfamiliar sense of that term. Instead of understanding judgment to be simply one of the many "topics" we must all somehow position within the overarching whole that we call reality or nature, *SC&O* seeks to bring out that *by* considering all these topics *as* topics, we have already positioned them as possible *objects* of judgment, inquiry, science, which is to say that we have already treated *judgment* as the overarching framework within which such topics find their proper place. And then, indeed, the assumption that judgment is *itself* one of those topics stops making sense.

Despite the obvious potential for confusion, then, we can in this manner come to see the point of deviating from the common, contemporary philosophical usage of the term "naturalism" as significantly as we are doing here (following Rödl in his *Replies*): this contemporary usage does not get into view the assumption underlying both what it calls "naturalism" as well as its opposites – viz., the very notion that whatever it is that we are (anti)naturalists about must be a "topic" in the sketched sense.

We remarked that Rödl's own *Self-Consciousness* presents itself, at least to some extent, as naturalist in this sense. Interestingly, however, if we go back to *Categories of the Temporal*, we find that Rödl there positioned himself much more in line with the rejection of the assumption that judgment (or thought, to revert to his terminological choice in that earlier book) must be a topic. In his first chapter there, he announces that what he is concerned with is “logical form”, which he renders as “the form of thought in general: what characterizes thought as thought” (Rödl 2012, p. 19); yet very quickly he adds that this is “just another name” for Aristotle’s famous “science that investigates what is insofar as it is” (ibid., p. 22), wherefore he entitles his inquiry one of “metaphysical logic”. Metaphysical logic is thus *not* concerned with any topic: the very project of metaphysical logic *is* a rejection of naturalism in the sense we have set out.

On the other hand, however, toward the end of *Categories of the Temporal* this firm rejection of naturalism appears to be somewhat lost from sight. Rödl there briefly considers the relation of his exposition of the categories of the temporal “at the most abstract level” with possible, more specific metaphysical-logical extensions thereof:

> Laws of reason and laws of nature are both laws, and not by homonymy. They are *specifications* of one form of thought. This form is as abstract as the category of movement. That does not exclude that there are formal distinctions among laws of movement, and that substances governed by them are temporal in different ways. But we can understand how mechanical laws and laws of stuffs, laws of sensory life and laws of rational life differ, only if we comprehend the logical form of laws of movement in general.
>
> (Rödl 2012, p. 187; emphasis added)

Although these remarks are explicitly recognized to go beyond the scope of Rödl’s project in *Categories of the Temporal*, they do appear to picture “laws of rational life” as a *specification* which finds application not across the metaphysical board, but rather more restrictedly, in rational life. And this appearance of rationality as a “topic” is reinforced on the semifinal page of the book, where Rödl writes, concerning the question how we should conceive of the subject of knowledge:

> In order to elaborate this, we would have to develop *the logical form of thoughts about knowledge*… . For this, we would have to understand

> the specification of the categories of substance form and movement form to forms of the living and further to forms of rational life.
>
> (Rödl 2012, p. 207; emphasis added)

To a naturalist (in our newly minted, encompassing sense), this will sound entirely acceptable: to understand knowledge, and therewith judgment, we need to turn our attention specifically to rational life, which we are to understand through "thoughts about knowledge" *as opposed to* thoughts about inanimate objects, stuffs, or nonrational life. It is this naturalist line of thought, which *Categories of the Temporal* merely points toward on its final pages, that finds full expression in Rödl's *Self-Consciousness*. For there, as we saw, we find a conception of thought which everywhere stresses the peculiar, non-empirical or "spontaneous" character of knowledge that springs from self-consciousness, but which nevertheless positions thought as a specific, rational capacity of certain material substances among others, and therefore as one topic among many others:

> A material substance that is the object of a first person thought is of such a kind that being a substance of this kind is bringing it under its principle of temporal unity.
>
> (Rödl 2007b, p. 129)

When we thus look at the evolution of Rödl's philosophical work from *Categories of the Temporal* via *Self-Consciousness* to *SC&O*, we can see it as an evolving *Auseinandersetzung* with analytic philosophy's naturalist assumptions on the basis of the recognition of self-consciousness as absolutely foundational. To put it somewhat bluntly: while in *Categories of the Temporal* the relation between these two remains slightly underdeveloped, *Self-Consciousness* seeks to arrive at a marriage of both, which is then resolutely rejected in *SC&O*.

In particular, *SC&O* rejects the idea of first-person reference on which *Self-Consciousness* rests, along with its idea of a *specific* form of explanation, or kind of causality, pertaining to judgment. In fact, this finds its reflection in the way we are invited to read the title of the later book: *Self-Consciousness and Objectivity*. On the one hand, being self-conscious, “a judgment and the thought of its validity are one act of the mind and a single consciousness” (*SC&O*, p. 4). That sounds much like the conception of self-consciousness presented in *Self-Consciousness*, on which I know that I believe that *p* by believing it, which in turn I do insofar as I see that it is right to do so. However, in *Self-Consciousness* this self-knowledge is taken to be a reality on its own, distinct from *p*. After all, believing that *p* is something that we, instances of the first-person material substance concept, do. It springs from the special, self-conscious, spontaneous kind of causation of which *Self-Consciousness* speaks. But *p* itself need not spring from such causation; that is an entirely different matter and depends on *p* itself. Now, in *SC&O* Rödl seeks to bring out that this conflicts with the objectivity of judgment, the fact that its “validity depends on what it thinks alone and on no character of the subject thinking it” (*SC&O*, p. 4). For, if my judgment that *p* and my judgment that *I judge p* really are “one act of the mind”, then the validity of the former and the validity of the latter coincide. And then judging *I judge p* is valid if and only if judging *p* is, which in turn implies that the object of the former cannot be anything other than the object of the latter. We cannot picture the former as capturing an act of spontaneous causality which is distinct from *p*. The upshot is that my judgment that it is raining is one with its object: one with the rain itself.[5]

5 Haddock makes the contrapositive version of this point in his contribution (§§21–22): on Rödl’s account in *Self-Consciousness*, if judging *p* and judging *I judge p* are the same, then *p*, the object of my judgment, is one with *my* judgment, and thus private: “Everyone is locked in his own, windowless world”.

This gives a flavor of what the rejection of naturalism in *SC&O* involves – though it should be kept in mind that what we have now rehearsed does not get us far beyond its first chapter, and thus represents its starting point rather than its end point. It is, however, no coincidence that the chapters seeking to uphold naturalism in the face of the considerations *SC&O* puts forward – those we introduced in the previous section, by Lucy O’Brien, Ram Neta, and Christopher Peacocke – take issue primarily with this starting point.

In what follows, we will now leave naturalism, in the unusual sense of the term we outlined, behind: judgment, thought, content, concepts, etc. are not "topics" in the sense in which such a naturalism seeks to situate and thereupon investigate them. Thus we face the question what is to be done, philosophically speaking, once we have agreed that naturalism, thus understood, is to be abandoned. In *SC&O*, Rödl answers this question by developing what he describes as "absolute idealism", but, as we will see shortly, this is not the only possible answer.

In our organization of both this Introduction and the present volume as a whole, we have followed Rödl's approach, as developed in his *Replies*, in grouping various "post-naturalist" philosophies together under three headings: formal idealism, quietism, and absolute idealism. However, where Rödl's aim in his *Replies* is to present these three as stages in a "progression" that culminates in absolute idealism, we simply aim to supply brief descriptions and preliminary comparisons between these three so as to be able to locate the various chapters collected in this volume within this landscape of philosophical orientations, which helps to get into focus their relation to *SC&O* (and to Rödl's *Replies*). Let us thus start by introducing formal idealism as a rival to *SC&O*'s absolute idealism.

5 Formal idealism vs. absolute idealism

When we investigate judgment, we do not investigate this or that power or activity, pertaining to certain beings but not others. Rather, to return to our earlier characterization, we investigate judgment as constituting the framework within which the investigation of such topics becomes possible in the first place. And, as indicated, *SC&O* claims this to result in a form of *knowledge*: not empirical knowledge concerning this or that topic, but rather *absolute* knowledge – knowledge which has no contrary, as Rödl puts it (we return to this shortly). Formal idealism, on the other hand, holds that, when we thus turn to judgment *an sich*, we turn away from all content of judgment and are thus left with the mere *form* of knowledge. The question then is what the result of this turn away from content toward form amounts to – and here the formal idealist disagrees with Rödl's absolute idealist answer.

Formal idealism finds its source primarily in Kant's philosophical work – indeed, that is where we find the origin of the label "formal idealism".[6] And absolute idealism of course springs from Hegel's philosophical work (on which more under §9). However, instead of presenting their divergence directly, through a discussion of Kant in relation to Hegel, we do best, for present purposes, to follow Engstrom's helpful angle on the issue, which departs directly from *SC&O* itself (see our brief introduction of his contribution to this volume in the next section). Let us thus start with a brief outline of what *SC&O* has to say on the sort of (putative) knowledge that is in dispute here.

6 In a footnote added to the B edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant remarks that, since his official label, "transcendental idealism", easily induces confusion, it may "in certain cases" be better to call it "formal idealism", so as to clearly distinguish it from "material idealism", the view "which doubts or denies the existence of external things" (Kant 1781/1787, B519n, my translation).

In §6.5 of *SC&O*, Rödl distinguishes judgments with contrary from judgments without contrary. A judgment without contrary is a judgment that simply has no negation: grasping such a judgment is knowing it to be valid. Or, rather, grasping *any judgment whatsoever* is knowing it to be valid. Consequently, there is no such thing as denying or questioning it: in this sense, it is *absolute knowledge*. What we, in judging, know our judgment to be simply *by judging* it, is in this sense without contrary, according to *SC&O*: such (putative) knowledge is included in every judgment, and thus there can be no such thing as framing a judgment rejecting or denying or questioning it. (Of course, words may be put together that appear to effect such a rejection, denial, or questioning – but, Rödl argues in *SC&O*, that is mere appearance.)

A judgment with contrary, by contrast, is different: it must be validated, *shown* to be valid. Or, indeed, invalid; here we have the possibility of denial, refutation, questioning. This is the realm of empirical judgment, i.e., judgment depending on sensory affection – judgment concerning some “topic” or other, to use our earlier terminology. This is the realm of *science*, which we may contrast with *philosophy* as the domain of judgments without contrary.

Now, in a nutshell, through reflection on the question how a judgment with contrary might be shown to actually *be* valid, Rödl arrives at the conclusion that, in fact, there can be no such thing as a completion of the search for its validation (see *SC&O*, chs. 7–9). Here is a way of making sense of this. To judge is to be conscious of the validity of doing so, and thus the validation of a judgment with contrary cannot be something external to that judgment; it must be internal to it. Accordingly, a judgment with contrary, together with its complete validation, would really be one judgment, valid in itself, and thus it would constitute a judgment *without* contrary. But that destroys its claim to being empirical knowledge. Hence there can be no such thing as a *completed* validation for any empirical judgment.

However, Rödl urges his readers to come to see that this very insight – that the validity of an empirical judgment is irredeemably incomplete – is *itself* without contrary, and thus absolute knowledge. Eventually, then, *SC&O* comes to conclude that absolute knowledge, the totality of judgments *without* contrary that comprises the domain of philosophy, *just is* the self-understanding of sciences *with* contrary, of empirical knowledge. Thus Rödl seeks to bring out how the unconditional validity of absolute knowledge *just is* the recognition of the irredeemable incompleteness of empirical knowledge, and conversely, how this recognition, which animates the never-ending search for validation in empirical science, *as such* constitutes its completeness – and thereby is absolute knowledge. Here we arrive at the identity-in-difference of absolute and empirical knowledge, or of philosophy and science, which Rödl presents as the “speculative high point” of *SC&O*, to which its final chapter is devoted. For present purposes, it is helpful to think of it as the developed version of its starting point: the identity of the self-consciousness and objectivity of judgment established "in the abstract" in its first chapter. This development from the abstract identity in Chapter 1 to the speculative identity in Chapter 10, consists precisely in working through the idea of *empirical* judgment, judgment with contrary, judgment that depends on affection.

Now that we have this very brief sketch of *SC&O*'s conception of empirical judgment on the table, we can compare it with formal idealism. For while it is essential to *SC&O*'s absolute idealism that its account of empirical judgment is itself absolute knowledge, and thus without contrary, the formal idealist disagrees on precisely this point. She will accept the starting point, viz., the identity of self-consciousness and objectivity – which is reflected in Kant's famous remark that "it must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations".[7] Yet (and here we follow Engstrom in his way of presenting the relevant contrast) she will understand this to be a mere *form*, which is of itself empty, and needs to be supplemented with *matter* if it is to make any claim to being knowledge. Our sensibility provides this matter; and this yields the idea of empirical judgment, of judgment depending upon affection. This is, again, in line with Kant's remark that "only in intuition, *which is distinct from the 'I'*, can a manifold be given", which, he adds, is true "not for every possible form of understanding" but only for our specifically human capacity of understanding, "for which the pure apperception … does not provide any manifold from itself".[8] This reflects Kant's "two-stem doctrine," where the two stems coincide with what we here call, following Engstrom, "form" and "matter".[9]

7 With this remark, Kant opens §16 of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which concerns the "original-synthetic unity of apperception" or, as he also calls it, the "transcendental unity of self-consciousness". See Kant (1781/1787, B131–B132; my translation).

8 See Kant (1781/1787, B135, B138; my translation and emphasis). Kant goes on to remark (B139) that, precisely because the unity of apperception necessarily is the first principle of our understanding, we cannot form any

conception of possible different forms of understanding – either of one which does not depend on affection at all, or of one that rest on a different form of affection than our own (ours, of course, has the form of space and time).

9 See Kant (1781/1787, A15/B29, A51/B75). Kant there calls the two stems “understanding” versus “sensibility”, and “spontaneity” versus “receptivity”, respectively. Engstrom labels them the “formal and material conditions of perception and experience”, or the “formal and the material moments of consciousness” (Engstrom, 93). See also Rödl (2007a, 2014) for critical discussion of the two-stem doctrine.

Along these lines, the formal idealist arrives at the conclusion that, in constituting itself as the power of sensory knowledge, the power of knowledge *does not know* itself to be either with or without contrary. The point here is that this self-understanding essentially involves the other stem, affection or sensibility. So, even though that self-understanding indeed is the necessary ground for all of our judgments with contrary, *it itself* may have contraries as well. Of course, *we* cannot frame any such contraries, given that the space of judgments with contrary we can frame is grounded in that very self-understanding. But, as Engstrom aptly remarks, “this lack of comprehension of possibility” on our side “is not insight into *im*possibility” (Engstrom, 103).

Formal and absolute idealism agree that investigation into judgment is not, as the naturalist would have it, an investigation into some topic, but rather an investigation into the very *form* of any investigation into topics. When we take the term “topic” to signify what is *with* contrary, then we can now say that the formal idealist is under some (naturalist) pressure to admit that this form is *itself* a topic – at least insofar as the form of *empirical* judgment is concerned. It is, of course, still a quite peculiar topic, because it is, indeed, necessarily present in all “ordinary” topics – whatever it is that we decide to investigate, it will be something that we receive through our sensibility. Moreover, as we saw, a careful formal idealist like Engstrom will insist that we don’t *know* that it *is* a topic in this sense, because of the mentioned “lack of comprehension of possibility”. And along such lines, a formal idealist will resist naturalist assimilation.

In any case, what in *SC&O* is claimed to be absolute knowledge of the essential incompleteness of empirical knowledge is, for the formal idealist, not absolute knowledge at all, because it includes a reference to sensibility, the character of which we do not know to be without contrary. Now, in *SC&O* we read that “absolute knowledge is empty and nothing at all” (p. 153) if it is not the self-understanding of empirical knowledge. If so, the formal idealist must conclude that we cannot have *any* absolute knowledge. Hence even what appeared to be a shared starting point without contrary – the identity of self-consciousness and objectivity, or the *I think* as the original unity of apperception – turns out to have no content at all, for the formal idealist. It is the *mere* form of knowledge; by itself it is not knowledge at all, and *a fortiori* not absolute knowledge. Note that this may be read as an expression of modesty: where the absolute idealist boldly claims absolute knowledge, the formal idealist suggests that, perhaps, we should admit ignorance.[10]

10 Perhaps, however, this modesty is not as innocent as it may sound. That would be the case if Rödl’s conclusion regarding the Kantian c.q. formal idealist view of empirical judgment in *SC&O* is justified; viz., that on that view, “judgment is the fundamental and irredeemable incomprehension of itself: it thinks itself to be what it is not, what it cannot be, and what it cannot know [viz., absolute knowledge]”, so that “Kant’s thought … is the resolute insistence on the impossibility of moving forward” (*SC&O*, pp. 135–136).

6 The chapters by Engstrom and Kitcher

Two of the contributions to this volume critically discuss *SC&O* in its relation to formal idealism as we have just outlined that position: those by Stephen Engstrom and Patricia Kitcher. Both Engstrom and Kitcher challenge *SC&O*’s ambition to distance itself from formal idealism by comparing it directly with (their interpretation of) Kant’s philosophical work. Where Engstrom seeks to bring out how the main tenets of *SC&O* can in the end be fully appreciated from within a formal idealist framework, Kitcher goes on to add considerations that lean toward a return to naturalism, as one might put it, while still retaining what she takes to be Kant's most fundamental insights.

Stephen Engstrom: Idealism, absolute and formal

Engstrom aims, in his contribution, to "compare [formal and absolute idealism] with an eye to their common ground" (94). He spells out, with great subtlety, the framework of formal idealism – indeed, my own previous introduction of formal idealism in relation to *SC&O* owes much to his chapter. Engstrom shows, *en route*, how various strands of thought within *SC&O* can be captured within that formal idealist framework. And although he remarks that "it would not comport with the shared spirit of these accounts [viz., formal and absolute idealism] to adopt the posture of a conventional critic" (94), a quite fundamental challenge to *SC&O* does come to the surface as we reach the end of Engstrom's chapter. For the result of the comparison turns out to be that "absolute idealism is silent where formal idealism acknowledges ignorance", namely, on the possibility of "a knowing that [is not] the act of the power of *sensory* knowledge" (104, our emphasis).

This conclusion may well strike one as surprising, given my earlier positioning of absolute idealism versus formal idealism. We pictured formal idealism as, indeed, concluding that there *may* be alternatives to the form of *our* empirical cognition, which depends on affection embedded in space and time, even though it is impossible for us to conceive of any. But, contrary to what Engstrom here claims, we pictured *SC&O* as claiming *knowledge* where formal idealism acknowledges ignorance, and so not at all as being "silent".

This rather profound difference can be read as the real challenge Engstrom poses for *SC&O*'s absolute idealism. The challenge then consists in the availability of a reading of *SC&O* that is fully in line with formal idealism. This availability can be brought out as follows. On Engstrom's rendering of the formal idealist picture, we should distinguish "formal and material conditions of perception", which are such that in addition to a "*formal identity* of subject and object" – which consists in the *I think*, in the unity of apperception – we have a "*material difference* of self and other, recognized in … affection". In other words, "the objects knowable in experience, though they must be given from elsewhere in order to be known, must conform to the knowledge of them" (93). On the basis of this duality of form and matter, Engstrom develops a reading of *SC&O*'s account of empirical cognition: "It appears, then, that the interdependence of absolute and empirical knowledge recognized in absolute idealism is the interdependence of formal and material knowledge recognized in formal idealism" (103). In this way, then, what is portrayed as absolute knowledge in *SC&O* is assimilated to the formal idealist's self-understanding of empirical judgment: thus assimilated it indeed appears that *SC&O* remains silent on the status of this knowledge while the formal idealist acknowledges ignorance.

There are, of course, a number of passages in *SC&O* that appear to resist such translation into a formal idealist scheme. Yet Engstrom quite eloquently frames them in line with formal idealism nevertheless. For instance, where *SC&O* insists that the "formal object of judgment is reality, not appearance" (*SC&O*, p. 103), Engstrom says that this is "surely right" as long as we keep in mind that " 'appearance' bears a different meaning when opposed to 'reality' than when contrasted with 'thing in itself' " (103). In such ways, then, Engstrom puts pressure on *SC&O*'s claim to be distancing itself substantially from formal idealism.[11]

11 Toward the end of his contribution, Gobsch, too, suggests that *SC&O* fails to distance itself successfully from formal idealism. See §9 of this Introduction.

Patricia Kitcher: Idealism, subjects, and science

Not unlike Engstrom's, Kitcher's chapter seeks, in §2, to "show that many of Rödl's distinctive claims … recapture what Kant was trying to say" on "the capacity for judgment" (106). She does so by focusing on two examples, the first being *SC&O*'s rejection of the force-content distinction, which she shows to find a parallel in Kant's epistemology. Secondly, she discusses *SC&O*'s rejection of the Kantian conception of "reason's demand for systematicity" as "subjective", as a merely " 'regulative' ideal" (110). As Kitcher reads him, Rödl's argument there (viz., in *SC&O*, §9.3) runs as follows: a "completed science is an impossible ideal" (i.e., it would be without contrary), so that "the idea of progress towards that ideal makes no sense"; furthermore, being a *subjective* standard, "even if … the ideal could be reached, it would not be a measure of knowledge or cognition because it would not be an objective standard" (110).

Now, Kitcher seeks to undercut this argument by, first, presenting a reading of Kant on the relevant point: "when Kant characterizes the principle of systematicity as 'subjective', he does not mean to claim that it is not also 'objective' " in that it "binds all subjects" (110). Additionally, Kitcher notes that Kant's point in labeling it a "regulative" ideal, rather than a "constitutive" one, is precisely that we thereby come to see science as essentially incomplete, as always in progress – which she claims to be "indistinguishable" from Rödl's view, on which "there is a completeness to science … [which] lies in its incompleteness, in its progression" (111). Like Engstrom, then, Kitcher is here suggesting ways of reading *SC&O* on which it is fully in line with a broadly Kantian position – and, so far, that is a formal idealist position.

From here, formal idealism retreats into the background, and Kitcher's contribution takes on more of a naturalist tone. She discusses, in §3, the "unity of the subject",[12] the absence of which from *SC&O*'s pages (by and large) she takes to be "a lacuna" (113). Interestingly, Kitcher here turns to Rödl's earlier book, *Self-Consciousness* (Rödl 2007b), and utilizes its conception of "rational causation" (114) in service of a conception of that unity as bringing together various episodes of perception, reasoning, and the like into a single consciousness.[13] She is careful to distinguish such "necessary conditions for being a judger" from a "given character of individual subjects" (116), which *SC&O* seeks to exclude from our comprehension of judgment. That is, she does not mean to delineate a conception of the individual thinker that is not known by the thinker simply by *being* an individual thinker.

12 This topic will occupy us at more length in §12 of this Introduction, in particular in relation to Haddock's and Wallage's contributions.

13 See our orienting discussion of Rödl's *Self-Consciousness* under §§1 and 4, and also under §§11 and 12 in relation to Ometto's and Haddock's contributions, respectively.

Finally, in Kitcher's §4, where she discusses what *SC&O* has to say on the relation between science and philosophy, she adopts an even more explicitly naturalist stance. For instance, she agrees, there, with *SC&O*'s claim that "there is no special science of judgers (*per se*)" (120). However, she proposes to read this, again, in line with Rödl's earlier conception of thought in his *Self-Consciousness*, on which "three fundamental claims" hold: "Thoughts are causes; they are just as real as other causes; they are fundamentally different from mechanical and chemical causes, because they are mediated by concepts or ideas" (121). As such, Kitcher notes that *SC&O* must be wrong in arguing that "the power of judgment is not an object for the science of evolution" (119; cf. *SC&O*, p. 60).

Summing up

Both *SC&O* and formal idealism reject naturalism (in the unfamiliar sense of that term we outlined in §4) – for both, judgment is not a topic as it is for a naturalist. Yet apart from this agreement on the negative side, *SC&O* and formal idealism differ – or, at least, aspire to differ – on the positive side, i.e., on the question of what it exactly is that we *can* say, or know, about judgment. Together, Engstrom's and Kitcher's contributions provide valuable angles on *SC&O* not only systematically, in both elaborating and questioning the differences between formal idealism and *SC&O* as alternative ways of rejecting naturalism, but also historically, in relating

SC&O to Kant's philosophical work. And Kitcher's contribution in particular does the latter by highlighting readings of Kant which bring out further dynamics to the broader philosophical situation in that it actually leads back to a form of naturalism.

7 Quietism

SC&O's absolute idealism and formal idealism agree in their rejection of naturalism: judgment is not a topic; the *I judge* is not one among the various possible contents of judgment but rather resides in what is judged in every judgment. Yet both still see fit to devote quite some pages to discussions of judgment, through which they seek to develop the self-understanding of judgment that resides in its self-consciousness (that is, in the *I judge*), even though they differ as to the status of this self-understanding as knowledge. In this section, we turn to yet another way of rejecting naturalism – still following Rödl's *Replies,* we call this third way *quietism*.

Before we start with our introduction of quietism, however, a caveat is in order. What is grouped together under the label of "quietism", both in terms of the chapters collected under that heading as well as in Rödl's treatment thereof in his *Replies*, does not belong together as clearly as other groupings within the present volume. Therefore, we will here merely be sketching a vantage point from which grouping the relevant chapters together as "quietist" can be seen to make sense, while acknowledging that different vantage points are certainly possible.

Here is a straightforward way of introducing quietism: the quietist agrees with formal idealism and *SC&O*'s absolute idealism on the incoherence of naturalism, yet she contends that both are mistaken in assuming that there is, then, still room for discussing judgment *at all*. By her lights, to discuss something *simply is* to treat it as a topic, and thus, as we may put it, as delineating some range of candidate *p*'s. So although the ambition of absolute idealism and of formal idealism alike is to discuss the *I judge* as opposed to the various topics that may figure in judgment, the quietist claims that this ambition can only yield a range of would-be *p*'s claiming to be “about” judgment – which, she will urge, is deeply confused. Put more bluntly: when we pretend to be discussing judgment, but not as a topic, we in effect utter sheer nonsense. Such a quietist urges us to come to realize that, when we attempt to turn to judgment, we can only say that there is nothing – no topic, no candidate for *p* – to discuss there. To put it in the famous words of the philosopher from whose early works the very notion of “quietism” appears to have originated: “whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent” (Wittgenstein 1921, §7).

For such a “tractarian” quietist, then, the insight that judgment is no topic is perhaps best expressed by saying nothing at all. However, quietism may also take different shapes. In fact, Wittgenstein’s later work offers inspiration for alternatives to tractarian quietism. For instance, a quietist may see it as her task to provide “grammatical clarifications” concerning notions like “judgment”, by way of which the urge to arrive at a form of knowledge where there simply cannot be any may come to rest. This version of quietism may take on the guise of a more or less explicitly “therapeutic” endeavor.

But such a quietism inspired by the later Wittgenstein may also take the shape of an exposition, or exploration, of our “form of life”, along with all the various “practices” that it encompasses, including that of judging and scientific investigation, as the “unquestionable” background which, for that very reason, cannot be the topic of any serious scientific or philosophical investigation aiming for knowledge.

With these brief remarks, we already have various forms of quietism on the table, which may have an increasing amount to say, and thus not be so very quiet after all – and yet still, all that can or will be said in these quietist quarters will always also serve to dissolve various naturalist, formal-idealist, or absolute-idealist claims to substantive knowledge of some sort or other concerning judgment.

Now, in Rödl’s *Replies* in this volume, he subsumes under quietism yet another strand of thought, which may be characterized as a *pragmatic* variety of quietism. This variety, too, rejects naturalism, in the following manner: it sees our comprehension of everything there is in nature – of all "topics" – as resting, in the end, on a foundational *conceptual framework* which cannot itself be established naturalistically. Hence we cannot approach this framework *itself* in the way in which we discuss this or that topic: the framework makes possible our very investigation of various topics. And the "pragmatic" quietist of course accepts neither the formal idealist's doctrine that we there arrive at the mere form of knowledge, nor the absolute idealist's thesis that we there arrive at absolute knowledge. However, she will also reject the "tractarian" injunction to be silent as well as the "therapeutic" project of dissolving all questions that inquire into the would-be realm lying outside of the realm of topics, along with the idea that the relevant conceptual framework somehow rests upon the "rock bottom" of our form of life. Instead, she will simply say that where there is no knowledge to be had, *nothing* constrains our conceptualizations – so that, on the level of the overarching conceptual framework within which we consider and investigate various topics, there is nothing but *choice* for this or that overarching conceptual framework.

Such choice operates "in the void", so to speak – in a place where there is utter silence. Accordingly, even though one's choice is constrained by considerations of *internal* consistency, and even though various possible choices of overarching conceptual framework may exclude one another, one's choice for one over the other cannot be a matter of the relevant choice being *correct or wrong*. Thus, the only measures against which such choice can be assessed are pragmatic ones – hence "pragmatic quietism".

8 The chapters by Benoist, Satne, Kimhi, Moore, and van Ophuijsen

Five contributions to this volume can be grouped together as broadly quietist in spirit, though it should be kept in mind that, as we remarked, not all of them lend themselves to such subsumption as straightforwardly as is the case for other groupings of contributions in this volume.

First of all, the chapters by Benoist and Satne explicitly exemplify the sort of quietism that can be broadly associated with the ("tractarian" and "therapeutic") forms of quietism we associated with Wittgenstein, though both of them of course move considerably beyond the mere slogans we used to characterize the relevant sorts of quietism. This last caveat applies even more strongly to Kimhi's contribution, which seeks to "transplant" aspects of *SC&O*'s self-understanding of judgment onto a different basis, viz., the expressibility of thought in language, understood as a necessary medium for thought which Kimhi nevertheless positions outside of the sphere of self-consciousness – a move he describes as the "deep linguistic turn".[14]

14 In effect, Kimhi's chapter puts *SC&O* in relation to his own book-length treatment titled *Thinking and Being* (Kimhi 2018).

Finally, in Moore's and, to a lesser degree, van Ophuijsen's chapters, "pragmatic" forms of quietism find expression – Carnapian in spirit in the case of Moore, Peirce-inspired in the case of van Ophuijsen.

Jocelyn Benoist: Real austerity

"There is no 'science' except where there is *something to know*", Benoist states; but "is knowledge itself … anything to be known?" (125). His eventual answer is, as one should expect from a quietist, that "[t]here is strictly speaking nothing to know there" (131). How does he arrive at that conclusion? After appreciatively highlighting *SC&O*'s conception of judgment as objective (which "overcome[s] modern and also post-modern perspectivism" 127), Benoist turns to its conception of judgment as self-conscious. Here, he has "reservations" concerning the way *SC&O* takes up this aspect of judgment. Upon asking "Does the reduplication that leads from 'it is so' to 'I think it is so' bring out anything?", Benoist suggests that, instead of an "inflationary analysis", we should opt for a "deflationary analysis", on which "[t]he judgment, as such, need not be said" (129f). Specifying what this comes to regarding knowledge, he, again appreciatively, first quotes Rödl's characterization of a theory as being "knowledge of something that is and is as it is independently of being known in that theory" (*SC&O*, p. 40); yet he adds, on Wittgensteinian grounds, that "[a] knowledge that is not a 'theory', in this sense, … would be sheer nonsense" (131). And so there looks to be little space left for a "science of self-consciousness" which is no "theory" – which is what Rödl claims philosophy, and his own *SC&O* in particular, to aspire to. Acknowledging that the very idea of a philosophical science must be "sheer nonsense", we come to embrace the "austere conception" on which judgment, being no topic, cannot be made into the object of any sort of science or knowledge at all (134; cf. Conant 2000).

Earlier in his contribution, Benoist does give a hint as to how we should, according to him, frame what figures as the self-consciousness of judgment in *SC&O*. Rödl, at one point, alludes to Wittgenstein's reflections on rule-following in his claim that following a rule is self-conscious (see *SC&O*, p. 33). Benoist now proposes to put this insight the other way around: self-consciousness rests on rule-following. With Wittgenstein, we should then keep in mind that " 'obeying a rule' is a practice (*Praxis*)" (126; cf Wittgenstein 1953, §202). But, Benoist warns, engaging in the relevant practice does not necessarily require "to think that we are following the rule", it is necessary only "to actually follow the rule". So that "one *acts* before knowing, or rather knows to the very extent that one acts"; yet what one does "does not have to think about itself" (127).

Glenda Satne: Knowledge, persons, and the fact of reason

Insofar as Satne's contribution can be classified as quietist, it is much less austere than Benoist's version thereof – it is more "outspoken", so to speak. Departing from *SC&O*'s characterization of knowledge as both objective and self-conscious, she notes that "[t]he validity of thought … is a rule of correctness, not for a particular subject but for thinking in general" (143). That is: although in judging *p* I know myself to judge *p*, this knowledge does not concern anything about me that is "given", i.e., true of me yet not included in *p*. Thus, though the *I think* is included in every judgment, "no particular subject and no particular character of a subject e.g., their humanity, … figures as a content for the *I think*" (138f). But how, then, should we understand first-personal judgments that *do* concern the particular subject essentially *as* the first person, such as “I am in pain”, or “I am moving my arm” (140)?[15] The *I think*, Satne concludes, is “not of any particular subject” but “of every subject”, “and yet [it is] an I who knows herself as being corporeal” (144f; compare also the chapters by Haddock and Wallage).

15 For more on the individuality, particularity, and materiality of the human being, see §12 of this Introduction and the contributions by Wallage and Haddock.

Satne’s way of addressing the perplexing character of these two sides of the *I think* is in terms of a “form of life”, which is “internal to thinking” and, thus, for thinking, “not a ‘given character’” – and yet it *is* a “given nature”. This is what she calls a “*fact of reason*, for which no question about grounding arises” (145) – and that is precisely where the quietist character of her contribution comes to the fore. As Satne’s terminology indicates, she is here invoking her reading of Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein 1953), on which “the task of philosophy is … to supply illuminating descriptions that clarify the *facts of our situation*; it is descriptive work” (146). The description involved she in turn characterizes as a “phenomenological description of … reason as embodied and situated”; following Husserl, she labels what is described in this manner “contingent a priori” (147). And it is on this point that Satne stresses her divergence from *SC&O*: where she takes the latter to be concerned “only with a priori necessities”, she herself “introduce[s] contingency into the realm of the a priori” (147). The examples we saw earlier, “I am in pain”, or “I am moving my arm”, are of this sort; they play what Wittgenstein calls “a *grammatical* function”: “although they are “*contingent*”, such judgments are also “*a priori* in that they play a constitutive role in determining objectivity”; as such they are “without contrary” (147f). Yet “without contrary” here cannot mean, as it does in *SC&O*, that the relevant judgments are valid in themselves – they are, after all, still contingent.

Satne recognizes the peril here: didn’t *SC&O* precisely argue that judgment, knowledge, cannot be understood to rest on anything given? But she stresses that the form of life "underlying" judgment is not something given in that problematic sense: though "it is *from* a form of life that objective judgments are made", the "measure of correctness" of such a judgment still simply lies in "the content of the judgment". And yet, she ends, quoting Wittgenstein (1953, p. 223): "if a lion could speak, we could not understand him" (151).

A.W. Moore: The possibility of absolute representations

In his contribution, Moore primarily responds to *SC&O*'s Chapter 5, which critically discusses his own views as developed in *Points of View* (Moore 1997). Part of Moore's response here is direct, in that he takes up one of *SC&O*'s primary arguments against his view (we turn to this shortly). But the other, more telling, part, is not; rather, it aims to clarify how his project, in *Points of View*, stands to Rödl's in *SC&O*. In particular, he reminds us that his "Basic Assumption", which says that "representations are of what is there anyway", really is an assumption in the sense of being part of a "conceptual structure to which there are alternatives" (154). And the choice between such alternatives is "not itself a matter of truth or falsity": it is "unjustifiable" (154). Hence registering that Moore differs from *SC&O* in what he says about absolute representations is, on this level, a matter of registering a difference *merely* in the relevant choice – which "is music to [Moore's] ears" (158), because it does not make for a genuine disagreement at all, *a fortiori* not one that would in any way threaten his own position. "There really *is* nothing to argue for", as Moore writes (154). In this way, then, Moore defends a quietist picture of a broadly Carnapian variety.

Still, despite the mere difference in "pragmatic choice", Moore recognizes that some of Rödl's arguments against his own position do pose a serious threat: "if those arguments are sound, they … reveal internal inconsistency in the conceptual structure that I adopt" (155). In a nutshell, Moore defends the thesis that, given the Basic Assumption, absolute representations must be possible. Absolute representations are from no point of view; in particular, for any true representation, *r*, that *is* from a point of view *p*, there must be a representation *r′* that is not from *p* and yet includes the content of *r* in its content. Rödl, in *SC&O*, argued that this cannot be right, since *r′* must, if it includes *r*'s content, still be from the relevant point of view *p*. Moore disagrees: although if we wish to relate *r* to *r′* from *p*, it is trivially true that we must indeed still think from *p*, this does not show, he believes, that there cannot be an *r′* which fulfills his conditions.

Irad Kimhi: The linguistic turn away from absolute idealism

In *SC&O*, Rödl argues that judging *p* and judging *I judge p* are the same; Kimhi calls this the "transparency point" (163). Going back to Parmenides, he notes that merely *stressing* this point may very well lead one to conclude that falsehood and negation are impossible, and thus to endorse a "strict monism: there is exactly one being, changeless, uniform, eternal" (165). Now, he asks, "does the … transparency point make falsehood and negation unintelligible?" and complains that *SC&O*'s "absolute idealism" does not have "a clear answer" to this question, "since it privileges the transparency point by isolating it from other logical features of thinking" (166). In fact, Kimhi notes that, here, *SC&O* appears to be in line with Frege's conception of the judgment stroke as isolated from other logical features of thinking (despite Rödl's adamant rejection of the force-content distinction, that is).[16]

16 In fact, Rödl discusses Frege's judgment stroke precisely as a version of Parmenidean monism elsewhere – see Rödl (2018a).

Now, in *SC&O*, we do also find the idea that the "transparency point" is a judgment without contrary, which belongs to the science without contrary, to which the principles of logic are thought to belong as well. However, Kimhi remarks, "there does not seem to be anything to distinguish the knowledge of one logical principle … from that of another", so that "the very idea of an absolute idealist articulation of absolute knowledge is unintelligible" (169). By contrast, Kimhi suggests that "we comprehend the transparency point as self-evident only by identifying it with other logical features of negation, conjunction, and the unity of thinking and what is"

(166). And, as his title suggests, he claims that we can do so only by turning *away* from absolute idealism and toward language. The significance of this turn can be brought out as follows: whereas the naturalist seeks to "find a space for objectivity outside subjectivity" (163), *SC&O* wants to "recall truth and logic from their exile … to subjectivity" (170); yet Kimhi's "complete linguistic turn", by contrast, recognizes that "[l]anguage exceeds subjectivity"; "the unity of … thinking and being is constituted by its linguistic manifestation". Philosophical logic, then, "clarifies the unity of thinking through a perspicuous rendering of the logical-sensible form of language" (171). But this perspicuous rendering "does not consist of judgments in any sense" (170). And that, indeed, is why Kimhi is whispered to be the "loud voice of quietism".

J.M. van Ophuijsen: Elective affinities of a guest from Elea

Van Ophuijsen opens his historico-systematic exploration of *SC&O* with the observation that, though *SC&O* frames its project as systematic, it does have "implications for the historiography of philosophy" (173). With *SC&O* in hand, he traces out the theme of thinking and being, which, according to *SC&O* (p. 17), "are known to be the same", throughout the history of Western philosophy. Van Ophuijsen departs from a "pre-philosophical intuition of the equivalence between being and truth", which is remarkable in that it portrays this equivalence as a matter of course, while picturing our capacity to "fabulate [as] the miraculous exploit to boast of" (175). From there, van Ophuijsen visits Parmenides and Plato – in particular the *Sophist* – on his way to Aristotle, whose work he considers in more detail in relation to *SC&O*, highlighting in particular the "under-determined original Aristotelian position" (173). The next stop is Spinoza, with his fascinating concept of "intuitive knowing", which shows remarkj1able parallels to *SC&O*'s conception of judgments without contrary: "He who has a true idea knows at the same time that he has a true idea, and cannot doubt its truth" (178). Guided by the question "Who do the thinking and how do they tell?", van Ophuijsen then takes us on to Averroes's unitary conception of *nous*, on which all the thinking is done by the one intellect; then to Aquinas, to Kant’s understanding of “systematic unity” as “regulative” (187ff), and finally to pragmatist lines of thought found in Peirce, Rescher, and Quine.

This multifaceted historico-philosophical journey equips van Ophuijsen with the materials he needs to formulate a “lingering worry”, which he frames as a question “about the status of absolute idealism that perhaps cannot be answered from a standpoint outside absolute idealism” (189). Granting that *SC&O*’s absolute idealism indeed establishes the identity of thinking and being, “does it do so merely provisionally, until further notice”, on the basis of having come to see that we cannot “attach meaning to any other supposition” (189)? If so, the whole realm of judgments without contrary, and that is, the whole of absolute knowledge, turns out to be expressive of this provisional standpoint, which in itself rests on pragmatic rather than justificatory grounds – and that takes us straight to a variety of “pragmatic” quietism broadly in line with Moore’s, as discussed earlier.

9 Absolute idealism and the chapters by Khurana and Gobsch

Now that we have discussed formal idealism and quietism in relation to *SC&O*’s absolute idealism, and introduced the contributions to this volume that challenge *SC&O* accordingly, it may seem to be unnecessary to devote a section to absolute idealism itself – there appears to be no room for challenging *SC&O* from an absolute idealist perspective, given that that is precisely the view it aims to “introduce”, as its subtitle claims.

Still, this volume includes two chapters – by Thomas Khurana and Wolfram Gobsch – that critically assess precisely *SC&O*’s claim to be introducing absolute idealism. Obviously, such a challenge can only come from a critical comparison of *SC&O*’s self-proclaimed absolute idealism with what Hegel originally intended that label to express. The mentioned chapters present just such comparisons, which are developed around two fundamental aspects of *SC&O*’s project.

The first is its conception of philosophy as “the science without contrary” (*SC&O*, p. 40): on this conception, philosophy is, as we have seen earlier, out to “say only what anyone always already knows, knows in any judgment, knows insofar as she judges at all” (*SC&O*, p. 13). Its being “without contrary” means, as we saw, that there is no such thing as denying it, for denying it is judging, and in judging, one “already knows” the very thing that one pretends to deny. For the same reason, philosophy “cannot say anything that is novel, it can make no discovery, it cannot advance our knowledge in the least” (*ibid.*). And Rödl is explicit that this is how his project in *SC&O* is to be understood (the “it” in this quotation in fact refers back to “the present essay”, that is, to *SC&O* itself). However, as we will shortly see, there may be absolute idealist reasons to doubt the adequacy of such a conception of philosophy. In particular, it may appear to conflict with the supposedly *speculative* character of the ultimate conclusion of *SC&O* itself.

Thereby we arrive at the second aspect of *SC&O*’s project relevant for this section: its culmination in a claim of “speculative identity” (§10.2), i.e., a claim the expression of which requires a contradictory statement like the one with which *SC&O* closes: “Judging anything at all, we recognize the difference of self-knowledge and knowledge of nature to be their identity, their identity, their difference”. It is notoriously hard to frame and understand such a speculative claim.[17] Yet it is, of course, central to absolute idealism – or to an “idealism of speculative philosophy”, as Hegel calls it (see Gobsch, 227). The speculative claim in which *SC&O* culminates therefore is crucial to its claim to be introducing absolute idealism. But is it truly a speculative claim, and does *SC&O* succeed in showing it to be absolutely necessary? Such questions motivate the critical evaluation of *SC&O* that Khurana and Gobsch undertake in their contributions.

17 However, if we follow Rödl’s conception of philosophy, to merely frame and understand such a claim simply *is* to endorse and vindicate it: in philosophy, conceived as the science without contrary, “it is difficult to say something”, but, by contrast, “no achievement at all to say something true”

(*SC&O*, p. 41), because there is simply no such thing as saying something false in philosophy – the truths of philosophy don't have a "contrary", after all.

Thomas Khurana: Self-knowledge and knowledge of nature, on the speculative character of their identity

In the first chapter of *SC&O*, the self-consciousness and objectivity of judgment are introduced in such a way that an apparent tension arises between them. Yet very quickly, Rödl's considerations there enable him to "say straightaway that objectivity and self-consciousness are the same" (*SC&O*, p. 11). If that were all there was to say, if the identity of self-consciousness and objectivity were a "simple identity", Khurana observes, "[w]e should … expect thought to be at rest and content with itself: validating itself in its single, simple, eternal act knowing the world as itself, itself as the world" (197).

Now, *SC&O* of course doesn't stop there. As soon as we do not merely consider judgment in the abstract, but rather the concrete case of empirical judgment, which is of "what is other than and independent of the knowledge of it" (*SC&O*, p. 70), we come to see that self-consciousness and objectivity are here "conflicting … *in concreto*" (203). The true task of establishing not their "abstract, formal identity" (@9) but rather their *speculative* identity comes into view. This task is to establish "the identity of [A] the difference of self-consciousness and objectivity in empirical knowledge and [B] the identity of self-consciousness and objectivity in absolute knowing" (204). And *SC&O*'s "speculative high point" surely does answer to this task: "Empirical knowledge is incomplete [A], yet complete in the recognition of its incompleteness. Absolute knowledge is complete [B], but only as the knowledge 'of the principle of the interminable modal progression of empirical knowledge' (*SC&O*, p. 156)" (219).

Still, Khurana is critical about *SC&O*'s treatment of this speculative conclusion. He contrasts it with two paradigmatic examples of the exposition of a speculative unity. The first is Kant's account of judgments of beauty, reflection on which shows that, for Kant, "[e]xhibiting the speculative unity of self-consciousness and objectivity depends on rendering our faculty for determining judgment inoperative" (210). The second is Hegel's account of the unity and disunity of life and self-consciousness; in contrast to the Kantian example, here it turns out that "to fully articulate a speculative unity" we have to "exceed the very form of judgment itself" (211). In both cases, then, a new, unfamiliar use of our capacity for judgment is required to arrive at the speculative claim – a use in which "the being together [of identity and difference] is … the very energy of the speculative relation that makes it productive and inherently restless" (@18). And this appears to contrast rather sharply with Rödl's insistence that the work of philosophy is to bring out what "anyone always already knows, knows in any judgment" (*SC&O*, p. 41). Moreover, Khurana suggests that, while *SC&O* has a lot to say on how empirical knowledge really is self-knowledge, we "also need to understand why self-knowledge has to constitute itself through knowledge of something other" (220). And, more generally, he remarks that for both Kant and Hegel, the speculative conclusion, with its unfamiliar character, can only be arrived at through developing "revisionary substantive accounts of objectivity and self-consciousness". By contrast, in *SC&O* we seem to find "a form of absolute idealism that is *therapeutic*" precisely insofar as it wants to be merely "reminding us of what we as judgers already know in every judgment" (218). Perhaps one can read this as in effect positioning *SC&O* closer to quietism than to absolute idealism (see under §7 of this Introduction).

Wolfram Gobsch: Absolute idealism? A Hegelian critique of Sebastian Rödl's SC&O

Gobsch goes beyond Khurana's more careful criticisms of *SC&O*'s claim to be introducing absolute idealism. Contrasting *SC&O*'s conception of philosophy with Hegel's, he notes that "[f]or Rödl, there can be no philosophical differences that are internal to philosophical truth" – after all, philosophical truth is what "anyone already knows". For Hegel, by contrast, "[t]here must be philosophical differences … the principle of which is … the idea of philosophical truth" (229). Now, the "key" to understanding this seemingly incoherent Hegelian conception of philosophy, Gobsch explains, "lies in understanding how philosophy and the history of philosophy are one" (229). And this, Gobsch claims, is very far from *SC&O*'s understanding of philosophy.

With regard to *SC&O*'s speculative conclusion, Gobsch argues that "Rödl and the absolute idealist have very different and indeed incompatible conceptions of the identity and difference of empirical cognition and absolute knowledge" (237). In line with *SC&O*, Gobsch characterizes empirical cognition as contradictory: it traffics in judgments with contrary, which are "to be validated"; yet it "cannot but fail in its aspiration to be unconditioned knowledge" (237). *SC&O* now claims that absolute knowledge is precisely this insight into the impossible nature of empirical cognition: "[a]bsolute knowledge is nothing other than the thought of the validity of empirical judgment" (*SC&O*, p. 154). However, Gobsch urges, this "requires us to know that the kind of unconditioned knowledge empirical cognition aspires to is possible at all … [a]nd clearly, the only way to know this is to actually *have* unconditioned knowledge" (237). However, Gobsch argues, *SC&O* does not show this. The actuality of unconditioned knowledge that he demands cannot take the shape of either empirical knowledge or absolute knowledge, as these are presented in *SC&O*. The former is ruled out because of its irredeemable incompleteness (which makes it conditioned), while the latter is ruled out because it fails to be "determinate or material" (238).

Gobsch identifies the missing form of unconditioned knowledge we are after: it is "our knowledge of moral laws", which is "knowledge that is at once non-empirical and non-formal, unconditioned and material" – yet this moral knowledge is not of what is, but only of what ought to be, and thus "lacks objectivity" (240). Practical reason and theoretical reason, Gobsch explains, turn out to each in different ways be contradictory, to claim to be something it cannot be. On this route, he arrives at Hegel's conception of absolute knowledge as “the [speculative] unity of theoretical and practical reason” (240). And this Hegelian conception of absolute knowledge, Gobsch stresses, is *different* from Rödl’s conception of it as “*nothing other than* the thought of the validity of *empirical* judgment” (*SC&O*, p. 154; emphasis added).

Building on these considerations, Gobsch unearths further pressures on *SC&O*’s claim to be introducing absolute idealism. One such pressure, pushing toward a “more quietist” perspective, arises for *SC&O*’s conception of judgments without contrary: why does Rödl “describe the form-consciousness at the heart of self-consciousness of empirical cognition as an *act*, as a *judgment*, and as *knowledge* at all, labels which … suggest its materiality?” (242). That is, what justifies *SC&O*’s talk of “judgments” without contrary, of philosophy as a “science”, etc.? And a final such pressure, one pushing toward “formal idealism”, is based on Gobsch’s observation that “Rödl’s idealism … works with a distinction between the very form of self-consciousness and its matter” (245).

Summing up

In earlier sections, we discussed challenges to absolute idealism, as it is developed in *SC&O*, from various naturalist, formal idealist, and quietist perspectives. With our introduction of the chapters by Khurana and Gobsch, we have now seen that it is also possible to challenge *SC&O* “from the other direction”, as it were – by questioning whether it really succeeds in introducing what it claims to be introducing: absolute idealism. Along the way, we hope to have sufficiently introduced the full landscape of philosophical orientations – naturalism, formal idealism, quietism, absolute idealism – within which the chapters in this volume, including Rödl’s *Replies*, position, challenge, and defend *SC&O*.

There are, now, two more sections to this volume that still await proper introduction: one focusing on the idea of powers, the other centering on the question of how we should understand the determinacy of the individual thinker. Properly introducing the contributions grouped together under these headings provides us with an opportunity to highlight additional significant aspects of *SC&O*'s overall line of thought, aspects which give more concrete substance to the much-discussed identity-in-difference of absolute and empirical judgment.

10 Explanation, necessity, and the power of judgment

SC&O starts and ends with the guiding thought that objectivity and self-consciousness are the same; that my judging *p*, and my judging *I judge p*, are identical. Yet throughout the book, distinctions come to light that seem to differentiate between *p* and *I judge p*, or between objectivity and self-consciousness. By way of orientation, it will be helpful to indicate the three most prominent such distinctions.

We read, in *SC&O*'s §6.2, that, in the case of empirical judgments, *what* I judge, *p*, admits of a peculiar form of explanation: an explanation by something that is not included in the judgment itself (an external explanation, or "E-explanation", as Rödl calls it; *SC&O*, p. 89). And indeed, when I judge that it rains, then *what* I judge admits of a form of explanation that is not already present in my judgment: I may for instance learn, upon inquiry, of certain meteorological matters that explain why it is now raining. By contrast, *I judge p* repels explanations of this shape. For if *my judgment* that it rains rested on such an "E-explanation", this E-explanation would not be included *in* my judgment. And in that case, I would simply *find* myself with this judgment, without knowing where it came from (just like I simply *find* myself in the rain). But, without knowing why I judge as I do, I am simply not judging, for, as we learned right at the start of the book, "judging is being conscious of the validity of so judging" (*SC&O*, p. 4). Thus, it transpires that judgment excludes the sort of explanation that its object invites.[18] And yet judging *p* and judging *I judge p* are the same: how can this be?

18 This is, of course, too quick. For instance, Rödl points out, in §6.2 of *SC&O*, that *if* my judgment has an E-explanation, *then* it must be invalid.

Similarly, in §6.3, we come across the "necessity of a fact", a "necessity *that* something should happen", which is to be strictly distinguished from the "necessity of an act", which pertains to judgment: "it is necessary *to* judge that things are so" (*SC&O*, p. 91). Again, the latter turns out to be internal to judgment: my thought that it is necessary to judge that *p* simply *is* my judgment that *p*. There is no room for a step taking me from the former to the latter: recognizing that it is necessary to judge *p*, I have already made the relevant judgment. By contrast, it seems that, in finding something to be the case, I usually do not grasp *its* necessity. Again, *what* I judge allows for a form of necessity which *my judgment* excludes, and yet judging *p* and judging *I judge p* are the same: how can this be?

Later on, in §8.4, we arrive at a discussion of the power of judgment. "In general," Rödl explained a little earlier, "a power is the concept, or nature, of something, considered as explaining it" (*SC&O*, p. 104). And in the case of what Rödl calls "simple" powers (*SC&O*, p. 119), this finds expression in the fact that these are articulated into the twofold *power–act* structure. As spring arrives, the pear tree's power to blossom manifests itself. What it is doing here and now – the "act" – is explained by the powers characteristic of the kind of thing it is – a pear tree. Such a power is a "given" reality, one that "precedes its acts" (*SC&O*, p. 122) and is the measure by which those acts are to be assessed. By contrast, the power to judge is not something "given", by reference to which its acts are to be understood. It is not that the power of judgment does not contain a measure by which its acts are to be assessed – as *SC&O* puts it: "the object of judgment … is *the* object: the world, what is, reality" (p. 63). The point is, rather, that that measure is completely empty, indeterminate, and thus cannot ground any specific, determinate judgment. (Note that the situation is different in the case of the pear tree's power to blossom.) In that sense, then, the power of judgment is not a "given" reality which precedes its acts. This comes out when we ask: how can the power of judgment become determinate in its acts? Since "it does not receive a determination from something other", we must say that it "determines itself" (*SC&O*, p. 123). And, as Rödl explains, it does so by establishing itself as *both* the determinate particular judgment *and* the determinate general measure against which that judgment is to be held. There are, then, always *two* acts of the power of judgment: "Any judgment of what is, and is happening, here and now – second act – always already involves an understanding, however inchoate and vague, of how things are, and what happens, in general – first act" (*SC&O*, p. 122). For instance: judging that *this pear tree is blossoming* (second act), I bring to bear some grasp of the general principles that organize pear tree life, i.e., of the science of the pear tree (first act). These two acts *themselves* stand to each other as power stands to act: the science of the pear tree is a power to make an indefinite amount of particular judgments concerning specific pear trees and their "activities". If we call the power of judgment *first power*, then we can call such a science *second power*, which thus is itself a first act of the first power. Along these lines, then, Rödl brings out that the power of judgment, unlike simple powers, bears a threefold structure: *first power – first act/second power – second act*. "The threefold distinction of power and act defines power that is not given; it is self-consciousness insofar as it is power and act" (*SC&O*, p. 124). Now, again, we find that the idea of a simple power, with its twofold articulation, belongs to *what* I judge – for instance, that the pear tree is blossoming – while the idea of a self-conscious power, with its threefold articulation, belongs to *my judgment*. And, as before, the question arises: how can this be, if the object of my judgment is none other than my judging it?

To sum up, empirical sciences thus deal with judgments that are not valid in themselves but must be valid*ated*: judgments with contrary. Such judgments require an *explanation* that is external to them; they are to be shown *necessary* by referring them to relevant further facts; they spring from *simple powers* which are a given reality preceding their manifestations. And philosophy, on the other hand, deals with judgments that are "without contrary", valid in themselves, so that they contain their own explanation and necessity, and refer themselves to the very power from which they spring.

Now, evidently, these distinctions will, when we simply accept them *as* divisions, lead us straight back to naturalism. After all, we would then inevitably position judgment as a “topic” on its own, complete with its own mode of explanation and necessity and its own variety of power, and thereby as one topic amongst others. But that is, of course, not the way *SC&O* proceeds. Eventually, toward the end of *SC&O*, these divisions between the twin notions of explanation, necessity, and power are claimed to be dissolved – or, rather, “sublated” – at a very high level of abstraction. There, they collectively appear as the opposition of science and philosophy (or the opposition of empirical and absolute knowledge, or of judgment with and without contrary, or of knowledge of nature and self-knowledge), the identity of which then forms the “speculative high point” of *SC&O*, as described in the previous section of this Introduction.

11 The chapters by Ometto, Mulder, and van Miltenburg

The central notion around which the contributions by Ometto, Mulder, and van Miltenburg can be grouped is that of the *power of judgment*. Each of them discusses, from different vantage points, what this notion really comes to, how it relates to the more familiar idea of a power or potentiality that has gained currency in more recent debates within analytic metaphysics and within action theory, and seeks to identify directions in which this notion needs to be further developed.

In particular, Ometto’s contribution clarifies the status of *SC&O*’s understanding of the power of judgment by comparing it with Rödl’s earlier conception thereof in his *Self-Consciousness* (see also our brief presentation in §1, and see also Haddock’s contribution, on which more later), while Mulder seeks to clarify how we should understand the relation between the power of judgment thus conceived and what *SC&O* calls “simple” powers. Van Miltenburg, on the other hand, explores what implications *SC&O*’s understanding of the power of judgment has for the case of practical judgment.

Overall, then, these chapters do not directly challenge *SC&O*’s philosophical ambitions, but rather seek to explore and clarify how we are to understand one of its most central ideas: that of the power of judgment conceived as a self-conscious power.

Dawa Ometto: The explanation of judgment

Ometto compares Rödl's account of "belief explanation" from his *Self-Consciousness* with what *SC&O* has to say on the explanation of judgment. He frames Rödl's project in *Self-Consciousness* as being concerned with a non-reductive conception of causality: it aims to defend the "attractive picture of the ladder of nature … – starting with inanimate substances, moving up to living beings, and with thinkers at the top" (265). On this picture, each rung of the ladder comes with its own *sui generis* form of causality and corresponding form of explanation, where "[t]he thought that there may be various kinds of causality is the thought that there may be … logically distinct kinds of power" (257). Ometto now observes that the distinctions from *SC&O* we traced out earlier – between two different forms of explanation, necessity, power – may appear to map quite neatly onto the differentiation between self-conscious belief explanation and non-self-conscious explanation one finds in *Self-Consciousness*. However, upon closer inspection it becomes evident that, e.g., "[t]he distinction between the necessity of an *act* and the necessity of a *fact* is not merely a new label for the distinction between self-conscious explanation and other kinds of sub-rational explanation. Rather, it runs deeper" (259f). Ometto brings this out by reflecting on *SC&O*'s claim that "the explanation [of judgment] is universal: the cause it provides is such as to explain the judgment in anyone" (*SC&O*, p. 94). He shows that Rödl's account in *Self-Consciousness* can only make sense of this universality on the side of the *object* of thought – i.e., when we both believe that *p*, we have *the same* belief. But it cannot make sense of this universality on the side of the *subject*: when we both believe that *p*, my believing *p* and your believing *p* are the result of different episodes of self-conscious causality, the (self-conscious) etiology of which may very well diverge. This, Ometto remarks, indicates that the force-content distinction is still firmly in place in *Self-*

Consciousness. Moreover, he observes that this picture of belief explanation is unstable:

> [Rödl wants] to say that (1) belief explanation is a causality constituted by a *particular* subject's self-knowledge of that causal connection, and that (2) what is thought – what results from an exercise of the power to know – is *universal*, while claiming that (1) and (2) are the same reality.
>
> (262f; compare also Haddock's contribution)

Moreover, Ometto makes clear that, despite Rödl's explicit intentions to the contrary, this implies that his account in *Self-Consciousness* is essentially an account "from the outside", i.e., it pictures judgment as a "topic", as a reality which we are accounting for in terms of a (quite special, because self-conscious) simple power. Put in *SC&O*'s terms: such an account "will be an E-explanation" (263).

Ometto thus concludes that "the mistake [in *Self-Consciousness*] is to suppose that judgment is a *simple* power" (264). And now he observes that, to avoid that mistake, the attractive picture of the ladder of nature turns out to be "flawed insofar as we conceive of thinking as another step *on* the ladder." And this "should have been obvious all along", for "judgment makes use of … the forms of explanation on the ladder" so that "the latter cannot be *external* to the power of judgment" (265). And this in turn indicates, Ometto urges, that Rödl's conception of the power of judgment as first power which determines itself into various sciences needs to be developed in a direction which Rödl does not discuss in *SC&O*: it must, *as* first power, already encompass the whole range of forms of explanation that the ladder embodies. – Ometto closes his chapter with a puzzle that is reminiscent of one of the critical points Gobsch makes (see under §9 of this Introduction): we reject "the idea that the explanation of judgment is of particular acts" (266), but isn't *practical* judgment precisely supposed to result in concrete, particular actions?

Jesse M. Mulder: Not so simple powers

Mulder departs from the distinction *SC&O* draws between simple and self-conscious powers, and wonders how these relate. He first frames these two "varieties of power" as occupying different rungs on the "*scala naturae*", but soon comes to conclude, just like Ometto, that "[j]udgment encompasses the *entire* ladder, rather than being one rung on it" (275). He illustrates this by bringing out that the two forms of explanation of which *SC&O* speaks coincide: explaining pear tree blossom by referring it to the relevant simple power of pear trees, and explaining my judgment that the pear tree blooms by referring it to the corresponding second power, the science of pear trees, surely look like "mere notational variants of each other" (276). Similarly for the two kinds of necessity *SC&O* distinguishes: it looks like the necessity *that* something should be the case, and the necessity *to* judge that it is, are two ways of expressing the very same thing.

This suggests that simple powers simply *are* second powers, and therefore a moment in the self-determining activity of the power of judgment. However, Mulder argues, thus assimilating simple powers to second powers loses sight of "the element of *receptivity*" (278) that is involved in empirical judgment. Without that element of receptivity, there is only the self-determination of the power of judgment, which, though creative, is evidently unable to arrive at any determination without the receptive element. The receptive element is thus crucial. And it is reflected in the character of simple powers as "something given" (*SC&O*, p. 124). Mulder now sketches a conception of this "givenness" on which what is given is not *outside* of the power of judgment – that would be to relapse to naturalism – yet still in a different sense external: "we *can* think of a division *within what is*, such that one part of it is given to the other part – *nature* is given to *me*" (281) in the shape of "an *appearance*, or *phenomenon*" (283) which is yet to be brought under the right concept. In receiving such given phenomena, I do bring them under a concept, the concept of the simple power from which they spring. That simply *is* to frame an empirical judgment (second act), grounded in the relevant science (first act/second power): second power and simple power can thus be seen to be one after all.

Niels van Miltenburg: SC&O and practical knowledge

Van Miltenburg remarks that the unity of self-consciousness and objectivity, as *SC&O* presents it, appears to be characteristic of judgment as such, i.e., that it is not restricted to theoretical judgment. Thus, he proposes to explore how this unity resurfaces in the case of practical judgment. To that effect, he first takes issue with the "attitudinal account" of practical reasoning, on which practical reasoning does not issue in action but rather in a normative judgment concerning what to do. On such an account, "the act of judging that one should do something and the act of judging that one is doing it are two separate acts", which "denies the self-consciousness of judgment and hence is no account of practical judgment" (290). On the other hand, McDowell, who defends the opposing, "Aristotelian" understanding of practical reasoning, insist that one's consciousness of one's own action is merely "factual" and not normative at all (290f). However, as Van Miltenburg shows, on the basis of his reading of Anscombe's *Intention* (Anscombe 1957), if this consciousness is to be practical *knowledge* of what one does, it must include its own grounds, i.e., that which shows that it is right so to judge. And that simply *is* the normative element that McDowell wanted to keep out. The upshot is an understanding of practical judgment in line with Rödl's conception thereof in his earlier book *Self-Consciousness*: action is "a movement that is a thought" (295). And this, van Miltenburg says, recovers the unity of self-consciousness and objectivity in the practical realm, for the "unity between thought and movement is the unity of self-consciousness and objectivity" (295).

Now, another, and related, characteristic of judgment prominent in *SC&O* is that it divides into judgments without contrary, which are valid in themselves and included in every judgment, and judgments with contrary, which are to be validated. Van Miltenburg observes that practical judgments must have contraries, which are, however, themselves practical judgments and thus actions: " 'I am making salad' is contradicted by someone who says 'Oh no you aren't' while wrestling the knife from my control" (297). However, although they are thus with contrary, there is a significant difference with theoretical judgments with contrary, for the latter admit of a contrary precisely because their justification is essentially incomplete, while practical judgment, as we saw, *does* contain its own grounds and is thus in the relevant sense complete. Van Miltenburg now proposes a different way of understanding the incompleteness of practical judgment, drawing again on Rödl's account in *Self-Consciousness*: the grounds on which I act ultimately rest on an "infinite end", such as health, or honesty, or charity. These ends are infinite because they are never completed or *attained*, but are rather manifest in the "never-ending pursuit of them" (298). Practical knowledge, then, is productive precisely because it is known, in that knowledge, that the end it is after is never attained: in that sense, it is indeed essentially incomplete. Correspondingly, van Miltenburg argues, practical judgment *without* contrary will be "practical wisdom" (299), i.e., knowledge of those infinite ends, and of their unity in the good life. He finishes by suggesting that the relation between practical judgment-with-contrary (particular actions) and practical wisdom (the unity of infinite ends) may be seen to mirror the "speculative high point" with which *SC&O* ends.

12 The determinacy of the individual and the chapters by Haddock and Wallage

The last theme that we need to introduce is the question of how the determinacy of the individual thinker is to be understood in relation to *SC&O*'s understanding of self-consciousness. One does, in *SC&O*, find brief discussions of this question, yet these brief discussions clearly call for further expansion or exploration. For instance, *SC&O* is explicit in that it takes philosophy, the "self-science", to articulate "*what I know myself to be*", wherefore it "reigns supreme over any empirical inquiry into what it is to be a human being" (*SC&O*, p. 72). But it does not articulate this aspect of the “self-science”, beyond, e.g., an occasional “note” that is explicitly “brief, and inconclusive” to the effect that “the animality, the sensory and material existence, of the human being is nothing other than her self-consciousness” (*SC&O*, p. 51).

That the question is a profound one becomes clear when we revisit *SC&O*’s claim that self-consciousness and objectivity are the same, which means that we cannot maintain that *p* and *I think p* differ in content. For *I think p* cannot then be understood as referring, through its use of “I”, to some concrete referent. After all, your thinking *p* and my thinking *p* coincide on this conception. As Rödl puts it: “the explanation [of judgment] is universal: the cause it provides is such as to explain the judgment in anyone” (*SC&O*, p. 94). Thus it seems impossible to frame the “I” of self-consciousness as a “referring expression” – an observation famously made by Anscombe in her essay on the first person (Anscombe 1975). This is the entry point for Haddock’s chapter, which traces out the difference, on precisely this point, between Rödl’s *Self-Consciousness* and *SC&O*.

While Haddock thus, and with great clarity, brings out the fundamental difficulty that we face when we undertake to develop an adequate understanding of the determinacy of the individual, Wallage explores, in ways that show a certain kinship to Kimhi’s contribution (see under §8 of this Introduction), possible routes toward such an adequate understanding. In particular, Wallage calls to his aid the presence of language, which, even where it is used for referential or representational purposes, always also *presents* itself very determinately and concretely.

Adrian Haddock: Reflections on Self-Consciousness and SC&O

Haddock’s chapter centers on the idea of self-consciousness. In particular, he aims to bring out the considerable “intellectual transformation” (§1) that takes place, with respect to that idea, between Rödl’s earlier book *Self-Consciousness*, and *SC&O*. In the former, Rödl wrote: “[a]sking what self-consciousness is, we are concerned with the sense, rather than the [referent], of ‘I’. We do not want to know *what* one refers to with this word, but *how* one refers with it." (Rödl 2007b, p. 2) and argued that *deciding* what to believe (or what to do) *just is* knowing what one believes (or does), so that one's belief (or action) and one's knowledge of it are "the same reality" (ibid., p. 14). This is a special, non-receptive way of knowing something about oneself: here one *knows* oneself to be *F* by *being F*. This special way of knowing, then, sustains first-person reference.

However, as we saw earlier in this Introduction (in §1, and see also Ometto's contribution), this conception of self-consciousness runs into difficulties: if, in the statement *I believe that p*, "I" is taken to be a referring expression, then this bit of self-knowledge is concerned with a certain particular individual (viz., oneself), even though *p* of course need not involve that individual. And this clashes with Rödl's thought, central to *Self-Consciousness*, that there is no separating believing *p* from believing *I believe that p* – for if so, then the referent of "I" in "I believe" must also already be included in the belief that *p*. This renders every belief "private", as Haddock puts it.

Haddock now observes that *SC&O* resolutely rejects this entire picture of first-person reference: "The first person pronoun is no variety of reference, but an expression of self-consciousness" (*SC&O*, p. 28; compare Haddock, §19). Haddock points out that the shift that has occurred here is, indeed, one of abandoning the entire framework of sense and reference in terms of which Rödl's project in *Self-Consciousness* was couched. Departing from Anscombe's (1975) aforementioned reflections on the issue, Haddock shows exactly why this framework breaks down in the case of the first person – concluding, with Anscombe, that " 'I' is neither a name, nor another kind of expression whose logical role is to make a reference, *at all*" (Anscombe 1975, p. 32). In *Self-Consciousness*, Rödl presented a reading of that essay on which her thesis expresses the insight that, with "I", one does not make "*receptive* reference" (Rödl 2007b, p. 124), which leaves open that "I" *does* refer, but spontaneously rather than receptively, i.e., by way of the special way of knowing mentioned earlier. By contrast, Haddock takes this Anscombean thesis unrestrictedly, on the grounds we just rehearsed: the problem with first-person reference lies not with a narrowly *receptive* conception of reference, but rather *with the very idea of reference*[19] – once we take the "I" in my judgment *I judge p* to serve some referential function *at all*, we can no longer appreciate its unity with my judgment *p*.

19 See also Haddock's (2019) excellent reconstruction of Anscombe's essay.

Haddock finishes his contribution by noting that "this is no place for our thought to come to rest". Especially once we start considering demonstrative judgments like "That G is F", it is evident that "[t]he subject of empirical knowledge must, in some sense, be 'in the world' " (§36). That, however, is no objection to *SC&O*'s rejection of the idea of first-person reference, but rather an invitation to "come to understand more fully" (§38) what its conception of self-consciousness comes to.

Martijn Wallage: Dotting the "I think": self-consciousness and punctuation

Wallage departs from *SC&O*'s suggestion that "if our notation confuses us … we may form the letter *p* by writing, in the shape of a *p*, the words *I think*" (*SC&O*, p. 6). The point, by now familiar, is that there is no separating *p* from *I think p*. Still, Wallage remarks, the words *I think* "are not entirely redundant" (318), which comes out when we consider judgments I no longer endorse, or the judgments of others. The "I" that figures in the *I think* is thus not something, yet it is not nothing either. But "what could 'not something' be, other than *nothing*?" (319).

Here Wallage proposes, in what could be read as a quietist spirit, to turn to language, where, with the help of Wittgenstein's reflections in the *Tractatus*, he finds a host of linguistic signs that do not say "something" and yet are not redundant at all. He presents, by way of example, this exchange: " 'Is it so?' – 'No, it is not so. What you say is false' " (323): here, all of the signs together convey an exchange in which there is disagreement, yet none of those signs stand for something; we don't get any idea of what the disagreement is about. Is perhaps the *I think* to be understood on this model? Again, Anscombe's essay on the first person may provide reason to think so: "With names … there are two things to grasp: the kind of use, and what to apply them to… . With 'I' there is only the use" (Anscombe 1975, p. 32; cf. Wallage, 322). The content-less exchange we just envisaged is composed of signs that only have a use. Wallage calls such signs "liminal signs" and describes them as "a kind of punctuation" (322f).

This, Wallage contends, gives us a first idea of how something can be significant without signifying something – how "not something" need not be "nothing". But it is not sufficient for our understanding of the first person. At most, we arrive at an understanding of the *I think* as akin to Frege's judgment stroke, which stands outside of all content (see 324f), or as equivalent to Wittgenstein's "limit of the world" solipsism (319ff). It does not show how to arrive at *oneself* as a concrete human individual. At best, we arrive at what is left of such an individual when we strip it of what Rödl calls "given character", i.e., when we leave out "whatever is true of a subject but not as such, not *as* thinking subject" (320). When we leave out the given character, we are left with "pure spirit", as Wallage puts it (326).

Wallage sees a "glimpse of a positive understanding" precisely in his turn to language. Liminal signs are not just non-representational, they express "nothing other than themselves"; they "*present* themselves" (330). When we one-sidedly focus on the fact that we can represent things in language and thought, we "are inclined to think of a speaker as nothing but the pure potential to represent things 'in the world' ". But "in representing …, speech presents itself" (330); likewise, then, we can think of the speaker *herself* as presenting herself – without thereby becoming something that can be represented just like any other object. In this direction, Wallage outlines "a conception on which a human being is neither given character nor pure spirit, but face and voice, presence in conversation" (332).

13 Concluding remarks

Wallage's turn toward the presence of face and voice in conversation, with which we closed the previous section, constitutes a suitable end point for this Introduction. The various contributions to this volume in fact all derive from original work presented at a series of conferences devoted to Sebastian Rödl's *SC&O*, and thus from concrete encounters between philosophical faces and voices, from actual conversations sparked by serious engagement with the rich and multifaceted philosophical journey *SC&O* invites its readers to undertake.

The first of these conferences and workshops, titled "Judgment Day", took place at Utrecht University in October 2017, even before *SC&O* was published; the contributions by A.W. Moore, J.M. van Ophuijsen, Dawa Ometto, Jesse M. Mulder, Niels van Miltenburg, and Adrian Haddock there found their first expression. In July 2018, Jocelyn Benoist and Lucy O'Brien presented a first version of their contributions at a workshop on *SC&O* at Bonn University. Then, in October 2018, a conference titled "Self-Consciousness and Objectivity" took place at Chicago University; here the contributions by Patricia Kitcher, Martijn Wallage, Adrian Haddock, Thomas Khurana, Jesse M. Mulder, Wolfram Gobsch, and Glenda Satne were discussed in detail. And finally, at the APA Central Division 116th annual meeting at Denver in 2019, an "Author Meets Critics" session on *SC&O* was held at which Stephen Engstrom, Ram Neta, and Christopher Peacocke presented their contributions.

With this Introduction, I hope to have contributed to a proper appreciation of the philosophical substance of Rödl's *Self-Consciousness and Objectivity* as the most recent stage of his evolving philosophical work, whether one agrees with its conclusions or not, and I hope to have provided a sufficiently detailed road map of the philosophical orientations and their interrelations against which the various contributions to this volume, as well as Rödl's *Replies* to them, can be appreciated and fruitfully engaged with.

What remains to be expressed is my heartfelt gratitude, first of all toward Sebastian Rödl for his cooperation and his willingness to write such a detailed and rich set of replies – and of course for providing the occasion for this volume in the first place –, but no less toward all contributors for

the substantive efforts they put into reworking their original contributions to the mentioned workshops and conferences into texts suitable for inclusion in this volume. For his invaluable editorial work on virtually all of the texts included in this volume my thanks go out to Aaron Shoichet. And I am greatly indebted to James F. Conant, Niels van Miltenburg, Dawa Ometto, and Adrian Haddock for their helpful comments and feedback on earlier versions of this Introduction. Finally, I would like to thank James Conant for our fruitful cooperation in bringing this volume together.

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