

If Levinson's style is occasionally more suggestive than conclusive, this is also partly because of the difficulty and importance of the questions he sets out to address, in particular when he considers the topics of aesthetic sensibility as an epistemic tool (Essays 19 and 20) and the intrinsic value of life (Essay 24). Additionally, Levinson opens up themes which few have explored before, such as in his 'NonExistent Artforms and the Case of Visual Music' (Essay 7) and 'Musical Chills' (Essay 12). It is this mixture of profoundly investigative and innovative essays that leaves the most lasting impression on the reader, leading us to wonder whether, despite his previous achievements, Levinson's most interesting and important work is yet to come.

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 doi:10.1093/mind/fzpo38

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*Companions in Guilt: Arguments for Ethical Objectivity*, by Hallvard Lillehammer. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Pp. 220. H/b £49.99.

Companions in guilt arguments, says Hallvard Lillehammer, are 'designed to defend the metaphysical or epistemological credentials of one set of claims by comparing them to a different set of claims with which they have some apparently problematic feature in common' (pp. 4–5). Arguments of this type come in two varieties. 'Arguments by entailment' work by establishing that some set of apparently philosophically problematic claims 'are necessarily implied by a different set of claims that are agreed to not be philosophically problematic in the same way' (p. 11). 'Arguments by analogy', by contrast, compare two sets of claims with the aim of establishing 'that they are similar in some important respect' (p. 12)—the assumption being, once again, that one set of claims is less problematic than the other. From since at least the early modern period, arguments of this type have been deployed to defend the objectivity of ethics. The task of Lillehammer's book is to explore a series of contemporary examples of this type of argument. His overall assessment is that these arguments have less going for them than their proponents have claimed.

Lillehammer is refreshingly forthright about what he has in mind by ethical objectivity. According to his construal, ethical objectivity comes in three varieties. First, ethical claims are objective if it is possible for agents who make them to do so correctly or incorrectly. Objectivity in this sense implies the possibility of moral error. Second, ethical claims are objective if they are 'answerable to substantial [ethical] facts and properties in the world that exist independently

of the contingent practice of making those claims and the relevant attitudes of those who make them' (p. 6). In short, objectivity of this sort implies moral realism of a certain kind. Third, ethical claims are objective if reasonable agents competent with the concepts that constitute them would converge in 'favorable circumstances of rational inquiry' (p. 7). As Lillehammer himself highlights early in the book, it is this last type of objectivity that most interests him. His contention is that nearly all the companions in guilt arguments he considers founder upon it.

The book's discussion divides into two parts: the first (Chs 2–4) considers three arguments from entailment, while the second (Chs 5–7) considers three arguments from analogy.

The section on arguments from entailment begins with an argument according to which the objectivity of ethics follows from the truth of propositional attitude ascriptions. Lillehammer's stalking horse in this chapter is Donald Davidson and his program of radical interpretation. Davidson, as Lillehammer reads him, champions a transcendental argument that, very roughly, maintains that since we can successfully attribute propositional attitudes to others, it must be the case that we have a substantial set of shared ethical commitments that are true.

The second argument considered in this section, developed most prominently by Jean Hampton and Christine Korsgaard, maintains that commitment to the objective validity of hypothetical imperatives commits us to the objective validity of categorical imperatives in ethics. Roughly, the idea is that if hypothetical imperatives are normative, then they apply to agents regardless of their particular ends, thereby implying a 'categorically imperative element' in practical reasoning (p. 43).

The third argument is developed, albeit in scattershot fashion, by Hilary Putnam. As this argument runs, the concepts *being true* and *being a fact* depend on the concept *being ideally justified*. On the assumption that this conceptual dependence holds, it is claimed that the concepts *being true* and *being a fact* also depend on ethical concepts—*being ideally justified* being at least in part an ethical notion if Putnam is correct.

None of these arguments succeeds, according to Lillehammer. Davidson's argument does not entail substantial convergence in ethical views in favourable conditions. The Hampton/Korsgaard argument is compatible with a robust Humeanism according to which all substantive moral norms are merely hypothetical. Finally, Putnam's argument fails for numerous reasons, most importantly because it also does not imply that ethical claims would converge in favourable conditions.

This leaves arguments from analogy to consider. The first on the dock is John McDowell's well-known contention that ethical values are akin to secondary qualities. The main claim here is that while secondary qualities such as the colours are not robustly mind-independent, they are nevertheless objective enough. The same is true of ethical values.

A very different line of argument explores the similarities between ethics and science. Putnam and McDowell, once again, come in for treatment—the former claiming that philosophers have been ‘too realistic about physics and too subjectivistic about ethics’ (p. 130). While the argument here is not easily summarized, one of its central contentions is that scientific and ethical justification are relevantly similar: both are broadly holistic in character.

After having explored comparisons between ethics and science, Lillehammer turns to comparisons with logic and mathematics. In this case, it is arguments by McDowell and David Wiggins, which appeal to so-called rule-following considerations, on which Lillehammer has his eye. Their overarching argument also is not easily stated, as it has multiple strands. Arguably, however, the most important strand is the claim that the domains of logic and mathematics are similar to the domain of ethics since neither stands in need of any justification from an ‘outside perspective’. All justification is ‘internal’ to the domains in question.

In Lillehammer’s estimation, these arguments may ‘provide a cogent defence against crude forms of metaphysically motivated subjectivism in ethics’ (p. 154; cf. p. 86). But they do not succeed in establishing that ethical claims are objective in the third sense identified earlier. The problem is that the analogies with secondary qualities, science, logic, and mathematics are not sufficiently robust. In these latter domains, rational convergence obtains in favourable conditions; in ethics it does not.

Is Lillehammer’s assessment of these arguments correct? Before weighing in on this issue, it needs to be said that metaethicists are in Lillehammer’s debt. His book fills a considerable hole in the metaethical literature. Until its publication, there was no sustained discussion of the companions in guilt strategy in ethics—let alone one that attempts to pull together so many different versions of the argument. Moreover, the authors that Lillehammer discusses—Davidson, McDowell, Putnam, and Wiggins—are often not easy to understand. Although I will express some qualms about Lillehammer’s interpretation of Davidson in a moment, it should be said that he presents their positions in a lucid, focused, and insightful way. He has made a difficult job look easy.

Let me now raise several concerns about Lillehammer’s discussion, which I organize under three heads. The first is whether Lillehammer has offered an accurate diagnosis of all the arguments he considers. I think there is reason to believe that he has not. To see the point, recall Lillehammer’s gloss on what a companions in guilt argument is: one that endeavours to defend the metaphysical or epistemological credentials of ethical claims by comparing them to a different set of claims with which they share some apparently problematic feature. Now consider Davidson’s argument: it tells us that the objectivity of ethical claims follows from the truth of propositional attitude ascriptions. What, however, is the apparently problematic feature that ethical claims share with propositional attitude ascriptions? As best I can tell, Lillehammer does

not explicitly identify one. Nor, as far as I can tell, is there one. Davidson offers an argument for the objectivity of ethical claims. But it is not a companions in guilt argument, as Lillehammer understands them. (One could say, I suppose, that there is a trivial sense in which ethical claims and propositional attitude ascriptions share an apparently problematic feature: they are both normative. But presumably to develop an argument that appeals to this shared feature we would need to know what it is about being normative that is problematic.)

I do not take this point to cut deeply against Lillehammer's project, as the other arguments he considers are plausibly glossed as companions in guilt arguments. But there is a second more worrisome feature that is worth noting. As noted, Lillehammer believes that none of the arguments he considers succeeds. In the last chapter, moreover, he expresses pessimism about whether any companions in guilt argument could succeed (see especially p. 170). But I wonder whether this pessimism is largely a function of which versions of the argument he has chosen to consider. Frankly, I am puzzled why Lillehammer chose to consider the versions of the argument he did. Most of them are sketchily developed by their proponents; in many places, Lillehammer works hard to reconstruct them. I am equally puzzled why Lillehammer chose not to consider other versions of the argument (or at least arguments that include a companions in guilt strategy as an important component). I do not understand, for example, why Paul Bloomfield's *Moral Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) goes without mention; at the time of the publication of Lillehammer's book, it was (according to one plausible interpretation) the most thorough development of a companions in guilt argument. And I do not know why the chapter on ethics and science fails to engage with the work of Richard Boyd and David Brink. Both Boyd and Brink explicitly and in considerable detail address the parallels between science and ethics and, in particular, of how reasoning in both domains is equally guilty of being theory-laden.

A general worry, then, is that Lillehammer's discussion does not engage with the best and most thorough companions in guilt arguments available. The last worry I wish to raise concerns the standard to which Lillehammer holds the versions of the argument he considers. As noted earlier, with the exception of the Hampton/Korsgaard argument, Lillehammer believes all the arguments he considers fail because ethical claims do not command convergence in favourable conditions. In some places, such as in chapters two and four, Lillehammer objects that the arguments in question fail because they purport to establish that ethical claims would command convergence but do not in fact establish this. In other places, however, the charge is not that the arguments attempt to establish that ethical claims would converge and fail. Rather, it is that even if the arguments succeed in defusing 'crude forms of metaphysically motivated subjectivism in ethics' (p. 154), the fact that ethical claims would not converge reveals that these arguments are of limited value since we find convergence in the domains to which they are being compared, such as science and mathematics.

Suppose we understand what it means to say that ethical claims would fail to command convergence in favourable conditions. (It seems to me a lacuna in the discussion that the character of such conditions is not discussed in any detail. Without a firm grip on what these conditions are, it is difficult to assess the charge that ethical claims fail to meet this standard.) Now consider the charge that a companions in guilt argument fails to establish that ethical claims would command convergence in favourable conditions. Why should we think that it is reasonable to believe that any such argument could establish such a thing? Look at the matter in this way: suppose, on the one hand, the shared, allegedly problematic feature of two sets of claims that are being compared is that they would fail to command convergence in favourable conditions. If that were true, one could hardly object to ethical claims that they would fail to command convergence in favourable conditions. In this case, their failure to command convergence is the very feature that is supposed to render them acceptable. Suppose, on the other, that the shared, allegedly problematic feature of the two sets of claims is something else, such as the fact that the objects they purport to represent are 'queer'. In this case, I do not see how we could reasonably expect any argument of this type also to establish that ethical claims would command convergence in favourable conditions. The problem is that there is no discernable connection between establishing that claims of two types exhibit a problematic feature such as the one just mentioned and their being such as to command convergence in favourable conditions.

Turn now the second charge levelled against companions in guilt arguments, namely that they are of limited value since ethical claims would not command convergence in favourable conditions, while scientific and mathematical claims do. When addressing this charge, I think it is worth asking why the value of a companions in guilt argument should hinge on the issue of whether ethical claims would command convergence in favourable conditions. Consider in this respect the companions in guilt argument Russ Shafer-Landau develops in his essay 'Ethics as Philosophy: A Defense of Ethical Non-naturalism' (in T. Horgan and M. Timmons (eds), *Metaethics After Moore*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Shafer-Landau argues that ethical claims are no worse off than philosophical claims in this respect: both are a priori and, hence, concern a 'nonnatural' subject matter. Moreover, both ethical and philosophical claims are subject to substantial disagreement. Still, many philosophers agree that philosophical claims are objective in a very robust sense. If this type of objectivity is enough for philosophy, why must ethics be held to a higher standard? The worry is that to assume that the value of a companions in guilt argument hinges on whether ethical claims would command convergence is to inflate the theoretical importance of such convergence.

This is not to deny that it would be desirable for a metaethical view to establish that moral claims would command rational convergence. But, as I say, it is asking a lot of a companions in guilt argument to establish this. And

I see little reason to maintain that their worth hinges on the issue of whether ethical claims would command convergence in suitable conditions. So, let me suggest a better way to assess such arguments: take them on a case-by-case basis. Determine whether each particular argument actually succeeds in establishing that ethical claims share some allegedly problematic feature with another set of less problematic claims. Then turn to the issue of whether proponents of such arguments have strategies by which to explain the apparent lack of agreement in ethics. Such strategies are not difficult to identify. They might, for example, appeal to the fact that even in favourable conditions of inquiry, differences in our ethical 'programming' would not be overcome—these differences being such that they result in our seeing the world in very different, incompatible ways. If this is right, only when we explore the resources available to proponents of companions in guilt arguments, do we gain a more accurate assessment of their philosophical value.

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 doi:10.1093/mind/fzpo39

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***Cognitive Variations: Reflections on the Unity and Diversity of the Human Mind***, by Geoffrey Lloyd. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007. Pp. 201. H/b \$55.00.

In *Cognitive Variations* Geoffrey Lloyd seeks to discover the extent to which ways of thinking differ across cultures. Chapters pursue this topic by reviewing the evidence with regard to thinking about colour perception; spatial cognition; the classification of animals and plants; emotions; health and well-being; the self, agency and causation; and nature versus culture. Empirical research into cross-cultural cognitive variability stems from diverse disciplines—anthropology, neuroscience, psychology, linguistics. Lloyd reviews such work, but also draws on his expertise as a scholar of Ancient Greek and Ancient Chinese thought. Each chapter of the book compares the ways in which the Ancient Greeks and Ancient Chinese thought about the topic in question with the findings of contemporary empirical research. The end result is a rich, well-researched and eminently readable book. *Cognitive Variations* displays the strengths of multi-disciplinary research at its very best. Lloyd's breadth of knowledge enables him to make connections and see problems that more narrowly-focused researchers have overlooked.

The book is far richer in its contents than I can convey in a short review, but a brief summary of the chapter on colour perception will at least give some flavour of it. Here Lloyd takes on conventional wisdom which has it that there