

The subjective and the objective in veber's ethics and in moral particularism

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POVZETEK

SUBJEKTIVNO IN OBJEKTIVNO V VEBROVI ETIKI IN V MORALNEM PARTIKULARIZMU

Napetosti med subjektivnimi in objektivnimi sestavinami Vebrove etike, kot je denimo razlika med psihološkim ter med nepsihološkim, so primerjane z napetostmi med subjektivnimi in objektivnimi sestavinami moralnega partikularizma. Za subjektivno sestavino se morda zdi, da je nekakšno pretiravanje zdravega razuma. Za objektivno pa, da ji manjka duša. Pričakovati je pomembne uvide na podlagi vzporednic med omenjenimi napetostmi.

Ključne besede: Veber, etika, moralni partikularizem, subjektivnost, objektivnost

ABSTRACT

Tensions between subjective and objective elements in Veber's Ethics, such as the distinction between psychological and non-psychological, are compared to the tensions between subjective and objective elements of moral particularism. The subjective element may seem a slight exaggeration of common sense; and the objective element may be reproached for lacking the soul. The paper presents relevant insights into the matter on the basis of the analogies among these tensions.

Key words: Veber, ethics, moral particularism, subjectivity, objectivity

Subjective-objective gap

Similarly¹ as there is the explanatory gap between consciousness and its subvenient basis, as this is described by Joe Levine,² there is a gap between the subjective and the objective that is proper to some positions in ethics. The positions of Veber's Meinongian approach to ethics and that of moral particularism are compared in respect to their subjective and objective components. This may not be an explanatory gap, but still the comparison may turn out interesting.

The gap between the subjective and the objective has a long pedigree in philosophy. One way to approach it is to look at the subjective point of view and at the objective point of view.³ The subjective point of view is that of qualitative experience as it is characterized by phenomenology that goes along with it. Phenomenology is presented as what-it-is-like qualitative stuff, as the quality that cannot be approached from perspective of another agent or person. A known example of this kind of qualitative experience figures what-it-is-like to be a bat.⁴ The idea is that it is in principle impossible to capture the quality of a bat's conscious experience in an objective manner. The objective third person description allows to capture what comes as related to the qualitative experience, as what accompanies this experience, such as behavioral data, but not the subjective quality of what-it's-like to be involved into this experience. We can perhaps objectively describe the experiences of a bat in a minute detail, with all the neurophysiological paraphernalia and behavioral parameters. But the bet is that there will still persist an unbreachable gap in respect to the bat's very own qualitative or conscious experiences. The objective description, no matter how intricately, is still on the side of the purported easy questions, the questions that bet their hope on the promise of a generalist answer. Whereas subjective experience and the access to it remains an unbreachable question of a principally hard nature.⁵ The experience of the bat is perhaps only invoked as an entrance to the experience proper to other subjects.⁶

The lesson of explanatory gap, i.e. of the fact that there is a principled difference between the objective and subjective approach to experiences, and that consciousness therefore has to be treated as a hard problem, i.e. a problem not to be swept under carpet by objectivist techniques seems nowadays appropriated by many. Nevertheless, the essential and intrinsic qualitative and subjective nature of experiences is still not fully recognized, because of the methodology proper to several areas. Agency, the mental and other domains many times tend to be approached by tools of objectivist nature, such as

¹ The main idea sketched in this paper comes from Vojko Strahovnik, and it evolved in several discussions we had in respect to this topics.

² Recently in his *Purple Haze* book. Just like myself, Levine played bass guitar in the sixties. Levine introduced the explanatory gap, as the gap between the objective and the subjective explanation.

³ An introductory description of the first person view as compared to the third person view may be found in Matjaž Potrč, *Dinamična filozofija*, 2004, in a chapter delineating Potrč and Seppo Sajama project on this topics. At the time the plan was for Seppo to defend the first person point of view and for myself to defend the third person point of view. Now my intuitions shifted closer to Seppo.

⁴ What it s like to be a bat is the title of a known paper by Nagel.

⁵ Chalmers introduced the distinction between easy and hard questions. As an overall naturalist, he denies though the objective naturalistic treatment for the area of consciousness on this basis.

⁶ Husserl was concerned with questions pertaining to intersubjectivity. He tried to approach those questions on the basis of subjective experiences. Husserl takes part in the inherent gap proper to the overall approach in Brentano school, which adopts a mixture of foundationalist Cartesian style, served with a blend of scientific objectivity.

these involving straight causality or teleology.⁷ These may even allow for consciousness or subjective experiences to accompany the basically objective setting. The real change of perspective comes though as one points out that the objectivist moves are not just slightly misguided for several areas, but that they are rather completely wrong as applied to them.⁸ Agency and mental have consciousness inherently and constitutively involved as their precondition.⁹ This gives a new perspective on such areas as agency and the mental.¹⁰

The thesis about phenomenology of intentionality that involves a subjectivist perspective characterizes Brentano school in a wide sense, for in its view each phenomenon turns out to be a phenomenon endowed with intrinsic consciousness. On the other hand, Brentano also embraced the thesis of intentionality of phenomenology. Each typical phenomenological experience, such as feeling an itch or noticing of a green patch happens in space according to him; it is inherently spatially located.¹¹ If these involving phenomenology of intentionality and intentionality of phenomenology are correct, then perhaps there is no real gap out there between the subjective and the objective. This¹² is enhanced by the brain in a vat compatibility of these descriptions.

That however seems to be opposed to the common sense compatible intuitions of externalist provenience¹³ that promote the flavor of strangeness attached to the grounding subjective experiences. Be this as it may, there still remains an intuition in respect to *tension* between the subjective and between the objective perspectives. Noticing of this tension is valuable because it points to the existence of a kind of gap between the subjective and the objective. Noticing of the gap between subjective and objective is neutral however in respect to the reduction of subjective to the objective and the other way round.

The tension between subjective and objective certainly comes forward in many areas.¹⁴ The exercise here however consists in briefly presenting tension between subjective

⁷ Dretske and Millikan come to mind for the explanatory resources aiming at the mental.

⁸ This is claimed by Terry Horgan and John Tienson, in their phenomenology of intentionality and intentionality of phenomenology paper. To some extent, the precursors are Galen Strawson and some others – but just in the sense of affirming intrinsic involvement of phenomenology into the intentional.

⁹ Those views that allow for just accompanying role of consciousness, such as Dennett's trial to explain consciousness from what ultimately turns out to be an objectivist perspective, are treated as zombie like takes on things by Chalmers.

¹⁰ Terry Horgan and John Tienson elaborate the project of recognizing the real constitutive role of phenomenology for the mentioned areas of agency and the mental. The enterprise started with Horgan and Tienson affirmation of both phenomenology of intentionality and of intentionality of phenomenology, in a paper invoked in a preceding footnote. Whereas phenomenology of intentionality claims that qualitative experience is inherent to the intentionally directed phenomena, the thesis of intentionality of phenomenology claims that qualitative experience is intrinsically located in space, say in the experience of one's body (I can feel an itch in my arm or on my neck, and not somewhere outside my body). It should be added though that such experiences are compatible with the overall brain in a vat scenarios – which underlines primacy of the phenomenological.

¹¹ Compare Matjaž Potrč Spindel paper (2002) on intentionality of the phenomenological in Brentano, with Mueller-Lyer or Brentano illusion in its basis. See Brentano's work on *Sinnespsychologie*.

¹² As already noticed.

¹³ Thus, the main intuition of common sense is externalistically grounded and it is therefore contrary to intuitions that underlie brain in a vat scenarios, i.e. such as that a brain in a vat entertains a rich intrinsic phenomenology and spatially located phenomenology of its experiences.

¹⁴ One example, just for trial, involves perception. Internalist theories of perception hope to reduce or at least to delimit the contribution of external factors to the internal, say to the representational resources. Externalist theories of perception will try to put into question the very existence of epistemic intermedi-

and objective in the area of moral thought. The approach to ethics by Slovene philosopher Veber is taken and summarily reviewed first. It shows the tension between the subjective and objective ingredients in the underpinning of ethics. In order to shed some light on this question, recent teaching of moral particularism is reviewed in respect to the tension between the subjective and objective ingredients. The presentation of both these proposals in the area of moral thought is painted on a canvass with a fairly wide brush stroke, so that parallelism between these moral philosophies is hopefully able to surface. There are undoubtedly many other possible considerations. But just the mentioned parallelism will be interesting enough and it also presents a sufficient task for this delimited exercise.¹⁵

What about the tension? It does not seem to be identical with the gap. But again they are somehow related. The gap is where we are in presence of two areas that stay apart. Once as the bridge is eventually built between them, there is no gap anymore. Tension on the contrary is where there are two perspectives on things that fail to be compatible. There will be tension between the subjective and between the objective perspectives on things until these will be eventually shown compatible. There is a tension in personal relationship, as for that matter, till the views of several parties concerned in respect to a certain area become compatible.

Tension between subjective and objective in Veber's ethics

Franc Veber is most important philosopher who wrote in Slovene language.¹⁶ Veber is a pupil of Austrian philosopher Alexius Meinong. Meinong's school was active in Graz before and after the beginning of twentieth century. In a wider sense, it belongs to the Brentanian philosophical movement. Brentano distinguished between several kinds of experiences, such as presentations, thoughts and emotions. He also believed that there exists one-sided dependency between these: there is a possible creature that entertains presentations exclusively, without that it would really need to engage into any thoughts. But if a creature entertains thoughts, these thoughts are necessarily underpinned by the presence of the creature's experience involving underlying presentations. Similarly, a creature entertaining emotional experiences is capable of these just in case as it also entertains appropriate presentations and thoughts.¹⁷ Besides to the dimension of experiences' hierarchical and building block arrangement, Veber distinguishes the dimension of experiences' ranging according to content. In agreement with this dimension that comes as rather independent from the previous one, there are experiences that are di-

aries. (Gibson provides a case in point, and Davidson agrees with him in respect to the exclusion of epistemic intermediaries from the story. See Potrč paper on Davidson in GPS conference publication: Veber conference with presence of Davidson, the conference co-organized by Potrč.)

¹⁵ This is not to deny that both Veber's ethics and moral particularism would deserve a much more detailed treatment. I have published a little bit on Veber's ethics and a lot more on moral particularism.

¹⁶ Veber began writing in German language during his beginning studies with Meinong in Graz. As he came in the role of professor to the University of Ljubljana in 1919, he started to systematically write and publish in Slovene language. Veber published extensively till the beginning of WW II. After the war he was denied access to teaching and publishing by the communist regime, and a few things that he wrote remain unpublished. (I have prepared his *Moja filozofska pot* manuscript for publication several years ago. It should have appeared in Holland, together with its translation into German language that was prepared by Andrea Zemljič.)

¹⁷ There is difference between Brentanian approach in the wide sense and between moral particularism. Brentanian approach is atomistic and it relies on tractable procedures. Whereas moral particularism's specificity is in that it is holistic and that it subscribes to intractable proceedings.

rected at the beautiful, at the good, and at God, together with their eventual opposites. Here is where Veber's program takes its departure. The main idea was to elaborate systematically all the areas having to do with basic kinds of contents that are proper to our experiences. So Veber wrote his *Aesthetics*, his *Ethics* and his *Book on God*.¹⁸

Beside these, Veber also wrote books with such titles as *System of Philosophy*, *Analytical Psychology* and *A Treatise on Psychology*. In fact, Veber stressed the importance of the psychological which was important for Brentano school in general and especially for Meinong.¹⁹

As is well known, Brentanian school in its entirety adopted the thesis of intentionality, of directedness of mental phenomena, as the basis for its scientific enterprise. In this respect, the challenge may be understood as explaining why I am able to think about this chair whereas this chair does not seem to be able to entertain a thought in respect to myself.²⁰ On the other hand, there is also a well known diversity of answers about the nature of intentional relation in Brentanian school and even by Brentano himself.²¹ Relation between content and object was emphasized as a problem by Twardowski. The specific answer proposed by Meinong in this respect was to presuppose the existence of objects, independent of any psychological access to them. I.e., it may be that psychological experiences are necessary for the access to objects and for our acquaintance with these. But objects exist quite independently of psychological experiences that offer an access to them. In German, Meinong called these objects *Gegenstaende*, and he called the theory that is concerned with these objects *Gegenstandstheorie* (theory of objects). The idea was that once as one recognizes the existence of these objects, a science concerned with several areas of these objects needs to be established. There is the difference between a circle and between the presentation of a circle (the first is round, but no the second one), and the same goes for cat as opposed to the thought about the cat. The first Meinongian object was diversity, a rather abstract item as compared to the psychological just noticeable differences that underlie it in psychophysics.²² Meinong classified his objects according to the dimension of reality, possibility and impossibility (I do actually possess some money, but this is far from my possible state of being stinky rich; I can

¹⁸ See Potrč presentation of Veber in *Alexius Meinong School* volume (Albertazzi, Jacquette and Poli editors, Ashgate Publishers).

¹⁹ Meinong established the first laboratory in experimental psychology in Austria at the time, and he had Benussi, the first Italian experimental psychologist as one of his pupils. Brentano also longed to establish a laboratory in experimental psychology (an information given to me by Wilhelm Baumgartner), but was unable to do so for external reasons; despite this he in many aspects dedicated his attention to psychology: to the sensory and to the higher cognitive. Veber was closer to the *descriptive* psychology, and had no deep interest or engagement in experimental psychology (except that he once figured as experimental subject for Benussi). Veber's interest in sensations nevertheless stayed persistent. See his early fifties of twentieth century Graz paper *Empfindungsgrundlagen der Gegenstandstheorie*. (There is also a more extensive manuscript by Veber dedicated to sensations and psychophysics.) It is interesting that as another basic and representative topics Veber choose title *Values* for his Graz lecture at that occasion.

²⁰ This was the way to put the question as proposed by Roderick Chisholm at the occasion of his lecture on *The Primacy of the Intentional* in Ljubljana in early eighties. Chisholm adopted the solution of self-ascription which is not necessarily shared by everybody in Brentanian school.

²¹ Brentano adopted thesis of reism ("There are only things, no dependent entities") in his late development, and criticised his own earlier views.

²² Meinong's first objects are thus abstract objects related to the investigation of psychophysics. Compare Potrč and Vospernik 1996 paper. The investigation by Meinong proceeded along the discussion of Weber's law. Notice that Weber the psychophysicist is quite different person from the philosopher France Veber who is discussed here.

imagine this state perhaps, but not the square circle that thereby turns to be impossible, nevertheless upholding a kind of existence, the *Aussersein* of the pure object).²³

Veber adopted the distinction between the area of the psychological or subjective and between the area of the apsychological or the objective – also the area of objects, as this is characteristic for Meinongian school. He implemented this distinction quite strictly in his investigation of domains with which he was concerned. In the area of aesthetics, undoubtedly there is a psychological basis of experiences. This psychological basis is necessary for our access to aesthetic objects (beautiful and its opposite) that however exist quite independently of the psychological basis. Comparably, there are psychological religious or hagiological experiences. But God himself is taken to be objective so that She cannot be reduced just to someone's psychological access.

The realm of the objects proper to certain area of experiences is thus quite independent from these experiences that may enable access to it. There certainly exist some lawful relations that are proper to psychological experiences. But once as one reaches the realm of the apsychological or of the objective, the realm of objects, one ends up in an area where the independently existing relations of a different kind, relations between objects, may be compared. Similarly this may be then asserted for the relation between aesthetic experiences and between aesthetic objects, whatever they may be.²⁴

In his ethics, Veber embarked upon a similar approach. There is the psychological basis of moral experiences. This basis however has its correlated objects, which form another and quite independent special area (in respect to moral experiences), whose logic has to be investigated and where the special science of objects can find its place. Veber compares this to the investigation of logical relations in respect to the cognitive area that gives access to them without grounding them. Nobody denies that we perform inferences as part of our psychological skills. Psychological access often turns out to be quite imperfect in this area. In our reasoning we often use unjustified biases and we make shortcuts. This does not mean however that the investigation of the apsychological logical relations needs to be tied to these psychological peculiarities. The inferential relations in logic may be investigated quite independently of all this. And they are effectively investigated and developed in this manner, as the science of logic shows.

Similarly as it goes for the customary brands of logic in respect to cognitive experiences, there has to be a special logic of heart that undergirds connative experiences of ethics, according to Veber. There are psychological and subjective moral experiences. But these experiences are quite independent from the area of psychological ethical objects, such as the good and its opposites. Relations between ethical objects, again, may be investigated quite independently from any psychological access to them. As already mentioned, a specific logic of heart is then in the offing.

Veber was certain that he discovered a brand new but actually quite obvious domain of investigation that was unfortunately not noticed by others. In order to understand what is at stake here, we may wish to return to Brentano's one-sided dependency of experiences. Brentano distinguished between presentations and thoughts as cognitive experiences, but he lumped together all the variety of possible emotive experiences under one title (*Gemuetsbewegungen*). Similarly it stayed for Meinong, who did put some

²³ Compare Potrč and Strahovnik paper on the *Scorekeeping Meinong* as a trial to adopt just ontic commitment to objects, and thus to recognize them as suppositions of our discourse, i.e. of language and thought – without that this would necessarily cut off any of their rooting in the world.

²⁴ Potrč-Strahovnik *Scorekeeping Meinong* take on things would tend to interpret the apparent aesthetic objects as so many discursive commitments of just ontic and not of ontological kind, thus differently as this is done by several interpretations of Meinong.

stress on the investigation of moral realm. It was Veber who really pushed for distinction between desires and strivings on the emotional side of experiences, a distinction comparable to presentations and thoughts in the area of cognitive experiences. Once as this distinction becomes acknowledged, one-sided dependency may be affirmed not just between the emotive and cognitive, but moreover on the side of the emotive between desires and strivings: strivings are one-sidedly dependent on the existence of desires. Veber pushed still further and, in a Meinongian manner, came to the affirmation of independently existing realm of objects, correlated to the kinds of emotive experiences. Once as the independently existing objects are discovered in their diversity, several relations between these may be studied in a similar way as this happened with relations between ontological correlates to cognitive experiences. The already mentioned logic of heart or ethics may then be spelled out and elaborated.

It would be an interesting question to see why Veber was the only one to have this idea of ethics as the logic of heart, which investigates the independently existing relations between apsychological objects, whereas this is not the case for Brentano or Meinong.

Besides to this, as it was already mentioned, Veber stressed the tension between the subjective and between the objective realms in respect to his ethics. The tension already results from the independency of these realms of the subjective experiences and the objectively existing apsychological objects.²⁵

Veber claims that specificity of his approach consists in stressing the psychological component, and that this interest in descriptive psychology may be different in his case as compared to other people working in the theory of objects. The subjective component, as compared to the orthodox theory of objects, is stressed in the second personalist phase of Veber's development, as he turned away from the strict beliefs proper to the theory of objects.²⁶ This *subjective* or *psychological* component stresses the importance of the subject and of the subjective. One may talk about the emotive or about the conative basis proper to ethical experiences. According to this subjective side, all morality persists in moral emotions. Whatever guarantees that your moral evaluation is correct seems to be restricted to the subjective.

The *objective* or *apsychological* side promotes an independent existence of objects (i.e. independent of any psychological access to them, as it was already explained). Veber agrees that real reasons for ethical deeds and their evaluation, although they depend on the experiential psychological side for an access to them, are quite objective themselves. But finally as the chips come down there cannot be any involvement of subject as crucial for evaluation of goodness or of moral badness of someone's acts.²⁷ Mother Theresa, as for that matter, is good in a manner that is quite independent from anybody's subjective

²⁵ This tension between the existence of the psychological (subjective) and apsychological (objective), as already affirmed, is not specific to ethics. It also extends to other areas of basic kinds of content for experiences and for their correlated objects. Veber's specific, as he himself claims, is that he stressed the importance of the psychological (and thereby of the subjective: experiences), which further certainly enabled him to delineate the correlation between the psychological and between the apsychological or the objective. Compare the next paragraph.

²⁶ The third phase of Veber's development consists in his idea of hitting of reality (*zadevanje*) or the direct access to the world relation, as opposed to the presentational psychological activity. This aspect of Veber's work was further developed by Ludovik Bartelj in several of his books.

²⁷ Compare this with the objectivity of reasons promoted by moral particularism, a topic of the next section. According to moral particularism, reasons for moral actions have to be objective facts and not any epistemically loaded desires or beliefs.

evaluation. Theresa is good in an objective manner, completely independently from your psychological assessment of this fact.

A part of tension comes from the subjective and the objective, the psychological and the apychological side being elaborated in a quite independent manner. There is no extensive relation between one and between the other area. But at least we can promote the question whether two areas are related. Perhaps one can simply state the lack of their interconnectedness.

Veber opts against reduction of the subjective psychological experiences to the objective ones and the other way round. Both are needed. But certainly there is a tension in his work between the subjective and objective components. They are perhaps not reducible to each other. They also come as interdependent in a way.²⁸

Tension between subjective and objective in moral particularism

Particulatism is a view in moral philosophy that denies dependency of moral acts and values upon general principles. My act of lying is morally wrong in this particular case not because of the general moral principle ('Lying is always wrong') that underlies it, but because of a specific particular rich background whose result is this act's evaluation in this singular case. It is not that a generalist reason would concernedly wait and hum in the background during the clash of several principles, according to the pluralistic (and not just monistic) generalism. For moral particularism, there simply is no humble way out for generalism: there ain't no generalism with a human face. As already mentioned, the 'because' of reasons always belongs to a particular complex situation. Particularist's natural claim is about the descriptive appropriateness of his view: if you just take a look at the data, they actually do behave his way, and they do not dance in the manner generalists would like them to.

This may easily bring in the worry that particularist enterprise is utterly subjective and arbitrary. If there are no generalist moral principles around, then not just interpretation of moral acts, but these acts themselves will have no compass to guide them, and accordingly they will ultimately lack morality. So something objective is needed. Notice that this is actually a common sense simplistic reconstruction of particularism. It is in fact not adequate, although we will use it for the sake of our own argument as the subjective position of particularism that is opposed to objectivity of reasons.²⁹

Moral particularist denies that objectivity is to be searched for on the side of moral principles. He simply points out that the reason for any moral action that you encounter, if you study it carefully and long enough, or from an appropriate and unbiased angle, will be the result of a certain intricate arrangement. There is still relevance in this arrangement; despite that it is not a generalist relevance. The promises of generalist relevance come from general patterns. But the void nature of these patterns reveals itself as soon as one realizes that the relevance proposed by them is actually built on pure repetition.³⁰ The real relevance is that of singular particular patterns: i.e., there is a structure,

²⁸ The *Meinongian scorekeeping* (Potrč, Strahovnik) take on things would stress *just ontic commitment* of discursive features instead of full fledged ontological objects. If this is true, then there does not need to be any huge tension here anymore, because we have done away with the strict ultimate ontological realm of objects (of Platonic or some similar kind; see Zalta interpretative shift for Meinong in this Platonic direction).

²⁹ In fact, there is objectivity of reasons adopted by Dancy, but not the subjective grounding of particularism.

³⁰ The discussion of general patterns is to be found in a paper of Frank Jackson and his peers. Generalist

and it is a relevant structure. The productive relevance coming along with this structure depends on the direction, which is subtly hinted at by the forces persisting in the rich background.

The difference between general patterns and between particular patterns is crucial for understanding of particularism. This difference is now being elaborated by Matjaž Potrč and Vojko Strahovnik, in a project entitled *Beautiful Patterns*.³¹ A part of the project is extension of moral particularism to such areas as metaphysics and epistemology, but potentially to all areas that have to do with rationality. This last point is acknowledged but not elaborated by the originator of moral particularism Jonathan Dancy.³² Moral particularism is namely just a specific implementation of a general idea which first appeared in the area of causality. Dancy does thus acknowledge extension of the idea of moral particularism to other areas related to rationality. But he does not elaborate it. And although Dancy disagrees with generalist patterns, he does not explicitly elaborate particularist patterns in a positive manner. He does not engage in a project that Potrč and Strahovnik call project of *Beautiful Patterns*. Beautiful patterns are features from which the true relevance results, as this may be seen in the case of patterns that are present in the aesthetic works of art.³³

Dancy as the main representative of moral particularism is not extremely preoccupied with the arbitrariness of the subjective approach such as it was briefly formulated a while ago. But he should perhaps be concerned in this respect. Actually he seems to be, in the sense that he himself furnishes several elements of particularist patterns relevance, without elaborating on this in such an explicit manner as this is proposed by Potrč and Strahovnik.

Nevertheless Dancy is very much concerned with affirming *objectivity* of moral reasons. The interesting thing is that he does this quite *independently* from his moral particularism overall agenda.

If we simplify for a while,³⁴ we can say that Dancy's recent book *Ethics Without Principles* (2004) would somehow offer itself to the subjectivist challenge. In respect to the principles involved (particularist principles, which only *Beautiful Patterns* project promises to elaborate), this is indeed a *subjectivist* side of moral particularism program.

This may be a suitable affirmation in the direction of promoting dialectic tasks related to this paper, especially in order to underline potential opposition of Dancy's new book in this respect to the objectivity of moral reasons, the position to be clarified in a minute. More accurately however, the subjectivist view is actually that of common sense reconstruction of particularism, which believes that with the absence of general principles as a guiding line, one is confined to subjectivist arbitrariness. If general principles are not endorsed, then everybody may judge the situation from her own perspective, and we have uniqueness of each individual figuring as the subject in this situation. This simple common sense reconstruction of particularism thus believes that the argument of

patterns are attacked by Margaret Little. The affirmation that generalist patterns thrive on void repetition is that of Potrč. If this act of lying is wrong and that act of lying is wrong, and so on down the line – it still does not follow that this act now is wrong because all of the rest of them were.

³¹ A partial contextualist entrance into *Beautiful Patterns* project is provided by Potrč-Strahovnik, *Practical Contexts*, Ontos Verlag 2004.

³² See Potrč paper on Resultance (2004), where Dancy's endorsement of this program is stated.

³³ Patterns in aesthetic works of art are not just figural, they are actually extended through all the variety of *Gestalts*, such as is the *Gestalt* that underlies this complex but successful performance of the opera.

³⁴ This simplification though allows us to look at Dancy's work from a wider perspective, and it allows us to see some facts that would otherwise escape our attention.

particularism is the promotion of each individual's subjective and historically burdened opinion.

The simple common sense reconstruction of particularism fails to be true in respect to the argument of *Ethics Without Principles*. The argument for particularism there does not proceed from human deliberation. The main insight there is in the nature of reasons, which are such that they cannot be captured by principles. Thus, particularism does not promote an ethics grounded upon the subjective taste. There are other reasons for the particularist to refuse accepting an ethics that does not build on moral principles. *Ethics Without Principles* is thus not really in opposition to Dancy's book on *Practical Reality*. Theses involving reasons, decision and normativity try to be consistently translated into the language of morality. The position of *Ethics Without Principles* is thus not really subjective. But there is a simplistic common sense reconstruction of the position that tends to be subjectivist. This gets its sense from the actually forthcoming position of the earlier book.

On the other side and quite independently from the more directly forthcoming argument for particularism, Dancy elaborates his theory of reasons as an *objectivist* enterprise (*Practical Reality*, 2000). Here is how the argument basically goes. The real reason that this act of helping that lady was a morally good one cannot be a Humean desire of mine to help her, nor my belief to that effect. For desire and belief are prone to be influenced by my subjective fancies. If I desire to help her this may not be grounded in her real needs, and the same goes for my beliefs that I need to help her. The real reason is the *objective* reason, the *fact*: the real situation out there in the world being such that she needs this kind of help.³⁵

Now it seems that there is a similar tension here in the case of moral particularism as is the one that we have already found in Veber's ethics: the tension between the subjective³⁶ and between the objective. The feeling is that some valuable lessons may be learned from the comparison of tensions between the subjective and the objective in Veber's ethics and in moral particularism. For the sake of further clarifying the position, subjectivity and objectivity in moral particularism will now again be briefly summarized.

The tension between subjective and objective components is patent in Veber's ethics, with its distinguishing between psychological and apsychological ingredients leading to what he calls the logic of heart. There is also a question, for moral particularism, about the *subjectivity* or *objectivity* of its approach. If there are no general rules, how do you escape the shear pitfalls of subjectivity? What is objective, how to attain objectivity?

It seems that the particular by its nature is *subjective*, that it is not objective. The particular seems always to depend on your perspective. Also, the particular situation includes a subject: my point of view, your perspective, your reason that you see the situation in the way that you do. In the end, you can always find a justification for everything, and so you may as well justify anything you choose with everything else (a simplistically common sense interpreted Dancy's *Ethics Without Principles* book may give basis for

³⁵ Potrč stresses that the fact is still atomistic and therefore that it is ultimately incompatible with the particularist basic richness and holism. This is of course still compatible with objectivity.

³⁶ Notice again that the subjective is a reconstruction of *Ethics Without Principles* argument from the side of simplistic common sense. This book at least does not explicitly argue for objectivity as the book on *Practical Reality* does. This is sufficient for the somehow didactic opposition to the objective in this paper assigned to the *Ethics Without Principles*. Although this is not really the case; neutrality may be a more adequate position.

the previous remarks). Notice that similar things were already treated in the section dedicated to Veber. You can now compare parallelism with Dancy's subjective side. From a certain perspective, all morality is in moral emotions. Whatever guarantees that your emotional evaluation is correct seems to be restricted to the subjective.

The *objective* comes quite independently then in moral particularism. Moral reasons turn out to be objective facts, and not any of the plenitude of ways about how one is able to see the world. My beliefs cannot be the real reasons for the goodness of my action; they may be just an epistemic justification for it. Facts, on the other hand, may well be the required reasons. Facts provide objectivity. They are independent from any subjective point of view. In ethics, it is because of the objective reality of facts – it is *because* of these that an act is morally good, and not *because* of any psychology. (Compare Dancy's book on *Practical Reality*).

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