

## SK minutes, 13.11.18, Research presentation: Colin's paper

**Present:** Colin, Giacomo, Xintong, Eduardo, Jose, Alisa, Peter, Alan, Giovanni, Fiona, Indrek, Paul, Jonathan, Carrie, Sonia

**Presenter:** Colin

### *Section 1*

**Alan** wonders why Colin wants to make an identity claim, rather than the claim that that one is  $\Phi$ -ing is inextricably linked to one's awareness of it. The latter is more plausible and less hazardous. For example, it might be held that necessarily, if you believe something, then there are other things that you believe, but no-one would say that in that case we have identity: that believing the one thing is the same as believing the other things. If one does not think it in that case, why should one think it in the cases Colin considers? **Colin** responds that the inextricable link would remain mysterious. One should explain then why are they inextricably linked. If there is identity, then the question 'How do you know that you are looking for an apple?' does not arise. The identity claim comes with a theoretical benefit.

**Giovanni** wonders whether Colin is really committed to an identity claim. How is an identity claim compatible with there being self-understanding of  $\Phi$ -ing without  $\Phi$ -ing? **Colin** responds by saying that the identity in question is property-possession identity, not property identity. For example, the chair's being coloured is not something over and above it's being red, although at the level of properties (types) they are distinct. At the level of having the properties (tokens), they are identical.

**Giovanni** then wonders whether the theoretical benefit that Colin alluded to is preserved, once self-knowledge is eliminated from the picture (given that knowledge in general is receptive). If it the identity is only at the level of property-possession, and not at the level of properties, then do we still get the theoretical benefit? Given that the properties are distinct, there is an explanation to why someone possesses one of the properties and not the other, e.g. there is an explanation to why something is coloured but not red.

**Peter** wonders about the distinction between receptive and spontaneous. Judgment is receptive, but self-understanding is not. Still, they are the same act. So, receptive and spontaneous cannot be properties of the act, otherwise we have incompatible properties. **Colin** admits that he hasn't thought about this, but suggests that the act has two contents, one content goes with one, the other with the other.

[**Paul**: it seems that when Anscombe introduces knowledge via observation. ... Knowledge of pain is not observational. If I get it wrong, is it an error of performance? **Colin**: Yes, but the fundamental contrast I think is between receptivity and spontaneity. It is occluded by the Wittgensteinian noise in Anscombe. **Paul**: But one interesting thing ... we cannot be wrong about them (that I'm in pain).

**Colin:** You can avow knowledge or window-opening without you opening a window. You can avow a state you are not in and thus be wrong about it. The self-understanding is had in the act.]

**Giovanni** notes that Colin seems to be open to receptive comprehension of oneself. If so, it seems that self-knowledge is still possible. **Colin** responds that self-knowledge is possible, but it is just a kind of other-knowledge. **Giovanni** wonders why one couldn't rely on self-understanding to obtain self-knowledge. Why should there be a wall between self-knowledge and self-understanding? **Colin** responds that the divide is due to a difference in contents. The content that I self-understand is not susceptible to receptive judgment.

### *Section 2*

**Giovanni** wonders about Colin's response to Davidson's counter-examples to Anscombe's account of actions. **Colin** clarifies this by noting that Davidson doesn't think of actions in terms of process. His system is all in the past tense which does not allow the formation of processive content, while Anscombe is dealing with processive contents. **Giacomo** wonders why we cannot define it in terms of successful execution. **Colin** responds that we do. We have to understand processive actions in terms of a teleological end, e.g. opening the window can only be understood in terms of an aim to open the window.

### *Section 3*

**Peter** wonders about Colin's notion of Fregean acts. They are supposed to be of special interest because they have a standard of correctness built into them. This sounds right about judging, reading, etc. But does it work for acts like sawing? For a lot of things, it is not clear if they have a standard of correctness built in. For example, is one a crummy flute player or not really playing the flute? **Colin** responds that you could be so bad at something that you don't count as doing it. A standard of correctness can be internal or external to the act. In the acts I am concerned with, the standard is internal. In the case of sawing, it is external. Sawing correctly differs from just sawing. **Peter** then notes that something similar can be said about reading. It is not clear whether the line that Colin draws is as sharp as he presents it.

**Alan** asks about Colin's account of judgment, namely that for the judging subject it is recognition of truth. When people say things like 'true for me', what they mean is just that this is what they think. It is not clear what Colin says about judgment, other than that it consists in judging what you take to be true.

**Peter** adds that the claim that, necessarily, in judging you *intend* to judge correctly is unproblematic and familiar. But the other claim, namely that, necessarily, in judging you understand yourself as judging correctly is unfamiliar. How does the familiar relate to the unfamiliar? For example, my aim in reading is to read correctly, but I might have that aim and be in ... [???]. The claim is not that, in

$\Phi$ -ing, one *believes* oneself to be  $\Phi$ -ing. And it's not that, in  $\Phi$ -ing, one intends to  $\Phi$ . But what space is there between the two? It is true that judgment is something you cannot do unless you go for it with the intention of doing it right. **Colin** responds that the idea of intention seems weird. It seems weird to judge but not intend to judge correctly. Colin agrees that he didn't say that this is what aiming at truth comes to. ... [??]

*Rest of the paper*

**Giovanni** raises again the point about uncommonality of content and self-understanding, noting that Colin allows that self-understanding can find linguistic expression, which in turn suggests that it is the kind of thing that can become the object of a normal belief or judgment. **Colin** responds that, given the view he proposes, there simply are no such beliefs. The content of self-understanding is not the content of any belief. **Giovanni** then suggests that it should still be possible to start with self-understanding, then move to a belief about oneself (in the third person), and then go back to yourself (in the first person). But if there is a long route, why shouldn't there be a more direct route from self-understanding? **Colin** responds that taking self-understanding to be a platform for a special access just reintroduces the problems concerning self-knowledge. This defeats the point. Those discussing the belief, according to Colin's view, are not really talking about anything. They are confused about the subject matter. **Paul** wonders whether all self-beliefs are receptive beliefs. **Colin** responds that people can use the word 'belief' in any way they like. The point is that there is dualism between receptive and spontaneous without any middle-ground between them.

**Peter** suggests that Giovanni's point finds support when we introduce time into it. My knowing what I was doing *yesterday* is not the same as my doing it. When time is added, there does seem to be room between acting comprehendingly and having knowledge of having acted. **Colin** responds that this is similar to the distinction between switching the lights on and alerting the burglar. One is intentional, the other is unintentional. They are different acts. **Peter** clarifies his point: The content of the memory in that case still derives from the content of self-understanding. This suggests that they are not unconnected.