



BRILL



brill.com/jmp

Which Moral Properties Are Eligible for Perceptual Awareness?

Preston J. Werner

Lecturer, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

pjwerner1@gmail.com

Abstract

Abstract: Moral perception has made something of a comeback in recent work on moral epistemology. Many traditional objections to the view have been argued to fail upon closer inspection. But it remains an open question just how far moral perception might extend. In this paper, I provide the beginnings of an answer to this question by assessing the relationship between the metaphysical structure of different normative properties and a plausible constraint on which properties are eligible for perceptual awareness which I call the Counterfactual Strengthening Test. Along the way I consider and reject a few other possible constraints on perceptual awareness. I defend the view that moral perception is restricted to the perception of evaluative and *pro tanto* deontic properties. I conclude with a few gestures toward what this limitation on moral perception may mean for broader moral epistemology.

Keywords

moral epistemology – moral perception – perception – normative properties – evaluative properties – perceptual awareness

Moral perception, in one guise or another, has made something of a comeback in recent work on moral epistemology.¹ Plausible rejoinders have been given to the traditional objections to moral perception: that it is impossible because

1 Audi (2013), McBrayer (2010a), DesAutels (2012), Clifton (2013), Cowan (2014), Werner (2014), McGregor (2015), Wisniewski (2015), Matey (2016).

moral properties are causally inefficacious;² that moral properties don't have a characteristic "look";³ and that moral perception would be epistemically impotent anyway, since it would rely on prior moral knowledge.⁴ Positive developments of the epistemological inner workings of moral perception have also been given.⁵

This progress in the literature has motivated more sophisticated objections. On the other hand, amongst its proponents, there is increasing interest in more fine-grained questions about the nature of moral perception. The aim of the present paper is to make progress on both fronts, by considering a question which has not yet been addressed in the substantial literature on moral perception: Assuming *some* normative properties are perceptible, which ones? An answer to this question would tell us the extent and limitations of a wholly 'pure' theory⁶ of moral perception for moral epistemology. Furthermore, the conditions on perceptibility can illustrate the metaphysical constraints on a theory of moral perception over and above purported general constraints on perceptibility such as causal efficacy.⁷

Proponents of moral perception should be interested in these questions because they're interested in developing a complete theory of moral perception. Opponents should be interested insofar as answering these questions could demonstrate the limitations of moral perception as an independent source for moral knowledge. My route to answering this question takes as its jumping off point the recent work of Eli Chudnoff, who has used his framework in part to argue against moral perception.⁸ However, I intend the lessons learned to be general.⁹

The paper proceeds as follows. In section 1, I lay out a few distinctions relevant for the arguments that follow. Section 2 recaps Chudnoff's conditions on perceptibility, as well as how he uses this framework to argue against moral perception. Section 3 points to an imprecision in Chudnoff's account, and

2 McBrayer (2010a).

3 Cullison (2010), McBrayer (2010b).

4 See, for example, Väyrynen (2008), Faraci (2015). For one response, see Werner (forthcoming).

5 Audi (2013), Cowan (2015).

6 For the distinction between 'pure' and 'impure' moral perception, see Werner (forthcoming, section 1), as well as below.

7 See McBrayer (2010a).

8 Chudnoff (2016, forthcoming).

9 For two quite different approaches to these questions, see Goldie (2007) and Lyons (forthcoming).

sharpens it. In section 4, the revised test is applied to different types of moral properties, with mixed results. To foreshadow, the upshot is that, while all-things-considered normative properties are probably not perceptible (barring the truth of certain first-order normative theories), many evaluative and *pro tanto* normative properties are. Finally, in section 5, I consider the implications of the conclusions I draw for the role that moral perception could play in a broader moral epistemology.

1 Moral Perception: Some Background

As I use it here, anyone who accepts moral perception accepts the following:

(MP) “Subjects can have perceptual experiences that represent the instantiation of [moral] properties.”¹⁰

Two clarifications are in order. First, while we could read MP as a claim about mere possibility, for the sake of maximum interest, I read MP as a claim about human subjects. In other words, some human beings, at least some of the time, represent the instantiation of moral properties in perceptual experience. Second, MP assumes some form of representationalism about perceptual experience. Strictly speaking, disjunctivists or adverbialists can be proponents of moral perception as well, but they would reject MP since they reject the representationalist claim.¹¹ Formulating an otherwise theory neutral version of MP would be awkward and unnecessary for my present purposes. I’ll speak throughout as though representationalism is true, but I don’t think that any of what I say depends on this.¹²

There is a wide variety of ways to accept MP. The most prominent distinctions concern what exactly moral perception comes to, and how exactly it

10 Bergqvist & Cowan (forthcoming, 8). I’ve substituted “moral” for “evaluative” in the quote, as Bergqvist & Cowan are concerned with evaluative perception, not moral perception. Of course there is a close relationship here between their discussion and moral perception, despite the fact that some evaluative properties are not moral (e.g. esthetic properties) and the fact that some moral properties are not evaluative (e.g. normative properties like *rightness*).

11 For overviews, see Haddock & Macpherson (2008) and Woodling (2016), respectively.

12 See Siegel (2011, Ch.2) for an argument as to why those who reject representationalism can’t easily sidestep questions about perceptibility and perceptual content.

works.¹³ For the most part, I will just focus on one distinction between views which is particularly relevant to moral epistemology: The difference between so-called “pure” and “impure” instances of moral perception.¹⁴ In impure moral perception, a moral property is represented in a perceptual experience only because of the causal influence of previously existing moral beliefs on perceptual processing (so-called “cognitive penetration”). As such, impure moral perception is plausibly, in Cowan’s words, “epistemically dependent” on the justificatory status of the influencing moral beliefs.¹⁵ On the other hand, pure moral perception involves the representation of a moral property in perceptual experience which is not causally dependent on a previously existing moral belief. Pure moral perception, were it possible, would open up the possibility of a wholly a posteriori moral epistemology.¹⁶

I am not directly concerned with adjudicating the debate about whether pure moral perception is possible. Rather, I mention it here because some of the theoretical options and upshots discussed below depend on the moral perceptualist’s ambitions. I return to these issues below.

2 Chudnoff on Moral Perception and Intuition

Eli Chudnoff has recently argued that the phenomenological data often given in defense of moral perception is actually a better fit within a theory of low-level moral intuition—which, while [token] caused by perceptual experience, is metaphysically and epistemologically independent. A core reason why, and the reason that concerns us here, has to do with a distinction Chudnoff draws between knowing wholly on the basis of perceptual experience and knowing only because of some further background beliefs. He asks us to consider

13 Berqvist & Cowan (forthcoming) have an excellent overview.

14 This distinction comes from Werner (forthcoming, Section 1).

15 Cowan (2015). Not everyone accepts the inference from causal dependence to epistemic dependence—most notably, Phenomenal Conservatives reject this move. For related qualifications to this inference, see Chudnoff (forthcoming) and Werner (2017). I speak throughout as though causal dependence entails epistemic dependence, because it broadens the scope of my arguments to those who have stricter conditions on epistemic dependence. But I don’t have a strong view about this issue.

16 This view is sometimes called “a posteriori ethical intuitionism” (see, e.g. Väyrynen 2008, Werner forthcoming) or “perceptual intuitionism” (Cowan 2015). I avoid this terminology to avoid confusion, as Chudnoff’s view makes overt use of intuition talk as an alternative to perceptual experience.

hearing an oven chime signaling that it is sufficiently preheated. Consider the following two propositions:

- (1) There is that chiming sound.
- (2) The oven is heated to 450 degrees.

(1) is intuitively knowable on the basis of perceptual experience alone. (2), on the other hand, appears to require some background beliefs (about how the oven works, what you set it at, and so forth).¹⁷ It may initially seem as though this distinction is obvious enough as to not require further analysis. After all, we could list beliefs that need to be held for (2) to be justified. But this isn't so obvious. After all, why isn't the background belief that *this is what chimes sound like* required for (1) to be justified? Chudnoff's answer to this question attempts to illustrate what underlies our intuitions:

Whole Basis: If one has a perception that p, then it can be the whole basis for knowing that p only if it both has p as part of its content and makes one aware of a truth-maker for p.¹⁸

The key notion here is in the idea of perceptual awareness of a truth-maker. If a perceptual experience doesn't provide perceptual awareness of a truth-maker for p, then the justificatory force for beliefs about p must come from somewhere else, such as beliefs or intuitions.¹⁹ So the relevant question is—can we be perceptually aware of the truth-makers for some moral proposition p? If the answer is no, then impure moral perception is the strongest tenable position that the perceptualist could defend. Chudnoff argues in the negative:

[P]erceptual experiences cannot make one aware of truth-makers for propositions about what one should do in a situation. Consider Joan's moral perception and suppose it just is her sensory perceptual experience of the standing woman. Perhaps this experience makes Joan aware of part of the truth-maker for the proposition that she should offer her seat, namely the woman's discomfort. But the whole truth-maker includes

¹⁷ Chudnoff (2015), 211.

¹⁸ Chudnoff (2015), 212.

¹⁹ More carefully, what is important here may just be *seeming* to be perceptually aware of a truth-maker, if some versions of internalism about justification are true. I thank Dan Baras for pointing this out to me.

more, such as that there is a *prima facie* duty of beneficence that is not defeated by other features of the situation. The point illustrated by this case seems to generalize.²⁰

Why can't Joan be perceptually aware of the *prima facie* duty of beneficence? I don't mean to claim that she can—I agree with Chudnoff that she cannot, or at least does not, in this situation—rather, a general test for perceptual awareness seems required in order to assess Chudnoff's claim that the point illustrated by the case will generalize. The notion of “perceptual awareness” seems too technical to have strong intuitions about any but the most obvious cases, at least for all that's been said.

Chudnoff provides an analogous case to support our intuitions in the case of Joan.²¹ Suppose you see a car parked next to a fire hydrant. And further suppose that you are perceptually aware of the car, the fire hydrant, and their relation. These facts partially ground the fact that the car is parked illegally. Does that mean that you can be perceptually aware of the fact that the car is parked illegally? Intuitively, Chudnoff says, the answer is no—you need to rely on background knowledge about the laws to perceive that the car is parked illegally. So your perception that the car is parked illegally won't meet Whole Basis: Part of the truth-maker is, in an important sense, outside of your perceptual experience.

It's relatively clear that the truth-makers for what is legal and illegal will involve features outside of one's perceptual awareness. It's also intuitive that the truth-maker(s) for the duty of beneficence will also involve features outside of Joan's perceptual awareness.²² But why should we think, as Chudnoff says, that this will generalize to all cases of purported moral perception? Elsewhere, Chudnoff says a bit more about perceptual awareness, indicating that it involves a presentational phenomenology:

If an experience makes you aware of something then that thing contributes toward determining the phenomenal character of that experience...

²⁰ Chudnoff (2015), 212.

²¹ Chudnoff (2016), 14.

²² A referee helpfully pointed out that an idea in the background here is that the duty of beneficence is abstract, and perception cannot give us access to the truth-makers for abstracta. It seems plausible that the duty of beneficence is abstract, but this commitment is quite contentious, and Chudnoff does not explicitly defend it, so I set it aside in what follows.

If you see something, then that thing looks some way to you...it makes some difference to your visual phenomenology.²³

Just what does this phenomenology come to? Indrek Reiland (2015), in defending a view indebted to Chudnoff, understands the notion of presentational phenomenology in terms of the experience “present[ing] the truth-maker in a way that presents its relevant look,” in a way that he says makes the experience “revelatory.”²⁴ Awareness should also differentiate the object in question from its perceptual background. And it should ground demonstrative thoughts about the object in question.²⁵

These further clarifications help to understand what Chudnoff and others, such as Reiland, have in mind. And the perceptual awareness condition seems plausible enough to grant, at least for the sake of argument. It’s also clear, given the three aspects of perceptual awareness, that Joan can’t be perceptually aware of the principle of beneficence. However, the problem is that Chudnoff’s claim that his illustration will generalize is not so straightforward. Consider another example:

Esther. Esther sees Lenny berating Mary and Mary crying. She immediately forms the belief *That is wrong*.

Assuming what Esther sees is wrong, and that Esther is otherwise a virtuous moral and epistemic agent, can she be perceptually aware of *wrongness* in this case? Well, first, it seems that the proponent of moral perception would argue that Esther does have a presentational phenomenology of wrongness.²⁶ In other words, there is an aspect of Esther’s experience that presents the appearance of the situation as *wrong*.²⁷ And there is also some reason to believe that this event would pop-out and differentiate itself from Esther’s perceptual background.²⁸ The morally relevant features of the situation present themselves as relevant, as opposed to background features (such as the scenery behind Mary and Lenny). Finally, it’s *prima facie* possible that Esther can form

23 Chudnoff (2016), 13.

24 Reiland (2015), 526

25 Chudnoff (2016), 13.

26 See Audi (2013), Werner (2014).

27 For more on presentational phenomenology, see Chudnoff (2012).

28 For empirical evidence of this, see Gantman & van Bavel (2015). But see also Firestone & Scholl (2016) for an alternative interpretation of the data.

demonstrative thoughts about the *wrongness* in the scene in front of her—after all, it looks like that's just what she's done in forming the belief *that is wrong*.²⁹

I don't take any of the three above claims to be uncontroversial. I suspect Chudnoff and other opponents of moral perception would reject them. But what is important here is that proponents of moral perception, even pure moral perception, are not saying anything that doesn't already follow naturally from their phenomenological and perceptual commitments. Meeting the perceptual awareness constraint, from what we've seen so far, doesn't require any ad hoc maneuvering on behalf of the moral perceptualist. So it looks like, without a more precise test for perceptual awareness, Chudnoff's argument has ended in the same theoretical stalemate as before.

3 Perceptual Awareness, Perceptual Fields, and the Counterfactual Strengthening Test

I have so far argued that Chudnoff's discussion of perceptual awareness has not presented a problem for the pure moral perceptualist. But that isn't because it's obvious that moral properties can be part of perceptual awareness. Rather, Chudnoff's discussion of perceptual awareness is not precise enough to have clear bite against the proponent of moral perception. To move past the stalemate, then, we'll need a more precise test for perceptual awareness. This is what I aim to provide at present.

Intuitively, perceptual awareness is restricted to features present within one's perceptual field. An agent can't be visually aware of a cat lying on a mat 100 miles away, at least not without some technological intervention, because a cat lying on a mat 100 miles away can't be part of the features of her visual field. This will be so even if she has a special light that flashes whenever the cat is lying on the mat. The light may be a reliable indicator of the cat's lying on the mat, but nonetheless, this isn't through visual awareness (alone). So it must be that somehow the cat herself makes a difference to the visual phenomenology

29 An impure perceptualist would argue that Esther's moral experience was partially formed on the basis of some prior belief that berating people is wrong (or some such), whereas a pure perceptualist would allow for the possibility that Esther had no such prior belief (or that even if she did, it had no effect on the formation of this particular experience). Both views are compatible with meeting Chudnoff's conditions.

of an experiencer, if she is to count as visually aware of it. Notice that this is just a way of motivating Chudnoff's claim that "[i]f an experience makes you aware of something then *that thing* contributes toward determining the phenomenal character of that experience" (emphasis mine). What we need, then, is a way to sharpen this claim.

Intuitively, a light that signals the presence of a cat on a mat 100 miles away doesn't count as visual awareness of the cat. And this is so even though the light—a reliable indicator of the cat's location—*does* make a difference to visual phenomenology. So we need a test that can distinguish between these clear cases. Given that what is important for Chudnoff is the idea of making a phenomenological difference, we may interpret him as saying something like:

CT [Counterfactual Test]. For any property (or object) F and any subject S, if S is perceptually aware of F, then S could not have a phenomenologically indistinguishable experience E such that E does not contain F.³⁰

CT initially seems plausible. If perceptual awareness involves making a phenomenological difference, then removing the property and assessing whether there has been a phenomenological change looks like a straightforward way to test for perceptual awareness. Unfortunately, though, this simpler test won't do the trick unless we are willing to be radically revisionary about the objects of perceptual awareness. This is because we could generate a phenomenologically indistinguishable perceptual illusion for nearly *any* object or property. It's surely possible to create a phenomenologically indistinguishable cat-facade to set on the mat. But this possibility shouldn't make it impossible to be perceptually aware of a cat. And similarly for nearly any other property or individual.³¹ CT has counterintuitive implications; it also can't capture the difference between seeing a cat on a mat and seeing a light that indicates that there is a cat on the mat. According to CT, in neither case is there perceptual awareness of the cat—perceptual awareness of cats is impossible, since there could be phenomenologically indistinguishable experiences of cat facades.

30 I was pressed to consider this option in correspondence with Elijah Chudnoff. Faraci (2015, Sect. 2) discusses related issues. He doesn't commit himself to CT, but his discussion may entail something like it.

31 Conservatives about perceptual experience (e.g. Dretske (1995), Brogaard (2013), Byrne (2017)) may accept this implication, arguing that we can only be perceptually aware of properties such as colors and shapes. (See for example Price (2009), for a similar argument

We could try to save CT by interpreting “phenomenologically indistinguishable” as the phenomenal externalist would.³² On such a view, seeing a cat and a cat-facade would be phenomenologically different on the basis of their different worldly properties. I don’t have any knockdown arguments against such a view, so I won’t deny that this couldn’t be made to work. But all things equal, a proposal that avoids such a controversial commitment would be superior to one that takes on board something as contentious as phenomenal externalism.

Here, then, is an alternative proposal: In the light case, an agent’s perception of her immediate (visual) environment can be wholly accurate even if the cat is not laying on the mat. This is because her perception of the cat is mediated by the light—the cat itself is not part of her immediate (visual) environment. More generally, if a feature can be altered without any change in visual phenomenology, then that feature is not an aspect of visual awareness. More formally:

PF [Perceptual Field]. The set of objects and properties that impinge on a sensory organ as a result of a non-deviant causal chain and contribute to some aspect of a subject’s perceptual phenomenology.

cs [Counterfactual Strengthening]: If a subject S is perceptually aware of a particular instantiation of a property N, then there is no set of facts F such that (i) F is not part of S’s PF, (ii) had F not obtained, N could have failed to be instantiated, and (iii) had F been different, S’s perceptual experience would have been phenomenologically identical.

To get a sense for PF, just think about a visual scene in front of you, such as Figure 1.

Imagine you are standing and overlooking this scene. (Suppose you are personally there, to avoid complications with perceptual awareness of objects within

about the content of perceptual experience and twin-eartheability.) But first, this doesn’t seem to be Chudnoff’s view. Second, given that CT doesn’t capture the intuitive cases discussed above, it would be a conclusion in an argument for conservatism, rather than a premise. Finally, conservatives are already going to have independent reason to reject the existence of moral perception. So insofar as the present paper is asking a question about perceptual awareness of moral properties, conservatives will have gotten off the boat long ago.

32 Or if “indistinguishable” is too internalist sounding, we could change “phenomenologically indistinguishable” to “phenomenologically identical” in CT. Phenomenal externalism is, of course, very controversial. See e.g. Dretske (1996), Lycan (2001), and Schroer (2009).



FIGURE 1

photographs.) Your visual field in such a case includes all of the objects and properties contained within the “frame” of the experience. The cars, buildings, and people within the frame will count as contained within the visual field, but any such things outside of the frame will not. And any objects occluded by other objects—such as a street behind the building on the left side of the image—will not count as part of the visual field.

A further important point is that, while obviously which features are part of a perceptual field is epistemologically important, the notion of a visual field is not itself an epistemological one. For example, suppose the man on the right side of the photo is New York yo-yo champion Philip White.³³ It won’t matter if the subject knows who Philip White is, or even what a yo-yo is—Philip White, as a matter of fact, lies within the subject’s visual field, because Philip White is making a difference to the subject’s perceptual phenomenology. Similarly with non-individual categories, such as stoplights, a subject need not have a

33 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ApkAHnoFuxU>.

34 One may wonder how well such an account will extend to other modalities. So long as a plausible account of auditory, tactile, and gustatory fields could be given, we should be

recognitional concept of a stoplight for a stoplight to lie within a subject's visual field.³⁴

So a perceptual field has outer spatial bounds, determined by a subject's spatiotemporal location and sensory capacities. Now we can turn to the test for perceptual awareness, CS. The core idea here is that, if a subject is perceptually aware of some property N, then facts outside of the subject's perceptual field can't change whether N is instantiated without thereby changing the subject's perceptual experience. So, for example, change whatever global features of the world that you like, and it will still remain the case that *greenness* is instantiated in the perceptual field of a subject looking at Figure 1. On the other hand, no features about Chicago make any difference to her perceptual experience; the existence or non-existence of Chicago has no effect on S's perceptual experience. There is a set of facts (facts about Chicago) such that, had they been different, S's perceptual experience would be phenomenologically identical, but *being-in-Chicago* would not be instantiated.³⁵

CS is a necessary, not a sufficient condition for perceptual awareness. For example, according to CS, a subject experiencing a scene such as Figure 1 contains Philip White within her visual field. But, plausibly, she isn't perceptually aware of *Philip White*. She may be perceptually aware of a person, but she lacks the epistemic capacity to be perceptually aware of Philip White, since she (let's suppose) doesn't know who he is. Or even if she does, if her *Philip White* recognitional capacity hasn't been triggered because she isn't paying attention or he is too far away, or because she doesn't have a "revelatory" phenomenology, in Reiland's terms,³⁶ she plausibly also won't count as being perceptually aware of Philip White.

I should make clear here that I'm not endorsing the claim that one cannot be perceptually aware of an individual on the basis of lacking certain epistemic capacities. There are tricky issues that arise for a view that claims that

able to extend PF and PAT ok. I think these ideas can be made sense of, but defending this claim would require a paper in itself, so I stick to the visual field in what follows. (Thanks to Elijah Chudnoff for pressing me on this point.)

35 As Noga Gratvol pointed out to me, things are a bit more complicated, because it could turn out that one of the people in Figure 1 *wouldn't have* been in the picture had Chicago not existed, for whatever reason. I'm supposing, for simplicity of exposition, that this counterfactual is false.

36 "For the experience of a bishop to have a presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that this is a bishop it has to present you with its bishop-y look." Reiland (2015), 526.

one can be perceptually aware of *that man* without being perceptually aware of *Philip White*. Such a view entails that perceptual awareness is intentional. Maybe that is problematic.³⁷ My purpose in emphasizing that CS is a necessary but not sufficient condition is only to stress that endorsing CS doesn't entail any claims about these related contentious issues.

Let's see how CS handles the distinction between seeing a cat lying on a mat and seeing a light that reliably indicates that a cat is lying on the mat. Notice that both cases could in principle ground justified belief. In fact, we could even structure the cases such that the light is *better* at detecting the presence of the cat on the mat than directly visually experiencing it. For example, suppose your eyesight is not very good, and you also have a very similar looking small dog that you confuse for a cat sometimes. But the light is somehow able to detect this difference with near-perfect accuracy. Nevertheless, seeing the cat on the mat remains intuitively an instance of perceptual awareness, while seeing the light—regardless of its reliability—does not seem to be an instance of perceptual awareness. CS explains why this is so: When looking at the cat on the mat, the truth-maker for the proposition lies within your visual field. The cat could not be removed without an alteration in your perceptual phenomenology. When looking at the light, the truth-maker is not within your visual field. The light could remain on even in the absence of the cat. So there is no perceptual awareness.³⁸

One interesting implication of CS is that it entails that one can be perceptually aware of some object or property without being aware of all of its properties. For example, suppose the cat in the above case has a white spot in its fur, but that this white spot is not visible from where the agent is currently sitting. For the reasons stated above, CS entails that the cat is eligible for perceptual

37 But see Bourget (2017) for reasons to think it isn't problematic.

38 If there is no direct correlation between perceptual awareness and reliability, one may worry that perceptual awareness is not an epistemically significant category. And if it is not an epistemically significant category, why should the moral epistemologist care about which properties are eligible for perceptual awareness?

I can't hope to fully answer this question here, but two things are worth briefly noting. First, only one sort of externalist about justification will think that reliability is all that matters for perceptual justification, and so there is space for perceptual awareness to play a role in justification beyond a measure of reliability. Second, recall above that one feature of Chudnoff's understanding of perceptual awareness that I take it extends to CS is that perceptual awareness is required for demonstrative thought, which is itself plausibly of epistemic significance. (Thanks to David Faraci for raising this issue.)

awareness. However, many properties of the cat, such as its white spot, are not eligible for perceptual awareness, because the spot is neither part of the agent's perceptual field, and nor would removing it change any aspect of the perceptual phenomenology. But notice that this implication is just what we should want from a condition on eligibility for perceptual awareness—it is intuitively plausible that we can be perceptually aware of an object even while not being perceptually aware of all of its parts. For example, one can be perceptually aware of a building by looking at it from the outside without being perceptually aware of all of its rooms. So I submit that this implication of CS is a feature of the condition, not a bug.

Let me quickly discuss just one of the more complicated cases before moving on to the central question of the paper—about our perceptual awareness (or lack thereof) of normative properties. Suppose I'm looking at my cat Zooey. Can I perceive *catness*, despite the fact that the truth-maker for such a property involves a bunch of complicated genetic and historical facts? On the Counterfactual Strengthening test, the answer is yes. This is because an alteration in historical or genetic features is very likely to change my perceptual experience—Zooey plausibly wouldn't exist in such a counterfactual possibility, or would at the very least appear qualitatively different. This is plausible because on standard views, some of Zooey's historical and genetic features are essential to him. It may be objected that I have not considered the right sorts of possibility—for surely it is possible for some other phenotypically identical but genetically distinct species to have evolved and be sitting in front of me right now. But mere possibility of a phenomenologically indistinguishable experience in which *catness* is not present doesn't show that *catness* fails to meet the Counterfactual Strengthening test. The Counterfactual Strengthening test is about the *nearest* world where the set of facts *F* hold. And in the nearest world where we change the genetic and historical facts about cats, my perceptual experience of Zooey is very likely to be different. *Catness*, then, is eligible for human perceptual awareness.³⁹ More importantly, we have now seen how Counterfactual Strengthening is supposed to provide a test that a subject must meet if she is to count as perceptually aware of some property. I turn now to the metaphysics of moral properties, before considering which side they fall on vis-a-vis Counterfactual Strengthening in section 5.

39 Or it seems so. Nothing crucial in what follows depends on the reasoning of this paragraph. It is only meant to illustrate how the Counterfactual Strengthening test should be run. Thankfully, the test is much more clear in the case of normative properties.

4 Moral Properties and Their Metaphysics

We can divide moral properties along two dimensions. A first division is between evaluative properties, such as *goodness*, *badness*, and *courage*, and deontic properties, such as *wrongness*, *permissibility*, and *having-a-reason-to- ϕ* .⁴⁰ A second division is between *pro tanto* moral properties, such as *having-a-reason-to- ϕ* and *goodness*, and *all things considered* or (in Parfit's terms) decisive moral properties, such as *wrongness* and *having-decisive-reason-to- ϕ* .⁴¹ What is crucial here is that *pro tanto* moral properties can be overridden by other morally relevant features, whereas decisive or *all things considered* properties cannot. One other thing worth noting: "all things considered" here should be taken throughout to refer to *all things considered morally*. There are deep and interesting questions about the relationship between moral obligations and prudential and epistemic obligations. These questions are often phrased in terms of a single authoritative *all things considered* ought.⁴² Because I am only concerned about moral properties here, I will use *all things considered* throughout in the more limited, moral sense. Readers bothered by this should feel free to mentally insert "morally" into "all things considered" below.

These distinctions provide us with four broad categories of moral properties:

	Evaluative Properties	Deontic Properties
Pro tanto properties	Goodness; Badness	Reason-in-favor; reason-against
All-things-considered [moral] properties	Ideal? (or \emptyset) ⁴³	Rightness; Wrongness; Decisive-reason-in-favor/ against

It's plausible that these distinctions track differences in the location of the properties' truth-makers. For example, arguably, a deontic property can only be instantiated in the presence of some agent—as Dancy points out, "reasons

⁴⁰ See Tappolet (2013, 2014).

⁴¹ Parfit (2011), Sect. 1.1.

⁴² Chang (2004), Stapleford (2015), Baker (forthcoming).

⁴³ See note 49.

belong to, are *for* individuals. There are no reasons hanging around waiting for someone to have them.”⁴⁴ Arguably, this is true also of rightness and wrongness—a world with no agents may have plenty of value and disvalue, but it would not have rightness and wrongness. If this is right, the truth of a positive claim involving a deontic property will metaphysically depend on the existence of one or more properly situated agent(s).⁴⁵ Arguably, this is because reasons and other deontic properties apply to *actions*, and actions require agents.⁴⁶ On the other hand, it initially appears as though evaluative properties do not metaphysically depend on agents, at least not in all of their instances. If pain is bad, then it is bad even in a world where there are no agents (suppose there are only creatures who can feel pain but cannot act). Similarly with many other potential grounds for evaluative properties (pleasure, wish-satisfaction,⁴⁷ a great work of art [at least on some objective views of aesthetic properties])—they can be present even in the absence of agents. This suggests:

Evaluative Metaphysics (EM). If a property is evaluative, then not all of its particular instantiations metaphysically depend on any agent.

Deontic Metaphysics (DM). If a property is deontic, then its particular instantiations do metaphysically depend on the existence of some agent or agents.

Turn now to the distinction between *pro tanto* and *all things considered* moral properties. Is there any plausible and metaphysically unified distinction between these two sorts of properties? The most fundamental distinction between *pro tanto* and *all things considered* properties is normative and deliberative. Knowing the facts about *all things considered* properties in a given situation will, in a rational agent, end deliberation, at least about some actions. For example, if Nikki knows that it is obligatory that she ϕ , her deliberation about whether to ϕ can rationally end. She has decisive reason to ϕ ; no further

44 Dancy (2000), 170.

45 Strictly speaking, we should restrict this idea to *atomic* propositions involving deontic properties, to avoid cases such as “Either $2+2=4$ or this action is wrong.”

46 Thanks to Aaron Elliott for pointing this out.

47 We could also add desire satisfaction, if we think creatures could have desires without being able to act.

questions about what she ought to do are necessary.⁴⁸ Things are trickier with a property like *ideal*. Given the complications here, and the fact that it's unclear whether to even treat *ideal* as an *all things considered* property, I set it aside in what remains.⁴⁹

On the other hand, while *pro tanto* properties cannot count in favor of or against certain actions, they cannot—at least not without some additional “that’s all” fact—foreclose deliberative possibilities.⁵⁰ This appears to be so with both evaluative properties such as *goodness* and *badness*, as well as the paradigmatic *pro tanto* property, *pro tanto* reasons.

So, plausibly, (knowledge of) *all things considered* properties can by themselves rationally rule out or rule in actions in deliberation, but (knowledge of) *pro tanto* properties cannot. This doesn't yet illustrate a metaphysical difference between the two sets of properties. But it does suggest one. One way to put this is that all things considered properties are global, in the sense that

48 Of course, she may gather further information that reveals that she was wrong, and that she doesn't have decisive reason to ϕ after all. But such a scenario would show that she didn't have decisive reason after all, not that decisive reasons are not genuinely decisive.

49 Will a rational agent who learns that ϕ -ing is ideal or best close deliberation on whether to ϕ ? Only if agents are rationally required to pursue the best or ideal actions, a contentious claim to be sure. Any first-order normative theory that allows for multiple actions to be permissible even if they aren't tied in their evaluative features will deny that knowing that ϕ -ing is ideal will always rationally close deliberation.

I'm inclined to think that this shows that *ideal* is not an *all things considered* property after all, at least not in the sense traditionally used by normative theorists. But it may even be an ill-formed question, since one may think that evaluative properties cannot, by their very nature, be *all things considered* properties. Maybe I'm even committing a category mistake! Best just to set aside the tricky case of *ideal* in the remainder of the paper.

50 A structurally analogous problem arises in the truth-maker literature for negative and universal truths, such as “There are no unicorns” and “All humans are mortal.” In order to show that there are no unicorns, we can't just list all the things there are and then note that none of them are unicorns. We must also state that this is all the things that there are (a “that’s all” fact), and similarly for listing all of the humans and showing that all of them are mortal. (See, e.g. Dodd 2007, Griffith 2015.)

Suppose Sam is in a situation in which there is only one moral property, a single *pro tanto* reason to ϕ . And suppose further that, in the absence of no other reasons, the consideration that grounds the *pro tanto* reason is decisive. Nonetheless, the consideration that grounds the reason cannot alone be the truth-maker for the *all things considered* reason to ϕ . For that, we also need the “that’s all” truth: *There are no other reasons*.

their truth-conditions are essentially related to arbitrarily many background features in the world. Pro tanto properties, on the other hand, can have their truth-conditions locally. If pain is bad, for example, then badness can be grounded intrinsically within a living organism. This suggests something like the following distinction:

Pro Tanto Metaphysics (PTM): If a property is *pro tanto*, its instantiation depends only on the intrinsic features of its grounds.

All Things Considered Metaphysics (ATCM): If a property is *all things considered*, its instantiation depends on the presence or absence of features extrinsic to its (contingent) grounds.

As with the characterization of the metaphysical difference between evaluative and deontic properties given above, this distinction is not completely neutral between first-order normative theories. For example, particularists of a certain sort will hold that no feature or set of features can intrinsically ground *pro tanto* reasons, since there is no set of features which will always tell in favor (even *pro tanto*) of a particular action.⁵¹ So they will reject PTM. And moral absolutists—who hold that some kinds of action (killing an innocent person, lying) are *always* wrong—will reject, for at least some instances, ATCM. For if killing is wrong regardless of the circumstances, then the wrongness will be intrinsic to the killing itself, not dependent on other extrinsic background facts. To reiterate, these are not meant to be analyses of the differences between evaluative and deontic and *pro-tanto* and *all-things-considered* properties. Rather, they are only meant to be implications of what is perhaps some deeper metaphysical difference between the categories.

Before moving on, one complication should be flagged. On one straightforward interpretation, non-naturalists about normativity are committed to the claim that *all* normative properties are abstracta. This may seem to entail that non-naturalists must deny that any normative property will meet PTM, because no normative property is wholly grounded in its concrete, local bases. In fact, I think PTM is compatible with non-naturalism, but I can't hope to fully address this here. My discussion in what follows should then be read as restricted to metaethical views according to which PTM is true.

51 See Dancy on “variable relevance” (e.g. 2013, section 3).

5 The Metaphysics of Moral Properties and the Counterfactual Strengthening Test

Recall our table of distinct types of normative properties from above:

	Evaluative Properties	Deontic Properties
Pro tanto properties	Goodness; Badness	Reason-in-favor; reason-against
All-things-considered [moral] properties	Ideal? (or \emptyset)	Rightness; Wrongness; Decisive-reason-in-favor/ against

The task now is to assess, for each category, whether those properties are in principle perceptually accessible (for human beings). Given the rough metaphysical implications of each kind of moral property, we can now generate the following metaphysical version of the table:

	Evaluative Properties	Deontic Properties
Pro tanto properties	Intrinsic truth-maker; non-agency requiring	Intrinsic truth-maker; agency requiring
All-things-considered [moral] properties	Extrinsic truth-maker; non-agency requiring (but possibly an empty category)	Extrinsic truth-maker; agency requiring

Begin with the all-things-considered properties, both evaluative and deontic. It's relatively clear that these properties are not eligible for perceptual awareness. As long as perceptual fields are spatiotemporally finite—which they surely are, at least for human beings—there will always be possible extrinsic conditions which can affect whether an all-things-considered property is instantiated. Suppose Nikki sees some children lighting a cat on fire. This is as good of a candidate as any for Nikki to be perceptually aware of *wrongness*. But Nikki can't be perceptually aware of *wrongness*, because facts outside of her perceptual field could make it the case that *wrongness* is not instantiated in the burning of the cat. For example, the children may be burning the cat because they have been reliably told that their failure to do so will result in thousands of deaths. This additional fact would be outside of Nikki's

perceptual field, and would make no difference to her perceptual experience. So *wrongness* fails the counterfactual strengthening test. For similar reasons, so too will any moral property that fits with ATCM.

Next let's turn to what I'm calling *pro tanto* evaluative properties, such as *goodness* and *badness*. Return to Nikki seeing some children lighting a cat on fire. It's clear the cat is in pain. Can Nikki be perceptually aware of the *badness* instantiated here? It appears that the answer is yes, on the assumption that she can be perceptually aware of the cat's pain. So the question, in turn, is whether there are instances of pain (in suitably normal circumstances) that can meet cs. Arguably, the answer is 'yes': There is no set of facts outside of Nikki's perceptual field that we could use to remove the cat's pain without changing Nikki's phenomenology. So while the idea that we can be perceptually aware of the mental states of others is non-trivial, once it is granted, there is no special problem in moving from the awareness of these states to the awareness of evaluative properties. Similar reasoning will apply to many other instances of *badness* and *goodness*. The truth-makers for the instantiation of these properties will often be wholly located within a subject's perceptual field.

The argument will not generalize to all instances of evaluative properties, however. Whether a particular instantiation of an evaluative property is or could be eligible for perceptual awareness depends on the metaphysical grounds of its instantiation. In many cases the grounds will be too broad for perceptual awareness. For example, suppose that income inequality is bad. A widespread unjust distribution in income or wealth is a fact whose grounds are extremely complicated and range over an entire neighborhood, community, country, or even world. And it's a fairly abstract notion as well—it's not as though people have a sign on their clothing that explicitly says how much money they have in their bank account. So inequality of this nature will not be eligible for perceptual awareness, and thus instantiations of *badness* that are grounded in these sorts of facts will not be either, and similarly with other instances of evaluative properties that have their source in complicated and broadly distributed facts. But here, as with the case of the burning cat, the issues with perceptual awareness do not arise because of the evaluative or normative nature of the properties, but about the spatiotemporal location (or lack thereof) of their truth-makers. The important upshot here is that there is no special problem for the possibility of perceptual awareness of (*pro tanto*) evaluative properties.

Finally, there are *pro tanto* deontic properties, such as *pro tanto* reasons. This is the most complicated case. As with *pro tanto* evaluative properties, the truth-makers for these properties can in principle be relatively localized. But they also essentially depend on the actions available to the agent(s) who have

the reason(s). Are agential capacities eligible for perceptual awareness? Let's consider two cases—first, the possibility of perceptual awareness of a reason that some other agent has; second, the possibility of perceptual awareness of a reason that one herself has. Call the former a third personal reason, and the latter a first personal reason.

Suppose I see a child drowning in a pool in the distance, and an aloof-looking person sitting next to the pool reading a magazine. And let's suppose I am too far away to make any significant difference to the child's predicament. Can I be perceptually aware of the (*pro tanto*) reason that the magazine reader has to save the child? When we try to apply the counterfactual strengthening test, it's a bit unclear. Suppose, for example, that the magazine-reader can't swim. She may, so long as we fill out the case in the necessary ways, not have any reason to act to save the child.⁵² Will any of these ways of filling out the case result in an identical perceptual field? It probably depends on the details of the case. For example, the magazine reader would probably have been a different person, or learned to swim, in a counterfactual scenario according to which she was put in charge of watching the child. If this were the case, then the inability to swim of *this* magazine reader would have resulted in a distinct perceptual experience of this situation (someone else would have been sitting there). On the other hand, if the magazine reader bears no special relation to the child (she just happens to be there and the child just happens to be drowning), then her ability or lack thereof wouldn't, presumably, make any difference to one's perceptual experience. So in the former case, but not the latter, the *pro tanto* reason is eligible for perceptual awareness.

Given that the difference between these two scenarios—the one in which a reason is present and the one in which a reason is not—is visually undetectable, it might seem intuitively as though reasons (at least in this case) are clearly not eligible for perceptual awareness. This isn't, strictly speaking, quite right: We've seen above that there will often be cases in which an object or property is eligible for perceptual awareness even though there could be a perceptually indistinguishable experience in the absence of the object or property in question. However, our intuition in this case can be explained in terms of a closely related but distinct issue. Recall that the question we're worried about at present is a test of whether a given property is *eligible* for perceptual awareness. Moving from eligibility for perceptual awareness to successful perceptual

52 Perhaps we would judge her character for sitting idly by reading a magazine while a child drowned, but let's set this aside, as it is not clearly a reason to act *per se*, but a judgment of her emotional dispositions.

awareness for a particular agent at a particular time will require further conditions, some of which will plausibly be epistemic. And given that the counterfactuals in the drowning child case above are nearby possibilities rather than distant skeptical scenarios, it's plausible that the epistemic conditions in such a case would not be met by most human beings in most circumstances. (Of course, this depends on just what the epistemic conditions on perceptual awareness are, which is a question outside of the scope of the paper.)

Let's turn finally to first personal *pro tanto* reasons. Consider a slight variation on the case above—suppose *you* are the person sitting by the poolside when you notice the child drowning. And suppose, for simplicity, that you are able to swim and have training in how to save a child from drowning. Is the *pro tanto* reason you have eligible for perceptual awareness? The first personal case is in one respect simpler and in another respect more complicated than the third personal case. It is simpler because, at least in many circumstances, you know whether a certain action is available to you, since you have a good idea of what your abilities are.⁵³ But it is more complicated, because it is a much more contentious question whether one's own abilities can have an effect on perceptual awareness. Since these abilities are partial truth-makers for these *pro tanto* reasons claims, the former must be perceptually available if the latter are to be eligible for perceptual awareness.

There is a long-standing tradition of perceptual psychology as well as philosophy of perception which claims that at least some of the actions available to an agent are a matter of perceptual awareness. For example, in perceptual psychology, the Gibsonian school has long argued that perception directly involves perception of *affordances*, which are relationships between agents, objects, and potential actions. For example, if I look in my mug, I can see that my coffee is *pourable*, *drinkable*, or *touchable*. Gibsonian perceptual psychology remains a minority view, but it continues to have its advocates, in both psychology and philosophy.⁵⁴ A second, admittedly also minority view, is the Gareth Evans' influenced *disposition theory*.⁵⁵ Evans' theory (and Grush's development of it) is too complicated to discuss in detail here. But what is

53 Notice that this is a difference in degree rather than in kind. I know that my partner can speak French, and so this allows me to know that certain actions will be available to her that are not available to me in certain contexts.

54 The notion was coined by J.J. Gibson (1979). For a contemporary discussion in the psychology literature, see, e.g. Osiurak et al. (2010); for philosophical discussions, see, e.g. Chemero (2003), Siegel (2014).

55 See Evans (1982), Grush (2007).

important for present purposes is that perception involves egocentrically locating ourselves with respect to our perceptual inputs in virtue of a perceiver's potential actions. It appears that such a view allows for possible actions to be partially constitutive of perceptual content (at least if the view is interpreted in accordance with representationalism).

If first personal *pro tanto* reasons are eligible for perceptual awareness, then the agent's potential actions, as their partial truth-makers, must be eligible for perceptual awareness. Since the latter is contentious, I can't hope to settle this case here. The following table sums up what's been argued in this section:

	Evaluative Properties	Deontic Properties
Pro tanto properties	Eligible for perceptual awareness	Third personal: Eligible First personal: (Possibly) Eligible
All-things-considered [moral] properties	Ineligible for perceptual awareness (or \emptyset)	Ineligible for perceptual awareness

Before discussing some implications of the arguments just given, it is worth addressing one objection. As I noticed above, CS is a necessary but not sufficient condition on perceptual awareness. The skeptic about perceptual awareness may claim that meeting CS, even if it is a legitimate condition on perceptual awareness, should provide no comfort to the moral perceptualist. This is because, she claims, there is some other necessary condition on perceptual awareness that moral properties clearly will not meet. I can think of two kinds of conditions that may be seen as problematic. According to the first, moral properties aren't eligible for perceptual awareness because they have no distinctive phenomenological "look" or appearance. According to the second, moral properties aren't eligible for perceptual awareness because they aren't causally related to our perceptual experiences in the right sort of way (if at all).

These are both formidable objections to the perceptual awareness of moral properties, and I can't address them here. Instead, I focused on CS—a sharpening, I take it, of Chudnoff's condition on perceptual awareness—because these other challenges have been addressed in the literature on moral perception.⁵⁶ Strictly, then, the upshot of the above arguments should be weakened: Assuming, as I think, that these other conditions on perceptual awareness can

⁵⁶ See, for instance, Cullison (2010), McBrayer (2010a, 2010b), and Cowan (2015).

be met for moral properties, then at least some kinds of moral properties are eligible for perceptual awareness.

6 Implications: Limits of Perceptual Awareness and Perceptualist Moral Epistemology

Suppose everything said above is correct. What constraints does this place on a robust moral epistemology? Assuming one wants to incorporate moral perceptual states into one's positive moral epistemology, there are two ways one could go. First, one could endorse an *impure perceptualism*, according to which perceptual experience can only represent moral properties given prior moral beliefs that exert cognitive influence on perceptual processing (i.e. cognitive penetration).⁵⁷ On an impure view, the perception of moral properties' justificatory power is causally, and thus epistemically, dependent on the justificatory status of the prior moral beliefs that exert cognitive influences.⁵⁸ So, for example, Nikki's perceptual awareness of the cat-burning's *badness* depends on her previous belief that *animal suffering is bad* (or some such). According to a *pure perceptualism*, on the other hand, at least some instances of perceptual awareness of moral properties does not require or causally depend on prior moral beliefs. Pure perceptualism allows for stimulus-driven, *a posteriori* moral perception. Nikki can have perceptual awareness of *badness* in the cat-burning case even without any moral beliefs influencing her perceptual systems. And, if all goes well, this awareness could justify moral beliefs in the standard way that perceptual awareness can justify other perceptually basic beliefs.⁵⁹

57 For discussion of cognitive penetration and its relationship to the epistemology of perception, see Silins (forthcoming).

58 For discussion, see Cowan (2014), Väyrynen (forthcoming), and Werner (forthcoming-a).

59 Strictly speaking, I am conflating logical space here by running together two questions: 1. Whether perceptual awareness of moral properties is *causally* dependent on prior moral beliefs, and 2. Whether perceptual awareness of moral properties is *epistemically* dependent on prior moral beliefs. One could in principle endorse a view according to which we can be perceptually aware of moral properties without prior cognitive/causal influence, but that these instances of perceptual awareness cannot justify beliefs. Or one could hold that perceptual awareness of moral properties is causally dependent on prior moral beliefs, but that this doesn't make them epistemically dependent. (A phenomenal conservative of a certain sort would endorse such a view—see, e.g. Huemer (2014) and Tucker (2014).) See also Werner (forthcoming-b) for a non-standard version of this strategy.

It's also worth mentioning that I'm assuming moral skepticism is false, for ease of explication.

Impure perceptualists are committed to a perception-independent source of moral justification.⁶⁰ As a result, the limitations on perceptual awareness sketched above should be less concerning to the proponent of impure perceptualism. On such a view, we may still have access to *all things considered* properties (at least conditionally) by having access to the true moral principle(s) or at least to the general principles that help to weigh different *pro tanto* features against each other to reach a decisive all-things-considered conclusion. Of course, depending on the details of one's *a priori* moral epistemology, the impure perceptualist could also allow for *a priori* access to *pro tanto* facts as well. But what seems important here is that, on the impure view, the limitations on perceptual awareness of moral properties are compatible with a variety of epistemological views, be they principle-first, reason-first, or value-first.⁶¹ Of course, this isn't to say that the impure perceptualist is out of the epistemological woods. Unlike the pure perceptualist, they will need a plausible *a priori* moral epistemology that explains our access to the moral facts, a non-trivial task. On top of this, a smaller theoretical issue here is that the impure perceptualist is committed to a seemingly disunified theory, according to which some moral justification is perceptual and some is *a priori*. Of course, this is not the end of the world—disunified views should be accepted if the alternatives are all unacceptable. But it is a cost worth noting.

Pure perceptualism avoids the problems of disunity, as well as, in principle at least,⁶² the problems of providing a positive view of substantive *a priori* moral knowledge. Of course, the pure perceptualist owes a story about how exactly the move from eligibility for perceptual awareness discussed above is connected with successful perceptual awareness in ordinary human beings. The success of a proposal would depend on its details and on the further conditions on successful, justification-conferring, perceptual awareness. But let's suppose such a proposal could be developed and defended.⁶³ Given the

60 See Faraci (2015) and Werner (forthcoming-a).

61 Note that I'm here concerned with the structure and priority of moral justification, rather than with metaphysical priority, itself an interesting but orthogonal issue.

62 As defined here, the pure perceptualist could accept that there are two fundamental sources of moral justification—one purely perceptual, and one purely *a priori*. Pure perceptualism says that there can be perceptual awareness of moral properties without any previous *a priori* influence. But strictly speaking it is neutral on the existence of (unrelated) *a priori* moral knowledge.

63 For the beginnings of such a story, see Werner (forthcoming-a).

discussion above, a pure perceptualism entails that our only direct access to the moral facts is to *pro tanto* evaluative facts, and perhaps some *pro tanto* reason facts. So a full moral epistemology for pure perceptualism will have to do one of two things: Either (a) explain how we can justifiably move from awareness of these *pro tanto* facts to justified belief in general moral principles, via some kind of abductive process, or (b) embrace a more epistemically modest particularism, according to which we have no knowledge of general moral principles. Either approach would have implications for first-order normative theory as well as, at least potentially, rational deliberation. And both of these approaches have some precedent in the moral epistemology literature (though they weren't motivated by defending pure perceptualism).⁶⁴ If neither approach can be made viable, then it looks like the pure perceptualist—and with it, the hopes for an anti-skeptical empiricist moral epistemology—is in trouble.

7 Conclusion

Proponents of moral perception have done quite a bit to defend the possibility of perceptual experience and awareness of moral properties. But even supposing this possibility has been established, working moral perception into a constructive positive and complete moral epistemology remains a largely overlooked task. In this paper, I have attempted to assess some of the prospects for the range of moral properties that might be eligible for perceptual awareness. Recently, Eli Chudnoff has given a general argument against the perception of moral properties on the basis that the truth-makers for the instantiation of moral properties cannot be presented to one in experience. I have developed Chudnoff's test for eligibility for perceptual awareness, and defended the claim that some kinds of moral properties are in fact eligible for perceptual awareness. Even if my arguments are successful, as I've pointed out, the moral perceptualist is not out of the woods. For even on the revised test of eligibility for perceptual awareness that I defend here, many kinds of moral properties are not the sorts of things that could be perceptually accessible. So the defense of a perceptualist view given here is modest and qualified. But the hope is that it provides a path, even if a narrower one, for the moral perceptualist interested in developing a wholly adequate positive moral epistemology.

64 For the former, see Ross (1939). For the latter, see Dancy (2004).

Acknowledgments

This paper has benefitted from helpful comments and conversations with Dan Baras, Elijah Chudnoff, Nikki Fortier, Noga Gratvol, Avi Kenan, Errol Lord, Byron Simmons, and two anonymous referees as well as audiences at the 2018 Borders of Perception conference in Jerusalem, as well as at Ben Gurion University, Beer-Sheba, Israel.

Biographical Note

Preston J. Werner is a lecturer at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research focuses on moral epistemology, philosophy of perception, and normative ethics. He received his PhD in 2016 from Syracuse University.

Works Cited

- Audi, Robert. (2013). *Moral Perception*. Princeton University Press.
- Baker, Derek Clayton. (forthcoming). "Skepticism about Ought Simpliciter," in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, 13.
- Bergqvist, Anna & Robert Cowan. (forthcoming). "Evaluative Perception: Introduction," in *Evaluative Perception*. Oxford University Press.
- Bourget, David. (2017). "Intensional Perceptual Ascriptions," in *Erkenntnis*, 82(3):513–530.
- Brogaard, Berit. (2013). "Do We Perceive Natural Kind Properties?," in *Philosophical Studies*, 162(1):35–42.
- Byrne, Alex & Susanna Siegel. (2017). "Rich or Thin?" in Bence Nanay (ed.), *Current Controversies in Philosophy of Perception*. Routledge.
- Chang, Ruth. (2004). "All Things Considered," in *Philosophical Perspectives*, 18(1):1–22.
- Chemero, Anthony. (2003). "An Outline of a Theory of Affordances," in *Ecological Psychology*, 15(2):181–195.
- Chudnoff, Elijah. (2012). "Presentational Phenomenology," in *Consciousness and Subjectivity*. Ontos Verlag.
- Chudnoff, Elijah. (2015). "Moral Perception: High-Level Perception or Low-Level Intuition?," in Theimo Breyer & Christopher Gutland (eds.), *Phenomenology of Thinking*. Routledge.
- Chudnoff, Elijah. (2016). "Epistemic Elitism and Other Minds," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Online first.

- Chudnoff, Elijah. (forthcoming). "Experience and Epistemic Structure: Can Cognitive Penetration Result in Epistemic Downgrade?," in *Inference and Consciousness*. Available at: <https://philpapers.org/rec/CHUEAE-2>.
- Clifton, W. Scott. (2013). "Murdochian Moral Perception," in *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 47(3):207–220.
- Cowan, Robert. (2014). "Cognitive Penetrability and Ethical Perception," in *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 6(4):665–682.
- Cowan, Robert. (2015). "Clarifying Ethical Intuitionism," in *European Journal of Philosophy*, 23(4):1097–1116.
- Cullison, Andrew. (2010). "Moral Perception," in *European Journal of Philosophy*, 18(2):159–175.
- Dancy, Jonathan. (2000). "Should We Pass the Buck?," in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 47:159–173.
- Dancy, Jonathan. (2004). *Ethics Without Principles*. Oxford University Press.
- Dancy, Jonathan. (2013). "Morality and Principle," in Bakhurst, D.J., Brad Hooker, & Margaret Little (eds.), *Thinking about Reasons*. Oxford University Press.
- DesAutels, Peggy. (2012). "Moral Perception and Responsiveness," in *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 43(3):334–346.
- Dodd, Julien. (2007). "Negative Truths and Truthmaker Principles," in *Synthese*, 156(2):383–401.
- Dretske, Fred. (1995). *Naturalizing the Mind*. MIT Press.
- Dretske, Fred. (1996). "Phenomenal Externalism, or If Meanings Ain't in the Head, Where Are Qualia?," in *Philosophical Issues*, 7:143–158.
- Enoch, David. (forthcoming). "How Principles Ground," in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*. Oxford University Press.
- Evans, Gareth. (1982). *Varieties of Reference*. Oxford University Press.
- Faraci, David. (2015). "A Hard Look at Moral Perception," in *Philosophical Studies*, 172(8):2055–2072.
- Firestone, Chaz & Brian J. Scholl. (2016). "'Moral Perception' Reflects Neither Morality Nor Perception," in *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 20(2):75–76.
- Gantman, Ana P. & Jay J. van Bavel. (2015). "Moral Perception," in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 19(11):631–633.
- Gibson, James J. (1979). *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Goldie, Peter. (2007). "Seeing What is the Kind Thing to Do: Perception and Emotion in Morality," in *Dialectica*, 61(3):347–361.
- Griffith, Aaron M. (2015). "How Negative Truths are Made True," in *Synthese*, 192(1):317–335.
- Grush, Rick. (2007). "Skill Theory V2.0: Dispositions, Emulation, and Spatial Perception," in *Synthese*, 159(3):389–416.

- Haddock, Adrian & Fiona Macpherson. (2008). "Introduction: Varieties of disjunctivism," in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*. Oxford University Press.
- Huemer, Michael. (2014). "Phenomenal Conservatism Uber Alles," in *Seemings and Justification: New Essays on Dogmatism and Phenomenal Conservatism*. Oxford University Press.
- Lyons, Jack C. (forthcoming). "Perception and Intuition of Evaluative Properties," in *Evaluative Perception*, Cowan Robert & Anna Berqvist (eds.). Oxford University Press.
- Lycan, William G. (2001). "The Case for Phenomenal Externalism," in *Philosophical Perspectives*, 15(s15):17–35.
- Matey, Jennifer. (2016). "Good Looking," in *Philosophical Issues*, 26(1):297–313.
- McBrayer, Justin P. (2010a). "A Limited Defense of Moral Perception," in *Philosophical Studies*, 149(3):305–320.
- McBrayer, Justin P. (2010b). "Moral Perception and the Causal Objection," in *Ratio*, 23(3):291–307.
- McGregor, Rafe. (2015). "Making Sense of Moral Perception," in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 18(4):745–758.
- Osiurak, F., C. Jarry, & D. Le Gall. (2010). "Grasping the affordances, understanding the reasoning: toward a dialectical theory of human tool use," in *Psychological Review*, 117(2):517–540.
- Parfit, Derek. (2011). *On What Matters*. Oxford University Press.
- Price, Richard. (2009). "Aspect-Switching and Visual Phenomenal Character," in *Philosophical Quarterly*, 59(236):508–518.
- Ross, W.D. (1939). *Foundations of Ethics*. Oxford University Press.
- Schroer, Robert. (2009). "Does the Phenomenality of Perceptual Experience Present an Obstacle to Phenomenal Externalism?," in *Philosophical Papers*, 39(1):93–110.
- Siegel, Susanna. (2011). *The Contents of Visual Experience*. Oxford University Press.
- Siegel, Susanna. (2014). "Affordances and the Contents of Perception," in *Does Perception Have Content?* Oxford University Press.
- Silins, Nicholas. (forthcoming). "Cognitive Penetration and the Epistemology of Perception," in *Philosophy Compass*.
- Spaulding, Shannon. (2015). "On Direct Social Perception," in *Consciousness and Cognition*, 36:472–482.
- Stapleford, Scott. (2015). "Epistemic Versus All Things Considered Requirements," in *Synthese*, 192(6):1861–1881.
- Tappolet, Christine. (2013). "Evaluative vs. Deontic Concepts," in *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*.
- Tappolet, Christine. (2014). "The Normativity of Evaluative Concepts," in *Mind, Values, and Metaphysics: Philosophical Essays in Honor of Kevin Mulligan, Volume 2*.

- Tucker, Chris. (2014). "If Dogmatists Have a Problem with Cognitive Penetration, You Do Too," in *Dialectica*, 68(1):35–62.
- Väyrynen, Pekka. (2008). "Some Good and Bad News for Ethical Intuitionism," in *Philosophical Quarterly*, 58(232):489–511.
- Väyrynen, Pekka. (forthcoming). "Doubts about Moral Perception," in *Evaluative Perception*. Oxford University Press.
- Werner, Preston J. (2014). "Moral Perception and the Contents of Experience," in *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 13(3):294–317.
- Werner, Preston J. (2017). "A Posteriori Ethical Intuitionism and the Problem of Cognitive Penetrability," in *European Journal of Philosophy*, 25(4):1791–1809.
- Werner, Preston J. (forthcominga-a). "Moral Perception Without (Prior) Moral Knowledge," in *Journal of Moral Philosophy*.
- Werner, Preston J. (forthcomingb-b). "A Posteriori Ethical Intuitionism and the Problem of Cognitive Penetrability," in *European Journal of Philosophy*.
- Wisnewski, J. Jeremy. (2015). "The Case for Moral Perception," in *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 14(1):129–148.
- Woodling, Casey. (2016). "The Limits of Adverbialism about Intentionality," in *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, 59(5):488–512.
- Zahavi, Dan. (2011). "Empathy and Direct Social Perception: A Phenomenological Proposal," in *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 2(3):541–558.