

Reply to the commentaries

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As the target essay itself is wide ranging, so, too, are the thoughtful and deeply appreciated commentaries submitted by fourteen commentators drawn from a variety of scholarly and professional disciplines. Several threads of criticism and approval run through a number of the commentaries, with yet new, different and still to be connected threads featured in others. For the sake of economy, it might be best for me to begin with a general reply that is intended to make relevant contact with all the commentaries, and then turn to the remarks of specific commentators in the order in which their wise and interesting words appear.

Perhaps what I did make sufficiently clear in the target essay itself was my recognition and, yes, approval of the *hybrid* nature of Psychology. It is at once a profession, a humanistic field of study, and a derived branch of the larger project that is the natural sciences. It cannot be expected to serve these different duchies simultaneously and with equal fidelity. The professional psychologist, withholding counsel and therapy until there is a fully developed *science* of human nature might just as well take early retirement. The student of human history and culture, who would frame a useful and ever more revealing picture of the human condition, might be of little service to the family whose children drug themselves to insensibility. The specialist in the psychophysics of pitch-discrimination cannot be expected to explain the unique auditory hallucinations suffered by the patient in Room 304. The three domains, though occasionally overlapping, are nonetheless provinces identified by methods of inquiry and explanation more or less suited to provincial needs and expectations. Only the incurable and radical positivist would predict total unification, and only the intemperate scold would condemn the partitions.

In offering psychophysics as exemplary, my intention was two-fold: First, to make clear that, in its enduring scientific aspirations, Psychology already possessed a set of methods and perspectives, as well as a broad and deep database, leaving no doubt about the authenticity of discipline's scientific credentials. Those entrusted with the serious task of educating the novice in the ways and wisdom of Psychology, and careful to make clear its place within the community of natural sciences, can have no better material than that supplied by the thick book of psychophysical research. My second and rather muted aim was to draw attention to the distinction between *measurement* and *counting*, between quantification and statistics, between functional laws and mere indications of tendencies. Once one appreciates just why it is that psychophysical findings enter effortlessly the domains that include biophysics, physics, neurophysiology, biochemistry,

optics and acoustics, one begins to appreciate the limitations – actually the *weirdness* – of that “analysis of variance” model that guides most (allegedly) scientific thinking in the discipline. These, then, are my reasons for focusing on psychophysics and I apologize to those (e.g., Professors Mammen and Schultz) for whom I had not made these reasons clearer.

To accept the hybridization of challenges and problems (and, therefore and inevitably, methods and perspectives) is *not*, however, to justify the trivial or misguided undertakings in any or all of the distinct provinces. Psychophysical research can be poorly done, therapies can make things worse, and cultural historians can be dangerously ignorant in their knowledge and profligate in their theories. What I was at pains to argue in the target essay is not that hybridization itself is problematical, but that the tendencies toward “nothing-but-ism” are strong and dominant in *all* the provinces. Thus, the “value-neutral” therapist, unwilling or unable to accept the ineliminably *moral* boundaries within which lives are actually lived, reduces the therapeutic arena to a conversational space filled with how-to tricks. Thus, the “scientist” assures students that all that makes, e.g., Proustian remembrances enthralling must be “controlled” (i.e., eliminated) so that the “main effect” of e.g., color-saliency can be investigated. When Goethe insisted in his *Farben Lehrer* that the Newtonian theory of optics explained everything except what we actually *see*, he was recording not the innocent ignorance of the poet but the profound recognition of a man of science that science itself must be made robust enough to accommodate its proper subject-matter.

Finally, by way of the more general features of my essay and replies to it, I should say a word more about the distinctions between *vocation* and *profession*. How reassuring it would be if (*pace!* Prof. Willert) being Danish, having tenure and not receiving grant-support were sufficient to ensure the flourishing of *vocations* in an academic world dominated by *professionalization*. The most cursory inspection of authoritative journals in Psychology *all over the world* will establish beyond doubt a nearly universal commitment to short-term, narrow, utterly ‘professionalized’ treatments of subjects otherwise and widely known to be vastly more complex and variegated when displayed by actual persons living actual lives. With or without tenure, whether Danish or Irish, our colleagues write for each other, often ignorant of or indifferent to the past, and generally when not officially indifferent to that larger world that is presumably the subject of their interests, if not their solicitude. I turn now to the specific commentaries, hopeful that my brevity will not

conceal the profound respect I have for the efforts expended in response to my target article.

In his characteristically thoughtful way, Prof. Bertelsen would seem to defend the maxim according to which *everything in nature is a melody that sings itself*, but adding to this the resonant relationships by which the things of nature become organically connected. With perceptual and cognitive life, the connectedness is toward and about things, it is *intentional* and, at the level of human activity, it is about intentionality itself. The different levels, on Prof. Bertelsen's account, must all be included, lest the highest levels of connectedness become "airy" owing to their separation from lower level (inorganic, evolutionary, biogenetic, etc.) phenomena. It is here that I would depart from the overall proposal, for I do not think that explanations at the level of the civic, the moral, the aesthetic and the transcendental are enriched in any way by reference to inorganic or (merely) biological processes. In this I sail directly against the mainstream but, I think, toward waters at once wider and richer. In a word, I believe continuing allegiance to the several (often conflicting) chapters in that thick book of positivism has outlived all attempts at justification. As for the hypothesizes resonances and modes of connectedness, I am inclined to offer as something of a "neutral" agent that of *information*; neutral in that it does not entail either matter or spirit, though it does entail means and ends, as well as an ontology rather less crude than "atoms and a void".

Shyam Cawasjee also speaks of "resonance", now between methods of inquiry and that irreducibly *moral* being active in the world. And, in citing on the same page one of the philosophers I most admire (Thomas Reid) and my favorite essay in the English language (*Culture and Anarchy*), he leaves me with little to do but applaud loudly! Arnold begins that essay with a melancholy acknowledgment of how Plato is received in the busy and prospering world of Victorian England. I began my own quite inferior essay with a nearly melancholy awareness of how the busy and prospering world of contemporary Psychology would receive the demands of a culture higher than its own.

Prof. Cawasjee writes approvingly of my critique, but notes that I have failed to locate human nature within that overall evolutionary context whereby man is properly 'naturalized'. Failure here, however, is intended, even stubborn. I have no settled position on the extent to which evolutionary theories are adequate or even useful as a means by which to understand human history, which is the fullest expression of human nature. Nor do I have a settled position on relationship between human and non-human animal life. Oh, of course, I accept all the well worked out details of evolutionary biology as refined by recent developments in molecular biology, etc. With William James, however, I understand that the appearance of a self-conscious and striving being – the transformation from the *hypothetical*, "If x is to survive, then such and such is necessary...", to the *declarative*, "We will survive, and therefore will do such and such..." – a radical shift takes place. There is all the difference between a psychological account of how a dependent creature adapts to the demands of the environment, and a creative, self-conscious creature demanding that the environment be

rendered suitable to its purposes. Moreover – and here I speak, if I may say, not only as an ethical vegetarian and, I hope, good friend to the entire animal creation – I do not regard the intrinsic worth of other forms of sentient life to depend upon the extent to which that sentience matches up with my own. I do not regard myself as what the right thinking ape would aspire to be, or the ape as what the really gifted short-haired pointer might at some time metamorphose into. Whatever the fate of species, the individual members have their precious allotment of time and frugal resources with which to fashion a form of life. At the level of civics, morality, aesthetics and the transcendent, I do not think much insight will be gained into our little lives by examining the adjustive prowess of rats or cats typically confined by us in places that are not their own. In a word, "evolution" has come to function like Moliere's *vis dormativa*. I require something rather more informing. Prof. Cawasjee's reference to the *Lyrical Ballads* converges on these thoughts of mine.

Prof. Engelsted cites Michael Scriven's old but still fresh diagnosis, going on to make the useful distinction between "field" and "domain". There has been prosperity in the former, a relative *status quo* in the latter, with fragmentation being the inevitable result. He notes the great progress in various *applied* fields of psychology, even while noting the Danish poet's verdict, that we study by the sweat of our brows what everyone knows already. Where I fail Prof. Engelsted is in my "debunking theory" in offering as a substitute the sort of homiletic wisdom for which Wittgenstein is (in)famous. Alas, I have been misunderstood *gravely* and accept blame as an author. I am no enemy of theory and I surely would prefer to failed theory to an inscrutable aphorism! The theory Prof. Engelsted would have me entertain – Aristotle's own – is one to which I devoted an entire book (*Aristotle's Psychology*, 1989), declaring it to be the most systematic and integrative account ever produced! And, no, Aristotle's psychology is *not* "iron age" and, as per my remarks above, it is *not* to my mind at all "updated" by way of Galileo or Darwin. As for my position on "naturalism", it is precisely Aristotle's and is thus capable of including among the "natural" things of the world both the political and the moral dimensions of life. What Galileo and Darwin (and especially the self-appointed disciples of both) would exclude from "natural" phenomena Aristotle was fully committed to include. Thus, "the *Polis* is of purely natural growth", he says. Rest assured, Prof. Engelsted, my "program", as it were, is every inch Aristotelian. As such – and in keeping with Aristotle – the animal world is worthy of study because it exists and is part of the reality we share with it. But there are properties that mark out each species as unique, and those that render us unique – the civic, the moral, the aesthetic and the transcendent – are the gift of special rational and deliberative powers that are neither shared with nor anticipated by forms of life here long before we arrived.

Robert George underscores and illuminates these themes, adding importantly the *juridical* perspective. He sees in the seasonal triumph of legal positivism consequences to jurisprudence akin to those psychology has suffered. I would merge remarks here with a comment on Prof. Hobson's critique which finds me getting awkwardly close to "deriding"

the work of others. Suppose Prof. George had claimed (as I think he would) that no finding in “cognitive neuroscience” would be of any value whatever in determining those principles of equity that should guide judges in cases involving unlawful stock manipulations. I doubt that Prof. Hobson would regard that judgment as at all derisive. What I would urge here is that the sorts of questions that seem to me to be entirely neglected in the business-as-usual world of Psychology are much more akin to questions of equity than to, say, how colour might be used as a memory-prime.

Prof. Hobson asks sensibly whether psychological research, at least in his own field of specialization, is teaching us important lessons regarding human mental life. He notes that the research on attachment has accomplished much and has led to significant developments in understanding and even treating autism. There is no reason why Prof. Hobson should know that I was a principal consultant to BBC and Public Broadcasting for the jointly produced series, *The Mind*, or that I actually gave the name to the first program in that series, *The Search for Mind*, urging that *autism* be centrally featured. Having said this, I might then suggest to Prof. Hobson that what he offers by way of rebuttal is actually a brief for the defendant! Research on autism, on infant-maternal attachment, on the resulting patterns of social life, which grounds civic life, is precisely what I am arguing for. Here is research that enters the world of lived lives and seeks to unearth chains of dependency and implication by which to explain the complexity and richness of the consequences that follow from the fact that, “Man is by nature a social animal”. To Prof. Hobson I can say no more than, *Well done*.

Professor Høgh-Olesen locates the constriction of methods and perspectives in the diverging philosophical traditions of British Empiricism and Continental Rationalism, and urges teachers to resist the temptation to render either hegemonic. He correctly (in my view) recognizes William James as anticipating many of my criticisms and failing (as I must) because unable to provide concrete alternatives. In this I believe Prof. Høgh-Olesen may be less than fair to James and to me, for to insist on alternatives that are *concrete* is to beg the very question that inspired the target article and, of course, the very question James examines in his rejection of every and any *block universe*. Alternatives must fit the phenomena worth studying and if these refuse to be collapsed into something static and concrete, so be it.

I applaud and admire Prof. Høgh-Olesen’s own research on what he calls “human morals and sociality”. With all respect, however, I would wonder on just what basis that research identified judgments or actions as “moral”. Were they obeisant to a calculus of utility? Were they guided by Kantian maxims? Were they in the service of an Aristotelian form of perfectionism? As for Milgram, my former student and now accomplished researcher, Prof. George Mastroianni at the U.S. Air Force Academy, wrote an important critical essay on the Milgram research, yet to be published. In that essay he makes clear that the defining features of the Camps and those who ran them were utterly unlike anything displayed by Milgram’s subjects. I note this merely to call attention to how easily one can “simulate” complex cultural and social forces by ignoring their unique and contextual grounding. Let’s recall Norbert

Wiener’s reminder that the best model of a cat is a cat – preferably *the same cat*. On the matter of external confirmations of models and explanations, I am sympathetic with Prof. Høgh-Olesen’s perspective, but would respectfully remind him that these conditions were satisfied not only by Galileo and his co-workers, but by the Witch Hunters and their co-workers. The fact that a practice is widely shared and even sanctioned by the texts in *Research Design and Statistics* may finally have no bearing whatever on the ultimate standing of the enterprise.

It is Prof. Mammen’s keen observation that a Psychology that follows my urgings might find a “sharp rivalry from literature and drama”, not to mention psychiatry and neuroscience. Avoiding this calls for Psychology to contribute something *of its own*, Prof. Mammen says, and then presents the instructive example of Einstein’s development of Special Relativity. Following the model, Prof. Mammen moved from basic psychophysical methods to more ecologically valid perceptual spaces in which the subject’s own intentionality adds to the phenomena features that elude a Gibsonian theory which would have *all* the information in the wavefront. Then, to accommodate this very complex subject/object ecology, Prof. Mammen must move from the category of the numerical to the category of *choice*, for the former – which may contain all pens – will fail to identify *my pen*, etc. My judgment here is that this imaginative and suggestive research is but one example of the class of questions arising within the enlarged framework of psychophysical investigations. These are not limited by some mechanical formula of “input” and “output”, but leave ample room for selective attention, stimulus salience, *d'* and comparable criteriological measures, etc. But a radically different set of methods and a quite different mode of conceptualization would be engaged if the query were now expanded to include the question, How does a given pen come to be regarded as *mine*? For now we might find ourselves distinguishing between the purely subjective state of regarding an object as one’s own, and the moral (juridical) state in which one has a *possessory right* to something, whether one knows it or not!

As for Mary Midgley, I do not recall a sentence of hers with which I have found myself in disagreement, and the same can be said of the philosophically acute pages that Edward Pols has contributed to the world of thought now for many decades. His *Mind Regained* could usefully replace most of the textbooks in cognitive psychology, the result being a net gain not only in perspective but, yes, in original research! He and I both have acknowledged debts to William James. Prof. Pols has repaid his debts with interest. In kindly frees me, however, from a burden I happily bear; namely, that of “equating a truly *psychological* psychology with metaphysics”. It was James’s famous claim that it is in just the sense that psychology is a science that “the waters of metaphysics” must leak in at every joint. There is, to be sure, more to Psychology and more that is different about it, than what we take to be “metaphysics”. But if metaphysics has as its two foundation stones the subjects of ontology (what there really *is*) and epistemology (how on earth we can ever *know* anything), then the domains of a truly psychological

Psychology and of Metaphysics will reveal whole continents of overlapping concern.

Prof. Shultz's worries about my psychophysical peregrinations have been addressed at the beginning of this reply. His use of Comte is, to be sure, sure-handed, but I worry that it was Comte's own optimism that had much to do with the muddle in which we find our discipline. J. S. Mill was won over early but wisely abandoned ship, chiefly because he knew that matters were rather more complicated than Comte wished them to be. This "father of Sociology" was content to assign roles on the basis of gender, to regard moral issues as fit for a kind of engineering solution, and to understand the most deeply moving features of human life as a vestigial feature of the age of superstition. We do not understand human nature more fully by first denying what defines it, then constructing a better version of it – though one never seen except in the pages of a book – and then explaining the model. But does Prof. Schulz understand me correctly in the matter of modes of inquiry and explanation? Alas, *YES!* Studies of basic and essentially universally distributed processes (color vision, pitch discrimination, heart-rate conditioning, carbohydrate metabolism) are best guided by quantitative methods of inquiry leading to general statistical and functional laws: $R = k \log S$, $F = ma$, etc. Studies of just how Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo are not to benefit from or be expected to culminate in such nomological efficiencies. With due respect to those feisty and agile logical atomists of the early 20th century, to be the daughter of Henry VIII is to be something more than and different from *the function of a variable*. By the time we give bulk and intelligibility to the notion of a "function" in such instances, we will discover that we've come up with a new way of speaking of daughters. As for Wundt, here we have a scholar of legendary proportions. His two-volume treatise in ethics still repays close attention; his multi-volume anthropological psychology anticipates much of today's "social constructionism". Unable to name comparably positive things about some others cited by Prof. Schultz, I will say nothing, except to note that they have either been exceptions to my characterization of dominant, mainstream psychology or have written in ways so obtuse or grandiose as give the mainstream all the justification it requires.

Henderikus Stam's brief but illuminating sketch of the Industrial Age and the emergence of a middle class adds much to my own sketch of professionalism and its consequences. The line that divides a wholesome individuality from the plodding and self-absorbed *entrepreneur* has become blurred too often in the academic world. The line that divides one's interests from the phenomena toward which that interest directs itself has also a history of blurring and thinning. Prof. Stam speaks of this with controlled concern and puts on notice all who would regard the real world as an object set before our

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eyes rather than, to some degree, already seen before it is observed.

In his direct and always summoning manner, Prof. Sternberg gets to the bottom of it: The snobbish devaluation of fields that are not "my own", leading inevitably to an ignorance of all alternatives, takes place in the competitive arena of grants and related measures of success to yield a fragmented cadre that is a community in name only. The divisions between science and practice, research and teaching, "pure" and applied – one can go on with the Balkanizations – urges us to find modes of reintegration. But how?

Prof. Westfall sees a parallel between the pedigree that seems to have ended with Mill, Bain, James and Wundt, and that which ended sometime between Florence in the *Quattrocento* and the reserved civic classicism of Philadelphia and the ports of North Carolina. He acutely recalls that the originating subject of Plato's *Republic* is psychology, not political science, but also that any firm distinction between the two must rest on a mistake. The good man – the *kalos anthropos* – and the good state are not merely models of each other but are co-creators of each other. In a manner nearly logical and formal in its entailments, this understanding makes of architecture a veritable nursery of virtue – or vice. "The degradation of the city into a mere market", notes Prof. Westfall, leads to a new productive capacity: The capacity to convert by the machinery of the market those who are machines themselves, now having "functions" where once there were civic duties shared by a community guided by common conceptions of the good and of the bad.

Finally, to that passionate and Danish psychologist, Prof. Willert, I can say that you have nothing less than a *vocation* that grounds your professionalism and thereby renders it a worthy model for the young. You may think that in this you are the beneficiary of a national life that has "...not scored high on the incidence of civil wars, class wars, colonial wars". In this you would be mistaken, looking here for a "cause" where only *reasons* can explain. To mention just a few whose own national lives were surrounded by what Denmark has been spared, I cite only Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Dante, Shakespeare, Hobbes, Locke, Jefferson and Lincoln. And most of them needed patrons – "grants", so to speak – and influential supporters. Think of Plato trying to pump sense into the heads of lazy young aristocrats or Aristotle trying to make a case for the intrinsic worth of knowing about the cuttlefish. Our problems, Sir, are in neither stars nor our national histories, but in ourselves.