

Linguistic Research Institute
Report No. 37

APPRAISAL

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The concept of appraisal is one of the most widely used concepts in Descriptive Psychology. However, it has appeared to be a rather slippery notion. In part, this appearance reflects an insufficiently precise placement of the concept within the overall conceptual structure. In turn, the placement problem reflects the fact that the concept of appraisal was introduced into the Descriptive Psychology literature in some half a dozen different places at different times, independently. As a result, there is some question as to whether the same concept is involved in each of these cases.

Thus, it is appropriate to review the several usages and examine their alignment.

The paradigmatic uses of the term "appraisal" appear in (a) the definition of "appraisal," (b) the formulation of emotional behavior, (c) the Judgment Diagram, (d) the Actor-Observer-Critic schema, (e) the formulation of the phenomenon of status assignments, and (f) the formulation of consciousness and altered states of consciousness. These and other uses are reviewed and explicated below.

A. Definition

The concept of appraisal is defined as follows. "An appraisal is a description which tautologically (i.e., as such) carries motivational significance." To paraphrase, an appraisal is a description such that if a person makes that discrimination (given by the description), it follows logically that he has a certain motivation. (It does not, of course, follow that he acts on that motivation.

The contrast term for appraisal is "mere description" (see, e.g., Felknor, 1977) "The lion is a danger to me" is an appraisal; "The wall is to my left" is a mere description. To recognize that I am in danger from the lion is to be motivated to escape the danger. To recognize that the wall is to my left is not, as such, to be motivated in any way at all; so also for recognizing that the wall is brown, or that he is in danger, or that the table is in the room, etc., etc.

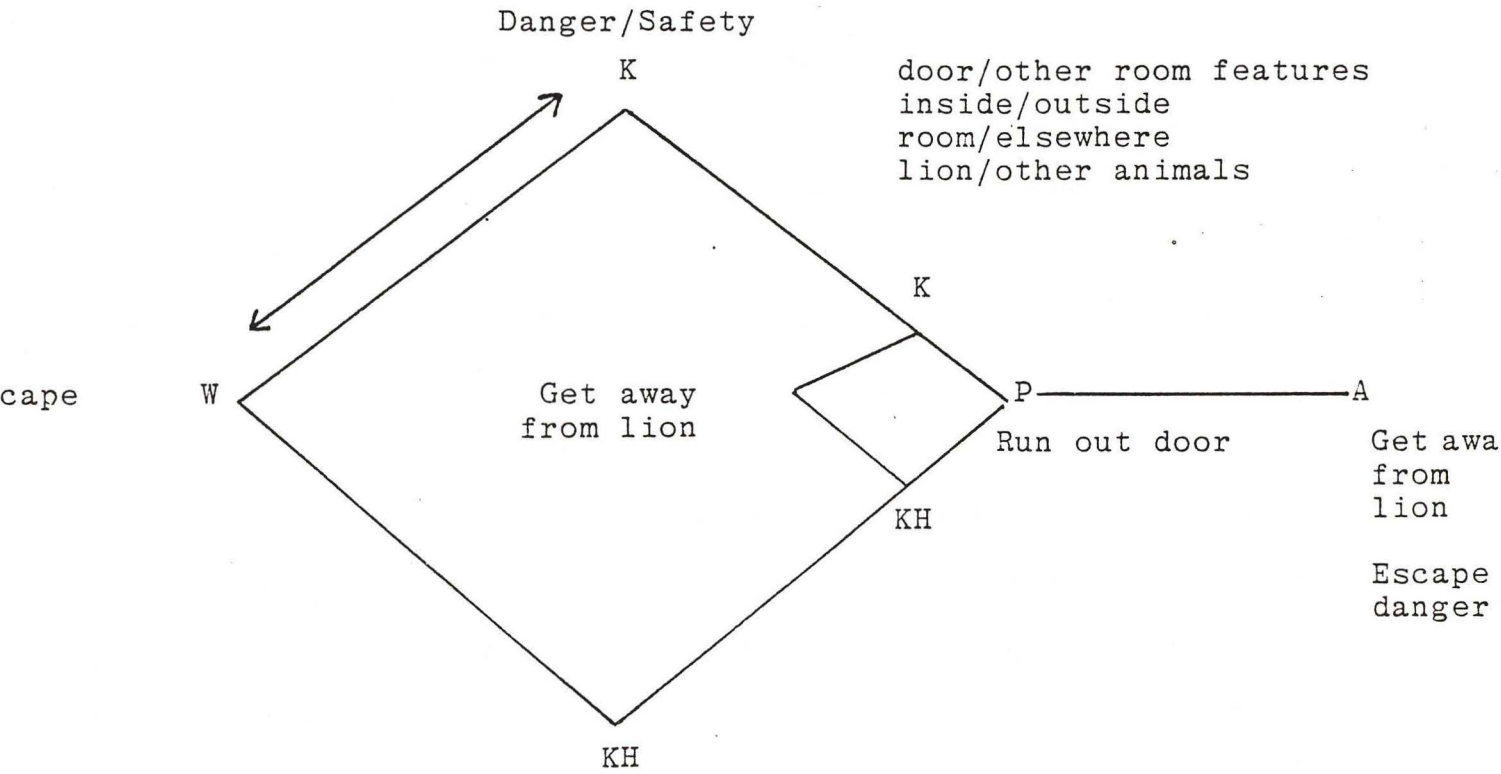
The definition as such appears to be entirely straightforward. However, it is clear that it has a variety of implications which stem from systematic connections to other concepts.

B. Emotional Behavior

The standard heuristic example of emotional behavior is the case where a lion walks into the room and I run out the door and into another room, slamming the door behind me. The full example fits the guideline of "If there ever was a case of emotional behavior, this is one." The behavior is diagrammed in Figure 1.

Formally, the diagram is a Significance Description, i.e., a case where one behavior (the outer diamond; escaping the danger) is accomplished by engaging in another behavior (the inner diamond; getting away from the lion). The features which are specific to this particular example are contained in the inner diamond; the features which are common to fear behavior per se are contained in the outer diamond in this representation. The latter is what makes this behavior a case of fear behavior.

Figure 1. Paradigm example of emotional behavior



The bidirectional arrow in the diagram connecting the discriminated reality basis (danger) and the motivation (to escape the danger) indicates that an appraisal is involved.

This appraisal is the essentially emotional aspect of the behavior, and it is what accounts for the occurrence of the behavior. It is because the lion is a danger to me that it is desirable for me to get away from the lion and I am so motivated.

Note that the logical form of the appraisal is a state of affairs judgment, a judgment about a relation between the lion and myself, i.e., the lion endangers me or, conversely, I am in danger from the lion. (Recall Transition Rule 8a from "What Actually Happens" [Ossorio, 1971/1978], i.e., "That a given object or process or event has a given relation to another object or process or event is a state of affairs.")

That such a judgment is necessarily relativistic is obvious -- when the lion is a danger to me it is not necessarily a danger to anyone else. Because of this relativity there is also an essential difference between first person judgment and third person judgments. For me to recognize that I am in danger from the lion is to be motivated to escape; for me to see that he is in danger from the lion is not, as such, to be motivated in any way at all. (Of course, if I recognize that he needs my help because he is in danger, I may well be motivated to help, but then we are no longer talking about fear, or about emotion, either -- it is a different appraisal that is involved.)

To say that to recognize that I am in danger is to be motivated to escape is to suggest that there is a phenomenon, i.e., appraisal, which has both cognitive and motivational

aspects. Such a notion violates a strong intellectual tradition, one in which we have made not only a categorical distinction between the two (cognition and motivation are logically distinct kinds of things) but also an ontological one (cognition and motivation occur as distinct phenomena). Thus, we have the classic philosophical questions about "How could a mere cognition move us to action?" and "Aren't all our cognitions slaves in the service of our passions, because only our passions can really move us to behave?" One current form of this question is "How can a mere moral judgment be sufficient for moral behavior to ensue?"

Now of course, we already have an example of a phenomenon which has both cognitive and motivational aspects, namely behavior which has eight parameters, including a cognitive parameter and a motivational one. What we require here, however, is a stronger connection, and a more occasional one, since not every cognition corresponds to a characteristic motivation and not every motivation corresponds to a characteristic cognition.

On critical review, the answer to "How could a mere cognition move us to action?" proves not to be very mysterious. But the question itself is somewhat misleading to begin with.

The key notion in this connection is found in "Meaning and Symbolism" (Ossorio, 1969/1978). In that formulation, the fundamental form of cognition and description of the real world is "This is a situation which calls for behavior X"; from this we can derive as a special case, "This is a situation which calls for description Y." The first of these corresponds to an

appraisal and the second corresponds to a "mere description."

Note that there need not be anything else that is common to all situations which call for behavior X other than that they all call for behavior X. In general, there is in fact nothing that we know of that is common and therefore nothing common that we are depending on in making the judgment that behavior X is called for. For example, there is nothing common to all situations which call for trying to escape other than that they call for trying to escape.

To be sure, we may establish empirical connections between descriptions and situations which call for trying to escape. For example, situations describable as "There's a lion ten feet away from me" are often situations which call for trying to escape, but only often, not necessarily and not always.

But what about "danger?" surely, that is a description of something necessarily common to all situations that call for trying to escape. To be sure. However, it is not a second such description. A fortiori, it is not a reference to a special kind of cognition which somehow moves us to action. Rather, "danger" is what we call a situation that calls for trying to escape. This is the unexciting reason why a description or cognition can tautologically carry motivational significance and why, ultimately, to see oneself as being in danger is to be motivated to escape.

Some elaboration on the foregoing would, of course, be needed in a comprehensive treatment of fear and emotions generally. For example, we might decide that "danger" covers only some of the situations which call for trying to escape,

pointing to noxious, disgusting, irritating, or annoying sights, sounds, smells, etc. as other species within the same genus. (We might, however, decide that, properly speaking, these other situations only call for getting away, not specifically for escaping.) In that case, we might elaborate the formulation and say, e.g., that "danger" covers situations that call for trying to escape in order to avoid injury (broadly conceived as a condition of reduced behavior potential). However, at that point we might well stop trying to make other locutions do the job that "danger" was specifically designed for, and simply say that danger calls for escaping. That requires no commitment as to whether anything else calls for escaping or whether the situations we identify as dangerous have anything else in common.

We might also raise the question of universality in a different form. We might ask, are there forms of pathology or atypical states of mind in which I might recognize that I am in danger but not be motivated to escape? Briefly:

(a) We do have a familiar use of "danger" which is not an appraisal, namely the third-person use ("he is in danger"). We might, therefore, imagine that on a given occasion I say "I am in danger" essentially as a third-person description, in the same spirit as "He is in danger."

(b) If we suppose that such anomalous descriptions occur, we also have to suppose a radical degree of self-detachment which, over any extended period, would almost certainly correspond to a pathological state. We might also suppose a developmental deficit in which only the third-person use was learned while the

first-person use was only verbally learned. Such a deficit would produce a radical degree of self-detachment. Anomalies of these kinds can be formulated as anomalies of Actor-Observer-Critic functioning.

(c) Being motivated to escape injury is tautologically related to valuing safety and integrity. If I did not value my safety or integrity, I could not be afraid, and I could only understand "I am in danger" as I would "He is in danger."

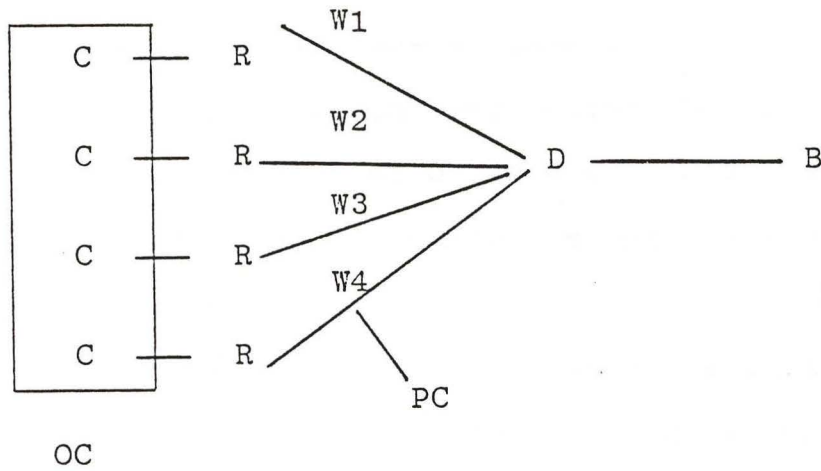
(d) The locution "a situation which calls for trying to escape" does not entirely do justice to the appraisative force of "danger" and that may encourage us to minimize the difference between first-person appraisal and their-person description. A more direct formulation, and one which is more Actor oriented as against Observer oriented, is "a situation to escape from."

C. The Judgment Diagram

The Judgment Diagram is a schema for reconstructing a behavior as a case for Deliberate Action. A case of Deliberate Action is one in which you know what behavior you are enacting and have chosen to do it. The schema is shown in Figure 2.

The Judgment Diagram reflects the following: For a given behavior, B, with a given overall set of circumstances, OC, there are particular circumstances, C, which provide reasons, R, of various kinds for and against enacting the behavior. Each of these reasons carries a certain amount of weight, W, with the person in question. These weights reflect the person's person characteristics. Given the pros and cons, the person makes a decision, D, which is implemented by enacting the behavior, B.

Figure 2. Judgment Diagram



OC - Overall Circumstances

C - Particular Relevant Circumstances

R - Reasons (Hedonic, Prudential, Ethical, Aesthetic)

W - Weights

PC - Person Characteristics

D - Decision

B - Behavior

By convention, four reasons are shown in the diagram (corresponding to Hedonic, Prudential, Ethical, and Aesthetic); for actual behavior, there will generally be many more reasons than that.

Where does appraisal have a place in this picture? In the identification of the relevant particular circumstances (facts) and in the correspondence (shown as one-to-one in the diagram) between those particular circumstances and the reasons for and against enacting the behavior.

Literally and categorically, a reason is a state of affairs (in the vernacular, a fact). Literally and categorically, a circumstance, and one's circumstances, are states of affairs. In the Judgment Diagram, each reason, R, and its corresponding circumstances, C, represent the same state of affairs.

How does this come about? Certainly it is neither a pre-established harmony nor a historical accident. Rather, it is the result of appraisal. We routinely evaluate our overall circumstances in regard to their significance for us. In doing so, we identify particular circumstances as being relevant in this regard. Their relevance consists in their motivational/behavioral significance and it is their having this significance which we mark by calling them reasons.

Since in making such appraisals what we do is to pick out the motivationally significant states of affairs, it is indeed the case that "An appraisal is a description which tautologically carries motivational significance."

D. Actor-Observer-Critic

The A-O-C formulation is perhaps the earliest occasion on which the concept of appraisal was introduced explicitly (the initial terminology was Critic/Appraiser and Observer/Describer). As a matter of fact, there are two versions of Actor-Observer-Critic.

In the first version (the "methodological version"), Actor refers to the general case of a person behaving; Observer/Describer refers to a case of a person describing some behavior; Critic/Appraiser refers to a person appraising a description of behavior. The conceptual relations among them are such that Observer/Describer is a special case of Actor and Critic/Appraiser is a special case of Observer/Describer. It can be shown (Ossorio, 1972) that facts of each of the three sorts are necessary if there is to be a science of behavior.

In the second version (the "clinical version") Actor, Observer, and Critic refer to three primary statuses that persons, as such, have. The "job" model of statuses has heuristic value here -- these are three jobs which a person must master in order to operate paradigmatically as a person. The three job descriptions are as follows.

As an Actor, a person acts on his inclinations, desires, impulses, wants, etc. In doing so he acts spontaneously and creatively, assimilating the world to his activities and projects. As an Observer, a person merely notes what is the case, what is happening, how things are. As a Critic, a person evaluates how things are and how things are going. If things are

going well enough, the Critic appreciates that and doesn't interfere. If things are not going well enough, the Critic formulates a "diagnosis" of what is wrong and a "prescription" for how to try to improve matters.

This version of Actor-Observer-Critic provides a formulation of human self-regulation and the logical structure is essentially that of a negative-feedback loop (either the Critic's appreciation of the "prescription" or both is the feedback). In light of this, it can be seen that the first version of Actor-Observer-Critic has the same structure and provides a model for the social self-regulation of the social enterprise of behavioral science (or any other social enterprise as well).

The Critic task is complex, involving more than one sort of appraisal and involving more than merely appraisal. The first sort of appraisal, i.e., "Are things satisfactory?" clearly involves both the competence to make this kind of judgment and some set of standards for making particular judgments. In the case of things being unsatisfactory, the question is, "unsatisfactory in what way?" (Procedurally, of course, one might go directly to "things are unsatisfactory in this way," and that would preempt the question of whether things were satisfactory or not.)

Here, the phenomenon appears to be the same as that involved in the judgment diagram. That is, the person evaluates his circumstances and identifies the particular circumstances (states of affairs) which are motivationally relevant to his behaviors and behavioral choices. (Maxims: (a) A person values some states of affairs over others and acts accordingly. (b) A person

requires that the world be one way rather than another in order to have a reason to act in one way rather than another.)

It is the formulation discrimination, or description, of such states of affairs which constitutes the first appraisal (satisfactory vs. unsatisfactory) and the second appraisal (satisfactory or unsatisfactory in what way). Depending on the account of what is wrong, the "prescription" may be as nominal as "try again" or "Do something else," in which case the primary burden of improving matters would fall to the creativity of the person in his job as Actor. Or it may be as detailed and specific as a computer program, in which case the Actor would have little contribution beyond following instructions.

E. Status Assignment

It is a truism that in the real world, anything has some relationship to anything else, and this holds not merely for particular individuals, including human ones, but also for organizations, collectivities, systems, situations, events, occurrences. For any given thing, X, but most importantly people, a person's relationship to X provides reasons, and some opportunities as well, to treat X in one way rather than another.

To treat X in one way rather than another is to participate jointly with X in a given social practice rather than another; in the chosen practice, the person and X each play one of the parts, or positions. More technically, each is (embodies) one of the formal individuals specified in the Process Description of the practice.

When it comes to how persons interact with each other we may

consider what possibilities are formally available and what restrictions may operate on a given person's selection from these possibilities. In regard to the first, we can say that the possibilities are given by the social practices and institutions (which are organized sets of social practices) of the community. Such practices and their groupings tend to be strongly conservative, especially when taken as a whole, but they are susceptible to modification, incrementation, elaboration, and replacement through invention or borrowing.

In regard to the second, restrictions stem from a person's other relationships, his person characteristics, the broader scope activities he is implementing via his present behavior, social norms of appropriateness, the other person's characteristics and inclinations, particular circumstances, and so on.

Facts which constitute such restrictions and opportunities correspond, in one way or another, to the person's hedonic, prudential, ethical, and aesthetic reasons for and against engaging in a given practice or engaging in it in a given way. The facts which constitute the person's reasons either literally are some of these (which is rare) or they are accounted for by them. For example, it is because the politician is ambitious that election to a higher office would be satisfactory and advantageous; that it would be satisfying in certain ways would be a hedonic reason for running for that office. That it would be satisfying in certain other ways would be an aesthetic reason for running. That it would be advantageous would be a prudential

reason for running. If circumstances provided a good prospect of election those reasons would be stronger than if there was only a fair prospect of success. (To be sure, for example, his relationships with other members of his political party might well result in even stronger reasons not to run at all.)

For present purposes, it is perhaps sufficient to say that (a) it has so far proved impossible to formulate a set of circumstances such that only one behavioral choice is open to a person (this is not merely because, as the Existentialists have noted, one can always choose to die instead), and (b) it is highly implausible that any such attempt will ever be successful (it is only through strong categorical stipulations, not actual specifications, that 'determinism' with respect to behavior has managed even a semblance of plausibility).

Thus, no matter what we might have to say practically in particular cases about "how much choice he really had," it is formally appropriate (and unavoidable, if we stick to the facts we actually have and don't make anything up) to speak of the person choosing what he does. The technical notion of status assignment corresponds to this notion of choice, though it is not a technical paraphrase of it.

Choosing one's behavior is far more than choosing one's postures and movements (indeed, those are seldom included at all in what one chooses). Archetypally, the choice is the choice of which behavior pattern (social practice) to enact jointly with the other animate or inanimate party or parties. But in choosing this, we must choose the part that each Other is to play, since, our options and further choices of particular behaviors involving

the Other depend on that. (Compare: In order to have a baseball game, we not only choose up sides, but we also have to settle on which position each person is to play. If we don't there will be no game.) The part that the other is to play in the social practice is his status within the practice on that occasion; choosing that part for the Other to play is the assigning of that status to him.

The assignment of a status to an individual may be done within any context or domain in which there are statuses. A single social practice on a given occasion is a very restricted context. Most commonly, statuses are assigned more broadly, within organizational, institutional, or cultural contexts, and these provide guidelines and restrictions for status assignments in narrower contexts such as particular practices or particular episodes.

The preceding articulations of the concept of status assignment does raise questions about the relation of that concept to the concept of appraisal. Is making a status assignment really a case of "A description which, tautologically, carries a motivational significance?" Is it really a case of evaluating circumstances in regard to their motivational significance?

The latter is closer to the mark. There is a genuine parallel between appraising the lion as constituting a danger to me and assigning John the status of being a friend of mine, for we might also speak of assigning the lion the status of a danger to me and of appraising John as a friend of mine.

In this connection it should be recalled that there is a close relationship between the concepts of relationship and status. Briefly, the fact that a given person has a certain status within a given domain is equivalent to the fact that he has the totality of relationships that he does with the other elements in that domain, and that implicates the interrelationships among those other elements. And, for example, a relationship constitutes a limiting case of a status, i.e., it involves two statuses within a two-element domain.

Thus, if appraisal is keyed to the concept of a relationship (between the appraiser and what is appraised) and status assignment is keyed to the concept of place or position, then it is not surprising that the concepts of appraisal and status assignment can be used interchangeably over a wide range of cases.

At least one difference remains. In general, the term "appraisal" is used when there is a presumption that a certain relationship already holds and the appraisal is a way of recognizing that. (For example, the lion is already a danger to me at the time when I appraise him as dangerous.) In contrast, "status assignment" is used primarily to refer to cases where the presumption is that the relationship or positioning is at least partly created by the assigning of a status. (For example, when I describe James as assigning Carrie the status of rescuer, I do not presume that Carrie was already that, though it is not unlikely that James does.)

Correspondingly, the assigning of a status raises questions which making an appraisal does not raise. These include (a)

whether the other person (if it is a person who is involved) accepts the status and (b) how well the person does at it. In contrast, we do not expect to raise such questions in regard to the lion. thus, there is a pragmatic difference between saying that I appraise John as a friend and saying that I assign him the status of "friend."

F. Final Order Appraisal and Reality

The notion of a final order appraisal stems from the fact that any appraisal may be superseded by another appraisal. A later appraisal may completely change the significance of an earlier appraisal, and a still later third appraisal may completely change the significance of the second appraisal and so on. Thus, until such a sequence comes to an end, nothing is settled. A final order appraisal is, therefore, one which still has currency at the time is so described, either because it was acted on or simply because it has not been superseded.

What a person takes to be real is what he is prepared to act on and conversely. Since a person cannot act on appraisals he has not yet made, it follows that a person acts on his final order appraisals. Final order appraisals correspond to what a person takes to be real. In the light of the preceding discussion of status assigning, we may say, correspondingly, that a person acts on his final order status assignments and that these correspond to what he takes to be real.

Although in the main the connections between final order appraisal and what a person acts on and takes to be real are tautological, there is some further logical complexity involved.

For example, appraising an apparent object or state of affairs (etc.) as real does not consist of attributing some additional characteristic to it. If I decide that there really is a lion walking into the room, I have not thereby attributed a new characteristic to the lion or the situation that I see; rather, I am now prepared to act on what I see.

Because no new characteristic is involved, one could describe my behavior without reference to the appraisal at all. In the example of the lion walking into the room, as diagrammed in Figure 1, this would amount to eliminating the outer diamond and retaining the inner diamond. In that case we would speak only of my distinguishing the lion, the room (etc.), and of my motivation to get away from the lion, and of my running out the door. To be sure, that kind of account would leave open the question of why I would do such a thing on such an occasion, but there are always other resources for supplying an answer, e.g., there was something about my learning history which accounts for that.

Clearly, I would have no use for the concept of "real" if I were not prepared sometimes to reject as unreal (illusory, fake, counterfeit, deceptive, insincere, mistaken, etc.) something that I would otherwise have taken to be the case and acted on. Indeed, for an individual who we take it is incapable of making the distinction of real vs. unreal, e.g., a laboratory rat, parsimony requires that we eliminate any reference to the appraisal of something as being real or unreal and speak only of the distinction (the state of affairs concept; the mere description) being acted on. In contrast, if I am an individual

who routinely distinguishes between something being real and its being unreal, then the description above holds, and whatever distinctions I act on are what I take to be real.

It is not the case, of course, that if I take something to be real I do so by virtue of any explicit procedure (of any kind) of appraising it as real. That would be impossible, since it would involve an impossible infinite regress of such procedures. Rather, since real-unreal is part of the cognitive framework within which a person normally operates, the issue of what is real and what is not can be handled effectively primarily on a policy basis, with explicit appraisals being made on an ad hoc basis. The policy in question is familiar in the form of a maxim, i.e., "A person takes it that things are as they seem unless he has reason enough to think otherwise."

G. Objective Appraisal: Truth, Beauty, and Goodness (etc.)

We have already noted that there is a crucial difference between first-person appraisals ("I am in danger") and third-person descriptions ("He is in danger") in that the former is logically connected to my wanting to escape and the latter is not logically connected to either my wanting to escape or his wanting to escape (he may not recognize that he is in danger).

In contrast, when I say "That's beautiful" or "That's true," or "That's bad," I do not mean "To me, that's beautiful" or "For me, that's true" or "From my point of view, that's bad," or anything of the kind. When I appraise something as true, beautiful, or bad (etc.), I do not mean that it has a certain relationship to me. Thus, judging that something is true, ugly,

or bad is not a paradigmatic appraisal like judging that something is a danger to me. But neither is it a mere description like "He is in danger." (It is because it is, among other things, a linguistic community, that one can speak with, in this sense, authority.)

Rather, what is involved is the notion of talking objectively, i.e. from an objective point of view. To speak objectively is to speak as "one of us," as a representative of a linguistic (among other things) community. that contrasts with merely speaking for oneself. It is comparable to serving as a juror, where one judges on the basis of what one would, properly, say on the basis of the admissible evidence rather than, say, on the basis of a personal impression or a preference as to what one would like to be the case. (Compare the degradation ceremony analysis (Garfinkel, 1956; Ossorio, 1971/1978) where both the Denouncer and the Witness act as representatives of the community.)

Much has been said and written on the topic of objectivity and subjectivity in judgments or descriptions. Much that has been written or said appears to equate objectivity with truth and subjectivity with bias. Often objectivity has been equated with the absence of bias, and social scientists are prone to despair of the very possibility of objectivity, so conceived. (For such persons, even their concern would have to be taken to be biased. Then need we really be concerned?)

In the present formulation, there are no such equations. For example, far from equating objectivity with truth, I would say that speaking objectively is a precondition for speaking

falsely or truly or for speaking correctly or incorrectly. (Only a statement can be true or false, and making a statement requires the idiom and the notion of objectivity.)

At face value, I am speaking objectively when I say that it's true that the cat is on the mat or that the painting is beautiful or that the action was bad, etc. It is precisely because in speaking objectively I am acting as a representative of a community that what I say makes a claim (which may be rejected) on other members of the community. (Compare: When the jury finds the defendant innocent (or guilty), it thereby commits the community to treating the defendant accordingly; normatively, the commitment is honored, though in particular cases it may be rejected or qualified.)

One could say that the claim is that this is what we would, properly, say on the matter; in saying it's true that the cat is on the mat (etc.), I am merely saying what one of us would, properly, say about that. However, note that my reason for saying that the painting is ugly (etc.) is not that that is what one of us would, properly, say. That may be the case, but it could hardly be my reason.

The picture is beautiful. It's true that the cat is on the mat. Hitting him was a bad thing to do. One could say that that is how things are for us. But it is not the case that that is how things are for us for us. Rather, for us, that is how things are, period.

In such matters, it matters who is talking, who one is talking to, and who or what one is talking about. (Compare: "He

is in danger" vs. "I am in danger.") When I speak to another one of us, my reason for saying that the picture is ugly (etc.) is simply that that is how it is; my justification is not that that is what one of us would, properly, say, but rather, that (any) one of us, including me, can see that that is so or can tell that that is so. It is because of that that that is what one of us would, properly, say; it is because of that that the community would, and in that sense, does, have a position on the matter. It is only when I speak to an outsider (someone who is not one of us) or in light of a possible outsider that it would make sense to relativize, to disclaim, to say that that's the way it is for us, where "us" excludes the outsider.

The question of whether the community has a position on a given matter is an important one, since that is not always the case. For example, a community is likely not to have a position on the question of whether chocolate ice cream tastes better than strawberry or on whether team A is a better team than team B or on whether it's better to be introverted than extroverted, or whether law is a more socially useful occupation than accounting, or whether the experiment ought to have been done differently and so on and on. If the community has no position on a given matter, then there is no objective judgment to be made on the matter either.

The community's position on a given matter is normative, and in that sense, appraisative, rather than merely descriptive or narrowly empirical. For example, the community would not have a position on whether chocolate ice cream tastes better than strawberry even if it were the case that everyone in the

community in fact preferred the taste of chocolate. The test of the difference lies in the community reaction to a hypothetical person who said "I like strawberry better." The reaction would be "Well, you're an exception," not "you're wrong. Chocolate tastes better."

In turn, such restrictions are not merely empirical. One of the matters on which a community will have a position is precisely on which matters the community has a position. The items mentioned above (chocolate vs. strawberry, etc.) for example, are among those on which our community's position is not merely that the community does not have a position on them, but that it shouldn't (or that it shouldn't try to or claim to, since it wouldn't make sense).

How is objective judgment possible at all? The question only arises in light of the traditional practice of equating objectivity with a guarantee of truth or with the absence of bias. If we eschew such transcendental postulates, we are left with nothing more mysterious than a person acting as a representative of a community, and that is no more mysterious than a person acting as a banker, a mother, a Baptist, a juror, a printer, etc. (Ossorio, 1983, p. 35 ff).

In being a banker, I appraise my circumstances from a banker's position, or perspective, and I find relevant those circumstances that would be relevant to a banker. I have the reasons that a banker would have in those circumstances. In acting as a banker, I act on those reasons without reference to any other reasons I might have as a person, and particularly, I

do not act on any reasons which conflict with those which I have as a banker. If I fail in either respect, I have done a bad job as a banker. (Maxim: In a social system, a person views events in light of the values and concerns which go with his position in the system.)

When it comes to acting as a representative of a community there is clearly a significant potential for doing a bad job of it in just this way. Since I have other statuses I may act on those, or I may just act as myself rather than as a representative. In the latter case, it will make sense to speak of my judging subjectively. In both cases it will make sense to speak of my being biased. In the former case it will make sense to say that my judgment is objective. In neither case is my judgment guaranteed to be false or incorrect.

H. Summary

Upon review, it appears that the notion of appraisal is used consistently in the various paradigmatic forms encountered in the Descriptive Psychology literature. The single greatest lack of correspondence is found between the concept of status assignment and that of appraisal. The pragmatic force of "status assignment" involves primarily the creation of a status of relationship; the pragmatic force of "appraisal" involves primarily the recognition of an existing status or relationship.

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