

# WITTGENSTEIN AND HOMUNCULAR PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS

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*Em seus livros recentes, Consciousness e Judgement and Justification, William Lycan sugere que a combinação de uma ontologia agregativa e uma epistemologia 'de cima para baixo' é capaz de bloquear a objeção, de tipo Ryleano, de que as teorias homunculares em psicologia levam a uma regressão infinita. Segundo a combinação proposta, capacidades e atividades caracterizadas em termos intencionais seriam explicadas por referência a homúnculos. Argumento que o defensor dessa proposta enfrenta um dilema. Se alguma forma de redução de tipo é empregada para bloquear a regressão, a diversidade psicológica fica indevidamente restringida. Mas se o teórico homuncular não usar reduções de tipo, então ou não obterá leis psico-funcionais, ou a regressão não poderá ser impedida. Minha conclusão é que este dilema pode ser resolvido incorporando-se idéias dos últimos escritos de Wittgenstein a uma teoria psicológica homuncular.*

*In his recent books Consciousness and Judgement and Justification, William Lycan suggests that the collaboration of an aggregative ontology and a top-down epistemology "ingeniously blocks the standard Rylean infinite-regress objection to homuncular theories in psychology". According to such a collaboration, intentionally characterized abilities and activities are accounted for by making reference to homunculi. I will argue that the advocate of such a collaboration faces the following dilemma. If any form of type-reduction is used in order to block the regress, then psychological diversity is implausibly restricted. In contrast, if the homuncular theorist does not make use of type-reductions, then either no psycho-functional laws are forthcoming, or the regress objection cannot be blocked. My conclusion will be that this dilemma can be resolved by incorporating insights from the later writings of Wittgenstein into a homuncular psychological theory.*

Following the lead of such authors as Daniel Dennett and Jerry Fodor, William Lycan, in his recent books *Consciousness and Judgement and Justification*, suggests that the collaboration of an aggregative ontology and a top-down epistemology "ingeniously blocks the standard Rylean infinite regress objection to homuncular theories in psychology" (Lycan 1987, p. 40). According to Lycan, psychologists who adopt a methodology incorporating such a collaboration will begin with some intentionally characterized ability or activity of the sentient subject and then posit, as theoretical entities, intentionally characterized subsystems, homunculi, to explain the subject's hav-

ing that ability or performing that activity (*ibid.*). The idea is that the homuncular theorist understands a sentient creature as a kind of corporate entity – “an integrated system of intercommunicating ‘departments’ that cooperatively go about the business of *interpreting* the stimuli that impinge on the corporate organism and of producing the appropriate behavioral responses” (Lycan 1988, p. 5; my emphasis). Because homunculi interpret the stimuli that impinge on the corporate organism, and because interpretation is an intentional activity involving both intentional abilities and activities, the homuncular theorist is led to introduce “further, smaller homunculi” in order to explain the intentionally characterized abilities and activities of the previously posited subsystems.

The picture that emerges is one in which the intentionally characterized abilities and activities of sentient subjects are explained by positing levels of homunculi, where the levels gradually descend in terms of the complexity of the intentionally characterized abilities and activities attributed to the homunculi at each level. Because the intentionally characterized abilities and activities at any given level are not accounted for by positing subsystems having the *same* intentionally characterized abilities and activities, “but by positing a team consisting of several smaller, individually less talented and more specialized” intentionally characterized subsystems (Lycan 1987, p. 40), Lycan concludes that the standard Rylean infinite regress objection to homuncular theories has been blocked.

Given this brief outline of Lycan’s homuncular theory, the question to ask is: What are the costs of blocking the infinite regress objection to homuncular theories in this manner? In what follows I will argue that the homuncular theorist faces a dilemma. If, at some stage in the decompositional analysis, intentionally characterized abilities and activities are type-identified with abilities and activities characterized non-intentionally in homuncular functionalist terms, then psychological diversity is implausibly restricted. In contrast, if intentionally characterized abilities and activities cannot, at any stage in the decompositional analysis, be type-reduced to non-intentionally characterized abilities and activities, the homuncular functionalist is left without psychological (psychofunctional) laws. After examining these problems, I will consider the possibility that the problem of the dilemma’s second horn can be dissolved by incorporating insights from the later writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein.

The problem posed by the first horn of the dilemma is one that Lycan must address. The reason for this rests with his claim that every intentionally characterized ability or activity can be type-identified with a non-intentional, functionally characterized, ability or activity. Because he intends the type-identification to be a “*reductive type-identification*” (Lycan 1988, p. 34; my emphasis), Lycan is led to say that “a typical homunculist explication will take the form ‘To be in mental state S is for one’s [sub- ... sub-personal]  $\emptyset$ -er to be in some functional state  $S(\emptyset)$ ’” (Lycan 1988, p. 34), where the sub- ... sub-personal  $\emptyset$ -er is itself a homunculus. Thus, Lycan’s decompositional analysis can be understood as a two stage process. First, the subject’s intentional abilities and activities are decomposed into progressively less complex teams of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed. Second, at some point in the decompositional analysis, the intentionally characterized abilities and activities of homunculi are type-identified with non-intentional, functionally characterized, abilities and activities of lower level homunculi.

Before moving on, a bit more needs to be said about the character of Lycan’s decompositional analysis. Although Lycan is, in my opinion, not always clear, he sometimes *seems* to intend that the decompositional analysis of intentionally characterized abilities and activities at one level into intentionally characterized abilities and activities at a lower level be understood as an instance of type-reduction. For example, he writes that “[T]he difficulty of outlining a tenable [presumably type] reduction of the mental even to the institutional [i.e. homuncular] is due to our ignorance of the organizational workings at a sufficiently low level of abstraction” (Lycan 1987, p. 42). Now I admit to being uncertain about this interpretation of Lycan. It is important, however, because, as I shall argue shortly, the problem faced by Lycan is caused by his use of type-reduction and not by the move from the intentional to the non-intentional (except insofar as it too is an instance of type-reduction). Thus, if Lycan intends the decomposition of intentionally characterized abilities and activities to teams of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed to be type-reductive, then the problem begins *before* reaching the stage where intentionally characterized abilities and activities are type-reduced to non-intentional, functionally characterized states and abilities. It begins, in fact, with

the very first decomposition. For this reason I intend to give Lycan the benefit of the doubt, and *not* attribute to him the view that the decomposition of intentionally characterized abilities and activities of teams of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed is an instance of type-reduction.

Returning to the problem posed by the first horn of the dilemma: although Lycan suggests that the type-identification of intentionally characterized abilities and activities with abilities and activities characterized non-intentionally in homuncular functionalist terms is "relatively harmless" (Lycan 1987, p. 42), this assessment seems overly optimistic. For example, the sort of type-reduction that Lycan makes use of seems to require that every organism in the same intentionally characterized state have the same kind of homunculi in the same non-intentional, functionally characterized state. The problem is that that requirement seems to implausibly restrict psychological diversity. In order to understand what the problem is, it will help to consider two examples.

First, there is Hilary Putnam's example of the belief that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood. As Putnam suggests, the problem with the attempt to type-reduce this intentionally characterized state to one characterized non-intentionally in functionalist terms is that "[E]ven if the two people speak the same language, they may have different stereotypes of a cat, different beliefs about the nature of cats, and so on . . ." (Putnam 1988, p. 82). For example, suppose two people, Jason and Marla, believe that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood, Jason, unlike Marla, has been exposed to only Siamese cats. If Jason's exposure to cats has been limited to Siamese cats, and if the non-intentional, functionally characterized state with which Jason's belief is type-identified is, in part at least, to account for his behavior, then the non-intentional, functionally characterized state associated with Jason's belief that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood ought to reflect his having been exposed to only Siamese cats. In contrast, suppose that Marla has been exposed to many different kinds of cats (including Siamese cats). If Marla has been exposed to many different kinds of cats, and if the non-intentional, functionally characterized state with which Marla's belief is, in part at least, to account for her behavior, then the non-intentional, functionally characterized state associated with Marla's belief that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood ought to reflect her having been

exposed to many kinds of cats. The upshot is that while both Jason and Marla are in the same intentionally characterized state, it is *prima facie* counterintuitive to suppose that they are in the same non-intentional, functionally characterized state. Thus, there seems to be no non-intentional, functionally characterized state with which the belief that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood is type-identical. I will refer to this as the problem of multiple functional realization.

The second example I owe to Bill Robinson. Suppose that both Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson believe that Moriarty is the thief who stole the painting. Watson has this belief because Holmes told him that Moriarty is the thief who stole the painting. In contrast, Holmes has the belief because he deduced that Moriarty was the thief from the clues that Moriarty left. What is important is that the entire structure of evidence (who else may be involved in the theft, what is the best way to catch Moriarty, etc.) may be, and plausibly is, quite different for Holmes and Watson. For this reason, it seems implausible to suppose that Holmes and Watson are in the same non-intentional, functionally characterized state even though they have the same belief. As in the first case, an intentionally characterized state (a belief) appears to have multiple functional realization.

Since examples such as Putnam's and Robinson's seem to undercut the idea that intentionally characterized states can be type-reduced to non-intentional, functionally characterized states, they pose a serious problem for the homuncular functionalist. Therefore, let us see whether there is any way that Lycan could avoid the problem of multiple functional realization.

First, Lycan could say that the necessary conditions for having a belief about cats is having the *proper* stereotype about cats, having the *proper* beliefs about cats, and so forth. However, this restriction is implausible. Even if it were possible to identify the proper stereotype, the proper beliefs, and so forth, it is, I believe, unlikely that many people would satisfy these conditions. If correct, the cost of avoiding the problem of multiple functional realization in this way is an implausible restriction of psychological diversity.

A second way to avoid the problem of multiple functional realization is to weaken the implicit requirement that the reduction of intentionally characterized abilities and activities to non-intentional, functionally characterized states is a 1:1 reduction. For example, in

the case of Jason and Marla we could say that the intentionally characterized state of believing that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood can be type-reduced to either of two states characterized non-intentionally in functionalist terms. But now, what of the person who has been exposed only to Persian cats, whose beliefs about cats differ from both Jason's and Marla's, but who believes, like Jason and Marla, that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood? Does the presence of such a person require that the type-reduction be treated as a 1:3 reduction? The problem is that, presumably, these sorts of questions can be raised indefinitely many times. For this reason, the type-reduction of the belief that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood to a functionally characterized state will be a 1:indefinitely many type-reduction. There seem to be no salient features in common amongst the functionally characterized states other than their intentional properties. What this suggests is that there is no psychofunctional law connecting intentionally characterized states with functionally characterized states.

A third way to avoid the problem of multiple functional realization is suggested by the second. Rather than weakening the requirement that the type-reduction be 1:1, Lycan could say that while Jason and Marla appear to have the same belief, in reality they do not. Because they have been exposed to different kinds of cats, have different beliefs about cats, etc., their beliefs are different. In this case Lycan could retain both the thesis of type-reduction and the thesis that the type-reduction is 1:1. However, I find this way of avoiding the problem of multiple functional realization implausible. Presumably, if Jason had experienced  $cat_1, cat_2, \dots, cat_n$ , while Marla had experienced  $cat_{n+1}, cat_{n+2}, \dots, cat_p$ , then Jason's belief that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood would be different from Marla's belief that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood. More than this, it would seem that the only situation in which Jason and Marla could share the belief that there are lots of cats in the neighborhood would be when they have both experienced the same cats (and only those cats). As a result, it would seem that on this way of resolving the problem of multiple functional realization very few people (if any) ever have the same belief.

Since the problem of multiple functional realization is created by the type-reductive character of Lycan's homuncular functionalism, the homuncular theorist could replace the requirement of type-

reduction by token-reduction. There is, however, a problem with weakening the requirement of type-reduction in this way. Recall that the point of a (1:1) type-reductive homuncular analysis was that it allowed for the type-identification of intentionally characterized abilities and activities with non-intentional, functionally characterized abilities and activities. For Lycan this had two benefits: it allowed the homuncular theorist to avoid the charge that a homuncular psychological theory is a question-begging theory, and it allowed for the discovery of what Lycan calls "psychofunctional laws of the homuncular sort" (Lycan 1988, p. 35). Now while weakening type-reduction to token-reduction does not jeopardize the non-question-begging character of a homuncular theory, it does seem to undercut the possibility of there being psychological laws. As Donald Davidson has argued, the most that token-identifications sanction are generalizations that are roughly true (Davidson 1982, pp. 216ff.). Thus, if there are laws to be found, they will either not be psychofunctional laws, or if they are, they will not be laws "that support counterfactual and subjunctive claims, and are supported by their instances" (Davidson 1982, p. 217). Moreover, if Davidson is correct that there are no laws involving only psychological predicates, then it seems to follow that psychological explanation "is not genuine explanation in the sense of revealing underlying realities in nature ..." (Lycan 1988, p. 27). Presumably this is not a conclusion that Lycan would welcome.

Turning to the second horn of the dilemma, if intentionally characterized abilities and activities cannot, at any stage of the decompositional analysis, be type-reduced to non-intentionally characterized abilities and activities, then there seem to be no psychofunctional laws forthcoming. In order to more clearly understand this problem, suppose that we begin with a human being to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities have been attributed. According to the homuncular theorist, it will next be necessary to posit homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed in order to account for the personal level intentional attributions. But now, because intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed to the homunculi, it follows that the homuncular functionalist needs to posit another, lower level of homunculi to explain the intentionally characterized abilities and activities of the homunculi at the level above. Either these lower level homunculi (sub-homunculi) will be attributed intentionally characterized

abilities and activities, or they will not. If they are attributed intentionally characterized abilities and activities, then it seems necessary for the homuncular theorist to posit a new, even lower level of homunculi in order to explain the intentionally characterized abilities and activities of the sub-homunculi. Here the homuncular theorist is faced with the beginnings of an infinite regress of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed. Although the intentionally characterized abilities and activities of "smaller and less talented homunculi will", in Lycan's words, "get less and less interesting, and less and less paradigmatic as they lose complexity" (Lycan 1988, p. 12), this does not make them any less intentional. While intentionality may come in degrees, low level intentionality is still intentionality. Thus, there will be no final, non-intentional, functionally characterized abilities and activities with which intentionally characterized abilities and activities can be identified, and so too no psychofunctional laws.

Why couldn't the homuncular theorist accept the claim that there is an infinite regress of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed? The answer, I believe, is that most homuncular theorists agree with Daniel Dennett's remark that a necessary condition for a psychological theory to be non-question begging is that the theory make no *ultimate* appeal to unexplained intentionally characterized abilities and activities (Dennett 1981, p. 83). Thus, even if the homuncular theorist is willing to accept an infinite regress of homunculi with intentionally characterized abilities and activities, the homuncular theory seems to be question begging. On the assumption that Dennett is correct, the homuncular theorist is led to try to somewhere stop the regress with homunculi to whom no intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed. But, as has been argued, there is no obvious way of stopping the regress at the non-intentional realm without encountering many problems.

The aforementioned problems notwithstanding, it is, I believe, possible to construct a *version* of homuncular functionalism that both blocks the standard Rylean infinite regress objections and avoids the problems faced by Lycan's version of homuncular functionalism. To this end, it is useful to begin with Wittgenstein's claim in the *Philosophical Investigations* that "... there is a way of grasping [understanding] a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhib-



ited in what we call 'obeying the rule' and 'going against it' in actual cases" (Wittgenstein 1979, §201). This remark contrasts with his earlier view in *The Blue Book* that in any genuine instance of rule following, "the symbol of the rule forms part of the calculation" (Wittgenstein 1969, p. 13). What Wittgenstein came to see was that this view leads to a vicious infinite regress. As Merrill and Jaakko Hintikka put it, "[I]f to follow a rule is to apply a symbolic expression for it, as a formula in calculation, how do we know that we follow the symbol correctly?" (Hintikka and Hintikka 1986, p. 188). To say that a person correctly follows the symbolic expression of a rule only if that person's behavior involves an application of a new rule will not resolve the problem. If to follow a rule requires applying a symbolic expression for it, then following a new rule will require an application of a symbolic expression of that new rule, and the question of whether the symbolic expression is being correctly followed will recur *ad infinitum*. Thus, Wittgenstein was led to the view that there is a way of grasping a rule in which the action of following the rule does not require an interpretation of the rule. Instead, the rule is, as Wittgenstein says, "obeyed blindly" (Wittgenstein 1979, §219).

Applying this idea to the infinite regress of homunculi, what the homuncular functionalist can say is that there is a way in which homunculi may have intentionally characterized abilities and activities attributed to them that does not require positing lower level homunculi with intentionally characterized abilities and activities. Just as there is a way of exhibiting the grasp of a rule in which the action of following the rule does not require an interpretation of the rule, so too a homunculus can *exhibit* its intentional character by responding to the stimuli that impinge on the corporate organism and producing the appropriate behavioral response without interpreting those stimuli. The regress is avoided by the recognition that the decomposition ends with homunculi described in this way.

While Wittgenstein's remarks may be *suggestive*, more needs to be said about what it means to say that homunculi may, without any interpretation of the stimuli that impinge on the corporate organism, *exhibit* their intentionally characterized abilities and activities. Turning again to the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein says that "... 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule". As G.P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker note, if obeying a rule were not something done within the context

of a practice, then "how we understand a rule would not be exhibited in action" (Baker and Hacker 1980, p. 124). Here the point is that because "[F]ollowing a rule is a human activity" (Wittgenstein 1978, VI, §29) and human activities derive their character from the practices in which they are embedded, then any application of the concept 'following a rule' must presuppose the context of a practice. If the background practice were removed, the rules embedded in the practice would lose their meaning. Thus, whether or not the exhibition of the grasp of a rule involves interpretation, the exhibition of a grasped rule is something that can only be done within the context of a practice.

Returning to the case of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities have been attributed, suppose one grants that the intentionally characterized abilities and activities of such homunculi may be exhibited by the homunculi responding to the stimuli that impinge on the corporate organism and produce the appropriate behavioral responses without interpreting those stimuli. What Wittgenstein's remarks about rule following suggest is that the non-interpretative exhibition of intentionally characterized abilities and activities by homunculi can occur only within the context of a particular set of practices. Accordingly, the homuncular functionalist is led to ask two different questions:

- (1) When does a sentient creature's pattern of behavior warrant attributing intentionally characterized abilities and activities to it?
- (2) Given that a sentient creature's behavior warrants attributing intentionally characterized abilities and activities to it, why explain these abilities and activities by positing teams of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed?

With respect to the first question, Wittgenstein's discussion of the conditions necessary for (proper) attributions of pain (Wittgenstein 1979, §281ff), and his remark that a dog cannot simulate pain because "the surroundings which are necessary for this behavior to be real simulation are missing" (Wittgenstein 1979, §259) are suggestive. What they suggest is that the first question can be answered only by looking at the sentient creature's role within a particular social practice. In particular, just as "it is only against the backdrop of

some particular language-game that questions of rule following can be meaningfully asked in the first place" (Hintikka and Hintikka 1986, p. 189), so too the question of when the behavior of a sentient creature warrants attributing intentionally characterized abilities and activities to it can be answered only relative to the practices of a particular community in which attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and activities are made. This means that no one can unilaterally understand what it means for an instance of behavior to warrant the attribution of intentionally characterized abilities and activities except by reference to the authority of securable communal assent on the matter. Relative to the first question, it follows that the pattern of behavior exhibited by a sentient creature warrants attributing intentionally characterized abilities and activities to the creature only if the behavior of the creature is such that the community making attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and activities accepts the behavior of the creature to be of such a sort that the attribution of intentionally characterized abilities and activities is warranted. A sentient creature whose behaviors do not, in enough cases, accord in the relevant ways with those of the community will not be a creature to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities will be attributed by the community.

Given that within the context of most ordinary human practices it is often proper to attribute intentionally characterized abilities and activities to human beings, why explain those abilities and activities by positing teams of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed? It is important to emphasize that the homuncular theorist making use of the ideas of Wittgenstein does not attribute intentionally characterized abilities and activities to human beings because he or she has somehow found homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed. This is backwards. Instead, because the behavior of the human being is such that, within the community of which the homuncular theorist is a member, the behavior warrants attributing intentionally characterized abilities and activities to the human being, the homuncular theorist explains those abilities and activities by positing teams of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed.

What the foregoing discussion suggests is that the homuncular theorist's answer to the second question is that the most plausible

explanations of the intentionally characterized abilities and activities of human beings, that capture all the common sense psychology generalizations wanted, are explanations that posit teams of homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed. Following Dennett, the idea is that teams of such homunculi are posited *in order to make as much sense as possible* of the attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and activities warranted by the community making such attributions (Dennett 1989, p. 91). Notice here that the positing of homunculi is an empirical issue. If it turns out that non-homuncular explanations better allow us to make sense of the intentionally characterized abilities and activities attributed to sentient creatures, then homuncularism will be abandoned.

At this point an obvious question arises. If the posited homunculi are attributed intentionally characterized abilities and activities, and if attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and activities require participation in a community in which the attributions are made, does this mean that the homuncular theorist must talk about a community of homunculi that sanction the attribution of intentionally characterized abilities and activities of homunculi? I hope that the answer to this is no, because the idea of a community of homunculi who make attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and activities is jejune. Instead, I believe that the homuncular theorist can say that the community life of the human being to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities have been attributed provides the necessary social context for attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and activities to the posited homunculi. Recall that homunculi are posited in order to provide explanations that make as much sense as possible of the personal level intentionally characterized abilities and activities attributed to human beings by the community making such attributions. Thus, the homuncular theorist starts out with personal level attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and activities, and then attributes to posited homunculi only those intentionally characterized abilities and activities necessary to explain the personal level intentionally characterized abilities and activities. In effect, the homuncular theorist is saying that the intentionality of the intentionally characterized abilities and activities attributed to posited homunculi is derivative; it is deriva-

tive of personal level attributions of the intentionally characterized abilities and activities that the homunculi are posited to explain.

Let me now try to bring some of the strands of my account together. What I've argued is that intentional characterizations are always relative to a community in which intentional attributions are made. Attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and activities require a social context for them to make any sense at all. What personal level intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed will be constrained by the homuncular theorist's goal: to make as much sense as possible, *within the intentional realm*, of the behavior of sentient creatures. Once personal level intentionally characterized abilities and activities have been attributed to the sentient creature, the homuncular theorist next asks the question: Does it help in making as much sense as possible of the intentional behavior of the sentient creature to posit homunculi, to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed? If so, then the homuncular theorist will posit the homunculi. As was the case for personal level attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and activities, what intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed to the posited homunculi will be constrained by the homuncular theorist's goal of making as much sense as possible of the sentient creature's intentional behavior. But now, what of intentionally characterized abilities and activities of the posited homunculi? Here the homuncular theorist must ask whether decomposing these homunculi into teams of simpler, posited homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed will help in making sense, within the intentional realm, of the sentient creature's intentional behavior. If the answer is yes, then the homunculi ought to be decomposed into teams of sub-homunculi to whom intentionally characterized abilities and activities have been attributed. Rather, such homunculi may be said to exhibit their intentional characteristics by responding to the stimuli that impinge on the corporate organism and producing the appropriate behavioral response without any interpretation of the stimuli. At each stage, the question of whether decomposition ought to occur is, I believe, an empirical one.

Here, I believe, two questions naturally suggest themselves. First, whether the decomposition stops at the first level or at some later level, isn't it the case that, because the posited homunculi have intentionally characterized abilities and activities, the decomposition must

go on? Second, if the decomposition stops, doesn't the homuncular theory turn out to be a question begging theory? The answer to the first question has, I believe, already been given. Even though intentionally characterized abilities and activities are attributed to the posited homunculi, this does not require additional decomposition. This is the moral of recognizing that not all instances of grasping (following) a rule require interpretation. Recall that, according to Lycan, the homunculi that the homuncular functionalist is required to decompose are those homunculi that *interpret* the stimuli that impinge on the corporate organism and that, because of such interpretations, produce the appropriate behavioral responses (Lycan 1988, p. 5). These homunculi are decomposed because interpreting is an intentionally characterized activity and, if it is not explained, the homuncular theory will turn out to be question begging. However, what the homuncular theorist can say is that responding to stimuli and producing the appropriate behavioral responses need not involve interpretation. The homunculi may be said to exhibit their responding to stimuli and producing the appropriate behavioral responses by allowing the homuncular theorist to make as much sense as possible of the personal level attributions of intentionally characterized abilities and states. Thus, the standard Rylean infinite regress objection to homuncular theories has been blocked.

What then of the second objection, that the homuncular theory is question begging? This objection depends upon the supposition that any non-question begging explanation of an intentionally characterized ability or activity must be one that explains the intentional *in terms of* the non-intentional. However, this supposition conflates at least three different kinds of explanations:

- (a) Explanations of high-level intentionally characterized abilities and activities in terms of lower-level, intentionally characterized abilities and activities.
- (b) Explanations of intentionally characterized abilities and activities in terms of non-intentionally characterized abilities and activities.
- (c) Explanations of high-level non-intentionally characterized abilities and activities in terms of lower-level, non-intentionally characterized abilities and activities.

It's true that if one recognizes *only* explanations of the form (b) or (c), explanations of form (a) are question begging. Put differently, if one assumes that the only way that intentionally characterized abilities and activities could be genuinely explanatory is in virtue of the absorbability of intentional psychology into science, then homuncular functionalist explanations of the sort I have proposed are not genuinely explanatory. However, this is where to draw another moral from the writings of Wittgenstein. Since the homuncular functionalist is offering explanations *within the intentional realm*, explanations of form (a) are not question begging. To suppose otherwise is tantamount to saying that explanations of form (c) are question begging because they explain high-level non-intentionally characterized abilities and activities in terms of low-level non-intentionally characterized abilities and states. But this seems to be the wrong conclusion to draw. Rather, we should say that, within the non-intentional realm, explanations of form (c) are perfectly appropriate. Thus, so long as explanations are explanations within the intentional realm, the claim that explanations of form (a) are question begging ought to be resisted.

So, finally, after all the foregoing discussion, what can be said about psychological explanations? A couple of things I believe. First, the sort of explanations that (my version of) the homuncular theorist makes use of need not be causal explanations. This does not mean that actions have no causes; I believe they do. Neither does this mean that we do not make reference to intentionally characterized abilities and activities (and states) in the explanation of actions. However, just because reference is made to intentionally characterized abilities and activities in the explanation of actions, it does not follow that intentionally characterized abilities and activities explain those actions because they are their causes. Psychological explanations explain by allowing the inquirer to make as much sense (relative to the conceptual framework of the inquirer, which is in turn a function of the community or communities of which the inquirer is a member) as possible of the intentionally characterized abilities and activities of the subject studied. Does this mean that psychological explanations will never be causal explanations? The answer to this question is, I believe, 'no'. Because psychological explanations are context dependent (i.e. they depend upon a specification of the community making the explanations), it is possible that some psychological explanations

will be causal. Which psychological explanations will be causal? Here I follow Lycan, Dennett, and others and believe that the answer to this question must wait until psychological predicates that pick out natural kinds are found. What this means is that common sense psychology and scientific psychology are not in competition with each other. By recognizing the context dependence of psychological explanations, we are permitted to recognize the value of psychological explanations that are not causal explanations. A nice ecumenical position to end with.

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