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AN ANALYSIS OF REQUIREDNESS

**A Choice
from Köhler
by Roberta De
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Wolfgang Köhler (Reval, Estonia 1887- Enfield, New Hampshire, USA) , one of the founders of Gestalt Psychology (with Max Wertheimer and Kurt Koffka – the three of them had studied with Carl Stumpf in Berlin), became famous after publishing his pioneering work on the cognitive faculties of anthropoid apes in 1917. After directing the Institute of Psychology at the Friedrich-Wilhelms University in Berlin, he was the only academic of the institute’s faculty to engage in a public protest, when he published a newspaper article against the first wave of anti-Jewish Nazi legislation in 1933 (a few months later, by contrast, Heidegger delivered his infamous pro-Nazi inaugural address as rector of Freiburg). He left Germany in 1935, and was appointed professor at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. In the academic year 1934-35 he had given the third series of the William James Lectures on Philosophy and Psychology at Harvard, published in 1938 under the title *An analysis of Requiredness* (Livering Publishing Corporation, New York).

Under the term “requiredness” – a strict English rendering of the German term *Forderung* (and its close semantic relative, *Aufforderung*), Köhler refers to what J.J. Gibson, famously, coined the neologism *affordance* for. Köhler’s analysis of the “phenomenal field” provides a strong argument against axiological subjectivism, while sketching an objective-relational theory of values.

The chapter we reproduce here provides the fundamentals of this theory. For a related argument, cf. R. De Monticelli, *Requiredness. An Argument for Value-Realism*, this issue.

W. Köhler, *The Place of Values in a World of Facts*, Chapter III, “An Analysis of Requiredness”, II-IV (Mentor Books, New York 1966 pp. 65-87).

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W. Köhler, “An Analysis of Requiredness”, *The Place of Values in a World of Facts*, II-IV

II I return to our main problem, which is the generic problem of value as such. The subjectivistic theory of requiredness seems to resolve the paradoxical aspect of this notion. Apparently the mere introduction of human interest, striving, conation achieves the solution of the problem. We have the impression moreover that the problem is, in this way, not merely solved, but rather transformed into something obvious; because striving and interest themselves are matters of everyday experience. It is precisely this aspect of the theory which may arouse one’s caution. Too frequently just the apparently obvious contains, and most successfully hides, certain essential traits which deserve all our attention. I shall try to show that this applies to the present case.

What was paradoxical in requiredness? It appeared paradoxical so long as we said: Facts *are or happen indifferently*. There is no requiredness about them. Consequently there is no place for requiredness in a world of facts. How, then, is this situation changed when requiredness is brought into connection with interest? The subjectivistic theory makes us see that we were too hasty in our characterization of facts. Not all of them are or occur indifferently. In the very nature of some facts there is, as a constitutional trait, a quality of acceptance or rejection of something beyond. Human interest, striving, conation are all of this kind. It belongs to their character that they point or refer to other facts. And this reference to other facts is far from neutral. They are very partial, they are selective with regard to other facts to which they refer. As soon as we make these properties of interest more explicit all apparent commonplaceness disappears from the subjectivistic theory of requiredness.

The first point, it is true, is still simple enough and not a novelty; some contents of the phenomenal field have a *direction* or directedness, others not. A coin before me does not point toward something, an interest does. Because of this property we shall borrow a term from mathematics and physics and call interest a *vector*¹. With the second point we approach an essential side of our problem which is usually well hidden under the disguise of obviousness and commonplace speech. Interest as a vector is experienced as *issuing from a definite part of the field*. If it is ‘my’ interest, it issues from that particular item in the field which I call ‘myself’-not from a pencil to the left, not from a sheet of paper to the right. Why repeat what everybody knows and what our language implies? We do so because we are dealing with one of those cases in which experience does contain not merely an isolated fact here and an isolated fact there, but also the fact of their *belonging together*. This is the

¹ K. Lewin and his students frequently use the term in their investigation.

phenomenal aspect which practically is more implicit than explicit when we say: "I am interested in," or when we speak of "my interest." There are other such experiences of belonging together, many of which have been dealt with by Gestalt psychologists.² This particular one, however, in which a vector is experienced as issuing from a definite part of the field has a special relevance in our present discussion.

A third point is no less implied in common language than the second, but is in the same manner hidden by the smooth cloak of everyday speech rather than really accentuated. The subjectivistic theory of requiredness often refers to objects as *causing or releasing a human interest*. This is one aspect of the role which objects of all kinds play in subjective valuation. Another aspect is that interest or striving is *directed toward* the phenomenal object in question. Not all causes have such effects. But it is this effect in our case which, implicit in common speech, has to be made explicit. Interest is not only experienced as issuing from a particular part of the phenomenal field. It is also experienced as referring to another and, in most cases, a very definite part of the same field. Here, then, we have a vector which, with two parts of the field, forms an experiential unit, a specific context.³ The three belong together in experience; one part is the point of issue of the vector, the vector transcends into the objective region of the field, and the last part serves as target or mark for the vector. In this case at least Hume's bundle-description of the phenomenal field is utterly inadequate, because definite organization is here a concrete trait in the field itself. There is in actual experience no more doubt about the point toward which interest is directed than about the point from which it issues.⁴ Innumerable times in philosophy and psychology some such expression has been used as: "something is the object of an interest." But few seem to realize that the full meaning of such simple terms is sufficient for a refutation of Hume's atomistic psychology. We *are* aware of definite and very concretely organized dynamic contexts. There are not separately: a self, an interest and many things in the field, but, surrounded by many other items, a-self-interested-in-one definite thing.

Under these circumstances it is not very important whether we say that an interest is directed from the self to the object or, perhaps better, that in the form of an interest the self is directed toward the object.

2 Cf. Wertheimer's article in *Psychol. Forsch.* 4, 192; ; the writer's report in *Psychologies of 1925* and *Psychologies of 1930* (ed. by Murchison); *Gestalt Psychology*, ch. 5 and 6; and Kottkas *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, 1935.

3 I know of no English word that would correctly render the meaning of the German "Zusammenhang." In this predicament I have decided to use the word "context" as a substitute. For the purpose of this book it will perhaps acquire the connotation which is implied in the text.

4 Cf. *Gestalt Psychology*, ch. 10.

In such organization, as we all know, the vector of interest may be qualified in a great many different ways. It may have the quality of hatred, of fear, of contempt, of approval, of love, and so on. All, however, have this in common, that by such vectors the self either accepts or rejects the corresponding objects.⁵ It is this trait of interest-situations with its two possibilities which gives the subjectivistic theory of value its plausibility. It does not, however, make requiredness a commonplace matter. That one part of the field should be directly experienced as accepting or rejecting a definite other part of the field—thus formulated and deprived of the staleness of everyday speech—the statement contains a most remarkable fact.

Where all this leads to will soon become apparent when we discuss a last point. Professor Perry states that “any object acquires value when an interest is taken in it,” or also “that which is an object of interest is *eo ipso* invested with value.”⁶ I do not see quite clearly whether or not a new property is thus attributed to the object when it becomes an object of interest. In general Professor Perry’s remarks point to the interpretation that he regards objectivistic terms like value and valuable as mere forms of speech the true meaning of which is not different from “interest is taken in something.”⁷

We should not lose sight of the fact that some philosophers have never been satisfied by theories which localize all value in the self. One reason for it may be that, besides those meanings which I have mentioned, the unfortunate word “objective” has still a third connotation in which it is nearly equivalent to “valid.” Convinced that ethics should be a system of strictly *valid* rules these theorists would prefer an objectivistic interpretation of value since “objective” means “outside of us,” “independent” and “valid” all at the same time. What is objective phenomenally exhibits, indeed, more steadiness on the average than does the everchanging stream of our subjective life. Besides there seems to be less variability among the objective fields of different people than among their subjective interests and tendencies. I doubt, however, whether this

5 For brevity’s sake I use these terms in a general sense so that, for instance, in fear the negative character of this particular attitude would fall under the term rejection.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 116.

7 This at least would follow from the thesis that “value is a specific relation into which things ... may enter with interested *subjects*” or that “relation to interest *assumes* the role of adjective.” If a stone becomes warm when exposed to intense sunlight, its warmth is not, properly speaking, a relation between the sun and the stone. The problem before us is whether the interest changes its object as the sunlight changes the properties of the stone. (*Cf. also General Theory of Value*, pp. 28-34.)

is the only motive of those who insist upon an objectivistic theory of requiredness. Where in the history of philosophy one tendency of thought is never totally subdued, however excellent the arguments of the opponents, there is some suspicion that both parties look upon different sides of the phenomenological subject-matter, and that they are both right within limits. Even errors have often some basis in the phenomenal material, so that they are not totally wrong. In our case the objectivists are so insistent that it would not be prudent to ignore their claims altogether.

The same warning may be found in the fact that almost all naive people would be most indignant if we were to tell them that their interested attitudes contain all the values which they can find in the world, and that they are deceived when they believe that on the contrary objective values make them assume these attitudes. Charm is a special value-quality; so is loveliness and womanliness. Tell an unsophisticated young man who is very much in love that the object of the case has only neutral properties, and that to speak about her charm is just a synonym for the fact that he is in love. You will hear what he answers. Again, if you make the corresponding observation to a belligerent reactionary who declares that socialism and socialists are bad, he will emphatically refuse to accept the theory that without his hostile interest a socialist is a neutral object. No, he would say, these people themselves are bad. I may go farther and say that we find the same objectivistic conviction everywhere and exemplified in all possible varieties of value. This observation at least raises the question why, if the contrary is true, practically all mankind should not be able to see this simple truth, why they should hold precisely the opposite view, namely that the diverse forms of value are inherent in the objects.⁸ It seems to me, by the way, that such apparent objectivity of values is of the very greatest practical importance. It would be ever so much easier to convince somebody that he is on the wrong track, if he could realize that value is equivalent to valuing, i.e., only an act of his own. But often he will be much too excited for such a conversion because the bad or the great, the mean or the noble, are so clearly before his eyes. And now you, his opponent, pretend that you cannot see what is so obviously there. How blind or stubborn you must be! Is not this our experience almost daily, for instance, in political discussion?

⁸ That the young man may be completely alone in his conviction about charm in his object is, of course, not to the point at all. Whether this concrete example of value is in his field a property of this object or not, is the only point we have to discuss here. And the same applies to the other example. Once more: objectivity as here in question is not generality or general validity. Besides, I repeat, it does not mean physical existence either.

Personally I understand this objectivistic attitude of the layman very well because I find myself exactly in his position. That face looks mean- and I abhor it. Dignity I hear in those words which I have just heard Mr. X. speaking- and I respect him. Her gait is clumsy- and I prefer to look away. Everywhere value-qualities are found residing in such objects as characteristics of them.

If this is true, there are, it seems, three possible interpretations: Just as objects are round or tall, events slow or sudden, so some have charm, some are ugly by themselves, independently. In this case the subjectivistic theory of value would appear to be at least incomplete. Again, if and in so far as interest of any kind is taken in an object, it *acquires* new concrete qualities, viz., value-qualities. This might mean an amplification or completion of the subjectivistic theory. And thirdly: Besides the self and its interests, other factors in a field could perhaps, also by a vectorial influence of some kind, create value-properties in certain objects. In this case, as in the first, the subjectivistic theory of value would be revealed as one-sided.

As to the first possibility I do not see any reason why such "tertiary qualities" should not occur on the objective side of the phenomenal field. Most arguments which have been brought forward against their truly perceptual existence seem to be influenced by the ineradicable tendency which we have to take percepts as pictures of physical realities, if not as somehow identical with them. But no physical sequence of tones has the "minor"-quality. Still, "minor" is an objective property of certain objective auditory events. That the basis of all argument about such questions has been essentially changed by von Ehrenfels and by Gestalt psychology is sufficiently known at present. Therefore I may refer to the literature for more detail. This does not mean, however, that, admitting such (independent) tertiary value-qualities, we should sacrifice the subjectivistic theory altogether. It may still be right within certain limits. The third possibility seems altogether strange at first. It will nevertheless occupy us later. As to the second interpretation it is the path which the subjectivistic theory should follow if, confronted with ample evidence of objective value-attributes, it wishes to preserve its own character. These, the theory would have to say, are products of our acts of interest. And doubtless there are such cases. Even to be a goal in general seems to give a thing a new flavor. Not only is it the end, the terminating part of a circumscribed context, comparable to the edge-quality which a line assumes when a closed figure stands out from the ground. It also begins to dominate in the objective region of the field, to become its center, however unimportant, visually for instance, it would be otherwise. There are cases

in which this goal-quality may survive the most radical changes of the object. In dreams it frequently happens that we find ourselves in pursuit of a goal which gradually becomes so remote and unclear that finally not even a shadow of an object-image remains. In this case the object is nothing more than a mere something; and still it may have goal-quality. To be more specific and perhaps more convincing: After many hours on skis in a sharp frost we come home, and before us there is brown, hot, fat meat just brought in from the kitchen. Can anything look more appetizing than this meat? This is when we are hungry. A short time afterwards—we have eaten too much and too hastily—it may be difficult for us even to stay near by when precisely the same kind of meat is put upon the table for late-comers. It does not look neutral now, it looks decidedly repulsive. And have we not enough witnesses among the literary libertines of all ages who describe the terrible change which after a conquest transforms charm into something quite neutral, if not slightly unpleasant. In both examples, when the interest changes with satiety, the aspect of the object changes as though from one end of a scale to its zero-point and beyond.

So far we are in agreement with Professor Perry. “That feeling,” he says, “does somehow color its object is an undeniable fact of experience, and a fact recognized by common speech in so far as all of the familiar feelings assume the form of adjectives.”⁹ But he is not inclined to accept this objective aspect of interest as genuine: We cannot possibly localize the red of an object in our self; this is therefore a truly objective quality. The “tertiary qualities” on the other hand yield, he believes, to an effort of attention. When we try hard enough we find them separating from the object and tending to unite with the self.¹⁰

I am afraid that with this argument we approach the procedure of Introspectionism. To the Introspectionist certain phenomena appear as surprising and therefore suspect. In such cases he asks attention to help him find the real sensations. Perhaps attention is successful, in so far as the disturbing fact disappears. Supposing that the change be in the direction of a more customary phenomenon, the Introspectionist will now say that he has found the real fact. More and more psychologists are becoming convinced that they are not entitled to apply this procedure. If, in an analytical attitude, I find an overtone in a clang which before was phenomenally a completely unitary sound, then my analysis has not corrected an error, an illusion: it has changed one genuine phenomenon into another. Again, if I direct my attention upon some happy feeling in order to find out what it is really like, the chances are

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

that I shall destroy the feeling. All “tertiary qualities,” too, may be treated in this way and some of them thus changed or destroyed. But it does not follow that their previous existence was in any sense illusory. That some qualities, e.g., colors, will often show more resistance than many “tertiary qualities” does not decide the point. A bar of steel is not destroyed when we beat it with a hammer, china is. Still china is as real as steel. We might in fact almost deduce from the theory the consequence that such “tertiary qualities” should change or disappear, if we look upon them long enough with the cold scrutiny of scientific analysis. Supposedly they are the objective-looking correlates of definite interest-attitudes. Instead of these we introduce the attitude of sober analysis. From the standpoint of the theory it would be surprising if they should remain unaltered under these circumstances.¹¹

But, in this last argument, I may be misrepresenting the theory. “It seems necessary,” Professor Perry says, “at some point to admit that the qualities of feeling may be referred where they do not belong.”¹² From the point of view of phenomenology I cannot agree. Qualities belong where we find them. And no explanation or theory can convince us that they were not where we found them, –even if it should prove possible to shift them to another place under changed conditions of subjective attitude. The question of their origin is not the question of their present location. The main point, however, is that according to this theory the “tertiary qualities” are said to be misplaced facts of subjective interest. If this were correct, there should be agreement between the “tertiary qualities” and the qualities of those interests which are directed towards the objects in question. That this should be the case in general I find it hard to admit. The charm, womanliness and loveliness which may be found in certain objects are qualitatively altogether different from the present striving of the (male) self, but also from all other interests or conations which he may have at other times. If a face looks brutally stupid, this would be a “tertiary quality” of the negative kind. Certainly the contempt and aversion with which I look upon that face do not show much similarity to this value-quality. Finally may we take a case where the “tertiary quality” is undoubtedly a product of the interest: The goal-character of any object of positive striving is not similar to the striving itself. Therefore it cannot be interpreted as misplaced striving.

We had to interrupt our analysis of subjective valuation in order to consider the objective side of the situation. We had previously come to

11 In its general form the argument against the “attention-test” applies also, if, as I believe, many value-qualities are not due to subjective interests, but are inherent in phenomenal objects independently.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

the conclusion that in subjective requiredness one part of the field, the self, is felt as accepting or rejecting a definite other part of the field, the object. There is a question whether sometimes the object may not have value-qualities in its own right. But there is no question that in general it acquires certain new traits in so far as it is the target of those vectors. To summarize:

Subjective valuation represents a special form of organization in which a vector issuing from one part of the field is felt to accept or to reject another part. Under its influence this second part of the field acquires value-properties of an objective character.

In this formulation I have not explicitly mentioned the self as being the source of the vector. The general aspect of the theoretical situation becomes and remains more striking, if we do not mention it specifically. As soon as we specify it, the situation tends to slip back into that atmosphere of staleness and triviality in which the most essential problems of philosophy and psychology are so easily hidden.

Against the subjectivistic theory the criticism has been raised by Professor Urban that it is circular, as all other forms of relational theory of value are.¹³ It describes what happens in value-situations but does not give a definition of value; it actually presupposes the existence of value. It seems to me that the task of a theory of value does not necessarily consist in the reduction of requiredness to something else. In this sense, I think, a definition of value would be impossible. The only thing we can do is to bring into full view the characteristics of a value-situation. When these have been uncovered it becomes possible to see them in their relation to other phenomena, and thus to include the concept of requiredness in a larger theoretical structure. An attempt toward the achievement of such a larger view will be our next goal.

Whether a consistent system of ethics can be founded on a purely subjectivistic interpretation of value is not a question which we are prepared to answer here. And it need not be treated so long as there are serious doubts as to whether subjective requiredness is the only requiredness existing. But even the nature of nearly subjective valuation proves that it is utterly misleading to say: facts simply are or happen. This statement applies only to those indifferent facts which fill the mental visual field of many scientists since the time of Hume and the development of Positivism within the sciences. Vectors which, issuing in definite contexts, are experienced as resisting or as

¹³ *Journ. of Philos., Psychol, and Scient. Meth.*, 13, 1916.

welcoming certain parts of a field are no less genuine facts than are those indifferent events.

- III The attempt has been made by some philosophers to objectify the relational theory of value. If the *universe were* the context within which value is determined, subjective valuation would become an unimportant matter. But how does the universe determine values? We know so little about the universe and nothing about its demands. I am afraid that, together with subjectivity, any definite basis for a theory of requiredness would be eliminated in such an attempt.
- There is, however, another way of escaping a certain limitation of the theory that all requiredness is centered in the self.
- In Gestalt psychology we distinguish three major traits which are conspicuous in all cases of specific organization or gestalt. Phenomenally the world is neither an indifferent mosaic nor an indifferent continuum. It exhibits definite segregated units or contexts in all degrees of complexity, articulation and clearness.¹⁴ Secondly such units show properties belonging to them as contexts or systems. Again the parts of such units or contexts exhibit dependent properties in the sense that, given the place of a part in the context, its dependent properties are determined by this position. May I use an old example once more: A melody is such a context. If it is in *a-minor*, for instance, *minor* is a property belonging to the system, not to any note as such. In this system the note *a* has the dependent trait of being the tonic with its static quality.
- Let us compare this with subjective requiredness as it appears when the cover of everyday-staleness is lifted. There is a definite context, comprising definite items in the field which are experienced as belonging to the context. There is secondly the vector which characterizes this context as a system-property of it; striving does not occur by itself. There is, thirdly, the goal-quality and often other “tertiary qualities” in the object which are due to its place in the context.
- We can analyze the melody, but not in independent parts. That would be destruction of the melody. Its *minor-character* for instance would be lost. We can analyze the situation of subjective requiredness, but again not in independent parts, all taken by themselves. The vector-and requiredness-cannot exist alone any more than a fish can live out of water. Again, the object loses “tertiary qualities” when the context dissolves.
- This is agreement in all essentials. Thus, value-situations fall under the

14 That segregation of such units is *not* absolute, that it only makes them comparatively independent parts of larger contexts, need hardly be emphasized.

category of gestalt. This permits us to hazard one more step forward. If those cases in which the vector issues from the self are special examples of gestalt, -is there any reason *a priori* why the self should always play this role? Why should other contexts not exhibit similar vectors and consequently also requiredness? No speculation can answer this question. It is a question of facts and of phenomenological observation. Therefore, instead of selecting the universe as a context in which requiredness might be determined, let us turn again to concrete and circumscribed contexts. Are there any whose general structure is congruous with the structure of subjective requiredness, but whose vectors do not issue from the self? Once more let us remind ourselves that the self is not the physical organism, just as objects in our present connection are not physical objects. And in particular let us note that other persons are, for our present purposes, not other physical organisms but percepts, most lively phenomenal objects. To these refers our next phenomenological question: Does the self always play the dominant role in our phenomenal field? Undoubtedly it does not. Sometimes those other objects called other people may be much more active and important in the field than we are. Is there anyone who has never felt small and unimportant in the presence of others whom we call powerful personalities? Who has never wished to be led by another when he was at a loss what to do and saw the assured manner of the other? How many professors, actors and singers have survived their first public appearance without having felt the audience before them as something much more powerful than themselves? When, at the writing desk, we consider the phenomenal world there is a tendency to choose as objective partners of our self this desk, our books and the writing paper, perhaps in imagination some other quiet things. In this case, it is true, the self is often the dominating part of the field. But is it always?

In some philosophical systems, of course, we hear about the "epistemological subject" who seems to be responsible for the existence of all objects whatsoever including other persons. Phenomenally there is no such entity since the phenomenal self is decidedly not felt to be responsible for the existence of its objects. That other subject is a construct. When we hear about its functions we soon begin to wonder how different it really is from another construct, namely, the physical organism. In any case, as a construct it must remain outside our discussion.

But other persons are not only often more important in the phenomenal field than the self. Quite as often it is not the self from which vectors reach out towards other parts of the field, for instance, other people. These persons, on

the contrary, reach towards us with their demands in many cases. The police officer makes me stop at a crossing by a sign of his hand, and I obey. Somewhere on the street a poor victim of the depression extends his hand towards the self which finds it hard to resist the demand. During a party, in lively conversation, we suddenly feel that something is wrong; the others have become silent, eyes stare at the self-somebody is about to sing, and the force of society around us makes us stop and retire to a corner in embarrassment. Is there, phenomenally, a vector in such situations? Is there requiredness? It cannot well be denied. But does it issue from the self? Phenomenally it does not. Instead it arrives at the self which, as far as the vector is concerned, has for once assumed the role of the target. The vector is directed toward, not away from it. And it is for the time being the policeman, the beggar, the social group from which the vectors issue. As to the rest, whatever has been said about contexts in which the self is interested in an object remains true for these other cases, if only in the contexts the self takes the place of the object, and other persons, or a group of them, take the place of the self. It will not be necessary to compare details. If there is a difference, it consists in the fact that, being a more flexible and sensitive part of the field than any mere things, the self in such a context, under requiredness from without, is apt to develop dependent properties more strikingly than an objective goal will do in the other case. Nervousness, shame, embarrassment, excitement or other such qualities besides general goalness may develop when, for instance, suddenly all other people in the room concentrate upon the self in expectation of a speech. Being occupied with phenomenology we may postpone explanations for one more moment and add another example.

The article which X. has just published about the political situation is really fascinating. Coming home I have again started reading, and I read until gradually there is a feeling of disagreeable pressure which soon develops into my obligation to finish a certain piece of work before next month. How could I read so long! Where in this case does the vector issue phenomenally, in the self or in some object? Not in the self decidedly which, at the moment, feels hunted, driven, compelled by something else. To this extent the situation is strictly comparable to the case in which demands of other persons are directed toward the self. Only now it is an object of thought-character from which the vector issues. People who have to write books, to prepare lectures, to open letters of probably disagreeable content, to write other letters in which they have no interest, who hate to do all these things and still say: Too bad, I must do it-do they feel a vector extending from their selves to those things and occupations,

or do they feel under the pressure of such tasks? There may be a vector issuing from the self, for instance, in our examples a vector of disgust and aversion. If there is, it becomes only the more apparent that the other vector, the positive demand, comes from the objective side.

It will not be advisable to describe other instances in which the vectors in question issue from thing-percepts, but again exert their demands on the self. Though there are enough cases of this kind, they would not at this point be given adequate attention. Even the examples just described have probably strained the patience of the reader. What are they, if not instances of the well-known “pathetic fallacy”? It is the self which from its experience equips policeman, beggar, social group and expecting audience with vectors or requiring attitudes. If the subject had not made it his task at an earlier time to write the book, to give the lecture and so on, no demanding vector, no requiredness could now, even apparently, be found on the objective side of those situations or, correspondingly, of many others.

On what basis are we so very sure about this point? One reason may be given which makes us understand, to some degree at least, why demanding vectors should not be accepted as issuing from the objective side of the field, why instead their apparent occurrence should be treated as a special case of “pathetic fallacy.” This reason is once more the outspoken or unintentional identification of phenomenal objects with physical realities. The influence of natural science has accustomed us to regard physical things as totally unable to exhibit demands. Consequently, if percepts are, either identical with physical objects or almost copies of them, there cannot be any demands in them either. This applies to other persons as percepts as it applies to things. -In the case of my thought-objects there is another danger. Other people cannot see them. They say that thoughts are “in me,” that they are only “my thoughts.” I can, besides, do much about my thought-objects whereas other people can do comparatively little about them. The consequence is again a most unfortunate vagueness in the use of the term self. It may be as obvious as possible that often I look upon a thought-object as upon something distinctly different from myself; it will still be called “a content of my self” for such reasons. If, therefore, phenomenally a thought-object should now and then exhibit a demanding vector, could there be a stronger temptation than that by which we are led to say: This is still requiredness “inside the self”? Thus it would escape our notice altogether that, with this formulation, the strictly phenomenological ground is left, that there may be phenomenally certain ‘objects’ which exist only opposite my ‘self,’ but not opposite others at the same time and similarly, and which still are

not parts of the phenomenal 'self'.¹⁵ If demands issue from them, the origin of such demands is no less 'objective' than is that of demands which issue from other persons or any percepts.¹⁶

Decidedly, experience shows that sometimes vectors do issue from other persons and from objects, such as tasks, and that the self feels himself the target of many such demands. How explain the reluctance of so many to accept this observation as correct if not by these ambiguities in the meanings of such words as self and objects? Why should the observation appear as so strange or even impossible? We hear so often about the "pathetic fallacy." Why so seldom about reasons why the phenomena in question should be cases of "pathetic fallacy" and not of "pathetic percepts"?¹⁷ Who has given the self a monopoly for demands? I could not even admit that vectors issuing from the self are always more intense; because those which arrive there, which are directed towards the self, are often quite as vividly felt as influencing, attacking, changing it. One more word may be added for those who would not believe in any phenomenological statement, unless they see that it is compatible with "reality," i.e., physiological or physical notions. They would still tend to identify the self with the physical organism which certainly is a most active part of the world; thus, they would attribute to the self many traits which they do not ascribe to phenomenal objects since these are regarded as passive products of stimulation. But in both assumptions they are wrong. The 'self,' though functionally depending upon processes in the organism, is a phenomenal correlate only of a limited part of brain events. And 'objective' percepts, including other persons, are quite as much the correlates of intense processes in the same brain. That these processes, occurring in the same nervous system, should be passive copies of stimulus-patterns is certainly an idea which can no longer be seriously held. There is no reason why, in principle and in all cases, they should be much less dynamic physically than are the processes underlying the phenomenal self.

15 At this point I cannot agree with the terminology which has been adopted by K. Lewin in several publications and by Koffka in his *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*. Objects of thought-character are certainly functions of organic processes, but so are all percepts. If, in the second case, we have reason to distinguish phenomenal 'objectivity' from genetic subjectivity, the same reason applies to thought-objects, which may be altogether 'objective' phenomenally. Inconsistency here might easily lead to errors in theory.

16 Functionally my thing-percepts are of course quite as much my percepts as my thought-objects are my individual property. Naïve Realism believes, it is true, that a given thing-percept may be the common property of several people, and New Realism holds a similar view. Such beliefs, however, seem to me untenable (Cf. ch. 4). Both thing-percepts and thought-objects are functionally subjective and may nevertheless be phenomenal 'objects' for the phenomenal 'self.'

17 I do not include, of course, those cases in poetry where human thinking and language are attributed to trees, mountains and other things. Nobody would maintain that he perceives such events there. But we perceive thunder as threatening and the attitude of the beggar as demanding.

Besides, what is the thesis contained in the term “pathetic fallacy”? It is an example of those many empiristic theories which everywhere obstruct the path of the psychologist. Originally occurring in the self only, demands or other such vectors are said to be wrongly attributed to objects in the phenomenal world. By some process of association or other learning, the theory says, they have been transported from the self to its objects. Assuming that this be true, -where are such vectors now? Whence do they issue, where do they arrive? Whether the empiristic theory is right or wrong, they now issue, in such cases, from objects and are directed toward the self. If I should discover that soap which I bought in Boston was made in and imported from France, is this soap therefore in France or is it in America? There is a tendency of empiristic theorizing to give us the impression that, once the theory is applied to a fact, this fact does not remain what it was before the explanation. This at least is indeed a fallacy. If something is found to occur on the objective side of the phenomenal world, it does not lose this objectivity when we discover that, originally, the trait in question had only occurred on the subjective side. If we were to neglect phenomenal facts after an empiristic explanation has been given for them, a most interesting problem would be neglected at the same time, namely: How can a vector which occurred at first only in the self be transformed by some indirect process into a vector residing in an object? Because this is what we really find. The vector is issuing *there* now phenomenally, it actually belongs to the object in question, just as before it putatively belonged to the self. It is not my vector, my interest now which I find in the attitude of the policeman, in the beggar or in the disagreeable obligation. All such subjectivity is lost. At the time I may not in the least experience a corresponding vector issuing from my side. Thus, we can say that vectors really do occur in the objective realm, and that objects are capable of being their sources. Why then speak about a “pathetic fallacy”? Unfortunately the empiristic theory does not recognize this problem.

May I use still another analogy in order to make this point clearer? Supposing that two chemical substances A and B do not form a compound directly. It may be that by first combining one of them with a third substance C, I can then produce a compound which contains all three of them, and that, from this compound, I can afterwards eliminate the auxiliary material C, so that (AB) as a chemical compound is left. It is true that, historically, without the indirect procedure there would not be the substance (AB). But is it therefore not a real substance, a real compound now? Similarly, in the phenomenal world demands often issue from objects

really, whatever previous history may be responsible for it, and their general behavior under these conditions is the same as that of vectors issuing from the self.

- IV So far we have found two classes of contexts in which there is requiredness. In the first the vector points toward the object, in the other the object is the point of origin of the vector. If, in this manner, both the origin and the target of such vectors may be objects, it will be a natural question whether these two conditions cannot occur in one and the same context, whether there are no cases in which a demand is found to issue in one object and to accept or reject another?

We see indeed quite as clearly how a man is striving towards shelter in a heavy rainstorm as we see him approaching the self in a demanding attitude. No less convincing in its objective character is the avoiding attitude of a chimpanzee who finds himself near a strange-looking thing. Even the reference of such vectors to definite objects or regions of the field as to their (positive or negative) goals may be perfectly obvious in such cases. Whether the object in question is a thing in the narrower meaning of the word or another person makes no essential difference.¹⁸

Awareness of vectors in similar cases has, I believe, caused Professor Tolman to include purpose among his Behavioristic categories.¹⁹ Are we warranted, on the basis of our phenomenological evidence, in attributing striving as biological reality to the organism of a rat? In our earlier discussion of this point we concluded that as yet there is no biological datum which would encourage such a step. Probably Professor Tolman, as a Behaviorist, would not be interested in subjective striving as an occurrence in the rat's possible but doubtful consciousness. Others, therefore, would adopt a strictly opposite attitude and decline to accept our description, contending that it does not conform with physical and physiological facts. Though such criticism transcends the phenomenological realm, it should be mentioned in this connection. How can we possibly perceive that an animal is striving towards or away from an object since our retinae are stimulated by rays reflected from the physical animal's surface and from the surface of the object, but certainly not by any stimuli corresponding to a vector between them? There are no such stimuli. On such occasions recent developments in the psychology of perception reveal their general relevance. Quite as little as for the vectors in our

18 Cf. *Gestalt Psychology*, ch. 7.

19 E. C. Tolman, *Purposive Behavior in Animals and Men*, 1932.

last examples is there “a stimulus” for any grouping in the visual field; nor is there “a stimulus” for the figure-character of certain areas as contrasted with mere ground-character, or for the minor character of a melody. Nevertheless, all these things appear on the objective side of our phenomenal field. We have been forced to realize that certain traits of percepts depend upon stimulus-constellations rather than upon definite single stimuli. One such “Ehrenfels-quality” of a perceptual situation is the vectorial attitude in which an animal is seen to strive towards an object. About the “pathetic fallacy” seemingly implied in our description enough has been said above.

Since, however, people and chimpanzees are, in our connection, only more vivid percepts than other objects, we have to ask one last thing. Do we find requiredness in contexts which contain no people or animals, i.e., in contexts which are objective in the sense that they do not contain any percepts very similar to the self?

We play a simple sequence of chords on the piano. If these are properly chosen a definite key will develop. Supposing that in this key the “leading note” is introduced in an appropriate manner, a final chord following this note is not an indifferent fact in the auditory field. It may sound *wrong* or, if it corresponds to the tonic of the key, it may sound *right*. If we stop after the leading note without a further chord, the sequence will be heard as *incomplete*, with a vector towards completion. This vector usually develops during our approach to the leading note, and becomes most intense with this note. It points toward the tonic, if no chord beyond is given; it accepts the tonic, if the tonic is given; and it rejects other notes with varying intensity according to their place with regard to the key.

In all essential respects this example exhibits the same characteristic traits which have been discussed in cases of subjective requiredness. A context forms, in it the vector develops, and definite objects are either accepted or rejected as completions. Under the influence of the vector, in the context, they acquire those dependent part-qualities which we call *right* or *wrong*. If these are “tertiary qualities,” so are all the goal-qualities which we have mentioned above. And it can hardly be doubted that, in this case, these terms refer, phenomenally, to something in the tones, not in ourselves. The last chord is heard as *right* or *wrong* with reference to the auditory context. By changing the context we may easily make a note sound *right* which has sounded *wrong* before, and vice versa.

Keys, leading notes, the tonic are unfamiliar notions to many. Though the facts in question are strictly independent of any acquaintance with the

theory of music, it may still be advisable to give a second example. I have chosen it intentionally from the very commonest experiences. Nobody should think that requiredness in objective contexts is a rare occurrence, a mysterious experience, and therefore doubtful.

A man has bought a suit, and now he wants a necktie. This necktie must, however, fit in with the color of the suit. In these very words there is acknowledgment of the fact that some colors of ties would appear as required by those of the suit, whereas others would not. The case is perfectly analogous to our last example with one exception, namely, that in the case of the suit and the tie not only one, but several nuances of the tie may be *all right* or even *good*. Requiredness, then, is not always equally specific, and, incidentally, it is not in all cases equally intense.

Once more some criticisms should be mentioned. There are persons who do not seem to acknowledge such facts of requiredness, for instance, in the field of music. Does this invalidate the requiredness? Not at all. There are tone-deaf individuals, it is true, who in spite of otherwise excellent hearing cannot even understand what we call pitch. Nothing could be more natural than that, if the auditory material is different in a person, he cannot find in it the same requiredness that we find in our auditory world.-It might be said secondly that requiredness seems to change in history. So far as we can see, no minor chords were acceptable as conclusions of any music a few hundred years ago. All music had to finish with a major chord. This has changed altogether since that time. The fact cannot be denied. But whatever the historical circumstances were which produced the change, the change itself cannot alter our phenomenology. If the historical fact proves a definite subjectivity of such requiredness, it is not subjectivity in the phenomenological sense of the term. Moreover, an interpretation of requiredness which would exclude the possibility of such changes could not be acceptable. These changes are too obvious. Any system of aesthetics and ethics should contain a theory of them in connection with the problem of *valid* requiredness. But in an interpretation of requiredness as such and in general they constitute no problem. Why should objective requiredness not be able to vary, if subjective valuation does? With all sympathy for those who feel a need for valid requiredness and for a theory of it, we must not confuse two different investigations.²⁰

In the same way we come upon objective requiredness in matters of knowledge or thought. The similarities between red, blue and purple

20 The problem of valid requiredness has recently been discussed by Wertheimer; Cf. *Some Problems in the Theory of Ethics*, in *Social Research* 2, pp. 353 ff. (1935).

are such that the place of purple is ... The context asks for completion. If, as a completion, the words are given "between the red and the blue," their meaning fits the context; they are *right*. Or again: "Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other." The last part of this statement is seen to be *right* in the context of the beginning. Any other case of correct thought might be given as an example. All would show the same main characteristics. Precisely as in the case of subjective valuation, objective requiredness means that vectors issuing in parts of certain contexts extend beyond these parts and refer to other parts with a quality of acceptance or rejection. These other parts themselves assume the dependent properties of *right* or *wrong*. Whatever other differences there may be between logic, aesthetics and ethics—and there are important differences—this general trait seems to characterize requiredness everywhere. Even timeless truth, as our last examples show, involves no exception. Probably no theory would appear satisfactory and final in which the basic contrast between mere facts and requiredness had to be interpreted differently for the case of logic on the one hand, for aesthetics and ethics on the other. We are not in a position to deal with these philosophical disciplines as such. A much more thorough investigation of particular forms of requiredness would be needed for this purpose. If our interpretation is adequate, however, it would appear altogether feasible to develop those branches of philosophy from one common principle. But, after all, is it not subjective requiredness which in our last examples has been wrongly "referred" to objective data? We are disturbed when a sequence of chords ends with the wrong note. We do not like to look upon a necktie which does not fit the suit of its wearer. Obviously here the self is not a neutral observer of alleged objective requiredness. Why then should these cases not be reduced to subjective requiredness?—The observation is correct to some degree. We do not remain neutral in such situations. But why should we? Among the objects which the self may have before it there are contexts of many different kinds in some of which parts appear as right or wrong, required or the contrary. This means that in such situations there is, first, an objective context with its requiredness and, secondly, another and larger context which, besides the objective context, contains the self. That one context should form part of a larger one is a fact so frequently found even within the objective field of percepts alone, that its occurrence here will not surprise anybody familiar with the psychology of perception. And just as simpler objects may affect the self as attractive or repulsive, so contexts in music or in the visual field may, *qua* contexts, either issue vectors extending toward the self or arouse vectors

in the self which are directed toward the contexts. Often they will do both, as for instance when in a sequence of chords we hear a wrong note, feel disturbed, and then go to the piano in order to correct the player. If this explanation should be taken as a mere auxiliary hypothesis, too complicated to deserve our confidence, it will only be necessary to point to corresponding cases in thought. In a book we read an argument which is logically altogether wrong. Certainly it is wrong objectively. But here again we are not neutral witnesses. We feel almost offended by such an obvious mistake, and presently a big stroke of our pencil on the margin, perhaps a note as well, will make it evident enough that a new vector emerged which was directed toward the object. In this case nobody can fail to see that a subjective vector is created in the larger context while at the same time objective wrongness is and remains objective in the argument. There are indeed few things in the world which make us so eager to interfere as wrongness in objective contexts. Too easily, in cases of aesthetics for instance, two such facts of requiredness, one objective and one subjective, are confused, one might almost say, telescoped into each other in the Theorist's mind.

To summarize our discussion of requiredness: It is not the subjective aspect of requiredness in human striving and interests which makes requiredness compatible with facts. Instead it is the observation that certain facts do not only happen or exist, but, issuing as vectors in parts of contexts, extend toward others with a quality of acceptance or rejection. That in many examples such vectors issue from the self is a relatively minor point. Its discussion does not belong to the interpretation of requiredness as such; it belongs, rather, to the geography of requiredness, in which the problem is: where do we find the contexts in question? By the same token subjective requiredness loses its apparent commonplace character. Its essential feature is still hidden from our eyes so long as the term striving, without closer inspection of its meaning, is held to solve the problem. So much is implied in facts of striving that they cannot be regarded as trivial in the present phase of psychology. After this has once been realized we shall be less inclined to regard the subjective case as particularly simple, as necessarily basic in the treatment of requiredness. There is no *a priori* reason why this should be so or why, if there are other cases, the subjective variety should be given an outstanding place. If our phenomenological attempt has been adequate, no such restriction to subjective requiredness and no theoretical accentuation of it can be defended. It seems to be a special case only. In the following chapters, therefore, requiredness as the vector-aspect of phenomenal contexts

will be taken in its general meaning. At least, it will not be regarded as a constitutive trait of requiredness that sometimes or often the vector in question issues from the self.

With these remarks we conclude our phenomenological survey of requiredness. It has been elementary throughout, and the reader may be assured that I do not regard these observations as an adequate basis for ethics or for other systematic disciplines of value. In our survey many different cases of requiredness were considered impartially, and each by itself. In actual life one requiredness is often the enemy of another, and ethics, for instance, claims that, in its field, it can settle such disputes. No basis for such a procedure has been given in this chapter. I hope very much that here again the same phenomenological method will be helpful. In fact, if one particular demand objects to another, this situation itself is one of requiredness. When studying it the phenomenologist will soon find himself in the field of ethics. But for the purpose of the present investigation we need not solve this task. Requiredness in general will be considered in the next chapters as it was in the last.