

### Mario's Dual Content View of Color Experience

#### *The Intuitive Argument*

"It would seem that the . . . thermometer represents [in addition to the temperature 70F] the dispositional property [of being disposed to cause the thermometer to read '70F'] by means of . . . pointing to '70F' . . . [Analogously] intuitively the chromatic part of an experience of seeing a geranium leaf represents both an objective chromatic property and a subjective dispositional chromatic property." (p. 3, 5)

*Potential problem:* Many would say that this is not intuitive (cf. Tye on Shoemaker's very similar dual-content view).

#### *The Theoretical Argument*

"Not only . . . intuitions, but also [the causal-covariation theory of content], . . . imply that dispositional properties [in addition to objective properties] are represented . . .", p. 4

1. Some causal-covariation theory of content T is true. (Problem: highly controversial)
2. Your visual state S, as you view a leaf, is optimally *caused by* an objective property and by the property of being disposed to cause that very state, S. (Problem: Intuitively false, or leads to an unreasonable multiplication of contents.)
3. Your visual state S represents both the objective property and the dispositional property.

#### *A General Question*

Mario holds that my experience, as I view a leaf, represents two chromatic properties. In fact "*all the properties which . . . determine the same (actual) extension*" (p. 13). As it might be: *being one of Ray's favorite objects*). I wonder: what does he mean by 'represents'?

Most philosophers: it is tied to 'looks'. In that case, the view seems implausible: the leaf does not look to have two chromatic properties, much less indefinitely many properties. This suggests that, when giving his theory of 'the representational content of experience', he may not mean what philosophers typically mean.

### Mario's objectivist view of the content of 'Green' and the like

The usual objectivist view is *the reflectance view*: the substantive 'green' rigidly refers to a reflectance property: this is a **stable** property that is **possessed by objects**.

Mario's *light-view*: 'green' refers to "the light of a certain type . . ." <sup>1</sup> (p. 30) This is **not stable**, and it is **not a property/kind that objects possess/belong to**.

#### *Mario's argument against the reflectance view that 'green' rigidly refers to some reflectance R*

1. It's conceivable, therefore possible, that the object should have, not R (L), but R' (L'), and yet normally *look green*, and indeed, *have the color green*. (pp. 26-7) (*Problem: fool's gold, fool's green; Problem: can be used against Mario's view*)
2. Therefore 'green' doesn't rigidly refer to R.

#### *A potential problem with Mario's light view*

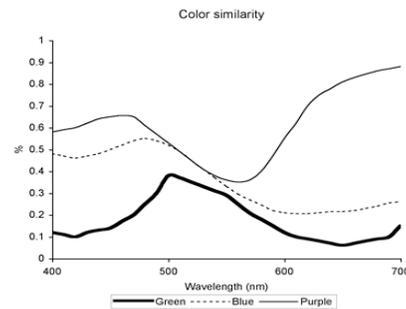
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<sup>1</sup> Mario describes the light in terms of *dominant wavelength*. This problematic, because purples, being non-spectral, have no dominant wavelength.

1. The color green is a sort of thing that flies through the air at the speed of light. (Mario: T, Intuition: F.)

*A second potential problem with the light view*

1. The color blue is more like the color purple than the color green (Intuition: T; Light view: F)
2. Blue light is more like purple light than green light
3. This shade of purple is 75R and 25B (Intuition: T)
4. Purple light is 75R and 25B (?)



*A third potential problem*

1. The leaf in the dark *has* the color green
2. The leaf in the dark *is* green
3. The leaf in the dark *normally produces* green-light.

The proponent of Mario’s light view could say that ‘has’ and ‘is’ here have a special content: *normally produces*, in which case 1 and 2 being equivalent to 3, which is true. But it would be nice to have a more uniform view. E. g. Soames:

The semantic properties of predicates formed using [natural kind substantives like ‘green’ and ‘gold’] are different from, but determined by, the semantic properties of the terms themselves. The semantic content of such a predicate [always] consists of the content of its general term plus the content of the copula – roughly, *being an instance of*. – ‘Manifest Kinds’, Phil Topics

(Note that Soames’ view shares with Mario’s the claim that natural kind substantives are in a way primary while natural kind predicates are derivative.) The reflectance view, but not the light view, is consistent with this more uniform view. For it holds that ‘green’ denotes a reflectance, and reflectances are properties of which ordinary objects are instances (even in the dark).

*Mario’s reference-fixing view on how the reference of ‘green’ is fixed (relative to a context)*

We have an *implicit intention* that ‘green’ (rigidly) denote the objective phenomenon P such that (i) paradigms like emeralds etc. fall under P, (ii) variations in P cause variations in color experience.

*Potential problem:*

1. If the natural kind view is true, then ‘green’ would not denote if we all turn out to occupy a Matrix-like scenario in which there is no phenomenon that satisfies (i) and (i). (In other words: then, relative to such a scenario *considered as actual*, ‘green’ does not denote.)
2. Intuitively, ‘green’ (like ‘sweet’ and ‘square’ and unlike ‘gold’) would still denote: it would denote a property things appear to have but don’t have.
3. So the natural kind view is false: whether ‘green’ refers doesn’t depend on whether there’s a phenomenon that satisfies (i) and (ii).

This argument can’t be used against a natural kind semantics for ‘gold’: intuitively, ‘gold’ *wouldn’t* refer if it turns out we occupy a Matrix-like scenario (i. e. in the case of ‘gold’ 2 is false). This

<sup>2</sup> The figure represents red, blue and green *reflectances*, not red, green and blue *light*: but it gives an idea of the SPD of the light reflected by red, green and blue objects.

argument suggests 'green' is more like terms like 'sweet' or 'square' than it is like natural kind terms like 'gold'. (Btw, all this is consistent with the view that 'green' denotes a physical kind, just not with Kripke's reference-fixing account of how it gets to refer to that kind.)