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Abstract: The goal of this paper is to assess the scientific credibility of folk psychology. In so doing, it argues for a certain conception of our commonsense mental states that regards them as causally tracking patterns of joint action and makes them supervene upon the proprieties of both the individual whom they are attributed and his social and physical environment. Thus, it argues for an updated form of functionalism, using broad states for its psychological proprieties.

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Looking back. Forty or fifty years ago, in the golden age of functionalism, philosophers and scientists seemed to have found a powerful model for the mind, capable to explain behavior in a manner that could be easily squared up with commonsense. After the austere years of behaviorism, scientists had again, as a legitimate object of inquiry, a mind rich with intentions and opinions, which could properly account for what people did. For a couple of decades, at least, a good proportion of philosophers advocated enthusiastically the idea that the way one acts can be explained by tracking the causal relations between a sensory input, mental states and the behavioral output. As such, the mind was principally no different from a digital computer, so there should have been no greater epistemological difficulties in explaining its functioning than in explaining the way a computer works. One of the foremost application of this computer-model was in accounting for the commonsensical states of mind (though expressions like ”folk psychology” or ”commonsense psychology” were still to gain their current popularity). Pioneers like Putnam were eager to show how the common mentalistic vocabulary, once Ryle (Ryle, 1949) tried to parse in behavioristic terms, could be replotted within the grid provided by the new paradigm (see for instance Putnam, 1960, 1964).

But after some initial successes, the winds turned rather quickly, and many of the further progresses promised by the new theoretical framework failed to materialize[1]. Not only was the paradigm out of breath, but it had suffer a second blow, ultimately deriving from one of its pioneers, Hillary Putnam, who in mid-seventies kick-started what came to be called externalism. Soon, Burge produced his well-known *Individualism and the mental* (Burge 1979), aimed at demonstrating that mental states cannot be construed as the original functionalists did, that is as internal states, so they cannot be equated with the internal states of a computer.

In this new age of uncertainties, scholars tried various alternatives, both when it came to designing empirical research and philosophical reconstructions, resulting in various models for the mind. While externalism was gaining popularity in the philosophical arena, its impact came to be felt everywhere common states of mind were mentioned. Some of the new conceptions were constructed quite explicitly as a response to the new challenges. This was the case with reformed variants of functionalism employing the so-called ”narrow contents”, but these were in no way the only avenues explored while trying to cope with the problems raised by the contextual factors. The renewed interest in the environmental factors even made Rom Harré talk of a second cognitive revolution, marked precisely by the attention accorded to external realities such as the symbolic systems at use in the community the subject lives in (Harré, 2009).

In the meanwhile, connectionism inspired voices like that of Paul Churchland questioned the assumption that folk-psychological mental states are fit for science, and preached for their elimination. Folk psychology was seen as an antiquated way of theorizing about the mind, poor at explaining many

1 This was , for instance, the situation chronicled in the '70s by Dreyfus's *What computers still can't do* (Dreyfuss 1979)

phenomena, such as mental illness or memory, incapable of evolution and ill-fitting to everything else science has to say about humans or nature in general; moreover, the functionalist outlook, no longer relying on microstructure, was deemed akin to alchemy, whose shallow explanations were cast in predicates referring only to surface proprieties of substances, without any preoccupation for the constitution of matter, that could have afforded sound explanations for the transformation of substances (Churchland 1981).

Under the pressure of the new wave of theorizing, it became clear that functionalism about the commonsense states of mind needs some major adjustments, if not outright elimination. The latter course would put in a difficult position an array of disciplines, starting from psychology and ending with economy, whose theories and explanations are built-up in a language ridden with the maligned folk psychological talk. Yet many psychologists, historians, sociologists or economists, to this day, still put together their theories in folk-psychological language, nonchalantly ignoring eliminativist warns, and until proven otherwise by their fellow scientists, being successful at formulating explanations and predictions. After all, people do invest billions based upon what economists have to say about the intentions of economic players, and if their predictions come under fire, it is definitely not because they employed folk language. There is a definite cleavage between what the skeptics prescribe and what scientists, maybe due to blissful ignorance, do. While the classical functionalism of 50 years ago turned out clearly not to be the definitive answer, the cognitivist eliminativism that sprung a couple of decades later has failed too effecting the massive changes in the scientific outlook it demanded. Time has shown that it simply hasn't caught on with the practitioners of science. Maybe it is time for some overall reassessment.

And if the way of thinking about the common states of mind needs some reassessment how far should we go? Should we proceed with an outright elimination of folk psychology? We actually don't have any reasons for that. Churchland's arguments are far from bullet-proof. First of all, many well-respected sciences taxonomize their kinds without paying attention to microstructure. Astronomy, for instance, speaks about planets, without taking into account whether these heavenly bodies are made out of silicates or condensed gases. If proprieties such as being a planet can be employed in scientific theorizing without problems, nor should constructing psychological kinds based upon their functional proprieties and not upon microstructure jeopardize their scientific acceptability. When it comes to folk psychology itself and the arguments against its scientific credibility, “the incapacity to evolve” accused by Churchland might mean simply the fact that the commonsense theory of mind is true, not necessarily that it belongs to a degenerating research program. After all, Archimedes' law, and many other long standing generalizations, still part of physics, haven’t changed at all since the day they were first proposed. Moreover, dozens of academic journals offer with each issue new theoretical advancements framed in the commonsense mentalistic language. We have an enormous quantity of material on the opinions entertained by people in a certain group at a given time or how the intentions or beliefs of market players contributed to certain economic trends. Therefore, contrary to what Churchland holds, folk psychology is extremely productive, and does not lead to stagnation. Of course, it doesn't explain everything, but no theory does. The fact that electromagnetic theory can't explain the phenomena thermodynamics explains doesn't make the former a candidate for elimination. After all, each theory has a limited stock of phenomena it aims to account for. The fact that folk psychology doesn't explain how memory works or psychotic manifestations says therefore nothing about its truth or future. It remains the question of the integration of folk psychology with other sciences, peculiarly with the neurosciences. The plethora of theoretical constructions mentioned a few lines above, which explain in terms of intentions and beliefs, would suffice to demonstrate the integration and dense interconnections Churchland denies. Churchland speaks of reduction, saying that nobody has the slightest idea about how folk psychology could reduce to a larger corpus (Churchland 1981). Of course,

we 're not going to tackle here the problem of reductionism. Suffices though to say that how reduction, if any, is to be effected is not immediately obvious. It is usually quite a scientific exploit, sometimes dependent upon spotting unforeseen correlations between sets of proprieties, and until the scientists come up with the solution, it remains a mystery. Until then, if ever such a reduction is to succeed, scientists are searching for all sorts of intertheoretic relations, which do not amount to a full-fledged reduction, though they might succeed in finding one. After all, nobody thinks astronomy is pseudoscience just because many of its truths are, from a certain standpoint, still deep mysteries to be accounted in terms of more basic laws of physics. This point shows that there can be intertheoretic relations without having at hand, at least momentarily, a reduction. And this is precisely the case with folk psychology. Far from standing in that "magnificent isolation" Churchland accuses, there are numerous research programs trying to account for the neural functioning subserving intentions and opinions. Literally every day brings a paper on such issue. From the timing of the events in the brain accompanying a conscious intention (see, for instance, Haggard and Libet 2001) to the patterns of activation in the brain while entertaining a socially shared opinion (see Campbell-Meiklejohn, Bach, Roepstorff, Dolan, and Frith 2010), to choose quite randomly from what is truly an abundant stock, there are countless research papers aiming to explain the neural substratum of what are the same old folk psychological states.

But if there are no apparent reasons for elimination, there are the issues emphasized by the externalist, that seemingly prompt for a revision of the way we think about the commonsensical states of mind. We will examine the problem of externalism, trying to evaluate its consequences upon the scientificity of folk psychology. Our problem will therefore be ultimately epistemological, more precisely, to assess the scientific credibility of theorizing in the language of folk psychology, and of making use of its generalizations. But the offshoot will be of some significance to the decades long discussion outlined in the beginning of this paper, about the way we should model the mind. Our strategy will take the route of an analysis at the level of performance, whereby we will try to extricate the way folk-psychological mental states are attributed.[2] It will enable us to shed some light on the status of the folk psychological attributions, clarifying what they refer to and what they purport to explain. In this respect, we will start by reexamining Burge's classic argument from *Individualism and the mental*, trying to see what really makes externalism tick and, subsequently, emphasize how this could yield a strategy for recovering folk psychology within the general framework of science.

Our conclusion will be that the folk psychological states, at least the contentful ones, commonly deemed to define folk-psychology (Cf. Stich 1996, p.10, Churchland 1981), are truly causally responsible for our behavior. As such, they can become part of viable functional theory. Up to here, we are in complete agreement with the classical brand of functionalism about commonsense states of mind. But there's a twist to the story we are trying to tell. Rather than being realized by states of the brain these states characterize a system that goes well beyond the individual's skin. The reason lies in the very facts that compel us to be externalists. A psychological state with content is most of the times attributed within a joint practice. As such, it has to supervenes on more than the internal states of the individual, depending on such things as verbal and behavioral dispositions of the other participants or the objects employed in that practice. In other words, the science evoking such states operates with a peculiar sort of "wide mental states", but, in spite of some divergent opinions we will comment upon at the appropriate moment, can legitimately do so.

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2 Because our analysis will be carried out at the level of performance, where we would try to examine our mentalistic statements, what they refer to and the links between them, and not at the level of the actual cognitive mechanisms that enable us to ascribe mental states. Therefore, we will not try to take a position in the debate between theory-theorists and their adversaries from the simulationist camp, or those belonging to other alternative denominations.

Burge's thought experiment. The example is well-known, but for the sake of exposition, at least, is worth recapitulating it briefly. Suppose Alf is attributed a large number of attitudes containing "arthritis", amongst which the false belief that he has arthritis in the thigh. His microphysically identical twin, Bert, lives in a society where "arthritis" is used with a wider scope, encompassing not only diseases of the joints, but also rheumatic afflictions located outside them, such as the ones affecting the thigh. Bert has the same history of physical stimulations as Alf, which affords him the same verbal dispositions, so both assert "I have arthritis in the thigh" whenever they are questioned. Generally speaking, as a result of their identical microphysical structures and physical histories, they have the same verbal and behavioral output. But we could never attribute Bert propositional attitudes containing "arthritis" in an oblique position. Burge's reason for denying that to Bert is that he could not have acquired the notion of arthritis, because in his community there is no such notion in circulation. As the only difference between the two lays in their social context, not in their non-intentional and physical features, the difference in the attributed opinions should originate in their peculiar environment.

But Burge's thought experiment is inconclusive. The fact about the matter is that we could attribute both the same propositional attitudes, such as the ones including "arthritis" in an oblique position. Let us imagine that Bert is a villager, not at ease with the medical jargon, but which nevertheless has learned some disease words in his own community, where the use of "arthritis" doesn't replicate faithfully the one we could find in med schools. Now, suppose he is diagnosed with arthritis at a clinic in town, and subsequently he has to pass that information to those he interacts over there. For instance he has to say "I have arthritis" to the chemist he buys drugs from, to the osteopath, to the insurance agent that might reimburse his fees and, or to the bookshop keeper, which questions him while trying to assist him in choosing the titles that could help him learn more about his ailments. Couldn't they credit him with the opinion that he has arthritis, albeit his use of the word, they might admit, is odd in certain respects, due to his peculiar enculturation? Our character might not have learned the concept. The doctor could just have told him "You have arthritis", without any further explanation about the disease. This would hardly amount to picking up the concept of "arthritis", as it is used in the medical textbooks and differentiates it from the one he has learned at home, or picking up the use of the word in that new community. Yet, all those he interacts with would attribute him the opinion that he has arthritis. This situation conforms perfectly to the type of situation Burge asks us to consider, yet the conclusion is exactly the opposite.

This is not a science-fiction thought experiment. It is rather the reality of the actual attributive practices in our societies. The reality about our language use is that what seems at a first glance as a uniform community is actually split into subgroups, each one with its own idiom. Regional and social fault lines create conceptual peculiarities shared and transmitted within the groups thus differentiated. A second important premise in our argument, which should be even plainer, is that people interact with people outside of the groups they originate in, having somehow different linguistic practices. Take for instance the children that learn in their scientifically naïve families or at Sunday school that whales are fish. They necessarily come to have a somehow different concept of fish than, for instance, those with more zoological knowledge. Their skewed concept encompasses a few more creatures than our own, a concept one acquires by frequenting teachers or other people outside their biology uninformed group or by being born in the more cultured strata of society. In their community, they learned a slightly different way of taxonomizing the living world. Yet, are we prohibited to attribute to the subjects lacking any contact with modern zoology propositional attitudes including the concept of "fish"? The reality we all can easily notice is that we actually do attribute such beliefs and intentions to the members observing "deviant" linguistic practices with respect to our own or our own group. For

instance we would attribute without hesitation to a boy raised a the scientifically naïve community, crying out on the lake shore, angle in hand, “I think I caught a fish!” the opinion that he thinks he has caught a fish, and not the that he has caught a twish or some other category of living being, even when are fully aware that his “fish” taxon extends to cetacea, where he comes from and the way he has acquired his zoological terminology.

These sorts of situations demonstrate, first and foremost, that Burge's thought experiment is flawed. But their interest is not limited to assessing a classic thought experiment. They tell us why it doesn't work, and furthermore, as we shall see, what the real grounds for externalism might be. There is a presupposition at the core of Burge's argument, namely that the concept we attribute must depend upon the fact that we have learned or somehow “picked up the notion of arthritis”. But this is not true. It seems that content attribution does not depend on the way our subjects get the concept. After all, it would be highly impractical when attributing mental states. With regard to most people we meet in our lives we have no information about where people came from and the way they learned their word use. This part of their history is most often hidden from us. And even if we knew that someone picked in some respects a different concept, such as the child picking up the different fish concept in Sunday school or in a highly traditional community, we wouldn't mind that, and we would readily attribute propositional attitudes containing “fish” in oblique position, as we have just seen.

So what do we do? What we have is their present performances, and, as we have seen in our examples, we attribute readily folk mental states when we see that subjects are able to function in our community and interact with the people they meet, or, in other words, whenever they can integrate the framework by which we live our lives in society. So, it seems that propositional attitudes are being attributed based on the joint activities a person participates in, and not his learning history[3]. It appears that what counts is what a person does, within a certain community, characterized by certain practices. The content of Alf's opinion “that he has arthritis” depends on certain classificatory practices with regard to rheumatoid ailments, that have made the doctor pronounce a certain diagnostic and on Alf accepting his opinion, and acting accordingly (going to the insurance agent, pharmacy etc.). It is here that the “joint action” factor gains its crucial role in defining the mental states. The content of Alf's opinion is gained by attending that practice (i.e. of seeking and receiving medical care). This commerce is capital to attributing propositional attitudes involving such a conceptual content. It is only on the background of a definite practice that we can assign most of the propositional attitudes[4]. It would be, for instance, preposterous to speak of voting intention within a community where there are no electoral practices. It is only amongst a certain community where people organize elections and the subject has the opportunity to cast his vote, that we can speak of such an intention. We shall see below that these social phenomena on the background of which we assign mental states are a special case of regular action, and there remain a few types of intentions where the sociality isn't present, but as long as many (maybe the vast majority) of the things we do are social, this factor cannot be omitted.

But Burge strongly disagrees with such a perspective that makes the states of mind dependent upon the practices present in a community, privileging the learning of the concepts as the factor that determines which mental states characterize a person (Burge 1979, 1986). This obtains, according to Burge (Burge 1986), because a person can contest any practice involving the application of a concept. For instance, exemplifies Burge, someone might come to the idea that sofas are not pieces of furniture, as most of the members of our society think, but religious objects. The “cognitive value” that person attaches to the

3 Of course, learning history might be taken into account, but that would be just a particular case of joint action, when someone learns and another person teaches.

4 We will emphasize some exceptions below, though.

term “sofa” is here different from the one of the fellow members of his linguistic community. Thus, there might be massive cognitive differences between him and the other individuals in that community. Any of the intellectual norms governing our cognitive and linguistic practices can be challenged, emphasizes Burge. Thus, though capable of fixing linguistic meanings, communal linguistic practice, as it is at a certain moment, cannot individuate cognitive aspects, as anyone can rebel against them, think differently and maybe impose his new way of thinking and the associated linguistic practices on the society.

But that doesn't imply that “cognitive value” is not individuated according to communal practices. It is actually individuated by the very ones that are being contested by the views of the subjects we attribute mental states. For instance someone might say “Alf thinks sofas can be sat upon” but immediately add “but he thinks sofas are religious objects”. Such a supplementary remark would be unintelligible if we wouldn't characterize Alf's state of mind with reference to the linguistic practices of a certain community, in occurrence the one we all belong, that does not link them with anything supernatural. It would seem utterly inappropriate or futile if we all thought, for instance, that sofas are religious objects. What we do here is start with a certain communal practice, where sofas are considered to be mere pieces of furniture, to which we add a further qualification, specifying what peculiarities differentiate him form the rest of us. Thus even when describing the states of mind of persons challenging communal practices we must make reference to that communal practice, as it is at the moment of our attribution. Even when the norm is challenged, we are bound to individuate the folk-psychological states of mind with reference to a certain established practice, by grafting the peculiarities of the person acting as a challenger within that group, onto the way the members of that group think about and treat the concerned objects. There is no way we can escape communal practice.

Society and causality. This emphasis on the role of shared practices puts us in the vicinity of one of the major developments within the last decades trying to take into account the social factors - the discursive approach advocated by Harré. His thesis is that when we attribute mental proprieties, we are tracking the person within the grid of social interaction. But it is at this very point that the two perspectives part. He thinks that our psychological explanations should not be deemed as causal, but as exploiting the net of norms the person observes. Harré allows thus psychology to employ in its theorizing a normative factor, which according to him should be taken as the peculiarity of psychology amongst sciences. This would raise some eyebrows. After all, the same normative element made Davidson refuse scientific status to psychology, at least to the one construed in the language of common mentalistic talk (see, for instance, Davidson, 1995). But there's no need to have such worries. What we will contend is that our folk-psychological explanations are plainly causal. What distances us even more from Harré's perspective is that we will hold that the social interaction, while very important, is just one of the factors people employ in a certain way we theorize about our fellows, or rather a peculiar case.

What Harré holds is that what connects the “mental states” with everything else are not causal relations but the rules of discourse (Harré and Gillett 1994, p. 65). This establishes, according to his theory, normative relations between thoughts, acts, emotions and so forth. Literally, what we are referring to in our commonsense psychological explanations are not causes or effects, but what people are required to do or what was a ground for them to do something (Harré 2002, p. 175). Harré repeatedly warns us that the array of thoughts and acts a person performs should not be seen as a causal succession. (see for instance Harré and Gillett , 1994, p. 33). According to Harré (Harré and Gillett 1994, pp. 121-123) the rules we follow in society provide us with “techniques” to organize our activity, structuring our behavior, but of course we may or may not observe that rule. Rules give us reasons, but we are free not to act upon that reason (Harré & Gillett 1994, pp. 121). Though invoked in our day to day explanations

reasons should not be therefore mistaken for the causes of our behavior.

Thus, our intentional explanations should be redeemed as somehow offering the contextual elements of the behavior or the thought we have to explain, as laid out by the storylines culture provide us to live our lives by, thus making them intelligible, by placing them in that conventional but widely known way of doing things (Harré 2002, p.181). What gives coherence to those scenarios are not regular causal sequences within them. They are ordered by normative links, as established by the conventions governing those ”discursive practices”. It is such ties that enable us to make inferences about the psychology of people or explain their behavior. But scientists would misrepresent their endeavor if they were to think that they were exploiting causal links when accounting for behavior. They are rather exploiting some conventional normative links between various sequences of a discursive practice. The only sources of such the ties between explanandum and explanans can be the social setup and the semantic, pragmatic and syntactic rules for using symbols (Harré, 2002, p. 175).

Exiling folk psychological explanations from the category of causal explanations makes one important service they provide us daily life hard to account for. What Harré unfortunately does not pay attention enough is the predictive use we make of the links between reasons and actions. One way to account for these unsung successes of folk psychology is to say that for our predictions we rely on constant connections between sets of proprieties, mental and behavioral. To mention a garden variety example, we think for instance that “whenever X intends to F and thinks that only by doing G will bring about F, he will do G”. At first sight, these seem an array of facts about a person, connected by run of the mill empirical regularities. But if Harré's theory is true, our prediction would turn to rely on sentences more like as “No honest person will ever steal”, which exploits the socially defined meaning of what is to be honest and the prescriptions for proper conduct embodied by it, or to speak in the language of Harré’s theory, what defines a certain position people assume in the social game, that of being a honest person. If we think John is honest, and no honest person will ever steal, we can anticipate that John will never steal, but in doing so, we do not make use of regularities linking some “psychological” characteristics of the person with its behavioral output, as in our first example. We rely on what the law or social conventions stipulate honesty is.

Now, there is clearly a difference between the two situations. While the latter proposition is necessary, we do not have such necessity in the former case. No matter what happens, if our society defines honesty as a way of conduct which includes never stealing, and John is honest, he will never steal. Of course, the rules of proper conduct might change, but until such a reform that would redefine what we mean by being honest and dishonest, no matter what happens, our proposition will stay true. This is to be expected whenever we rely on conventions defining certain characteristics, such as honesty, and drawing conclusions based on the ties they provides us with.

As regards the general propositions linking types of intentions and beliefs, on one side, with types of actions, on the other side, these are only *ceteris paribus* true (or at least a large stock of them, which is enough to refute Harré). In our example, there are lots of things that could happen, preventing X doing G, although he will keep his intentions and opinions constant. He might simply forget or be physically restrained to do G. This says something important: if we are to predict somebody else's behavior, we must rely on run of the mill empirical regularities, described by general propositions that are, as a distinctive mark, of course, plagued by *ceteris paribus* clauses, as there are many things that can interfere. Moreover, if we are not to attribute repeatedly occurring sequences of behavior to sheer miracle or wildly improbable statistical accidents, we will have to presuppose a causal mechanism that produces such a regular sequence. No doubt, we can use such regularities not only to make our acts intelligible, but even warrantable (for instance explaining our acts as the inevitable effect of some

justifiable intention). But our explanations and predictions will stay causal.

Moreover, there is another element that distances us from Harré. The social factor isn't really universal. There are instances of folk-psychological attributions where the social ingredient is absent, but our common methods of making sense of the other are still effective. What social norms is the foraging behavior of a hungry person looking for food in the woods regulated by? Of course, sometimes primitives might observe taboos and the trekker might not eat protected species. The point is though not that they do, but that there are cases when we can intentionally explain their behavior without referring to such social creations. For instance, we can explain the act of climbing up a tree, by the intention of picking up fruits. There is no cultural fact over here. We could use the same explanation in the case of a monkey or any other animal, lacking a culture.

Therefore, folk psychology goes well beyond exploiting social behavioral schemes in its explanations and predictions. The reason can plausibly only reside in the regularity of both basic behavior, such as the ones shared by man with the animals, and in those that are inculcated by the observances of various common customs. Each is capable of producing regular patterns of behavior that are picked up and used in explaining by folk psychology. From this standpoint, the rule-governed behaviors Harré puts forward are just a particular species of regular behavior. To obtain the full picture, though, we must supplement them by a-cultural regularities of the kind mentioned above. Of course, human behavior is hugely shaped by the culture one belongs to. We are maybe unique in this respect amongst animals. Culture contributes to the repertoire of acts we do, and structures our beliefs and intentions, probably overwhelmingly so, dwarfing nature when it comes to shaping behavior. Intentional psychology cannot be construed as essentially social, though, no doubt, it largely is. And where no social factor is involved, there are no rules. What we end up are not rules, but regularities.

Causal efficacy of wide mental states. Where does it leave us? Well, it seems that we should consider folk psychology as invoking in its explanations and predictions states that are both wide and causally interlinked. But would that make it amount to a set of propositions that can be justified by science, bare some marginal corrections? Well, this is a perspective some are resisting. It seems puzzling that something could make an effective contribution to what I say or do, without changing something inside me. After all, this is why the notion of narrow content has been introduced, to solve such a puzzle. Employing the idea of narrow content has been for a couple of decades extremely popular, maybe the dominant paradigm, when trying to turn folk psychology scientific. This strategy is not without its shortcomings, which have been very well emphasized by others elsewhere (cf. Putnam 1987, 2001), but we won't examine them here. Our task is rather to present a model of what folk-psychological theorizing could mean and decide if there is something scientifically wrong with it or not, given its characteristics, while clearing away the related misconceptions.

This way of dealing with the abovementioned puzzle presupposes that although psychological states might be typed in terms of external events or proprieties, what these external factors add is causally irrelevant. This point of view has been held by Crane (Crane 1991), which reserves causal efficacy to "intrinsic proprieties", while denying it to the non-intrinsic proprieties, where an intrinsic propriety is defined as one whose acquisition or loss constitutes a real change in a particular. According to Crane, whenever we look for causes, we look for intrinsic proprieties. The fact that my brother became shorter was not caused by my increase in height, and nor has it any effects. Considering some psychological proprieties to vary with the community someone lives in, makes the non-intrinsic, and thus causally idle.

But extrinsic proprieties can have effects. Suppose that my brother becomes shorter than me while I

grow in height, and our parents pick the shortest one for a certain task, best suited for those with the shortest height, that fatigues him or makes him the victim of an accident. This clearly shows that an extrinsic propriety is truly capable of leading to definite effects. Moreover, such an objection would turn causally irrelevant and thus scientifically inadmissible proprieties like water solubility. This is not an intrinsic propriety a sugar cube has. It essentially depends upon the proprieties of water, not only the proprieties of sugar. Imagine that water had different physical proprieties that would render it incapable of breaking the molecular ties within the crystals of sugar. The causal proprieties of water, though beyond those afforded by the proprieties of sugar, are essential when it comes to attributing such proprieties as water solubility, and further on, when it comes to determining the effects of placing a piece of sugar in water. They are not causally idle, nor are they making extrinsic proprieties scientifically dubious in any way.

The commonsense states of mind are proprieties of this sort, extrinsic, like water solubility. For a maximum of precision it would be better to specify the communal practices with regard to which the mental state is ascribed, thus saying not simply “X intends P” or “ X believes Q”, but prefixing the assigned states of mind with the practice on the background of which they are attributed. That would turn our attributions into to something like “within the practice A, X intends P”, “within the practice A, X believes Q”, very much like specifying the type of liquid a certain substance is soluble in, when we say that sugar is water-soluble or vitamin A is fat-soluble. But that would complicate our lives uselessly, as most of the time, it is understood that the relevant practices are those of group the attributer, the hearer and the subject being attributed mental states belong to and interact. Most of the time, the three persons above mentioned are part of the same community. The necessity of such a specification appears though in situations where the practices are utterly different from the ones we usually all share. For instance, we find in the works of classicists, that attempt to make intelligible to the modern reader the opinions of a certain Greek author, ample descriptions of the discursive and non-discursive routines being practiced in the community and at the moment that author lives. The same is true also with the anthropologist who is trying to describe and explain what members of a native community think or intend. Because the practices he encounters are not always shared by the modern reader, whenever such is the case, he has to offer a detailed account of the sometimes odd customs of that society. But usually, in our day to day lives, we simply assume that the relevant practices are those we usually attend, as both attributer, the person whom he addresses to and those he ascribes mental states are similarly encultured.

Returning to the issue of causal powers, the fact about the matter is that wide mental states have different causal powers for each counterpart. One reason they should so differ is because the way those around us understand us. A different conceptual slicing of the world means, amongst other things, different behavioral effects. If we make the commonsense states of mind dependent upon the community and the language games it plays, we make them implicitly dependent upon the behavioral dispositions, verbal of otherwise, of the members of that community. We would rather have to think about folk psychological mental states as supervening upon the proprieties of a group, and inheriting their causal powers not only from the proprieties characterizing the individual, but also from the proprieties characterizing the other members of his society. Making the commonsense states of mind supervene both upon the internal states of the subject and on the states of affairs in the environment, chiefly upon the dispositions of the other members of the community can help us make sense of the somehow counterintuitive idea that the environment makes a causal difference. The causal power is the resultant of what happens in one's head and what happens in the heads of the members of the community he lives in, and as such, a mental state, widely construed, differs in its causal powers when community differs.

Yet, not only do we want these proprieties to have no metaphysical problems with causation or trap us into insoluble puzzles. We want them scientifically respectable. But there is notorious rejoinder here, coming from Fodor (Fodor 1987). As Fodor notes, science individuates its kinds through their causal powers. We won't argue against this premise, and will show that wide states of mind satisfy this criterion for what could count as an authentic scientific propriety. But the argument doesn't end here. As Fodor stresses, it would be preposterous for a psychologist to consider what is microphysically identical as having different causal powers. For instance, it would be absurd to consider two people different with respect to their alimentary preferences, only because, in their respective communities, foods are taxonomized slightly differently. It would be absurd for science, says Fodor, to attribute them different wants when they say "Please bring me some brisket for dinner" only because in one community brisket covers both veal and chicken meats, while in the other only veal meat is named brisket. Of course, in their own society, each one's request might result in being brought different sorts of meat, but, emphasizes Fodor, causal power must be evaluated in the same context. It would wrong to say that two microstructurally identical sugar cubes have different causal powers, because the effects of placing them in two glasses containing different substances are different (Fodor 1987, pp. 28-42).

But think of two societies placed in in the same physical environment, each having slightly different ways of conceptually organizing the world. While in Alf's society "jade" denotes jadeite, in the society his microstructurally identical twin Bert lives, it denotes nephrite. Suppose that Alf and Bert express a wish containing the concept specific to each, so both say "I want a boulder of jade, to use it as a paperweight". Of course, this might lead in Alf's society to the extraction from a nearby mountain of a piece of jadeite, while in Bert's society to the mining of a piece of nephrite. Yet if we construe the states of mind broadly, that is supervening upon internal states of the subjects of our commonsense mental attributions and those of the members of its society, that is upon the states of an entire group, the context should be searched outside that group, for instance within the natural environment. And here the results are clearly different: while in Alf's case a piece of jadeite is extracted, in Bert's case a piece of nephrite it is taken out of the ground. We will still have a causal individuation of scientifically respectable kinds, while keeping the mental states broad. The important thing here though, is not to imagine folk mental states contained inside the head and responsible for individual bodily motions, but as supervening on states of a group of individuals and tracking patterns of joint action, where the person to whom the commonsense mental states plays a peculiar role (for instance putting in motion a whole social process, by ordering to be brought a certain piece of rock). This way, we can define context as contexts of an entire social practice.

Of course, environmental factors, such as the verbal dispositions of our peers, might make no difference with regard to the physical movement of our limbs or to the sounds we utter. But that doesn't mean they make no causal difference at all. There are differences even closer to the agent, than the end results of a joint action, but for which, in a final analysis, joint action is also responsible. As has been often emphasized, lots of the causes and most of the effects of the states of mind folk psychology deals with are typed in "actionistic" language. Socialwise, the role of a physical event might differ according to the rules of the game governing that particular practice (or, to be more precise, according the structure of interactions within a regular pattern of joint activity). The array of sounds "□ ī□wo□nt wo□-tər" must be typed as a request for H20 or XYZ, depending on the practice within which these sounds are emitted, and, further down the road, because such an act effects different outcomes (i.e. when one says that wants water is brought water, while when another says he wants XYZ, because that is what his word mean in his society and the dispositions of those attending that linguistic practice are such that he is brought XYZ). That is, if we are to embrace the individuation criterion emphasized by Fodor, because these statements have different effects, they should be considered different kinds of acts. And because each wish generates different kinds of acts, they too must be considered different wishes.

At each stage, the proprieties folk psychology operates with are problem-free, from the standpoint of scientifically typing them by causal powers. Again, the decisive factor is how the different ways people jointly act within a different practice, when issuing or responding to requests or other speech acts, thus creating the network of interactions defining that practice.

Conclusion. Commonsense mental proprieties are used to track not the behavior of sole individuals, but to causally account for the behavior of an entire system, composed of an individual and the objects and people constituting its environment. The fact that they are occurring in a network of causal relations licenses us to ascertain that doing folk psychology is entertaining a functional theory. On the map of philosophical positions, it would easily place us on the functionalist continent. What we are advocating though is not the classical functionalism, but quite a different species, that has evolved to adapt to the new theoretical environment. The functional system is no longer realized by the individual, with its internal states of mind, sensory stimulations and its bodily motions. The realization is provided instead by a larger complex, including the individual whom we attribute mental states, people it jointly acts with within a practice and other objects in its environment. This would add an independent line of argument for those pleading to consider the mind as extending beyond the borders of the organism (see for instance Chalmers and Clark 1998), thus recommending a certain class of models for the mind.[5] Leaving aside the broad ideological families, we emphasized the general outlines for what this model should include, when it comes to folk psychology. Moreover, extending this way the commonsense mental proprieties provides us with the answer of how such proprieties can be made scientifically viable.

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5 though the problems each paper tries to solve by going that direction are different (i.e. the resources mobilized in solving various cognitive tasks vs. explaining how common attribution works), and it remains to be seen if the two approaches can be subsumed under a common all-encompassing theory or if the two models can be made to coincide. Anyway if the express goal of the two authors is not to establish how the common states of mind like are used according to standard usage, but that we *should* construe them so for various explanatory reasons, what we are showing is that our attributive practices are really construing the mental proprieties this way. If the epistemological reasons Clark and Chalmers emphasize bind us to use such kinds, folk psychological states already fit the bill

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