John McDowell’s “Values and Secondary Qualities”

I. Why is it “comparatively easy to argue that the appearances are misleading,” as Mackie’s error theory suggests, if we model our awareness of values on primary qualities? Why does Mackie believe, in McDowell’s appraisal, that the model must be primary rather than secondary qualities? (Sect. 2)

II. Secondary properties (Sect. 3)

A. How does McDowell define a secondary property? (111-112)

B. Why does McDowell believe that our experience of secondary properties is of properties “genuinely possessed” by objects? (112)

C. How does McDowell distinguish two senses of subjective and objective as a way of explaining the error in Mackie’s Lockean idea of secondary qualities as not objective, not real? (113-114)

III. The Role of Secondary Properties in Explanation (Sect. 4)

A. What is Mackie’s empirical argument that secondary properties are not genuinely possessed by objects? (117)

B. How does McDowell question Mackie’s point, arguing that “the right explanatory test is not whether something pulls its own weight in the favored explanation”? (117-118)

C. “Questions about explanations of a different kind” (118)

1. What is the analogy and, more importantly (for our purposes now), the disanalogy between values and secondary qualities that McDowell notes? (118)

2. How does Mackie attempt to overcome the disanalogy he finds between values and secondary qualities with his discussion of fear and how some objects can be said to really merit our fear? (119-120)