

Opposing Opposing Powers

Abstract: Is it possible that an object *x* has a disposition *D* but, even if the characteristic stimulus obtains, it would not manifest *D* because one of its own intrinsic properties would immediately block the manifestation? In other words, is it possible to ‘fink or mask’ dispositions by intrinsic properties? Randolph Clarke vehemently argues that it is. But the possibility of finking or masking dispositions intrinsically is naturally conducive to the possibility of two opposing dispositions’ being co-instantiated by one and the same object. Being well aware of this, Clarke lately offers a number of examples that he claims to corroborate the possibility of two opposing dispositions’ being co-instantiated. But I will argue below that Clarke’s claim is unfounded.

1. Intrinsic finks, constitution test, and opposing dispositions

Is it possible that when a bearer of a disposition *D* is subjected to its characteristic stimulus it does not manifest *D* because one of its *intrinsic* properties prevents the manifestation? Some philosophers say yes. A glass is fragile but it does not break when struck. Why? Because the glass has an intrinsic property *P* that hinders it from breaking: either *P* would instantly remove its fragility, in which case *P* is termed an intrinsic fink to fragility, or *P* would instantly thwart the process from striking to breaking without removing it, in which case *P* is termed an intrinsic masker or antidote to fragility.¹ It is an intensely disputed issue whether or not intrinsic finks or antidotes to dispositions, so understood, are conceptually possible.²

It is to be noted that the view that it is possible to fink or mask dispositions by intrinsic properties goes along with the idea that it is possible for *x* to possess opposing dispositions at the same time, where opposing dispositions are dispositions that have the same characteristic stimulus but incompatible manifestations. For instance, the property of being fragile and the property of being sturdy are opposing dispositions. They have the same characteristic stimulus, the event of being struck. But they have mutually incompatible manifestations: the characteristic manifestation of being fragile is the event of breaking, whilst the characteristic manifestation of being sturdy is the event of remaining unbroken. The possibility of the co-instantiation of opposing dispositions, so

¹ For discussions of extrinsic finks and antidotes, see (Johnston 1992), (Martin 1994), (Lewis 1997), and (Bird 1998)

² The possibility of intrinsic fink and antidote to disposition has been accepted by Choi, Handfield, Bird, Cohen but rejected by Fara, Clarke, and Everett. See (Choi 2005), (Cohen and Handfield 2007), (Handfield 2008), (Handfield and Bird 2008), (Clarke 2008; forthcoming), (Fara 2008), and (Everett forthcoming).

characterized, seems to be entailed by the possibility of intrinsic finks or antidotes to dispositions. Why? Because on the supposition that *x* is disposed to *M* in response to *S* and it also has an intrinsic fink or antidote to it, it is highly plausible to say that *x* is disposed *not* to *M* in response to *S*. Given that the glass has an intrinsic property *P* that would prevent its breaking, it sounds reasonable to say that it is sturdy. The proponents of the possibility of intrinsic finks or antidotes to dispositions thus seem to be left with the view that opposing dispositions can be co-instantiated by the same object.

To make my point more forceful, it will be helpful to take a look at what Clarke calls 'the constitution test', which he has invoked to bear out the possibility of finking or masking dispositions intrinsically. Clarke (2008, 5) says of the constitution test: 'Furthermore, in many standard cases of dispositions, we find intrinsic structural features which, given the laws, suffice for the possession of those dispositions. Having a certain molecular structure and bonding suffices, given the laws, for being soluble. We need not take into account *all* of a thing's intrinsic properties in determining whether it has a given disposition.' The core idea of the constitution test, I take it, is that not all the intrinsic properties of *x* are relevant to *x*'s possession of a given disposition. Not all but only some of *x*'s intrinsic properties suffice to make it the case that *x* possesses the disposition.

Clarke indicates that the constitution test entails that dispositions are intrinsically finkable. To see this, let us apply Clarke's constitution test to an object *O* that is supposed to have a microstructural intrinsic property, say, a particular type of bonding structure which is typical of fragile things. This object *O* is claimed to have an intrinsic structural property required for being fragile. From this, by the constitution test, Clarke will infer that it is fragile. Further, even if we additionally posit the intrinsic property *P* that would take away the bonding structure from *O* should it be struck, this makes no difference to the fact that *O* is fragile. For, according to the constitution test, the glass is fragile insofar as it keeps the bonding structure required for being fragile. In general, it seems conceptually possible that *x* has an intrinsic property or property-complex *Q* which, according to the constitution test, makes it the case that *x* has a given disposition; and, at the same time, *x* has another intrinsic property that would cause *x* to lose *Q* when the characteristic stimulus occurs. The constitution test thus seems to uphold the position that dispositional properties are susceptible to intrinsic finks. Similarly, we can readily see that it also goes along with the position that dispositions permit intrinsic antidotes.

Here it is important to realize that the constitution test not only necessitates the possibility of finking or masking dispositions intrinsically but also necessitates the possibility of the co-instantiation of opposing dispositions. To see this, let us consider the object *O* again that has both a particular type of bonding structure typical of fragile things and the intrinsic property *P* that would remove this bonding structure should it be struck. As Clarke sees it, the constitution test tells that *O*

is fragile as it has an intrinsic structural property nomically sufficient for being fragile, i.e., the bonding structure in question. Let us now look at the intrinsic property complex consisting of the bonding structure and P. This intrinsic property complex may well be seen to necessitate the possession of the property of being sturdy. The two intrinsic properties, the bonding structure and P, ensure that x would remain unbroken when struck. If so, the constitution test tells that x is sturdy. On balance, the constitution test allows us to attribute to x two opposing dispositions, being fragile and being sturdy, at the same time. In general, according to the constitution test, each case that is alleged to involve an intrinsic fink or antidote involves opposing dispositions. Then we are led to the idea that the constitution test, which is brought up to argue for the possibility of finking or masking dispositions intrinsically, upholds the possibility of opposing dispositions' being co-instantiated. This lends plausibility to the idea that once one maintains that it is possible to fink or mask dispositions intrinsically, she is likely to take the position that opposing dispositions can be co-instantiated by the same object. In fact, Clarke, a vehement supporter of the possibility of intrinsically finkable or maskable dispositions, explicitly subscribes to the position in question.

2. American football

Clarke (forthcoming), in his recent paper, presents a number of examples that he takes to force the possibility of opposing dispositions' being co-instantiated by one and the same object. In what follows, I will carefully examine each of them to find out whether they do what they are hoped to do by Clarke. The upshot will be that despite Clarke's intention, none of them can be taken to exemplify that an object has opposing dispositions at the same time, which I think undermines the core ground for Clarke's position. It will also have the effect of taking us some way to bringing down the idea that dispositions can be finked or masked intrinsically.

Clarke's first example starts with his amiable memory of childhood:

Once when I was eight or nine, during a game of football (the American kind) with some friends, I took a handoff and quickly broke free of defenders. I ran as fast as I could toward the goal. Unhappily, before I reached it, I dropped the ball.

In this example, Clarke suggests, he had two opposing dispositions. He says 'It seems that if I was disposed to take the ball across the goal if I tried in the given circumstances – if I had this power – then I simultaneously had an opposite disposition (or power, or liability): to drop the ball if I ran with it'.

In the first place, it will be appropriate to remind ourselves that, as Clarke describes it, the dispositions involved are sure-fire dispositions, not probabilistic dispositions. What Clarke claims is not that he was disposed to have a chance to score if he tried but he was, at the same time, disposed to have a chance to drop the ball if he ran with it, which will be denied by nobody. It is that he was disposed to score with certainty if he tried but he was, at the same time, disposed to drop the ball with certainty if he ran with it, which is an interesting but highly contentious claim. I think when we take this point to heart we can perceive the weakness of Clarke's suggestion.

As I said before, Clarke suggests that his case shows that opposing dispositions can be co-instantiated by the same object. It will be useful to clarify precisely what the opposing dispositions involved are. Clarke indicates that they are the following two dispositions: 'the disposition to take the ball across the goal if he tried in the given circumstance' and 'the disposition to drop the ball if he ran with it'. At least apparently, however, they are not opposing dispositions! They have different characteristic stimuli: the characteristic stimulus of the first disposition is the event of his trying to score under the given circumstance and the characteristic stimulus of the second disposition is the event of his running with the ball. But we have seen that opposing dispositions are defined to have the same characteristic stimulus.

Perhaps I have read Clarke's sentences too literally. The following reading seems to me closest to what Clarke means by them: he was disposed to take the ball across the goal if he tried to score in the given circumstance but he was also disposed to drop the ball if he tried to score in the given circumstance. On this reading, the two dispositions concerned have the same characteristic stimulus but conflicting manifestations, in which sense they are opposing each other. This reading takes away much of its intuitive force from Clarke's claim, though. It might be viewed as plausible to say that he was disposed to score if he tried with no defenders near but he was, at the same time, disposed to drop the ball if he ran with it: after all, he could have scored without running. But it is very counter-intuitive to maintain that Clarke was disposed to score with certainty if he tried but, at the same time, he was disposed to fail to score (by dropping the ball) with certainty if he tried.

What can Clarke say in support of his claim? Clarke thinks of his example as involving an intrinsic antidote, say, a simple lapse of attention³. Whilst drawing an analogy between his example and Austin's example where Austin misses a short putt despite his ability to do so, indeed, Clarke says: 'His [Austin's] ability might have been masked by a simple lapse of attention. Our dispositions to do things when we try are characteristically subject to failure due to such intrinsic foibles'. Assuming that Clarke was indeed disposed to take the ball across the goal if he tried to score but he did not manifest this disposition because it was masked by a lapse of attention which was intrinsic to his

³ Clarke does not explicitly suppose that his disposition to score is masked by a simple lapse of attention.

body, however, it is an easy matter to show that he was also disposed to drop the ball if he tried to score. For, as we have seen in Section 1, it is quite arguable that two opposing dispositions are co-instantiated by one and the same object in each case of intrinsic fink or antidote to disposition: given that such a lapse of attention was Clarke's intrinsic feature, he had an intrinsic property complex that ensured that he would have failed in his attempt to score. This reasoning thus seems to lead to the conclusion that Clarke was not only disposed to score if he tried but also disposed to fail to score (by dropping the ball) if he tried. I think, though, that this reasoning is not sound, for Clarke's example does not involve an intrinsic antidote.

For the sake of argument, let us suppose that Clarke was indeed disposed to score if he tried but he did not manifest this disposition owing to a momentary lack of attention. A dispositional antidote or masker is a factor that would frustrate the process from stimulus to manifestation should the characteristic stimulus occur. Therefore, we can say that the disposition in question did not manifest because it was masked by the lack of attention, only if its characteristic stimulus did occur. I insist, though, that the characteristic stimulus did not occur. I thus think that Clarke did not manifest the disposition to score if he tries not because a dispositional antidote prevented the manifestation but because the characteristic stimulus did not take place.

Why do I think so? When you say you will try to do X properly, you mean you will make sure that there is no lapse of attention. Should you have a lack of attention, then very likely we will be accused of having not tried to do X hard enough. Once this is realized, we can give a straightforward explanation of why Clarke failed to score despite his disposition to do so if he tries: he did not try properly. Taken this way, Clarke's lack of attention did not function as an intrinsic antidote to the disposition in question; but it merely made it the case that the characteristic stimulus did not occur. No masking took place.

On this construal, Clarke's example does not exemplify that he tried to score properly but he failed to score. If so, it is not a case where Clarke manifested his disposition to fail to score if he tries, for he did not try to score properly in the first place. Then it follows that Clarke's example does not justify his claim that he was disposed to fail to score if he tried, the claim that has brought us to the conclusion that he had opposing dispositions at the same time. What we can derive from Clarke's example, if any, is merely that he was disposed to fail to score if he did not try properly. Put together, therefore, we have the result that Clarke was disposed to score if he tried properly but was disposed to fail to score if he did not try properly. But the two dispositions involved are not opposing dispositions, for they do not have the same characteristic stimulus. Hence the conclusion that Clarke intends to draw from his example, that he had opposing dispositions at the same time, does not follow. The same goes for Austin's example.

My criticism of Clarke's example heavily relies on the assumption that the intrinsic antidote is a simple lapse of attention. In response, therefore, Clarke might reject this assumption, insisting that his disposition to score failed to manifest owing to some intrinsic antidote but it was not a lack of attention. But this does not do much to support Clarke's apparently counterintuitive claim that he instantiated the two opposing dispositions under discussion unless a detailed story of what the intrinsic antidote at work was is given. One such story might be given by supposing further that one tiny muscle in Clarke's right leg was malfunctioning. But this supposition does not do the work, for, in that case, we would start to doubt that Clarke was disposed to score if he tried. This consideration naturally leads us to the idea that Clarke's example is not a case of intrinsic antidote, to begin with, which undermines the attempt to neutralize the counterintuitiveness of Clarke's claim by supposing that his example involves an intrinsic antidote.

Thus far I have contended that when Clarke's example is interpreted as involving the following two dispositions, it does not suit his purpose: he was disposed to score if he tried to score in the given circumstance but he was also disposed to drop the ball if he tried to score in the given circumstance. Perhaps I have misinterpreted him. Here I observe that Clarke (forthcoming) frequently speaks of his abilities in the relevant passage. This observation instigates an alternative reading of his example, according to which the core idea is that Clarke was able to take the ball across the goal but, at the same time, he was unable to take the ball across the goal. I concede that there are numerous contexts where it is highly plausible to say that one is able to do X but, at the same time, is unable to do X. Clarke's example may provide one of such contexts. Nonetheless, however, I take it that this reading of Clarke's example does not warrant his claim that opposing dispositions can be co-instantiated by one and the same object, either.

As Clarke (2009, 339) explicitly states, he does not hold that an ability to A is invariably a disposition to A. Therefore, granted that he was able to take the ball across the goal and, at the same time, he was unable to take the ball across the goal, on Clarke's view, this does not immediately entail that he had two opposing dispositions. What is more, Clarke (2009, 339) himself says 'There are several different things that we might be thinking or talking about when we think or say that someone can or is able to do a certain thing. Perhaps one or another of these things is just a matter of having some disposition(s). Some of the others appear not to be.' This being the case, there is no guarantee that when we truly say that Clarke was able to take the ball across the goal and, at the same time, he was unable to take the ball across the goal, the two expressions, 'able' and 'unable', refer to the same notion of ability. I am able to drive a car: I have a driver's licence and also have a long experience of driving a car. When it is further supposed that no cars happen to be available to me, however, there is a good sense in which I am unable to drive a car. We can then truly state that I am

able to drive a car and, at the same time, I am unable to drive a car.⁴ But the two expressions, 'able' and 'unable', occurring in this true statement refer to distinct notions of ability. We can thus render the statement in question true without contravening the widely held view that it is impossible that someone is able to do X and, at the same time, he is unable to do X in the same sense of ability.

The same goes for the following statement insofar as it is thought to be true: Clarke was able to take the ball across the goal and, at the same time, he was unable to take the ball across the goal. But it entails that Clarke had opposing dispositions at the same time only if the two embedded sentences talk about the same notion of ability. From the statement in question, therefore, it does not follow that Clarke had opposing dispositions at the same time.

I have so far canvassed some of the most charitable interpretations of Clarke's example and concluded that none of them lends support to Clarke's thesis that opposing dispositions can be co-instantiated by one and the same object. Perhaps Clarke has in mind a different interpretation from the ones I have considered, in which case, however, he has not made it clear. The onus for clarification is on him.

3. Liking and disliking

Let us carry on to another example that Clarke brings out to convince us that it is quite common that x possesses opposing dispositions at the same time. Clarke (forthcoming) observes that we routinely say that one both likes and dislikes something at the same time: 'Liking it, one has an attraction toward it, a disposition, perhaps, to seek it, acquire it, accept it, or consume it. Disliking it, one has a repulsion from it, a disposition, perhaps, to avoid it, reject it, etc.' Clarke goes on to say that some cases like this can be described as cases of intrinsic antidotes: the liking functions as an intrinsic antidote to the disliking or the other way around. I believe, though, that, just like Clarke's first example, this example fails, too.

To be concrete, suppose that Tom asserts that he likes and dislikes a jacket at the same time. I agree with Clarke who says that, in this case, at least typically, Tom likes the jacket for one reason and dislikes it for another. For instance, he likes it because of its shape and dislikes it because of its colour. In connection with this observation, Clarke (forthcoming) discusses one possible objection to his position:

It might be objected that a case of the imagined sort is better characterized as one in which a person likes a thing's shape and dislikes its color, but doesn't both like and dislike the thing.

⁴ This example is due to Clarke (2009, 338)

The person has at most one of these attitudes toward the thing, depending on which (if either) of the liking or the disliking is stronger (assuming that these are the only relevant factors).

I hold that by elaborating this objection carefully we can develop a full-blown response to Clarke's contention.

For one thing, I take it, it is important to draw a clear line between one's liking (or disliking) an object and one's liking (or disliking) a property instantiated by it. I like this apple. But I also like its taste, one of its properties. As a matter of fact, I like this apple because I like its tastes, not because I like its colour. Similarly, I like my house, an object, because I like some of its properties, say, its spaciousness and quietness. Then exactly how do liking an object and liking a property instantiated by it differ and how are they related to one another? I believe that an analogy with the following physical example will be illuminating in addressing this question carefully.

Let us imagine two particles that have the same electric charge and mass. Then it might be thought that, thanks to its mass, each of them is disposed to attract the other (when placed at a certain distance apart) but, at the same time, thanks to its electric charge, it is disposed to repel the other; and therefore that each of them instantiates opposing dispositions at the same time. This thought, however, is wrong, trading on an equivocation between total force and component force. Thanks to its mass, each of the two particles is truly disposed to undergo an attracting component force, whilst, thanks to its electric charge, it is truly disposed to undergo a repelling component force. It is of major importance to realize, however, that these two dispositions are not opposing dispositions. That is because it is not contradictory at all that one and the same object undergoes many different component forces some of which may operate in different, even opposite, directions. That said, x's undergoing an attracting component force to y is perfectly compatible with x's undergoing a repelling component force from y, which means that the two dispositions under consideration do not have conflicting manifestations, and so they are not opposing dispositions.

What is contradictory is that one and the same object undergoes more than one total force, for instance, two total forces acting in opposite directions. But the total force exerting on an object is determined by adding up all the component forces it is subject to. Hence neither x's having an electric charge nor x's having a mass necessitates x's being disposed to undergo a determinate total force. If so, it is not the case that, thanks to their masses, the two particles described earlier are disposed to undergo attracting total forces and, at the same time, thanks to their electric charges, they are disposed to undergo repelling total forces. Each of the two particles is uniquely disposed to undergo one single total force, where the total force is the vector sum of the electrostatic and

gravitational forces on it; and this disposition is not counteracted by any other dispositions it possesses. Admittedly, its having a mass necessitates an attracting component force to the other particle, whilst its having an electric charge necessitates a repelling component force from the other particle. We have seen, though, that this does not at all permit the conclusion that it instantiates opposing dispositions. In view of this, I conclude that, whether the example at issue is understood in terms of component force or in terms of total force, it does not corroborate the possibility of the co-instantiation of opposing dispositions.

There is a clear analogy between this example and Clarke's example where one is claimed to like and dislike the same object. Liking the shape of the jacket, Tom is disposed to experience an 'attracting component force' toward it. Disliking the colour of the jacket, he is disposed to experience a 'repelling component force' from it. But the two dispositions are not opposing dispositions. It is perfectly possible that one experiences an attracting component force toward and a repelling component force from the same object. This is in resemblance with the fact that it is perfectly possible that the two particles with the same electric charge and mass experience an attracting component force toward and a repelling component force from each other at the same time. Thus the two dispositions at issue do not have conflicting manifestations, which means that they are not opposing dispositions. In general, when I say that I like (or dislike) one of x 's properties, this implies that I am disposed to experience an attracting component force toward x (a repelling component force from x). Further, as I said before, the following two dispositions are not opposing dispositions: the disposition to experience an attracting component force toward x and the disposition to experience a repelling component force from x . This being the case, from the fact that I like one of x 's properties but dislike another, it does not immediately follow that I instantiate opposing dispositions about x .

I mean a quite different thing when I say I like or dislike an object. What does it mean that I like an object x ? It should not mean that I like all of x 's properties. Indeed, it is extremely rare that I like all of x 's properties even in case I like x very much. In view of this, ' x likes y ' approximately means that x likes y 's properties so much so that x is disposed to seek y , acquire y , accept y , or consume y . By saying that I like x , I mean that, all of its properties considered, I am so attracted toward it as to seek it, acquire it, accept it, and consume it. Likewise, by saying that I dislike x , I approximately mean that I dislike x 's properties so much so that I am repelled from x with the result that I avoid x , disown x , reject x , and despise x .

With this in mind, I suggest that to like an object x is to be disposed to experience an 'attracting total force' toward x ; and that to dislike x is to be disposed to experience a 'repelling total force' from x , where total force is spelled out in terms of component force. To be specific, recall that, when I

like or dislike one of x 's properties, I experience an attracting component force toward or a repelling component force from x . But these component forces can be represented by two-dimensional vectors. This being the case, we can represent x 's total force on me, i.e., the total force I am disposed to experience with regard to x , as the two-dimensional vector sum of x 's component forces on me. This is in resemblance with the fact that, in the example of the two particles, the total force on one of them is the vector sum of the component forces on it. If x 's total force on me is an attracting one, this means that I like x , being disposed to seek it, acquire it, accept it, and consume it. Liking my laptop computer, I am disposed to experience an attracting total force toward it, which is why I seek it, acquire it, accept it, and consume it. Conversely, if x 's total force on me is a repelling one, this means that I dislike x , being disposed to avoid it, disown it, reject it, and despise it. Disliking my car, I am disposed to experience a repelling total force from it, which is why avoid it, disown it, reject it, and despise it.

My account leaves open the possibility that I like an object x but dislike some of its properties and the possibility that I dislike an object x but like some of its properties, which is in accord with our common-sensical opinion. Hitler is known as a cruel and hawkish racist. But I like his moustache. That is, I like one of Hitler's properties. Does this mean I like Hitler taken as a whole? No. It merely means that, due to his moustache, I am disposed to experience one attracting component force toward him. It does not follow from this, though, that I am disposed to experience an attracting total force toward him. In fact, I dislike his cruel and hawkish character, as a result of which I am disposed to experience repelling component forces from him. Further, those repelling component forces overwhelm the attracting component force mentioned earlier, which means that the vector sum of them is a repelling one. I am thus disposed to experience a repelling total force from Hitler, which is to say that I dislike him, being disposed to despise him, lambast him, and reject him. In short, I dislike Hitler although I like some of his properties. It is an easy matter to come up with an example where one likes x but dislikes some of x 's properties.

Until now I have developed an account of what it is to like or dislike an object in terms of total force, which I think is a natural articulation of the idea behind the objection quoted earlier. On this account, it is indeed contradictory that one experiences an attracting total force toward and a repelling total force from one and the same object. Therefore, on the assumption that I like and dislike one and the same thing, it follows that I instantiate two opposing dispositions as it means that I am disposed to experience an attracting total force toward it and, at the same time, I am disposed to experience a repelling total force from it. But I hold that there is no compelling example where one likes and dislikes the same thing at the same time.

For instance, let us return to the case of Tom where he is supposed to like the shape of the jacket

but dislike its colour. On this supposition, Clarke suggests, Tom likes and dislikes the jacket at the same time, which bears out the possibility of the co-instantiation of opposing dispositions. On my account advanced earlier, however, Clarke's suggestion is unfounded. What follows from the supposition is that Tom is disposed to experience an attracting component force toward the jacket and, at the same time, he is disposed to experience a repelling component force from the jacket. As we have seen earlier, however, this *per se* does not entail that he instantiates opposing dispositions at the same time. Further, when the first component force overpowers the second component force, the resulting total force is an attracting one, in which case Tom likes the jacket, being disposed to seek it, accept it, and consume it. Otherwise, the resulting total force is a repelling one, in which case Tom dislikes the jacket, being disposed to avoid it, disown it, and abandon it. Hence it is not the case that Tom is disposed to experience an attracting total force toward the jacket and, at the same time, Tom is disposed to experience a repelling total force from it. Once this is seen, this example can be hardly viewed as a case where Tom likes and dislikes the jacket at the same time. To conclude, contra Clarke, it does not substantiate his claim that two opposing dispositions can be co-instantiated by one and the same object, whether it is read in terms of component force or in terms of total force.

In his rejoinder to the objection quoted earlier, Clarke says 'But even on this construal, the case serves its purpose. Liking the thing's shape, one has an attraction to the thing, a disposition to seek it, acquire it, accept it, etc.; and disliking its color, one has a repulsion from the thing, a disposition to avoid it or reject it.' Note that when Clarke says that one has an attraction to or a repulsion from *x*, it can be read in two different ways. It can mean either that one is disposed to experience an attracting component force to or a repelling component force from *x*, or that one is disposed to experience an attracting total force to or a repelling total force from *x*. This is in resemblance with the fact that when it is said that one of the two particles described earlier is attracted to the other, this can mean either that the first is subject to an attracting component force to the second or that the first is subject to an attracting total force to the second.

Suppose first that 'one has an attraction to or a repulsion from *x*' means that one is disposed to experience an attracting total force to *x* or a repelling total force from *x*. On this supposition, when one is assumed to have an attraction to *x* and a repulsion from *x* at the same time, this indeed entails that two opposing dispositions are co-instantiated by the same object. But it is incorrect to say 'Liking the thing's shape, one has an attraction to the thing' or 'Disliking its color, one has a repulsion from the thing'. As I see it, from the fact that Tom likes the shape of the jacket but dislikes its colour, it is not immediately derivable that he is disposed to experience an attracting total force to the jacket and, at the same time, he is disposed to experience a repelling total force from the

jacket.

So, I presume that, by saying 'one has an attraction to or a repulsion from x', Clarke means the other thing, that one is disposed to experience an attracting component force to x or a repelling component force from x. In this case, it is indeed correct to say 'Liking the thing's shape, one has an attraction to the thing' and 'Disliking its color, one has a repulsion from the thing'. This is no great comfort to Clarke, though. First of all, even if it is assumed that Tom has both an attraction to the jacket and a repulsion from the jacket, this does not on its own imply that Tom instantiates opposing dispositions. *A fortiori*, it does not follow from this assumption that he is disposed to experience an attracting total force to the jacket and, at the same time, he is disposed to experience a repelling total force from the jacket. On my proposal, therefore, the assumption does not warrant the claim that he both likes and dislikes the jacket. Nor does it warrant the claim that Tom is disposed to seek it, acquire it, accept it, etc., and, at the same time, he is disposed to avoid it, reject it, abandon it, etc. This means that Tom does not instantiate two opposing dispositions. This brings us to the conclusion that, whether Clarke's rejoinder is read in terms of component force or in terms of total force, it has no purchase. It appears to be valid to the extent that Clarke equivocates between component force and total force when he speaks of attraction and repulsion.

In short, Clarke fails to construct a case where one both likes and dislikes the same thing at the same time. Surely we are sometimes ambivalent as to whether we like or dislike something, which I suspect Clarke attempts to exploit by means of his example. But this is only because we are not sure which of attracting component force and repelling component force surpasses the other. This must not be taken to license us to suggest that we both like and dislike the same thing at the same time.

4. Weight

Clarke (forthcoming) presents a couple of more examples that are intended to provide ground for his claim that opposing dispositions can be co-instantiated by the same object. I will pass over one of them that is about a wish-washy man who is presently certain that p as I do not think it has much argumentative force: the intuition for Clarke's conclusion in this example is pretty shaky. The other example, however, is very interesting and worth careful consideration. Let us consider John who weighs 300 pounds. But if he is placed on a scale, then he will desperately lop off his right arm, and therefore the reading of the scale will be 280 pounds, not 300 pounds. Call this case *Lopping*. Clarke's claim is that, even in this case, John's weight is still 300 pounds but this disposition does not manifest because John's desperation works as an intrinsic fink to it.

There is no doubt that John weighs 300 pounds despite his intention to lop off his right arm. What

is more, we must accept that John's intention in question is intrinsic to John. That being said, it seems hard to resist Clarke's claim that *Lopping* is a case of intrinsic fink to disposition. Like the preceding examples we have discussed thus far, however, this example cannot stand under scrutiny, either. Let me first fix a small error in Clarke's example. Strictly speaking, John's desperate intention to lop off his right arm is not a fink, let alone an intrinsic fink, to his weight of 300 pounds! When we say that something weighs n pounds, we do not necessarily mean that its parts are adjoined to each other. For instance, when I say that my bicycle weighs 50 pounds, I mean that all of its components collectively weigh 50 pounds. This is the case even if I disassemble it. Likewise, when I say that John weighs 300 pounds, I mean that all the components of his body like his arms, his legs, etc., altogether weigh 300 pounds. So construed, even if John's right arm is taken apart from his main body, the fact remains that he weighs 300 pounds. Whether or not his right arm is in physical contact with his torso, all the components of his body collectively weigh 300 pounds. Once this is recognized, it is clear that, contra Clarke, John's desperation is not a fink to his weight of 300 pounds. For, even if he is put on a scale and takes his right arm apart from his torso, he will still weigh 300 pounds.

But Clarke can readily circumvent this difficulty by supposing instead that John, a sorcerer, has the intention to expunge the right arm completely, not the intention to merely cut it off. Given that John's right arm would just go away, this example – call it *Expunging* – is not susceptible to the objection I raised against Clarke's original example: should John be put on a scale all the components of his body would collectively weigh 280 pounds. But it is not to be disputed that John's intention to annihilate his right arm entirely is intrinsic to him. Then it follows that John's intention to annihilate his right arm works as an intrinsic fink to his weight of 300 pounds.

I insist, though, that *Expunging* is no great comfort to Clarke. There is a sign of trouble foreshadowing its failure: *Expunging* does not seem to be a case where two opposing dispositions are co-instantiated by John. It has come to light in Section 1 that, on Clarke's view, each case of intrinsic fink or antidote can be seen to involve two opposing dispositions. For instance, Clarke seems to maintain that, in his first example where he was disposed to score if he tried but he did not manifest this disposition due to an intrinsic antidote, he instantiated opposing dispositions, the disposition to score if he tried and the disposition to fail to score if he tried. Recall that Clarke claims that John's weight of 300 pounds is finked by one of his intrinsic properties, his desperate intention to expunge his right arm altogether. If so, Clarke seems to be committed to the position that not only John weighs 300 pounds but also he weighs 280 pounds. But the problem is that, despite his desperation, we do not want to say that John weighs 280 pounds. In fact, Clarke (forthcoming) himself says 'The man's desperation doesn't make him any lighter, provided he isn't placed on a

scale!'. *Expunging* is thus a striking contrast to the first example I described above where opposing dispositions are claimed to be co-instantiated by the same object. Clarke is silent about this difference between the two examples, which I think signals that there is something wrong.

What is wrong? The answer will present itself when we compare *Expunging* with an example where a categorical property is finked by an intrinsic property. One such example is given by Choi (2005, 498-499) who imagines an object *Tt* that is supposed to have exactly the same intrinsic properties as an ordinary triangle except that it has an intrinsic property that would cause it to become rectangular if its corners were correctly counted. On this supposition, if *Tt*'s corners were correctly counted, straight away *Tt* would become rectangular in virtue of one of its own intrinsic properties; thereby, the result would be four, not three. But it is intuitively evident that *Tt* is triangular. Thus understood, this example is generally thought of as showing that a categorical property, triangularity, is intrinsically finked. Note that it is also evident that *Tt* is not rectangular when its corners are not correctly counted. This is so despite the fact that *Tt* would become rectangular should its corners be correctly counted. Choi's example is thus in parallelism with *Expunging* where John has the weight of 300 pounds, which is finked by one of his intrinsic properties; and when John is not on a scale he does not weigh 280 pounds despite the fact that he would weigh 280 pounds should he be placed on a scale. This lends itself to Handfield's (2008, 202 fn. 9) observation that, just like triangularity, weight proper is a categorical property.

Once it is assumed that weight is a categorical property, it is no surprise that we are tempted to think that John cannot instantiate two opposing amounts of weight. For, it is hard to dispute that an object cannot have two 'opposing categorical properties' at the same time. It has been suggested that something has a categorical property insofar as it actually or occurrently exhibits a certain distinctive manifestation without undergoing any stimulus (Choi 2005, 502). Obviously, though, it is impossible that *x* actually or occurrently exhibits two opposing manifestations at the same time, which entails the impossibility of *x*'s having two opposing categorical properties at the same time. This is why, to the extent that we are certain that *Tt* is triangular, we do not want to say that it is rectangular. The same goes for *Expunging*. To the extent that we are certain that John weighs 300 pounds, we do not want to say that he weighs 280 pounds. The assumption that weight proper is a categorical property thus gives us a pretty compelling explanation of why we are tempted to think that John cannot instantiate two opposing amounts of weight at the same time.

In short, we have more than enough reason for believing that weight proper is a categorical property. This being the case, *Expunging* merely shows that a categorical property can be intrinsically finked, which almost no one has objected to. If so, it does not serve Clarke's goal of vindicating the possibility of finking dispositions intrinsically.

In response, Clarke might attempt to reformulate his example such that the properties concerned are incontrovertibly dispositional. In fact, he discusses the following artificial definition of weight that renders it explicitly dispositional and adamantly argues that his conclusion can be reached with respect to weight so defined: x has the weight of n pounds iff x has the disposition to depress a properly constructed scale so as to elicit a reading of n pounds in x 's gravitational field. Let us now consider the following scenario – call it *Explicitly Dispositional*. When John is not on a scale, he is disposed to give the reading of 300 pounds on an accurate scale on Earth. But John has the desperate intention to expunge his right arm altogether if he is placed on a scale. Should John be placed on a scale, therefore, his right arm would just vanish, and therefore the reading of the scale would be 280 pounds. This being the case, John's intention to annihilate his right arm altogether might be claimed to work as an intrinsic fink to his disposition to give the reading of 300 pounds on an accurate scale on Earth. Notice that *Explicitly Dispositional* is stated in explicitly dispositional terms like 'is disposed to give the reading of 300 pounds on an accurate scale on Earth'. That said, it is free from the problem that troubles *Expunging*. *A fortiori*, Clarke seems to be in a better position to maintain that John instantiates two opposing dispositions at the same time. For, having the intention to get rid of his right arm, John can be plausibly said to be disposed to give the reading of 280 pounds on an accurate scale on Earth: after all, he will invariably give the reading of 280 pounds without fortuitous external interference. On Clarke's position, thus, John is both disposed to give the reading of 300 pounds and disposed to give the reading of 280 pounds. As a consequence, *Explicitly Dispositional* seems to exemplify that two opposing dispositions are co-instantiated by one and the same object.

Explicitly Dispositional, too, does not take Clarke far, though. Among other things, it is not intuitively compelling that when John is not on a scale, he is disposed to give the reading of 300 pounds on an accurate scale on Earth. Note that John will never exhibit this disposition without fortuitous external interventions. In fact, Clarke (forthcoming) imagines a variant of *Explicitly Dispositional* where John gives the reading of 300 pounds on an accurate scale on Earth thanks to an accidental intervention, a companion who convinces John to keep his right arm. But the presence or absence of such a companion should not be considered as relevant to whether or not John was disposed to give the reading of 300 pounds on a scale on Earth. Barring accidental interferences, however, John never exhibits the disposition in question, which I think justifies the claim that John does not possess it. Indeed, Handfield (2008, 202 fn. 9) discusses an example like *Explicitly Dispositional* where an object has a built-in jet engine and a detector that switches the engine on when it is put on a scale and correctly concludes that it is not disposed to give the reading corresponding to its rest mass on a scale. I believe that the same type of conclusion must be reached

in *Explicitly Dispositional*. I thus insist that John is not disposed to give the reading of 300 pounds on an accurate scale on Earth. If so, it is not the case that John's disposition to give the reading of 300 pounds on an accurate scale on Earth is intrinsically finked by his intention to remove his right arm. The fact that emerges from this is that *Explicitly Dispositional* does not serve Clarke's purpose of exemplifying an intrinsic fink to a disposition, let alone two opposing dispositions' being co-instantiated by one and the same object.

I said before that *Explicitly Dispositional* is an improvement over *Expunging*: whilst the second involves properties that may be arguably viewed as categorical, the first involves unquestionably dispositional properties. This improvement has not come without cost: whilst there is no doubt that John weighs 300 pounds although he has the desperate intention to expunge his right arm completely, it is doubtful that, given that intention, he is disposed to elicit the reading of 300 pounds if he is placed on a scale. The two examples both are unsuccessful but for different reasons.

5. Conclusion

Thus far I have carefully examined Clarke's examples that are alleged to show that opposing dispositions can be co-instantiated by one and the same object and brought to light that all of them fail. Clarke might respond, though, that this result is not as deleterious to his position as it appears to be. Admittedly, it is indeed a bad news for Clarke that, contrary to his claim, his examples fail to demonstrate the co-instantiation of opposing dispositions. It might be thought, however, that the finding of this paper is not a decisive blow to his position. This thought is inspired by Clarke's suggestion that, whilst he holds onto the possibility of intrinsic finks or antidotes to dispositions, he does not rule out cases where dispositions cannot be co-instantiated alongside intrinsic finks or antidotes. For instance, Clarke (forthcoming) discusses Handfield and Bird's example where an individual is supposed to be lactose intolerant but when she drinks milk containing lactose she does not feel ill thanks to a capsule of lactase she consumes along with the milk; and this individual is contrasted with another individual who does not feel ill when she drinks milk containing lactose because her body naturally produces the enzyme lactase needed to digest lactose. A bit surprisingly, Clarke agrees with Handfield and Bird that the second individual is not lactose intolerant. Clarke insists, nonetheless, that we cannot generalize from examples of this kind. So, his position is that 'in some cases a disposition can be possessed alongside an intrinsic masking or finking feature, while in others the disposition is lost if something resembling a mask or fink is made intrinsic' (Clarke, forthcoming).

In view of the fact that each case of finking or masking disposition intrinsically can be plausibly

claimed to exemplify that opposing dispositions are co-instantiated by one and the same object, Clarke's suggestion is naturally conducive to the idea that, in some cases opposing dispositions can be possessed by one and the same object, whilst in others they cannot. And this idea is consistent with there being some examples where opposing dispositions appear to be possessed by one and the same object but, on inspection, it turns out that this is not the case. With this idea in mind, Clarke might shrug off the finding of this paper that none of Clarke's examples are of service to Clarke in demonstrating the co-instantiation of opposing dispositions. I take it, though, that this possible response from Clarke has no force unless a clear line can be drawn between cases where opposing dispositions can be possessed by one and the same object and cases where opposing dispositions cannot be possessed by one and the same object. But no such line is forthcoming. In fact, Clarke (forthcoming) admits that he does not know how to drive a wedge between cases where dispositions can be co-instantiated alongside intrinsic finks or antidotes and cases where dispositions cannot be co-instantiated alongside intrinsic finks or antidotes. If so, Clarke cannot simply brush aside the finding of this paper as being not very detrimental to his position.

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