

THE EXPERIENCE OF VALUE FROM THE FIRST
PERSON PERSPECTIVE

By

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To Anna and Sophia

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INTRODUCTION

Do we discover value in experience? From the first person perspective, there are some instances in which we cannot help but see things a certain way, or to assess our experiences as we do. Experience seems to give us insight about what objects are valuable, which actions are right or wrong. These experiences seem, at least on occasion, to provide us with some insight regarding what is valuable or what actions or objects are “to be valued.” At the very least, they seem to provide us with some direction about the appropriate response towards various objects and actions. While such experiences may seem to give us “a glimpse of the normative order,” many philosophers have doubted that we directly perceive value.¹ These philosophers argue that our experiences can be explained in terms of our background psychology, in particular, our background moral beliefs, as well as our immediate experience of emotions or other conative states. To be sure, these philosophers typically hold this view because they deny that there are values “out there” waiting to be discovered by us. Setting aside the connection between the metaphysical denial of independently existing values and the proper explanation of our experiences, there are other reasons for being skeptical about the idea that we discover values through an act of insight or judgment. What different people take to be insights about value—good or bad, right or wrong—seem to be tutored by their past experiences, their upbringing or the society in which we live. This is evidenced by the fact that we can often trace a person’s immediate responses to things to some element in her background psychology, and the fact that there are different judgments about what is valuable across cultures, and even communities. Philosophers who hold this view also hold

¹ This way of putting the point is due to Simon Blackburn’s discussion in *Think*, p. 285.

that we can explain the phenomenology of our experience of value via the mechanism of projection. What seems to be the discovery of values in the world is really our emotions or feelings being projected onto the world.

Certainly we cannot deny that our experiences may be shaped, in part, by our upbringing and the particular social context in which we live. This upbringing or socialization into a particular social context helps us to make sense of the vast world in which we find ourselves, and likely makes it possible for us to form conclusions about what to do, or about what is good or bad, right or wrong. Furthermore, this explanation of the role of emotions and other experiential states in the formation of our evaluative beliefs is adequate to explain at least some cases of valuing. A man who has been raised to think that women are inferior to men, and whose beliefs have been reinforced over time is disposed to react in certain ways to the specific women he encounters. He may physically or mentally ‘wince’ at stereotypical female traits, for example, their higher pitched voices or their tendency to be more emotionally expressive, further reinforcing his beliefs about women: that they are inferior to men in matters of rationality and affairs which require one to be “cool headed.” If he is somehow unaware of his attitude towards women, or in denial about it, he may discover something about himself—his “real” attitude towards women—through experience. Some theorists have concluded (in part) from such experiences that while it seems that we learn about values in experience, we mostly learn something about ourselves and our attitudes through our seeming experiences of value.

While the aspect of our moral psychology that most philosophers have focused on in their accounts of emotions and other experiential states seems compatible with some aspects of our practical lives, these accounts are incomplete. This project begins by criticizing the

account of human psychology that underlies the projectivist explanation of the connection between experience and value. In particular, I take it that this account adequately explains our experience as practical agents only if we focus on the (more or less) fully developed practical agent. But we aren't simply fully developed agents who respond in habitual ways to the objects of our attention and the situations in which we find ourselves. Our practical views develop over time, and they change and grow in response to our experiences as well as reflection on our experiences. In some cases, our experiences compel us to evaluate things differently, or at least, to take seriously options we might otherwise have overlooked. And faring well in our circumstances seems to require adapting our practical views to our circumstances, not merely attempting to live through pre-defined values or preferences. Of course, we may take ourselves to have good reason not to make the changes that seem appropriate given our immediate experiences, or we may rightly search for more information before adjusting our practical views in light of novel experiences. The point is that these experiences do not fit the model of practical experience that most theorists have defended. Or so I argue in chapter 1.

My account of the phenomenology of our experience as practical agents has been importantly influenced by a number of philosophers' views, both historical and contemporary. For example, Maurice Mandelbaum held that there is a particular phenomenology associated with morality. According to his view, we experience moral claims as demanding a certain response from us, and the demands that appear to us to be moral demands, Mandelbaum says, "are seen by [the agent] to be objective and independent of his desires" (Mandelbaum 1955, p. 57). In a different type of discussion about emotions, Brentano notes a similar aspect of our experience, which he characterizes as an experience of

the correctness or incorrectness of certain responses—e.g., love or hatred—to the objects at which the response is directed (Solomon 1984, pp. 167 – 168).² There are more recent discussions which take into account similar points about our experience of values. For example, John McDowell’s view that moral values don’t merely elicit certain responses from us in the way that (say) colors cause us to have certain perceptual experiences, but rather, are such as to merit certain appropriate responses, also reveals something about the phenomenology of our experience (McDowell 1998, p. 143).³ Finally, Iris Murdoch calls our attention to an important aspect of our ordinary experience of morality that is often overlooked in theorists’ attempts to defend the idea that values are an invention of our moral sensibilities, or a projection of our (merely) subjective feelings, attitudes, or tendencies to approve or disapprove of certain objects. She says, “The ordinary person does not, unless corrupted by philosophy, believe that he creates values by his choices. He thinks that some things really are better than others and that he is capable of getting it wrong” (Murdoch 1970, p. 97).

What is the nature of such experiences? Do we genuinely perceive values through experience, or in spite of appearances, are such experiences a projection of our feelings or prior attitudes onto their objects? Given the nature of such experiences, I argue, we are not always justified in treating them as a projection of our feelings and subjective attitudes towards various objects and events. First, the phenomenology of these experiences differs from the phenomenology of the experience defended by those who embrace the projectivist

² While Brentano uses this experience to defend the view that such experiences give us insight into moral values, this is not the view I am defending. In all cases here, I am stressing my use of these philosophers’ views about the phenomenology of experience, and not necessarily embracing their views about whether such experiences give us insight into values.

³ Again, McDowell’s discussion is an attempt to defend the view that values are secondary qualities. I do not defend this view here, although I discuss McDowell’s views in some detail in chapter 2. I note McDowell’s view here because his point that certain responses seem merited captures something about the phenomenology of our experience as practical agents.

explanation of practical or moral perception. For example, Gilbert Harman holds that moral observation is only observation in the loose sense. It is loosely called ‘observation’ because of the immediacy of our evaluative responses towards the immediate objects of our attention. One observes a heinous act, and unreflectively and immediately characterizes what one sees as wrong. However, Harman holds, this seems to be due more to the fact that we hold beliefs about the wrongness of this type of action, and recognizing a particular act as an instance of the type, we do not have to stop to think about whether what we witness is right or wrong. What seems to be a spontaneous reaction elicited by (perhaps) objective evaluative properties we observe or witness is better explained by our underlying moral psychology.⁴ In contrast, the experiences I am interested in are precisely those which occur when our ordinary responses fail, or when our prior practical views cannot fully help us to figure out the appropriate response to the objects or events we witness, or how to respond to those people with whom we interact. Perhaps we experience a breakdown in our ordinary way of

⁴ In chapter 1 of *The Metaphysics of Value and the Normative Aspect of Experience*, Jennifer Hawkins develops a perceptual account of value, and she contrasts her view with Harman’s account. And, in “On the Epistemic Value of Moral Experience,” William Tolhurst develops a similar view, discussing problems with Harman’s view. Both of these discussions have been helpful to developing my account in chapter 1, in particular, in describing the phenomenology of fittingness experiences. In particular, Tolhurst calls the experience of value ‘fittingness experiences,’ and I think, correctly holds that this experience is irreducibly relational. Such experiences occur when we experience the appropriateness, correctness, or (to leave out any suggestion that the experience is irreducibly moral), fittingness between an object or event and a particular response to it. My own use of this phrase stems from Samuel Clarke’s view that we perceive eternal fitness relations, and Maurice Mandelbaum’s discussion of direct moral judgments in *The Phenomenology of Moral Experience*. Mandelbaum argues, “So far as our present problem is concerned, we predicate fittingness or unfittingness of a particular envisioned action; we do so on the ground that we feel it to be fitting or unfitting in the situation which confronts us” (Mandelbaum 1955, p. 61). Now, while philosophers have traditionally tended to treat this experience epistemically, more recent discussions, such as Hawkins and Tolhurst, as well as the views I discuss below, do not treat practical experience as necessarily giving us insight into independently existing values. Most of these theorists, correctly I think, take the more modest view that given the nature of such experiences and the similarity between the role these experiences play and the role of experience in the theoretical domain, practical experience is no more suspect than ordinary perceptual experience in the justification of our beliefs. (See also, Millgram (2001), pp. 331 – 354). Finally, while there are similarities between my views and those I discuss, there are differences as well. For example, the perceptual model on which I build my account of practical experience differs than that of Tolhurst’s. And while Hawkins focuses on the experience of goodness, my discussion revolves around the development of concepts such as ‘right,’ and ‘wrong,’ and how we develop a sense of obligation or duty. As well, she does not emphasize the relational quality of the experience she discusses.

responding, or perhaps, a different sort of response suddenly seems appropriate. Thus, they cannot be characterized on the model of observation as Harman characterizes it. Still, I argue in chapter 1, this does not mean there is no analogy to be made with perception in the theoretical domain. The better analogy, however, is with moments in our cognitive lives when our ordinary expectations are thwarted, and we find ourselves stymied in forming beliefs on the basis of our immediate perceptual experiences. Or, we feel compelled to change our beliefs, or at least, to investigate our circumstances in order to discover the truth.⁵

My view has also been influenced by a number of more recent discussions in practical reasoning and the emotions. First, Elijah Millgram has characterized pleasure (and pain) as being (roughly) an observation of improvement (or setback) in a person's welfare rather than an observation of a stable property, such as desirability.⁶ His view has influenced my focus on those experiences which constitute (roughly) learning curves in practical development in searching for a legitimate place at which we might say that a person's practical responses cannot be explained wholly in terms of her underlying psychology, or (as it is often thought) dispositions to respond in particular ways to certain types of actions. Thus, in contrast to philosophers such as McDowell, who characterize the (more or less) fully developed agent as possessing fairly sophisticated tutored perceptual capacities for dealing successfully with the objects and events they encounter, I attempt to characterize moments that mark (seeming)

⁵ As it will become clear in several chapters, my views about the phenomenology of believing have been influenced by C. S. Peirce's discussion of the phenomenological categories, and this has had some influence on my discussion of the phenomenology of our practical lives. In particular, Peirce's analogy is helpful in describing those moments in which external events, objects, or people, defy our expectations, and we "bump up against" circumstances that seem to require us to make changes in our practical views, arguing that such experiences involve a reaction between ego and non-ego, not merely a shift in phenomenal quality.

⁶ In chapter 6 of *Practical Induction*, Millgram characterized it as (roughly) an observation of value, and this more recent view is developed in "What's the Use of Utility?." It should be noted that several historical philosophers may have held this view. For example, Plato discusses this sort of view in the *Philebus*. See Millgram (2000), p. 121. As Jeffrey Tlumak has also pointed out to me, Spinoza also seemed to have held this view about the role of pleasure and pain.

developments in our practical and moral views.⁷ One reason for my focus is that if it can be established that these different moments are part of the same continuum, and if we have good reason to treat our (again, more or less) fully developed practical views as the upshot, in part, of learning from experience, then we are in a better position to determine what sort of justification we have for our practical views. This is particularly important in the area of practical judgment. In spite of the focus on this area of our practical lives, I do not assume it to be the norm, as I argue in chapters 1 and 2.⁸ Furthermore, if practical (including moral) judgment is an outgrowth of our experiences rather than merely a reflection of our subjective attitudes, then questions of their justification, and whether they give us categorical reasons or only subjective reasons for action, must take this fact into account.

While pleasure and pain may be important tools in our practical repertoire, they are also limited in relevant ways. Such states may tell us something about whether things are getting better or worse, but they are only very rough indicators of how well we are doing. They do not tell us much about the specific way in which things have gotten better or worse, and they tell us little on their own about what we might do to make sure things continue to go well, or how we might improve things for the better if they've gotten worse. Millgram uses the metaphor of hill-climbing in order to illustrate his point about pleasure and pain in our

⁷ Thus far, I have been using the terms 'practical' and 'moral' in a way that makes it seem as if the two are different. In the remainder of this paper, the term 'practical' can be used to take into account both our sense of what personal goals to pursue, our beliefs about how to act in non-moral and moral situations, and in general, our views about how to live, or what constitutes the good life, as well as our sense of how to treat other people, or our beliefs about what we owe to others. But the moral life encompasses more than our judgments about what to do, and the term 'practical' encompasses this broader conception of how to live. I reserve the term 'moral' when I want to discuss more specifically our views about how it is appropriate to treat others. I also use it to place emphasis on the sense we sometimes have that certain actions aren't merely appropriate or justified in the circumstances they are to be performed, but that they are demanded.

⁸ In a recent book, *Beyond Moral Judgment*, Alice Cary makes this same point, arguing that moral thought encompasses more than moral judgment. My view about practical development and the place of practical judgment in the development of our practical views is influenced, in part, by Hubert Dreyfus's discussion of the stages of moral development in the development of moral expertise, and the role of judgment in this process. See Ogilvy (1992).

practical lives.⁹ If one is hill climbing on a large space, one is likely to know little about the overall topography, but one can still make progress if one is able to determine one's altitude in relation to a few adjacent points. As one steps on terrain with an altitude higher than the one in which one finds oneself, one is making progress. This can often be done by "sidling over a step or two and seeing if you've gone uphill or not" (Millgram 2000, p. 124). Pleasure fills this role in our practical lives by helping us assess our progress on the "welfare landscape." Pleasure is an indicator of improvement in a (say) darkened landscape on which we're trying to improve our welfare, the emotions are like having a flashlight that will give you a slightly broader field of vision. Thus, in order to fill the gap left by rough indicators such as pleasure, as well as (what might be called) feelings of rightness or wrongness, correctness or incorrectness, or a feeling of fittingness, or a feeling in which things "suddenly make sense," or "don't make sense," which I discuss and compare with the role of pleasure in Millgram's account in chapter 1, I turn to the emotions.

This is not to say that these different types of experiences can necessarily be equated in all cases. Regarding its role in the development of our moral views, pleasure and pain seem to be limited to helping us enlarge our moral interests to include the well-being of others, for example, by showing us how our lives might improve if we are (say) more aware of and interested in helping others. Furthermore, pleasure may lead us to a belief about how to improve our own lives, but we rarely take this experience to indicate an obligation to improve our lives in those ways. With respect to moral obligations, we sometimes experience moral imperatives as demanding a particular response from us, and a relational experience such as the experience of fittingness seems better to explain our experience in

⁹ It should be noted that 'hill-climbing' is no longer a metaphor in computer science, but has a literal. I am grateful to Elijah Millgram for pointing this out to me.

these cases (cf. Mandelbaum 1955, p. 57). Emotions also play a role in the development of moral obligations, as I discuss in chapter 2.

Emotions aren't merely informational states which tell us something about how we're doing, but practical states which help us discover reasons for action we might otherwise overlook, and improve our ability to fare well in the circumstances in which we find ourselves in (more or less) specific ways. In particular, I discuss Jesse Prinz's account of emotions as embodied appraisals. According to his view, emotions are perceptual states. Via emotions, we perceive bodily changes, which represent changes in organism-environment relations. The promise of the emotions, or at least some experiences of (occurrent) emotions, is that they provide us with more information about the kind of changes needed given the circumstances in which we are operating. Fleeing the scene may be appropriate given a threatening situation, and rethinking one's past actions or future actions may be appropriate given one's experience of regret. As well, individual emotions provide a rich source for the development of our moral views, including our understanding of moral concepts, and so, cannot be dispensed with in discussing the role of conative states in moral development. While a sweeping analysis of what emotions are will only get us so far in attempting to explain the role of emotions in practical and moral development, in chapter 2, I also discuss the specific lessons of various (specific) emotions, and the connection between the experience of an emotion and reasons for action.¹⁰

¹⁰ In "Sentiment and Value," Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobsen criticize what they call 'neo-sentimentalist' accounts of emotion for their inability to distinguish reasons that are and aren't relevant to whether an emotion is fitting in certain circumstances. While I offer some criticisms of their view at the end of chapter 1, my discussion in chapter 2 comes some way towards developing their positive view, with which I partly agree, that in order to distinguish relevant and irrelevant reasons, philosophers need to take more than a "detour through the sentiments," and must examine emotions "piecemeal, in order to articulate differences in how each emotion presents some features of the world to us when we are in its grip" (D'Arms and Jacobsen 2000, p. 746).

Several further points should be noted. First, my interest in Prinz's account of emotions is motivated by his account of emotions as perceptual states, but also, his account of emotions as embodied states. Prinz's view is that through butterflies, chills, changes in pulse, et al., we perceive changes in our circumstances that (apparently) affect our well being. Unlike physiological or sensation theories of emotion, this account is similar to cognitivist accounts in being able to explain the intelligible role emotions play in our practical lives. Unlike many cognitivist accounts, it recognizes the role of bodily changes in the genesis of emotions.¹¹ But there are other reasons for recognizing the role of bodily states in the genesis of at least some practical states, as well. From the first person perspective, faring well isn't limited to satisfying one's desires, or accomplishing one's goals. It also consists in adjusting one's expectations and adapting one's goals or preferences so that one has a better chance of realizing them. This sort of activity includes adjusting one's most ambitious goals and loftiest dreams, but also includes lower level activity in which we literally attempt to adjust our bodies so as to get a better grasp on our physical circumstances. Young children use trial and error, and continuous practice and "play" in order to master their physical environments, and to adjust their responses in light of what they learn about the world. This includes expectations about the physical world, and other people. Part of the reason we are inclined to adjust our goals in this way is the fact that we experience ourselves as embodied beings who operate in space and time among other embodied beings who place constraints on what we can legitimately do.¹² Finally, given our

¹¹ This is not to suggest a false dichotomy between sensation or physiological accounts and cognitive accounts. It is simply to suggest advantages of Prinz's account over many commonly held theories of emotion.

¹² As it will become clear in chapter 2, my account of the constraints that shape our experience of value is influenced, also, by Carla Bagnoli's discussion in "Moral Constructivism." She does not discuss embodiment in her discussion, though she rightly points out that the phenomenology of morality, which includes the experience of ourselves as beings who operate in space and time, and who necessarily form relations with other

experience as embodied creatures, we should expect that we need cues that involve our bodies as well as our minds if we are to fare well in physical environments that impact our well being even when we aren't fully aware of its impact on us.

Second, I do not place as much emphasis on hedonic states as philosophers interested in the role of pleasure and pain, and as the emphasis thus far may suggest. In my own discussion, I speak more of the experience of disequilibrium, or perhaps the sense of returning equilibrium that marks a change in welfare.¹³ Part of my reason for using more neutral terminology is that the focus on 'pleasure' and 'pain' has obscured philosophers' views about the role emotions, in particular, might play in justifying certain moral responses. Some theorists argue that the pleasant feelings associated with or constituting certain emotions justify a person's responses, but only because of the association between pleasure and the objects the emotion motivates us to pursue. Thus, emotions may give rise to personal or subjective, or hypothetical reasons for action, but not categorical reasons for action. In chapter 2, I argue that the content of specific emotions, such as regret and compassion, may justify certain responses, and the hedonic aspect of the state—if focused on at all by the bearer of the emotion—more likely plays a role in forcing the person's attention towards certain objects or actions which give her a reason for action. My more neutral terminology emphasizes, also, what I think is characteristic (specifically) of learning curves in our moral development: we sometimes bump up against other individuals' interests, ends or preferences in a way that grabs our attention and compels us to think differently about the relative importance of our own projects in relation to others'.

needy and interested beings form part of the constraints of practical deliberation, and explain, in part, our experience of the objectivity of the moral judgments we make.

¹³ Millgram's own discussion characterizes pleasure and pain in terms of the role they play in our practical lives rather than specifically their phenomenal quality, and it could just as well be characterized in more neutral terms in some cases.

More generally, in chapter 2, I discuss what I call the Standard Philosophical Account of Human Psychology (SPAHP), which has influenced a great deal of contemporary views about the psychology of making a moral judgment, and the status of such judgments. SPAHP is related to the discussion in chapter 1 because it shares a common thesis with those who are skeptical about the role of experience in shaping our practical views. According to SPAHP, beliefs and desires, or reason and emotions, are different types of mental states. And, while reason may have influence over the passions, reason alone cannot influence them. It can do so only with the aid of some other conative state. Given that moral judgments play a role in motivating action, and that only desires, broadly construed, or emotions (or other conative states) are capable of motivating action, the moral judgments we make will be importantly influenced by our prior feelings. The problem with this view is that it cannot explain many aspects of the phenomenology of making a moral judgment, in particular, the fact that we treat these claims as categorical claims which place demands on us. I take it that part of the problem is the account of emotions proponents of SPAHP defend. In connection with the account of emotions developed in chapter 1, as well as some analysis of the conditions that make certain specific emotions possible, I offer a different account of the role of such states in forming a moral judgment. Once again, an important aspect of my positive view is practical development, and the role of emotions in forming novel moral judgments. Although a great deal of emphasis has been placed on this area of our moral lives, making a moral judgment is the exception rather than the norm. Ordinarily, we respond as we do without stopping to think about whether our actions are appropriate. It is when we are stymied in our actions or other responses, or experience a setback in our sense of what to do that we think about what to do, and possibly form a judgment about the appropriate response.

Since we experience emotions as compelling us to look at things in a different way, and in some cases, to see others as making claims on us, such states play an important role in the development of our moral views. Some discussion of the emotions of regret and compassion is also presented in my discussion of (specifically) moral development.

In chapter 3, I extend my discussion of SPAHP to an important view about reasons for action, which I call the Standard Account of Practical Reasons (SAPR). According to this view, since practical reasons are capable of motivating a person to act, and since only desires, or other conative states are capable of motivating action, a person's reasons for action are determined by some conative state of the agent. I discuss this account in connection with the direction of fit account of beliefs and desires, arguing that emotions do not fit neatly into these theorists model of desires or other motivating mental states. I further argue that there are problems with the account of desires these theorists defend, and I sketch a different account of desiring from the first person perspective. One of the implications of SAPR is that a person cannot be criticized for not having certain ends, and she does not have a reason to do anything that does not serve some element of her subjective motivational psychology. In light of my discussion of emotions and desires, I argue that we are justified in treating others' perspective as potentially authoritative for us since the factors that determine what we judge we have a reason to do are open to others' who share a common world with us. And, their perspective may have the benefit of experiences that are relevant to us, but which we have not had.

In chapter 4, I discuss and criticize various contemporary accounts of emotions. In particular, I focus on cognitive accounts of emotions, which have gained a great deal of popularity, given philosophers' and psychologists' rejection of the once commonly held view

that emotions are purely phenomenological or physiological states which are opposed to reason. According to many cognitive theorists, emotions are responsive to reasons and evidence, and they take in aspects of the world that affect our well-being or our ability to flourish. My discussion includes, not only cognitive theories developed by philosophers, but also, appraisal theories which are typically the province of psychologists. What all of these theorists share is the view that emotions are not necessarily arational states, but that they can be important guides to action. At the very least, they are responses to immediate objects of attention, or factors in our immediate circumstances that disrupt our ability to respond adequately, and they may play a role in enhancing our ability to cope in unusual circumstances.¹⁴ While I agree with many of the insights of these views, there are other aspects of emotions that these theories overlook. Furthermore, the theories I discuss require a fairly highly developed understanding of the concepts involved in particular emotions, which we have little reason to assume all those who experience a particular emotion possess. At the end of the chapter, I provide some further development of Prinz's account of emotions as embodied appraisals, and my reasons for defending his view for at least some experiences of emotion.

¹⁴ Although my account differs from Robert Solomon's account of emotions in many relevant ways, his view that "emotions are responses to unusual situations in which usual behavior patterns seem inappropriate" goes along with my view about the role of emotions and other practical experiences in our practical lives.

CHAPTER I

EXPERIENCE AND VALUE

Introduction

Experience seems to play a role in shaping many of our practical beliefs. It typically influences our beliefs without our having to think about how to interpret our experiences. We simply find ourselves forming beliefs about the appropriateness of certain responses to the objects and events we encounter. That is, our practical responses seem to be the result of absorbing the lessons of our experiences. In this way, practical experience seems to play a role analogous to the role ordinary perceptual experience plays in the formation of our empirical beliefs. However, according to the prevailing view of philosophers, an adequate understanding of human psychology undermines the purported analogy between experience in the practical and empirical domain. Even those philosophers who aren't skeptical about the role of ordinary perceptual experience in learning about the world are skeptical that experience can play the same role in the practical domain.

According to some philosophers, insofar as we take ourselves to be discovering independently existing values in our experience, we are projecting our feelings or attitudes about various objects and actions onto those things. This account of the connection between experience and evaluative thought can be traced back to Hume's observation of sensibility's tendency of "gilding and staining all natural objects" with the "colors of our sentiments" (Hume 1751, p. 88). According to Hume, we have a tendency to spread our feelings onto objects, thinking that we have discovered some independently existing value "out there." In dispelling this idea, he gives the following example:

Take any action allow'd to be vicious: Willful murder, for instance. Examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, or real existence, which you call vice. In which-ever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in the case. The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You never can find it, till you turn your reflexion into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action...So that when you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it (T 468-469).

J. L. Mackie's error theory of morality is based, also, on the view that we are mistaken insofar as we think that values are "part of the fabric of the world." We have a tendency to objectify our own non-rational attitudes, thinking we have gotten a "glimpse of the normative order".¹⁵ Mackie calls this 'the pathetic fallacy'. It is our mind's "tendency to read our feelings into their objects. If a fungus, say, fills us with disgust, we may be inclined to ascribe to the fungus itself a non-natural quality of foulness" (Mackie 1977, 42).

Similarly, our moral judgments seem to track independently existing normative properties.

At least with respect to morality, what we find good or bad, right or wrong, is influenced by society.¹⁶

¹⁵ This way of putting the point is due to Simon Blackburn's discussion in *Think*. In describing the Moore's and Plato's views, noting, "Another tack would suggest that what is cognized is a peculiar non-natural, 'normative' fact. This was Moore's own view, and it might have been that of Plato. It is as if we get a glimpse of something other than ordinary empirical or scientific features of things. We get a glimpse of the normative order." See his, 285.

¹⁶ There are two likely differences between Hume's and Mackie's view that are worth pointing out. First, while Mackie holds that the real source of our beliefs about right and wrong, good and bad, is our social upbringing, Hume holds that the source of the moral sentiments is our common human nature. Second, Mackie agrees with realists that in making a moral judgment we are attempting to cognize or represent values. His theory is an error theory of moral judgments, however, because he thinks that such judgments are false. While Hume agrees with Mackie that insofar as we take ourselves to have discovered values "out there" when we make a moral judgment we are committing the error of projecting our subjective attitudes onto their objects, he isn't necessarily (or probably) an error theorist. For Hume, virtuous character traits are those traits that make a person useful or agreeable to herself or others, and vicious character traits that have the opposite effect on the person who possesses the traits. Thus, the moral judgment 'kindness is virtuous' is true just in case kindness is a trait that makes a person useful or agreeable to herself or others. This would make Hume a cognitivist about moral judgments, but not an error theorist. This view differs from the view of realists, as well, because what makes a moral judgment true is not that it represents some independently existing moral property. When we claim, 'Willful killing is vicious,' for example, there is a matter of fact this claim represents, but it isn't an

In a more recent discussion, Gilbert Harman defends the view that while we seem to observe value in the world, it is only observation in the loose sense. In order to illustrate his point, Harman offers the following example:

You can observe someone do something, but can you ever perceive the rightness or wrongness of what he does? If you round the corner and see a group of young hoodlums pour gasoline on a cat and ignite it, you do not need to *conclude* that what they are doing is wrong; you do not need to figure anything out; you can see that it is wrong. But is your reaction due to the actual wrongness of what you see or is it simply a reflection of your moral “sense,” a “sense” that you have acquired perhaps as a result of your moral upbringing? (Harman 1977, p. 4).

According to Harman, we do not need to posit values in order to explain our reaction to what the children are doing. Rather, he argues, our “observations” of value are more simply, and so, better explained as the effect of our moral upbringing. He explains our experiences of value as the effect of features of our underlying moral psychology, rejecting the idea that our immediate responses are perceptive of normative properties which actions and objects possess, or evidential considerations, which might give us objective reasons for action. We respond as we do because we unreflectively interpret our immediate experiences in light of more general beliefs we hold about the proper application of concepts such as ‘right’ and ‘wrong,’ ‘good’ and ‘bad’. For example, someone who observes the children burning the cat, who possesses concepts such as ‘cat’ ‘wrong’ ‘senseless torture,’ and who

independently existing moral property. It is the fact that we disapprove of willful killing from the moral perspective (Radcliffe 1997, 257). In “Kantian Tunes on a Humean Instrument,” Elizabeth Radcliffe argues that Hume does say that there is a matter of fact when we turn inward to find a sentiment of disapprobation (Ibid). She further notes that if moral sentiments are cognitive claims, “moral feelings yield beliefs about matters of fact and that to form a moral judgment is to accept a proposition or to endorse a truth-claim” (Ibid, 257, fn. 20). This could be the case for Hume so long as the moral sentiment, which issues in a belief non-inferentially, does not make a claim about the external world. Thus, Radcliffe argues, it would have to have a form such as “‘X is virtuous (or vicious)’”, which could be used to make inference about external objects (Ibid, 258). Finally, in the introduction to *What is an Emotion?*, Calhoun and Solomon note of Hume’s view, “Hume argued that moral and aesthetic sentiments do not perceive values. Nevertheless, we may appeal to feelings of moral approval or aesthetic enjoyment in making value judgments because, he argued, a ‘value’ is simply the power of a person or thing to evoke sentiments” (Calhoun and Solomon 1984, 18). Since Hume’s view is arguably more sophisticated than the Standard View of human psychology (or belief/desire psychology), my discussion of the Standard View is not intended to include Hume’s more sophisticated account.

believes that senseless torture is wrong, might immediately 'see' this particular act as an act of senseless torture, and thus see it as wrong. But seeing here is mostly shorthand for the fact that the person unreflectively and immediately judges that what the children are doing is wrong. That is, she does so without having to go through any explicit inferential process. It is the unreflective and immediate nature of their judgment that prompts us to characterize this as a case of observation.

Moral observation can be contrasted with ordinary cases of observation. According to Harman, in both cases a person must make use of her background beliefs about various objects in order to form a judgment in light of her experience. However, it is reasonable to believe that there are physical facts which explain why someone observes what they do in ordinary cases of observation. This is why observation can provide observational evidence for or against a person's theory about the world. For example, suppose that a scientist sees a vapor trail in a cloud chamber. According to Harman, his observation is evidence that there is a proton present in the cloud chamber because it is reasonable to assume that there is a physical fact, namely, a proton, which explains why the scientist made the observation he made. This is true regardless of the fact that both ordinary observation and moral observation are theory laden. One's background beliefs do not necessarily determine what one observes in ordinary cases of perception, though they do determine what one observes in the case of moral observation.

Problems with Harman's Account of Observation in the Practical Domain¹⁷

Now, I take it that (something akin to) Harman's account of practical experience does capture at least some aspects of our experiences as practical agents. A person with a (more or less) well-developed practical outlook is oriented towards the world in a certain way. She reacts to the situations in which she finds herself without having to think about which aspects of the situation are morally salient. An object or action simply strikes her as good or bad, right or wrong, and she responds as she has learned to respond in similar situations. I see that someone needs help opening a door, and I reach out to help her because this strikes me as the right thing to do. In such situations I rarely stop to think about whether I am right to help. I simply reach out to help. If I explicitly judge that helping this person is right or that I ought to help her, I don't question my judgment. I simply form the judgment on the basis of what I observe, and act on it. Even as it regards exceptions to rules, we often just "know" when an exception is called for in a particular situation, and we act on it. Most of us have learned that in some cases it is better to tell a white lie than to tell the truth, and so, we respond by lying in certain situations without giving much thought to whether it is permissible to do so. If anything characterizes this aspect of our practical lives, it is the lack of resistance we experience to our efforts at responding to the people, objects, and events we confront, or the ease with which we are able to recalibrate our responses in order to alleviate any tension or

¹⁷ Although the philosophers I discuss in the introduction are discussing moral experience and its role in making a moral judgment, I discuss the broader category, practical experience and discuss its role in our practical lives. I take it here that moral claims form a subset of practical claims since, for example, one might not only judge that (say) honesty is important because others deserve to be treated that way, but that being an honest person is important to one's happiness or well-being. Of course, another way to distinguish practical claims from moral claims is to argue that the former are hypothetical imperatives, that is, claims we are obligated to live up to because we have certain desires, and the latter are categorical imperatives, that is, claims we are obligated to live up to regardless of our desires. Surely in our ordinary lives we distinguish between ends that we are obligated to act on only because of other desires we have, and ends we are obligated to act on regardless of our desires. Many, if not most or all, moral imperatives seem to fall under the latter, thus they are not necessarily a subset of practical imperatives if these are taken to be (roughly) equivalent to what most philosophers mean by 'hypothetical imperatives'. I say more about this important issue in chapter 2.

resistance we experience. This is because we have enough familiarity with the appropriate responses to the objects we confront to allow us to quickly gauge the appropriate response in the current situation.¹⁸

Since a person's background practical beliefs are thought to control her seemingly spontaneously formed responses to what she perceives, given enough information about the contents of her mental states, a person should be able to form a fairly accurate prediction about how she will react to various objects and events. For example, if one were aware of one's (perhaps unconscious) belief that senseless torture is wrong and one's belief that setting a cat's tail on fire for seemingly no reason is an act of senseless torture, one could predict how one will react when one sees such an event take place. Furthermore, given some knowledge about one's temperament and how one is disposed to respond to acts of senseless torture, one could also predict that one will react with (say) outrage to the children's actions.

But we cannot always predict how a person will react, and it is sometimes the novelty of one's response that accounts for the special role it plays in a person's practical life. Consider the following true story which can be used to illustrate this point:

Upon arriving to her parents' new home on a Caribbean island, Gayle Forman's mother told her that it was very important on the island to say 'hello' or 'Good morning' (or 'afternoon' or 'evening') upon passing someone on the street, even a stranger. Forman thought it was silly, but did not want to ruin her parents' reputation on the small island so she

¹⁸ Maurice Mandelbaum describes this sort of activity in his discussion of the phenomenology of ethical comportment in Mandelbaum's *The Phenomenology of Moral Experience*: "I sense the embarrassment of a person, and turn the conversation aside; I see a child in danger and catch hold of its hand" (p. 48); "Actions such as these (of which our daily lives are in no small measure composed) do not... seem to spring from the self: in such cases I am reacting directly and spontaneously to what confronts me... [I]t is appropriate to speak of 'reactions' and 'responses'" (pp. 48 – 49). In "What is Moral Maturity?," Hubert Dreyfus discusses these passages, and contrasts the sort of activity Mandelbaum discusses, ethical comportment or skillful coping, with less skillful coping in which explicit judgment plays a role (Ogilvy 1992, pp. 112 – 113). Thus, as Dreyfus points out, rather than being the activity of moral maturity or a principled moral agent, forming a moral judgment occurs in earlier stages of moral development. (I discuss the psychology of making a moral judgment in detail in chapter 2.) According to Dreyfus, this activity does not have a propositional structure, thus it is neither implicit nor explicit in skillful coping. I do not take a stand on this issue here. What is important for my purposes is to contrast this activity with other cases in which our ordinary way of responding falls short.

played along. She says, ‘Such Mayberry manners seemed anathema to me, with my New York City stare-through-you-and-pretend-you’re-not-there conditioning. Still, I didn’t want to wreck my parents’ standing on the island ...so I greeted away. After 10 days of saluting, I felt exhilarated and calm.’ In light of her experience, Forman decided to embark on what she calls ‘a civility experiment’. After she got back to New York, no matter how rude people were, she would be kind in return, never yell at a customer service representative, or store clerk. After discovering the benefits of civility through her own observation and experimentation, she says, ‘Five years after that trip to Nevis, what started as a lark has become a guiding life principle.’ Learning the difference civility makes to her life changed Forman’s views about its importance.¹⁹

As the story is told, Forman’s experience leads her to question her prior beliefs about the importance of civility, and it seems to occur because her experience on the island clashes enough with her more settled practical views. Perhaps Forman’s experience urges her to move in a certain direction, that is, to seriously consider the idea that civility matters in a good life, perhaps even to conduct an informal experiment in civility. But it does not determine what she comes to believe. She might later decide that she was right in the first place, and her experiences were the effect of the warm air and sunshine on the island. Thus, in this case, the positive feelings Forman had during her trip highlighted the possibility for a different sort of life rather than determining the ends she would pursue.

More importantly, it is likely that if Forman could predict how she would respond on the island, her experience on the island would have likely had less of an impact on her. Suppose that she had done an inventory of her mental states and recalled her past experiences traveling. In doing so, she recalled a memory of having spent a happy summer vacation near the seashore when she was younger. She remembers being in a good mood, greeting strangers happily and having her mood uplifted by the smiling faces her happiness seemed to bring. Based on this memory, she might now recall what she seemed to know formally:

¹⁹ Gayle Forman, *Self*, August 2005, 30.

acting civilly, especially if civility is returned, is important to one's well-being. On this basis, she might decide to visit her parents with the aim of improving her mood. Would her feelings of joy have the same impact on her under these conditions? She may have felt better after her trip, but if her expectations for the trip had been exactly met, she would have been less likely to take notice of the importance of civility, more generally. This is because we tend to pay little attention to how things go when they go as we expect them to go.²⁰ It is the unexpected moments that tend to have an impact on us, and prompt us to reevaluate our current preferences, desires, or goals. It is these moments that prompt changes we could not have otherwise anticipated, and that we would not have otherwise made.²¹

²⁰ Recent psychological studies suggest reasons why Forman's experience led her in the direction it did. According to recent research on happiness, what stands out most to us in our everyday encounters aren't the ordinary things we encounter or the cases in which things go pretty much as we expect, even if things don't go particularly well. What matters most to us are changes in our circumstances that positively or negatively affect our well-being. But once we have adapted to the changes, we no longer experience the exhilaration or bad feelings that accompanied the change. George Lowenstein, who has done a great deal of work on happiness, suggests, "Happiness is a signal our brains use to motivate us to do certain things. And in the same way that our eye adapts to different levels of illumination, we're designed to kind of go back to the happiness set point. Our brains are trying to regulate us." Timothy Wilson, a fellow happiness researcher adds to this explanation, "We don't realize how quickly we will adapt to a pleasurable event and make it the backdrop of our lives. When any event occurs to us, we make it ordinary. And through becoming ordinary, we lose our pleasure" See John Gertner, "The Futile Pursuit of Happiness," *The New York Times Magazine* (September 7, 2003): 44 – 47, 47. Interestingly, this phenomenon is not limited to positive shifts in well-being, but may also occur when we receive 'negative' signals, or signals that prompt awareness of threats to our ability to fare well in our environment. For example, if an individual is unsure about how she stands in relation to another individual, and she gets the sense that the person poses a threat to her, she will become uncomfortable or wary around the person, perhaps exhibiting a tendency to keep a close eye on the person to ward off any threat. But once the individual comes to believe that the other person is, indeed, out to get one, her thoughts tend to shift from figuring out how she stands in relation to the person to how to ensure that she protects herself from the threat this person poses. In short, fear seems to dissipate as one adapts one's responses to this negative event.

²¹ It is also likely that these moments play a role in a good or happy life. Charles Larmore makes this point in "The Idea of a Life Plan." He says, "we are never in a position to grasp in advance the full character of our good, even in its broad outline. As a result, our happiness includes not just the anticipated good we achieve, but also the unexpected good which happens to us. It even involves this very experience of surprise." See his, 103. The point I am making here is relevant to discussions about a person's apparent interests v. her real interests. Rationalists argue that a person's real interests are determined by her rational self as opposed to, say, her empirical self. The problem with these accounts is that the rational self is so idealized that it is doubtful whether it can be attributed to an actual person. Instrumentalists argue that a person's real interests are determined by her motivational structure, and so, cannot be non-instrumentally criticized. While her real interests may not be those she is currently motivated to pursue, on the instrumentalist view, they would be the interests she would have if she were fully informed about her underlying practical psychology as well as the kinds of circumstances she would face. However, if it is true that knowledge of how a person is likely to react

Of course, we are not always transparent to ourselves, and so, it is possible to learn something about our own attitudes through our experiences. I might think that I really want x, but realize after experiencing x that I don't really want it, after all. 'I didn't realize how much I disliked x until I tried it,' I might think.²² First, it isn't clear that what we're doing is making a discovery of mental contents that were there all along, rather than retrospectively ascribing the lack of such a desire in order (perhaps wrongly) to make sense of our behavior to ourselves. Second, suppose that through careful analysis, I fail to discover a background belief that could explain my reaction to what I encounter in the world. One might attribute my response to an unconscious belief or a disposition to respond to objects and events in just the way I responded to them. And certainly some of our seemingly spontaneously formed reactions to the objects and events we encounter can be explained this way. The attribution of an unconscious belief or disposition is typically invoked in discussions of the epistemology of desiring or valuing on the basis of a person's verbal and non-verbal behavior.²³

But can this be used as a unified explanation of practical observation? Typically, dispositions are attributed to a person by observing her verbal and non-verbal behavior. Suppose that in Forman's case we observe her behavior back in New York, and find that she is disposed to form judgments similar to those she formed in light of her experiences on the island. We would have evidence that her reactions are being controlled by her background

makes her actual reaction more unpredictable, then a fully informed person is not going to be very helpful to an actual person in determining her real interests prior to encountering certain objects and events.

²² Even here, I say this with reservations. Often enough, it is the case that what we didn't realize is the other things that would come along with x, and since we realize that x isn't worth putting up with these things, we might decide that, all things considered, we do not want x, after all.

²³ The interesting test cases here are those in which a person's habitual responses change over time as a result of her experiences. For example, having seen the impact of a chilly climate in which one is a (more or less) full participant on the individuals who become the unwitting victims of the climate can prompt one to revise one's beliefs about the appropriateness of one's actions or the desirability of such working (or living) conditions.

psychology rather than the immediate impact of events on her. But if we observe something different, as Forman suggests we might have observed prior to her visit to the island, then we have less evidence for concluding that her immediate reaction on the island is truly the result of prior beliefs, or underlying dispositions to respond to events in a particular way. To be sure, the complete explanation of Forman's response isn't the events she encounters. It is likely that some aspect of Forman's prior experiences or underlying psychology makes it possible for her to be influenced in the way she is by her experiences on the island. But this is no different than observation in the theoretical domain. One's prior experiences with chairs make it possible for one to observe a chair sitting in the corner of a room. But this doesn't mean that these experiences provide a full explanation for one's seeing a chair in the corner of the room. Presumably, the fact that there is a chair in the corner of the room explains one's seeing it.

The point is similar in the practical case. My focus on changes in a person's way of responding is intended because it is here that explanations in terms of a person's underlying psychology are most suspect. The fact that such moments play a different role and have a different phenomenology than other moments in which our responses reflect our underlying practical views or dispositions to respond to various stimuli further bolsters the point.

Finally, for the individual, changes intended to help her live a better life can be directly tested against experience. If Forman finds out that her life goes better when she is unfailingly civil, then she has evidence that the change was a change for the better. This doesn't mean that this is the only justification for our moral and practical beliefs. However, it does suggest that Forman isn't operating—forming immediate responses or inferences—as she had been all along. And, it seems to suggest that her responses are better in tune with the flow of events,

thus they are responsive to what makes a life go well rather than strictly reflecting personal or social norms she has observed prior to her visit to the island.²⁴

In *Balance and Refinement*, Michael DePaul calls experiences like Forman's 'formative experiences.' As he points out, "Having such a formative experience is not a matter of working out the consequences of a system of more or less explicit moral beliefs that are the product of, if I can be excused the expression, one's moral sense. Rather, formative experiences feel more as if they influence one's faculty of moral judgment, intuition, or perception, so that one sees situations in a different way, and feels drawn to make different moral judgments or accept different moral principles" (De Paul 1993, 146). These experiences compel one to see and evaluate things differently. Of course, while experience might urge one to follow a different path or evaluate things differently, one need not accept the appearance at face value. Yet, as Forman's story shows, formative experiences bring to attention things that previously went unnoticed, either because one overlooked them or because one has never encountered them before. This example doesn't easily fit the model of practical observation as Harman describes it. Forman's experience occurs more clearly in connection with changes in her practical views rather than reflecting her more settled

²⁴ Perhaps the intersubjectiveness of a response provides further evidence that one's responses aren't merely reflecting one's underlying psychology, but that civility does matter in a good life. I will not pursue this point here, though I do think that some of the norms for assessing empirical evidence will work in the practical case. In *The Metaphysics of Value and the Normative Aspect of Experience*, Jennifer Hawkins contrasts her account of evaluative experience as cases of "strictly speaking" with cases of "seeing as." As she points out, one difference between the two in ordinary cases of perception has to do with perceptual content which is available to all, and content which is more local. In the formation of beliefs, the content available to all is given to us by the world, while part of the content is provided by our background conceptual capacities. She takes the "untutored appreciation of qualities of nature" as a likely good example of evaluative responses that are available to all. To be struck by the beauty of the "silhouette of the oak branches against the night sky" does not require the concepts 'oak,' 'silhouette,' or 'beauty,' though to describe the experience this way does. See her, pp. 14 – 15. This is not to be committed to realism about values. Taking this example, the beauty of nature is, arguably, content available to all, and the intersubjectiveness of our responses to nature is one criterion for determining that this is so.

practical beliefs. The change is experienced as a positive development in her sense of what matters.

Practical Experience from the First Person Perspective

Harman's analysis of practical observation is adequate to describe more highly tutored cases of perception, that is, cases in which perception is conceptually laden. Even though we do not always explicitly form a judgment in these cases, some conceptual repertoire seems to underlie our immediate responses. Thus, perception in these cases is only perception in the loose sense that Harman discusses. But we do not always have the luxury of operating in familiar circumstances or having an appropriate response at hand for dealing with the people, objects, and events we encounter. In such cases, we might find ourselves stymied in our attempts to act, or act on the basis of how we have acted in the past, but find our responses inadequate because we lack any sense of the appropriate response. In contrast to the above scenario, we experience resistance in our attempts to act or respond to what we encounter. The problem is that we do not have an immediate sense of what response is called for in the situation, or a disposition to respond in any particular way. We might stop to deliberate, and act on our admittedly limited, though perhaps best, judgment. We might simply use a method of trial and error, or we might try to use our feelings as a guide. In these cases, a person might fall back on her instincts or "gut feelings" as a way of trying to navigate unfamiliar territory. Her instincts might help her, but they may also fall short if the circumstances are unfamiliar enough. At any rate, these cases do not fit neatly into Harman's account. For here we use our feelings as a guide precisely because our cognitive supply falls short.

One might question how we come to have a more or less well-developed practical outlook in the first place.²⁵ A child's social upbringing and continuing social cues are likely relevant, but they do not necessarily determine an individual's response. The idea that our practical views are strictly the result of our social upbringing has an air of plausibility to it because it is difficult to deny that children (and adults) are influenced by the views of those around them. In particular, children are susceptible to such influences because they do not have well-established beliefs, or habits of action or inference, through which to filter what they are told.²⁶ This early training likely provides an essential context for making good judgments about how to live and what actions or responses are appropriate. It also gives the child some, perhaps vague, sense of what is valuable or appropriate, which gives the child enough structure to begin developing her responses to her environment. Regardless of how close the relationship is between a child and her early trainers, however, her experience of her world is not identical to theirs nor will she confront only the situations her trainers have

²⁵ In using the phrase 'practical outlook,' I do not mean to suggest too much. There may be no unified set of values an individual carries from context to context, and one's well-shaped practical outlook may be quite thin. Some people are more likely than others to use past or "tried and true" responses or patterns of inference to make judgments in their actual circumstances. Others are more open to the novel aspects of their environments, and so, more open to trying new responses. One way to explain what I take this to be is to think of any area of one's life in which one rarely has to stop to think about how to respond or in which one infrequently finds oneself stymied, but simply responds to the immediate demands of the situation. This area may be quite small, after all, but they are important for us to fall back on so that we can focus on other matters. For example, I drive to work each day without thinking about how to respond to the changing demands of morning traffic. I simply accelerate or brake, swerve or keep my hands steady as demanded by the situation. In the practical case, I simply hold or do not hold the elevator when I get to work, and I stop to help a person pick up papers she has dropped without questioning whether I should do so. (See Hubert Dreyfus, "What is Moral Maturity?" for a discussion of the phenomenology of expertise and this example of driving.) While doing so, I may think about what I want to say to a student who is coming in to see me about missing an exam, or mentally work on a difficult paper I am trying to finish. It should be noted, also, that although I am discussing the development of a person's practical outlook as opposed to the narrower category of a person's moral outlook, I agree with what others have written about the role a person's actual circumstances, including her sense of her own capabilities, play in the formation of a particular outlook.

²⁶ Certainly, there may be many explanations of why children are susceptible to certain influences, as Jose Medina has pointed out to me. Some children are more susceptible than others from the outset, and later on. It may also be that children lack the self-confidence or self-reliance not to be influenced by their parents, elders, or community members' word. And certainly, because we need the information our trainers have in order to cope with the world, there may be survival advantages to having the ability to empathize and learn from our elders.

confronted, given her unique assets and liabilities. This will give her a unique perspective from which to evaluate her environment and how well she relates to it.

For example, a father who was robust as a child may have a son who is scrawny or who has other characteristics which are fodder for bullies. The father may try to help the child deal with the threat, but not having dealt with bullies himself, his advice (along with the advice of the child's mother and teachers) may be very limited. The particular threat is the threat that it is due to particular facts about the participants and the situation. The child may ultimately find that he must amend or ignore the advice of his elders—"just ignore the bully"—if he is to deal adequately with the threat. Furthermore, given the uniqueness of the situation, dealing well with the threat may require the boy to resort to rather unique responses.²⁷

Perhaps this is simply an empirical problem, and one could sidestep the need to figure things out for oneself by sticking to a regular routine or staying close enough to one's elders so that one does not have to figure things out for oneself. It is doubtful that this is possible since we cannot control how events unfold, and things happen to us that we never could have expected. Even our familiar turf can, for better or worse, change in such a way that no one can help us, and we must rely on our own devices to figure things out. Furthermore, even if we did not have to confront unfamiliar circumstances very often, it is doubtful whether we can get by without figuring things out for ourselves. Our well-being is affected by our ability

²⁷ In at least one study, William Damon questioned children about certain moral precepts, asking them what they would do if their parents or teachers told them it was okay not to share, etc. The children said that their parents or teachers would be wrong, and they would do it anyway. Orna Feldman, "Thou Shalt not Raise Self-Indulgent Children," *Brown Alumni Monthly* (October 1994). Of course, it could be that these children have so absorbed the precepts they've been taught that they cannot (yet) see that these precepts are the result of social training. Still, it suggests a willingness on children's part to deviate from the rules for (presumably) moral reasons.

to relate well to our environment, and this depends, in part, on our (first personal) assessment of how well we are relating to it.

Consider this example from the theoretical domain. According to Hubert Dreyfus, babies learn about their environments through trial and error, not by learning certain rules for how things work, but through their own interaction with it:

Perhaps there is no set of context-free facts adequate to capture the way everyday things such as water behave. We may have to learn from vast experience how to respond to thousands of typical cases. That would explain why children find it fascinating to play with blocks and water day after day for years. They are probably learning to discriminate the sorts of typical situations they will have to cope with in their everyday activities (Dreyfus 1994, xxvii).²⁸

By literally playing with the objects in her environment and various responses to it, a child sees for herself how things work, but also, how her presence affects her environment as well as how it affects her. This activity helps the child to relate to her actual environment more successfully than she could if she had to operate in it after merely listening to what her parents and others told her about how things in her environment operate.

Similarly, a developing practical agent might (figuratively and literally) play with different responses to people, objects, and events, or try out different responses in order to determine what responses are appropriate with respect to various people, objects, and events. The responses that work for one's trainers or other members of one's community may not help one since many factors determine whether an individual will fare well in her

²⁸ In *In Defense of Truth*, Lenn Goodman discusses this passage, which points to a further similarity between experience in the theoretical and practical domain. This passage from Dreyfus suggests that ordinary people do not trust their senses, or if they do, it is because they have learned to do so. Something similar might be said about feelings. Most individuals seem to treat their feelings as being less trustworthy than their ordinary perceptual experience, yet if they do, it may simply be because they haven't honed their feelings in the way they have honed their senses. See Goodman, p. 206, for his discussion of this passage.

circumstances. As noted above, her temperament, her individual assets and liabilities, as well as her circumstances, will affect her ability to navigate her circumstances well.²⁹

This view assumes that we are embodied creatures operating in specific space-time locations who share their environment with other embodied individuals who have their own goals, projects, or interests which constrain the range of possible actions for any particular individual.³⁰ That is, the individual experiences the range of responses she can perform in a particular situation as being constrained in part by her environment and other people.³¹ She can do what she wants unless doing so undermines her relationship to her environment, which includes her relations with other people. This is a consequence of the fact that faring well is not merely determined for the individual strictly by whether she is satisfying some (or

²⁹ Waltraut Stein makes a similar point in “How Values Adhere to Facts.” She says, “The moral man begins to work by becoming conscious of the materials and tools with which his existence presents him. These include, for instance, his own temperament, intelligence, and abilities as well as the temper of his times, his cultural heritage, and the specific situation within which he is living. He “plays” with these both literally as a child and later figuratively as he considers the various possibilities inherent in his existence.” See her (1969), p. 69.

³⁰ Thus, my view assumes that we cannot necessarily be identified with our mental selves or our bodily selves primarily. In our practical lives, we will give primacy to one or the other at various times, for example, one might focus on one’s bodily identity during times of health crisis rather than developing one’s mental self. However, focusing on the effects of (say) disease on one’s body and treating the body without treating the “person” is not metaphysically determined. It is equally likely that what happens to my body happens to me (as an embodied creature), and an argument must be given to show why (say) a physician can ignore me while treating my body.

³¹ Carla Bagnoli makes a similar point in her (2002). First, she notes, “The question is not: how does value get attached to the world? The question is, rather, how the agent establishes normative relations with her surroundings and acquires moral reasons...the agent necessarily establishes normative relations with [her world]. That is, she searches for reasons for believing, acting, and feeling. To be an agent is to engage in such a search” (p. 131). She further argues that there are certain constraints that bear on her conception of her possibilities and options. In particular, she points out, “a significant trait of the agent’s context is that her world is inhabited by other interested, needy and concerned beings that make claims on her. The normative relations that the agent establishes with her world are partly determined by the relations she establishes with other agents. That is, other agents put some important constraints on what she can take as a reason, that is, on the normative relation she establishes with her surroundings” (p. 132). While I agree with her discussion as far as it goes, I aim to establish the further point that one need not actively establish normative relations with others in order to be so constrained. Rather, in some cases, we simply find ourselves so related to others through our spontaneous emotional assessments of our environments. This is not to say that one cannot try to extricate oneself from such relations, change environments, judge that one’s feelings are misguided and thus decide not to act on them, or actively establish new relations that conflict with one’s lower level assessments. It is merely to say that we directly experience ourselves as constrained by others and our environment even when we are not actively engaged in such a search, or actively establishing ties to it. As embodied creatures, we directly experience these constraints when we bump up against things that test our cognitive limits.

most) of her desires. That is, the fact that we are embodied creatures determines what counts as faring well in our circumstances, even at the lowest levels of action. Even at the level at which our actions aren't directed by our conscious deliberation, reasons, desires or goals, we exhibit a tendency to adjust our bodies to minimize tension or to get into equilibrium with our circumstances.³² It is determined, in part, by how well we are relating to our environment. This lower level activity likely plays a role in a person's emerging evaluative thought, but the kind of mental activity required at this level is conceptually minimal, as I discuss below.

Emotions as Embodied Appraisals

There is a recent account of emotions that is helpful to my discussion of embodied agency, and the role emotions play in helping us navigate our environments.³³ This account

³² In "The Current Relevance of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment," Hubert Dreyfus makes this point. He says, "According to Merleau-Ponty, in everyday, absorbed, skillful coping, acting is experienced as a steady flow of skillful activity in response to one's sense of the situation. Part of that experience is a sense that when one's situation deviates from some optimal body-environment relationship, one's motion takes one closer to that optimum and thereby relieves the 'tension' of the deviation. One does not need a goal or intention to act. One's body is simply solicited by the situation to get into equilibrium with it" (Dreyfus 1996, [34]). As Dreyfus points out, this is a more basic kind of motivation than what most philosophers in the tradition have held. Most notably, empiricists have held that what motivates us to act is the desire to achieve certain goals that are associated with pleasure or the absence of pain. But in skillful coping, one does not need a goal in mind to act.

³³ Although Prinz's view is helpful to my interest in embodied agency, my interest in the role emotions play in guiding action (as well as shaping evaluative thought) is influenced as much, if not more so, by Elijah Millgram's views on the role of pleasure (and pain) in our practical lives. In an earlier account, he argues that pleasure (and pain) amount to judgments of desirability. See his 1997, chapter 6. In a later article, he argues that pleasure is an indicator of improvement (and pain is an indicator that things have gotten worse). The change stems (in part) from the observation that feelings distinguish over time, thus they cannot be observations of stable properties. For example, the excitement over being accepted into one's desired university eventually fades as one gets used to one's situation. Of course, the initial feelings can play a role in one's more stable or enduring views about what matters or what is worth pursuing, more generally, as well as in her welfare (as Millgram notes). For example, the feelings of pleasure Forman experienced during her visit on the island led in somewhat complicated ways to a more stable belief about the importance of manners to one's well being, more generally, and we can suppose, to a change in her way of seeing and reacting to others. We can suppose that the initially heightened feelings subsided, due in part to the fact that her initial pleasure stemmed from the (seeming) discovery about civility as much as from acting civilly. But this does not mean that acting civilly will become any less important to Forman's overall welfare. It is also unlikely that what started as a "lark" will cease being part of her conception of what makes her life go well. It would likely only have this effect if acting

is developed by Jesse Prinz in a book titled *Gut Reactions*. Without defending his account against other accounts, I want to discuss some of the basic tenets of his view in this section.³⁴

Prinz defends his account against the backdrop of criticisms of the main theories of emotion developed by philosophers and psychologists, some of which I discussed above. He also defends his account against certain psychological experiments which tend to confirm the view that emotions can be induced by altering the body's physical state in a way that is prior to (or at least doesn't require positing) changes in evaluative judgments a person makes.³⁵ But the view he develops is also steeped in what seems correct about certain traditional and contemporary accounts of emotions.

Prinz agrees with contemporary psychologists, especially, Richard Lazarus, that emotions involve appraisals. However, whereas Lazarus defends the view that cognitive appraisals are necessary preconditions for the experience of emotions, Prinz argues that emotions are embodied appraisals.³⁶ According to Lazarus's view, emotions represent core relational themes, for example, anger represents the core relational theme that a demeaning offense has been made against one.³⁷ Prinz agrees with Lazarus that emotions represent core relational themes, but he argues that they do not describe them. For example, sadness

civily "proved" to affect her life negatively over the long run. Thus, our initial responses can have a longer term effect on our cognitive and motivational structures (as well as our welfare) in spite of the fact that the initial response fades. This is due in part to the fact that the initial feelings prompt one to focus on (and consider more seriously) the object that gives rise to the feeling rather than, strictly, at its role in improving our lives, and this sort of reflection can give rise to stable ways of seeing and responding to events. Focusing on emotions, more generally, helps to explain the varying roles they can play in the individual's life and the more specific (but enduring) changes they prompt us to make.

³⁵ See chapter 4 for further discussion of these arguments.

³⁶ This aspect of Prinz's view is influenced by William James' account of emotions, according to which emotions are perceptions of physiological disturbances or bodily changes that occur in response to our awareness of external events and objects. His view differs from James in that Prinz argues that bodily disturbances or changes represent changes in a person's well-being.

³⁷ It should be noted that my intent is not to defend Lazarus's view (or Prinz's acceptance of Lazarus's view) of the core relational themes of specific emotions. Further discussion of emotions would be needed to defend Lazarus's view about what triggers specific emotions, such as anger.

represents irrevocable loss without some part representing irrevocability and another part representing loss (Ibid, p. 65). Prinz compares the way in which emotions represent core relational themes with the way in which “fuzz busters” represent nearby police. He says, “A beep emitted from a fuzz buster represents the presence of police radar. But the beep itself is utterly lacking in structure. It cannot be analyzed in to meaningful sub-beeps. There is not a tone meaning ‘radar’ and another tone meaning ‘police,’ which merge together to form ‘police radar’ tone. In other words, the beep emitted by a fuzz buster does not describe what it represents” (Ibid, p. 65). Similarly, emotions are reliably caused by changes in a person’s bodily states, and represent organism-environment relations without describing them.

According to Prinz’s view, experiencing an emotion is more akin to experiencing red than seeing something as red. As discussed earlier, the latter involves the possession of the concept ‘red’ and is more precisely directed at a proposition held true, whereas seeing red involves seeing an object, and does not require the possession of the concept ‘red’. Of course, as we acquire concepts for labeling our experiences, we can recognize fear as fear or anger as anger. Even if we have the requisite concepts, according to Prinz’s view, the emotions caused in us by daily events aren’t controlled by the concepts we possess. He says, “the emotions that are caused in us by events in our day-to-day life are not concepts. They are more like percepts. The fact that we have stored copies of emotions in memory does not render exogenously controlled emotions cognitive. By comparison, the fact that we have a concept of redness does not make ordinary red experiences conceptual. Recognizing red involves concepts, but merely experiencing red does not” (Ibid, p. 50).³⁸ The difference in the case of emotions is that they track changes in a person’s well-being by tracking bodily

³⁸ One may object that all perception is conceptually laden, thus object to Prinz’s distinction between recognizing red and experiencing red. For my position on this issue, see below.

changes. For example, through fear, which occurs in response to changes in bodily states—heart palpitations, shudders, and chills—an organism perceives a threat to her well-being. Through sadness, a person perceives the loss of something she values; sadness represents the loss of something valued (Ibid, p. 63).³⁹ In general, Prinz’s view is that through shudders, chills, heart palpitations et al., “[emotions] use our bodies to tell us how well we’re faring in the world” (Ibid, p. 69).

This is not to say that beliefs never play a role in the experience of emotions on Prinz’s account. As Prinz points out, cognitive cause theorists hold that emotions occur as a result of a person’s having evaluated a situation, and these evaluations are typically treated as having no intrinsic connection to the states that register changes in the body (Ibid, p. 76). Prinz argues that this is wrong, but he does not deny that propositional attitudes can become emotion triggers. He argues that as a person’s cognitive skills develop she acquires concepts for reflecting on her world. These concepts are developed in connection with the experience of certain emotions we are biologically disposed to experience under restricted types of perceptually detectable circumstances. However, the concepts learned through these experiences can be applied to make sense of our experiences in other (more highly socialized) cases, which in turn can also trigger emotions. For example, Prinz says, “Darkness and a sudden loss of support may both be triggers of the state we come to know as fear. As our cognitive skills develop, we...acquire a host of disembodied concepts for reflecting on the world around us. We acquire a concept of danger, and a corresponding word. At some point, while experiencing fear in a darkened room, we entertain the verbally mediated thought that we are facing a dangerous situation...At first, the thought ‘I am in

³⁹ Again, this is a gloss on sadness. Prinz endorses Lazarus’s view that sadness involves the perception of “irrevocable loss,” but perhaps the loss need not be irrevocable, as Jeffrey Tlumak suggested to me.

danger' is an effect of fear. It is an assessment of the situation that triggered an emotional response....Eventually, the explicit thought 'I am in danger' becomes capable of initiating fear responses in situations that lack the physical features that are predisposed to upset us as a function of our biology" (Ibid). In this way, he argues, judgments about core relational themes can become inner causes of emotions.

Prinz's view is helpful in explaining the connection between emotions and value concepts. Rather than requiring their development prior to our experience of emotions, emotions explain, in part, how we come to interpret our world, and our connection with it, as we do. Our cognitive supply often falls short, and in such cases, we need some way to guide our actions. Our feelings may be the first clue as to how we might go about doing this. The person who confronts a dangerous situation or threatening person, for example, may have no familiarity with the circumstances in which she finds herself, and she may have only her feelings to guide her. It is through various experiences of a particular type, in part, that she may come to learn the proper concepts for describing her experiences, and to make finer discriminations between situations in which the threat posed requires fleeing and situations that have threatening aspects, but which call for a different response. Such expertise is likely to require, also, the help of a child's parents or teachers that she is given concepts for interpreting her experience, and possible ways in which to cope with the problem.

This account also better explains the continuity of the experience of infants and children who seem to lack the capacity to make judgments and entertain thoughts, but who reasonably seem to experience emotions, and the emotional life of more mature conceptual beings. Fear in infants or children and adults shares characteristics similar enough to be labeled 'fear'. Furthermore, it is these early experiences which help us interpret our

experiences and make sense of our world. Upon seeing that a child exhibits the behavior we might exhibit when feeling afraid or fearful, an adult can help the child along in making sense of her world and how to act in light of her experiences in conceptual terms. Such tutoring may be partly transformative in that early responses might have greater plasticity than later ones since the causes of emotions are not cognitive states, and since the experience of an emotion is not conceptually demanding. Thus, earlier responses may take on somewhat varying shapes depending on one's tutors. This doesn't threaten the account discussed, but rather, supplies part of a reply to a potential criticism of the account.

Prinz's main thesis is that emotions are embodied appraisals. But there seems to be many more emotions than bodily indicators for interpreting our experiences. If Prinz is right, then how is it that from a few clues, we end up with a vast array of emotions, the role of which is to help us make sense of our circumstances? Philosophers and psychologists have offered various accounts of which emotions are basic and how to determine whether an emotion is basic. If there are basic emotions, that is, emotions which can be found across different times and cultures, and if Prinz's view is right, then it is likely that at least some basic emotions have no cognitive component as a cause. Furthermore, since the bodily changes characteristic of these emotions are likely to be shared with other more socially structured emotions, there is likely some flexibility in the way in which basic instincts can be molded in relation to cultural context. At higher stages, a person's history, current beliefs, and background assumptions seem to play a role in helping a person make finer discriminations in her experiences. This latter fact makes sense of the thought that we construct our values through our emotions rather than discovering them.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Hume would agree with the latter (though not necessarily the former) claim, but a caveat should be noted. In their discussion of Hume's overall account of emotions, Calhoun and Solomon claim that "Hume argued that

Finally, Prinz distinguishes between emotions as motivations to act and emotions as motives. As motivations, emotions impel action. However, it isn't the case that every emotional experience impels action or disposes one to act in a particular way. They may make certain actions more likely by preparing the body to respond in particular ways, e.g., by raising a person's blood pressure or heartbeat, but one will not necessarily act on one's feelings if one does not think one's emotions provide sufficient reasons for action. This could be because one thinks there are better reasons for acting differently, or because one more directly doubts the seeming veridicality of one's feelings.⁴¹

Is Perception Conceptually Laden?

Some further understanding of perception is in order here, as it is unclear what exactly the distinction is between perceiving an object and perceiving that the object has a certain attribute. While the former notion of perceiving involves perceiving an object directly, the latter is more clearly a case in which a person recognizes the truth of a proposition. For example, if one is said to perceive a red chair, then the object of perception is the red chair. If one is said to perceive that the chair is red, then the object of perception is the proposition held true, namely, 'the chair is red'. The latter notion requires the possession of the relevant concepts, such as 'chair' and 'red.' It isn't clear what is required in the former case. Traditional empiricists held that the objects of perception are unconceptualized data, though most contemporary theorists reject this position. Setting aside Prinz's own view on

moral and aesthetic sentiments do not perceive values. Nevertheless, we may appeal to feelings of moral approval or aesthetic enjoyment in making value judgments because, he argued, a 'value' is simply a power of a person or thing to evoke these sentiments". See their (1984), 18.

⁴¹ These two cases are related. One might believe that one's feelings are appropriate while believing that one has good reason not to act on them. This might occur in the case noted earlier. One might be angry because one's boss insulted one and believe that one's anger is appropriate, but believes that one ought not to act on one's anger because doing so will jeopardize one's job.

this point, I do not mean to argue that (say) “merely seeing red” is a case in which we experience something akin to raw sense data or unconceptualized data. It may require the possession of minimal (or untutored) concepts. That is, on the one hand, the concepts involved are likely minimal enough that very young children can respond in appropriate ways to certain stimuli without our needing to posit something like a private language or underlying conceptual repertoire that is propositionally structured. Nor does possession of these concepts require social training, on the other hand. The concepts required to perceive an object or to experience an emotion are minimally conceptually demanding, and (perhaps) flexible enough to be shaped in myriad ways.⁴² For example, very young children experience fear appropriately, and in spite of the fact that they have little or no familiarity with the situations that illicit fear. And, they certainly seem to lack a conceptual repertoire sophisticated enough to label their immediate experience as ‘fear’ or the feared object as ‘threatening.’

The above paragraph harkens back to Harman’s discussion. Moral observation, as Harman describes it, requires the possession of concepts such as ‘right’ ‘wrong,’ and ‘senseless torture,’ as well as concepts such as ‘cat,’ and ‘gasoline.’ Thus, Harman understands moral observation strictly on the model of ‘seeing that.’ That is, perception in this sense involves seeing that some proposition is true. The current discussion of emotions, at least, as I am utilizing Prinz’s account of emotions, is intended to discredit Harman’s view about all cases observation in the practical domain. While it is true that at least in some cases, practical observation involves seeing that some proposition is true, at least as it involves a perception of a change in a person’s well-being, our observations do not fit this model. Certainly, these reactions cannot be fully determined by the concepts one possesses

⁴² The term ‘minimally conceptually demanding’ stems from Hawkins (2000), chapter 1, section 1.4.

since they occur when a person's ordinary way of responding fall short (or in cases in which she does not have a fully developed sense of how to respond). Perhaps they involve concepts in their emerging sense, that is, as they are taking shape in a person's life. But even here this should not mean that what one comes to believe is determined by the concepts emerging. As noted above, one might reject the appearances, and as well, further experience may affect the shape these concepts take, and the uses to which they are later put. Thus, my claim is that similar to ordinary perception, experience can lead one to form genuinely new beliefs about what matters, and what response is appropriate to various objects—including other people—and events. That is, our initial practical responses play a role in practical development by helping us to see differently, and possibly, playing a role in bootstrapping a person into new 'ways of seeing.'

Practical Experience as the Experience of Fittingness

Emotions are one well-known model for practical experience. Positive emotions such as moral admiration along with negative emotions such as outrage, moral indignation, and moral disapproval are thought to be paradigm instances of (specifically) moral experience. More broadly, however, practical experience does not always have the feel of an emotion even though it shares some of its phenomenology. Typically, when we think about practical experience in terms of emotions we are thinking about a person's immediate sense of whether particular actions or objects fall under a certain thick ethical concept, or whether it is an instance of the outrageous, the kind, the pitiful, the sleazy, the generous, etc., and only

derivatively of whether an action is right or wrong, or an object is good or bad.⁴³ From the individual's perspective, practical experience varies in its phenomenology. At one end is the case in which the emotion's object seems highly identifiable, and the emotion seems transparent, or easily identified to the individual. This is not to say that the individual cannot be wrong about her emotions or their objects. It is a point about the phenomenology of emotions. A person who is outraged over the children's actions in Harman's example can fairly easily identify her feelings as outrage over the children's actions of burning a cat.

At the other end of the spectrum of practical experience are reactions that are vague in their phenomenology. Here we speak not of outrage, anger, love, envy, fear, or some other specific emotion, but speak more vaguely of a feeling that we should go this way or that, a sense of the general direction to be taken or experience some response to the objects of our attention as making sense, on the one hand, or a vague feeling of disconnectedness that arises as a response to the objects, events, and people one encounters or with whom one interacts, on the other hand. A certain response—attitude or action—feels right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate, or seems right or wrong to the individual in these cases, though she can often say little about why it would be right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate. The individual may speak of a gut feeling or instinct about what to do, or not to do. For the agent, a particular response makes sense or fits given the circumstances, and in becoming aware of her immediate evaluative perspective, she is most immediately aware of a change or development in the appropriateness (or inappropriateness) of certain responses towards various objects, events, or actions she might take. For example, a person might experience a gut feeling about a new acquaintance, and something about her may not “add up” or “feel

⁴³ In “Emotion and Moral Judgment,” Linda Zagzebski discusses the role emotions play in learning thick ethical concepts as well as their role in our forming judgments about the rightness and wrongness of certain actions. I discuss her views in some detail in chapter 2.

right”. Or one might say that she doesn’t know why, but a certain action “feels right” or “does not feel right.” Although on a continuum with other emotional responses to various objects and events, the language of particular emotions does not quite capture the phenomenology of this experience.

This sort of experience has gotten some attention in recent literature as an experience of good or bad, right or wrong. Although the exact nature of specific experiences may vary somewhat, some philosophers have attempted to capture this experience under one label. Following intuitionists such as Samuel Clarke, and theorists such as Brentano, as well as contemporary theorists such as William Tolhurst, I call this experience a *fittingness experience*, or in other cases, an *unfittingness experience*.⁴⁴ It is not an irreducibly moral experience, but concerns any experience in which certain responses or actions seem fitting, appropriate, or right, or unfitting, inappropriate or wrong to the person who undergoes the experience. It is directed at the immediate objects of attention, and it is not first and foremost an experience guided by an individual’s background psychology. Rather, this sort of experience occurs in cases in which an individual does not have a prior sense of how to respond to the objects of her attention, or in the circumstances in which she finds herself. It is precisely because she does not have a prior sense of how to respond that her actions or

⁴⁴ I am not the first to use this phrase. In “On the Epistemic Value of Moral Experience,” William Tolhurst uses this phrase to refer to the experience of value. See his (1990), p. 78. Although Tolhurst does not refer to Samuel Clarke specifically, and while I do not defend intuitionism, my use of this term was first inspired by Samuel Clarke. His discussion is influenced by John McDowell’s discussion as well as Maurice Mandelbaum’s and Brentano’s. In particular, Brentano holds that we experience some instances of love and hate as being correct. As noted, my own use of the term stems from reading the intuitionist Samuel Clarke’s discussion of fitness relations. My view is not the same as his in that I do not take these experiences to be experiences of independently existing fitness relations (see below). But Clarke’s view does capture something about the phenomenology of our experiences as practical agents. A better model for the insight intuitionists talk about is perceptual experience since it captures the structure of our experience, and better explains the authority granted to our evaluative experiences. Finally, in *The Metaphysics of Value*, Jennifer Hawkins discusses the experience of goodness as an evaluative impression, and desires are, on her view, perceptions of desirability. Her view has been helpful in developing mine here, although I do not discuss the experience of goodness, nor is my view that these experiences are observations of value.

efforts may be stymied or frustrated that her instincts kick in to help her successfully navigate her circumstances. These experiences play a role in an individual's emerging sense of what it would be appropriate to do or feel in the circumstances in which she finds herself.

Though recent philosophers have attempted to discuss this sort of experience separately from emotions, Brentano tied this experience to the experience of some emotions. According to Brentano, we sometimes experience our feelings as correct, for example, one might experience his love for his spouse as correct. In other cases, Brentano observes, one does not experience one's emotions as correct. We love people whom we believe we shouldn't love, and our love is not experienced as correct. I resent my colleague's promotion, though I do not experience my resentment as correct because I believe she deserved it. For Brentano, the experience of correctness has epistemic import. That is, the experience of correctness is evidence that the object of our feelings has the evaluative properties it seems to have. What we love is good, for example, just in case we experience our love as correct.⁴⁵

Now, I take it that when our emotions do not conflict with our beliefs, we experience our responses as correct, or at least, we do in some cases. But we can experience an action or attitude as correct without its being the correct action to take or the correct attitude towards something. For example, as a parent gazes at her child's tiny fingers and toes or the child's reactions to the parent's face, feelings of love may be stirred. Surely the parent's response to her child is, from her perspective, a response to the child's lovable (or good) qualities. But here it is the fact that one's feelings aren't in conflict with one's beliefs that explains why they are immediately experienced as appropriate in the circumstances. Other factors may

⁴⁵ Brentano, "On the Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong," in Robert Solomon, *What is an Emotion?*, 2nd edition, pp. 161 – 169. See also, Cheshire Calhoun and Robert Solomon, *What is an Emotion?*, for further discussion of Brentano's views.

play a role as well. Phenomenologically, this experience is likely similar to the phenomenology of Hume's 'calm passions' and what moral sense theorists would call 'intellectual pleasures', for example, aesthetic enjoyment and moral approval. It is here that the line between emotions and the experience of fittingness is blurred. Some feelings may be appropriately described by one person in terms of an emotion such as love, and another as a feeling (or experience) of fittingness or appropriateness. I suspect that the difference lies in whether one's focus is on a person or thing that elicits one's feeling or on the response—action or attitude—appropriate towards that person or thing. Furthermore, if I am right that there is a continuum between a vague feeling about the appropriate direction to take and more distinctly "felt" emotions, then as the line between the two becomes blurred, the same sort of feeling may be differently described by different people, and there may be a mixture of the two for one person.

In discussing the experience of fittingness, it may also seem unclear whether the language of feelings or the language of perception is more accurate, and the two are typically thought to be different types of mental states. In my account, there is no need to make such a distinction, as the same experience may be treated as a feeling in some instances and a state of awarenesses in others.⁴⁶ That is, I do not think fittingness experiences or feelings of fittingness are separate experiences, but the same experience described in different ways. The explanation for the different way in which we describe our experiences may have something to do with temperament and social influences. For example, women are often tutored to be comfortable using the language of feelings, while men are not. Differences in temperament, also, rather than gender may explain the difference in a person's experience.

⁴⁶ Even though feelings have a bodily component, on the view I am developing, they can be states of awareness because they aren't merely sensations. For other attempts to distinguish feelings from sensations, see Millgram 1997, 116, and Martha Nussbaum 2003, 282.

Some people are more comfortable using the language of feelings and some are more comfortable using the language of cognition.⁴⁷

As well, any individual will speak sometimes of feelings and other times of instincts or perceptual awareness. I suspect the difference may have to do with how immediate the connection is between the experience and what a person is motivated to do. Some fittingness experiences influence our views about what responses are appropriate towards a particular object or action, but the experience may not require immediate action. But some do arise in connection with what we are immediately motivated to do. For example, in a particular situation, I may be unsure about how to respond to a crying baby. However, I may say that a particular response to her feels right, for example, picking her up and comforting her may feel right whereas letting her cry in her crib may not. My immediate sense of what to do in the situation in this case has an immediate connection with what I am motivated to do. I pick her up because doing so feels right. In other cases, our immediate practical perspective is indirectly related to what we are motivated to do. For example, suppose that initially I have no reason not to trust my new neighbor, but slowly, or suddenly, I come to see my neighbor in a different way. Perhaps something about my neighbor's actions or attitude strikes me as "off" in some way during an encounter with her. My change in awareness could be the result of one experience, or perhaps, the end result of observing her over time without giving a great deal of focused attention to what I observe. In the latter case, it is (perhaps) after a build up of past experiences that I cannot ignore her actions, or her actions suddenly become salient to me, and my immediate awareness of her shifts. This is not to say that my beliefs

⁴⁷ It should be repeated that fittingness experiences are more akin to perception than cognitive states such as beliefs. I use 'cognition' here because I take perception to be most immediately connected with a person's sense of how things stand in the world, and how one stands—objectively—in relation to her world. Thus, treated as a perceptual state or state of awareness, a fittingness experience is an important source of some cognitive states, i.e. practical beliefs.

determine my response, as I have not “made anything” yet of my past experiences. Rather, they make a certain shift in attitude seem inevitable, appropriate, or perhaps, even demanded, by what I have observed.⁴⁸ In either case, I might tell my husband that something does not seem right about her. In this case, my awareness of her regards a change most immediately in my attitude towards her rather than a change in my immediate sense of how to respond to her. Still, it is a practical shift. My awareness of her affects my dealings with her, and I may vow to keep an eye on her in the future, or I may simply find myself keeping any eye on her regardless of whether I explicitly decide to do so.⁴⁹ Returning to the discussion in the previous section, I want to suggest that fittingness experiences, since they are on a continuum with other emotions, are embodied appraisals. We speak of gut reactions to various objects and events, and I take it that when we speak of a feeling in the pit of the stomach, butterflies, etc., we are not speaking only metaphorically.⁵⁰ We literally gauge the appropriateness or inappropriateness of certain responses towards the various objects and events we encounter, and sometimes guide our actions, via the (seeming) wisdom of our bodies.

Finally, one might ask what such experiences have in common with the more tutored responses that Harman discusses. The two cases can be distinguished, although I take it that

⁴⁸ An analogy with perception in the theoretical domain may be helpful. A scientist may observe something anomalous, and immediately shift her attention to the anomaly, rightly or wrongly deciding that his initial theory must be revised. In other cases, a scientist may regard the anomaly as insignificant, attempting to explain it away, however, she may not be able to explain the anomaly away as the hypothesis that supports her theory may break down more and more over time. Suddenly, her attitude towards her theory shifts, but the shift is preceded by a build up of problems. In either case, the scientist’s current state of awareness is not explained by prior beliefs, as her prior experiences do not amount to believing that there is a problem with the theory. Rather, these experiences make it difficult for her to ignore a problem, and forming a new belief about her theory seems inevitable or demanded.

⁴⁹ In her own discussion of a similar example of fear, Patricia Greenspan points out that insofar as I remain suspicious of my neighbor, my fear will put me on guard against him if only to “prove” to myself that my fear is misguided. It puts pressure on me to keep an eye on her. See her, 1988, 7.

⁵⁰ In “Pleasure in Practical Reasoning,” Elijah Millgram notes that pleasure, which he takes to be a feeling as opposed to a sensation, may involve such sensations, though as he points out, there are no particular sensations connected with all experiences of pleasure. See his (1993), p. 395 – 396. The same is likely true in the case of emotions.

our immediate perceptual experiences play a role in shaping our more tutored responses. To use an earlier example, suppose that something about my neighbor doesn't "add up" or "seem right" to me, though I cannot put my finger on the problem. My feelings are directed at my neighbor, though the problem I have with her is only vaguely defined. I later learn that my instincts about her were correct, as I learn that she has been talking about me behind my back. I now believe that my neighbor is not to be trusted. That is, what I suspected simply becomes a fact of the matter, and I adapt my responses—actions and attitude—appropriately. What I do in response to this knowledge is less determinate. Perhaps I initially decide to limit my interaction with her, but learn that I should avoid her—and (more generally) anyone who acts this way towards me—altogether (cf. Zagzebski 2003, 116). At any rate, as I adjust my responses to deal with my neighbor, I simply see her as untrustworthy or as posing a threat to me or my interests, and I act as I've learned to act in such cases.

Experience and Practical Development in Ann Tyler's *The Accidental Tourist*

Finally, I want to consider a more extended example in order to illustrate the above points about the connection between practical experience and a person's practical views. The example I will use is taken from Anne Tyler's thoughtful novel, *The Accidental Tourist*. This example is different than the example of Forman since it is a story about a change in a person's practical views rather than an actual account of such a change. However, the example provides a nice illustration of the various experiential factors that might play a role in actual changes, and what role they might play. The protagonist in the novel, Macon Leary, is in the process of dealing with his ten-year old son's death, which happened a year before the story begins. At the beginning of the story, his wife, Sarah, leaves him, and Macon is

forced to figure out how to go on without his son or his wife. In the course of the separation, he becomes involved with an eccentric dog trainer, Muriel. On their first meeting, it is apparent that Muriel is interested in Macon, but Macon is not interested in Muriel. He barely takes any interest in the conversation in which she tries to engage him and he notices little about her except for her odd dress and malapropisms, which is one of Macon's bigger pet peeves. After his dog bites several people, Macon takes Muriel up on her offer to train the dog. Slowly, Macon finds himself becoming involved with Muriel in spite of his desire not to get involved with her. From what we glean of Macon's inner life, his preference is to get back together with Sarah. Even while living with Muriel, he continues to think about Sarah, and eventually, goes back to her. At one point, Sarah asks Macon to come home, and he finds himself driving back to their house even as he is supposed to be going back to Muriel's apartment. However, at the end of the story, Macon decides to go back to Muriel. One of the factors that influences his decision is his belief that he and Sarah no longer belong together, which is based in his experiences over the course of the novel.

Upon his initial meetings with Muriel, there was no reason to think that Macon was disposed to be attracted to her, much less to get involved with her. She is quite obviously interested in him, but Macon resists her overtures, and even seems a bit turned off by her infelicitous use of certain words in the English language. In one scene, for example, Muriel says that she is willing to work with Macon's dog, Edward, who bites, as dogs that bite are her 'speciality.' "Specialty," Macon corrects her. "Webster's prefers specialty." Given her peculiar mannerisms and offbeat clothing, she is, at best, peculiar, in Macon's conformist eyes.

After employing Muriel as a dog trainer, Macon and Muriel spend quite a bit of time together. While his time spent with her seems to soften his attitude towards her a bit, he does not seem to have any more of a desire to go out with her than he did initially. She asks him to dinner several times, and he finally accepts. However, as the day approaches, Macon writes a letter to Muriel explaining why he cannot come over for dinner. When he goes to her house to leave the letter in her mailbox, she greets him at the door. After stumbling around for the right words to explain his situation to her, she invites him in. He spends the night at her house, and slowly begins to move in with her. While it is likely that Macon has some interest in Muriel at the point in the novel at which they become involved, it is also the case that Macon is drifting through his life without having a strong sense of what he wants. He still wants Sarah, and he still does not seem to have a strong desire to be with Muriel. Rather, it is unclear whether she is a temporary distraction for him or if he is going to make a long term commitment to her. It is only through his experiences with Muriel, as well as Sarah when he returns to her, that the direction his life should take begins to take shape.

Around the middle of the novel, there are several passages which suggest that Macon's attitude towards being with Muriel is beginning to change. First, in one passage, Macon wakes up late only to find Muriel, her son Alexander, her sister Claire, and a neighbor milling around the kitchen making pancakes on a particularly snowy morning. Although Macon thrives on quiet and order, Macon seems to enjoy the activity and commotion in Muriel's kitchen on this particular morning. Macon's thoughts about the scene he enters into are not articulated, but one might say that he enjoys the snowy morning banter and the activity in the kitchen, which is a marked difference from the order and quiet of his life with his wife and his own siblings with whom he lives for a short while after Sarah leaves him.

The moment is interrupted when Macon's brother, Charles, comes to the door with his dour attitude to pick up Macon. While together in the car, Charles bombards Macon with questions about "that person, Muriel" and how "her people" must think Macon is a real "catch" for her. Macon becomes irritated by his brother, and it becomes apparent that Macon is seeing the good in her world in a way he did not earlier in the story. After getting out of his brother's car back at Muriel's, Macon is relieved:

Freedom! Sunlight glinting off blinding white drifts, and children riding sleds... Throngs of hopeful boys with shovels. And then Muriel's house with its walk still deep in snow, its small rooms smelling of pancakes, its cozy mix of women lounging about in the kitchen. They were drinking cocoa now. Bernice was braiding Claire's hair. Alexander was painting a picture. (Tyler, 251).

One can imagine Macon earlier in the kitchen and now immersed in this situation, simply experiencing the goodness of the moment. We can imagine that Macon would never have recognized these things as being desirable prior to his experiences with Muriel. In fact, Macon seems especially appreciative of his new surroundings, in part, because they occurred against the background of the oppressiveness he felt while being subjected to Charles's interrogation earlier in the day (among other things that occur earlier).

There are other passages which are also suggestive of the role experience plays in Macon's decision. In spite of not wanting to get involved with Muriel's son, he seems to take some satisfaction in taking care of him, and providing him with a much needed male role model. As well, after moving in with Muriel, Macon falls into a routine. He writes in the morning, and after lunch putters around the house, trying to get things into order. Macon finds satisfaction in getting Muriel's house in order:

There was so much that needed fixing!...He whistled while he probed the depth of a crack. He hummed as he toured the basement, shaking his head in disarray. Upstairs he found a three-legged bureau leaning

on a can of tomatoes, and he told [his dog] Edward, 'Scandalous!' in a tone of satisfaction (Tyler, 235).

Passages like these suggest that Macon's experiences while living with Muriel belie his initial beliefs about her. Some of the moments that play a role in prompting this shift are better described as (broadly) emotional experiences, for example, the satisfaction he experiences in helping Muriel to get organized. Other passages suggest a subtler role for experience, for example, Macon's simply taking in the moment when he enters Muriel's busy kitchen.

Perhaps one will already object at this point that Macon's experiences played a causal role in his change in attitude towards Muriel, but there is no reason thus far to believe that the states that explain the shift are responsive to objective features of the circumstances in which Macon finds himself. The shift can be explained in terms of how Macon is disposed to respond to certain stimuli, and his experiences with Muriel are merely causing him to respond as he is disposed to respond to people such as her.

First, if Macon is disposed to respond to Muriel in this way, there is little or no evidence of this at the beginning of the novel. It is only as he spends more time with her that he is capable of envisioning any sort of deeper relationship with her. The view that our evaluative beliefs are a projection of our feelings is supposed to be an empirically based account of human psychology. One (say) observes that practical judgments are capable of motivating action, observes that only feeling motivate, and concludes that our practical judgments must be based in our (rationally) arbitrary feelings. Or, having seen enough cases in which a person's background beliefs influences her experiences, one concludes that this is the best explanation for our (seeming) observations of objective evaluate features. An account that is empirically driven should be amenable to evidence that supports a different

explanation. Perhaps in some cases, a disposition will be evident as one observes someone over time, and seeming changes in a person's practical views aren't the changes they seem to be, after all. But there is no reason, in principle, to hold that a disposition, perhaps one that conflicts with other dispositions a person has exercised given the bulk of their experiences, was there all along. This is true especially in cases in which changes in a person's practical views could not have been fully predicted given all that we knew about the person at a given time, or in which we have evidence which suggests a different (and better) explanation.⁵¹

Second, I would not argue that the moments described above constitute shifts in Macon's more stable practical views. It might be more appropriate to claim that their more immediate role is to help him envision the possibility of a different sort of life, a reasonably good (if not a perfectly happy one) is still possible even after his son's death and his separation from his wife. Macon's life does not take a permanent shift until the end of the novel when he decides to go back to Muriel. Thus, it would be more accurate to say that the above experiences play a role in his decision to go back to her, not that they determine what he will do.⁵²

⁵¹ As Elijah Millgram points out in "Internal and External Reasons," changes in a person's subjective motivational psychology may have their "roots" in a person's current motivational psychology, thus not just anyone can be brought around to believe anything regardless of what he thought before. Still, the fact that such changes are rooted in one's subjective motivational psychology does not mean they are fully determined by it. See his (1996), p. 211. Thus, even if one could give a rough explanation of how Macon would react if he underwent various experiences, then had to decide between Sarah and Muriel, it would still only be a rough explanation. Unless they could account for the twists and turns Macon's thoughts might take between time 1 and time x, they could not fully predict how he actually would react given such and such experiences. The explanation would likely hinge as much on their assessment of how a person would likely, or perhaps 'ought' to, react, in such a situation, as it would hinge on how Macon would react. Could this person fully predict the relative importance Macon placed on his various experiences in coming to a decision? It is likely that they could not.

⁵² Cora Diamond makes a similar point in interpreting Wittgenstein's views about the connection between experience and subsequent thought. She says, [Wittgenstein] implies that this relation between experience and what it leads to is not as it were a mere arbitrary causal given: it's not (in the case he mentions) that belief in God is just *what happens* to some people who go through much suffering. The relation between their suffering and what they are thus led to can be imaginatively grasped, its sense can be seen...[Traditional empiricists] can leave room for its being a psychological fact about some people that they *just go* from having experiences of x to beliefs that y" (Diamond, "Ethics and Experience", 9).

Before discussing what happens at the end of the novel, there are several passages worth noting. These passages suggest more concretely a shift in Macon's attitude. After leaving Muriel to go back to Sarah, Macon settles back into their routine. However, he now realizes something is wrong with their life together, and it is here that we really begin to see the connection between Macon's experiences and the shift in his practical views:

Making love to Sarah was comfortable and soothing. After all their years together, her body was so well known to him that he couldn't always tell the difference between what he was feeling and what she was feeling. But wasn't it sad that they hadn't the slightest uneasiness about anyone's walking in on them? They were so alone. He nestled his face in her warm, dusty neck and wondered if she shared that feeling as well—if she sensed all the empty air in the house. But he would never ask (Tyler, 320).

There are two points worth mentioning in the above passage. First, Macon's experience is more akin to a perceptual state than a belief-like state. As his mental state is described, he senses emptiness between them. The experience as it is described is similar to how I described the experience of fittingness. Prior to this episode, Macon had longed for the familiarity of Sarah and the comfort he found in their shared history. These aspects of their relationship were important to him, and it might be said, they were part of his conception of a good relationship, or at least, what made their relationship good. But in spite of how well they know each other, they no longer seem to fit each other. Second, Macon's experience seems to him to be open for Sarah to recognize. There is objective content to the experience, at least from Macon's perspective, which is there to be perceived by others, if it is there to be perceived at all. For this reason, it cannot be characterized as a mere sensation of pain with no intentional content. Nor is it properly characterized as a mere preference for leaving Sarah. In fact, Macon's experience does not dispose him to leave Sarah. From what we glean of Macon, he wants things to work with Sarah, even after this event. It is only later

that Macon assesses the importance of this experience in deciding what he should do, or at least, we can so imagine that experiences such as this one play a role in his ultimate decision to go back to Muriel. That is, his immediate experience doesn't lead him to believe that he and Sarah should break up. But his immediate evaluative perspective is shifting as he sees the emptiness of his life with Sarah. It is only later that Macon makes something of his immediate experience, as he undergoes a cognitive change through deliberation.

It is only as the story unfolds that we get glimpses of the role Macon's experiences over the course of the novel play in his developing and more stable practical views. As Macon is packing his belongings to go back to Sarah, Muriel asks him if his leaving means he could just use a person up and move on. Later, after being with Sarah and thinking back to the conversation:

[Macon] began to believe that people could, in fact, be used up—could use each other up, could be of no further help to each other and maybe even do harm to each other. He began to think that who you are when you're with somebody may matter more than whether you love her (Tyler, 317).

Of course, now he was speaking of Sarah. But again, Macon's experiences provide him with seeming objective lessons: he was beginning to see that people can use each other up and cannot be of any help to each other anymore.

At the end of the story, Macon reflects on his relationship with both women while laid up in Paris due to a back injury. It is only now that he realizes that he and Sarah no longer belong together. It is also here that he decides to go back to Muriel. While his reasoning is not fully articulated in the novel, the story is clear in helping us to see how his various experiences play a role in his ultimate decision. Upon telling Sarah that he has decided to go back to Muriel, she asks why he is going back to her since they seem so ill-suited for each other. Macon says, "I just decided, Sarah. I thought about it most of last

night. It wasn't easy. It's not the easy way out, believe me'" (Tyler 1985, 352). And we believe him when he says that it wasn't an easy decision. None of his experiences or his prior motivational psychology seemed to determine what he would do one way or another. And, something is lost in the decision as well. He values the life he had with Sarah, and he still loves her. It is simply that over the course of the novel, he comes to see that he and Sarah no longer belong together. From Macon's perspective, it isn't as though he simply woke up one day and found himself preferring Muriel over Sarah. His responses to Muriel and Sarah, and changes in his practical views with respect to the two women, and relationships, in general, make sense to him in light of his experiences. Furthermore, it is because of this fact that Macon is able to utilize his practical experiences in deliberating about what to do. Liking who he is when he is with Muriel becomes a reason to go back to her, from Macon's perspective, not simply because it feels good or satisfying. It is because feeling good about oneself while in a relationship comes to have normative weight, for Macon: he learns through experience that who one is while in a relationship matters more than whether one loves the person.

How Do Reasons Grow out of Experience?

Suppose we were to lift the conceptual veil from our practical beliefs in order to reveal the real source of our belief that there are objective values or objective reasons for action, as the projectivist account of values suggests we can do. Far from experiencing a feeling of clarity, we might experience something different. Consider what happens when a person comes to regard herself as having no reason for a particular practical belief, or she finds reasons for thinking her belief is misguided. If she comes to believe that there are no

reasons for acting on it, she will cease being motivated to act on it, or at least, cease regarding her beliefs as ‘to be acted upon’ even if she cannot help but give into the urge to act on them.⁵³ Further, if one came to believe that there are no reasons for any of her desires or preferences, far from experiencing a moment of clarity, there is a phenomenology associated with the seeming insight that there are no objective values or reasons for action. One who has this experience, however momentarily, experiences dread, anxiety, even a physical feeling of turmoil. One’s ordinary activities seem (more or less) meaningless, and even if one is able to carry on with one’s everyday activities, one’s world is seemingly colorless. Thus, far from being an ordinary aspect of our practical lives, this is an extraordinary, disorienting, and perhaps, life altering experience, which affects a person’s motivational structure as well.⁵⁴

⁵³ In chapter 2 of *Practical Induction*, Elijah Millgram argues that if instrumentalism is correct, then one should be able to desire at will, and one can desire at will if one can desire by pill, that is, by taking a pill which will induce a desire. For example, one wants to be an automobile salesperson and since one realizes that one will make more money in this profession if one is enthusiastic about the cars one is selling, something one currently cares little about, one might be motivated to take a pill which will induce one with the requisite enthusiasm. However, Millgram argues, if the economy takes a turn for the worse and one is laid off from one’s job, one’s desire won’t serve its original aim. One might feel enthusiastic about owning a certain car, but if one realizes that one only has the desire because one took a pill, one is unlikely to continue desiring the car. He says, “I would be crazy to act on these ‘desires’ now. Perhaps these thoughts will suffice fully to undo the effects of the pill. Or perhaps there will be residual effects that I shall resolutely ignore. In any case, I will politely decline to make the purchase” (p. 17). Now this desire is fairly thin since it really isn’t important to the individual’s conception of his good, even by his own lights. He only has the desire because he took a pill, and he recognizes this fact. A desire one acquires by pill is probably quite thin, so to speak, as the person may not care very much about the end, except as a means to something else. But they could be fairly thick, that is, this sort of end is likely to be fairly firmly entrenched in a person’s system of ends, and it may be an end on which a person’s identity is largely based, as well as her sense of her overall good. For practical purposes, at least, the end is her happiness and her happiness is this end. It isn’t a means to happiness. This sort of end is stable if any end other than those programmed by nature is stable for an agent because giving up the end will likely require giving up a large part of one’s identity. For example, consider a promising athlete who has devoted most of her life thus far to perfecting her talent, but whose legs are severely injured in an accident. If the physical injury is deemed to be most likely permanent, the athlete’s original aim may prove to her to be, for all intents and purposes, out of reach. This may not deter the athlete, at least initially, from pursuing her original goal, as she may make an unrealistic assessment of her ability to overcome her odds. Over time, as frustration mounts, she may finally recognize the futility of pursuing her original goal, and so, revise or change her goals so that they are achievable. Thus, one could come to regard oneself as having good reasons to give up an end she cares very much about achieving.

⁵⁴ In “How Values Adhere to Facts,” Waltraut J. Stein makes this point in criticizing the view that “values...arise out of the feelings or attitudes of the subject and are considered as nothing more than the

Now, there is a very different way in which we sometimes experience the practical judgments we make. Far from seeming rationally arbitrary, we experience them as exhibiting a special authority over our actions or other responses. We do not act on them because we want to or because doing so would get us something else we want. Rather, we experience them as making demands on what we can or should do.⁵⁵ The fact that they are experienced as objective does not determine whether we are committed to the view that there are values in the way that there are ordinary middle-sized dry goods. It could be that

expression of these and as having no status apart from the valuer” (p. 66). She notes, “The rare occasions on which the world appears as value free which I have in mind are the times when one experiences the anxiety over his being-in-the-world itself that so many of the existentialists describe. In this peculiar mood, modern man feels a dread that is actually associated with physical nausea and finds he loses his power to act effectively... The question of why there should be anything at all and not rather nothing becomes most compelling and completely unanswerable” (69). There seems to be at least one written account of the (life altering) effect such a revelation would have on an individual. This is the breakdown John Stuart Mill experienced in the course of his life, which is recounted by Candace Vogler in *John Stuart Mill's Deliberative Landscape*. Mill's problem occurred because the associationist psychology to which he ascribed was connected with a view about practical reasons, namely, the view that all practical reasons are instrumental. On this view, a person can have a reason to take the means to her ends, but she will ultimately come to an end for which there can be no reasons. According to Vogler's discussion, Mill had been in a 'dull state of nerves... when what is pleasure at other times becomes insipid or indifferent'. He finally asked himself whether he would not feel joy or happiness if all his ends were realized, and the answer was 'no'. The end of all action, according to Mill's view, happiness, as the balance of pleasure over pain, couldn't serve as a motivating reason for action. This led Mill to a crisis, and raised many questions about the associationist psychology on which he had been raised. Vogler notes, “What kind of constraints, if any, were there on the ends of human action? Could ends be given any support beyond the arbitrary clinging of feeling to thought? And on what basis could Mill himself find both a new source of motivation and a different account of the way in which ends 'external' to happiness lent a sense of meaning to life?” (Ibid). According to the associationist psychology Mill learned from his father, James Mill, and Jeremy Bentham, people come to care about things through association of ideas with feeling, which are “artificial and casual”, and thus, the ultimate ends individuals pursue are devoid of the influence of reason. While there were arbitrary connections between reason and feeling, there could be no reason for sentiment, and so, no reason for a person's ultimate ends. Mill thought that ordinary people did not demand reasons for their ultimate ends, however, since his intellectual powers had been trained so well, his ends dissolved under critical scrutiny. Again, Vogler says of Mill's crisis, “the trained intellect was prone to reject any accident of personal history as the source of a legitimate and justifiable ground for action, and Mill's intellect had been as thoroughly trained as anyone's. While people with trained intellects tended to require 'reasons to justify their feelings,' Bentham and James Mill had convinced John Stuart that by and large, there was no 'reason for sentiment' (Ibid, 45). Mill did carry on with his ordinary pursuits, but his motivation to do so was drained. She labels the problem Mill had that led to his crisis the 'arbitrariness problem'.

⁵⁵ My views about the phenomenology of practical judgments owes a great deal to Carla Bagnoli's discussion in “Moral Constructivism”. She notes, “we consider our moral judgments important, authoritative, indicative of our moral personality and our moral vision, and in this sense both objective and practical. The action-guidingness of ethical judgments is a byproduct of their being claims that are so authoritative and important that they inform the agent's conception of her possibilities and of her options... [they]... importantly make claims on the kind of agents we are” (p. 131). She uses the phenomenology of ethical judgments to argue for the meta-ethical position that values are a construction of reasons. My aim is the more minimal one of discussing the psychology of making a practical judgment, generally, and more specifically, a moral judgment.

practical judgments are authoritative because they are supported by reasons, thus to say that they are true is to say that there are better reasons for them than other alternatives (cf. Rachels 2006, pp. 44 – 45). Further, we can accept something for little or no reason at all. Thus, the fact that keeping a promise is in my interest could be a reason for doing it, but one cannot treat this as a reason without believing—implicitly or explicitly—that its being in my interest makes it worth pursuing, desirable, or good, etc. (cf. Buss 1999a and 1999b, p. 547; Korsgaard 1997). Thus, one cannot treat it as a reason without thinking there are some facts about what one ought to pursue.

Setting aside the question of whether there are values that we represent in making a practical judgment, the question I am interested in is whether any experiential account of valuing can explain the fact that we experience (at least some) practical judgments, in particular moral judgments, as inescapable.⁵⁶ I do this in chapter 2.

Do We Perceive Value in Experience?

Finally, do we discover values in experience? Many theorists object to the analogy between perception and emotions because, it seems, emotions are largely constructed rather than modes through which we discover anything about the objective evaluative features of our environments. For example, my fear of tall white haired men is largely a construction of my past experiences rather than anything about all tall white haired men. My emotions may seem to pick up on features of certain men that make them threatening, but it is my attitude that drives my interpretation of events. Further, it is dangerous to treat our emotions as authoritative because they can be the source of bias or prejudice, not a basis for constructing

⁵⁶ This point about the phenomenology of moral judgments stems from Bagnoli (2002).

our picture of the world. Similarly, even if an evaluative feature is present, the corresponding emotion may not be appropriate.

There are other reasons for resisting the analogy between emotions and other forms of practical experience with perception in the theoretical domain. For emotions are not appropriate in all cases in which an object or action has the relevant properties. For example, my outrage over X's obnoxious behavior is thought to be inappropriate, even if I am right that X's behavior is rude or obnoxious. But my observation of a relatively stable object seems to be appropriate as long as the object remains the same.⁵⁷ More generally, if emotions were simply observations of value, particular emotions would seem to be appropriate in any and all cases in which objects or circumstances are thought to have certain characteristics. But I take it that we have intuitions about the appropriateness of emotions that are in conflict with this thesis. As Aristotle observed, the appropriateness of an emotion seems to be relative to the individual who experiences it, and to the time, place, and circumstances in which it is experienced. Fear might be appropriate for one individual in the same circumstances in which it (or the same level of intensity) is inappropriate for someone else. And, the same intensity of fear might be appropriate for an individual at one time and place, but not another, after she's had enough experience in a particular type of situation.

In "Sentiment and Value," Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson criticize recent attempts to ground values in the sentiments on the basis that these accounts (thus far) have failed to make sense of the rational aspects of evaluation. They argue that proponents of (what they call) neo-sentimentalism are committed to the "response dependency thesis" or RDT, which states that "to think that X has some evaluative property Φ is to think it

⁵⁷ This objection is from Elijah Millgram. On his own view, pleasure is a judgment of improvement in one's welfare. His objection to comparing perception in the theoretical and the practical domain, as well as his own discussion of pleasure, were very helpful in developing my views here.

appropriate to feel F in response to X” (D’Arms and Jacobsen 2000, p. 729). Their criticism of this thesis is that a person could have good reasons for not feeling F even though X has the relevant property. For example, a person might have prudential reasons not to feel shame even though their actions are shameful. The reason is that feeling shame interferes with the person’s ability to develop certain skills, thus she may have good (prudential) reasons not to feel shamed by her deficiency in being able to perform a particular skill (Ibid, p. 741).

D’Arms and Jacobsen’s argument is based in large part on their analysis of various examples in which an evaluative property is instantiated, yet the emotion is inappropriate for prudential reasons. But some of their examples do not obviously support their thesis in the way they suggest. In one case, they argue that a widow may have good reasons not to grieve the loss of her spouse since doing so would prevent her from taking care of her children in spite of the fact that she has experienced an irrevocable loss. However, it might merely be the case that she ought not indulge in her grief as much as she would like to do so since doing so would prevent her from taking care of her children. In this particular case, if she completely avoids grieving, it might back up on her eventually, and she will be unable to do anything. Grief is a way of taking in appropriately the gravity of a loss, and may ultimately play a role in helping one to adjust to one’s circumstances.⁵⁸ Thus, most of us would not want to say that she should not grieve at all. In the above example, while one may have good reason not to become paralyzed with shame, some shame is likely important since the person might not be motivated to develop her skills if she never felt shamed by her deficiency in them. In their example, Dennis wants to become a philosopher, but his skills are lacking. He makes shameful mistakes, yet they argue that he should not feel shame since shame would prevent him from developing his skills. Now, suppose Dennis is a particularly arrogant

⁵⁸ For an interesting discussion of grief, and its role in adjusting to loss, see Martha Nussbaum (??), chapter 1.

student, and that lately he has been acting obnoxiously in his classes. This attitude may cause Dennis to fail to gauge properly how well he is doing in developing his skills as a philosopher.⁵⁹ That is, he may be ignoring important cues about how well he is doing until he is caught off guard by a pointed remark, and made to feel shameful. In this case, Dennis's skills may suffer if he doesn't heed the lessons of shame. It is likely true that he ought not to indulge in his shame or let it prevent him from further developing his skills, but shame plays an important role in helping us gauge our efforts in relation to certain standards.⁶⁰

D'Arms and Jacobsen acknowledge that the problem is not always our emotions, but that we might have good reasons not to act on them. We might also have good reasons not to mirror the gravity of the situation in our emotions since it prevents us from doing other things. Even so, we might have prudential reasons not to feel an emotion if feeling it gets in the way of accomplishing other things we need to accomplish. And this seems to prevent the analogy with the theoretical case from going through.

The analogy is surely imperfect. However, there is still an analogy with the theoretical domain. For example, a scientist might have good reasons for ignoring counter-evidence to her theory since doing so would prevent her from developing her theory. She realizes that many factors can change the results of an experiment, and so, the hypothesis that supports her theory may seem to be disconfirmed. Yet, since the factors that skew the results may have a hidden explanation compatible with her theory, she may have good (prudential)

⁵⁹ Perhaps one ought to err on the side of confidence, or assessing oneself through rose colored glasses. This is the view of some psychologists, who have found evidence that depressed people make better assessments than their non-depressed counterparts in determining how well they are actually doing, or how much control they actually have over a situation. Still, if one errs to far on the side of confidence—or pride—one is likely to get into trouble as well.

⁶⁰ In "Aristotle on Learning to be Good," Myles Burnyeat point out in discussing Aristotle's views, "shame is the semivirtue of the learner." See his essay in "Essays on Aristotle's Ethics, Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press 1980), 78. For an interesting discussion of the positive role of shame in developing a moral consciousness, see Sarah Buss, "Respect for Persons," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 29, 1999, 517 – 550.

reasons to ignore the anomaly, at least for the time being. Getting caught up in something she “knows” to be an anomaly even if she cannot prove it will distract her from developing her theory.

Without going further into the point, let me simply suggest that emotional assessments provide us only with rough guides regarding the shape our practical lives should take. Certainly emotions can be misguided, and surely the actions that result from our experiences cause us to structure our lives in a way that determines the next “fitting step” or what ends are now an option for us, thus our reasons are likely constructed, at least in part. Even so, at least some experiences of emotions and other practical experiences, for example, the experience of fittingness, provide us with clues that improve our ability to cope with our circumstances by shaping our actions and our ends, and directing us to reasons for action we might otherwise miss. These experiences may reflect past experience, our current ends and goals, and the lessons we have gleaned thus far. However, far from merely informing us about what we value, what we are disposed to value, or what we should do to get what we already want, they may also provide us with genuine insight about what ends to adopt in order that we might better adapt our responses to fit our circumstances.

CHAPTER II

HOW MORAL REASONS GROW

Introduction

A number of philosophers have utilized the emotions in developing accounts of morality. In particular, these philosophers have explained moral judgments and our assessment of moral reasons in terms of emotions, passions, feelings, sentiments, and desires. The attraction to this sort of account is that it readily explains an important aspect of moral beliefs. Unlike theoretical beliefs which mainly aim to describe the world, and only have an indirect link with how we act or what we do about what we perceive, practical beliefs, in particular moral beliefs, affect our responses to the objects, people, and events at which they are directed. As Hume notes in the *Treatise*, “morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions” (Hume 1978, 457). More strongly, at least in the vast majority of cases, accepting a moral judgment is sufficient to give a person some motivation to act as she believes she should, and her motivation to act seems to “spring” directly from her perception of the truth of the moral claim.

Moral judgments also tell us what things are good or bad, which actions are right or wrong, what our obligations are towards other people, and what responses to the objects of our attention are appropriate or inappropriate. Thus, they seem to be states of taking the world, or some aspect of it, to be a certain way. In philosophical terminology, they seem to be cognitive states capable of being assessed as true or false. Combined with the above view that moral judgments are capable of motivating action, it seems that some ways of taking the world to be a certain way are also states which are capable of motivating our responses.

There is a commonly held philosophical account of human psychology which prevents treating moral claims as both motivating and cognitive states in the way that our ordinary experience suggests. Call this the *Standard Philosophical Account of Human Psychology* or SPAHP.⁶¹ According to SPAHP, no state of awareness is also a state that motivates action. Traditionally, this thesis stemmed from the bifurcation between reason and passion. In contemporary discussions, the thought that cognitive and motivating mental states are different types of mental states often falls under the label, ‘belief/desire psychology.’ Now, the thesis does not imply that cognitive and motivating mental states cannot causally interact to produce other states, or that they cannot be combined in one mental state via mechanisms of association. The point is that there is no conceptual tie between the two.

How does one come to the view that cognitive states alone cannot motivate action? One way is to recognize the fact that cognitive states do not always motivate action. For example, the belief that there is no milk in the refrigerator may motivate me to go to the store to buy some, but sometimes it doesn’t. When does it motivate action? It does so in cases in which I want a glass of milk, or perhaps I need milk as an ingredient in something else I want to make. However, if I am merely taking an inventory of the contents of my refrigerator, or taking note of the fact that there is no milk in it, yet have no desire that I supply my refrigerator with milk, I am likely to remain unmoved by the fact that there is no milk in my refrigerator. The case is similar with moral examples. One is not always motivated to tell the truth or keep a promise simply because one recognizes that one’s action would constitute

⁶¹ This is not to say that only philosophers hold this account of human psychology. Many philosophers working specifically in the area of emotions do not hold this view. However, those working in the area of practical reasoning, whose main interest is in the status of practical reasons extracted from emotions and other affective states such as desires, commonly hold this view. Thus, I refer to it as a philosophical account of human psychology in this paper.

an act of lying or promise breaking. Presumably, then, one tells the truth or keeps one's promises (or refrains from lying and promise breaking) because one desires to do so. Or again, one's belief that another person needs help does not always motivate one to act. It does so in some cases, though, such as cases in which one is moved by pity to help a stranger.

Given philosophers' interest in the connection between morality and what we are motivated to do, many theorists have focused on the emotions and other conative states in giving an account of moral judgments.⁶² Given SPAHP, the challenge of such accounts is to

⁶² This is not to say that this is the only alternative one can take. Some philosophers have defended the view that moral judgments are cognitive claims, and have attempted to explain how they succeed in motivating action. Aside from error theory, the thesis that moral judgments are cognitive claims is typically defended in connection with the metaphysical thesis that there are independently existing values which we aim to represent in making a moral judgment. If so, then our capacity to represent values and our desire to do the right thing are separate capacities. One might succeed in being rational insofar as one is capable of representing values, yet exhibit no desire to act on the moral judgments one makes. This does not ring true of our ordinary experience of morality. One solution to problems created by combining SPAHP with a cognitivist account of moral judgments is to suggest that, ordinarily speaking, we exhibit a desire to do the right thing. This desire is transmitted to the particular judgments we make. So, for example, if I judge that I ought to keep my promise to help out a friend, I ordinarily exhibit a desire to do so. This is because I believe, perhaps implicitly, that keeping one's promises is the right thing to do, and since this is a particular act of promise keeping, it is right to keep this promise. But there are problems with this solution. If desires and other motivational states are non-cognitive states, why should we expect them to "obey" inferential norms that we ordinarily apply to cognitive states? And if most individuals typically exhibit a desire to do the right thing, it is unclear that they sometimes lack the motivation to do what they believe to be right. Why is it that this desire is typically, but not always, responsive to the sincere judgments a person makes? We need an explanation for the norms governing the connection between judgment and motivation, but this is just what we are told we cannot have since cognitive states and motivating states are distinct types of mental states. It would be just as likely that there is no pattern to our motivations; motivation to act as we judge we should act would be haphazardly distributed. In "Emotion and Moral Judgment," Linda Zagzebski makes a similar point. As she notes, moral apathy, in which a person makes a moral judgment but has no motivation to act on her judgment is puzzling, yet cognitivists who accept SPAHP cannot explain why it is puzzling. See her (2003), p. 106.

Furthermore, an individual who is always and only motivated by the judgments she makes because she has a separate desire to do the right thing is far from the ordinary person we encounter. Most of us are motivated appropriately in some areas, but struggle in others. In those areas in which we struggle, we might act as we do because, we tell ourselves, it is the right thing to do. But we often do so in the hopes that acting might help us "see" or "feel" what we intellectually believe. Our motivational structures seem complex, even to ourselves, and this is what makes us complicated, concerned, and perhaps, deep, albeit, imperfect and fallible, moral agents. But an individual who is motivated by only one desire, the desire to do the right thing, is at best, a shallow individual, who doesn't really seem to understand the depth of morality. At worst, an individual who professes to care always and only about the needs and rights of those she helps or those to whom she obligates herself stands out does not seem to be like the rest of us. Scratch the surface, we suspect, and what she really cares about is being perceived to care about others.

explain why we treat moral judgments as categorical claims which are supported by reasons independent of our desires and other conative states. In this chapter, I discuss problems with the most widely held responses to this challenge, and defend a different account of the connection between moral judgments and emotions. On my view, the phenomenology of emotions plays a role in the development of moral reasons from the individual's perspective. And, though our perception of possible reasons for action is prompted by our experience of emotions, which themselves aim to help us improve our relations with our environment, the structure of emotions plays a role in our capacity to perceive possible extra-personal reasons for action. Their phenomenology causes us to take the seeming lessons of our experience seriously, and plays a role in our emerging beliefs about the role of others in determining what we have a reason to do.

Are Moral Judgments Non-Cognitive Claims?

As noted above, morality is connected with what we are motivated to do. When we are concerned about a friend's plight or feel a sense of obligation towards someone we perceive to be in a pitiful, harmful, or bad situation, our concern, pity, and perception of the badness of the situation move us to act. We perceive these factors as reasons for responding in a particular way, and we typically exhibit some motivation to act as we think we should. If SPAHP is true, it would seem that an account which bases moral judgments in our emotions, sentiments, passions, or (other directed) desires, offers the best explanation of the motivating force of moral judgments. These mental states cause us to take an interest in

things, and provide us with concerns that motivate us to respond to others in particular ways.⁶³

On the simplest sort of view, moral judgments are non-cognitive claims which describe or express our immediate feelings—pleasures or pains, desires, or other motivational states—towards various objects. The problem with this sort of account is that it is certainly possible to make a moral judgment yet fail to exhibit any motivation to act on it (cf. Zagzebski 2003, p. 106; cf. D’Arms and Jacobsen 2000, p. 726). How might this occur? Consider a woman who has absorbed the precepts of her community or society to such an extent that she truly believes what she has been taught, yet she is so exhausted from trying to live up to the expectations inherent in her society’s beliefs, that she simply lacks any desire to act as she believes she should. There seems to be no reason to deny that such a case could occur, that is, that a person could truly believe what she professes to believe even if we think her belief is defective in some way. This fact is further bolstered by the possibility that someone might feel the remorse or guilt of a weak-willed person for not wanting to try any longer to act as she believes she should. Of course, not all cases will fit exactly this model, as there are any number of reasons why someone might form a moral judgment yet fail to have any motivation to act on it.⁶⁴

There are two further objections to the idea that moral judgments are based in a person’s feelings of approval and disapproval. Simple subjectivism, according to which moral judgments are descriptions of a person’s attitudes cannot make sense of moral

⁶³ My reference to the things that concern us stems from Simon Blackburn’s discussion of a person’s “real concerns” in his (1999), p. 270 – 277. According to his discussion, “To have a concern is to be moved by a thought. Some aspects of things engages our motivations and becomes an aspect that weighs with us or that matters to us...Aspects of things weigh with us when we are deciding what to do, obviously. They can also weigh with us by influencing attitudes, such as admiration or contempt, or emotions such as fear or hope” (Ibid, 276).

⁶⁴ In “Emotion and Moral Judgment,” Linda Zagzebski cites moral apathy as a case that non-cognitivists cannot explain.

disagreement.⁶⁵ On this view, the claim, “X is wrong” means “I disapprove of X,” and the claim “X is morally permissible” means “I approve of X.” When we engage in dispute, we are merely reporting our beliefs, and once we’ve told each other how we feel about a particular action, there is nothing more to talk about (Rachels 2007, p. 38; D’Arms and Jacobsen 2000, pp. 724 – 725). Furthermore, if we speak sincerely, we are both correct, thus there is nothing to be wrong about in the realm of morality (Rachels 2007, p. 38). But surely this is a problematic account of the psychology of making a moral judgment. We engage in debate in our moral views, provide reasons for our beliefs, and few of us regard ourselves to be infallible with respect to issues about right and wrong (Ibid).

Emotivism, according to which moral judgments express a person’s attitude towards various objects and actions, bypasses the above objection, though it deflates what we might have in mind when we engage in moral dispute. According to this view, when we say that ‘X is wrong’ or ‘X is morally permissible,’ we are expressing our attitudes towards various objects and actions rather than merely reporting them, and moral dispute is persuasive. If I say ‘X is right’ and you say ‘X is wrong,’ then we are having a disagreement in attitudes rather than about attitudes, and in so doing, we are attempting to persuade each other to adopt certain policies or act in certain ways. The terms ‘true’ and ‘false’ do not apply to moral judgments in this case because we aren’t reporting our attitudes—which we can report correctly or incorrectly—so there isn’t anything to be right or wrong about. Still, we do consider ourselves to sometimes be right in our attitudes, and sometimes we realize we are wrong. We engage in dispute, giving and accepting reasons for particular moral views, and

⁶⁵ The phrase ‘simple subjectivism’ stems from Rachels’ discussion in *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (2007). D’Arms and Jacobsen (2000) use this phrase as well to describe the view.

emotivism cannot explain our practices. Moral debate is nothing more than attempting to persuade someone to act as we want them to act.

One might reply to the above objections by invoking our tendency to project our feelings onto their objects. There are problems with this explanation of our ordinary practices. Consider the emotivist view that moral disagreement amounts to little more than attempts to persuade others to act as we want them to act. Certainly we make a distinction between “mere” persuasion and discourse aimed at “getting things right,” or at least, “getting things better.” Even though we have desires that the world be a certain way, we are also sensitive to our tendencies to impose our views on others, and we sometimes engage in discourse with the aim of sorting out the two. Moreover, it is often the case that once we realize that the things that concern us are just that, our subjective concerns, we cease attempting to win others over to our position. Similar to (mere) taste in which we might report our likes and dislikes to each others, but do not necessarily try to convince each other of the rational superiority of our individual taste, if we became aware that all of our evaluative beliefs were merely matters of individual taste or preference, surely our ordinary practices would be affected. Especially in cases in which we have to struggle, we look for ways to make sense of our pursuits, and this would be lacking if there were no point to our pursuits. Moments in which there seems to be no point to our pursuits may be rare, but there is a phenomenology characteristic of such moments that is incompatible with our ordinary experience of morality (cf. Stein 1969; Vogler 2001). Even if we’re wrong in thinking that there is a difference between various modes of moral discourse, these views seem inadequate to explain the distinctions we make from the first person perspective.

Morality and the Sentiments

A number of theorists have offered accounts of morality in the spirit of SPAHP, which ground morality in the sentiments, yet which do not succeed in providing a richer explanation of our deeper moral views. Consider my focus on practical development. We typically perceive changes in our practical views to be improvements in our grip on what matters. For example, Macon learns over the course of the novel that what matters in relationships isn't simply how much one loves someone, but how one feels when one is with that person. This seems to Macon, at least, to be more than a "mere" change in his subjective attitudes about relationships; it is an improvement in his conception of what really matters in a relationship. Can one make sense of this aspect of our moral lives, while maintaining the view that moral judgments are not products of reason? In his popular book, *Think*, Simon Blackburn attempts to explain the connection between a person's subjective interests or concerns, and her perception of practical reasons. He says, "When we have concerns, the aspects of things to which we are sensitive can be described as our *reasons* for choosing one thing or another, or feeling some attitude or emotion" (Blackburn 1999, p. 276). My concern for (say) the overpopulation of homeless cats prompts me to become outraged at how little other people care about the emaciated cats in their neighborhood, and perhaps, to act on behalf of the cats. I may be moved by pity at the sight of a particular starving cat, and try to help her, thus taking an interest in this cat's well being. Aspects of the cat weigh with me as reasons, given my concern about their well-being. Thus, far from being simple feelings of approval and disapproval, we can develop an account of emotions which explains how reasons, in general, and moral reasons, in particular, grow out of our experience.

According to Blackburn's projectivism, values are the product of our sentiments. There are several reasons for embracing projectivism, including its ability to explain our motivation to act. Blackburn takes it that his view can "protect the appearance of morality: to urge that there is no error in our ordinary thought and our ordinary commitments and passions. This enterprise will interest a projectivist most, because it defends him against the most forceful attack he faces, which is that he cannot accommodate the rich phenomena of the moral life" (Blackburn 1993, p. 158). Rather than speak of the difference between our subjective attitudes and objective features that call for a certain response to explain this aspect of morality, Blackburn distinguishes between appropriate and inappropriate patterns of objectification. These are distinguished in terms of (say) admirable and deplorable tendencies to evaluate things, our tendency to make hasty judgments or to be biased in our judgment. According to Blackburn, "My attitudes ought to be formed from qualities I admire—the proper use of knowledge, the real capacity for sympathy, and so on. If they are not, and if the use of those capacities and the avoidance of the inferior determinants of opinion would lead me to change, then the resulting attitudes would not be only different, but better" (Ibid, p. 79).

On such a view, moral discourse is in the space of reasons. If I want to convince someone to join my cause of helping the homeless cats, I can do so by pointing out aspects of the situation that demand a better response from community members. My opponents can also point out features of the situation that call for a different response than the one I am advocating. Now, my opinions may be the result of much investigation about the situation, and in attempting to convince others of my position, I point out features of the situation that I think should weigh with them as reasons. As a projectivist, I realize that they aren't reasons

for just anyone. That is, they aren't reasons for those who do not already have concerns about homeless cats, or who do not take an interest in their plight. However, these will be reasons for anyone who is, like me, concerned to form their attitudes based on their more admirable qualities, or perhaps, their tendencies towards altruism.

While it is the case that we can reflect on improvements in our ability to (say) maintain peace of mind when everything around us is falling to pieces, and while we can reflectively admire our own ability to turn the other cheek in the face of others' transgressions towards us, we can do so without thinking that these changes constitute rational improvements in our conception of what matters rather than merely constituting changes in our ability not to get ruffled. Certainly, this is more likely if I realize that even the judgments I form from qualities I admire are no more (or less) grounded in reasons than any other qualities from which I might form a judgment about what to do.⁶⁶ As noted above, we make distinctions between "mere" persuasion and debate based on objective reasons or evidence, but even Blackburn's refined account cannot explain the difference. When I come to believe that there are moral reasons for helping cats, I do so because I believe that there are reasons for helping the cat that hold independently of my desire, interest, or concern to help homeless cats. My reasons arise because of my sensitivity to the plight of the homeless cats, not the other way around. Indeed, morality often steps in when

⁶⁶ Carla Bagnoli makes this point in discussing Simon Blackburn's account of values. According to Bagnoli, what needs to be explained is the fact that "the agent experiences ethical judgments as normative: they are conceived and experienced as authoritative and as such as to inform one's life in a special way. To take phenomenology at face value is to make the experience of the agent intelligible" (Bagnoli 2002, p. 126). Blackburn argues that while some of our tendencies to judge are defective, and based on prejudice or unexamined traditions, others are the result of admirable qualities, for example, kindness or sympathy, and we can legitimately speak of improvements in our attitudes when we evaluate our tendencies to approve and disapprove of things to be a result of admirable rather than defective tendencies. Furthermore, although moral truths originate in our moral sensibilities, Blackburn argues that they acquire a further reality and autonomy; thus there can be a notion of truth within the sphere of morality. However, as Bagnoli argues against Blackburn, "the issue at stake seems to me to be the authority of values created out of our projected sentiments. Why should one recognize authority of the deliverances of a subjective projection, or even to the productive and creative power of a sensibility?" (Ibid).

our desires conflict with our sense of what we should do, and it is our belief that there are reasons independent of our subjective attitudes that support our actions, and keep us on track when we are tempted to give into our desires.

Furthermore, one's actions may be formed from qualities one admires, but one may still come to believe that one has good reasons for ignoring these qualities in deciding what to do. For example, Jane is sensitive to her students' needs, a quality she admires in a good teacher. She recalls the insensitivity of many of her college instructors, and she does not want to be that sort of person. Thus, she prides herself on being empathetic to her students needs, offering liberal due date policies, revisions on papers and make up exams. While she has succeeded in getting her students to like her, they also take advantage of her. Moreover, she wonders if it would be better for the students if she were stricter, as students are (among other things) spending time on past assignments to the detriment of current assignments. They do not seem adept to make reasonable deadlines for themselves, and their grades are hurting because of it. The students do not see that this is so, as far as Jane can tell. They like the maximally liberal policies in Jane's class. Now, if Jane is not to burn out in her job, and if she is to help them succeed as students, she will have to act in ways inconsistent with the teaching qualities she admires; she will have to be *less* sensitive—at least in her policies—to her students' individual needs and desires. Even if her students do not see that they are better off under her policies, she may come to believe that she has good reasons to revise them for her sake as well as for theirs.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ In "Autonomy Reconsidered," Sarah Buss makes a similar point about the need to accommodate one's general preferences to fit one's circumstances in her discussion of autonomy. What she says there is relevant to my discussion. As she notes, even if it is 'wrong' or 'unfair' that one cannot be the sort of person one wants to be, given one's not too far fetched ideals, one has no choice but to adjust one's expectations to fit the facts. She discusses Aristotle's important distinction between types and tokens, noting that since actions are in the class of particulars, one's preferences to perform particular types of actions is "too general to determine a particular decision to perform a particular action" (Buss 1994, 100). It should be noted, of course, that strictly speaking,

Problems with the Causal Account of Emotions

In order to further illustrate problems with SPAHP as it regards emotions, consider an account of emotions that is amenable to the thesis underlying this account. According to Jerome Shaffer's causal account of emotions, emotions are "[a] complex of physiological processes and sensations caused by certain beliefs and desires" (Shaffer 1983, 161).⁶⁸ He argues that the physiological processes and sensations are causally superfluous to a person's actions, and the knowledge we seem to gain through the experience of an emotion can be explained in terms of a person's beliefs and desires (Shaffer 1983, p. 163). As well, on Shaffer's view, emotions play no role in the acquisition of knowledge. In describing a case of fear, Shaffer says:

I find myself feeling afraid and ask myself what I am afraid of and why. I notice that I am upset and determine that the upset is a result of an unconscious belief that S represents some danger to me. I avoid S and later learn that S would have harmed me if I had not avoided S.... In this case the belief is true and produces useful behavior but often it is not that way. So the fear does not generate knowledge; at best, the fear is merely a *consequence* of prior knowledge (Shaffer 1983, 166).

Shaffer's account of emotions is comparable with Harman's account of practical experience. In Harman's discussion, for example, our general belief that senseless torture is wrong explains our outrage over what they are doing, which is causally connected with our belief that their actions are wrong. According to Shaffer's view, in particular, the experience of outrage itself is superfluous in shaping our belief that what the children are doing is wrong.

Such theories are appealing to some contemporary philosophers and psychologists because they are amenable to contemporary belief/desire psychology, according to which there are two distinct types of mental states, beliefs and (broadly) desires, the former of

one has a choice about whether to adjust one's expectations to fit one's circumstances. But the cost of not making the adjustment is high, as discussed above.

⁶⁸ See, also, Tolhurst (1990) for a discussion and insightful analysis of Shaffer's account of emotions.

which is cognitive, and so, capable of rational assessment, the latter of which isn't capable of rational assessment, except by reference to other desires. However, as it pertains to the emotions, critics of this sort of account often point out that belief/desire psychology is not sufficient to explain emotions.⁶⁹ According to belief/desire psychology, beliefs and desires have different directions of fit. In believing that something is the case, we attempt to make our mental attitude fit the world. Thus, if I believe that there is a blue house at the end of the street, but discover that my belief is wrong, my original belief exhibits a tendency to change. In contrast, if I desire that I have a piece of chocolate cake, then I exhibit a tendency to make the world such that it includes me (now) eating a piece of chocolate cake. Emotions seem to fit the category of desires in belief/desire psychology, as the term 'desire' is broadly used to encompass any mental state that has motivational content. Yet, emotions do not fit neatly into this category because we do not, strictly speaking, always want the world to match our emotions. If I fear something, it seems to me to present some danger or threat to me, yet I do not desire that the world match the emotion. I hope I am wrong about the feared object, and that my fear is mistaken. Of course, fear may give rise to a desire to get away from the feared object, but this desire arises because I perceive the world to be threatening in some way as a result of feeling fear.

This criticism sidesteps the issue of whether beliefs are necessary for experiencing an emotion, and what role a person's background psychology plays in the experience of emotions. While I do not deny that a person's beliefs may play a role in causing certain emotions, it isn't clear that emotions always require that a person hold certain beliefs in order to experience an emotion. Even if we grant that there are no complications in ascribing an

⁶⁹ In *Upheaval of Thoughts*, Martha Nussbaum criticizes accounts of emotions which are based on belief/desire psychology. See her, 48.

unconscious belief about S in the example Shaffer gives, there are other cases in which we would have no reason to ascribe such a belief to a person. Forman's story, which was discussed in chapter 1, plausibly provides such an example. There was no reason to think that Forman was disposed to take satisfaction in treating people kindly, especially those who were uncivil towards her. Furthermore, it is unlikely that she believed that civility was important prior to her experiences on the island, as it would be difficult to explain why her own responses came as such a surprise to her, and why her experience on the island led her to conduct an experiment in civility. Similarly, Forman's case also provides reasons for thinking that the experience of an emotion may also represent a change in attitude towards an object or event rather than being directed by one's current underlying attitudes, beliefs, or dispositions to respond in certain ways. The outcome of Forman's story was a change in beliefs about how one should treat others. And it seemed to be this change in belief that ultimately led to changes in her way of responding to others. If she had already believed that it was important to treat others in a certain way regardless of how they act, then evidence should be provided to show that she was disposed to act this way.

The causal account also seems inadequate to explain the role emotions often play in motivating appropriate actions. Suppose that S really does mean to harm me in some way, and he was acting suspiciously during our encounter. The theorist who holds that my unconscious beliefs are controlling my responses will have to say that it is merely a coincidence that my emotional reaction happens to fit the facts. And, while this may sometimes be the case, our emotions often play a role in motivating action that enhances a person's ability to cope better in the circumstances in which she finds herself. Fear in dangerous circumstances, for example, better ensures that we will survive. Anger in

circumstances in which one has been demeaned by someone better ensures that one will protect oneself against the offender, and so, go on to fare well in one's circumstances. As these cases accumulate it seems less likely that emotions can be explained purely in terms of a person's underlying motivational psychology.

Causal theorists, in general, seem to suggest that one might separately embrace a proposition, say, that S represents some danger to one, and subsequently experience an emotion, if one experiences it at all. But this doesn't ring true in most cases. We might suppose in the above example that I do not first believe that S threatens to harm me in some way—if I believe this at all—then become upset or uncomfortable in the presence of S. Rather, it is through the experience of fear that I perceive S as dangerous or threatening to me in some way.⁷⁰ My fear is directed at S, not my own mental states. Also, I do not necessarily assent to the propositional content of my experience, as noted above. Nor, it should be added, does it require that I can give an adequate description of my present perspective using the relevant concepts.⁷¹ Things simply seem a certain way. In fact, since the emotion occurs when my habitual way of seeing or responding to S falls short (or when I have none), it is likely that I will have a hard time trying to articulate my immediate sense of the situation.

Finally, if emotions weren't experienced as being under the influence of external factors, it would be much more difficult to explain their role in motivating appropriate action. In her own discussion of a similar example of fear, Patricia Greenspan points out that insofar as I remain suspicious of S, my fear will put me on guard against him if only to "prove" to myself that my fear is misguided. It puts pressure on me to keep an eye on S (Greenspan

⁷⁰ Martha Nussbaum makes this point against causal theorists in "Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance." She says, "When I grieve, I do not first of all coolly embrace the proposition, 'My wonderful mother is dead,' and then set about grieving. No, the real, complete, recognition of that terrible event...*is* the upheaval." See her, 282.

⁷¹ See below for more on this point.

1988, 7). As she argues, this aspect of emotions seems to depend on the fear being object directed, and so, capable of holding an evaluation in mind more reliably than beliefs and objectless sensations. “The content of even an acknowledged belief need not be an object of current attention,” Greenspan notes, “and unpleasant sensations that merely accompanied it might very well distract one from it or from a requirement to act in light of it” (Ibid, 269).

Emotions and Reasons for Action

Before proceeding with my account of the connection between emotion and moral judgment, a few further remarks about the structure of moral judgments are in order. It is often taken that moral judgments are either cognitive claims which aim to represent independently existing moral facts, or that they are claims which describe or express a person’s desires. James Rachels argues for a third view, according to which moral judgments are truths of reason. A moral judgment is true, he holds, “if it is backed by better reasons than the alternatives” (Rachels 2007, p. 45). He says further, “Such truths are objective in the sense that they are true independently of what we might want or think. We cannot make something good or bad just by wishing it to be so, because we cannot will that the weight of reason be on its side or against it. And this also explains our fallibility: We can be wrong about what is good or bad because we can be wrong about what reason commends” (Ibid). Thus, on this view, we can reject the idea that moral judgments are ways of describing or expressing our attitudes towards things, which is related to the metaphysical thesis that values are invented via our sentiments, yet not commit ourselves to thinking that moral judgments can only be true just in case there are moral facts they represent, or that

cognitivism commits us to the contentious thesis that there are independently existing moral entities.

While Rachels's discussion is intended to say something about which meta-ethical view is correct, it also captures something important about the conditions for accepting something as a reason, a point which non-cognitivists, in particular, have a problem capturing. When we accept a consideration as a reason for acting, it seems to us that there is something going for the consideration beyond our approval or disapproval of an action. C. S. Lewis makes this point, noting, "to call children delightful or old men venerable is not simply to record a psychological fact about our own parental or filial emotions at the moment, but to recognize a quality which demands a certain response from us whether we make it or not (Lewis 1947, p. 29).⁷² Now, insofar as one treats one's dispositions as the relevant considerations in determining the appropriate response, then one's reasons are based on subjective concerns.⁷³ What matters in determining whether a consideration is the basis for a categorical claim is whether we treat the consideration as having merit independently of an individual's (or individuals') disposition to treat it as such. It is the latter point that has made the emotions seem to be an inadequate source of moral reasons. In section 4, I attempt to show how experience can lead one to accept categorical reasons for action.

Now, I assume that any consideration can count as a reason, and our judgment can be based on good or bad reasons. Reason giving is a messy business, and I do not want to fall into the trap of holding that practical agents aim to act on plans they have reflected upon and

⁷² William Tolhurst discusses this passage in criticizing Harman's account of moral observation. See his 1990, 70- 71. Against Harman, Tolhurst points out that our immediate experience does not always determine our judgment. Our capacity to recognize defects in our responses also explains the authority we accord such judgments.

⁷³ As others have argued, even in this case one must treat desires or other subjective responses as legitimate sources of reasons for action, which itself is not a purely subjective claim. Thus, one's desires provide one with reasons for action insofar as one believes that they justify a certain response, or make a particular action worth pursuing.

endorsed, or that our actions are always the result of our rational assessment or endorsement. We can throw caution to the wind in our actions, and not only after deciding to be spontaneous! And we can genuinely surprise ourselves in our actions, or reflect back on what we've done, and truly puzzle ourselves as to why we acted as we did. I also believe that when we attempt to give reasons for our beliefs, the reasons we give do not necessarily reflect our best attempts to sort out good and bad reasons. We can accept something for a reason for little reason at all, and the process of giving reasons is itself a capacity that can be improved over time.

In spite of the focus on the psychology of making a moral judgment, this activity is the exception rather than the norm in our practical lives. As discussed in chapter 1, a person ordinarily responds as she has learned to respond, that is, without any thought intervening. For example, I see that someone needs help opening a door, and I stop what I am doing in order to help, without thinking about the relative merits of helping those in need or whether I really have good reasons for helping this person out. Or I make a date to meet someone, and when the date and time arrive, I simply set out to meet them without the intervening thought that I ought to keep this date, or that there are good reasons for doing so. If I do think about whether to keep my promise, this question doesn't occur in a vacuum, in ordinary contexts. That is, I do not ordinarily ponder whether there are good reasons for keeping a promise, in general, but do so in the specific context. For example, perhaps something else comes up, and I have to decide whether to keep my promise or break it in light of a competing obligation. Even here, I noted earlier, one often "just knows" that an exception is called for, and one just does or does not break the promise in light of a conflicting obligation.

So when do we find ourselves making a judgment about what to do? In some cases in which we are unsure of what to do, we may reflect on our options, and form a judgment based on our limited knowledge of how things are likely to go. We may simply “feel” our way around the turf in which we are operating, hoping to figure out what we could or should be doing. We may act on the results of deliberation or follow rules we have been given, and “discover” through acting on our best judgment or belief that certain rules provide adequate guides to something about how we ought to act, or what we should not do again. That is, experience may lead us to confirm our hunches, on the one hand, or revise our beliefs, on the other hand. This point is important because it reflects the fact that a practical judgment, given its contextual development, can motivate action in myriad ways. It can motivate on the basis of immediate experience—emotions or other ‘feeling’ states—in which case a person’s immediate experience is central in motivating her actions. But practical judgments also occur against the backdrop of deeply held beliefs, assumptions and commitments about the importance of acting rationally or the importance of acting as we believe we have sufficient reason to act.⁷⁴ These background beliefs and assumptions play a role in motivating us to act on the practical judgments we make even when our judgments conflict with our immediate

⁷⁴ Perhaps it is influenced by a *desire* to act rationally, or to be the sort of person who acts according to the balance of reasons. If this is a desire, it is a different sort of desire than those discussed by proponents of SPAHP, or more importantly, the desires that instrumentalists claim to be the source of all reasons for action. The desires they discuss are those an individual can add or drop to her list of priorities without any change in her overall commitment to being practically rational. The desire to act on the balance of reasons isn’t something one can add or drop to one’s list of priorities in this way. James Dreier makes this point in “Humean Doubts about Categorical Imperatives.” He says, “there is no sense at all to be made of the question of whether we have any reason to follow the rules of rationality. Maybe rationality is itself nothing more than a system of rules, just as prudence and law and morality are. Even so...reasons of rationality are unlike these other systems of rules and the reasons they generate. It always makes sense to think that there might be (or fail to be) reasons to follow moral, legal, or prudential rules. To think that there are or could be reasons to follow the rules of rationality is, I would say, to misunderstand what reasons are. Reasons are in terms of the rules of rationality” (Dreier 2001, 29). In this way, our emotions may help us to perceive reasons for action we might otherwise miss, and our commitment to acting as reason tells us to act explains, in part, our capacity to be motivated by reasons sufficiently disconnected from our emotions, desires, and other so called affective states.

experience. However, the nature of practical experience as emotions or other feelings plays a role in our capacity to be motivated to act on even these latter types of practical judgment.

Or so I shall argue below.

From Emotion to Moral Judgment

Moral claims make recommendations or demands on what it is appropriate to do or feel, and these recommendations or demands seem to hold regardless of her feelings or desires. Thus, it would seem that practical experience cannot play a role in our developing moral views. After all, emotions and other mental states that constitute practical experience seem to inform an individual, at best, about *her* immediate, best, real, etc. interests, not what she ought to do regardless of her desires or interests. An account of emotions might also lead one to distinguish between a person's immediate interests and her real interests in a way that makes her real interests accessible to the individual. For example, the frustration of reading botany and the satisfaction of reading philosophy might lead one to believe that one is a philosophical sort of person, thus that one has a real interest in pursuing philosophy. Similarly, the guilt one feels from ignoring others' needs and the deep satisfaction one gets from helping others might play a role in one's attempt to figure out what to do. Since one finds it satisfying to help others, one has a real interest in helping others. Thus, even if one believes that one does not have a reason to help others, one may be wrong about one's real interests. Having helped others, one might find this more deeply satisfying, and so, see that one has a real interest in helping others. One's feelings of regret over seeing the damage one does to one's friend by breaking a promise may play a role in determining that one is not the sort of person who can easily break promises, thus, one might learn through this experience

that one has a real interest in keeping one's promises. Experience of an emotion might lead one to see that acting morally is in one's interest, thus morality is justified in terms of its connection with a person's happiness.

Neither of these accounts of morality is truly satisfying to those who wish to account for the categorical structure of moral judgments. The idea that an experiential account of practical reasons is limited to a certain account of the status of practical reasons stems from a particular understanding of emotions. If emotions are merely subjective states limited to giving us information about how we feel about objects, or how we are disposed to respond to various stimuli, then they cannot explain the categorical structure of moral judgments without invoking a mechanism by which we project our subjective reactions onto their objects. The account of emotions defended in chapter 1 has the resources to give a more straightforward explanation of our belief that some practical claims give us categorical reasons for action.⁷⁵ Most generally, like the case of perception in the theoretical domain, emotions exhibit some authority over our actions despite being subjective reactions to objects and events, because they seem to be under the influence of objective events. Certainly emotions can be mistaken; they often lead us astray. But we can also regret not going along with our feelings in acting when our ordinary responses lead us astray. And it is this experience that explains, in part, their authority. They present themselves as guides to action when we bump up against people, objects, and events that affect our lives, yet which push our cognitive limits or (in some way) force our attention toward objects and events we would

⁷⁵ This claim is somewhat ambiguous as it does not distinguish our individual moral beliefs from our more general belief that (at least some) moral claims are categorical claims. The examples and discussion below focus on the role experience might play in the development of a particular categorical claim. Near the end of the paper, I indicate the role of emotions and practical experience, more generally, in our belief that morality provides us with extra-personal reasons for action, that is, reasons for action that are not dependent on whether they advance our desires, projects, immediate, long term or real interests.

not have otherwise noticed. In these cases, we directly experience other people, objects, and events as relevant to who we are or can be, what we can or cannot do, what sort of life is possible for us to live.⁷⁶ We experience our options as constrained by certain factors because we experience these constraints via our emotions. These initial experiences can lead, in complicated ways, to the formation of extra-personal reasons for action.

Consider the role of emotions in the development of a person's moral beliefs. While the case I discuss here involves the emotion of regret, I do not assume that regret is specifically a moral emotion. For one could regret not pursuing one's interest in becoming a violinist when one had the chance to do so many years ago. In this case, regret does not play

⁷⁶ There is an analogy here with perception in the theoretical domain. In spite of the fact that we only have our admittedly fallible subjective impressions on which to base our empirical beliefs, we treat our subjective impressions as yielding potentially objectively true beliefs. Our belief in the objectivity of some of our empirical beliefs is also due, in part, to our experience of being fallible. At least one philosopher, Charles Peirce, recognized this aspect of perceptual experience. When we think about perception, we tend to think about the objects we see when we look around us, or perhaps, the sounds we hear, the textures we feel, or the tastes we experience when eat or drink something. According to Peirce, while perception involves a certain phenomenal quality, it is also inherently dual, involving an interaction of ego and non-ego. He notes that while we perceive objects brought before us, we apply the word 'experience' mostly to events, in particular, changes in perception. For example, he says, "A whistling locomotive passes at high speed close beside me. As it passes the note of the whistle is suddenly lowered from a well-understood cause. I perceive the whistle, if you will. I have, at any rate, a sensation of it. But I cannot be said to have a sensation of the change of note... That I experience rather than perceive. It is [the] special field of experience to acquaint us with events, with changes of perception. ... It is more particularly to changes and contrasts of perception that we apply the word 'experience'. We experience vicissitudes, especially. We cannot experience the vicissitude without experiencing the perception which undergoes the change; but the concept of *experience* is broader than that of perception, and includes much that is not, strictly speaking, an object of perception. It is the compulsion, the absolute constraint on us to think otherwise that we have been thinking that constitutes experience. Now constraint and compulsion cannot exist without resistance, and resistance is effort opposing change. Therefore there must be an element of effort in experience; and it is this which gives its peculiar character. But we are so disposed to yield to it as soon as we can detect it, that it is extremely difficult to convince ourselves that we have exerted any resistance at all." (Peirce 1955, 88-89). There are other passages which suggest something similar. In speaking about his phenomenological categories, in particular, the category of secondness, Peirce claims that the interaction between ego and non-ego explains the involuntary, compulsive character or dual nature of perception. Through this aspect of perceptual experience, we bump up against hard fact. According to Peirce, it is an interaction with something other than oneself (cf. Haack 1994, 15). Now, the phenomenology of perceptual experience may not allow us to imply anything about whether we really do perceive external objects. It could be that the objects of experience are inner objects and our experience of an external world is an illusion. My point is that perceptual experience plays a role in our cognitive lives, and it plays this role, in part, because of the phenomenology of perceptual experience, namely, the experience of objectivity.

a role in the development of moral reasons. It does play such a role in other cases. In order to illustrate its role, consider the following example.⁷⁷

Carla and Elliot are coworkers. Elliot's boyfriend, John, puts Carla into the awkward position of having to invite Elliot to go to a club on Thursday evening to meet Carla's friend, Maria, for drinks. Carla is reluctant to take Elliot because she doesn't think the three of them have enough in common, and she doesn't want to "baby sit" Elliot all evening. Furthermore, since she needs a relaxing night of fun, Carla decides to tell Elliot that she has to cancel their plans. Carla is excited about getting together with Maria, however, she does not realize that Elliot has decided to go to the club alone. Unfortunately, Elliot has few friends other than Carla—this is why she was looking forward to going out with Carla and Maria—so she decides to go out by herself. Elliot runs into Carla and her friend, and is visibly hurt when she realizes Carla ditched her, though she tries to pretend that it doesn't matter that much. Carla sees how hurt Elliot is over Carla's lie even though Elliot tries to pretend as though she isn't that upset. After running into her, Carla is unable to have a good time. She feels bad about what happened, and later feels remorse for what she did. Ultimately, she regrets lying to Elliot, and not taking her out. She judges that she was wrong to lie to Elliot, and that she should have taken Elliot with her.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ This example is loosely based on an episode of the popular television show, *Scrubs*.

⁷⁸ Here, I am lumping together what might be treated as separate experiences: feeling remorseful and feeling regret. What distinguishes the two? One might describe one's feelings in terms of remorse given the immediacy of the feeling. For example, while Carla might later regret what she did to Elliot, insofar as her emotions arise upon seeing Elliot, or immediately afterwards, she is more likely to experience remorse, and to describe her feelings in such terms. It may be only later that Carla expresses her feelings in terms of regret. One reason may be that regret often arises upon reflection over what one could have done, but didn't. At any rate, I do not mean to conflate the two, though I do not expect to do full justice to the important emotion of regret in our practical lives. For a thoughtful discussion of regret, see Carla Bagnoli, "Value in the Guise of Regret." In particular, she argues that "agent-regret is a mode of valuing: a way in which the agent endorses a reason for valuing an unchosen path (Bagnoli 2000, p. 1). As she points out, the unchosen path may not have been an option considered or an option available to the agent at the time of choice. Still, she points out, "Even though the agent did not have better alternatives at the time of choice, feeling regret is not just a masochistic exercise. Its practical function is quite important: by calling attention to the alternatives the agent did not have, the agent

At the time that she decided not to include Elliot, Carla realized that Elliot really wanted to go out with her and Maria, for that is the reason why she lied to Elliot about her reasons for not taking her out. She realized that Elliot was having trouble making friends, but she really needed some time out with her friend, Maria, and was afraid that Elliot's presence would affect her evening. She feels bad enough that she cannot face Elliot even to apologize. She wants to avoid her in spite of realizing that she owes her an apology.⁷⁹ That is, Carla judges that she owes Elliot an apology because she believes that discounting her feelings under these circumstances wouldn't be right. Still, she really just wants to avoid her, and to pretend that what she did wasn't a big deal. And this is what she does for a while. However, doing so does not make her feel any better. She doesn't feel any better about the evening until she apologizes to Elliot.

Carla's feelings serve several roles. First, it makes her aware of Elliot's situation in a way she wasn't prior to running into her, and it makes her reconsider what she did in the first place. Feeling bad isn't equivalent to feeling regret. Her initial reaction is enough to make her think she hurt Elliot, though it does not tell her anything in particular about what to do in response to what has occurred. Carla's feelings of regret cause her to cast her eye over her earlier actions as well (perhaps) as her deliberations, and to consider the possibility that she overlooked something significant when she decided to exclude Elliot from her plans (cf.

may be pushing the bounds what she thinks possible for her. Our perception of what is possible for us to do, of what is a valuable alternative may be significantly changed by endorsing counterfactual thinking. In this case, counterfactual reasoning is a way of questioning the ineluctability and necessity of some of our deliberative constraints" (Ibid, p. 1)).

⁷⁹ Perhaps Carla simply feels regret over getting caught in a lie. That is possible, but why should all cases of regret be reduced to this sort of case? It would be the case if changes in one's own interests, for example, one's reputation, could affect one's attitudes. This is certainly true of narcissists and other shallow individuals. But why assume that cases that describe such people are the paradigm instances of how emotions function? Or, even if we're capable of being narcissistic, self centered, self interested, and shallow, why assume that's all we are? Certainly our motives are many and varied. Finally, my discussion is an attempt to explain the role emotions sometimes play in helping us to perceive others points of view as mattering, i.e., their role in expanding our motives to include other people's interests. Further discussion of the example is required for this criticism to be effective.

Bagnoli 2000). It does not determine what she does, but forces her to consider the impact of her actions on Elliot, specifically, and reasons she may have had not to lie to Elliot in the first place.

Internally, regret creates internal tension for Carla, but her focus is not on the tension it creates. If it were, she might cast her eye towards anything but Elliot in order to alleviate feeling bad. She might decide to go shopping or read a good book. Perhaps she tries, but cannot get the picture of Elliot out of her mind. She realizes that the only way to alleviate her feelings is to make amends with Elliot, and try to cheer her up. In this case, Carla's feelings are not necessarily a device for figuring out which actions will make her happier. From her perspective, hurting Elliot makes her feel bad because her actions had an impact on Elliott's well-being. Of course, if she could not be brought to care about how her actions affect Elliott, then she would not feel regret over her actions. Her feelings help her to see that it matters how she affects Elliot. Certainly, one could see the negative effect of one's actions on another person without feeling regret over one's actions. Thus, Carla must experience her effect on Elliot's well being as relevant to what Carla has a reason to do. In order to improve her relations with her environment, specifically with Elliot, Carla has to make things right with her. She cannot simply avoid her or try to talk herself into thinking that it isn't a big deal. Thus, her feelings arise because of the pain she caused Elliot, and aren't directed primarily at her well-being. From Carla's perspective, they exhibit some authority over her further responses, because they seem to be responsive to having hurt Elliot.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ In "Value in the Guise of Regret," Carla Bagnoli argues, "the moral agent thinks of morality as inescapable, not because it is sanctioned but because it is authoritative. In this case of a moral violation, the moral agent does not wish to be freed of regret; she wishes to have acted otherwise, to have chosen better" (Bagnoli 2000, p.

What role might Carla's experience play in forming a moral judgment? Carla's feelings of discomfort over lying to Elliot might play an immediate role in prompting actions aimed at alleviating the tension caused by regret, and what she does will be determined by what she judges to be the source of her regret. For example, she may shake off her feelings as misguided, and try to distract herself from her feelings, hoping they go away. Or, she may immediately apologize to Elliot if she takes her feelings at face value. If Carla is successfully able to forget what she did in the first case, or feels better after apologizing to Elliot, she is likely to form conclusions about her experience—if she does—compatible with her experience. However, like perception in the theoretical domain, emotions may function as a “check” on our practical beliefs. Suppose Carla decides that she doesn't believe she did anything wrong, and that her feelings are misguided. She may try to distract herself, but possibly to no avail. Unable to do so, she may rethink the lessons of her experience, and decide that she was wrong to think that she does not bear some responsibility for the effects her actions have on others.

Carla's experience may lead her to form an immediate judgment about (say) the cruelty of her actions, which makes reference to the appropriate response to the event only indirectly, or they may lead her more directly to judge that some action is appropriate given the circumstances.⁸¹ She may decide that she should make amends, or that she should try to

21). She further points out that regret is not merely a way of expressing that we think something is valuable; it is a way of conferring value, thus regret is capable of generating a new practical view (Ibid, p. 24).

⁸¹ In “Emotion and Moral Judgment,” Linda Zagzebski offers a thoughtful discussion of the role emotions play in the formation of moral judgments. According to her discussion, immediate moral judgments always involve the application of thick ethical concepts, and only indirectly lead one to form judgments using thin ethical concepts. This is partly due to the account of emotions Zagzebski defends. As she notes, thick ethical concepts involve the application of concepts to objects, while thin concepts such as ‘should,’ ‘ought,’ ‘right’ and ‘wrong,’ though not necessarily ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ are directed at our responses (Zagzebski 2003, p. 171). On my view, since emotions as embodied appraisals involve changes in one's perception of how one is faring in one's circumstances, and so, have a hedonic tone, or at least, involve deviations in equilibrium, which can be interpreted directly in terms of the fittingness or unfittingness of a certain response, and do not involve

make Elliot feel better, or simply, that she should be more sensitive to others' feelings in the future. In any case, her immediate judgment motivates action because it stems from her experience of remorse (insofar as she feels bad) or regret (insofar as her feelings stem from her current appreciation of reasons overlooked earlier). But it motivates Carla to act in a certain way in connection with her recognition that she hurt Elliot, and that doing so was wrong.

Interestingly, it is often possible to distract oneself from an emotion until things return (more or less) to normal, thus concluding that what happened wasn't a big deal. Eventually, Elliot may simply get over what happened with Carla, and since they must work together, the situation may pass without much changing. But again, further experiences may act as a "check" on Carla's assessment of the situation. Perhaps Carla is fairly insensitive to others' needs, and lately she has been bumping up against others due to her insensitivity. While she may be able to discount the importance of her actions on Elliot, as she confronts similar situations, she may find it more and more difficult to deal adequately with others. While I have focused on Carla in this example, this is not to suggest that Elliot is a passive participant. Her hurtful feelings may have caused her to feel guarded around Carla, or more directly led her to form a judgment about Carla's actions, her response, or the appropriateness of one or both. Similarly with others with whom Carla interacts. Thus, Carla's response to Elliot may not go "unchecked" even if she does not suffer any repercussions in the specific instance. And, as more cases pile up, Carla may be forced to reevaluate the relevance of her negative attitude towards others.

sophisticated conceptual repertoire, one may focus directly on one's response rather than attempting to categorize the intentional object of the emotion. At lower levels, which are most appropriately characterized in terms of the experience of fittingness or unfittingness, one's most immediate response will be about how it is appropriate to react in the circumstances.

Now, it is true that in this case, Carla's response to what she did may primarily be motivated by her desire to alleviate the tension regret causes her, and so, it may provide her peace of mind. However, this does not mean that her actions are strictly self-regarding. Even if Carla believes that she should apologize to Elliot for her own peace of mind, the object of her emotion is other-regarding: she won't have peace of mind until she does something to alleviate the pain she caused Elliot. This is not to say that we can be so affected only in cases in which we are responsible for hurting someone. Earlier I discussed compassion. This emotion may lead one to feel a need to help alleviate another person's pain regardless of whether one is responsible for the pain another feels. Second, let me say a little more about the connection between this example and criticisms of psychological egoism. Theorists criticizing psychological egoism often quote the story about Lincoln stopping a stage coach to save some piglets from certain death because if he does not, he will not have peace of mind.⁸² Now, as these critics point out, the fact that Lincoln can be moved by the plight of the piglets suggests that he isn't merely acting in his own self-interest by helping them out. If someone only acted for this reason, then we would think that person was shallow at best, and we might only be able to help them see that acting morally is in their self interest. We're fairly good at picking such people out even when the person professes to care only about doing the right thing. Scratch the surface, we suspect, and what the person really cares about is being perceived to care about others. Most of us exhibit a tendency to be motivated appropriately (by our own lights, at least) in some areas, but to struggle in others. In those areas in which we struggle, we might act as we do because, we tell ourselves, it is the right thing to do. But we often do so in the hopes that acting might help us "see" or "feel" what we intellectually believe. Our motivational structures seem complex, even to

⁸² For a recent discussion of this passage, see Rachels (2007), pp. 72 – 74.

ourselves, and this is what makes us complicated, concerned, and perhaps, deep, albeit, imperfect and fallible, moral agents. Thus, to reduce all actions motivated by emotions to self-interested actions is to fail to do justice to the phenomenology of our ordinary way of experiencing ourselves and others.

This fact about our experience also explains why it is possible to conclude that one's well-being is all that truly matters in the case of morality. For it is possible to take one aspect of our experience as the relevant one, for example, the hedonic tone, and discount other aspects as playing an essential role in determining whether a response was appropriate, for example, the intentional object of the emotion. Thus, it is possible to conclude that we have a reason to treat others well only because (and if) we are affected by what they do, not because our impact on their well-being matters. Further, my aim is not to argue the opposite. I aim merely to show that from the first person perspective, the fact that one has hurt someone can be a reason for one to treat the person better because one directly sees or experiences the negative effect of one's actions on another person, and sees one's impact as mattering. Here, one's "feelings" help one see what one might have otherwise overlooked.

Carla's case can be compared with the child who apologizes for hurting someone because he will get in trouble if he doesn't. In this case, the child presumably lacks an appropriate perception of the impact of his actions on the other child, and any emotional tension he experiences is presumably brought about by the threat of punishment by his parents. If his parents did not punish him, he would not experience any negative tension over his actions. Perhaps his parents' punishment sends the message it is intended to send, and he does become remorseful for his actions. The latter case is similar to Carla's; the former isn't. In terms of the stages of moral development, Carla's experience of regret plays a role in

helping her to perceive possible moral reasons for action even if they are still primarily concerned with her own well-being from her perspective since her judgment arises out of her sensitivity to how her actions affected Elliot.

Carla's experience serves a further role as well. Given that from her perspective her response arises appropriately as a response to her immediate experience of objective features of her environment, her belief that she ought to have acted differently at the time she lied to Elliot is capable of stopping the regress of reasons for Carla (cf. Millgram 1993; cf. Zagzebski 2003). Suppose that Carla initially forms the judgment that her feelings are misguided. She tries to minimize her actions and her corresponding feelings of remorse, and tries to distract herself from her bad feelings until they subside. Still, suppose that she cannot get Elliot off her mind, or keeps coming back to the events of Thursday evening. Failing at her efforts to distract herself, Carla may simply determine that what she did was wrong. In this case, Carla cannot remove the lens to see that wrongness or badness does not attach to her actions, but is a projection of her attitude onto their objects. From Carla's perspective, her feelings are irreducibly directed at Elliot's diminished well being, her role in harming Elliot's interests, and the (seeming) fact that her impact on Elliot's well being matters.

It should be pointed out that I am not assuming that Carla's ability to feel regret over her treatment of Elliot, or her subsequent response are not influenced by other factors, including her background beliefs about friendship or one's responsibility towards those one does not consider to be one's (close) friend. Certainly there are factors that make the experience of an emotion possible, and background social and environmental cues which hone our sensitivity to certain features of our environment. But these factors alone do not determine our immediate experiences, and there is no reason to think that emotions cannot

shift our focus and play their own role in determining the features of our environment we take to be relevant. Perhaps Carla has always prided herself on being a stubborn person who isn't easily shaken by the negative effects of her decisions. Her experience of remorse over seeing Elliot may constitute a genuine shift in her awareness of the impact of her actions on others. Perhaps other incidents have prompted Carla to take a close look at her attitude towards others, but it is only this experience that prompts her to see and judge that she should be more aware of the impact of her actions on others. There is little difference between this case and the theoretical domain in which one's attention slowly shifts due to recalcitrant experiences, and suddenly one's beliefs shift on the basis of a particular observation. This slow shift in attention can help a person to ultimately see what is there to be seen, but which she does not initially have good reason to believe given her other beliefs.

Finally, in both cases, one's background beliefs or conceptual repertoire does not fully determine what one comes to believe on the basis of experience. The fact that one has a concept of a chair, table, dog, or other object does not necessarily explain or determine one's seeing a chair or other object. Presumably, the fact that there is a chair in the room explains what one's sees, and play a role in shaping one's belief that there is a chair in the room. Furthermore, the fact that one has a concept of a chair does not mean that one will see the chair in front of one or form the appropriate belief. Similarly, even if we grant that emotions invoke a person's background beliefs or conceptual repertoire, this does not mean that she cannot form a genuinely new practical view on the basis of her experience of an emotion, and it does not fully determine what one comes to believe, as I discussed in chapter 1.

The Role of Emotions in our Developing Moral Beliefs

Aside from their role in prompting immediate action, emotions play an important role in the development of a person's moral views. This allows them to play an indirect role in motivating actions that do not stem immediately from our experiences. The fact that we experience our emotions in the way we do highlights another role they play in the development of our moral beliefs. Experience often prompts reflection, and one may reflect on the more general lessons of one's experience. This is similar to the role experience plays in the theoretical domain. Thinking about the situation with Elliot might lead Carla to think about how she's been acting lately, thinking of herself first and discounting others' plans when they are not in line with her own plans. This may ultimately lead Carla to believe that she should pay more attention to how her attitude or actions affect others, and thus to judge that she ought to treat others better. This claim is likely to be less motivationally compelling than her immediate experience of others, unless experience or reflection prompts further emotions. For example, looking back at how she's been acting lately may prompt remorse, regret, or even shame over her actions, and these feelings may play a role in motivating her to act differently in similar cases.

We can also peel the lessons of our experience away from the "feeling" component to form more enduring beliefs about how it is appropriate to act. In complicated ways, Carla's experience might lead her to reflect on how it is appropriate for friends to treat each other.⁸³

⁸³ I do not want to be too precise about what considerations would lead to this insight, as they are many and varied. I am also not suggesting that the inferences that lead to such conclusions are based on good evidence. Furthermore, like our capacity to recognize (skeptical arguments notwithstanding) others as individuals who experience the world we experience, we can simply recognize that others are similar enough to us that they do or should have similar responses to us (and we should have similar responses to others), and we can fairly quickly, though not with necessity, come to the conclusion that everyone ought to feel or do x in C circumstances. Of course, recognizing relevant differences, one can fairly quickly and easily, but again, not with necessity, come to the conclusion that my feelings or needs, or another individual's or group's feelings or needs, or each individual's feelings or needs are unique and special, thus not the proper object of rational

The authority of this claim can be traced back (in part) to the seeming authority of Carla's initial experience of regret. This capacity also allows us to generate reasons for our beliefs. For example, one might argue that one has good reason to treat friends well because one's actions affect one's friends' well-being. And one might treat one's friends' well-being as mattering because of its connection with one's emotional experience. In actual cases, of course, things might be more complicated. Often, a person may learn from individual experiences how far the bounds of (say) friendship can be stretched. Perhaps Carla's initial response towards Elliot was shaped by earlier experiences of being hurt by friends whose needs Carla had put first. She learned in these cases to take care of her needs first. This case may have seemed similar enough to those earlier cases that Carla applied the lessons of her earlier experiences here. This case may be treated as an exception for Carla, or it might generate new or modified lessons about friendship. As discussed earlier, particular responses to stimuli which are similar, yet different in relevant ways, may crystallize into a way of responding over time. These particular lessons are some of the ways in which one later "just knows" the appropriate way to respond in a particular case, or when one "just knows" that an instance calls for an exception to a more general rule. Certainly one may test the bounds of a particular rule. Carla may "try" different responses to different people—friends, work colleagues, family, etc.—before she gets a firmer footing about the level of sensitivity to individual needs required before coming to a more general conclusion about when and to what degree one ought to be sensitive to others' needs, more generally. These further ways of seeing and responding are connected indirectly with earlier experiences of emotions, which point one in a direction one's life could (and perhaps should) take [**stein**]. Such

correction. Still, insofar as one is capable of directly experiencing certain responses as (seemingly) authoritative, one cannot simply ignore the possibility that other points of view are irrelevant to what one has a reason to do, especially if this (seeming) fact conflicts with one's experience.

responses are always open-ended, as one cannot fully predict the direction in which events will later take one.

Beyond Emotions in the Development of Moral Reasons

The phenomenology of emotions also explains the authority of moral judgments that cannot be traced back to our immediate experience of emotions. From the first person perspective, at least some experiences of emotion are states of awareness through which we perceive our relation to various objects, people, and events. The fact that objective events, objects, etc. seem to determine, in part, the appropriateness of a certain response, explains not only our capacity to generalize from our experiences; it also explains why we treat (at least some) moral judgments as authoritative even when they are not based in our immediate experience. Just as one can see that an object is red or large even when perceptual conditions aren't favorable, one can see that pity, regret, remorse, outrage, resentment, et al. is called for even when one isn't experiencing the emotions. This capacity does not mean we are necessarily defective because we do not experience the emotion related to our recognition that a particular concept applies. This capacity allows us to engage in evaluative thought with others, and recognize the appropriateness or inappropriateness of certain responses for others, not only ourselves (cf. Zagzebski 2003, p. 119).⁸⁴

Consider the above example again. Perhaps Carla does not feel bad when she sees Elliot's hurt. She may still form the belief that remorse is called for, or that she ought to feel

⁸⁴ When might we judge a response to be defective? Cheshire Calhoun argues that an evaluative belief may be defective when it could be held "evidentially," but is only held "intellectually." In the case of theoretical beliefs, this may occur when one isn't properly convinced by (say) the evidence of one's own eyes. It is similar, according to Calhoun, in the case of evaluative beliefs. For example, a child who believes lying is wrong, but does not experience lying as wrong holds intellectually that lying is wrong, but not evidentially. She believes evidentially, Calhoun notes, "when she stops being merely obedient to parental authority and feels imperative force of the obligation" (Sober 2003, p. 243).

bad in spite of the fact that she doesn't. Perhaps she doesn't feel remorse, but she recognizes the signs of its appropriateness when she sees how her actions have affected Elliot. Or she recognizes a deficiency in her sensitivity towards others. Perhaps Carla resents Elliot because Elliot was fortunate enough to have come from a background which gave her the motivation and financial opportunity to become a physician. Carla desired to become a physician, but did not pursue this profession for various reasons. Instead, she became a nurse. She experiences an underlying sense of resentment towards Elliot even though she realizes that her problems aren't Elliot's fault, and she also sees how hard Elliot tries to befriend her. It isn't as if Elliot is snobbish about her status as a physician. Thus, Carla may believe that she ought to feel remorse for her actions, and treat her resentment as blocking her ability to be appropriately affected by Elliot as a person who is capable of being hurt by her (Carla's) actions. Carla's belief about the appropriateness of a certain response also plays a role in her judgment that her actions were wrong.

The above case is similar to perception in which we recognize that certain factors are blocking our ability to perceive certain objects accurately, and we do our best to act in conformity with our beliefs rather than our immediate perceptual experience. The nature of emotional experience also explains why we treat such claims as authoritative. Earlier, I noted a quote from C. S. Lewis in which he says that, in judging small children to be delightful, we take it that we are responding to valuable features of children, not merely expressing our approval of children or certain features of them. He further notes, "I myself do not enjoy the society of small children...I recognize this as a defect in myself—just as a man may have to recognize that he is tone deaf or colour blind" (Lewis 1947, p. 29).⁸⁵

⁸⁵ William Tolhurst discusses this passage in criticizing Harman's account of moral observation. See his 1990, 70- 71. Against Harman, Tolhurst points out that our immediate experience does not always determine our

In the *Treatise*, Hume attempts to trace the genesis of ‘ought’ claims, discussing the role our perception of defects in our own responses play. In one example, Hume discusses a man who realizes that he does not have the same affection towards his children as other parents. Given our desire to approve of ourselves and our tendency to see ourselves through others’ eyes, the man may desire to feel about his children as others do theirs. Thus, his actions stem from his desire to be a certain way rather than his feelings towards his children. He may judge that he ‘ought’ to treat his children in certain ways based on his desire to have a certain attitude towards them.

The view discussed above presents a different account of the role ‘ought’ as well as other thin moral concepts may arise in our moral views. They aren’t necessarily convoluted ways of expressing our desires, but rather, may be genuine attempts to “get things right,” even when we do not “see things aright,” to use John McDowell’s well known phrase. This account explains better than Hume’s account the authority with which we experience such claims, and presents a challenge to experiential accounts of valuing discussed at the beginning of this paper. In many cases, as well, acting on our judgment in such a case is a stage in moral development. We do not act on such claims merely because we want to see things as others do or because we do not want to experience the pain of having people realize that we do not exhibit the feelings most people have. We may do so with the hope that in acting we might feel as we have good reason to feel, or that we might appreciate what is there to be appreciated. Our actions are a genuine attempt to help ourselves improve our

judgment. Our capacity to recognize defects in our responses also explains the authority we accord such judgments.

ability to be sensitive to significant features of our environment, and reduce the distance between our beliefs and what we are motivated to do.⁸⁶

Compassion and Reciprocal Treatment

What makes regret special is not simply that it can make us aware of possible moral reasons we've overlooked, but that it can affect and improve our more general capacity for practical deliberation (cf. Bagnoli 2000, p. 16). The more general lesson of regret may be to force us to look for reasons we might be overlooking in making choices in the future. Some of these reasons are other-regarding.

Other emotions seem to have a more direct affect on our capacity to see others from a moral perspective, and to treat them appropriately. Most of us take it for granted that others' ends are relevant to what we have a reason to do. For the most part, we accommodate our ends so that others can pursue theirs without our interference. We go about our business in a way that allows others to go about theirs, and when our ends pose a hazard to others' pursuit of their ends, we modify our ends appropriately. We also find it appropriate on occasion to help others accomplish their ends without thinking about how doing so will help us get what we want. We also take it for granted that it is appropriate to treat others with the same respect we believe we deserve, and at least in special relationships, we take it that we owe something to others. There are two questions that follow from these facts about us as moral beings: (1) how do we become such creatures? (2) Are we justified in treating others in these

⁸⁶ In "Emotion and Moral Judgment," Linda Zagzebski argues that since such judgments are related to past emotional experiences, or perhaps, related cases in which one's emotional awareness is sufficiently motivating, one's judgment is not devoid of motivational content (Zagzebski 2003, p. 122). Of course, the motivational strength of such judgments isn't as strong as the motivational strength of judgments that stem from our immediate experience of emotions. As she further notes, the degree to which one is motivated may depend on one's moral training, and developing what is often called "will power" (Ibid).

ways? Many theorists attempt to answer the first question in terms of the emotions or other conative states such as desires, and their answers to the second question is determined by their discussion of (1). According to the most commonly, and perhaps least contentious story, we really do have a reason to treat others in these ways *because* we are disposed to care about their needs and interests, and we are disposed to care about their needs and interests because we are creatures capable of feeling guilt, remorse, shame, or regret when we do not treat them fairly. These experiences give us a desire to avoid others' shameful glare or the guilt of hurting others' interests, etc. And, since we want to be happy, or perhaps, satisfied with ourselves, we also have a reason to act in ways that respect others' attempts to pursue their own lives. And again, we occasionally have a reason to help them do so. Still, this leaves it open that we do not have a reason to act in these ways if not doing so does not affect our happiness, or perhaps, if ignoring (and taking advantage of) others' needs and interests doesn't affect our levels of satisfaction.

As discussed above, given their adherence to SPAHP, many theorists do not think that emotions and other conative states are the kind of mental states that can be assessed according to rational standards, thus while one can legitimately be called 'vicious,' 'cruel,' 'mean,' or 'opportunistic,' and so, someone to be avoided, one's lack of shame, remorse, or guilt over transgressions that would cause these feelings in the rest of us cannot be assessed as a rational defect. Nor can the person be said to have a reason to treat others' better, or to feel guilt et al. over such transgressions.

Now, why are we—or most of us, anyway—the kinds of creatures who are disposed to feel guilt, remorse, shame, outrage, as well as positive emotions such as moral admiration, and approval? A general account cannot necessarily be given, as each of these emotions

demands its own story. Many recent theorists have attempted to explain individual emotions, and these accounts hold some promise for assessing emotions in terms of rational standards. If emotions have intentional objects rather than merely being caused by it, we can assess the legitimacy of an emotion in terms of whether it (say) gets its object right. Lawrence Blum argues that compassion is directed towards another person's plight, and not merely caused by it. If the latter were the case, the emotion would be self-regarding rather than other-regarding, and so, non-altruistic. One's preoccupation would be the possibility of oneself being afflicted with a similar misfortune (Blum 1980, p. 511). Genuine compassion, then, has a proper object.

Compassion has other components, as well. Again, borrowing from Blum, compassion is directed at a difficult or miserable situation of another, which one regards as a grave or serious negative condition the other person faces, and a regard for the person's good (Ibid, pp. 508 – 509; p. 511). Blum further argues, "compassion is not a simple feeling-state but a complex emotional attitude towards another, characteristically involving imaginative dwelling on the condition of the other person, an active regard for his good, a view of him as a fellow human being, and emotional responses of a certain degree of intensity" (Ibid, p. 509). For example, one might be upset over the fact that something happened to the other person, hope the other person comes through it, wish the tragedy had not happened, etc. (Ibid). Importantly, compassion involves seeing the person's condition "as deviating from the general conditions of human flourishing" (Ibid, p. 512). For compassion to arise, one must recognize the person's suffering as something that could happen to any human being, including oneself. It may not regard the same circumstances, but one must see that something could befall one which would be incompatible with the conditions for one's own

flourishing. Finally, according to Blum's account, "Because compassion involves a sense of shared humanity, it promotes the experience of equality, even when accompanied by an acknowledgement of social inequality. Compassion forbids regarding social inequality as establishing human inequality. This is part of the moral force of compassion: by transcending the recognition of social inequality, it promotes the sensed experience of equality in common humanity" (Ibid, p. 512).

Now, Blum's account (or my summary of it) may not be complete, and it may falter in certain respects. But it is correct in the aspects I have noted here.⁸⁷ In particular, one who feels compassion towards another experiences that person as being, like oneself, vulnerable to external circumstances, which can alter one's ability to flourish, at least insofar as one's flourishing is determined (in part) by one's conception of what it is to do well. One need not believe that the other deserves one's compassion, as one may, in a moment, feel compassion towards one's cheating spouse who has been jilted by his lover. One likely believes that he deserves it, and that one should have expected this to occur because one took up with someone who also had little regard for the fact that her actions might hurt others. Yet one might momentarily feel compassion for one's ex-spouse because one sees that he, too, is vulnerable to the blindness of love (or infatuation), and regard this as a character flaw that isn't his fault.

The fact that someone can feel compassion even in such circumstances is not necessarily a mistake, and it explains (in part) our capacity to treat others with a certain regard in spite of how they have treated us. Possibly, it is one of the experiences that explain our belief that we are justified in turning the other cheek when someone hurts us. It likely

⁸⁷ See also, Martha Nussbaum (2001), Part II for a complete account of compassion, including a discussion of what distinguishes compassion from empathy.

explains our belief, at any rate, that we should not do unto others exactly as they have done unto us. This isn't to say that particular experiences lead us to treat those individuals this way. But the lessons of the experience of compassion can prompt us to question our initial impulse to retaliate against another in particular cases. Thus, emotions such as compassion have a scope in motivating us beyond our immediate experience. We are capable of forming general lessons about how it is appropriate to treat others from minimal experiences, and the repetition of certain experiences, such as the experience of compassion towards other people (or one person), can bootstrap us into have a certain attitude towards others.

But what do we say to the person who does not feel compassion towards another person in cases in which most of us would? Is his failure to see others a certain way a rational defect or merely a non-rational difference in his character? Does this person have a reason to see or treat others other than he treats them? Does compassion only give reasons to those who experience it? Blum notes that failure at being able to understand someone's condition by imaginatively reconstructing what our own reactions might be given certain beliefs, values, projects, concerns, etc., may cause one to fail to feel compassion. Similarly, those with a greater capacity to put themselves in others' shoes may have a greater capacity for compassion.⁸⁸ But is this failure at imagination a rational defect? In the remainder of this section, I will tentatively suggest that it is such a defect.

Consider two women who are both part of the same community, and who are both wives and parents. Each of these women does the same thing, but each has a different

⁸⁸ In short, while compassion is not equivalent to empathy, one who has a greater capacity to empathize with others is likely to have a greater capacity to feel compassion for others. However, compassion seems to be superior to empathy in moral development. While empathy is an important capacity in our ability to treat others as they deserve to be treated, it seems to be easier to manipulate than compassion. Empathy may be used strategically to help us figure out what motivates others so that others will better help us get what we want. Compassion goes beyond this in helping us do a better job of approaching others on their own terms in order to alleviate their suffering, and to help them flourish.

attitude towards what she does. Stella claims to be content to stay at home taking care of her husband and children. Though she loved her major in biology in college and she graduated with honors, she does not want to pursue it because, she believes, her true calling is to be a wife and mother. Meanwhile, her husband pursues his career pursuits and personal interests unfettered. He rarely helps with the more difficult aspects of taking care of his children, though he does play with them as well as take them to ball games. Stella's husband believes that his wife's place is in the home, and she seems to agree.

Stella's friend, Carol, is also raising her children while her husband works and pursues his personal interests. However, Carol is extremely frustrated. While she agreed with her husband that she would stay home to raise their two children, she has come to realize that giving up her career was a much greater setback to her personal development than she thought it would be. She feels bored and restless at home, and recently breaks into tears for little or no reason at all. She was on the fast track in her career when she quit, and she thought she could go back anytime to pick up where she left off. But this has proven to be harder than she thought it would be, and barriers to her reentry into work have arisen from all ends. She has failed to develop her skills over time, and she doesn't have the qualifications of those with whom she is competing for specific positions. She also senses the reluctance of mostly male employers to hire a woman who also has parenting responsibilities. Furthermore, her husband has made it difficult for her to pursue her career, subtly and not so subtly sabotaging her efforts. Most recently, he has threatened to cut off her access to their bank account if she continues to pursue her desire to work. Realizing it would be difficult to leave her husband because she cannot find a job that would pay her adequately, and because of her concerns about how this would affect her children, Carol has

given up in despair. She is frustrated, and even depressed over her circumstances, seeing no way out of her predicament.

Carol has confided in Stella about her situation, but Stella seems to lack any feeling or compassion for her friend's predicament. Instead, Stella tells a mutual friend that Carol should just be happy that she has a good husband to support her, and healthy children to fuss over. Carol's problem isn't that being a wife and mother is wrong for her, according to Stella. It is that Carol just does not see how fortunate she is to be a stay-at-home mother. After all, it is what women should do if they have the money and means to do so. Upon watching a television program which examined the predicament many women similar to Carol have found themselves in, Stella is filled with disgust over the selfishness of her contemporaries.

Stella doesn't feel compassion for her (so called) friend, thus she doesn't see a need to listen to her complaints, and she feels little compulsion to help her friend, or to try to cheer her up. Is Stella's lack of compassion a rational defect on her part? Should she be capable of listening compassionately to her friend or helping her in some way, given that she too is a human being with hopes and desires that may be thwarted by circumstances not of her own making? Suppose that Stella's belief about women's place is due to childhood training and education in a family and community that consistently undermined Stella's own attempts to fulfill personal goals. She loved biology, but was warned by her parents and teachers (and other relevant community members) not to take these things too seriously because she would ultimately give this up to raise a family. In short, suppose that Stella's personal goals are the result of an oppressive upbringing. Why should we assume that these goals are her own even though they reflect her deliberations about what to do with her life. The very factors that she

used to weigh her choices have been (say) corrupted by external influences in a way that leaves her ability to decide for herself suspect, and makes it difficult for her to take an appropriate interest in her own well being. She thinks she is choosing what will be best for her, but it isn't clear that she succeeds in doing so when she makes up her mind about what to do.

Now, if Stella's lack of imagination about her friend's situation is due to her inability to see that she too may be in a similar predicament, perhaps to be willfully blind to greater possibilities for her own life given her talents, or to perceive Carol's situation as one that is not entirely of her own making because Stella is blind to the corrupting familial and societal forces that have led each of them to make certain choices, then Stella's inability to feel compassion is defective. Furthermore, the reasons for action her lack of compassion causes her to overlook may truly be reasons for Stella in spite of the fact that she doesn't take them seriously. Now, this does not mean that any education or family upbringing is corrupt. Either may be justifiably treated as corrupt, however, if they cause a person to (nearly) systematically disregard possibilities for her life that are important to human flourishing.⁸⁹

In practice, those who think that morality must be connected with the satisfaction of a person's desires, in particular, a person's desire to be happy, are fairly confident that in practice, most of us will act morally and cultivate the necessary moral motives. For they are

⁸⁹ In "Autonomy Reconsidered," Sarah Buss attempts to reconcile her account of the conditions that can undermine a person's ability to make autonomous choices with feminist accounts of how an ideology one shares with other members of one's community can undermine one's autonomy. She argues, "How can a noncoercive education, willingly received, undermine a person's capacity for autonomous choice? My suggestion is that the feminist critique is grounded in a particular conception of the good life for human beings: according to the critics, the considerations which women are less inclined to take seriously, the possibilities which they are most likely to discount, are the sort of considerations... which most human beings must take seriously if they are to live full, flourishing lives. In the view of these critics, if it never occurs to someone with talent, intelligence, and sufficient means that she might be an astrophysicist or a political leader or a composer, then if her lack of vision can be attributed to the nonrational influence of certain cultural ideals, these ideals can be blamed from preventing her from determining her own fate—and so can the people who promote these ideals" (Buss 1994, 112).

fairly confident that most of us cannot live a satisfactory life or a life of satisfaction if we systematically disregard others' interests. Others' opinions are capable of getting to us because we are capable of seeing ourselves in others' eyes. Their disapproving attitude is typically enough to cause us pain which causes us to conform to moral standards.

Furthermore, if we fail to take others' ends seriously in pursuing our own ends, this eventually catches up to us. Others will not help us get what we want, nor will they socialize with us, and we all need human companionship to live a good life. Thus, we have good reason to be people who care about others, not merely people who appear to care about others, because others ultimately have a way of seeing through to our real motives, and won't trust us if they don't think we're truly interested in them.

This very condensed summary of a particular story about how we become moral creatures is problematic. While it takes seriously the effect that others have on us, in particular, our ability to feel guilt, shame, remorse, as well as empathy, compassion, etc., insufficiently told, it cannot explain the distinctions we make between appropriate and inappropriate instances of these feelings—shame, guilt, etc. There are cases in which others cannot get to us in spite of the glare of their disapproval, and our imperturbability seems appropriate. Why does another person's disapproving glance cause shame in some cases, but not in others? And why does it cause guilt in some cases, but shame in others? Why do we admire people for not being shaken by others' approval or disapproval in some cases, yet chastise them for their insensitivity in others? A more complex story about the objects of individual emotions, rather than a causal story about the connection between pleasure and pain and moral motivation is required here.

Furthermore, if the above discussion of compassion is on the right track, then the connection between morality and happiness is backwards in the above account. We don't act morally because it makes us happy or is a more satisfactory life. A person's unhappiness may rather be due to a failure in her imaginative (and other) capacities, capacities she has good reason to develop. Because she lacks these important capacities, Stella is insufficiently compassionate towards her friends' plight, and her lack of compassion may be indicative of a deeper fracture in her ability to see and properly appreciate the good reasons she has for pursuing certain ends.

CHAPTER III

DO DESIRES GIVE US REASONS FOR ACTION?

Introduction

In our ordinary lives, we treat others' practical views—including their responses towards various objects and actions—as potentially authoritative for us, and we hold others accountable for certain actions and responses without regard for their actual desires or motivations. We criticize our own and others' desires, as well as the actions that flow from them. Parents sometimes reprimand their children specifically because they deem their children's actual motivations to be problematic in some way, or because their children lack a motivation the parents deem important. Even when parents tell their children, 'You know better than to lie to me,' or 'You know better than to hit your friends,' their claims are only partly an ascription of a mental state to their children. The role of such claims in some cases is to supply the child with a motivation parents think they should have. We also do this with ourselves and other individuals whom we treat in word and action to be (more or less) full-fledged practical agents. We hold others responsible for actions without knowing whether they have the relevant motivation, and we treat them as someone who ought to live up to various practical and moral demands without attempting to investigate whether they are motivated to live up to those demands. Furthermore, regardless of how much thought we put into a decision about what to do, we realize that we might change our minds once we act, or that we might revise our beliefs with the insight that comes from experience. Thus, we believe that our present evaluative perspective may be misguided, and that there might be more to what we have a reason to do than can be gleaned from our own perspective.

What is the status of those claims we make that do not appeal to an individual's subjective motivational psychology, or which involve a claim about the irrationality of a person's desires or other aspects of her psychology that motivate her to act? According to one widely held account of reasons for action, these are not legitimate claims about what an individual has a reason to do. According to proponents of this view, since practical reasons are connected with what we are motivated to do, and since only a person's (broadly speaking) desires can motivate her to act, reasons for action must invoke a person's desires, or some aspect of a person's subjective motivational psychology capable of motivating action.⁹⁰ In all of its variations, theorists who hold this view hold some version of the Standard Philosophical Account of Human Psychology (SPAHP) discussed in chapter 2, according to which cognitive states alone aren't capable of motivating action. Proponents of what I will call 'The Standard Account of Practical Reasons,' or SAPR, hold that since reason alone cannot motivate action, a consideration that does not appeal to a person's desires or something she is already motivated to do—or could be motivated to do if she realized its connection with helping her get something she already wants—does not give her a reason for action.

A great deal of what drives the different versions of SAPR is their view about the role desires play in our practical lives. In this chapter, I distinguish the role emotions play in our practical lives from the role proponents of SAPR think desires play in our practical lives, and I argue that their reasons for limiting reason's role in criticizing a person's desires do not apply to emotions. I further argue that the account of desires at the heart of SAPR is

⁹⁰ Thus, the view I am discussing includes versions of SAPR which argue for a broader conception of the mental states that provide a person with reasons for action. For example, Bernard Williams argues that the elements from which we deliberate may include desires, but other motivating mental states as well. I discuss his account in more detail below.

misguided, and that theorists who hold this view cannot explain why desires are reasons for action from the first person perspective, a point which is important to explain their role in practical deliberation. Agreeing with these theorists that desires give us reasons for action, I sketch a different account of desiring from the first person perspective which better explains why we are disposed to take our desires seriously in deliberating about what to do. Finally, my argument entails that a person's desires may be corrected, a claim which seems to take away an important motivation for SAPR, namely, their view that if a person's "ultimate" or bottoming out desires cannot be corrected by others, individuals are protected from others' heavy handedness and paternalistic measures. In contrast, I argue that as developing practical agents interested in finding the best reasons for action, we have good reasons for treating others' evaluative perspective as potentially authoritative for us. The key to my argument is the foregoing account of practical experience as embodied perceptual states.

What are Desires?

One way theorists have distinguished passions, sentiments, feelings, or desires from cognitive states is in terms of whether the state represents external objects or states of affairs, thus whether the state can be assessed as true or false. Hume suggests this view in the *Treatise*. He says, "A passion is an original existence, or, if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification" (Hume 1978, p. 415).⁹¹ But while some contemporary theorists take desires to be something akin to phenomenological tugs or pulls, which have no propositional content, most theorists hold that beliefs do have propositional content. Desires

⁹¹ This is not to suggest that this is Hume's view about passions, although it is one interpretation of his view. I doubt that this interpretation is correct, especially as it regards moral sentiments.

aren't simply urges for something, akin to raw tickles and pangs, but have intentional objects. According to these theorists, beliefs and desires can be distinguished in terms of their different directions of fit, or the way in which the world and the propositional content of the mental state are made to fit each other. Beliefs are states which aim to represent objective states of affairs, and they should be changed when their content does not match the world. Desires are states which aim to make the world match their content, and it is the world that should be changed when the desire and the world do not match. Given that desires are states which try to make the world match their content, the fact that one's desires do not match its content isn't a reason for changing or revising a desire.⁹²

How does one come to the view that reason and passion, or beliefs and desires, are distinct? The most common method is to observe cases in which a belief motivates action, and cases in which it doesn't, and explain the difference between the two cases in terms of a passion or desire. For example, why does my belief that there is milk in the refrigerator sometimes motivate me to go to the store to get milk, and sometimes it doesn't? The difference has to do with whether I have a desire for milk. James Dreier puts the point this way:

Maybe the agent walked to the corner shortly before noon because he remembered his promise to meet his sister on the corner at noon. Do we need to add, 'and he wanted to keep his promise'? We might. But we might instead say, 'he believed that he has an obligation to keep the promise.' Then must we add, 'and he wanted to discharge his obligation'? I think we do need to add something. For after all, some people recognize their obligations and do not act on them. What we need to add is something to the effect that this is a sort of person whom the thought of an obligation normally moves to action (Dreier 2001, pp. 30 – 31).

⁹² It should be noted that we often do revise our desires in light of our beliefs. The point is that rationality does not demand that we do so.

In connection with this view about the nature of beliefs and desires, theorists argue that motivating reasons, that is, the reasons that explain a person's actions, are belief/desire pairs. And, since rational action is action for a reason, only a person's desires, along with her beliefs, can provide her with (normative) reasons for action.⁹³

Two Accounts of Desires

As noted above, there are (roughly) two accounts of desires proponents of SAPR defend. According to the phenomenological account, desires are states similar to hunger and thirst, or raw urges, tickles or pangs. While there are some defenders of this view, most contemporary theorists reject it as a complete account of desires. One reason cited is that desires aren't always introspectively available to an agent; they do not always have a definite "feel" to them. Michael Smith argues against this view, claiming that long standing desires do not always have much of a feel. For example, a father may actually feel the pang of his desire for his children's well-being from time to time, but not always, and probably not even most of the time (Smith 1987, 48). Yet it wouldn't be unreasonable to ascribe a desire for his

⁹³ This point is connected with the debate over whether all reasons for action are internal, or whether there can be external reasons for action. In general, many theorists hold that reasons for action are connected with what we are motivated to do. As discussed in chapter 2, the thought that one is obligated to do something or that something is one's duty typically motivates a person to act. Similarly, when one deliberates and comes to a conclusion about what to do, the action command implicit in one's judgment transmits to a motivation to act, at least if the person is rational. According to J. Mackie, moral concepts, in particular, are "intrinsically action guiding": the state of mind which is the discernment of a moral distinction by itself influences action. (See Charlotte Brown (1988), p. 75, for this point about Mackie's view.) Bernard Williams defends a version of internalism on this basis. His view is compatible with SAPR because of his commitment to SPAHP. Other theorists, for example, Thomas Nagel and Christine Korsgaard, are internalists, though they are not proponents of SAPR or SPAHP. According to Korsgaard's view, rational beings are capable of being motivating by rational considerations, thus in order to discover what a person has a reason to do, we can examine the contents of the laws of reason. As rational beings, we are capable of being motivating by these considerations, though since we aren't always rational, we sometimes fail to be properly motivated. These theorists agree that rational action is action for a reason, and despite their disagreement they all reject the view that reasons for action are external reasons. One such a view, a person's reasons for action and her motive for acting would be distinct, and the person is (perhaps) only accidentally rational. In criticizing the latter view, Christine Korsgaard, notes, "unless reasons are motives, we cannot be said to be practically rational" (Korsgaard 2001, p. 109).

children's well-being to the father, according to Smith, when he does not experience this pang. As noted above, another problem often cited with respect to the phenomenological account is that that desires do have propositional content.⁹⁴ One desires, for example, *that* one's children have a good life, or *that* one win the contest.

Most theorists hold that desires are dispositions to act which are attributed to a person through observation of her (verbal and non-verbal) behavior in conjunction with the attribution of a belief. For example, suppose that I go to the refrigerator, and I believe that by doing so I will be able to get a can of soda, but that I would not have gone to the refrigerator without that belief. If so, then it is reasonable to attribute the desire for a can of soda to me. Now, nothing in the latter account rules out the phenomenological conception completely, as a person's dispositional desires can from time to time be accompanied by some feeling or agitation. One might argue that if the father really has a desire for his children's well-being, then if one (or more) of his children's well-being were threatened in some way, he would feel the pang of his desire for their well-being.

This account of desires is excessively broad, and the category of desires must be more carefully circumscribed to distinguish habitual actions or routine behavior, which disposes us to act in particular ways given what we see to be the case, from action motivated by a desire. What plausibly distinguishes the two? One way to distinguish desires from routine habitual actions is in terms of whether one acts to attain a goal, or whether action involves consciousness of the desired object.⁹⁵ Desires plausibly involve acting towards a goal, and often with that goal in mind. Habitual actions do not. Suppose I desire to go on vacation,

⁹⁴ See, e.g., Smith, "The Humean Theory of Motivation."

⁹⁵ This latter way of putting the point was suggested by Jeffrey Tlumak in commenting on Spinoza's way of distinguishing action motivated by a desire from routine habituated behavior. In "What is Moral Maturity?," Hubert Dreyfus makes a similar point about (what he refers to as) the skillful coping of the expert in contrast to activity that is guided by choice or pursuit of a goal.

and decide to peruse the internet on a rainy afternoon to find a hotel in my desired destination. I spend the afternoon doing something that will help me satisfy my desire to go on vacation, and stop once I book a hotel room. This kind of action can be contrasted with other cases in which I act habitually, though not with a goal in mind.

Suppose that it is part of my daily routine to grab the mail out of the mailbox when I get home from work. I rarely give much thought to what I am doing, and I do not necessarily desire to see what is in the mail or to pick it up, as it usually contains bills which I would rather not face. And if my husband picked up the mail before I got home, or if there was no mail on a particular day, I wouldn't necessarily be disappointed. To be sure, I might be waiting for something exciting in the mail, and on a particular day, I cannot wait to get home to see if it is there. Ordinarily, however, I simply see that there is mail in the mailbox, and I grab it on my way in the house.

As well, one must be careful in how broadly one ascribes a desire to someone, especially insofar as one's desires are thought to play a role in deliberation. It is nearly vacuous to say that a parent desires her children's well-being. Furthermore, as specificationists remind us, some desires are too broad to form a basis for deliberation, and must be more narrowly specified if they are to play an effective role in deliberation. One works on one's children's well being one or two steps at a time in connection with one's conception of what one must do to help one's children flourish. We might say, then, in the spirit of Aristotle that one's more general desire for one's children's well-being must give way to more concretely specified desires if they are to be useful in deliberating about what to do. Thus, even if we stretch the term 'desire' to include such broad aspirations, it is worth

discussing further what desiring is like from the first person perspective, that is, the perspective from which individuals make up their minds about what to do.

Finally, while I have focused on the role of desires in motivating actions, this isn't their only role in our practical lives. According to proponents of SAPR, desires play a particular role in evaluative thought. Via our desires, we come to prefer or value certain objects or states of affairs, and our values and preferences determine our beliefs about what objects are good or desirable, which actions we ought to pursue. Thus, we can attribute a desire to someone, not only on the basis of whether she is motivated to pursue an object. We can also attribute a desire to someone by taking note of the process of deliberation, and the features she gives most weight to in deciding what to do. If I give more weight to keeping my promise to a friend in deliberating about what to do than I give to my desire to stay home and read a book, then it is determined that I am the sort of person who cares about keeping her promises (Robertson 2001, p. 140).

Emotions, Desires and Practical Experience

The broad use of the term 'desire' in non-cognitivist accounts of desires has often been invoked in criticisms of this view. Thomas Nagel makes this point, noting that their account of desires seems to include not only those motivational states that seem simply to assail the agent, such as the desire for food and water, but other motivational states along the spectrum, for example, those that are the product of deliberation, or, more generally, those which, from the agent's perspective, are supported by reasons.⁹⁶ The latter category of

⁹⁶ This is not to say that a person always has explicit or fully articulated reasons for all of her beliefs, or that the reasons given to justify a particular belief are the reasons why a person came to hold the belief. It is simply to note that one assumes one's judgment is supported by reasons. This is exhibited by the fact that one is under pressure (by oneself and others) to give reasons for her judgment in a way she isn't in the case of her desires.

desires can be more narrowly called ‘evaluative judgments.’ In his own discussion, Nagel labels the former category ‘unmotivated desires’ and the latter ‘motivated desires.’

Unmotivated desires are (roughly) those which a person has independently of having reasons for them. Motivated desires are desires had for reasons. Common sense suggests that motivated desires can be explained in terms of reasons and belief. However, according to those who embrace SPAHP, motivated desires are constituted (at least in part) by other desires. At bottom, the fundamental motivating states are unmotivated desires. Given their view about the bifurcation between cognitive and motivating mental states, this explanation of motivated desires has the consequence that a person’s evaluative judgment is no more (or less) supported by reasons than any other desire.

Most theorists have taken this insight as the point of departure for their discussion of practical reasons, typically attempting to defend the view that reason is capable of motivating action directly. But there are problems with the broad use of the term ‘desires’ in the above accounts even if it is acknowledged that such states play a role in shaping our beliefs about what to do.

First, there is an apparent problem with the idea that a person’s desires (along with her beliefs) explain her actions. Emotions seem to play a direct role in explaining a person’s actions. For example, I might be moved by pity to help a stranger, but this seems to be different than being motivated because I want to help this stranger. I may not want to help her, as I will be late for an appointment if I stop to help her. Still, I am moved by her plight, and reach out to help in spite of what this does to my plans. Further, I do not want the world to be such that a person (a stranger in this case) needs my help or anyone else’s, and I certainly do not want the world to be such that I have to rearrange my schedule to perform a

good deed.⁹⁷ I would rather that I didn't have to do so. Perhaps pity does give rise to a desire to help this person. If so, then emotions give rise to desires, but they aren't equivalent to desires. Thus, emotions do not fit neatly under the label 'desire.'

While desires are thought to play a role in evaluative thought and deliberation, their primary role is to motivate action. If desires are primarily motivations, which dispose a person to act in certain ways, then practical experience as I have discussed it is something different. In order to explain, consider the distinction Prinz makes in his discussion of emotions between motives and motivations. According to this distinction, motives give a person, *ceteris paribus*, a reason to act while motivations impel action. This is not to say that motives such as emotions have no connection with what we are motivated to do. But as Prinz points out, although emotions prepare a person for action, they fall short of disposing or impelling action (Prinz 2004, p. 193).

Emotions do not always lead directly to action, but rather, play a role primarily in thought.⁹⁸ For example, I might listen to a friend's plight with compassion without my feelings giving rise to a desire to do anything to change the world so that the events that gave rise to her plight do not exist. I may wish that things were not as they are for my friend, or curse the events that led to her plight, or scan the horizon to see what can be done to make

⁹⁷ Martha Nussbaum makes a similar point about emotions in *Upheavals of Thought*. She further notes that "emotions do attempt to fit the world, and as well—both to take in the events that really do take place, and to get an appropriate view of what matters or has value" (2001, 48). The account of emotions developed in chapter 1 does not agree with Nussbaum's view that emotions are evaluative judgments, however, on this view, it is the case that emotions track objective events, specifically, changes in a person's ability to fare well in the world.

⁹⁸ Prinz explains the appeal of appraisal theories of emotions over non-cognitivist accounts, "There is a deep intuition that emotions are meaningful. They are not simply arbitrary feelings. Instead they inform us about our relationship to the world, they embody our convictions, and they factor intelligibly into our decisions in life" (Prinz 2004, 16). Something similar seems to be the case with desires. Even for proponents of the Standard Account, a person's desires are supposed to guide her practical deliberations and help her make decisions about what to do, not merely move her to act. In order to play this role, it would seem that a person's desires have to be more than motivational states such as whims or urges, or relatively stable dispositions to go after certain things.

her situation better. But it does not necessarily dispose me to do anything about her plight. Or again, regret prompts an individual to rethink a response or an action taken, possibly in light of the recognition that important factors were overlooked in deciding how to act, or in acting without thinking about the repercussions of the action. But it doesn't necessarily impel action. It may simply prompt the agent to consider her options more carefully in the future. If the agent does act differently in light of a past experience of regret, or deliberates more carefully in the future, regret can be invoked to explain the agent's actions. This doesn't mean that regret motivates action directly in such a case. Rather, it may be that the agent recalls the past situation in which things went badly, and so, decides to do things differently in the present case. As noted above, it might be that insofar as emotions motivate action, they are relevant to the formation of desires to change some aspect of the world. But emotions cannot be included in the same category as desires, especially if desires are defined primarily as motivational states.

Now, as noted above, desires are also thought to play a role in deliberation, and the formation of our preferences, goals, and even evaluative judgment. However, the way in which they do so differs from the role emotions play in evaluative thought. On the narrowest view, desires set the standards for an individual; deliberation is deliberation from one's desires, or deliberation about how to satisfy one's desires. Some theorists, such as Bernard Williams, retain the spirit of this view, but try to incorporate a broader range of activities to be included under practical reasoning, and the elements that constitute deliberation. According to his view, deliberation issues from an agent's subjective motivational psychology, and involves not only a person's desires, but also, "dispositions of evaluation, patterns of emotional reaction, personal loyalties, and various projects, as they may be

abstractly called, embodying commitments of the agent” (Williams 2001, p. 81). Williams calls this a person’s subjective motivational set, or S, and says that from this basis, there are wider possibilities for deliberation than determining how to satisfy some elements in one’s S. Deliberation may include, Williams claims, “thinking how the satisfaction of elements in S can be combined, e.g., by time-ordering; where there is some irresolvable conflict among the elements of S, considering which one attaches most weight to...; or, again, finding constitutive solutions, such as deciding what would make for an entertaining evening, granted that one wants entertainment” (Ibid, p. 80).

But even Williams’ broader conception of the inputs and outputs of practical deliberation remains in the spirit of the narrower view. The elements of one’s S are taken as given, though he notes that commitments can be added or dropped on the basis of deliberation. How is this done? One might consider which of two possibilities one wants more, and so practical deliberation might involve the attempt to figure out whether one wants to satisfy one desire at the expense of another. And this deliberative process will proceed from one’s dispositions of evaluation, or other elements in one’s S. The role elements of one’s S play, then, is to dispose one to evaluate possibilities in a particular way, perhaps given knowledge of something else one wants; reason plays the role of helping one figure out (say) whether two elements can both be satisfied, and which one wants more just in case they cannot both be satisfied.

This idea about the role of desires and other similar states in practical deliberation can be contrasted with the role it plays on the account developed in chapter 1. There I argued that emotions and other mental states that constitute practical experience may force us to take seriously certain possible reasons for action, and they can highlight possible responses, or

even, ways of living, we might not have otherwise treated seriously. For example, Forman's experience on the island does not so much determine her assessment of the importance of civility as it opens up possibilities she had not previously considered. Perhaps it "drives" her to take seriously possible reasons for action she has previously overlooked. Macon's experiences over the course of the novel, *The Accidental Tourist*, cause him to reassess whether he and Sarah belong together rather than strictly causing him to prefer Muriel. While Macon's various experiences over the course of the novel prompt him to consider different possibilities, it is up to Macon to make something of his various experiences at the end of the novel. On the face of it, practical deliberation cannot be treated merely as deliberation aimed at satisfying one's current desires. Similar to perception in the theoretical domain, we also deliberate about whether to take our (novel) experiences seriously, or whether to discount the appearances as (say) an illusion.

Now, it should be noted that nothing in the above views prevents reflection on one's desires, nor does it prevent one from thinking that we can evaluate, and rationally rank our desires. A person's higher order desires may prompt her to form an evaluation of lower order desires, thus prompting one to choose to satisfy one desire over the other desire. This further desire can be ranked according to how well it satisfies still a further desire, and so on, at least until we come to a desire that is not a means to satisfying a further desire. The typically held terminus of all desires is happiness, or alternatively, the desire to incur as little frustration as possible. That is, according to these theorists, we have a desire to be happy, or not frustrated, and these are the desires that all other desires ultimately serve. Thus, what I should do today is ultimately determined by my understanding of how well each desire satisfies my (given or brutally there) desire to be happy.

Interestingly, this model of practical deliberation doesn't square well with Macon's story. According to the above account of the role desires play in evaluative thought, Macon's preference to leave Sarah, or perhaps (in conjunction with) his preference to be with Muriel, determine his judgment that he and Sarah are no longer suited for each other. His desire to be happy, or not to be frustrated, takes the form of a desire to go back to Muriel. Given this account of a person's ultimate end, the satisfaction of those desires that are (truly) a means to one's happiness should provide one with some level of satisfaction, or at least, an absence of frustration. But notice that while Macon was with Muriel earlier, he was still frustrated over the separation with his wife, and while he enjoyed being with Muriel, overall, he still wanted to be reunited with Sarah. This is why he drives straight to her house when she finally asks him to do so upon returning from a business trip. It isn't until the experience in the hotel that Macon finally puts the pieces together, and realizes that he and Sarah no longer belong together. It is only as he comes to this realization that Macon is truly able to take comfort in seeing Muriel. I take it that whether being with Muriel is a means to Macon's happiness isn't merely a fact of the matter about what would make him happy. His happiness is sensitive to his perception of facts about what makes relationships work, and this belief is influenced by his experiences with the different women.⁹⁹ In this way, also, Macon's desire to be with Muriel doesn't so much precede changes in his evaluative beliefs, but arises in conjunction with—or as a result of—these changes.

⁹⁹ This point is compatible with what other theorists have argued about the connection between a person's conception of her good, and her happiness. In "The Irrationality of Happiness," Sarah Buss offers several constraints on what a person can take to be part of her good, arguing that determining what one's happiness consists in or wherein one's good lies is related for an individual to the question of the ends one stands a chance of realizing (Buss 2004).

The Myriad Role of Desires

It is likely that no unified account of desires can or should be attempted. Desires play a role in motivating action. In this sense, they are motivations to act. Using the terminology discussed above, they are also motives, which give us reasons for action.¹⁰⁰ But from the agent's perspective, not just any motivational state provides *her* with a reason to act. Proponents of SAPR seem to think that desires are an obvious starting point for practical deliberation because acting to satisfy our desires is obviously motivating for an agent if anything is. But while desires are internal to an agent as psychological states on this view, they aren't essentially evaluative states, so it is possible to ascribe a desire to someone even if she sees nothing good or desirable about acting on her desires. From the first person perspective, one's desires may not be good reasons for acting, and one may refrain from acting on them.

Now, in our common sense view, desires provide a person with a reason to act. In this sense, they are motives rather than motivations.¹⁰¹ They may not outweigh other considerations, but even when they conflict with our beliefs about what we should do or what it would be good to do, all things considered, a desire is a reason for action. It is in their capacity as reasons for action that actions taken in light of them make sense to the agent and others, as well. What must desiring be like from the agent's perspective in order for desires to fill this role? One model theorists have suggested is the perceptual model in which desires are (roughly) perceptions of desirability. This model is thought to make sense of the fact that

¹⁰⁰ In *Gut Reactions*, Prinz argues that no unified account of desires can be given. According to his view, desiring something is often a motivation to attain it. It is an action command that gets entered into "the subsystems that guide...behavior. Barring impediments, auxiliary commands will then be rallied in place to satisfy that goal" (p. 196). In some cases, though desires are synonymous with hoping that some state of affairs comes about, and so, are more akin to emotions. In the latter case, desires are reasons for action. See his, pp. 196 – 197.

¹⁰¹ Prinz notes, "Qua motives, desire gives us a reason to act. It beckons us to make a decision. Qua motivations, desire directly drives us to act." See his (2004), p. 197.

desires confer rationality on a person's actions, that is, provide her with a reason to act (Stampe 1987; see esp. pp. 262 – 263). Dennis Stampe holds this view, arguing that just as perceptual states confer rationality on the beliefs one forms in light of them, as perceptions of desirability, desires confer rationality on actions taken in accordance with them (Ibid). Something's looking like a rock or feeling like a rock gives one reasons for believing that it is a rock even if one has better reasons for believing it isn't a rock. Similarly, he argues, "My desire to have a beer may be a reason for me to have one, even if there is better reason not to, and even if I know it would not be a good idea to have a beer. This is now explained, if my desire is a kind of perception—if my desire for a thing is a state wherein it [seems] to me as if it would be a good thing to have one" (Ibid, pp. 262 – 263).

Stampe's view sheds light on why we treat desires as reasons for action. For example, suppose that Jane has two job offers, and she is having a difficult time deciding which to take.¹⁰² She goes over the merits of each job with me, but after doing so, Jane turns to me and says, 'I know Company Y is a good prospect. But there is something about Company X that appeals to me. I really want to accept this offer.' Jane's desire to work for X is offered as a reason for accepting Company X's offer. And, I might agree that Jane's wanting to work at X (at least more than Y) certainly is a reason—if not a good one—in favor of accepting their offer. We can even imagine that I tell Jane on the basis of this fact that she should choose X's offer. And this is true even if I think her decision to go with Company X is a little crazy in other respects. Perhaps the salary and position are better at Company Y. For this reason, I might think that this is a better choice, objectively speaking. But I can make sense of Jane's choosing X if I know that she desires to work for this company in a way that she doesn't desire to work for Y. And again, I can view it as a reason

¹⁰² Stampe provides a similar example, though my example is not intended to replicate his exactly.

for choosing X, even if I still think there are better reasons for choosing Y. This isn't true for motivations. Just knowing that someone is inclined or disposed to go after X does not make me (or her) think that she has a reason to do x. But the fact that someone desires x seems to be a reason to do (or choose) x.

It is noticeable in this case, as well, that desires are similar to emotions in their deliberative role. Although Jane's desire draws her attention to X and forces it to stand out in a way that Y does not, her desire to work for X falls short of compelling her to act. It makes its appearance in her deliberations as a reason for choosing X rather than as a factor that controls her deliberations. Jane does not simply move from the desire to work for X to the conclusion that she should choose X, nor does it drive or compel her to choose X over Y. Rather, she considers the relative merits of each, takes account of her desire as further reason for choosing X over Y, and possibly chooses X on this basis.

Still, there are reasons for resisting the above account as a complete account of desires. Elijah Millgram has pointed out that mental states which do and should fade over time cannot be observations of more stable objects, for example, desirability. His discussion focuses around pleasure, which he takes to be (roughly) an observation of changes in one's welfare (Millgram 2000 121; see also, fn. 9, 121-122). Desires are also states which do and should fade once their objects have been satisfied, thus do not seem to be states which track desirability. If recent psychological studies are correct, one very quickly ceases appreciating what one has acquired, regardless of how badly one wanted it. What seemed like the key to one's happiness quickly becomes part of the backdrop against which one forms new desires (Gertner 2003).

So what are desires from the first person perspective? Consider what various instances labeled ‘desire’ have in common. Consider hunger or thirst, and the desire for food and drink to which these bodily states give rise. Hunger and thirst and other physiological states disturb bodily equilibrium, and satisfying the desire for food and drink restores equilibrium. Emotional bouts are also states of an agent that disrupt bodily equilibrium, and the desires to which they give rise tell the agent—rightly or wrongly—how to restore equilibrium. Fleeing in response to fear seems to the agent to be a way to restore equilibrium. In chapter 2, Carla’s desire to apologize or otherwise make amends with Elliot arose as a way to restore the equilibrium set off by her feelings of remorse over hurting Elliot.

This is also the case for desires that arise in our daily lives. For example, suppose that I have been asked to teach a course that is a higher level course in philosophy than I have taught before. I put together a list of assignments for the course that seem to me to be ambitious, yet certainly reasonable requirements. However, over the first few weeks of class, it becomes obvious that the students are having a great deal of trouble with the assignments. In spite of this fact, I may continue to believe that the requirements are reasonable, perhaps thinking that the students are lazy or simply aren’t rising to the occasion. But over time I grow frustrated with the students and the course, and I “give up.” I begin to think that the course would be much easier to teach if I adjusted the assignments to better fit their ostensible abilities, and while I may not believe that such a change is a good idea for the students, I desire to do so. In this case, my desire to change the syllabus arises as a response to factors in my circumstances I had not anticipated, and seems to me to be a way of making the situation better: the course as well as my attitude towards it. Thus, my desire arises as a

way of directing my attention to possibilities that will help me get a better grip on my circumstances, or perhaps, help me to adapt to the actual situation in which I find myself.¹⁰³

Whatever the objects of a person's desires, the trajectory that leads one to desire something is complex, and may take into account many factors. A person's history may explain why she desires something, and as noted above, certainly emotions are one of the factors that play a role in what we come to desire.¹⁰⁴ While a person may become aware—whether rightly or wrongly—of the trajectory of her desires, what grabs her attention is the object of her desire. And, while I would not argue that desires are phenomenological tugs or pulls, desiring from the agent's perspective does have such a component, thus we speak of our heart's desire and aching with desire for something. It is likely that if the gap between wanting something and getting it is small, we are more aware of the object of our desire. But as the gap between wanting something and our (seeming) ability to get it widens, we become more aware of the phenomenological component of our desires. I suspect that this is because other emotions become involved in a way they don't when our desires can be more easily satisfied. Continuing pursuit of the desire involves questions about the importance of the object of desire to one's overall happiness and well being, as well as one's identity or conception of one's good. Thus, the stakes become higher in such cases, and we are more apt to set our sights on getting exactly what we desire.

Now, what does desiring in this sense have in common with emotions and other hedonic states such as pleasure and pain? While I think the two are less capable of a neat distinction than theorists have acknowledged, we do speak and distinguish our desires from other emotions, so it is worth attempting to offer at least a rough distinction between the two.

¹⁰³ This account of desires corresponds with Millgram's idea that desires are for something, namely, to guide one's choices, and so, they must be ambitious yet realistic (Millgram 2000, 133).

¹⁰⁴ Of course, a person's history may play a role in determining her emotions, as well.

Desires are sometimes distinguished from emotions in terms of their objects. While emotions are typically directed at actual states of affairs, or things as they already are, desires are directed at states of affairs that have yet to be realized. While this is only a rough distinction, and counter-examples can surely be discovered, it is a helpful way to distinguish the two.¹⁰⁵ To complete the analogy, I would argue (somewhat tentatively) that via our desires we perceive possible objects or states of affairs as holding the promise of helping us improve our lives in some way.

This account is descriptive, yet also normative, for it is often the case that one thinks one's life will be permanently happy if one satisfies one's desires. One thinks that only if one had a spouse, a million dollars, or a fabulous career, one's well-being will be permanently altered in such a way that one will be permanently happier, if not permanently happy. More so than the other cases of desiring discussed, desires that lead us to form such beliefs stretch far beyond our immediate or immediately foreseeable circumstances, and inform or reflect our ideals. Assessing the adequacy of these desires is difficult, because it is likely the case that as the gulf widens between what we want and our ability to get it, emotions and other practical states likely play a role in making the satisfaction of these desires central to a person's conception of her happiness.

Still, many theorists and psychologists have pointed out that we are mistaken to think that satisfying our desires will leave us permanently happier, perhaps regardless of the ambitiousness of the desire, or the extent to which we think the satisfaction of a desire will affect our overall lives. Changing my expectations for my course is not so ambitious, and if I do not have strong ideals about the role of academia or my role as a teacher, not much will be

¹⁰⁵ One counter-example might be hope. Insofar as hope is thought to be an emotion, it is directed at states of affairs that have yet to be realized. However, hoping and desiring likely overlap in these cases. See footnote 12 above.

at stake for me in revising my syllabus. Perhaps just a few inconveniences will occur as a result of my decision to switch gears. Yet making a million dollars as opposed to making a middle class income seems as though it would have a great impact on my life. But if theorists are right, there may not be much difference between the way in which satisfying these very different desires will impact my overall welfare. Why is this? Generally, it is due, in part, to the fact that once we satisfy our desires, we are put in a position in which there will be a new gap between what we have and what we want, and this will become the object of our focus. The things we have become part of the backdrop against which we form new desires. Thus, strictly speaking, these more ambitious desires may not impact a person's overall happiness or long term happiness much more than the satisfaction of less ambitious desires (cf. Gilbert & Wilson 2001). And when a person's desires are, practically speaking, extremely unlikely to be satisfied, there may be good reasons for rethinking even one's most reflectively held ideals, and the desires aimed at helping one realize those ideals. At least, this may be true if other actions one might take will help one improve one's chances of faring better in one's circumstances.

For these same reasons, correcting our own and others' desires may need to be treated with some care, and there is some insight to be gleaned from the original position considered: that a person's ultimate desires are beyond the scope of rational assessment. Since how reasonable one's desires are may depend on how likely they are to guide one to make choices that can improve one's welfare in some way, and since it is possible to alter one's circumstances to some extent, including one's abilities, so that one's desires can be satisfied, the boundaries of one's circumstances aren't always clear. Surely some talented teachers are able to raise students to a new level so that what seems impossible for them to achieve in the

first week may be utterly reasonable by week 10 or 12. In this case, one has good reason to maintain one's ambitious agenda in the face of frustration and student complaints. On the other hand, these same teachers may need 30 weeks or more to raise students to the levels required for the course, and they may have good reason to revise their current syllabi, and encourage students to take Part II of the course. Whether one should revise one's current syllabus in the scenario described above depends on an adequate assessment of one's own talents, one's students' talents, university requirements, and probably a dollop of good luck. Thus, even when we do not 'know' that we can satisfy our desires or that we will find satisfaction in satisfying them, we may have good reason to act on them, hoping that experience and effort will provide us with further insight.

Further, while the satisfaction of our desires may have unintended negative effects, they may also have unintended positive effects. A mother who finds herself unfulfilled staying at home with her children may desire to go back to work part time because she thinks she will find fulfillment in the work she did prior to having children. She may find that when she goes back to what she once did it isn't as fulfilling as it used to be. This may be due to life changes in one's current circumstances. Perhaps having small children does not allow one to put all of one's efforts into one's work even when one is away from them, and one is not able to indulge in one's work. This may affect one's ability to enjoy what one is doing. Still, there may be unexpected positive effects of going back to work: financial and social independence from one's spouse, and a wider circle of people with whom to interact on a daily basis among other things.

This fact about the pursuit of our ends cuts in two directions. On the one hand, our desires are only partially sensitive to our actual circumstances, and the evidence we have that

they will lead to positive changes in our lives. Thus, one may have *prima facie* reasons to act on desires that are only partially shaped or which do not reflect all the facts since neither she nor we can always be expected to anticipate how things will go once we act. But one also has good reason to remain open minded about the adequacy of one's desires or even one's best (or fully informed) judgment given that there are factors that influence how well things will go that one cannot anticipate by examining one's current motivational set or who she is (currently) as a person.¹⁰⁶ For example, even if the woman who desires to go back to work is the "type" of person who enjoys helping people, she may be better off working at a job where she has minimal responsibilities helping others given her current life circumstances. For given other responsibilities she now has or ideals she now aims to realize, she may be better off protecting herself from the temptation to take other people's troubles home. Our desires and our circumstances affect each other: while our desires—or the satisfaction of them—affects the adequacy of our circumstances, our circumstances also affect the adequacy of our desires.

The Good Reasons We Have to Treat Others' Evaluative Perspective as Authoritative for Us

Even in the realm of our desires, we do not regard the considerations that might be reasons for us to be limited by them.¹⁰⁷ As discussed earlier, anyone who has found

¹⁰⁶ Indeed, as Charles Larmore notes in "The Idea of a Life Plan," "we go wrong in making so much of a difference between leading a life and letting life happen to us. The good lies between these two extremes. It belongs to a life that is not just led but met with as well, a life that is both self-directed and shaped from without. We miss an important aspect of what gives our lives meaning, when we suppose that we live well by living in accord with an all-embracing plan of our own devising. The happy life spans, not just the good we plan for, but also the unlooked-for good which befalls us." See his (1999), p. 97.

¹⁰⁷ For an interesting discussion of one of the origins of our tendency to regard others' reasons as potentially reasons for us, and its connection to the experience of shame, see Sarah Buss's thoughtful article, "Respect for Persons." My attempt to answer the question of whether we are justified in treating others' evaluative perspective as reasons for us is partly inspired by her discussion in section III of this article.

themselves less than satisfied fairly quickly after satisfying their desires may wonder whether their own desires are a good guide to what they have a reason to do. Consider an elaboration of the passage from C. S. Lewis in chapter 2, who believes that children possess delightful qualities though he does not enjoy their company. Suppose that Lewis sees the qualities of small children that call for a certain response, and he sees that most people are appropriately motivated by these qualities. He believes that it is a defect in himself that he doesn't delight in the qualities small children possess, and disliking this aspect of himself, he decides to spend more time with (say) his nieces and nephews so as to cultivate the appropriate response. In this case, Lewis believes that he should enjoy the company of small children or appreciate their special qualities, but his motive for treating them a certain way is his desire to correct a (so called) defect in himself.

Or, consider a variation on another example from chapter 2. Suppose that Carla does not feel remorse when she sees how her actions have affected Elliot. She tells a mutual friend that Elliot is being childish about the situation, and she should "get over it." Upon seeing others' reaction to her attitude towards what she's done, Carla begins to wonder whether there is something wrong with her. She lacks the sensitivity others have to the impact of their actions on others, and she is concerned about the fact that she doesn't feel remorse for her actions. Taking the advice of her friends, she decides to apologize to Elliot in spite of the fact that she is unsure about whether what she did was wrong or not. She is surprised and happy to see that her apology brightens Elliot's mood, though she cannot help wondering whether she has caved in by apologizing.

Now, as discussed in chapter 2, the perceptual model of emotions and other practical states, such as the experience of fittingness, helps to explain why we are apt to treat others'

claims as potentially authoritative for us. Consider, first, perception in the theoretical domain. While it is true that we mostly trust the evidence of our senses, I noted in chapter 1 that our trust in our senses may be something learned through exploring the world to see how it works, and much trial and error. The possibility of erring in forming beliefs and expectations about the world, and the disposition to revise our responses so as to better gauge how the world works expresses our pre-cognitive (or proto-cognitive) experience of a world not of our own making that exists apart from us, and which we might be wrong about. We experience ourselves as fallible creatures when we literally bump up against objects as we attempt to navigate our way in the world, but also do so as our expectations are thwarted when we attempt to act on our beliefs. We also experience other individuals as creatures who live in this world, and who form beliefs based on the same evidence as us. Given this experience, we have no choice but to rely on others' experiences in forming beliefs about the world. This does not mean we necessarily trust everyone's experiences, and over time, certain people prove to be more reliable than others. But we do find ourselves taking seriously others' views when their opinions differ from our own if we suspect on some level that they are better positioned to form a judgment, and we do so even if we would rather they weren't right.¹⁰⁸ Finally, since we cannot be in all places at all times, we have no choice but to rely on others' for some of our beliefs. In short, we learn things from others that we could hardly learn—at least without undue burden being placed on our time and expenses—if we relied only on our own experiences.

¹⁰⁸ C.S. Peirce makes essentially this point in talking about what is wrong with the method of tenacity for fixing beliefs in "The Fixation of Belief." He says of the person who tries to hold on to his beliefs tenaciously, even in the face of opposition, "The social impulse is against it. The man who adopts it will find that other men think differently from him, and it will be apt to occur to him, in some saner moment, that their opinions are quite as good as his own, and this will shake his confidence in his belief." See his 1955, p. 12.

I take it that one of the conditions for having such experiences is the experience of ourselves as embodied creatures who live and act in a world not of our own making. As embodied creatures, we operate in specific space/time locations among other embodied creatures whose point of view may be relevant to what we have reasons to believe.¹⁰⁹ We are capable of empathizing with their point of view to the extent that we can perceive what they perceive, perceive that they perceive the same thing we do, and form judgments about the reliability of their beliefs. Of course, in cases of conflict between their beliefs and ours, we must form a judgment about whether their beliefs are more likely to be reliable than ours in the specific case. At any rate, we are justified in treating others' experiences and beliefs as a source of information about the world even if we cannot always rely on what others say, and must discover things for ourselves.

Something similar is the case in the practical domain. In this case, the condition of embodiment is one of the conditions for experiencing emotions and other practical states such as the experience of fittingness, and emotions and other practical states are ways in which we experience the pursuit of our personal interests as being constrained by the needs and interests of others. As perceptual states, we take an interest, not only in how we are feeling or what our attitude is towards various objects and actions, but also, whether what seems to be the case really is the case, or whether there are reasons we are overlooking from our present perspective. This was shown in the examples used in chapter 2, above. Since

¹⁰⁹ My view here has benefitted from Joseph Buckley and Lisa Hall's argument in "Self-Knowledge and Embodiment." As they point out, the fact that different individuals rely on different cues to form beliefs about an individual does not mean that they use different criteria. For example, others form the belief that I am standing at a podium by seeing me behind it while my belief is formed on the basis of walking up to it, touching it, and looking at a different angle of it. We use similar perceptual criteria, though given our different space/time locations, we must rely on different perceptual cues (Buckley & Hall 1999, pp. 191 – 192). While their discussion is about theoretical beliefs, the next step for me would be to develop an account of such similar criteria in the practical domain as well. Obviously this account would invoke emotions and other forms of practical experience.

again, others' evaluative perspective is responsive to the shared world we inhabit, we are disposed, and also justified, in treating their claims as potential reasons for us.

Now there are differences between the two domains that may be relevant to how far the analogy between perception in the theoretical and practical domain can be taken. For one, we do take it that there will be variations in individuals' subjective motivational sets and that this will be relevant to what they have reason to do. Such claims are often made on the basis of our assessment of a person's particular talents and life experiences. For example, a person who shows no interest in "book learning," and who hates everything about being in school, but who seems to be talented in using her hands may be justified in going to cosmetology school or becoming a carpenter instead, given her particular make-up. And, we may judge that this person has good reasons for forgoing college regardless of how good we think it is for individuals to have a college degree.

But we do not always confine our beliefs about a person's good to her subjective motivational psychology, or her conception of happiness. Having observed enough instances of the difference good relationships and development of one's talents can make in a good life, we might reasonably argue that a person who isn't interested in friends, and who would rather spend all her free time watching television has good reasons to make an effort to meet more people, or to pursue a hobby. This person might tell us that she is happy doing what she is doing. But even if she seems to get some satisfaction from her pursuits, we are likely to think she has erred in her judgment of what she has a reason to do.

There are mixed cases as well. I take it that the line isn't always clear between the degree to which a person's current make-up should determine her choices, and the degree to which her circumstances, and the possibility of seeing things differently with the benefit of

experience, should dictate what she does. In some cases, having seen the negative impact of our advice on a person's life may prompt us to alter our beliefs about what she has a reason to do. But if a person is fortunate enough to have opportunities at her disposal, yet remains blind to all that she might do and be given these opportunities, then we are likely to conclude that she has a reason to x in spite of the fact that nothing in her subjective motivational psychology could lead her to want x, or to appreciate x, etc. Even if she is blind in the face of further experience to what we think is there for her to see and appreciate, we may retain our belief about the good reasons she has that she cannot see.

CHAPTER IV

EMOTIONS FROM THE FIRST PERSON PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

In chapter 1, I used Prinz's account of emotions in developing my account of the role of practical experience—as emotions or as the experience of fittingness—in practical development. However, I bypassed any critical discussion of emotions, including the account developed. In this chapter, I offer an (albeit incomplete) critique of some of the most commonly held contemporary accounts of emotions. I discuss various theories, including the James-Lange (physiological) account, which provides some insight about emotions, though my main focus will be to discuss the contemporary interest of philosophers in cognitive theories of emotions. There are a number of different accounts along the spectrum, which fall under the rubric 'cognitive', and there are probably as many differences among these theories as there are similarities. I discuss below various theories considered to be cognitive theories, and pay some attention to the question of what unifies them, as well as the question of what separates them.

There are certainly compelling reasons for defending some cognitive account of emotions, though I reject the account in favor of Prinz's account of emotions as embodied appraisals, which combines the strengths of phenomenological accounts and cognitive accounts. I provide (again, an incomplete) defense of his account to bolster my discussion in chapter 1.¹¹⁰ I defend Prinz's view because it better explains the role emotions play in

¹¹⁰ It should be noted that I am not attempting to defend a view of emotions that is exclusive to all other views. I doubt that such a theory can be given, and certainly not in the space of one chapter.

practical development than cognitivist accounts, but like those accounts, it explains the intelligible role emotions often play in our practical lives. Similar to phenomenological accounts, it also explains why we experience emotions as we do.

Non-Cognitivist Accounts of Emotions

Emotions are often identified by individuals—the individual experiencing the emotion as well as those observing her—through physical sensations or physiological responses to things. For example, an individual “knows” she is angry because (among other things) via the way anger or other emotions feel. Emotions also have observable effects. Others know an individual is angry by seeing her face turn red, observing her stance, or other gestures associated with anger.¹¹¹ So much do we identify emotions with the occurrence of changes in bodily states or physical sensations—a gut feeling, butterflies in the stomach, a feeling of gloominess or lightness—that some theories identify emotions with sensations, or physiological responses, for example, tickles and pangs, or the pit in the stomach one feels upon experiencing dread or some other emotion. While sensation theorists focus on the psychology of emotions, physiological theorists are interested in the physiological aspects of our experience of emotions (Calhoun & Solomon 1984, p. 9). On such views, emotions seem to arise in us through unknown causes, and beyond our control. Hume considers this view in the *Treatise*. He says, “When I am angry, I am actually possest with the passion, and in that emotion have no more a reference to any other object, than when I am thirsty, or sick, or more than five foot high” (T 415).

¹¹¹ There is also overlap in the criteria used to register bodily changes. I might look in the mirror, and see that my face is red, and a physician (or scientist) might take a person’s blood pressure or listen to her heart beat in order to determine the onset of an emotion such as anger or anxiety.

Phenomenological accounts as well as physiological accounts, such as the view defended by William James, are attractive because of their connection with our experience of emotions. As William James points out, without the feelings of discomfort, trembling, flushing, or other bodily changes through which we identify emotions, there would be merely an intellectual perception of some fact, for example, the fact that an object presents a threat to one, without the feeling of fear (Solomon 2003, p. 67).

One problem often cited with respect to the phenomenological account is that such views cannot accommodate the fact that we often talk about emotions as being rational or irrational. We criticize our own emotional responses and others' responses in the language of rationality, and we sometimes engage in dialogue about the (rational) correctness or appropriateness of our feelings. One way in which an emotion is judged to be irrational is if it is based on a false belief.¹¹² But the phenomenological account denies that emotions are states with representational content. In general, if emotions are nothing more than raw tickles or pangs, feelings of discomfort or urges to act, they are not the sort of mental states than can be modified by reason, nor can one be blamed or praised for her reactions to various objects and events.

Now, this isn't a decisive criticism against the view. Our ordinary practices may simply be wrong, and some revision in our way of talking about emotions might be necessary. But our ordinary experience of emotions also suggests that emotions can be modified, and this seems to be (at least sometimes) related to revisions in a person's beliefs.

¹¹² This is somewhat of an oversimplification, as not any case in which an emotion is based on a false belief is one in which we would consider the emotion to be irrational. Certainly, if a person has access to evidence against that would lead her to conclude that the belief on which her emotion is based is false, but she ignores that evidence (for whatever reason), one might say that her emotion is irrational. Perhaps an emotion is irrational if the person is aware that the belief on which here emotion is based is false, yet she is unable to free herself from the bonds of the emotion, so to speak. At any rate, my point is to discuss commonly held criticisms of the phenomenological account of emotions.

For example, my anger towards Joe dissipates when I realize that he didn't forget his promise. Still, for every example in which a person's beliefs extinguish her emotions, there are others which do not budge in light of changes in a person's beliefs. There are other commonly cited problems with this view, as well.

Many philosophers have objected to phenomenological accounts on the grounds that emotions aren't simply tickles or pangs, raw urges or sensations with no intentional object. Contrary to the quote cited above from Hume, when I am angry, I am angry at John for a perceived offense to me or some one I care about, angry that John demeaned me or someone I care about, or at least, I am angry over John's actions. That is, emotions seem to be directed at external objects and events, or objective features of the situations in which they arise. This aspect of emotions also better explains other aspects of the phenomenology of our practical lives. Emotions do not only seem to distract us from what it is reasonable for us to do or incline us to act in certain ways; at times, they play a role in motivating action in a way that seems reasonable, or is, at least, intelligible from the agent's perspective. For example, one doesn't merely experience an urge or inclination to avoid certain feared objects. A feared object seems dangerous or threatening in some way to one's well-being and this motivates one to avoid it, or at least, causes one to give serious consideration to getting away from the feared object.

Related to this criticism is the view that unless emotions are differentiated by beliefs or other propositional attitudes, it would be difficult to distinguish various emotions which are associated with similar feelings. Anger and resentment are both negative feelings, which engender pain or discomfort in the person who experiences them. And both can be directed at the same person. What distinguishes them? In part, a person's beliefs or other (perhaps)

cognitively structured underlying views about the object of the emotion seem to differentiate the emotion one experiences.

Some philosophers object to such views on the grounds that emotions do not always have a strong phenomenological component to them. Feeling butterflies in one's stomach is characteristic of falling in love, but one might continue to love one's spouse long after the butterflies disappear. Even when one feels something, it may not be indicative of one's emotions. A parent continues to love her children even during times in which her children give rise in her only to feelings of frustration. Loving one's spouse disposes one to treat her in a certain way, and place a special value on the relationship. And long stretches of not feeling much might also be occasionally interrupted by butterflies in one's stomach when the old feelings are renewed by something one's spouse does, or when one notices something about one's spouse one had not noticed before, which causes one to fall in love all over again. But such occasions are not necessary for saying that one loves one's spouse.

Most contemporary philosophers and psychologists reject the purely phenomenological account of emotions, holding instead that beliefs or other propositional attitudes are relevant to the experience of an emotion. These theorists would deny that the experience of fear, for example, is nothing more than shudders and chills. Some hold that the belief that (say) danger looms is a necessary component (or causal factor) of fear. Others hold that experiencing fear involves construing or (alternatively) seeing the object of one's fear as threatening; still others hold that it is something akin to entertaining the thought that danger looms.¹¹³ There is also a difference among these philosophers as it regards the role beliefs play in the experience of an emotion. For example, according to causal theorists,

¹¹³ The latter position and wording is Patricia Greenspan's. I discuss her account of emotions in more detail below.

beliefs are relevant in causing emotions, which in turn cause us to hold other beliefs. On such a view, the emotion itself might be a feeling, though it has various causal factors.¹¹⁴ On other views, beliefs form part of an emotion, and in some cases, are thought to (more or less) constitute the emotion. Regardless of the differences, some such states seem to be involved in emotions, otherwise, it would be difficult

Given these problems, the purely phenomenological account of emotions seems deeply problematic, and it seems likely that other aspects of a person's psychology are relevant to the emotions she experiences. Before discussing these various accounts in further detail, I want to consider a more sophisticated account of emotions in this same spirit, according to which emotions are perceptions of physiological disturbances caused by our awareness of various objects and events in our environment (Solomon 2003, p. 65). This is the view attributed to William James and C. G. Lange. Although this theory is similar to the phenomenological account discussed above, it goes further in discussing the bodily component of emotions.

The James-Lange Theory of Emotions

James and Lange came separately to the same conclusion simultaneously, and their work has come to be known as the James-Lange theory. According to the James-Lange theory, emotions are perceptions of physiological disturbances or bodily changes that occur in response to our awareness of external events and objects. Bodily changes (rather than thoughts) precede emotional experiences: one's heart races, one feels elated, one has a

¹¹⁴ As Jesse Prinz notes in discussing Hume's view, this does not necessarily mean that emotions are mere feelings since, although they do not have any representative quality they do contain desires, or motivations to act. As well, pride cannot occur without certain ideas coming to a person's mind, for example, the idea of a pleasing object that has some connection to one's self.

tingling feeling, one feels a pang, or feels butterflies in one's stomach. According to James, the common sense view in which "the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression" is incorrect (Solomon 2003, p. 67). Rather, he argues, emotions simply are perceptions of bodily changes. He says, "my thesis...is that *the bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion*" (Ibid). James follows through with this account by arguing that, again, contrary to common sense, we don't cry because we feel sad, tremble because we're afraid, or strike because we're angry. Rather, we feel sad because we cry, feel afraid because we tremble, and we become angry because we strike.

The James-Lange theory seems to provide insight about the role of bodily changes in the genesis of emotions in holding that emotions are responsive to one's perception of one's own bodily states. For example, focusing on one's own emotional state can cause one to become more anxious, upset, angry, etc. than one might have initially felt. However, if James is right, then there is no real difference between genuine cases of emotion and feigned emotions. Crying may be part of what it means to feel sad, or part of at least some cases of sadness. And certainly, one can raise the level of one's emotion by crying harder. But while one can genuinely feel sad, a person can feign sadness by crying. What distinguishes the two cases which are behaviorally similar?

Perhaps what distinguishes the two is the fact that the bodily changes important to emotions occur in response to external stimuli, while feigned emotions are created internally. According to James' theory, the sight of a poisonous snake might cause one's heart to race and the hair on one's arms to stand on end, thus creating a fight or flight response, and the

perception of such changes constitute a case of fear. Perhaps genuine instances of emotion are elicited by external stimuli. But this is only a very rough distinction, as genuine cases of emotion can be created internally. For example, recalling a specific and cherished time spent with one's deceased mother might cause one to become genuinely sad or nostalgic. In contrast, one might work oneself up to tears by recalling a sad event—either real or imagined—in order to elicit attention or sympathy from someone. Although such a case may have some characteristics of genuine sadness, it is questionable whether it is a genuine instance of sadness.

Interestingly, there are likely no marks that all instances of genuine experiences of an emotion exhibit, which all instances of feigned cases lack. It is more likely the case that there is a continuum between the two, and some external factors help us to distinguish the two types of cases. For example, while one might initially feign sadness by crying in order to elicit sympathy, the memories elicited might also cause one to feel sad, thus a feigned case is transformed into a genuine case of sadness. But surely it is difficult to discern where feigned sadness ends and the genuine case begins, and crying is insufficient to mark the difference. Furthermore, while emotions elicited by imagining an event or watching a play don't lead one to act in ways that one might if the emotion were elicited by a real event, they may still be genuine cases of emotion, which can motivate action by the person who experiences it. For example, imagining what it might be like to lose one's parent or spouse may lead to changes in behavior towards the person. But these changes will depend upon the extent to which the imagined loss gets a grip on one, and seems to require a change in one's actions or attitude.

Finally, the James-Lange account does not adequately explain the role of emotions in our practical lives. Impressed by Darwin's work, he suggests that at least in some cases instinct is involved, and he compares emotions in humans with instinct in non-human animals. Just as hens instinctively sit upon and protect the eggs they lay, James says, "The love of man for woman, or of the human mother for her babe, our wrath at snakes and our fear of precipices, may all be described similarly, as instances of the way in which peculiarly conformed pieces of the world's furniture will fatally call forth most particular mental and bodily reactions, in advance of, and often in direct opposition to, the verdict of our deliberate reason concerning them" (Ibid, p. 68). While the forces of nature may be underestimated in accounts of emotions which emphasize the role of thought in the genesis of emotions, we don't always act on our emotions in the way that birds instinctually build nests at the appropriate time of the year, or protect their eggs. And, as I discussed in previous chapters, some emotions play a role in revising our practical views, and figure intelligibly into our practical deliberations. Even when they do not have anything to do with our own survival or that of our loved ones, we take our experiences—emotional and otherwise—seriously in deciding what to do.¹¹⁵ This is because emotions play a role in enlarging our thoughts about possible reasons for action, or even, possible ways of thinking or living we would not have considered if we were driven strictly by our instincts. Listening empathetically to a neighbor's plight may lead one to see the significance of her life—her hopes and dreams and the significance of her relationships to her—differently than one could see prior to engaging

¹¹⁵ In his discussion, Prinz criticizes somatic theories, such as James', for not being able to explain why emotions seem so intelligible or meaningful (Prinz 2004, p. 20). Appraisal theories and other cognitive theories have appeal for this very reason, he also notes. "There is a deep intuition that emotions are meaningful. They are not simply arbitrary feelings. Instead they inform us about our relationship to the world, they embody our convictions, and they factor intelligibly into our decisions in life" (Ibid, p. 16).

with her. This might lead one to feel compassion towards her, which may have an effect on one's capacity to envision the good of a life quite different from one's own.

Do Emotions Involve Concepts?

According to most contemporary philosophical accounts of emotions, emotions involve cognitions. This view runs the gamut from theories which deny that there is any other component to emotions, for example, pleasures and pains, or some somatic component, to theories which combine a cognitive aspect with a phenomenological or physiological component. Now, most commonly, the cognitions thought to be involved in emotions are taken to be propositional attitudes (Prinz 2003, p. 22). Propositional attitudes are representations of propositions towards which one has an attitude: believing, desiring, hoping, supposing, etc. One common suggestion is that emotions involve believing that some proposition is true. For example, fear involves the belief that an object is dangerous or threatening to one in some way. However, one need not hold such a strong view. For example, Patricia Greenspan holds that having an emotion does not require that one believe the truth of some proposition. Rather, having an emotion is more akin to entertaining the thought that some state of affairs is true. On her view, for example, fear involves entertaining the thought that danger looms rather than believing that it looms. The latter way of putting the point helps to make room for the many cases of emotion-belief conflict we experience. Finally, the cognitions involved in emotions may be thought to be constitutive parts (or the whole) of an emotion, or background requirements or causal factors of emotions, which may involve other propositional attitudes, for example, desires for action, as well as sensations or other bodily components.

According to the views I discuss in this section, emotions involve cognitions, thus the experience of an emotion requires the possession of the relevant concepts. What does it mean, though, to possess a concept? Is this a sophisticated capacity? Or, can a child or other novice be said to possess a concept in the sense relevant to these theories? In order to explain what I take to be the level of sophistication required for the accounts I discuss, let me begin with a more familiar case, perception in the theoretical domain. I will then use this case to discuss emotions.

Although perception involves more than what we perceive through sight, visual perception is so common in discussions of perception more generally that I will use an example of seeing to make my point. Consider someone witnessing a dog lying on a porch. There are two senses in which we might describe the person's current visual perspective. We might say that the person sees the dog lying on the porch, or we might say that the person sees that the dog is lying on the porch. In the first case, perceiving involves perceiving the object—the dog—directly; it is directed at the object. In the second case, seeing is strictly seeing that some proposition holds true. Call the first case *seeing-o*, and call the second case *seeing-p*.¹¹⁶ Now, anyone who witnesses what this person witnesses can see the dog, though not everyone can see that the object is a dog. Seeing-p requires some mastery of the relevant concepts, for example, 'dog,' 'laying,' and 'porch.' It is informed or tutored by one's upbringing or tutored, and what one classifies as a dog is determined largely by one's understanding of the objects to which the term 'dog' applies. This isn't to say that one might not hesitate in stating that a dog is lying on the porch, as one might be unsure whether it is a dog or some other type of object. As well, there are degrees to which we can be said to have

¹¹⁶ My discussion here stems, in part, from Elliot Sober's discussion. He uses the terms 'objectual seeing' and 'propositional seeing' to distinguish the two. See his (2001), p. 412 – 413.

mastery of a concept. Young children may have enough of a grasp of a concept to apply it appropriately in most cases, yet err in a sufficient number of cases such that we would not say that they had mastered the concept. Still, while a young child may not be able to see that a dog is lying on the porch, this does not mean that she does not see a dog lying on the porch.

Seeing-o is much less conceptually demanding than seeing-p (cf. Hawkins 2000, p. 13). This isn't to say that there are no innate conceptual capacities we come hard-wired to utilize in our initial experiences, or that seeing-o involves merely the experience of raw data. The main difference between seeing-o and seeing-p is that anyone witnessing the dog is likely to see the object even if not everyone can see that the object is such-and-such, and even if not everyone can agree that the object is a dog. We come hard-wired with perceptual capacities, and other capacities that help us learn from our trainers, for example, an ability to mimic facial features of other human beings, and a capacity to empathize with others so that we can adjust our responses in connection with how they respond.

Finally, seeing-o and seeing-p differ phenomenologically. Seeing-o involves an awareness of the qualities of experience, for example, the redness of an apple or the pitter patter of rain, as well as a sense of involving an interaction with some "outside" oneself.¹¹⁷ In perception, we confront a world that (seemingly) isn't of our own making, and we find ourselves responding to it in ways that aren't determined by what we already know. This is most obvious in cases in which what we perceive doesn't fit our expectations, or seems to demand a particular response from us. This is true whether or not we form a judgment on the

¹¹⁷ The second aspect noted here is often overlooked by philosophers who attempt to distinguish the elements of perception from the interpretive element of it. My discussion is influenced by the pragmatists' emphasis on the dual aspect of experience, in particular Peirce's phenomenological categories. Secondness on his view involves duality, or bumping up against hard fact. This aspect is most obvious to us when what we experience defies our expectations. It should also be noted that there are no external objects, and what we experience are inner or mental objects. My point is about the phenomenology of experience.

basis of our experience. Seeing-p involves the habitual application of concepts. Our responses in this case are tutored by what we “know” about the objects we confront.

In my view, emotions may play a potentially intelligible role in our practical lives without requiring the possession of sophisticated concepts. In relation to perception, emotions involve perceiving-o, though not necessarily perceiving-p. On this sort of view, emotions may play a role in the formation of new beliefs or evaluative judgments by tracking objective events. This isn't to say that a person's previous experiences, past history, or social forces play no role in the formation of our immediate experiences. However, it opens up the possibility that our experiences in the practical domain cannot always be explained strictly in terms of underlying beliefs or tutored responses.

Do Emotions Involve Beliefs or Judgments?

One type of theory of emotions that can certainly be classified as requiring the possession of concepts at a fairly high level is an account according to which emotions are (roughly) equivalent to forming a judgment or forming a belief about something, or at least, requiring that the person hold certain beliefs, or make certain judgments as a necessary condition of an emotion or as a constituent part of experiencing an emotion. The content of the judgment or belief, it should be noted, may be about some fact of the matter, it may be an evaluative judgment, or it may involve both. Now, it is certainly the case that having an emotion and making a judgment differ for an individual phenomenologically. We make or form judgments, while emotions happen to us. We experience ourselves as passive in the face of our emotions, perhaps derailed in pursuing our own goals in their face. This isn't to say that our ordinary experience should be taken at face value, however, the phenomenology

of emotions suggests a different problem with the idea that emotions are equivalent to evaluative judgments. Emotions are “pushy” in focusing our attention on the objects at which they are directed, and they are connected with what we are motivated to do (cf. Nussbaum 2001, p. 24; cf. Zagzebski 2003). If fear is equivalent to judging (roughly) that (say) danger looms, what is the difference between forming a “cool” judgment which exhibits no motivational force over one’s actions, and those cases in which this same judgment forces or rivets one’s attention on the object of fear as was discussed in section 2?

Several theorists who embrace the view that emotions just are evaluative judgments, or that beliefs are constitutive of emotions offer an explanation of the difference between the experience of emotion and other cases of judgment. For example, Martha Nussbaum holds that emotions are judgments of value and importance, explaining the phenomenology of emotions in terms of the content of the judgment that make up an emotion. According to her view, emotions ascribe to their objects some importance to the agent’s flourishing. She states, “The object of the emotion is seen as *important* for some role it plays in the person’s own life” (Solomon 1984, p. 277). She further explains that a person acknowledges her neediness and lack of self-sufficiency in the experience of an emotion, and the eudaimonistic aspect of emotions explains why, “in negative cases, they are felt as tearing the self apart: because they have to do with damage to me and to my own, to my plans and goals, to what is most urgent in my conception of what it is for me to live well” (Ibid, p. 278).

While I would agree that emotions have to do with changes in a person’s ability to flourish in her circumstances, and that at least some involve the experience our vulnerability as human beings, Nussbaum’s explanation does not seem capable of fully explaining the “urgency” or “upheaval” that is part and parcel of the experience of at least some emotions.

It doesn't seem in principle impossible for a person to make a judgment about a loss of great importance without this judgment causing one to experience the urgency of the loss.

Nussbaum uses the death of her own mother and the emotions aroused by the news of her mother's impending death in order to illustrate the points she wants to make about emotions.

While Nussbaum's own judgment that her mother, whom she valued so much, led to a tumultuous stream of emotions, there is no reason to think that another person could not form the judgments that Nussbaum formed, yet fail to experience the loss as a loss in the way that Nussbaum did. Perhaps there is a problem with such a person given that she isn't sufficiently sensitive to the impact of her circumstances on her well being. Still, it would seem that the cognitive states of two people can be the same while their emotions differ.

Notice, also, that even in so-called normal cases a person can believe the purported cognitive content Nussbaum claims to be sufficient for an emotion without experiencing the emotion. Many years after losing a parent, people will say that their life has never been, nor never will be the same, yet they cease experiencing the intensity of the emotions they felt soon after the death of the parent. One adjusts to the event that once prompted so many emotions, and in so doing, one ceases to experience the emotion as one once did. But again, this doesn't mean that the person doesn't still believe that their life was permanently altered in some relevant way by the event. Nussbaum explains this point by arguing that one adjusts one's conception of what it means for one to flourish, and comes to believe that the person *was* an important part of one's flourishing. But one's feelings can cease even while one continues to believe that an important part of one's life is gone forever. Perhaps the beloved parent was central to the family, and family events are never the same once she passed. One might lament the fact that holidays "just aren't the same, and never will be," since one's

mother's death, yet cease to experience the emotions (or feel them less strongly and less frequently) one felt so strongly after her mother's death.

In an early piece on emotions, Robert Solomon defends the view that emotions essentially involve rash judgments. According to this view, emotions are purposive in that they aim to secure a person's place in situations that present a threat to a person's "usual intentions are perverted or frustrated; an unusual response is necessary" (Solomon 2003, p. 234). They are responses to unusual situations in which a person's usual way of acting is thwarted, or inappropriate. He goes on to say, "[Emotions] differ from "cool" judgments and normal rational deliberate action in that they are prompted in urgency and in contexts in which one's usual repertoire of actions and considered judgments will not suffice. An emotion is a necessarily hasty judgment in response to a difficult situation" (Ibid). They are rational, according to Solomon, in that emotions "fit into a person's overall purposive behavior" (Ibid). The reason they appear as they do is because emotions are "myopic." They are short-term responses which are focused on the immediate circumstances in which they arise. "Emotions are always urgent, even desperate responses to situations in which one finds oneself unprepared, helpless, frustrated, impotent, 'caught.' It is the situation, not the emotion, which is disruptive and irrational" (Ibid). According to his view, while it often seems that emotions are irrational, and we judge them to be irrational, it is people who are irrational, not emotions. In the face of threats to our self-esteem or long term intentions, we act on our short-term interests.

There is at least a grain of truth to what Solomon says about (at least some cases of) emotions. Bouts of emotion, at least, seem in some cases to arise in relation to changes in our circumstances that affect our well-being. More accurately, they help us adapt to our

circumstances so that we have a better chance of faring well in them, and are directed at objects and states of affairs which play a role in helping us change our course of action. But our plans and goals go beyond our immediate circumstances, and surely, what “feels” right in the moment, or what helps us get through it, may thwart those plans. Thus, I would agree with Solomon that situations which thwart our ability to act as we ordinarily act, or for which we lack an adequate sense of how to act are most likely to give rise to emotions. Tension is created between the person and her circumstances, and she may find herself in the throws of an emotion. Related to these points, since bouts of emotion arise in these cases, it is likely that a person will not have a well-considered judgment to fall back on in forming a response to her situation. Finally, it is true that when viewed from a different perspective, or with the hindsight of experience, emotions themselves seem irrational. However, when looked at in context, emotions serve our immediate interests, and their appearance is not completely without reasons, as Solomon points out.

But there are problems with Solomon’s account of emotions. First, while I do not want to dwell on the point, it is odd to say that a judgment is rational given that it is based on incomplete evidence, as Solomon argues, and that it serves a person’s immediate needs, interests, or desires, rather than her longer term goals. Perhaps one point to make clear is that emotions do not always thwart our ability to act as we have good reason to act, but can help us adapt our plans so that they are better suited to the realities of our situations. At any rate, the proper assessment of emotions may be more akin to the way in which we assess perception, in general. A person’s perceptual faculties may be an adequate basis for forming beliefs about the world, however, one’s perceptual faculties may go awry. If so, then one may be irrational for forming beliefs on the basis of one’s perceptual faculties. But one isn’t

necessarily irrational simply for seeing things a certain way. Even if a person's perceptual faculties are faulty due to one's own actions, we would not necessarily say that one is irrational for perceiving things as one does. Rather, one is irrational if one acts on her perceptual experience if she knows that they are faulty, or even if she hasn't done enough to figure out whether and how much they are to be trusted. Similarly, one may not be able to help experiencing an emotion in certain circumstances, but one can be faulted if one acts on emotions that are misguided. One may even be faulted for acting on one's feelings if one's actions are the result of not having done enough to determine how one's immediate circumstances are related to the larger picture.

It should be noted that emotions aren't always "emergency behavior" in unusual circumstances, as Solomon argues. They aren't always "urgent" or disruptive. A feeling of relief as one finally comes to the solution to one's problem or as one adequately adapts one's response to better manage one's circumstances isn't urgent or emergent behavior. It occurs in response to the alleviation of tension rather than the onset of it. Feelings of love may be similar. One may experience (renewed) feeling of love towards one's spouse as one observes one's spouse patiently caring for his ailing parent. Feelings of love may be urgent, but they aren't likely to be felt this way in this sort of case. Finally, emotions do not seem necessarily to involve hasty judgments. One may have problems with one's spouse, yet have a momentary feeling of love for him for the reasons noted above, and the judgment on which the emotion is based is clear and well-formed. While one's overall opinion of one's spouse may not change, one may realize and come to believe on the basis of such an experience that one's (perhaps ex-) spouse has redeeming qualities, after all. Even in urgent cases, one may experience an emotion without forming a hasty judgment about the object of one's attention.

In the example used earlier, one experiences S as threatening, though one does not believe that S is threatening. Moreover, one may judge that it would be silly to keep an eye on S because one believes that S isn't threatening. Still, as Greenspan notes, one may find oneself keeping an eye on S in spite of what one believes. In this way, emotions may involve hasty (seemingly) adaptive behavior, but not necessarily a hasty judgment about the object of one's emotions or the appropriate response.

Finally, some remarks about the idea that emotions involve judgments, in general, can be made. The problem with this thesis is that there are so many cases in which a person does not believe or form a judgment compatible with the judgments thought to be appropriate to emotions. The case of S is a good example of this fact. Some philosophers will insist on a definition of belief that allows these to be cases of believing. Perhaps I do believe unconsciously that S is threatening or untrustworthy, though it conflicts with my belief that he is trustworthy. Surely this is possible. But suppose that I believe that there are good reasons for discounting my immediate experience of S. As well as believing on the word of colleagues that S is trustworthy, I might have reason to think that I am responding to certain mannerisms of S's as I am because of similarities between his mannerisms and someone in my past who was also untrustworthy. In such a case, it stretches the notion of belief to think that I also believe that S is untrustworthy, even though I believe that I have no grounds for thinking this, and good grounds for thinking that my emotion is misguided. At least, it does if we consider the fact that we experience so many conflicts between our beliefs and our emotions. Surely our cognitive lives involve contradictory beliefs, but are they so permeated

with such conflicts?¹¹⁸ If so, it would seem that it would be difficult to make up our minds about what to do in a greater number of cases than most of us experience.

Many theorists argue for a cognitive account of emotions on the basis of the fact that our emotions are responsive to changes in our beliefs. This would be particularly the case if emotions are judgments or essentially involve judgments. One way of defending this view is to cite cases in which a person's beliefs do (at least sometimes) affect her emotions. Suppose that Jane is angry with the secretary of her department because she believes that the secretary ignored her request for copies of an exam to be made. Later, Jane realizes that the secretary never received her email, and so, we can imagine, Jane ceases to be angry with her.

Although there is no sure way to know what affected changes in Jane's reaction towards the secretary, it doesn't seem to be a stretch to think that cognitive changes played at least some role. But for any such example that can be given in which cognitive adjustments played a role in changing a person's emotions, there are equally great numbers of examples in which a person's emotions survive cognitive changes for this to be a decisive argument for the cognitivist account of emotions. It is often the case that one comes to believe that one's emotions are the result of faulty thinking, yet one is incapable of changing one's emotional experience. One may believe that one's sibling did nothing to win the unfair favorable treatment she received from a parent, yet one may be unable to help one's feelings of resentment towards one's sibling when she is (once again) treated more favorably than one for no reason at all. One may have come to realize that the parent just always favored this child, and even believe that the parent should have acted differently. Yet, the emotions

¹¹⁸ In "Cognitive Emotions?," Cheshire Calhoun points out that emotion-belief conflicts are common occurrences, and do not seem atypical or pathological. She says, "They are ordinary emotions in an ordinary emotional life. So what must we suppose about our doxic life?—inconsistent beliefs are ordinary occurrences. Surely we are not this irrational, even though we may never attain our proud ideal of complete rationality" (Solomon 2003, p. 241).

engendered by this situation may be improperly directed at one's sibling. There are many similar cases.

There are likely good reasons why our emotions aren't completely under the influence of our beliefs. Emotions seem to have adaptive advantages that out run our cognitive capacities. Consider the example of S used in discussing the causal account of emotions in chapter 2. Suppose that S really is threatening to harm me, and while I have no reason to believe that he poses a threat to me, my discomfort in his presence may cause me to keep an eye on him, or to be on guard in his presence. If my feelings are picking up on something in the immediate situation that I would not pick up on otherwise, they may help me protect myself against the threat.¹¹⁹ Emotions aim to help the individual adapt her responses so that she fares better in them, and while they may set off alarm bells where none are required or otherwise lead us off track, they also have adaptive advantages that are not supplied by reason.

Emotions as Cognitive Sets or Paradigm Scenarios, and Emotions as Perceptual States

If our emotions aren't always responsive to the judgments we make or the beliefs we hold, what explains the fact that we are capable of revising our feelings, at least on some occasions? Our emotions dissipate over time. The things that once worked us up hardly turn our heads over time, and the situations we could barely confront at one time may now seem be old hat. This is true when one gets a new job. The tasks that one once feared or found exhilaration over accomplishing have little effect on one as one masters one's job. And people who once got a rise out of us may barely get our attention.

¹¹⁹ Greenspan suggests this point in arguing that emotions may "fit the facts," though the person may not have evidence justifying a belief if she cannot specify the features that give her reasons for the emotion. See her (2003), p. 268.

Is it changes in a person's beliefs that directly give rise to changes in emotions? Consider the person who is afraid of spiders, but who doesn't believe that spiders are dangerous. Reminding herself that the spider sitting on her bed isn't going to harm her may help her work up the courage to remove it, but it is unlikely to completely undo her reaction to spiders. Or, consider a point made in chapter 3. Many people think that some particular object or state of affairs is the key to permanent happiness, and they find themselves utterly burned out and frustrated, among other things, as the object of their desire moves out of reach. As noted in chapter 3, they are likely mistaken since recent studies have shown that once we acquire something, it becomes part of the backdrop against which we form new desires, and yes, new (perhaps overwhelming) frustrations. But even knowing this fact, some people cannot help but *experience* the object of their desire as the key to everlasting happiness. Having a successful spouse seems to be the answer to all one's problems even if one realizes that it isn't. Winning the lottery seems like it would wash one's biggest cares away even though one has read about the real net effect of winning the lottery: it doesn't change much over time (cf. Millgram 2000). One has heard testimonials from others who have earned a Ph.D. that the initial exhilaration wears off rather quickly as one gets on with other projects. One has heard this enough and believes what one has been told, yet it's hard to wrap one's mind around the fact. It just seems like life will be permanently better, in some significant way, once one completes one's Ph.D.

What might change one's mind? While there are likely different ways in which one might stop feeling the urge for a wealthy spouse, a winning lottery ticket, or a Ph.D., one sure way is probably to get what one wants.¹²⁰ In doing so, one will see for oneself the net effect

¹²⁰ What are other ways? Here is one way: over time, the object of desire may become so far out of reach that the person stops identifying with it, and as much as she might wish it could be the case, it ceases to become part

of these things on one's overall well-being. Perhaps as one gets older, one gets less worked up about the things that one wants because one has been fortunate enough to have enough of these experiences to realize that no object or state of affairs is the key to permanent happiness. Certainly, one who realizes that landing a wealthy partner isn't the key to happiness one once thought it was involves a change in beliefs. But the change in one's beliefs isn't controlled by other beliefs in one's cognitive repertoire. The change is controlled largely by objective features of one's situation. Learning this way is learning from experience; learning from experience is one way to revise one's emotions. This way is similar to learning that the house on the Corner of Elm Street has been painted blue by driving by it, and seeing for oneself that it is blue. This way of revising our beliefs suggests that emotions are perceptual states.

Several philosophers have utilized quasi-perceptual models in their accounts of emotions. One reason has to do with the possibility of emotion-belief conflicts, and the fact that our beliefs cannot always undo our emotions. For example, In "Cognitive Emotions?," Cheshire Calhoun argues that although believing isn't essential to the experience of an emotion, experiencing an emotion involves "seeing the world as..." or seeing the object of an emotion as having some evaluative feature. On her view, more specifically, emotions are "cognitive sets, interpretive frameworks, patterns of attention" (Solomon 2003, 245). The experience of an emotion, according to Calhoun's view, involves the world's seeming to be a certain way, even if one doesn't believe the appearance of things. Ronald De Sousa defends the view that emotions involve paradigm scenarios. He says, "We are made familiar with the

of her good or an object to be pursued by her. See Sarah Buss, "The Paradox of Happiness," for this point and other reasons why one might cease feeling the frustration of not getting what one wants. Notice that in this case, it isn't ceasing to believe that the object is good or desirable, or that having the object would have some effect on one's life. It is simply that the object of desire is too remote from one's possibilities to "work one up."

vocabulary of emotion by association with paradigm scenarios. These are drawn first from our daily life as small children and reinforced by the stories, art, and culture to which we are exposed. Later still, in literate cultures, they are supplemented and refined by literature” (De Sousa 2003, p. 255). For example, one learns scripts for the surly waiter, the irascible professor, and other paradigm scenarios, and recognizing the marks of a scenario, one sees an instance of a waiter that has certain marks as a surly waiter.

These accounts seems well-equipped to explain the role emotions play in disposing us to see certain objects or actions as falling under particular concepts. One’s bouts of anger towards one’s surly coworker may eventually give way to a long standing, less “pushy” feeling of resentment over the way he has manipulated his way into several promotions in a short period of time. One’s resentment may show itself more in the way it influences one’s choice of actions towards one’s coworker than in one’s immediate reaction to each and every encounter with one’s coworker. It may seem to be a disadvantage if neither is capable of providing a unified account of emotions, but it is doubtful whether such an account can be given, anyway.

Still, there are problems with any account which requires the possession of concepts at such a sophisticated level as one of the prerequisites for the experience of an emotion. For it seems possible to experience an emotion without having cognitive sets or paradigm scenarios to fall back on. For example, one can experience fear without possessing the relevant concepts required for ‘seeing a situation as dangerous or threatening’, much less being able to entertain the thought that danger looms. Very young children who do not possess such concepts certainly seem to experience emotions such as fear in certain circumstances, and they act in ways we deem appropriate to that experience (e.g., exhibiting

certain facial expressions, crying or being tentative in the presence of the feared object, avoiding the feared object or circumstances, fleeing the scene, etc.). As adults, as well, we often must deal with situations that outstrip our cognitive supply, and we deal with these situations on an “emotional” level, guiding our responses by our feelings precisely because we lack an understanding of the situation. We give labels to our experiences as we muddle through them, and attempt to capture our experiences in concepts that can help us later to deal with similar circumstances. Are there determinate concepts underlying these experiences which we construe our experiences under? It is more likely that our experiences occur as they do because we aren’t quite sure what to make of novel factors that make our ordinary responses seem inadequate.

Are these perceptual accounts? One way to distinguish these accounts from a perceptual account is in terms of perceiving-o and perceiving-p discussed above. According to Calhoun’s account, for example, experiencing an emotion is strictly a case of perceiving-p. One’s interpretation of what one sees is determined largely by the concepts one already possesses. In one of her examples, a man experiences women as less capable than men. His early childhood training caused him to experience women this way. On the account I developed, there is room for thinking that experiencing an emotion is more akin to seeing-o than seeing-p. In a large class of cases, emotions are under the influence of objective features of a person’s situation. Especially with respect to changes in one’s evaluative response to some object of state of affairs, one’s circumstances largely determine one’s immediate response. On the accounts discussed above, one’s responses are determined by the theory or conceptual framework through which one interprets one’s experiences.

Finally, these accounts fail to do justice to the phenomenology of emotions. If emotions involve construing objects under certain labels or subsuming objects under certain concepts, what gives the experience of an emotion its characteristic “feel.” Seeing someone’s behavior as (say) outrageous does not necessarily involve the experience of outrage. Suppose that a new coworker’s actions and attitude upset me, or cause me discomfort, and I am even outraged over his behavior on occasion. As I get used to his actions, I may cease getting worked up over the things he does. But this doesn’t mean I won’t cease describing his more overt rude behavior as outrageous. One can also recognize a situation as fearful even though one doesn’t feel fear. This is how I recognize that someone else’s situation is genuinely threatening or fearful even if I don’t experience fear.

Greenspan’s Account of Emotions as Propositional Feelings

In her account of emotions, Patricia Greenspan attempts to accommodate the phenomenology of emotions with the idea that emotions involve propositional attitudes. On her view, emotions are a compound of affect and evaluative propositions (Solomon 2003, p. 266). They involve affective states directed at propositional attitudes. The propositional attitudes involved need not involve believing that a particular state of affairs obtains since it is possible to experience an emotion even when we don’t hold the requisite belief. Rather, it involves something akin to entertaining a thought or imagining that some state of affairs is true. Experiencing fear, for example, involves discomfort over the thought that danger looms. This involves, at a minimum, imagining or entertaining the thought that danger looms.

Greenspan seems right to resist the idea that emotions can be assessed in terms that are appropriate for beliefs since emotions may reflect the facts, though a person may have good reasons for thinking her emotions are misguided. One might have good reasons for thinking someone doesn't present a threat towards one, though one's fear might have adaptive advantages. Furthermore, her account of emotions seems appropriate to characterize the phenomenology of some experiences of emotion. Certainly it is true that one can get oneself worked up over imagining certain states of affairs or entertaining their possibility. But in other cases, it isn't necessarily the thought that danger looms that gives rise to the emotion nor need it be the case that a person entertains any thought in the experience of the emotion. It is simply the object that causes a fear response. One sees what looks like a snake in the grass, for example, and this gives rise to fear. Regarding Greenspan's example in which one is involved in a business transaction with someone, X, one's response to X need not involve suddenly entertaining the thought that he is threatening or that he may harm one's interests. It may only be later that one gives any interpretation to the experience. Perhaps upon reflection, one says, 'I suddenly felt as though something about X were threatening to me or dangerous'. One's thoughts about one's experience may be the effect of reflection on one's emotional reaction, and an attempt to articulate it, rather than the cause of it.

Lazarus's Appraisal Account of Emotions

While philosophers talk about the relevance of beliefs and other propositional attitudes to the experience of emotions, psychologists talk about the relevance of appraisals to the experience of an emotion. In particular, Richard Lazarus's appraisal theory of

emotions has been influential among many psychologists and philosophers. According to his account, emotions involve appraisals, through which one evaluates one's environment in relation to one's goals. In this respect, they are ways of taking in information about the world which bears on the likelihood of success one might have in achieving one's goals. He says:

What I propose is that to engender emotion an adaptational encounter must center on some *personal business*, as it were; it is an ongoing transaction between person and environment having a bearing on personal goals, which are brought to the encounter and with respect to which the environmental conditions are relevant...the person must decide whether what is going on is relevant to important values or goals. Does it impugn one's identity? Does it highlight one's inadequacy? Does it pose a danger to one's social status? Does it result in an important loss? Is it a challenge that can be overcome, or a harm that one is helpless to redress? Or is it a source of happiness or pride? (Lazarus 1991, 30-31).

Lazarus argues that there are different appraisal dimensions involved with each emotion. These appraisals correspond to the actual judgments he thinks a person makes before arriving at an emotion, and the various appraisals for each emotion are summarized under the rubric 'core relational themes'. For example, the core relational theme of anger is that a demeaning offense has been made against me or mine, and the core relational theme of anxiety is facing uncertain, existential threat (Lazarus 1991, p. 122). In general, while emotions involve cognitive appraisals, Lazarus distinguishes emotions from other (non-emotional) cognitive assessments, in terms of the bearing of a transaction with the environment on an organism's well-being. He says, "Cognition can be relatively cold when there is *minimal self-involvement or low stakes* in what is thought; cognition may also be hot or emotional" (Ibid, p. 131).

Other psychologists and philosophers have attempted to identify the judgments necessary for arriving at particular emotions, as well. In the example I have been relying on,

fear is thought to involve something akin to judging or entertaining the thought that danger looms, or that the object of one's fear threatens one's well-being in some way. However, it isn't always clear how theorists reach their conclusions about which judgments or appraisals are relevant to a particular emotion. Often enough, it seems that the theorists' intuitions or admittedly fallible theories about the background beliefs essential to the experience of an emotion, or even one's own views about which beliefs are appropriate to an emotion, are doing much of the work. A philosopher's own experience as well as (say) her discussions with others about their experiences may be relevant to the correct account of emotions, but they are of limited use in making generalizations about emotions.¹²¹ Some philosophers argue that it is conceptually impossible for certain emotions to occur without particular beliefs, but it may be failure of imagination that explains why the philosopher cannot imagine that the emotion could occur without the particular belief or concept.¹²² For example, some philosophers argue that shame necessarily involves failure to live up to one's own ideals, or ideals which the person regards as important to her self-conception. However, children experience shame, though it isn't clear that at a very young age they already have standards which they value, and want to uphold. Perhaps it is thought that social training causes children to hold certain values implicitly, and so, to be disposed to uphold the standards of their parents and society. But this isn't always the case. A person can be shamed into valuing certain standards, or at least, seeing the good in a way of life one has overlooked except for the experience of shame, and so, the experience seems to be one of the

¹²¹ In *Upheavals of Thought*, Martha Nussbaum discusses her own mother's death and the various judgments important to the trajectory that begin with hearing her mother was gravely ill to discovering that her mother was dead and dealing with the grieving process. See her (2001), chapter 1.

¹²² In *Gut Reactions*, Jesse Prinz makes this point, noting of this method, "The philosopher will first try to imagine cases of an emotion occurring without a particular concept or propositional attitude. If no case comes to mind, she will stipulate that the link between the emotion and that concept or propositional attitude is analytic." See his, 28.

ways children form new ideals (cf. Buss 1999). Presumably, it is through this experience (and others) that parents teach their children the value of doing certain things, for example, telling the truth.¹²³

Recent experiments in psychology have led theorists to conclude that introspection plays a limited role in determining the causes of a person's emotions. In one experiment, Richard Nisbett and Timothy Wilson asked participants to do certain things and explain why they did them. Female participants, for example, were asked to choose a pair of socks they liked best, then explain why they chose that pair of socks. They provided various answers, including preferences for the texture or sheerness of a particular pair of socks. However, they did not know that all of the socks were identical.¹²⁴ In reporting the results of the experiment, Joseph LeDoux says, "Nisbett and Wilson showed that people are often mistaken about the internal causes of their actions and feelings. Although the subjects always gave reasons, the reasons came not from privileged access to the processes that underlay their decisions, but from social conventions, or ideas about the way things normally work in such situations, or just plain guesses" (Le Doux 1996, p. 32).¹²⁵

¹²³ As Aristotle noted, virtue is the semi-virtue of the learner. Here is another example. John values speaking his mind without worrying about what others' think. However, after hearing a group of his fellow students imitating his obnoxious behavior, John is suddenly ashamed of his personality trait, and his feelings of shame motivate him to temper his remarks in group settings because they cause him to rethink of the value of speaking his mind whenever he feels like it. (Of course, he may reject the seeming lessons of shame, but in the scenario, he yields to his experience.) For a thoughtful article on shame, and its role in helping us to perceive reasons for action we might overlook, see Buss (1999).

¹²⁴ The results of the original experiment is reported in Nisbett and Wilson, "Telling More Than We Can Know: Verbal Reports on Mental Processes." My discussion is taken from Le Doux's discussion of it in *The Emotional Brain*, pp. 31-32.

¹²⁵ There are other experiments that suggest the same results. For example, in some experiments, it was shown that participants preferred one object to another simply because they had been exposed to it on a prior occasion, yet they cited other reasons for their preference. Alison Gopnik and other developmental psychologists have also done work aimed to show that in spite of the fact that we have a strong feeling of privileged access about the underlying causes of our intentional states, our judgments are mediated by our background beliefs about the causes and effects of intelligent behavior. See, for example, Alison Gopnik and Virginia Slaughter, "Children's Understanding of Changes in their Mental States," *Child Development* LXII, 1991, pp. 98-110. For an interesting discussion about self-knowledge which is based, in part, on recent psychological studies about first-person errors in introspective reports, see Victoria McGeer, "Is 'Self-Knowledge' an Empirical Problem?, *The*

Some psychologists have conducted experiments intended to prove that judgments play a role in causing particular emotions, but even these do not seem to count decisively in favor of a cognitivist account. For example, in one experiment, Smith and Lazarus (1993) test the role and structure of appraisals in the experience of emotions. In the experiment subjects are asked to imagine being in various scenarios, which stress different emotions. For example, one scenario involves a case in which a relative is dying from cancer. There are several versions designed to influence the subject's judgments. For example, one stressed other-blame (the relative is dying from cancer and the subject has begged the relative not to quit), one stressed self-blame (the same scenario, but in which the subject didn't try hard enough to get the relative to quit), and so on. After reading the scenarios, subjects were asked to answer a questionnaire about the applicability of various appraisal judgments and emotion terms. For example, in the threat version of the scenario, Smith and Lazarus predicted that subjects would select the word 'fear' and report thoughts of physical danger, etc.

In *Gut Reactions*, Jesse Prinz discusses Smith and Lazarus's experiment, noting that while their results favored their predictions, the results did not count decisively in favor of thinking that certain appraisal judgments went with particular emotions. The highest correlation between a scenario and a predicted set of one type of appraisals was 0.32, and the highest correlation between a scenario and a predicted set of second type of appraisals was 0.42. As Prinz notes further, the fact that correlations weren't higher is surprising because many of the scenarios contained leading phrases that should have pointed subjects towards

Journal of Philosophy XCIII, 1996, 483-515. She discusses at length, Nisbett and Wilson's results as well as Gopnik's.

predicted responses (Prinz 2004, 31).¹²⁶ It may be that subjects weren't good at determining the actual judgments they make in arriving at an emotion, and so, the criticism doesn't count decisively against a cognitivist account as the correct account of emotions either. Even so, it suggests that the experimental evidence for such an account is not as strong as some have argued (Ibid, p. 33).

In his discussion, Prinz also cites the work of Robert Zajonc, who defends the "primacy of affect" or the view that emotions can occur independently and without cognitive states. Zajonc offers several lines of evidence for his view, which Prinz discusses along with a discussion of replies from Lazarus regarding each of Zajonc's arguments. One of these arguments seems to me to offer convincing evidence for Zajonc's criticism of the view that cognition is essential to all cases of emotion. According to Zajonc's work, emotional states can be induced without any prior mental states, for example, via the injection of drugs, hormones, or electrical stimulation. They can also be induced through changes in facial expression. In particular, Zajonc and other theorists have conducted experiments which purport to show that smiling can cause a person's level of happiness to increase.¹²⁷ If so, then there are means other than appraisals which can directly impact a person's emotional state.

Although Lazarus hasn't offered much in the way of a reply to this line of argument, there are several replies from other theorists, which Prinz discusses. First, Gerald Clore has argued that the feelings and physiological changes brought about by making different facial expressions do not constitute an emotion. It produces the same feeling one would have if one

¹²⁶ Prinz discusses another experiment that avoids possible problems with the set-up of Smith and Lazarus's experiment, but correctly criticizes the experiment for also leading subjects towards a particular response.

¹²⁷ For a brief summary of these arguments, see Prinz, *Gut Reactions*, pp. 35-36. For a fuller discussion of the experiments, see, Zajonc, Murphy, & Inglehart, 1989, and Strack, Martin, and Stepper, 1988.

were having an emotion, but in itself it isn't an emotion. But suppose that along with the feeling produced being the same, the feeling brought about by the facial feedback is indistinguishable in its role in subsequent thought or behavior from the emotion. How can the two be distinguished? Perhaps it is because the feeling produced by facial feedback wasn't brought about via an appraisal. But it would be question begging to argue that what is missing in order for the feeling to be an emotion is an appraisal.

Prinz offers a further line of argument against Clore's suggestion. First, suppose that the relevant appraisal required for an instance of happiness is that something one values has occurred.¹²⁸ From the earliest hours of life, we are disposed to mimic the facial expressions of the people we encounter, thus smiling back when someone smiles at us. But this facial feedback also causes a state that feels internally like happiness. Clore would say that this isn't a true case of happiness since it isn't mediated by an appraisal. However, as Prinz points out, if someone smiles affectionately at me, causing me to smile, which in turn causes me to feel happy, my feeling of happiness occurs in response to something I value. Thus, it is playing a role very much like the role it plays in cases which are mediated by cognition or appraisals (Prinz 2004, 39 – 40).

One reply here is to suggest that facial feedback, drugs, hormones, et al. cause one to appraise things in a certain way, and so, while the states caused by these factors are true cases of happiness, the states caused are cognitive after all. For example, whistling while one works may cause one to smile, thus causing one to judge that what one must do isn't so bad, after all. Anxiety inducing drugs may cause fear by making one judge that danger looms or that there is some threat of danger, rather than causing fear directly. But again, there is no

¹²⁸ Here I am staying in the spirit of what Lazarus says. According to his characterization, happiness involves the appraisal that one has made progress toward a goal. But this seems too restricted, as one might find happiness in something unexpected, and thus amend one's goals.

evidence to suggest that emotions induced by chemical or bodily changes directly affect one's appraisals, or that they are involved in all such cases (Prinz 2004, p. 40). In fact, if one comes to believe that one is reacting as one does because of an injection of drugs or a hormonal change, one will likely not make the appraisals appropriate to the emotion unless one has other grounds for thinking that the reaction is appropriate.

This latter point doesn't prove that emotions do not involve concepts, in particular, that they aren't caused by inner judgments. Even in the case of children, many psychologists and philosophers have argued that children do form judgments prior to their ability to speak. Certainly they aren't blank slates as traditional empiricists argued. But reflection on what it means to possess a concept sufficient for forming a judgment suggests that children do not have a conceptual repertoire sophisticated enough for attributing the above view to them. Consider, again, the distinction between seeing a yellow chair and seeing that a chair is yellow. The latter requires the possession of the concepts 'yellow' and 'chair'. Possessing these concepts requires an understanding of what it means for something to be a chair and for something to be yellow. One who possesses these concepts can extrapolate from her experiences in order to imagine what a yellow chair might look like, and she can use this to compare it to what she is looking at in order to determine whether the object in front of her is yellow.¹²⁹ However, merely seeing a yellow chair does not require possession of these concepts. This is true in the case of evaluative concepts such as 'looming danger' as well. There seems to be no reason to think that very young children manipulate concepts in the way discussed above, and so, it is doubtful that their emotional lives are under the control of cognition (cf. Prinz 2004, 50). Emotions at this level are, at the very least, conceptually

¹²⁹Prinz's definition of cognition as "states containing representations that are under organismic control" is helpful in understanding the point I am making here. See his 2004, 48.

undemanding. Even if young children have the capacity to form concepts in connection with their experiences so that their experiences can be stored in memory and brought to awareness for various purposes, coming to possess the relevant concepts most likely requires the bootstrapping of parents and other adults.

Prinz's Account of Emotions as Embodied Appraisals

In *Gut Reactions*, Jesse Prinz develops an account of emotions, which seems to me to capture the phenomenology of emotions as well as explain the role emotions play in our practical lives. Prinz defends his account against the backdrop of criticisms of the main theories of emotion developed by philosophers and psychologists, some of which I discussed in the last section. He also defends his account against certain psychological experiments which tend to confirm the view that emotions can be induced by altering the body's physical state in a way that is prior to (or at least doesn't require positing) changes in evaluative judgments a person makes. But the view he develops is also steeped in what seems correct about certain traditional and contemporary accounts of emotions.

According to Prinz, emotions are not cognitive states (except in cases in which they are generated through imaginative thought), thus he rejects Lazarus's analysis of emotions. However, he does not reject Lazarus's view that emotions involve appraisals. That is, he agrees with Lazarus that emotions represent organism-environment relations, though according to his view, they are embodied appraisals. He further argues that emotions represent core relational themes, but do not describe them. For example, sadness represents irrevocable loss without some part representing irrevocability and another part representing loss (Ibid, p. 65). Prinz compares the way in which emotions represent core relational

themes with the way in which “fuzz busters” represent nearby police. He says, “A beep emitted from a fuzz buster represents the presence of a police radar. But the beep itself is utterly lacking in structure. It cannot be analyzed in to meaningful sub-beeps. There is not a tone meaning ‘radar’ and another tone meaning ‘police,’ which merge together to form a ‘police radar’ tone. In other words, the beep emitted by a fuzz buster does not describe what it represents” (Ibid, p. 65). Similarly, emotions are reliably caused by changes in a person’s bodily states, and represent organism-environment relations without describing them.

Prinz’s account of emotions differs from the models discussed above. For example, Calhoun’s account is modeled on the ‘seeing as’ model, yet it is more clearly in the cognitivist tradition since emotions are conceptually laden. On Calhoun’s view, experiencing an emotion is similar to experiencing an object as (say) red. As discussed in chapter 1, on Prinz’s view, experiencing an emotion is more akin to experiencing red, which doesn’t require the possession of the concept ‘red’, than it is to seeing an object as red (Prinz 2004, p. 50). Of course, as we acquire concepts for labeling our experiences, we can recognize fear as fear or anger as anger. Similar to the James-Lange view, Prinz holds that emotions are under exogenous control (Ibid). The difference in the case of emotions is that they track changes in a person’s well-being by tracking bodily changes. In general, through shudders, chills, heart palpitations et al., Prinz’s view is that “[emotions] use our bodies to tell us how well we’re faring in the world” (Ibid, p. 69). This is not to say that beliefs never play a role in the experience of emotions on Prinz’s account. I discussed this point about Prinz’s view in chapter 1.

Finally, the perceptual account makes sense of why it can be so hard to talk oneself out of an emotion or change one’s emotional responses, at least as they occur. Since beliefs

aren't essential to emotions, modifying one's beliefs may have little effect on one's emotions. The most one can do in many cases is remind one of one's beliefs so as not to act on emotions one believes to be misguided. This is similar to paradigm cases of perception. A person in a drug induced state may not be able to talk herself out of seeing a lion in the living room. However, if she believes that she only sees the object because she is under the influence of drugs, she may venture into the living room by reminding herself that it isn't really there. But there are other cases in which a person can retrain her way of seeing. For example, an object that at one time might have looked like a body of water in the distance may now look like a mirage (cf. Millgram 1997, p. 114, fn. 14). How does such a change occur? One way is through experience. Having learned about mirages, a person may pay particular attention to them, noticing the ways in which mirages are different from water. For example, bodies of water don't move farther in the distance as one gets closer. As well, bodies of water don't appear as translucent as one gets closer, while mirages do. There are habits of expectation built up around bodies of water that fall short in the case of mirages. In short, paying closer attention to an object—what it looks like, how it moves or doesn't move in comparison to similar objects, etc.—may ultimately bring about a change in one's way of seeing. Emotions can be modified this way as well.

Consider Jane, who got off on the wrong foot with the secretary of her department. Suppose that Jane was taken aback by the secretary's abrupt tone with her when she (Jane) first started working in the department, and more generally, the secretary's aggressive attitude toward her. Jane's immediate reaction was to be angered by the way in which the secretary treated her, and perhaps her reaction to the secretary in various early interactions later crystallized (more or less) into a particular way of seeing and responding to her. But

suppose that Jane is motivated to have a better working relationship with the secretary, for whatever reason. One way in which Jane might make progress in changing her attitude is by taking a closer look at the secretary, and seeing why she acts the way she does, on the occasions that she does. This requires more than watching the secretary in action. It requires seeing things from the secretary's point of view, and how her particular point of view might cause her to act in a certain way. By doing this, Jane might see the secretary's motives as being different than she originally thought. Perhaps Jane came to believe that the secretary responded to her as she did for malicious reasons. Through experience, she may come to realize that the secretary is under a great deal of pressure from home, and is more apt to be abrasive when she has spoken with her spouse or children shortly before Jane makes a request to her. Or perhaps Jane sees that she poses a threat to the secretary because, although Jane is new in the department, she (Jane) has a higher status than the secretary, and has the attention and respect from other staff members that the secretary doesn't. None of this makes the secretary's intentional slights justified. However, by coming to see things from the secretary's perspective, Jane's reaction to her might ultimately change, as well. Over time, if Jane can continue to empathize to some extent with the secretary's point of view, her immediate reactions to her might be less recalcitrant, and her attitude toward her might ultimately change.

Although emotions are similar to other perceptual states, according to this view, there are differences between emotions and perception in the theoretical domain. While Prinz discusses the connection between emotions and action, a further distinction between emotions and other types of mental states is helpful in delineating their special role in our lives. Emotions aren't cognitive mental states, as argued above. But while they are similar

to perceptual states in giving us information about our surroundings, they also serve an important practical role. That is, the role of emotions isn't only to give the agent information about her circumstances or inform her about how she is likely to fare in relation to it. Emotions also help the agent make changes that will enhance her well-being by preparing her body to respond in certain ways, as well as by exhibiting influence over her choices of action.¹³⁰ This isn't to say that they dispose us to act in certain specified ways. As discussed earlier, some emotions rarely or ever motivate action directly, for example, regret over actions taken or not taken in one's past. While regret may cause one to make different choices in the present or future, it doesn't necessarily drive one to change the past or do anything immediately.

¹³⁰ Prinz makes this point in distinguishing emotions, as motives to action, from motivational states, which impel action. See his, *Gut Reactions*, 193-194.

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