Fellow-Feeling and the Moral Life

Joseph Duke Filonowicz

CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE www.cambridge.org/9780521888714

This page intentionally left blank

FELLOW-FEELING AND THE MORAL LIFE

How do our feelings for others shape our attitudes and conduct towards them? Is morality primarily a matter of rational choice, or instinctual feeling? Joseph Duke Filonowicz takes the reader on an engaging, informative tour of some of the main issues in philosophical ethics, explaining and defending the ideas of the early-modern British sentimentalists. These philosophers – Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith – argued that it is our feelings, and not our "reason," which ultimately determine how we judge what is good or bad, right or wrong, and how we choose to act towards our fellow human beings. Filonowicz draws on contemporary sociology and evolutionary biology as well as present-day moral theory to examine and defend the sentimentalist view and to challenge the rationalistic character of contemporary ethics. His book will appeal to readers interested in both history of philosophy and current ethical debates.

JOSEPH DUKE FILONOWICZ is Professor of Philosophy at Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus.

FELLOW-FEELING AND THE MORAL LIFE

JOSEPH DUKE FILONOWICZ

Professor of Philosophy, Long Island University, Brooklyn

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK
Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521888714

© Joseph D. Filonowicz 2008

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provision of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published in print format 2008

ISBN-13 978-0-511-42923-1 eBook (EBL)

ISBN-13 978-0-521-88871-4 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of urls for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

For Joe and Marty, Janny and George,
Martha, Marta, Joseph, and Nicholas

Contents

Preface *page* ix

1 Fellow-feeling and ethical theory: the British sentimentalists 1
The school of sentiment 1
Two conceptions of the moral 6
Morality in the open street 12
A formidable ghost: the Sage of Malmesbury 25
Moral theory and moral advice 31
Designs of remaining chapters 37

2 Ethical sentimentalism revisited 45
Statement of the argument 45
Ethical rationalism 46
Shaftesbury's ethical sentimentalism 48
Sentimentalism and rationalism 55
Objections to sentimentalism 59

3 Shaftesbury's ethical system 65
Shaftesbury as moralist 65
The good 69
Obligation 72
Disinterestedness 75
Why should I be moral? 81
Shaftesbury's moral sense 91
The limits of Shaftesburyan sentimentalism 99

4 Hutcheson's moral sense 104
A sad tale? 104
Hutcheson's moral sense 109
Four naïve questions concerning moral sense 119

5 What do we perceive by moral sense? 124
Three received views 124
Defining Hutcheson's moral "realism" 142

Charting the return journey 149
Hutcheson's "offensive" argument against ethical rationalism 154

6 C. D. Broad's defense of moral sense theories in ethics 161
"Some Reflections" 161
The subjective theory 163
Analysis part 1: why moral sense theory is sentimentalistic 173
Analysis part 2: subjectivism versus naturalism, or, are ethical propositions statistical? 182
Broad's defense, (almost) concluded 188
Broad's offensive argument against ethical rationalism 195

7 What is innate in moral sense? 201
Moral sense theory: Hutcheson, Broad and beyond 201
James Q. Wilson's *The Moral Sense* 206
How do very young children come to approve (and disapprove)? occultism *versus* obscurantism 214
The "hyperoffensive" argument against ethical rationalism 223
Ideas without will 231
Postscript: Hume, Smith and the end of the sentimental school 233

Bibliography 239
Index 246

Preface

This book originated, in a strange way, at a particular moment in the late 1970s when a very practical, unphilosophical question was posed to me by someone whom I admired (and still do) very, very much. As I fumbled about for a dissertation topic (while studying at Columbia University in New York City) my professor and adviser Mary Mothersill asked, "Why not do something in the history of ethics?" I must have had grand delusions of solving the riddle of consciousness (or something) and she must have sensed, not that I might turn out to have some natural talent for writing about the history of moral philosophy but rather that the general subject might be relatively "easy" enough for me, given my slow-to-develop philosophical comprehension. Almost right away I discovered D. D. Raphael's two volume *British Moralists 1650–1800* on the shelves of the seventh floor lounge of Philosophy Hall, and that, as they say, was that. Hobbes, Butler, Mandeville, Hutcheson – *they* were talking about real people, about questions people actually ask themselves concerning how to live, about real life, about you and me. I went on to write the dissertation about Shaftesbury and his rather curious notion of a natural affection and equally exceptional idea that the natural affections are somehow or other "the springs and sources of all actions truly good." And now, so many years later, that essentially is what the present book is still about (though none of it is recycled, I assure you).

This is a handcrafted, very homespun piece of work (even the index). I do not have a long list of "big name" associates to credit, from discussions with whom I have profited. In fact there are only two well-known philosophers who, at a much earlier stage, were kind enough to take a look at what I was doing and criticize it (rather sharply, I might add): J. B. Schneewind (whom I met only once) and (naturally) Mary Mothersill. And I do credit and thank them officially here. Especially Mary. She probably disagrees with 90 per cent of what I say about ethics but that never mattered one bit – at least to her.

I do have a somewhat longer list of people to thank here at my home university over the past twenty-one years, which we call simply "LIU." I think of them as my circle of encouragement: Robert Spector, Gerald Silveira, Bernice Braid and Terence Malley (English), Elinor West, Margaret Cuonzo and Amy Robinson (philosophy), Cynthia Maris Dantzic (art), John Ehrenberg (political science), Joram Warmund (history), David Cohen (my college Dean), and David Steinberg (our university's President). Naturally, I will always remain grateful to my dissertation advisors back at Columbia: Richard Kuhns, Charles Larmore, Sidney Morgenbesser and (again, of course) Mary Mothersill.

I have never met sociologist James Q. Wilson, whose arguments in *The Moral Sense* take the lead in my seventh and final chapter. But when that book came out in 1993 I (rather brassily) wrote to him to express my admiration and impose on him my first paper on the sentimentalists. He graciously wrote back to me from his office at UCLA saying that he had "found my essay criticizing rationalism to be quite good, and to reflect [his] own views." That certainly was encouraging. I hope that he will be pleased by the present work, which is in part a tribute to his own keen eye for the intricacies of family life and the awkward yet inexorable moral development of every young child. (A modern-day Hutcheson, to my mind.)

The work of Thomas Nagel (who is not known to me personally) has been a continuing influence and source of enrichment, even when used, as here, as something of a foil for the sentimentalists rather than engaged with on its own terms.

I consider Frederick Seymour Michael practically as co-author of chapter 5, composed throughout the summer of 2006. Each week I would ride two buses to get to Brooklyn College, his home institution, where we would sit on assorted benches and stairways arguing about what Hutcheson was saying about moral sense and debating such eminently impractical subjects as how various thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment understood the workings of representative concomitant ideas, how Satan's moral sense might have come to be so corrupted, whether cats subject to physical abuse by young boys might resent rather than merely dislike their ill-treatment, and so on. So I was very happy when, in early September, Fred finally approved the chapter, for I felt that we must have produced something solid and broadly accurate concerning Hutcheson's ideas, having discussed them so carefully. So if we did, he gets half the credit, and half the blame (except for the actual writing) if we did not. I also thank Emily Michael, a scholar of Hutcheson's aesthetics as well as distinguished chairperson of the philosophy department there, for her own encouragement

as well as for allowing me to borrow her husband for a good part of that summer.

Of course I am especially indebted to Hilary Gaskin, senior commissioning editor for philosophy, and the readers, at Cambridge University Press. Such perceptiveness, such forthright honesty, such awe-inspiring professionalism – I have never worked so hard or learned so much, so fast, in my life. I am also grateful to the present editors of *History of Philosophy Quarterly* and Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints for their permission to use materials that originally appeared in those publications (in 1989 and 1991) in chapters 2 and 3, respectively, of this book.

Finally, rather than merely thank my parents, my siblings, my beautiful wife Martha and the three extraordinary children we share, I have dedicated this book to all of them.

Although my project is aimed primarily at scholars of ethics and its history and historians of ideas generally (whom I hope to provoke or at least challenge in sundry ways) I believe I have succeeded – with all of these people's help – in writing in language that is accessible to scholars of eighteenth-century ideas and culture, students of philosophy and history, and non-philosophers and interested laypersons (non-academics) – in other words, members of the general reading public. I have avoided needless "isms," charts, technical vocabulary, quantifiers, peculiar modal-logical operators and so on, and have tried to write in plain, clear language for the benefit of any interested intelligent reader. That is after all what the British Moralists did; their questions about people, their motives, their ethical possibilities, came to them naturally and still concern everybody. To try to understand and decide the merits of their competing answers is intrinsically rewarding for any thoughtful person. If I have made that activity a bit more accessible and attractive for a few more people, and little else, then – to borrow the title of one of Bach's recitatives, from the Little Notebook for Anna Magdalena – "It is enough" (*Ich habe genug*).

CHAPTER 1

Fellow-feeling and ethical theory: the British sentimentalists

> If any enquire, "Whence arises this Love of Esteem, or Benevolence, to good Men, or to Mankind in general, if not from some nice Views of Self-Interest? Or, how we can be mov'd to desire the Happiness of others, without any View to our own?" It may be answer'd, "That the same Cause which determines us to pursue Happiness for our selves, determines us both to Esteem and Benevolence on their proper Occasions; even the very Frame of our Nature, or a generous Instinct, which shall be afterwards explain'd."
>
> Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil*

THE SCHOOL OF SENTIMENT

It will swiftly become evident that this book of philosophy has a central hero – Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746). Hutcheson is an admirably clear writer, but I take my starting-point from the above uncharacteristically enigmatic (or perhaps just poorly written) passage. I would rewrite it somewhat as follows: Why do we approve and admire persons whose conduct displays genuine concern for others, if that concern in no way benefits us? (And why should we even care what happens to others in the first place?) The answer is that, just as we instinctively desire our own happiness, we are innately disposed not only to care about the good of others to some degree, but also to approve of such other-regarding concern whenever we see it at work. My own thesis is that Hutcheson's answer is, on the whole and at the end of the day, true, and that there is just such a generous instinct in all of us. (And that this has wide-ranging implications for moral philosophy.) To make his claim plausible, Hutcheson appeals directly to observations of young children.

> The Universality of this moral Sense, and that it is antecedent to Instruction, may appear from observing the Sentiments of Children, upon hearing the Storys with which they are commonly entertain'd as soon as they understand Language. They always passionately interest themselves on that side where Kindness and Humanity

are found; and detest the Cruel, the Covetous, the Selfish, or the Treacherous. How strongly do we see their Passions of Joy, Sorrow, Love, and Indignation, mov'd by these moral Representations, even tho there has been no pains taken to give them Ideas of a Deity, of Laws, of a future State, or of the more intricate Tendency of the universal Good to that of each Individual!

Many will dismiss this as romantic fantasy, sentimentality – but I take it to be scientific fact. Others, contemporary philosophers in particular, will have nothing to do with the idea of a moral sense, considering it to be an historical curio, a sort of philosophical white elephant. But I shall argue that there is a moral sense and explain as exactly as I can what it is.[1] And I will do this not by condensing articles from scientific journals – which could never suffice in any case – but rather by examining history, in this case the history of ethical speculation in the era of the sentimental school in early-modern British moral philosophy. I am specifically concerned with the thought of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, and to a somewhat lesser degree that of Hume and Smith – yet equally interested in the relationship of that school of philosophy to contemporary ethics. It was early-modern sentimentalism that first gave birth to and articulated the concept of moral sense, and I wish to explore that context in order to know better what role that idea could or should have in moral theory today.

My study has the form of an extended narrative (though the chronology is hardly linear), an attempt to retell the story of ethical sentimentalism in a new, more logical manner – a kind of pilgrimage, backward in time, to the origin of the sentimental school and thenceforth a return to ethics in the present day. I am by no means the first to characterize Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume and Smith as the leading proponents of a single school of ethics; Sir L. A. Selby-Bigge divided his classic anthology *British Moralists* (1897) into volumes under the headings, "the sentimental school" and "the intellectual school," including in the first the same authors whom I propose to call the British sentimental moralists.[2] But there has never been a study of these thinkers altogether as sentimentalists, and no one (it appears to me) has explained the underlying logic of the sentimental school. How exactly were these particular philosophers sentimental moralists; what does it mean to say that they were? What unites them as proponents of a single tradition, a distinctive line of ethical speculation? What are the basic

[1] Moral sense theory, as I develop it, is (quite roughly) the view that fully disinterested moral approbation and disapprobation cannot be accounted for without recourse to several innate factors at work in ethical judgment having nothing as such to do with reason.

[2] With the exception that Hume was given his own separate volume; also, Selby-Bigge included Bishop Butler among the sentimentalists – which I do not, for reasons explained in chapter 4.

principles of sentimentalism as a type of ethical theory, and supposing we can state them meaningfully and interestingly, to what extent are they important and true? I begin with the quite modest claim, or rather assurance, that there indeed was a sentimental school in eighteenth-century England, Ireland and Scotland – loose-knit to be sure, but real and influential in its day. I then offer a rough and ready historical sketch of its career and try to express (intuitively and in a timeless sort of way) its main unifying principles.

Sentimentalism began in the days when assorted churchmen, aristocrats and pamphleteers felt called upon to combat – both theoretically and in the popular imagination – the infamous selfish theory of Thomas Hobbes, along with all of its evidently dangerous anti-moral implications. It was carried on through a rich debate among the anti-Hobbesian moralists themselves over whether the best defense of traditional morality lay in reason and metaphysics – the intellectual or rational camp – or instead in our innate sociability and fellow-sympathy – the sentimentalists. The latter view evolved in the hands of the Third Earl of Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson into what we now call "moral sense theory," which was then roundly criticized by both rational moralists and at least one fresh sponsor of the selfish theory, Bernard Mandeville. Later on both David Hume and Adam Smith endeavored to distance themselves from the notion of such a peculiar moral sense (though not wholly successfully, on my reading). Finally sentimentalism advanced outward and onward, so to speak, in Hume's endorsement of something very like a utilitarian standard for ethics and Smith's theory of the impartial spectator.

I believe that at least one important strand in sentimental ethics first took shape in the work of the Cambridge Platonists, especially in the sermons of Benjamin Whichcote and the aphorisms of John Smith. But sentimentalism was first expounded as a recognizable school of ethics, at least halfway coherently, by Shaftesbury. Yet Shaftesbury would have been unable to do even that much had it not been for much previous solid intellectual work on the part of his own arch-nemesis, Hobbes. It was then developed into something more like a genuine ethical theory by Hutcheson, who, however, eventually partially abandoned its basic principles. Bishop Joseph Butler, despite his affinities (and debts) to Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, came very close to subverting the sentimental school by sowing serious doubts as to whether it could ever render a satisfactory explanation, or justification, for morality properly understood. Notwithstanding Butler's acute criticisms of both Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, British sentimentalism was then perfected by Hume and Smith. But in the course of their refining

and polishing these two conceded a bit too much to their own rivals, the intellectualists. In their hands sentimentalism lost much of its urgency, its electricity, as a distinctive and unprecedented school of ethics.

Thus the history of sentimentalism, on my telling of it, is fairly short and rather melancholic. It began in the second half of the seventeenth century and was past its best by the last quarter of the eighteenth, shortly before the time of Immanuel Kant. Then the school of sentiment was effectively laid to rest. This in stark contrast to its rival, the intellectual school, which remained alive and flourishes even (and especially) in the present day. Its enrollment dropped to zero; its original principles, such as they were, were consigned to histories of ethics, nevermore debated or defended within what soon would become professional academic philosophy.

But what were those principles? Sentimentalism, as it seems to me, weaves together three distinguishable strands of thought, with none obviously fundamental to either or both of the others. One is that people certainly do practice genuine altruism in their everyday dealings with one another, Hobbes notwithstanding, and when they do an essential factor in what is going on is a certain affective sensitivity on their parts to the good, the "weal and woe" of other persons, and a disposition to experience and act upon certain emotions and desires that aim, quite independently of abstract rational considerations of what is good or right as such, at those others' welfare. Call this sort of moral affection "fellow-feeling" for short, and call the elaboration and defense of this general hypothesis sentimentalism's motivational enterprise. A second, though closely related, line of thought might be called its justificational project. Sentimental moralists claim that in order to be fully successful, any justification for practicing altruism, living ethically, acting with regard to the interests of others, must appeal, ultimately, to human desires and emotions that are already other-regarding and benevolent in some sense on their own, prior to any abstract considerations concerning how one ought to live and act. Successful ethical justification, in other words, must appeal to our sympathies, our natural concern for others; reason, detached from affect, emotion, passion, can never supply a satisfactory answer to the question, why be moral? or establish a general requirement that we live ethically. Naturally much hangs on what counts as a successful justification in ethics, but the basic idea is roughly this: Any proposed rational justification of altruistic ethical principles and ways of life, if it is to succeed, must be capable of motivating those who accept it actually to act accordingly. Justifications that purport to bind us to such principles and ways of life without in any way depending for their force on our extra-rational feelings for others, our sentiments, are themselves

bound (for various reasons) to fail. A third strand in sentimentalist thought might be called axiological – an old-fashioned but perfectly suitable term. Sentimentalists believe that there is something especially, perhaps uniquely valuable in certain kinds of ethical motivations, namely those involving genuinely disinterested and distinctly emotional concern for others – sympathy, compassion, care, kindness – once again, fellow-feeling.[3] Shaftesbury called this spontaneous concern natural affection, the Cambridge Platonists called it love, Hume named it a principle of humanity. I call it (later on and for purposes of my own) sentimental benevolence. This third aspect of sentimentalism is probably the hardest to spell out and certainly the most difficult to defend. Indeed the problem of imagining what an argument for ascribing special worthiness to those sorts of motives in preference to others, such as self-interest, conscientiousness or duty, is partly what drove Hutcheson to propose his moral sense theory in the first place, with all of the problems it in turn raised. This axiological strand of thought is undeniably there in the British sentimentalists, and I shall explain and support it as best I can (or perhaps explain exactly why it cannot properly speaking be *defended* at all).

Now it goes practically without saying that the vague notions of being motivated, justified or ennobled by moral sentiment or its twin, reason, that I have used in stating the rough idea of sentimentalism cannot be left standing as mere dummy predicates but require much clarification and defense as genuine concepts, or families of related concepts. After all, that is precisely what Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume and Smith (and their rational rivals) were up to for a good deal of their time on the philosophic scene – and this will be one main focus of my study.

It would be natural for the reader to expect right about here a statement of my historical methodology, the structures and relationships among the particular chapters and so on, and only then for the actual journey to commence; but I would like to reverse the procedure, so to speak, and start by presenting an argument of some kind for concerning ourselves with the British sentimentalists at all. The sentimental school had its day so why go back to it, why regard Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and the others as being of more than antiquarian interest? My answer is this: philosophers have always been obsessed with two questions: What is knowledge? And what is reality? In ethics, I believe that so much weight has been given to the knowledge question, the question of moral justification, that it has

[3] This is the strand that is particularly visible in Whichcote and John Smith and preserved in the work their sole defender, Shaftesbury, then later taken up by Shaftesbury's own principal heir and systematizer, Hutcheson.

blinded a good many thoughtful people to an important dimension of moral reality, namely the role of affect (feelings, emotions, sentiments) in moral perception, judgment and motivation. Sentimentalism may show itself to be realistic in a way that its traditional rival, ethical rationalism, is not; therefore the work of its originators deserves careful and respectful re-examination. It might be better at this early stage (or at least safer) to say that sentimentalism is important because it includes an important dimension of moral reality, morality, morals, to which rationalism, almost by its very nature, remains blind or indifferent.

But I wish to leave all such "isms" out of things, or at least off to the side, for the present, and begin by sketching two very general conceptions of morality or of "the moral institution of life," in Butler's memorable phrase. The first seems to me to be at work, mostly by being taken for granted, in the vast majority of books and articles I read on the subject of what is nowadays called ethical theory. I will call it the "system of reasons" view of morality, of what is moral in human life and experience – and then contrast it with a quite different conception, calling that (naturally) the sentimental view.

TWO CONCEPTIONS OF THE MORAL

On the first view, morality forms, or simply is, a system. A system of what? I would say, a system of rules, principles or (more fashionably nowadays) norms, which govern – or are such that they ought to govern, even when they do not – people's conduct towards others (their "manners and conversations one towards the other," as Hobbes would say). These principles fall into two main categories, namely (speaking crudely) positive obligations or duties towards others – things one has to, or must, do – and negative constraints (things one must not). People should keep their word, tell the truth, assist helpless victims in need, care for their own children, and so on, and, on the other side, must not steal from, deceive, or otherwise cause gratuitous harm to others. For simplicity let's call both obligations and constraints 'moral demands.' There are at least two leftover categories of moral things, on the reasons view. Morality is supposed to allow for options, or free choices: You may if so moved go *way* out of your way to help a stranger in need, or on the other side, may certainly go to a movie rather than spend that two hours working as hard as you can to improve everyone's lot; moral demands are ordinarily overriding but not (so to speak) all-consuming. Finally, morality is thought to include a class of "duties to self" – to exercise a reasonable prudential regard to one's own health and well being, to develop one's natural aptitudes and talents, and so forth. These moral

demands are not to be identified with legal demands, though it seems very natural (to philosophers writing from within this conception of the moral) to speak of our being subject to or governed by requirements of both sorts. The contrast, roughly, is that human beings create legal and penal systems to govern their behavior from the outside, whereas they govern themselves by moral principles (demands) in the field, as it were, without the need for external sanctions – unless of course one stretches the meaning of sanctions to include the moral disapprobation, censure or outrage of other moral agents within the system.

Now I do not believe that these ideas are wholly artificial, purely the creations of moral philosophers; I think that most ordinary (non-philosophically inclined) people possess some notion of moral obligation, of what is morally required, allowable, unacceptable, and so on. They think and judge and act, in some sense and at least occasionally, in terms of moral reasons. But once today's moral theorists step in they mostly tend immediately to clarify the idea of morality as a system of reasons (demands, options and so on) in a rather predictable, almost automatic fashion.[4] For example, one question philosophers typically feel impelled (and qualified) to address right away is this: what sort of thing is this system? (What is the ontological status of moral demands, options, and so on? What sort of reality do they enjoy, in what medium, so to speak, do they subsist?) Here I believe there is a conventional, almost ritualized answer to be given. It is not simply to claim that the question itself is illegitimate. Rather the answer to the question, where is morality, is this: Morality is inherent in practical reason. As rational agents we share a capacity not just to apprehend reasons for believing what is true (what exists, what causes what) but also to discern reasons for doing one thing rather than another. And the capacity to act for (be motivated to act upon) those very reasons. Morality, it turns out, then, is simply an expression (and in some sense the most important one) of this very capacity for reasoning practically. It is not some diaphanous force moving about in the world (or in us) but rather a certain manner in which we come to the world as rational beings deliberating about and choosing what to do in it. So the philosophers' short answer to the question, what is morality a system of, is this: it is a system of practical reasons for action.[5]

[4] Some start by tidying things up, by asking (for example) whether the notions of moral options and moral demands are 'co-relative' (maybe free choice is just the realm of action where duties leave off), or whether prudential concern is ultimately justifiable on utilitarian grounds (as enhancing our ability to discharge our duties to others).

[5] Feelings (emotions, sentiments) get themselves mentioned occasionally, but then the main issue straightaway becomes when and why it makes sense – i.e. is rational – to have them. (See my note on philosophical 'isms', below (n. 48).)

This is how a good many moral philosophers today tend to talk, and the manner in which they practice ethics, moral philosophy, reflects this way of conceiving and speaking of the moral in a way that almost suggests a kind of predestination. If morality is a system of reasons for acting, we obviously need a theory of reasons, and of what it is to reason practically about what to do. So the first step is to propose and defend a theory of practical reason and of its relation to intention and action. Move next to the question, what in general is a good reason for acting. Finally demonstrate as best you can that moral reasons for acting are very good reasons for acting indeed. As practical agents we all have powerful, even overriding reasons to act morally, to act in accordance with moral demands. To do less would be (in one fashion or another) to betray our own nature as practically rational beings, to fail to live and act fully rationally. Hence morality is rationally demanded of everyone. Accordingly it is the job of every moral theorist to prove this (and then, or along the way, to work out in precise detail what those demands actually are).[6] The whole spirit of this approach to ethics is perhaps best captured by Stephen L. Darwall when he writes (in *Impartial Reason*, 1983), "One moralist after another has sought to demonstrate that it is contrary to reason to flout ethics. And although no particular attempt has been found compelling, indeed not even by a consensus of the moralists themselves, they continue to assert what they feel in their bones: that it must be so."[7]

There is one other important feature of the reasons conception of morality (and of ethics) that must be mentioned right away, and that is its general idea of moral motivation. Morality, whatever it is, is agreed by virtually everyone to be more than merely notional (like the square root of negative one, or the set of all sets); it is believed to have real effects in the shared world, to "produce or prevent actions," as Hume famously put it. So even if it is contrary to reason (in some very abstract or theoretical way) to flout moral demands, what is it that can actually move people to pay heed to them, to conform to them in what they do – that is, to act

[6] To put this in another way: philosophers deal in arguments, and they propound and challenge arguments by giving reasons. Arguing (coolly) is simply giving reasons. But ethics, it is almost universally agreed, concerns questions about what to do, how to live. Questions of how to live and act are questions about what sort of life makes most sense – i.e. is most reasonable – to live, are they not? *Ergo* we need a theory of reasons for acting (especially good ones), do we not? Since these good reasons invariably turn out to include (a system of) reasons to be moral, then to be indifferent to moral norms, reasons, demands or what have you is *ipso facto* to live irrationally, to act for bad reasons or none at all. (And the usually unspoken moral of it all is that the more sensible you are about things the better you must be, as a moral agent.) Case closed. In short, since the central business of philosophy just is rational justification, the subject matter of ethics simply must be moral reasons – and only moral reasons.

[7] p. 13.

practically reasonably? Accounts vary, but here too I think there is something like a near-universal consensus on the subject. Moral demands motivate or restrain us in acting because as practically rational beings we humans possess a capacity for moral autonomy or (as it has recently become more fashionable to say) normative self-governance (or self-government). And here I think it is critically important to allow a distinguished upholder of the reasons conception of ethics to speak for herself; I have selected the following eloquent passage from Christine M. Korsgaard's commentary on the work of Frans de Waal, in *Primates and Philosophers* (2006).

The animal's purposes are given to him by his affective states: his emotions and his instinctual or learned desires . . . The end that the animal pursues is determined for him by his desires and emotions . . . Kantians are among the philosophers who believe that a deeper level of assessment and therefore choice is possible. Besides asking yourself how to get what you want most, you can ask yourself whether your wanting this end is a good reason for taking this particular action. The question is not merely about whether the act is an effective way to achieve your end, but whether, even given that it is, your wanting this end *justifies* you in taking this action . . . Even if you do judge the action to be justified and act, you are acting not merely from your desire but from your judgment that the action is justified.

Why do I say this represents a deeper level of intentionality? In the first place, an agent who is capable of this form of assessment is capable of rejecting an action along with its purpose, not because there is something else she wants (or fears) even more, but simply because she judges that doing that sort of act for that purpose is wrong. In a famous passage in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant argued that we are *capable* of setting aside even our most urgent natural desires . . . to avoid performing a wrong action . . . Now if we are capable of setting aside our purposes when we cannot pursue them by any decent means, then there is also a sense in which when we *do* decide to pursue a purpose, we can be seen as having *adopted* that purpose. Our purposes may be suggested to us by our desires and emotions, but they are not determined for us by our affective states . . . Since we choose not only the means to our ends but also the ends themselves, this is intentionality at a deeper level . . . Another way to put the point is to say that we do not merely *have* intentions, good or bad. We assess and adopt them. We have the capacity for normative self-government, or, as Kant called it, "autonomy." It is at this level that morality emerges. The morality of your action is not a function of the content of your intentions. It is a function of the exercise of normative self-government.[8]

[T]he capacity for normative self-government and the deeper level of intentional control that goes with it is probably unique to human beings. And it is in the proper use of this capacity – the ability to form and act on judgments of what we ought to do – that the essence of morality lies, not in altruism or the pursuit of the greater good.[9]

[8] "Morality and the Distinctiveness of Human Action," pp. 110–12. [9] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

Obviously Korsgaard touches on several core issues of contemporary philosophy, here, but the immediate point is this: How, on the reasons conception of morality, do moral reasons, moral demands, shape people's actual conduct, their manners and conversations? The answer is that people adopt them for their own actions; they judge that they ought to act on them, and then act on those judgments. When men and women properly use their capacity to judge and act in this fashion, there is the essence of morality, the moral.

So that is one concept of morality and (in bare outline) one conception of what ethics, moral theory, is supposed to be about, which seems to 'fit' it remarkably perfectly. But (even as Korsgaard's last sentence suggests) this view of the moral is not the only one to have been proposed and that is also true of the approach to ethics that goes with it. There are other ways of conceiving morality and what philosophers are supposed to say and do about it.[10]

In "The Fourteenth Ward" (chapter 1 of *Black Spring*, 1959), Henry Miller imparts a charming depiction of his own boyhood, coming into his own on the streets surrounding the old Navy Yard in Williamsburg, Brooklyn at the approach of the first World War. But his narrative centers about what I take to be a genuinely philosophical claim, which seems to haunt me whenever I sit down to study or to 'do' ethics.

> To be born in the street means to wander all your life, to be free. It means accident and incident, drama, movement. It means above all dream. A harmony of irrelevant facts which gives to your wandering a metaphysical certitude. In the street you learn what human beings really are; otherwise, or afterwards, you invent them. What is not in the open street is false, derived, that is to say, *literature*.
>
> The boys you worshipped when you first came down into the street remain with you all your life. They are the real heroes. Napoleon, Lenin, Capone – all fiction. Napoleon is nothing to me in comparison with Eddie Carney, who gave me my first black eye. No man I have ever met seems as princely, as regal, as noble, as Lester Reardon, who, by the mere act of walking down the street, inspired fear and admiration. Jules Verne never led me to the places that Stanley Borowski had up his sleeve when it came dark. Robinson Crusoe lacked imagination in comparison with Johnny Paul. All these boys of the Fourteenth Ward have a flavor about them

[10] I happen to agree with Lawrence A. Blum that it is highly unlikely "that all the deliverances of the ordinary moral consciousness, even our most deeply held ones, are entirely compatible with one another and can be brought together within a common *system* [my emphasis]." (*Friendship, Altruism and Morality*, p. 8.)

> This is connected with the fact that the concept "moral" itself cannot rightly be given a unitary meaning, but rather bears the heritage of different moral traditions from which it gathers different sorts of meanings . . . the assumption of unity seems to me an article of faith, not borne out by experience.

still. They were not invented or imagined: they were real . . . Why, even now when I say Johnny Paul the names of the saints leave a bad taste in my mouth. Johnny Paul was the living Odyssey of the Fourteenth Ward; that he later became a truck driver is an irrelevant fact . . .

"In youth we were whole and the terror and pain of the world penetrated us through and through." But later "comes a time when suddenly all seems to be reversed."

We live in the mind, in ideas, in fragments. We no longer drink in the wild outer music of the streets – we *remember* only. Like a monomaniac we relive the drama of youth. Like a spider that picks up the thread over and over and spews it out according to some obsessive logarithmic pattern . . .[11]

"What is not in the open street is false, derived, that is to say, *literature*." Now in one obvious sense all ethics, all moral philosophy, has to be literature; its job is not to feel warships at a distance, "watch the goings-on" above the tavern on Saturday nights or lead us on after-dark adventures. Rather its task, presumably, is to analyze moral concepts, clarify ethical propositions, enunciate principles, construct theories and defend or assail them with arguments – and then, if things go well, to shape our actual moral practice. And what could life in the open street (or even remembering it) have to do with any of that? It is even possible, indeed quite common, to conceive ethics as a wholly *a priori* pursuit. It is supposed to tell us not what people really are, or how they actually behave, but instead how they ought to be, ought to act.

But Miller's words suggest to me the following, at least as an hypothesis: perhaps ethics has some obligation to try, at least, to be true to what people really are, true to what is in the open street.[12] If ethics has to be literature then perhaps, other things being equal, it is worse literature to the degree that it merely invents people, and better in so far as it manages to help us learn what human beings really are. If that is so, it seems to me we may have a very good reason even now for being suspicious of the whole notion of ethics I just described, and of the system of reasons view of what morality consists in that it reflects, embodies and supports (and perhaps one good reason already for going back to the sentimentalists). For both do seem to miss, or

[11] *Black Spring*, pp. 3–10.

[12] Compare Marcia Cavell, writing in 1975: "Moral judgment, like aesthetic judgment, suffers the more rigid it is, the less geared to this particular situation and person. As William Gass remarks [in "The Case of the Obliging Stranger"]: 'Ethics . . . is about something, and in the rush to establish principles, to elicit distinctions . . . and to discover 'laws,' those lovely things and honored people, those vile seducers and ruddy villains our principles and laws are supposed to be based upon and our ethical theories to be about are overlooked and forgotten.'" "Taste and the Moral Sense," p. 30.

ignore, an entire dimension of morals, moral experience, morality, which is palpably there in the open street. With its preoccupation with what is rationally obligatory, demanded, required, allowable and so on, the reasons view of ethics, at least, does seem "false, derived, literature" – perhaps even 'monomaniacal.'[13] And what is it that it misses, that which its own aims and categories choke us off from "drinking in" altogether? No surprise – I wish to say that it is a kind of emotional engagement in what they are doing, when real people think, judge, and act morally. I cannot imagine an argument to prove that ethics simply must take that into account; but I can offer a different conception of the moral, and speculate in a preliminary way on what a moral theory to match it would or could be like.

MORALITY IN THE OPEN STREET

As it happens I have lived in Brooklyn for many years[14] and when I walk around the open streets of Williamsburg – not as a five-to-ten-year-old

[13] Notice that if you think that the system of reasons view of morality is roughly correct and you think it makes any sense at all to ask whether or not it is true to the open street, then you will likely consider Henry Miller to be just about the worst guide you could possibly pick to finding out what is really moral. For Miller's own portrait of what is out there seems positively amoral. (Maybe he was, too, but I cannot get into any of that.) What I mean is, first, that no moral judgments of any kind ever seem to get themselves made by Miller as adult narrator of his own boyhood experiences. What happened to, in and around him just happened; none of it ever appears through any moral lens (as the system view understands what is moral). Miller never demands anything (or allows anything) morally of his characters. As he tells it they simply do not have any duties or constraints. Everything is optional, one could even say. And secondly, neither do any of his characters ever take notice of any such ideas, or make any moral decisions on their terms; no one is prompted or constrained by any detectable moral oughts. The ironmolder gorilla-men march into the foundry, and then out of it; on Sundays they change clothes and march into church – what's the difference? The Irish boys taunt the Jewish boys, who run away – so what? That is what boys do; that is what the Jewish boys, who don't even seem really to mind it anyway, expect the Irish boys to do. And surely what goes on in the rooms above the taverns on Saturday nights, when the gorilla-men have gotten paid, is not a matter of exercising moral responsibility – or irresponsibility either, it would seem. But these people are not, were not – as Miller would have it – really (merely) "literary characters" at all; they "were not invented or imagined: they were real." But I believe it is at least possible that Miller is quite a good guide to what is moral (as that is understood by the system people) on the open street, namely very little. For when I walk around in the Fourteenth Ward, on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings, what I see is perhaps a little less wild than what he saw as a boy, but otherwise it is much the same. And it is mostly amoral, or perhaps it would be better to say, nonmoral. I simply do not see, or overhear, much cognizance of moral demands, good moral reasons for acting. In my book, Miller has got people quite right, in his own little narrative.

[14] Not in Williamsburg, but close enough by subway (and the Williamsburg Bridge) to Miller's boyhood neighborhood that I often go there in various seasons and on different days of the week, just to walk around on the streets of the Fourteenth Ward – though nobody calls it that anymore – and "watch the goings-on." The ships and ironmolders are gone; the Navy Yard is surrounded by barbed wire, a gargantuan ugly no man's land in which there is a certain amount of economic activity, but no apparent connection between that and what goes on outside in the surrounding community. There are still the young boys (and girls) of Irish, Jewish and Italian descent, but I sense

boy, but as a grown man with an interest in moral philosophy – what I see just doesn't fit with what upholders of the reasons conception have to say about the 'essence' of the moral – in a way that is rather difficult to express. What I see naturally suggests to me a certain typology of motives that is simply incongruous with theirs. To put matters as bluntly as possible, where they see two basic sorts of motivations – one based on 'affective states' that determine what people do, the other a deeper sort of intentionality based on 'normative self-government' – I believe I see three. But mine are all affective states, desires and emotions. Whereas they locate the "essence of morality" in motivation of their second type, the "capacity to form and act on judgments of what we ought to do," I simply do not seem to see very much of that sort of thing going on out there at all. This may sound strange and perhaps it is; so let me begin by simply describing what people really are as I think I see them.

The people I see hurry about their own business as they imagine it to be. But what is the cause of all the activity, what actuates it, brings it about? The adults seem mostly to be acting from a plurality of desires that are in some sense self-involved, self-interested: desires for (their own) expedience, desires to do (profitable) business, desires for safety and comfort, desires for (as Hobbes said) their "conservation, or delectation [pleasure] only." Desires for things, the right things, to help them feel good, look good, prosper. In "The Tailor Shop" (also from *Black Spring*) Miller describes his father's customers (all older men) as having "nothing to do all day but run from the shirtmaker to the tailor and from the tailor to the jeweler's and from the jeweler's to the dentist and from the dentist to the druggist."[15] And this strikes me as a pretty accurate description of most of the goings-on. The children I see are mostly being dragged by adults, typically the mothers, to the adults' own ends, from the dentist to the druggist (or from the McDonalds to the Payless shoe store), perhaps with the periodic help of little bribes, and possibly while learning, among other things, as they are towed along, how to pursue their own conveniences all by themselves one day soon. It simply couldn't be right to call the people I see, or their

that the place is balkanized in a way it was not back then, much of the communal life its streets once supported having been compressed into strips of McDonalds restaurants, chain pharmacies and dollar stores. No longer identified with The Yard, Williamsburg is noted today (when at all) for its graffiti, its solid Hassidic sub-neighborhoods and artists' communities. Of course these days the neighborhood is under virtual invasion by wealthy New Yorkers seeking bargain condominium apartments outside of Manhattan (in the million-dollar range). These are known to some of the locals as the "hipoisie." By the way, the apartment building in which Miller lived as a boy is still there, and occupied by families with young children of their own.

[15] p. 90.

motives, selfish (Hobbes's selfish theory of human nature notwithstanding). Selfishness acts despite its effects on others' welfare, whereas what I see doesn't involve it at all; it is wholly detached from it, in an utterly innocuous way.[16] What I see is everyone's simply being engrossed in his own wants and necessities and at once wholly indifferent towards those of anybody else. Others might as well not even exist for the people I see as they rush about the streets. If there is a baseline, default motivation for what people are doing most of the time, what they are after, it might be called self-love, though I prefer Hobbes's own term, "conveniences" (or "self-convenience").

But if one watches long enough, sooner or later the preponderant self-absorption of self-convenience is broken, as it seems to me, by one or another instance of helping behavior. And it seems to me that this is the basic moral phenomenon to be accounted for – and possibly justified. This is hardly an original, let alone a revolutionary, suggestion; after all, empirical psychologists interested in moral behavior in young children invariably fix on *helping* behavior as their primary object of study (and to a somewhat lesser degree on their capacities for grasping and making what adults call moral judgments, and their remarkable ability from a very early age to distinguish these from merely conventional judgments). Whom do I see helping whom? Most helping behavior I see is behavior of parents towards their own children, though even a lot of that seems partly or even largely self-convenient or 'reciprocal' – untied shoelaces slow down the family business, after all. Some is parents helping their own parents. Occasionally a parent helps another parent's child. If you watch children playing for a while you will see children help other children. If one gets a scrape, sometimes another child will grow upset, show distress, and then actually take steps to comfort the first, with food or (even) her own toy or blanket. I see no extreme helping behavior but I suspect that I would if there were a bad car accident or other disaster, and people were severely inconvenienced (dying in the street, say). Sticking to non-extreme helping behavior, it seems clear that even it is (as already noted) relatively rare. Perhaps this is because mundane helpfulness, towards strangers, at least, appears mostly directed at people who are visibly in particular need of assistance; those whom I see getting help are the very ones who have tripped on subway stairs, dropped their wallets, got their grocery carts stuck in the doors of markets or (once in a long while) been accosted by some 'bad guy.' They are people who are

[16] As Butler said, "we often use the word *selfish* so as to exclude . . . all regards to the good of others . . . yet . . . bringing this peculiar disregard to the good of others into the idea of self-love, is in reality adding to the idea, or changing it from what it was before stated to consist in, namely, in an affection to ourselves." "Upon the Love of Our Neighbor," in *Five Sermons*, p. 50.

in plights, small or big; and they are people whose straits have somehow or other been noticed by others, the helpers.[17] Moreover, those who do stop to help, it seems to me, invariably appear to be aroused; they are not impassive the way others are, those just standing in line to board a bus or stepping around a patch of wet sidewalk cement. Their emotions are somehow engaged in what they are doing.[18] This is what appears to me to be happening when one individual pauses to help another for his sake.[19]

What about behavior that is positively unhelpful, injurious, humiliating, oppressive, deliberately hurtful (Eddie Carney punching young Henry in the eye)? My first reaction is to try drawing what motivates such conduct back under the umbrella of self-good, self-convenience: maybe Eddie didn't really want to hurt Henry *per se*; he just wanted to be, to appear to be, a 'big man.' Or it could well be that there is such a thing as disinterested malice (though even Hobbes denied it[20]). I am simply not sure what to say about this. In any case there is undeniably a third type of motivation at work in manners and conversations, whether it is best conceived as a kind of truly disinterested cruelty towards others or merely some sort of twisted, hyper-egoistic disdain for them, a sort of super-selfishness.

So what is really going on here, from a moral point of view? I cannot believe that there could be such a thing as a single moral motive, but focusing just on what I call helping behavior, I would say this: if self-convenience is the mold that forms the grand majority of human actions, and if helping behavior, altruism, if you will, does break the mold, however seldom or momentarily, then what motivates it must be something that

[17] Of course not much helping behavior is non-self-conveniently motivated. (Very little of it, I would say). Help from strangers in ordinary circumstances is very often motivated by self-love of some kind on the part of the helpers; we adults (at least) frequently lend others a hand simply in order to look good or to avoid the anxieties or other inconveniences that not 'doing what you're supposed to' would bring with it. I recall a former colleague telling me that he "usually treated other people reasonably well" because it was "simply too much *bother* to do otherwise"; and I believe he was being honest on behalf of all of us.

[18] Their arousal need not be obvious; in fact it is often very subtle. Just one real life example: during what New Yorkers – not a hardy lot when it comes to weather – were talking about awhile back as "The Blizzard of '02," two elderly women approached one other from opposite ends of a hastily shoveled channel in the snow. The one heading eastward stepped aside, off of the sidewalk, allowing the westward woman to pass first. The westbound person passed her eastbound counterpart; they made eye contact and then (simultaneously) smiled at one another. Certainly smiles indicate, express, release emotions, whatever else they do.

[19] I do not wish to claim that they are not acting for moral reasons, but I will suggest that their emotions are ultimately the source of those reasons and not the other way around.

[20] "[T]hat any man should take pleasure in other men's great harms, without other end of his own, I do not conceive it possible." (*Leviathan*, p. 32.) But then Hobbes needed to keep everything selfish for his own Galilean reductionist purposes.

can actually burst the bubble of self-absorption that we all seem to wear around our heads. It must be real, not invented. It has to be an actual psychic mechanism of some kind, one there is good empirical evidence to believe in, one that we can understand how we humans came to have. In any case if the great bulk of what we do in ordinary life takes shape within a cloud of self-absorption, as it seems to me it does, then (at the very least) Arthur Schopenhauer must have been right to say (in *The Basis of Morality*) that the moral motive cannot be merely an idea, an abstract belief, a "fancy floating in the air"; rather, it "must come and press itself upon us, and this with such force that it may, at least possibly, overcome the opposing egoistic motives in all their giant strength."[21] Speaking metaphorically – which is probably unavoidable in moral philosophy – it must indeed be a force. And (with due allowance for his own penchant for hyperbole) this force must be "strong enough to lay bit and bridle on the surging throng of human desires, on the storm of passion, on the giant might of egoism."[22]

And – finally – something quite similar to this un-self-absorbed engagement is definitely at work in the observers of the mundane sort of altruism I see. When one person notices and does something about another's need, quite often some other people notice her noticing and doing, and they give off signs of being struck by it, affected by it, in a positive sort of way – of approving it. What they seem to approve is not the helping behavior as such; rather it seems that what gives them pleasure, what they are impressed by, is (something like) a natural concern for other persons, other selves, which is manifested by the helper's actions. It is whatever led her to help that arouses approval in those who watch the goings-on. People (including myself) spontaneously and involuntarily attach value to moral concern, concern in one person for the welfare of others; they take it to be morally good. And I believe that everyone already knows this – even philosophers. But why should that happen? Eventually I will argue that this is among the most difficult questions in moral philosophy – despite its almost universal neglect.

In sum, most of what people do is from self-convenience, but some is motivated by concern, not for themselves, but for others. When that happens, something moral is definitely going on, in fact (I would say) something morally valuable. So whatever my (sentimentalist) moral theory

[21] p. 63. I also tend strongly to agree that egoism is "the first and principal, though not the only, power that the *moral Motive* has to contend against" (and that "the latter, in order to enter the lists against such an opponent, must be something more real than a hair-splitting sophism or an *a priori* soap-bubble"). (p. 154.)

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

may turn out to be, it will definitely include a principle to this effect: self-convenience, self-concern, is generally speaking morally indifferent, whereas being concerned for others, and acting on that concern, is morally good. (And that super-selfishness, or malice, is definitely morally bad.) Not much to go on, but it is a start.

Now someone could certainly object here, possibly with some justice, that my derivation of a sentimental conception of the moral from various observations of my own on the streets of Brooklyn is really a disguised attempt to prejudice the issue – which is, basically, 'what is the moral motive?' I said the children beholding the scraped knee of their playmate were upset, that adults stopping to help or approving of others who did were aroused, and so on. Why should I be permitted to drag feelings into things when it is quite possible that emotions might, in the end, not be germane to understanding the moral, that in which "the essence of morality lies"? All I actually observed were a few people being motivated (somehow) to help others and to approve of help being given (along perhaps with a few smiles, raised eyebrows, attentive gazes and so forth). And certainly no moral theory denies or is inconsistent with the claim that people often do take the trouble to help others in need.

I am not trying to support or debunk any particular moral theory here, only attempting to articulate a way of thinking about what morality is that is different from the one that is implicit in a lot of theories that others have proposed. I am not even (yet) claiming (with Hume, on one influential reading of him) that people never help others purely and simply because they believe it is right to do so or wrong not to (along lines suggested by Korsgaard). But to say only this much would be too flippant; the objection is fruitful in its own right. Rather obviously, what I will want to say (in due course) is that altruism – the actual practice of it, not some alleged rational demand that we take others' interests into account when we 'adopt' intentions – is essential to morality, and that what ultimately accounts for it is sentiment, not reason (or normative self-government). And interestingly, reasons theorists typically do not deny outright that people's emotions are involved, somehow, sometimes, when they are motivated to assist others. They only assert that such emotions are not essential to moral motivation.[23] One passage in Thomas Nagel's *The Possibility of Altruism* (1970) seems particularly instructive here. Nagel holds that, assuming that his own (rationalistic, Kantian) moral theory proves successful, we will see that "an

[23] Or they say (rather implausibly to my mind) that such emotions and desires, while undeniably involved, are themselves motivated or 'brought about' somehow by cognizance of reasons that exist independently of them. Or, they simply ignore emotions and feelings altogether.

appeal to our interests or sentiments, to account for altruism, is superfluous."

> My general reply to such suggestions is that without question people may be motivated by benevolence, sympathy, love, redirected self-interest, and various other influences, on some of the occasions on which they pursue the interests of others, but that there is something else, a motivation available when none of these are, and also operative when they are present, which has genuinely the status of a rational requirement on human conduct.[24]

(Nagel of course needs to explain what it means to say that this incentive is always operative or available and how anything can be at once a requirement and a motivation, but this is not germane here.)

Now suppose I wish to claim that, based on my own observations, altruism is typically motivated by feelings. What will be Nagel's response? He might (and as we will see, does) claim that sentiment may be necessary to account for why some people pursue the interests of others on some occasions, but that it cannot account for all instances of such conduct. And that would be fine, for at least then I could consider whether to agree or disagree with him. But that misses the force of his general reply, which is that sentiment is never necessary (it is superfluous) to account for altruism – in his own sense of "account for" (and, of "altruism"). "Altruism" here does not mean this or that bit of helping behavior; rather it is to be understood as a standing requirement that we (any one of us) always take the interests of others into consideration whenever we adopt intentions, just as we naturally regard our own interests as providing good reasons for others to act (where appropriate) in ways that help, or at least do not harm, us. Nor does "account for" quite mean "explain" in the ordinary (causal) sense, as when we say (for instance) that my belief that the elderly woman's cart is stuck in the supermarket door and my concern (desire) that she not be injured explain (because they actually bring about, motivate) my decision to help her out. To account for altruism instead means something like "prove through purely philosophical argumentation that anyone who is ever in a situation similar to mine in relevant ways has a good reason to help out, and further that he could be motivated to do so by his recognition of that very reason – even if he did not happen at the moment to be feeling any certain emotion towards the woman in question." (Such a purely rational, passionless motivation would be available to him.) But notice this: suppose Nagel's theory is right, and there is such a requirement of altruism built into practical reason. Where does that leave what I wish to claim, namely

[24] p. 80.

that an appeal to sentiment is not superfluous to accounting for altruism in people who are real, not invented or imagined? It is almost as if I am simply not allowed to say this. On the terms of his own account either I must be confused about what it means to account for altruistic phenomena (because I am not proving any rational requirements), or I am talking about a humdrum *de facto* sort of altruism that isn't really important for ethics. And why not? Because – seeing that it is motivated by desires people merely happen to have, is merely sentimental – it cannot genuinely represent "a rational requirement on human conduct." But only in that (we are told) does "the essence of morality lie." So my real answer to the objection is this: when I say (when writing about ethics) that I honestly believe that people are generally and for the most part acting on their immediate feelings when they aim at promoting others' interests and not merely their own, I do not see that I am being prejudicial. My central point is simply that if we uncritically follow Korsgaard and Nagel in looking only for moral demands, rational requirements, normative self-governance, we are too apt to ignore the role that "benevolence, sympathy, love" actually do play in real people's moral lives – and as providing a possible different foundation for ethics, namely that proposed by the original sentimentalists.

That being said, I would now like to expand my proposed sentimental conception of the moral, tentatively and partially, as follows. First, I simply do not see very much regard for reasons, as such, in all of this, very much self-government going on in people as I think they really are, in people who are not "invented or imagined." The system view of the moral seems to me to comport very poorly with what is in the open street (or in family homes). In fact I wonder if the notion of morality as a system of practical reasons for action hasn't been mostly invented by philosophers – much in the way Miller has us inventing the people with whom we interact as adults. The idea that people are moral through rational autonomy seems "false, derived, that is to say, *literature*."[25] I find that I simply must agree with

[25] I certainly do not have anything like a knockdown argument to offer against the idea that autonomy is the key to ethics, and am even doubtful whether there could even be such an argument. There is certainly something very appealing (or seductive, depending on what your final view is) about Kant's central claim that as a rational being "[m]an . . . is subject only to his own . . . legislation, and . . . is only bound to act in accordance with his own will" and corresponding argument that, since this will is "designed by nature to be a will giving universal laws," only by "self-legislating" moral laws can men and women be fully practically rational. I can however think of some ways in which the idea of moral autonomy – undoubtedly the dominant theme of modern moral philosophy – can be questioned, even if not debunked altogether.

The most obvious is to argue, along with Schopenhauer and (before him) Hobbes, that the concept of lawfulness (with regard to actions) is empty unless it is taken to mean accordance with positive law, whether divine or political, complete with sanctions against disobedience.

sociologist James Q. Wilson, that both when we are children and when we have become adults, for the most part "our inclination toward fair play or our sympathy for the plight of others are immediate and instinctive, a reflex of our emotions more than an act of our intellect."[26] I would go one step further: compassion towards others is undeniably *real*; reason – as a (supposed) source of moral motivation, sanction and value – is (very possibly) just literature. Further, I believe that our moral capacities – by which I mean our capacities for being engaged by others' good, being

Autonomy – originally a political concept – means self-rule, but if moral laws are void or incomprehensible outside the religious or political context in which the whole idea of moral laws was conceived then autonomy (self-rule by moral laws) is incoherent as well. The situation is simply then one (as Anscombe described the case of the moral ought or moral obligation *tout court*) of "the survival of a concept outside the framework of thought that made it a really intelligible one." ("Modern Moral Philosophy," in *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G. E. M. Anscombe*, 3, *Ethics, Religion and Politics*, p. 31.) But this argument is really a kind of *ad hominem*, which could be met by arguing somehow that it is after all sensible to claim that humans are capable of acting according to self-given laws – in some new sense not beholden to theology or inapt political metaphors.

A better way might be to accept Kant's claim that one is "only bound to act in accordance with his own will" but then argue that the idea of binding one's own will is required for autonomy and that this cannot make sense. Moral laws (demands, obligations) can only be valid if I freely choose to make them laws for my own actions, but how can I do such a thing? I find the germ of an argument along these lines in Rüdiger Bittner's challenging study, *What Reason Demands* (1983), in his discussion of promising. In promising I am supposed to place myself under an obligation (demand) to do or not do that which I promise by the very fact of my own free (autonomous) action of making the promise. Suppose I promise not to do something – say, tell another person about our present conversation – but then later on decide that it would be a good thing to tell him anyway. But how can what exists only because of my previous willing (the demand to keep the promise) acquire some sort of independent standing and turn against my (present) will?

Sometimes one does regret one's actions, so that, it could be said, one's present will turns against one's former will. But this way of talking is imprecise; in such cases, I am confronted with particular states of the world that I have brought about myself and could have prevented. But the promise did not change the world, apart from the negligible effects of sounds or marks. Through promising, nothing happens that makes difficult or impossible an action I would otherwise prefer to perform. Promising only establishes the demand to omit the action. But since the demand is in force only because I have placed it in force, and since, on the other hand, it is only a demand, not an actual state of the world, that can at most be changed but not recalled, I do not see how the demand can continue as a claim against a will that has changed, rather than simply lose its force and dissolve before the new will. I do not see how the prior resolution can fix an obligation that exists and endures like a thing, at last opposing itself to my will. The demand to do what is promised stands opposed to my will in the name of my will. But one would think that against my present will, my prior will has no force, and that a mere change of will cancels the old demand. The concession of its continued validity is an unintelligible regression to self-imposed minority. (p. 61f.)

"But whoever binds himself can release himself, and so is not really bound." "We cannot take freedom away from ourselves; it can only be taken from us." (p. 63) On Kant's view we are supposed to be attaining (true, rational) freedom precisely by binding ourselves to the moral law, but I for one do not see how that can be done in the first place for I do not see how one can bind oneself at all. True, this is not Bittner's own position. His is the (possibly) even more radical view, which accepts Kant's autonomy principle (or something quite like it) but then argues on its basis that moral demands are invalid and that moral laws, while possible, are "practically irrelevant." (p. 110.)

[26] *The Moral Sense*, p. 7.

motivated to attend to their needs and assist them in their distress – simply must be fundamentally biological and affective, rather than ratiocinative in nature, and that our susceptibility to guidance by abstract reasons (norms, principles), though certainly part of the whole package, is and must always remain secondary to more elemental forces already at work in each of us at birth. These probably include our innate dispositions towards sociability, our hunger for affiliation or attachment, our powers of imitation, and our susceptibility to empathy for others like ourselves. Morality, the moral (as I cannot help seeing it) emerges in all normal children at a very young age and in the setting provided by the family; and family processes, in turn, "do not much depend on invention, self-discovery, written instructions, or educated people; they depend on instincts, mutual attraction, and organic relationships." To the degree that it makes sense to speak of morality as having a basis at all, surely that basis must be something far closer to what Shaftesbury, the founder of the sentimental school, called the natural affections (or what Hutcheson and Butler called benevolence) than it is to any abstract system of reasons for acting. In short, Hume famously declared that morality is "more properly felt, than judged of," and I happen to believe he was absolutely right.

Reasons-theorists naturally view the moral life as an attempt to be, well, reasonable. If only we can manage to be fully rational we will naturally live up to the demands of morality that reason requires (and exercise our moral options, adopt ends we simply want to adopt, only where it is appropriate and allowable, i.e. reasonable, to do so). Moral reasons, after all, are simply practical reasons, so practical reason includes (so to speak) morality. Moral struggle is an effort to live in the way it makes most sense to live; the idea seems always to be that if we could just overcome, by a sort of rigorous self-command, various defects in our own practical rationality, such as partiality, weakness of will, failure to be motivated by our considered rational judgments and so on, we will then almost 'automatically' be moral.

I simply cannot believe it – and I do not believe that real people see it this way for the most part, either. Morality, we feel, must be mainly a struggle between our own love of ourselves and our (always) far less ardent concern for others, a contest not between regard for (general and impersonally formulable) reasons and disregard of them, but rather between self-convenience on the one hand and our other-regarding emotions and desires – towards particular real people – on the other. Moral endeavor is principally a concern to be less self-engrossed in our dealings with others. It centrally involves an effort to attend to others and thereby allow our more generous instincts to emerge despite the incessant urgings of the fat

relentless ego. So that (in outline) is my own sentimental conception of morals and it will soon become evident, I trust, that something very like it really is at work, being articulated and defended, in the writings of the original British sentimentalists.[27]

What will a sentimental moral theory to go with it be like; what is sentimentalism in ethics? I want to let an answer to that question emerge gradually and naturally from our study of what Shaftesbury and the others were doing, rather than shoehorn their concerns and arguments into some artificial stipulative definition of what that type of ethical theory must consist in, laid down in advance. At the same time I think it is quite easy to express what a sentimentalist moral theory will need to look like when stripped to its bare bones. There is no great mystery about it. I was a bit nervous when I proposed (in 1989, in an article that is now the next chapter of this book), that Schopenhauer – a bitter, nasty nineteenth-century anti-Semite whose overall view of the world, as "will and representation," I for one find quite ridiculous – was a sentimentalist. Yet I have since come to believe that Schopenhauer may well have stated the basic idea of sentimentalist justification (and perhaps of sentimentalism as a whole) in a way that is valuable, as a sort of commonsensical touchstone for understanding what Shaftesbury and the others were doing in this regard, how they sought to derive from their understandings of human nature some form of "moral *ought*."

Schopenhauer holds (as I do) that every human action springs from one of three basic sorts of motivation; he names his Egoism, Malice and Compassion. Egoism is normally wholly morally indifferent. But it easily grows

[27] Darwall proposes that it is "arguable" that "only in the early modern period (or just before) did a number of features coalesce into the idea of *morality*, the notion that there exist requirements or *demands* that are binding on all rational persons, even though the conduct demanded may lack any necessary connection to the good of the person obligated." "Of course," he adds, "this idea was not universally received; neither is it now . . ." (*The British moralists and the internal 'ought': 1640–1740*, p. 1f.) And, that a new conception of the human will – as involving "a kind of *command* the agent issues to herself," as the "capacity to make demands *of oneself* " – simultaneously took shape "in the attempt to understand and defend the distinctively modern conception of morality, namely, that of a set of demands that are binding on all rational moral persons." "How else, after all, could demands necessarily bind any rational agent unless they were somehow rooted in autonomous rational will itself?" (p. 20.) But neither Darwall's idea nor this conception form any part of my concept of morality (or of the human will); and to whatever extent I can understand these distinctively modern ideas at all it is from reading philosophers, studying the literature. Not only are these ideas not universally received but I should think (further) that most ordinary men and women would likely have no idea what Darwall was talking about – and this (on my view at least) is not irrelevant to moral theory. Speaking only for myself (and as a philosopher) I must confess that the whole idea of "issuing commands to myself" sounds, not distinctively modern, but rather old-fashioned, almost medieval rather than (even) early-modern, just not up to date somehow with contemporary ideas about motivation that are at work in the biological and human sciences.

and becomes canalized, in ways that are all too familiar, into bald-faced selfishness, which typically leads to gross injustice in conduct, and malice, which distinguishes itself from egoism to the extent that it waxes truly disinterested. These are positively morally disvaluable, anti-moral incentives. Only actions motivated purely and solely by compassion for one's fellow creatures (human or not) are genuinely morally valuable. (A good deal of the time compassion prevents unjust and spiteful actions, though the resulting inaction hardly merits approval.) Compassion displays itself in the practice of two cardinal virtues, namely justice (which opposes unbridled egoism) and "loving-kindness" (the antithesis of malicious hatred). So-called duties to self simply do not exist (they were invented by philosophers). Schopenhauer next defines the "principle or main proposition" of any ethical theory as "the shortest and most concise definition of the kind of conduct which it prescribes, or, if it have no imperative form, of the line of conduct to which it attaches real moral worth."[28] The "single enunciation, the direction for following the path of virtue" that best captures the principle of all action motivated by the moral motive is "*Neminem laede, immo omnes, quantum potes, juva* (do harm to no one; but rather help all people, as far as lies in your power)." (Egoism and malice each have mottoes as well, both Latin and German.) He then draws what seems to me a very sensible distinction between the what and the wherefore of the moral, as conceived by any given ethical theory, which theory accordingly has "two questions to deal with: the one has to do with the *Principle*, the other with the *Basis* of ethics." The principle is the "single enunciation" meant to capture the essence of all genuinely morally worthy conduct, the *neminem laede*. "Whereas the *Basis* of any theory of Ethics is the *dotí* of virtue [its "wherefore" or *raison d'être*], the *reason* of the obligation enjoined, of the exhortation or praise given, whether it be sought in human nature, or in the external conditions of the world, or in anything else."[29]

Notice that Schopenhauer's theory matches up fairly closely not only to my own "street" typology of motivation, but with the three claims that I said best distinguish the sentimental from the rational school in early-modern ethics (the justificational, motivational and axiological): if compassion is the wherefore of morals, then it (and not reason) supplies the only genuinely

[28] *The Basis of Morality*, p. 53.

[29] So when we come to Hutcheson, for example, we might say that the "wherefore" of his system is that "universal calm benevolence" of which the moral sense approves – or perhaps it is the moral sense itself – whereas the "what" is his principle that "that action is best, which procures the greatest happiness, for the greatest numbers; and that, worst, which in like manner, occasions misery." (*Inquiry*, p. 125.)

possible justification for living morally; compassion is always a necessary condition of altruistic (non-egoistic) motivation; unselfish feeling for others should be counted uniquely morally valuable, even stand alone as "the true incentive which underlies all acts of real moral worth." We shall soon see that Shaftesbury rests a lot of weight in his argument on the principle that "THE Affections or Passions which must influence and govern [any] Animal" are either "THE natural ones," "OR the self-ones" "OR such as are neither of these" and so "unnatural." (A characteristic natural affection is compassion, "desire for safety" a "self-one," and "exaggerated pride" typifies the unnatural ones.) Now it hardly takes genius to notice the correspondence. Were it important to our business I would argue that Schopenhauer simply stole his theory from the British sentimentalists – and that his pretentious "proof" that compassion is the true moral motive and his contemptuous remarks about Hutcheson notwithstanding, he was actually a moral sense theorist in disguise (or in denial).

What is important is that Schopenhauer's idea for deriving some sort of a moral ought from a typology of motives appears to make a good deal of sense. And none of it has anything as such to do with practical moral rationality, normative self-government or moral autonomy. We do not govern ourselves by moral reasons when we act decently, according to this (peculiar) German sentimentalist; rather any specific reason for acting morally, any "what we ought to do" is supplied by facts of our psychology having nothing to do as such with reason. It is our feelings, our sentiments, which provide the "wherefore." So as a crude working hypothesis: that is what a sentimentalist moral theory will, on the whole, be about. True, at this point (roughly, where Schopenhauer left matters) it has an air of crudity about it, even a ring of circularity. And unclarity. But I take that to be a challenge; and one burden of the argument to follow is that sentimentalism need not be philosophically simplistic or inherently deficient when it comes to moral justification. It may be the only sort of philosophical (or real life!) moral justification that can ultimately succeed.

Let me repeat that I am not asserting here that the sentimental conception of morals is right or true but only suggesting that it must be an important constituent in any wholly satisfactory account of humans as moral beings, in any credible analysis of the concept of morality, in any (decently realistic) ethical theory. It should at least be considered alongside the reasons conception as a live option for understanding what is essential in morals. And – to hint at my later argument – since it is barely even expressible in the preferred terms of reasons-theory, there is something quite wrong with views of that breed – something wrong, in other words, with ethical rationalism. In the following chapter I set forth the terms of that argument more specifically

and formally by defending sentiment-based accounts of ethics against the objections of Nagel (in *The Possibility of Altruism*), whom I take to be (formidably) representative of contemporary rationalism. This will furnish a working structural characterization of sentimentalism in ethics, which can then be tested against the actual arguments and strategies of the original British sentimentalists who are the historical subjects of my study.

A FORMIDABLE GHOST: THE SAGE OF MALMESBURY

I absolutely must pause here to say something about one character in this tale who, while he does not here receive a separate chapter of his own, was and must always remain a key player in sentimentalist, indeed all modern, moral philosophy: Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). Throughout the narrative Hobbes is like a shade lurking in the forest only a few steps removed from the paths we must travel. Unfortunately, I simply do not have room to say all that I would like to say about him, though two points would stand out if I did.

The first would be that Hobbes should be considered not merely as having supplied the occasion for both the rational and sentimental schools to spring forth, but rather as being in a very real sense the founder of both. I would retain the idea (implicit in most histories of ethics) of Hobbes as the quarry and therefore the axis of both the rational and the sentimental schools. His egoism, materialism, atheism and amoralism had to be combated. But he did much more than that. Hobbes provided the intellectual school with its principal impetus, to discover a way to prove that moral demands are rationally obligatory apart from individuals' particular interests, desires and sentiments. Yet (as explained in the next chapter) he also supplied the sentimental moralists with the argumentative form they would use in opposing his own apparent reduction of morality to self-interest. At the same time, Hobbes suggested historically important objections to both sentimentalism and rationalism. Fellow-feeling is too weak, fickle, partial and selfish to be used to justify a duty to obey abstract moral principles (natural laws) or to explain people's co-operative "manners and conversations." But since reason operating alone is just calculation, reckoning, it cannot do this either. For Hobbes, reason and passion must "concur," as Hume would much later famously say, in order for men and women to render themselves capable – through the social covenant (contract) as well as self-discipline and education – of full-blooded moral agency, or (as he himself would say) citizenship.

The second thing I would like to say (in more detail) is that Hobbes's philosophy remains, or should be taken to remain, dangerous, more than

300 years after his death. I feel certain that someone or other will say that I am too optimistic about human nature in this book (as dozens of critics over the centuries have said of Shaftesbury). But I am afraid that my real views are darker than Shaftesbury's, Hutcheson's or Hume's. I take Hobbes's psychological egoism, his selfish theory of human nature, very seriously. As I see it, the biggest threat to ethical sentimentalism is not rationalism – or (even) *vice versa*. Rather, the most serious danger to ethical theory on practically anyone's understanding of it is psychological egoism. Not egoism as ordinarily explained in introductory ethics texts, but a more formidable egoistic psychology grounded in the scientific theory of animal (including human) motivation – though this has not yet been worked out in satisfying detail, as far as I can see. Yet if it should be worked out convincingly, Hobbes's selfish theory of human nature (properly understood) might be proved to have been right all along. Ironically, Hobbes may have been the one who first anchored a selfish theory of moral psychology in what are truly scientific considerations; and that is what I wish to suggest here.

I do not believe that egoism is true. But neither do I believe that it has been decisively refuted – that because of some purely philosophical considerations egoism couldn't be true, as the ethics texts would have us believe. For one thing I think people really do possess certain unselfish, other-regarding feelings towards (certain) others – sympathy, compassion and (moral) concern. (Otherwise I would not have written this book.) We are not entirely selfish – even if our genes certainly are. But egoism still worries me, and I think it ought to worry (all) other moral philosophers too. Let me focus for a minute on certain of those others whom we have already met – the reasons theorists.

The human being is, absolutely undeniably, a very unique sort of animal. Surely we are not merely (in evolutionary biologist John Maynard Smith's well-known phrase) "lumbering robots programmed to ensure the survival of their genes." On the contrary surely we are capable in some sense (and in the right circumstances) of normative self-governance, in a way that (for example) cats clearly are not. Indeed the need humans have to converse about, avow, accept and be guided by shared norms of behavior is very likely what brought about the evolution of our moral emotions (anger, shame, guilt, sympathy, trust) in the first place. But just as the rationalistic two-tiered typology of motives proposed by Korsgaard (and Kant) did not seem to fit what I think I see people actually doing, for the most part, I do not see that it accords very well with what science has to offer on the subject of motivation, either. (It is not, or at least not yet, consilient with it.) Allow me to illustrate, without attempting to prove, this point, using some passages (of course) from Hobbes.

I believe that Hobbes was not only the inventor of the modern social contract theory of government (government is legitimate because people create government, authorize it), but that he was also the first to state and defend what is nowadays called the reward-event theory of motivation.[30] Many, if not most, of today's neuropsychologists, evolutionary biologists, evolutionary psychologists and so on tend to write as though they assumed the truth of the reward-event theory to be obvious, even when (oddly) they show no signs of knowing its name.[31] The idea is rather simple, almost obvious, and has even made inroads into popular culture and everyday

[30] It seems to me that someone or other should have claimed this before, but for the life of me I am unable to find it anywhere in the literature on Hobbes (which is vast). However J. C. A. Gaskin comes very close to doing so in his introduction to *The Elements of Law*, where, after citing *Human Nature* IX, 17, "There can be no greater argument to a man of his own power, than to find himself able, not only to accomplish his own desires, but also to assist other men in theirs; and this is that conception wherein consisteth charity," he remarks that there is "much of this sort of thing in Hobbes." For example of the 'beggar story' given below, Gaskin writes that, "This is to say that, at least sometimes, acting according to one's own aversion to pain (in a broad sense) or desire for pleasure *includes* avoiding the discomfort of acting badly towards other people." (p. xxx.)

> It can be taken to say both that men are normally pursuing their own selfish ends whether they appear to be doing so or not, and, more radically, that, because of the mechanistic psychology Hobbes uncovers in *Human Nature*, men and women in fact cannot do other than follow their own [selfish] devices and desires *whatever* they appear to be doing or allege they are doing. Thus moral teaching either inculcates hypocrisy or asks the psychologically impossible: 'every man's end being some good to himself.' (*Ibid*., p. xxxivf.)

[31] I offer only two examples here. In his discussion of (human) "access consciousness" psychologist Steven Pinker notes the "emotional coloring of experience." "We not only register events but register them as pleasurable or painful. That makes us take steps to have more of the former and less of the latter, now and in the future." "And evolutionarily speaking, there is seldom any mystery in why we seek the goals we seek . . . The things that become objects of desire are the kinds of things that led, on average, to enhanced odds of survival and reproduction in the environment in which we evolved: water, food, safety, sex, status, mastery over the environment, and the well-being of children." Evolution caused us to be built so as to pursue certain objects and states as goals generally (and receive pleasure when we obtain them); learning (throughout our earlier individual lives), which consists in "registerings" of pleasures and pains (surely internal events in the brain), "makes us" (i.e. motivates us to) "seek the goals we seek" now that we are here in real time (so to speak). (*How the Mind Works*, p. 143.)

Quite similarly, evolutionary zoologist Richard Dawkins, in addressing the question how genes (which obviously can have no foresight) can nevertheless be said to make "predictions about the future":

> One way for genes to solve the problem of making predictions in rather unpredictable environments is to build in a capacity for learning. Here the program may take the form of the following instructions to the survival machine: 'Here is a list of things defined as rewarding: sweet taste in the mouth, orgasm, mild temperature, smiling child. And here is a list of nasty things: various sorts of pain, nausea, empty stomach, screaming child. If you should happen to do something that is followed by one of the nasty things, don't do it again, but on the other hand repeat anything that is followed by one of the nice things.' The advantage of this sort of programming is that it greatly cuts down the number of detailed rules that have to be built into the original program; and it is also capable of coping with changes in the environment that could not have been predicted in detail. On the other hand, certain predictions have to be made still. In our example the genes are predicting that sweet taste in the mouth, and orgasm, are going to be 'good' in the sense that eating sugar and copulating are likely to be beneficial to gene survival.

parlance. In fact later on I will show that something very like it even worried Hutcheson, as though he had already discerned the theory to be at work in Hobbes.

In his *Brief Life* of Hobbes, John Aubrey reports that,

> He was very charitable (*pro suo modulo*) [according to his means] to those that were true objects of his bounty. One time, I remember, going in the Strand, a poor and infirm old man craved his alms. He, beholding him with eyes of pity and compassion, put his hand in his pocket, and gave him *6d* [pence]. Said a divine (that Dr Jaspar Mayne) that stood by – 'Would you have done this, if it had not been Christ's command?' – 'Yea,' said he. – 'Why?' quoth the other. – 'Because,' said he, 'I was in pain to consider the miserable condition of the old man; and now my alms, giving him some relief, doth also ease me.'[32]

Hobbes's egoistic claim that he helped the beggar in order to assuage his own pain reverses the causal order between desire and satisfaction that we have enshrined in our folk psychology of motivation – and which seems to be taken for granted by virtually all philosophers who write about the psychology of ethics. But suppose that the story is true and Hobbes did in fact receive a kind of satisfaction (or rather relief) from giving the beggar sixpence (which, even then, was not a whole lot of money). Let us call this his reward. Virtually all modern philosophical critiques of egoism, beginning with Hutcheson's and Butler's, hold that Hobbes's statement, that he wanted to help the beggar because of the satisfaction (reward) he would get from doing so, involves a confusion and depends on a misuse of language.[33] Simply put, Hobbes could not have received his reward unless he first wanted the beggar to be relieved. And that desire is what we (rightly) call benevolence, or pity. The object of his motivating desire was not his own relief (reward); rather his reward was the consequence of gratifying that desire for something else, namely to help the beggar. This is really

Notice that Dawkins's account of learning via reward and aversion events in the brain can easily handle explaining why we (human) survival machines are so often motivated to act in ways that are not "beneficial to gene survival." (Compare Murillo on anorexia nervosa, below.) "The possibilities of saccharine and masturbation are not anticipated according to this example; nor are the dangers of over-eating sugar in our environment where it exists in unnatural plenty." (*The Selfish Gene*, p. 57.)

[32] *The Brief Life*. An Abstract of Aubrey's Notes. In Gaskin, p. 242. Gaskin's source in turn is *'Brief Lives,' chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the years 1669 and 1696*, edited by Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1898), i. 321–95.

[33] As James Rachels puts it (*The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, p. 59f.),

> If we have a positive attitude toward the attainment of some goal, then we may derive satisfaction from attaining it. But the object of our attitude is the attaining *of that goal*; and we must want to attain the goal *before* we can find satisfaction in it. We do not first desire some sort of "pleasurable consciousness" and then try to figure out how to achieve it. Rather, we desire all sort of different things . . . and because we desire those things we derive satisfaction from getting them.

the heart of the usual, and I would say tired, case against selfish egoism, from Butler's *Sermons* into our own day. Unselfish desire, if gratified, may indeed cause some reward (event) in the agent, but this can occur only if there is that preexisting desire for some object or state of affairs other than the reward. The reward is causally dependent on the desire; the desire is not causally dependent on the reward event. The felt satisfactions we experience are contingent by-products of desires for things other than such internal events, which desires are themselves autonomous of (not causally dependent on) those events. But at least one contemporary philosopher, Carolyn R. Morillo, has argued that this may not necessarily be so. As Morillo points out, most philosophers seem to think that, "once one has cleared up the logical and linguistic confusions in egoism, it will be obvious that [the common sense] view of motivation is correct." "But [she asks] if a theory of human motivation is empirical, is really making claims about how we 'work,' can it be that easy?"[34] Morillo is quite right, I believe, to hold that both the common sense and standard philosophical view of motivation make empirical claims. They assert that Hobbes must have found his reward satisfying because he intrinsically desired something else. But suppose this is wrong. Suppose that we intrinsically desire our reward events because we find them to be satisfying, and desire other things because we have learned (or are programmed to believe, or to act as if we believed) that they are the means to (causes of) these reward events. Suppose we are motivated to act in a certain way if and only if there is some appropriately associated internal event that is rewarding (intrinsically satisfying) or aversive. Just suppose, in short, that what all of us are all really after in our lives is not 'out there,' but in our own brains.[35] Both sentimentalism and rationalism (and utilitarianism, and moral realism, and any other ethical

[34] "The Reward Event and Motivation," p. 171.

[35] For readers who share my interest in (and respect for) Hobbes, here is some textual support for my claim that it was he who first formulated a reward-event theory of motivation: "For the original of life being in the heart, that motion in the sentient, which is propagated to the heart, must necessarily make some alteration or diversion of vital motion, namely, by quickening or slackening, helping or hindering the same. Now when it helpeth, it is pleasure; and when it hindereth, it is pain, trouble, grief, &c. . . . But if vital motion be helped by motion made by sense, then the parts of the organ will be disposed to guide the spirits in such manner as conduceth most to the preservation and augmentation of that motion, by the help of the nerves. And in animal motion this is the very first endeavour, and found even in the embryo; which while it is in the womb, moveth its limbs with voluntary motion, for the avoiding of whatsoever troubleth it, or for the pursuing of what pleaseth it. And this first endeavour, when pleasant, is called *appetite*, that is, an approaching; and when it shuns what is troublesome, *aversion*, or flying from it." (*De Corpore* Chapter XXV, "Of Sense and Animal Motion," Gaskin, p. 226.) And from *Human Nature*: "[C]onceptions or apparitions are nothing really, but motion in some internal substance of the head; which motion not stopping there, but proceeding to the heart, of necessity must there either help or hinder that motion which is called vital; when it helpeth, it is called DELIGHT, contentment, or pleasure, which is nothing

theory I can think of) are committed to denying this, as it seems to me – even if they do not explicitly reject it or even show any signs of awareness that there is a problem about it. But what if – as a good many working scientists believe it will – it should turn out to be true?[36] I must simply leave that to my readers' own imaginations. Morillo holds that even if the

really but motion about the heart . . . and the objects that cause it are called pleasant or delightful . . . This motion, in which consisteth pleasure or pain, is also solicitation or provocation either to draw near to the thing that pleaseth, or to retire from the thing that displeaseth. And this solicitation is the endeavour or internal beginning of animal motion, which when the object delighteth, is called APPETITE; when it displeaseth, it is called AVERSION, in respect of the displeasure present . . . Every man, for his own part, calleth that which pleaseth, and is delightful to himself, GOOD; . . . As appetite is the beginning of animal motion towards something which pleaseth us; so is the attaining thereof, the END of that motion . . . and when we attain the end, the delight we have thereby is called FRUITION: so that *bonum* and *finis* are different names, but for different considerations of the same thing." (Chapter VII, "Of Delight and Pain; Good and Evil," *ibid*., p. 43f.)

Also, my idea that Hobbes actually conceived and defended the reward-event theory would certainly put his odd-sounding definitions of certain moral emotions in a new light and give them added force. For example *De Homine* (XII, 10): "To grieve because of another's evil, that is, to feel another's pain and to suffer with him, that is, to imagine that another's evil could happen to oneself, is called compassion." And his more familiar account of pity, from *Human Nature* (IX, 10), which so offended Bishop Butler and served as the main focus of his putative refutation of egoism: Pity is "imagination or fiction of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense of another man's present calamity." Hobbes, of course, located the reward event in the chest (heart), not the head (brain). The latter he reserved for our "cogitations."

[36] How could this be empirically tested? Suppose that scientists can learn to identify the reward event in the brain neurologically, the way Harvey identified events such as one-way blood vessel valve-closings in the circulatory system. Imagine that they can also identify hunger physiologically, as the internal condition that usually motivates eating behavior (and seems to make the eating rewarding).

Now let us suppose that we can independently control the neurological event and the physiological state to produce the following experimental situations. First, we determine that our creature is in the physiological state of hunger. We allow him to eat, but we suppress the neurological reward event. Let us suppose that the result is that the creature soon ceases trying to eat, seems no longer motivated to eat, even though the hunger condition continues or intensifies. (Have we modeled anorexia?)

Second, we determine that our creature is in a condition of satiety and thus ordinarily would not be motivated to eat. Now we artificially induce ingestion of food and, at the same time, trigger the reward event. Let us suppose that the result is that the creature now begins to eat and continues to eat as long as the reward event is triggered . . .

Such Mill's methods results would certainly suggest that the reward event, the satisfaction event, is causally primary. When the reward event is absent, there is no motivation; when it is present, there is. On the other hand, it might not work out that way. It might turn out that, in the absence of the reward event (case one), the creature is still motivated to eat, and that, in its presence (case two), it is not . . . ("The Reward Event and Motivation," p. 184.)

[T]he reward-event theory . . . would predict the first set of results. On this theory, the reward-event mechanism has evolved to play a central, functional role in the behavior of many organisms. Either through the evolutionary history of the organism or through its individual learning history, the reward event will have developed contingent connections with other physiological states, with perceived external events, with sundry cognitive states, and with various tendencies to action, in such a way that the reward event is the central causal key, an *affective* key, to why creatures do what they do when and where they do it. (*Ibid*., p. 185, emphasis added.)

reward-event theory proved true, it might still be possible to make most of the distinctions anti-egoists want to make. Supposing that all of the behaviors we are motivated to engage in really are ultimately means to experiencing reward events, we could in principle still find all sorts of different things indirectly rewarding and so be motivated to pursue them. There could even be two different individuals, one of whom finds causing suffering in others rewarding while the other finds helping others rewarding. "Deep down, they share reward-event motivation, but for social and moral purposes it is the differences that count. They are very different kinds of people, and of course that matters." I would like to agree with that but would first need to see it worked out. My point is simply that since reward-event theory is conceivably empirically testable (and so could turn out to be right), philosophers who write about how moral motivation is possible (without doing any empirical research at all) should show a little more humility concerning the true nature of human motivation, which remains quite mysterious. Korsgaard's account of normative self-government sounds edifying but is not self-evidently true; perhaps it will be found to be (in whole or part) merely invented. (Perhaps our affective states do more than suggest to us which intentions to adopt, but rather mainly determine what intentions we form and act on.[37]) And that is why I for one do not assume that the selfish theory has been conclusively proven false (in all its possible varieties), by Butler or anyone else – and why I continue to take Hobbes seriously. (I hope I have also explained my subsequent references to reward event problems in the thought of the sentimentalists.)

MORAL THEORY AND MORAL ADVICE

Finally I cannot resist saying one more thing here about moral theory, and I wish to conclude this preliminary justification for the intended pilgrimage

> [So] if the anti-egoist wants to claim that some people are ultimately or intrinsically motivated by, e.g., perception of the needs of others, then, if [the reward-event theory] is true, they are wrong about that. (*Ibid.*, p. 183.)

I would like to think that last claim is right but really have no idea whether it is, since neither Morillo nor anyone else I know of has convincingly worked out the necessary details. After all it would mean that, if the reward-event theory is true, sentimentalism's motivational enterprise would be supported and rationalism's (e.g. Nagel's and Korsgaard's) would be debunked.

[37] To state my doubts more crudely (and rhetorically): I wonder why, if I am supposed to be so fabulously free that I can, through my rational autonomous will, bind myself to the moral law or subject myself to laws of freedom or whatever, I seem so utterly incapable of willing myself to sleep when I have insomnia, or willing myself not to become angry when my teenaged daughter leaves garbage all over her room. In short I find the whole idea of willing (commanding) ourselves to be moral to be extremely doubtful from the start.

by responding (in my own way) to one influential traditional objection to the whole sentimentalist enterprise in ethics.

It has been a problem at least since the time of the ancient Stoics to see how one could begin one's ethical speculations from a study of the passions and get from there to anything like genuine moral prescriptions. This is one aspect of the traditional problem of is and ought. We have the passions we do, but how can this fact be used to guide and constrain practical deliberation and choice; how, in other words, can we derive from statements about what people are, conclusions about how people ought to live? Even if people are motivated exclusively by self-convenience, concern for others or super-selfishness – self-love, benevolence or malice, as Hutcheson will name these incentives – why should the second be given preference, assigned moral value, to the exclusion of the others?[38] And even if it should, what bearing does that have on what I do? It is often said (normally with an air of gloating) that sentiment-based accounts of ethics like Hutcheson's and Hume's can be at best only spectator theories of moral life. That is, by focusing so exclusively on what has to go into a bit of conduct to render it morally valuable – roughly, unselfish feeling or humane concern for others – they limit themselves to understanding the moral only "third-personally" and so fail to offer any real guidance to someone who is honestly trying to make up his mind (in the first person) what to do. There is some truth to this charge. Though as our study of Hutcheson in particular will show, sentimentalism can provide at least some direction in our practical deliberations and choices.[39]

But most of the force of the objection comes, I think, from an age-old prejudice to the effect that philosophical ethics, if it is not to be a total waste of time, just has to be able to come up with something that will guide, instruct, correct us, actually make us better. Now I certainly have

[38] My own short answer at this stage would be this: Egoism is preponderant but for the most part harmless (morally innocuous) or even beneficial (along lines suggested by Bernard Mandeville and Adam Smith), malice is quite rare (though I would certainly have to qualify that statement), and compassion, while hardly irresistible, is a genuine force (though usually on "standby mode") shaping how people usually finally choose to behave towards others – most often by restraining them from malice and injustice. Self-convenience needs no *oughts*; compassion suggests some, following Schopenhauer. Compare Wilson (*The Moral Sense*, p. 30): "Sometimes sympathy leads us to act altruistically; usually it does not. More often it restrains us from acting cruelly. And even when it does not inspire benevolent actions, sympathy is an important source of the moral standards by which we judge both others and ourselves."

[39] Compare Wilson, in "Moral Sense" (his *Presidential Address* to the American Political Science Association in 1992): "These natural moral sentiments are an incomplete and partial guide to action . . . [but] these deficiencies can lead the unwary philosopher to suppose that if a sentiment does not settle everything, it cannot settle anything or to infer that if people make different choices, they must do so on the basis of different sentiments." (p. 9.)

no general objection to philosophical inquiry concerning the nature and scope of rational justification as such, or questions of how best to live our lives, what pursuits in life might make more sense than others, what the right choices would be in various hypothetical circumstances as described in thought experiments and so forth; after all, who is going to look into such matters if not philosophers? Nor could there possibly be anything wrong as far as I know with ordinary people – parents, teachers, doctors, nurses, entrepreneurs, legal professionals *et al.* – thinking hard about the difficult ethical choices and conundrums that inevitably (though by no means constantly) beset them over the courses of their lives. People certainly shouldn't always rely on reflexes of their emotions, and sentimentalism, at least as I understand it historically and envision it in the future, need not be any form of anti-intellectualism.[40] Nevertheless I frankly doubt whether moral theory, even with the preoccupation with reasons for action that so governs it today, could ever really offer the kind of guidance its proponents hold out – if never wholly explicitly and candidly – as the eventual fruit of their labors. It may help somehow but not by discovering how you and I ought (or are required) to live our lives. And I believe that there are at least four reasons for this.

One is that philosophy, perhaps even rational justification as such, may come along too late in our moral development to have very much real effect on our temperaments and characters and (through those) on our particular choices. Again I cite Wilson:

> Children are by nature sociable; in the family they learn to extend sociability into generosity . . . For most children the ability to be affected by the emotional state of others leads to a concern for the well-being of others. Children learn without much instruction that their own happiness is in some ways affected by the happiness of others; with some instruction, they learn that the happiness of others can be improved by modest sacrifices in their own well-being. Their own experiences and the teachings of others produce habits of action that routinely take into account the feelings of others. All this occurs early in life, before the children have understood sermons, mastered moral precepts, or read cautionary tales.[41]

A second reason stems from the very nature of the beast, ethics – at least on the rational justification model. Moral theorists – an odd sort of self-granted title, to my ears – cannot afford to concern themselves with the messiness of life in the open street, with Johnny Paul and Lester Reardon. Their thought experiments, mostly designed to elicit the right answers to

[40] Unless of course intellectualism (in ethics) is taken as synonymous with rationalism, following Selby-Bigge.

[41] *The Moral Sense*, p. 46.

tricky moral dilemmas (including so-called "trolley problems") or agreement on the most rational ends to pursue, inevitably concern nameless agents deliberating in the most improbable (unrealistic) of circumstances.[42] Consequently (perhaps ironically) it becomes hard even to form an idea after awhile of what sort of insight or advice we might carry home with us from this strange speculative realm in which moral reasons can exist or apply or obtain absent any connection whatever with what any particular real person actually wants, takes any interest in or cares about. The whole project often seems (in Bernard Williams's apt phrase) "transcendental to life," existing "quite outside the practice it is supposed to regulate and justify."[43] Even when philosophers who write in this vein try to talk about real, or realistic-sounding people, their depictions of moral deliberation, decision making, moral attention, 'concern for morality' and so on typically have an air of unreality about them; they impart an over-intellectualized, or over-voluntarized, picture of moral life and experience.[44] Third – and

[42] For example, playing Russian roulette while given the chance to buy bullets from the gun's chamber, practicing iterated prisoners' dilemmas with their identical twins in a fictional social science laboratory, wondering whether to save four lives by throwing one fat man onto the train tracks, or shooting someone while skiing, and carrying a loaded shotgun, in order to prevent a life-threatening avalanche.

[43] *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, p. 110.

[44] I feel I must give at least one very mild illustration of this point, from the contemporary literature of ethics. In her analysis of "Moral Worth," Nomy Arpaly addresses what she calls "the cognitive-perceptual signs of moral concern." Her central claim here is that "a person concerned with morality is, to that degree, other things being equal, 'morally conscious,' noticing morally relevant things others might not."

It is a feature of the human mind that we learn more about things of more concern to us: other things being equal, a bird lover will notice a bird on the roof while a person who does not care about birds might not. If one cares about morality, one is more apt to notice, for example, that a fellow human being is showing the signs of distress, or that a joke has the potential to offend certain people.

Now these sentences, the second in particular, give me an eerie sense of not knowing any such person as Arpaly is describing. Possibly she is making only a conceptual claim, to the effect that "morally conscious" includes the idea of "morally attentive" – but that is not what her language ("it is a feature of the human mind") or her analogy to bird watching would indicate. "Caring about morality" is represented as an actual moral incentive, something that actually causes people to be more morally "competent" (as she says). But if her claim is empirical then it seems to me not so much incorrect as to have no subject corresponding to anything in empirical reality. Certainly if someone has noticed that another person in the room is (say) Jewish, and cares whether that person will be offended by a certain ethnic joke, and as a result refrains from telling it, then I have no objection to the idea that this is evidence for the claim that that person does indeed care about morality. But in what seems to me an uncanny, surreal sort of way, this philosopher has it that we can come, as a matter of empirical fact, to care about not hurting a real human being's feelings by first having come to care about morality. I doubt that this even makes sense. Apart from that, I honestly do not believe that I encountered anyone who cared about morality on my walks through Williamsburg; in fact I don't believe that its inhabitants even had any halfway coherent idea of morality, as such, under their hats. Some philosophers will no doubt argue that we all have such a concept and that their own theoretical analyses of moral concepts do not commit them to holding that they are describing

this is purely hypothetical at this point – what if the whole idea of "rationally justified" *simpliciter* should turn out to make no sense, to be simply incoherent however it is worked out by the moral theorists? That is, as I read them, just what Hutcheson and Hume themselves argued. And as we will soon see, their wholly instrumental conception of practical rationality is still defended today – often to the chagrin of ethical rationalists. In his classic discussion of Hutcheson's moral sense (in 1955) William Frankena correctly pointed out that that according to Hutcheson "we must, may, and do give reasons in support of our ethical judgments." But what Hutcheson is arguing first and foremost is that "in the process of justification we sooner or later head up in a proposition which is the end of the road so far as justification goes . . . and that this proposition is not a deliverance of reason (for example, a self-evident truth) but a commitment of the moral sense."

> Hutcheson is not saying merely that we elect or pursue the public good or any other ultimate end, not because of reason, but because of some instinct or affection. He is saying that our *approval* of the end or rule which constitutes our final justifying reason is the work not of reason but of a moral sense – a much more interesting thesis.[45]

any actual psychological processes as they go about their own – non-empirical – work. But I simply cannot buy that as a general procedure, and such a claim is clearly not open to Arpaly in the present case. Quite generally I fail to understand how one could ever care about something of which one had no clear idea. I have known one or two people who cared about birds, and they certainly were more apt to notice birds on a roof; but what they cared about was not "birdhood." True, one bird-loving friend of mine had developed a deep sort of respect for birds as such, owing partly to his studies in natural history and evolutionary biology; he admired birds for their adaptedness to and resourcefulness in the particular niches they had come to inhabit, their care of their young and so on. But I would bet that none of this could ever have come about had he not actually had affection, an emotional liking, or attachment, or at least a positive (pleasant) aesthetic appreciation of some kind, towards particular birds in his childhood backyard or the open streets he inhabited as a boy.

Yet what bothers me most of all about Arpaly's claim, and her language, is not so much its Platonism about morality but rather the kind of idealized rational human moral agent that seems always to be held up to readers by philosophers who write in this vein, write within (and from within) the system of reasons view of the moral. Not only do I have the sense that I do not really know any such people who care about morality, or who go about endeavoring to be guided by moral reasons; I almost feel a sense of gladness that I don't. Another famous Miller, the late Arthur Miller, once said that whenever he met anyone claiming to be in contact with God he would "look about for the door." Similarly my instincts lead me to wonder: if there are real people who actually care about morality, or even feel themselves to be in regular contact with it (perhaps by constantly checking to see if the intentions they are about to adopt are "universalizable" or not) might those people be either professional moral philosophers, or be suffering from some sort of defect in their characters or personalities? Perhaps what they are really concerned about is their own moral rectitude, probity, worth, and might not this be a subtle form of egoism, not moral concern?

But perhaps these philosophers would agree with that; perhaps all they want to claim is that each of us is capable of being fully attentive and responsive to moral reasons for action. But even then, if morality is conceived wholly in terms of reasons, how is concern for such reasons supposed to be actualized in the thoughts and actions (and feelings) of real people, without turning those people into something they are not, namely literary characters who are invented or imagined for the very purpose of proving that morality is rational? In my view it cannot be done.

[45] "Hutcheson's Moral Sense," p. 362.

That thesis (as already hinted) will gradually yet surely become my thesis. In his fine chapter on "Hutcheson on Justice and Practical Rationality" (in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 1988) Alisdair MacIntyre writes that Hutcheson's moral sense "ceased very quickly to be credible [to later philosophers] as a philosophical artifact; or rather it came to be recognized as merely a philosophical artifact rather than a feature of human nature."[46] But I do not take moral sense to be merely artifactual; in fact I see it precisely as a real feature of human nature and one moreover without whose acknowledgment moral theory cannot succeed – or even make sense. (And that will be precisely the argument of the last four chapters taken together.)

Finally, I sense something suspicious, almost bizarre (and I am not alone here, even within philosophy) in the entire idea of obtaining moral guidance, useful advice as it were, from someone's – anyone's – theory. If advice is to be genuinely useful to me it seems to me that I must first invite it (or at least be receptive to it) and then secure it from some particular man or woman whose judgment I have previous reason to trust. But cannot ethics – that very general intellectual pursuit, that which moral philosophers do – impart to me any sort of moral lesson that I might not learn otherwise? My answer is no. Or to be more precise, it is that some particular philosopher who has thought hard and long about moral questions, and perhaps moral theory, might be able to teach me something about how best to live, but that she would be no more qualified than any other wise (and humane) person to do it. Literature (explicitly philosophical or otherwise) abounds with passages that purport to capture the essence or content of what Josiah Royce called "the moral insight." And anyone who tries to do this is to that degree a moralist, in my own book. But my own favorite moralist in this sense isn't Royce, or Tolstoy or Gandhi, but instead Pablo Casals, speaking in 1970, very near to the end of his own life.

Sometimes I look about me with a feeling of complete dismay. In the confusion that afflicts the world today, I see a disrespect for the very values of life. Beauty is all about us, but how many are blind to it! They look at the wonder of this earth – and seem to see nothing. People move hectically but give little thought to where they are going. They seek excitement for its mere sake, as if they were lost and desperate. They take little pleasure in the natural and quiet and simple things of life.

Each second we live in a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and will never be again. And what do we teach our children in school? We teach them that two and two make four, and that Paris is the capital

[46] p. 279f.

of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them: do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all of the world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed there has never been another child like you. And look at your body – what a wonder it is! Your legs, your arms, your cunning fingers, the way you move! You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? You must cherish one another. You must work – we all must work – to make this world worthy of its children.

What extraordinary changes and advances I have witnessed in my lifetime! What amazing progress – in science, industry, the exploration of space! And yet hunger, racial oppression and tyranny still torment the world. We continue to act like barbarians. Like savages, we fear our neighbors on this earth – we arm against them, and they arm against us. I deplore to have had to live at a time when man's law is to kill. When shall we become accustomed to the fact that we are human beings?[47]

DESIGNS OF REMAINING CHAPTERS

The overall structure of my study is as follows. Having now raised, I hope, one or two uncertainties concerning the prevailing rationalist character of contemporary ethical philosophy, I will next outline (in chapter 2) a version of ethical sentimentalism as its natural opponent, and argue that standard objections to sentimentalism reveal themselves to be mainly question begging once we see how heavily they draw on arbitrary suppositions about the nature of moral theory and a corresponding, impoverished view of moral feeling. This will clear a path for a return to the original eighteenth-century sentimentalist-moral sense school of ethics (in chapters 3, 4 and 5) as represented by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. Chapter 3 argues that Shaftesbury's first and only systematic work, *An Inquiry concerning Virtue* (1699), does offer the rudiments of a genuine and consequential system of ethics, much traditional scholarly opinion to the contrary notwithstanding. Chapter 4 is a very straightforward and 'open-minded' attempt to capture Hutcheson's meaning in attributing our moral ideas to an innate, affective moral sense as their original; it concludes by posing four natural seeming questions about moral sense (for further study), which Hutcheson invites without ever quite clearly answering himself. One of these, "what exactly do we *perceive by* moral sense," occupies chapter 5; there I examine three traditional interpretations of Hutchesonian moral sense-perception while attempting to arbitrate among them, and explore how far what many scholars take

[47] *Joys and Sorrows*, p. 295.

to be his basic emotivism regarding ethical judgment can be reconciled with what some others insist is actually a type of realism concerning moral knowledge. (This is philosophically important because we need to have a view of what moral sense enables us to see that we couldn't without it, before we can take the idea seriously, or reject it.)

Then, beginning the 'return' journey and recommencing my actual case for sentimentalism, I ally myself (in chapter 6) with C. D. Broad, as an analytic philosopher who makes a suggestive case of his own, writing in the 1940s, for moral sense theory. Finally (in chapter 7), I recruit certain views and arguments from contemporary evolutionary biology, psychopathology and sociology (principally represented by Wilson, in *The Moral Sense*) in stating my actual case for the existence and crucial importance of something very like Hutcheson's original moral sense. A very short postscript on "Hume, Smith, and the end of the sentimental school" endeavors to explain the demise of sentimentalism as a real force in subsequent ethics and conclude my case for asserting that sentimentalism is overdue for a successful renaissance within contemporary moral theory.

Some chapters (3, 4 and 5) are largely expository and exigetical (scholarly) in character, while others (2 and 7) are more argumentative, even polemical – though my purpose throughout is to defend the sentimentalists rather than to attack the views of particular rationalistic philosophers past or present. This contrast of tone follows necessarily from the character of the whole expedition: chapter 2 prepares for the journey back to Shaftesbury and Hutcheson while chapters 5, 6 and 7 try to spell out what can still be recovered or learned from them and brought back to the present in defensible form. Along the way, in chapter 6, I explain (for the first time, I believe) why sentimentalism is inevitably committed to some form of moral sense theory in ethics – and why moral sense is necessarily sentimentalistic. In these final chapters I offer what is in effect both a reinterpretation and a defense of Hutcheson's original moral sense theory – a rather lonesome enterprise – using all the resources I can find, whether from philosophy itself or the scientific enterprises mentioned above. I began with no pre-selected thesis, except perhaps that the sentimentalists have been misunderstood and poorly appreciated. I follow no single interpretive method but rather adapt my style and approach as best suits (in my judgment) the subject of each particular chapter. Yet the result is, I feel confident, a sensible and coherent argument, a philosophical whole.

Although my aim is primarily to convey a fresh appreciation of the school of sentiment's original historical mission and achievement, by presenting its

original defenders' views and arguments in a cogent and sympathetic way, I wish in a certain manner to reclaim their ideas as well. I have long been consumed by a deep sense that, presuming that we are still permitted to ask such big questions as "what is the basis of morality?" the philosophers of the British sentimental school got things very nearly right, at least far more closely so than their own intellectual competitors and critics, and quite possibly than many of my fellow living moral philosophers who believe (with Nagel) that "an appeal to our interests or desires, to account for altruism, is superfluous." Moreover, whereas rationalism draws nourishment from a highly unrealistic ethical psychology of its own invention, the thought of the sentimental school of ethics seems far more consilient (again to use Edward O. Wilson's recently resurrected term) with evolutionary biology, the other natural and social sciences, and ordinary reflection on certain basic features of human life. If there is really such a thing as the truth about ethics, in other words, and if the original sentimental moralists were on to a good part of it, then despite its undeniable historical decline, its gradual falling out of favor among mainstream moralists, the career of sentimentalism cannot justly be reckoned over and done with; it can even serve as a model of what might still be done to good purpose in contemporary moral philosophy.

At the same time I have intended all along to produce a modest work; I do not so much attempt to set forth a formal contemporary sentimental moral theory as to reconsider the original sentimental school to make a start of ascertaining what such a theory might be like. There has been some solid scholarly work recently on Hutcheson, Shaftesbury, Smith and – of course – Hume from the perspective of ethical theory, but no one has yet provided a coherent account of the whole school of thought or even adequately defined sentimentalism as a type of ethical theory.[48] Indeed the early eighteenth-century school of sentiment almost seems a kind of

[48] A note on "isms" in moral philosophy: a former professor of mine wrote to me in 2002 urging me (among other things) to "get rid of 'isms'" because they are "barriers to understanding, not helps." (I will call her "Lady Philosophy" since she never gave me permission to broadcast her advice.) "Far better to restate a position – even if it seems tedious – than to attach a label (which then has to be explained)." "And that's true for 'rationalist' and 'sentimentalist' too." And she was absolutely right – of course.

I would restate the central ideas of the two broad traditions in ethics that are my concern, in a rough and ready way (here leaving aside the axiological strand in sentimentalism identified earlier) like this: Rationalism is the view that reason (whatever that is supposed on a given rationalist theory to mean) is sufficient both to justify ethical conduct and to motivate it. Sentimentalism is the view that while reason is necessary to both ethical justification and ethical motivation it is insufficient in the absence of moral emotion (as that idea is spelled out by it) either to justify or to motivate ethical conduct. It follows, at least, that no one can be both a rationalist and a sentimentalist.

lost era in the history of ideas. Nor is my assertion that moral sentiment is widely neglected in contemporary ethics meant to sound original. I have long admired Lawrence A. Blum's modest (and I would say realistic) book, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality* (1980), which takes its argument from "a widely shared sense that it is good to be sympathetic, compassionate, concerned, and caring for other human beings, and that to say of someone that he has these qualities is to say something about him from a moral point of view," and the observation that "moral philosophy, especially

But in the world of "real (philosophical) literature" things are never quite so neat. Hobbes's psychology of morals, for instance, obviously conjoins rational and sentimental sorts of motivations and justifications, but it would be both anachronistic and philosophically incorrect to classify him as either a rationalist or a sentimentalist in ethics; the same is likely true of the Cambridge Platonists, for example Cudworth and Whichcote. Even Shaftesbury never explicitly claims that reason is insufficient to "virtue or merit"; he just fails to pay much attention to it. It might even be best to think in terms of a spectrum of interest and emphasis, between narrow or strict rationalism as represented by Price, Kant and Nagel on one end, and the radical sentimentalism one finds in someone like Rousseau or Schopenhauer on the other – though I do not see it as vital to develop this suggestion here.

Still there are these two traditions. I think it is safe to include in the first column, along with Nagel and Darwall, some other contemporary authors: Michael Smith (*The Moral Problem*, 1994), Christopher Peacocke ("Moral Rationalism," 2004) and (perhaps) Shelly Kagan (*The Limits of Morality*, 1989) – as well as several other self-described Kantians, including Christine M. Korsgaard ("Skepticism about Practical Reason," 1986, *The Sources of Normativity*, 1996, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, 1996) and Onora O'Neill (*Towards Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning*, 1998). And all of these authors do seem devoted in a general way to my "system of reasons" view of the moral.

The "sentimentalist" title is much more problematical. Shaun Nichols counts himself a sentimentalist (correctly, on my definition) and considers the emotivism of C. L. Stevenson and A. J. Ayer as "the most influential sentimentalist theory in the first half of the twentieth century." (*Sentimental Rules*, p. 85.) This gave way in the "latter half" of that century to the "neosentimentalism" of Allan Gibbard (*Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, 1990), Simon Blackburn (*Ruling Passions*, 1998) and David Wiggins ("A Sensible Subjectivism," 1991).

I am (cautiously) willing to count Ayer and Stevenson among sentimentalists, but the latter "ism" seems to me to be dubious, even suspicious. For (at least as Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson spell out this view, in "Sentiment and Value," 2000) "the defining characteristic of neosentimentalism" is that "an important set of evaluative concepts (or terms or properties) is best understood as invoking a normative assessment of the appropriateness (or merit or rationality) of some associated emotional response." "[T]o think a sentiment appropriate in the relevant sense is a normative judgment . . . in favor of feeling it." (p. 729, emphasis in original.) And while there are hints of such an idea in a few passages from Hutcheson and Hume, this "neo" sentimentalism seems to me quite incompatible in both letter and spirit with what the original sentimentalists were arguing (and perhaps closer to traditional rationalism than to their views). Of course they are dead, and living philosophers may call themselves and each other by whatever "isms" they wish (so long as they explain their labels). But there cannot be any doubt, I think, that the continual proliferation of "isms" (sometimes even double and triple ones) is a serious blot on contemporary philosophy, rendering quite a lot of it virtually unreadable if not wholly nonsensical.

I can only excuse the very few other "isms" I employ by the fact that they were there in the literature long before I came along. And, hope for a day when even my own two (sentimentalism and rationalism) can be discarded, ladder-like, from what philosophers do as they strive for consensus on a science of human (moral) nature that successfully harmonizes the rational and emotional factors which undoubtedly function in moral judgment, motivation, justification and so on.

contemporary Anglo-American moral philosophy, has found it difficult to give philosophical form and expression to this aspect of the ordinary moral consciousness, much less to give it a firm philosophical grounding." A good part of my rationale for returning to the sentimentalists is that their ideas seem valuable for articulating just such a "form and grounding." Further, even as focused study of the British sentimentalists seems rather sparse in the recent literature, there has been a virtual explosion of work in what is known as feminist moral theory, much of which features the defense of an ethics of care in contrast to a morality of rights and duties; yet I sometimes wonder how closely (and how many) writers in this tradition are acquainted with the work of the original sentimentalists in ethics, who founded morality on love (the English Platonists), natural affection (Shaftesbury), benevolence (Hutcheson), sympathy (Hume and Smith). It has honestly taken me more than ten years to realize that two of my own (mainly implicit) theses are identical to those of Iris Murdoch in her influential 1970 foray into moral philosophy, *The Sovereignty of Good*: that "the unexamined life can be virtuous" and that "love is a central concept in morals." Whether these are distinctively feminist themes I leave it for others to decide, but I would certainly be pleased if scholars of feminism should find my work somehow useful.

So although it would be false (and silly) to imagine myself as some solitary crusader for the importance of moral sentiment and against rationalism in ethics, I have come to feel less lonesome since I began this project.[49] My first published defense of sentimentalism (now the next chapter of the present book) appears to have fallen dead-born from the press in 1989 – though I like to think this had something to do with both the relatively small readership of journals of the history of philosophy and a scarcity of interest in Shaftesbury and the others "back then." Chapter 3, on Shaftesbury, is derived from my introduction to a 1991 reprint edition of the author's original 1699 "Toland" version of his *Inquiry*. This met a similar fate (as expected, it was mostly purchased by libraries). I conceived the present book partly as a way in which to elaborate and contextualize those original two pieces, and everything else here is new and previously unpublished. When I began writing about the British Moralists the Internet was young but I recall searches for "sentimentalism" and "moral sentiment" turning up references to sentimentalism in European and American literature with nothing in philosophy. But now there is the ethics of care tradition, Shaun

[49] Except perhaps when it comes to the topic of moral sense, but there I feel I have had some good *scientists* to keep me company. See chapter 7.

Nichols's recent (and very interesting) *Sentimental Rules*; quality current encyclopedias of philosophy even contain rich articles on moral sentiments, moral feelings and so on.[50] So I am at last able to offer as further motivation for my own study the hope that it may have some helpful place in this broad revitalization of interest; I have tried to articulate more closely the relationship of this sort of work today – and certain relevant contemporary work in the life sciences – to the thought of the original British sentimental moralists.

And this leads me finally to the mandatory subject of methodology. I recall, upon first taking an interest in the history of ethics, being mildly shocked by this statement from Broad's introduction to his famous *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (1930).

> The minute study of the works of great philosophers from the historical and philological point of view is an innocent and even praiseworthy occupation for learned men. But it is not philosophy; and, to me at least, it is not interesting. My primary interest in this book is to find out what is true and what is false about ethics; and the statements of our authors are important to me only in so far as they suggest possible answers to this question.

But now all these years later I must say that, on the whole, I agree. Yet Broad does not quite express my own considered view, because I cannot accept the strict dichotomy between ethics and its history his statement epitomizes. For one thing I simply do not find the study of past philosophers from the historical point of view to be "not interesting," in fact I love it. But I also believe that we can sometimes understand what past philosophers were about far better when we read them (carefully) through lenses shaped by subsequent and contemporary argument, and that, conversely, detailed historical study of philosophy's past helps us to "do" philosophy better in the present. In a recent review of the second volume of Isabel Rivers's magisterial study *Reason, Grace and Sentiment* (1991/2000), Susan Martinelli-Fernandez writes that Rivers's work "will be useful and agreeable to those philosophers interested in and who love the history of ethics and, in particular, eighteenth-century British ethics." But only a few paragraphs earlier (in what sounds almost like a warning) she comments that "Rivers's work is squarely in the history of ideas and, as such, may not be to the taste of some contemporary practitioners, especially those who align

[50] There is now even a literature of "anti-theory" in ethics – perhaps with Bernard Williams as its headmaster – with which I find myself much in sympathy.

themselves with the analytic tradition."[51] So where does that leave me? I align myself with the analytic tradition, including (and especially, here) the work of Broad, and in the following I sometimes unabashedly use my subjects' original claims and arguments to criticize certain premises concerning moral motivation, judgment and value that have become enshrined in analytic moral philosophy, and which originally actually helped bring about, historically speaking, the demise of sentimentalism. I have harnessed views and arguments from Hutcheson and his fellows in order to be a bit provocative and even (gently) subversive of one important strain in contemporary moral philosophy. (Conversely I frequently enlist contemporary authors in trying to determine exactly what Shaftesbury and the others were trying to say.) Yet at the same time I have striven to be rigorous and historically legitimate in drawing inspiration from the sentimentalists, and to do justice to many if not all the ways in which the problems they confronted would have presented themselves to them – to produce a narrative that is broadly reliable, if necessarily partial.[52] The result is an exercise in both the history of ethics and ethical theory; I do my best to blend traditional textual interpretation and exegesis with original contemporary analysis and argument, to weave ethical theory and the study of its history together in a manner that is useful to both sub-disciplines of philosophy. If I have a central methodological principle, it is just that this not only can be done interestingly and legitimately but also by all means should be. I find it sad to think that any reader should have to *choose* between loving eighteenth-century British ethics and being part of the analytic tradition, but if my principle is sound and the results are found good, this is a choice that no one really needs, in theory, to face.[53]

[51] *Hume Studies*, 30, 2 (November 2004), p. 425f.

[52] For example I steer away from most religious and theological issues that confronted the British Moralists (and leave my own views on such matters out of things as well), though these do come up in connection with Hutcheson's moral 'realism.' But I cannot imagine a better account of the whole subject than *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*.

[53] To put this another way: my goal has been to capture much of what is philosophically important in the eighteenth-century figures who are my subjects, without duplicating what other more purely historical treatments of them have revealed (e.g. Henry Sidgwick's classic *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, J. B. Schneewind's *The Invention of Autonomy*, Daniel Carey's recent *Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson*, as well as Rivers's study) or purporting to offer a complete philosophical history of the period. At times – when writing about Shaftesbury's original formulation of moral sense (in chapter 3), Hutcheson's realism about virtue and vice (in chapter 5), and even in a way (in chapter 6) in treating of Broad's sly attempts to undermine G. E. Moore's non-natural analysis of good by defending moral sense theories in ethics – my method is that of a historian. But most of the time it definitely is not. My project is both philosophical and historical, with the first perspective always assuming the lead. In that, however, I can certainly cite Broad's *Five Types of Ethical Theory* as a precedent.

But now it is time to see if the principle is a good one by commencing the expedition. I propose to begin with two fairly simple and quite honest questions: why, more precisely, do the ideas of the original sentimentalists seem so largely incongruous with or simply irrelevant to the mainstream of ethical theory in our own day? And what, if anything, can or should be done about it?

CHAPTER 2

Ethical sentimentalism revisited

STATEMENT OF THE ARGUMENT

Relations with several of the earliest and most important British Moralists are severely strained. Contemporary moral philosophy strongly favors theories of ethics that are rationalistic. Ethical rationalism attempts to deflect traditional skepticism by justifying and explaining important moral principles and motivations in terms of rational standards applying directly to practical deliberation and action. The clear pre-eminence of this approach today suggests that early-modern British moral philosophy must have started on quite the wrong foot: Hobbes's earliest leading critics, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson in particular, opposed the selfish theory in the wrong way; their type of theory, which simply points to other passions and interests, neglected or explained away by Hobbes, and founds morals on these, could never give us what we (supposedly) want, namely a genuinely rational foundation for ethics. Yet these are the very thinkers whom we ordinarily largely credit with having originated the tradition leading directly to present-day moral theory.

I shall argue that sentimentalistic, desire-based accounts such as theirs cannot be ruled inadequate merely on account of their structure, and that sentimentalism should still be regarded as a genuine and live option for contemporary ethical theory. Modern diffidence toward these earliest Moralists' enterprise betrays a phobia of antirationalism or subjectivism that is itself likely to be highly historically conditioned. It perpetuates a misunderstanding of their thought as well as an overly narrow and probably outmoded conception of the proper task of ethics.

My argument begins from a thumbnail sketch of contemporary ethical rationalism; by then reconsidering Shaftesbury's *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue* (1699/1711) we can begin to understand the original sentimentalists' rationale for anchoring ethical justification and motivation in presupposed, existing human interests and desires rather than in reason's demand for consistency and impartiality. The form of Shaftesbury's system is an apt

model for a contemporary sentimentalism that might compete *en bloc* with rationalism, and it suggests a way to define sentimentalism as a type of ethical theory. Finally I explain what I take to be the most serious challenge to sentimentalism and indicate directions in which it ought to look for a satisfactory response. My findings are hardly conclusive in respect to the contemporary issues I raise but I do claim to document a curious and significant reversal in ethical theory that moralists and historians of ideas ought to try to understand.

ETHICAL RATIONALISM

Ethical rationalism seeks to show that ethically good action is at bottom just one sort of fully rational action. Reason, on this view, yields substantive moral conclusions that every rational agent must acknowledge and be capable of being motivated by. Rationalism thus involves both a normative, or justificational, and an explanatory, or motivational enterprise. In regard to the former, rationalists typically ascribe several significant features to the relevant requirements of reason in its practical capacity, or to the first-order ethical principles they (are purported to) entail or underwrite.

First, practical reason yields substantive principles of right, which offer concrete guidance to and establish ethical constraints on choice and action. Reason is neither merely formal nor wholly instrumental; it substantively guides action. Next, rational ethical requirements override other reasons to act agents may have, such as reasons stemming merely from their own given preferences, interests or attachments. They apply on no condition of what particular agents happen to want or prefer to do in the circumstances to which the requirements attach. There are certain rational moral standards for action that rightly claim final authority over deliberation and conduct. Last, practical reason is held to be fundamentally impartial in its operations. Practical ethical reasons point to objectively valuable ends, ends there are reasons for anyone to promote. In sum, reason requires right actions regardless of who one is and whether or not one wants to perform them. Such claims regarding reason's power to justify or require particular patterns of ethical conduct have been argued at great length and with much sophistication in the literature; I turn now to rationalism's motivational or explanatory enterprise.

Moralists of every persuasion have felt obliged to tell us not only how we ought to conduct ourselves but how creatures like ourselves are capable of living up to other-regarding ethical principles, how it is possible for us to be motivated by considerations of morality. Rationalists invariably affirm

a close connection, approaching identity, of reasons for acting and motives to action. They insist not merely that there are substantive, overriding and impartial moral reasons that attach to actions in some very abstract or merely classificatory sense. They argue that the recognition or acknowledgment of such reasons is capable of directly motivating actions, even in the face of competing motivations. Our nature as practically rational beings not only requires that we act rightly toward our fellows; it insures that we can do so.

It seems that rationalists must so insist on a direct connection between ethical reasons and motives, given the following consideration. Even if it can be shown that there are operations of reason yielding practical conclusions binding (in a justificational sense) on every rational agent, there is still a question of how such operations could yield conclusions that can motivate us accordingly. (If they could not, how would they be truly practical?) It seems that we appeal to reasons not only in justifying or recommending actions but in explaining them as well. That is, we speak not only of reasons to act (or for acting) in some way, but also of reasons why an agent does (or did) something – of his reasons in so acting. But we seem able to explain what someone does only by saying what motivates him so to act. It follows that unless reasons are motives, they cannot prompt or explain actions. And if reasons cannot prompt or explain actions, we cannot be said to be practically rational agents. Thus, as Christine M. Korsgaard says, "practical reason-claims, if they are really to present us with reasons for actions, must be capable of motivating rational persons."[1] Korsgaard calls this the "internalism requirement." It is principally a demand on ethical theories. Philosophical accounts of ethics and action, if they are not to leave moral motivation a mystery, must explain how the acceptance or acknowledgment of ethical reasons can actually motivate persons to act in accordance with them. Proponents of ethical rationalism must specifically explain how we can be motivated to do what reason is said to require or demand that we do.

On every rationalistic account of ethics this is done by arguing that the capacity to motivate is inherent somehow in practical reason itself. For example, Thomas Nagel, in *The Possibility of Altruism*,[2] argues that reasons must be capable by themselves of motivating, since the first-person acceptance of a reason to act is intrinsically relevant to the explanation of the associated action. The judgment that a certain act is justified, or that one ought to do it, can explain why the person making the judgment

[1] "Skepticism about Practical Reason," p. 5.

[2] All references to Nagel in this chapter are to this work and are identified in the notes by page number.

actually does what she judges she should; it has "motivational content." It is a commitment to act, and must be capable of supplying an appropriate motivation, since it is (he claims) sufficient to explain one's action.[3]

But rationalists typically go beyond arguing that the acceptance of practical reasons is capable in principle of motivating actions; they claim that often, in favorable circumstances at least, it is sufficient to do so. No extra-rational psychological mechanisms, such as standing or occurent desires, are needed to motivate or to explain actions done for reasons. As Nagel states this claim, "the first-person acknowledgment of a sufficient reason for doing something . . . is by itself capable of providing a motivation in the appropriate direction . . . [and] in the absence of contrary influences or interferences . . . usually becomes operative."[4] In my view this insistence, not only upon the possibility of purely rational, passionless motivation, but upon its sufficiency to action in normal circumstances, is crucial to the rationalist's program. Practical reasons must be capable of motivating (the internalism requirement); rationalists must argue that (as Nagel says) "they have this capacity precisely because they are reasons, and not because a motivationally influential factor is among their conditions of application."[5] If ethical reasons are finally dependent on desires, interests or sentiments for their motivational efficacy, then rationalists cannot rightly claim to explain the justificational and motivational bases of morality purely in terms of their own conception of practical reason. That Nagel is aware of this is shown by his determination to prove that "an appeal to our interests or sentiments, to account for altruism, is superfluous."[6] As we will see in more detail, the sufficiency of pure practical reason to motivate as well as justify crucial other-regarding ethical principles is also an essential condition, on this picture, of the objectivity and autonomy of ethical theory.

SHAFTESBURY'S ETHICAL SENTIMENTALISM

Sentimentalism has no very clear, shared sense either in current moral theory or in the history of ethics. I know of no living author who has thought to call herself a sentimentalist.[7] Most often the term is used polemically and tendentiously to brand vague themes thought to be barely worthy of

[3] Stephen Darwall, another living rationalist, builds the possibility of motivation into his definition of a reason to act: "Considerations that when reflected upon motivate a preference for an act, other things equal, are reasons for the agent so to act." *Impartial Reason*, p. 21.

[4] p. 110f. [5] p. 31. [6] p. 80.

[7] I believe that when I wrote this sentence in 1989 it was true; things may have changed. See (e.g.) Nichols, *Sentimental Rules*.

serious consideration, such as that "acting from sense of duty is morally repugnant." History of philosophy will provide a fresh starting place.

Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Smith and Hume were sentimentalists, I suggest, because they sought to anchor moral motivation and justification not in reason's demand for consistency and impartiality, but rather in what they took to be certain given, standing human interests, attachments and concerns. Specifically they appealed to emotions, sentiments and desires that seem to be benevolent or altruistic (if one may speak so) by their nature, prior to and independently of reflection. Not unexpectedly the early sentimentalists differed in regard to the question, which desires and interests should be reckoned the basis of morals. Where Shaftesbury had spoken of natural affection Hutcheson would substitute benevolence, Hume sympathy or a "principle of humanity." Still these four seem to have been united in something like the following conviction: Without some appeal to fellow-feeling, broadly understood – other-regarding and benevolent desire, emotion and sentiment – not only would humans be seen to lack sufficient motivational resources for the practice of altruism, but any attempt by moralists to rationally justify important altruistic ethical principles would necessarily be futile. Proponents of rationalism view such appeal to pre-reflective sentiments and interests as superfluous both to the project of justifying moral standards and to that of explaining how humans can be motivated to live by them. A defender of sentimentalism is committed to seeing such appeal as essential somehow to both enterprises. (This is my working hypothesis.)

Why should this have been thought necessary? That is, what was the original rationale for sentimentalism? My revisitation focuses on Shaftesbury, who is widely regarded as the leading progenitor of later sentimental moral philosophy in Britain and mainland Europe.

Modern scholarship displays a curious ambivalence toward *An Inquiry concerning Virtue, or Merit*,[8] Shaftesbury's first treatise and the only systematic presentation of his philosophy of morals that we possess. It is generally agreed that it stands as the first modern proposal for a credible humanistic basis for traditional moral idealism that is independent of political authority (as in Hobbes) or religious sanction (as in Locke). Yet no one has directly challenged James Bonar's assertion in *Moral Sense* (1930) that "no coherent view can be extracted from Shaftesbury . . . about moral theory

[8] All references (save one) to *An Inquiry* in this chapter are to the second version as it appeared in the first edition of *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), and are given as Book, Part, Section and paragraph numbers (for example, I, III, III, 11), so that any edition of (the second version of) *An Inquiry* or *Characteristics* may be consulted.

in general."[9] Summaries of Shaftesbury's explicit doctrine fail somehow to lay hold of anything like an ethical theory or *system* that can be ascribed convincingly to the author of *Characteristics*. Despite Shaftesbury's failure to state principles of ethics I believe that his *Inquiry* does offer sufficient materials for a genuine if rudimentary ethical system. Its key is the author's notion of natural affection, together with his claim that the natural affections are "the springs and sources of all actions truly good." Here I can only take a rough stab at extracting Shaftesburyan principles of ethics by stating rather dogmatically what I think they are and then explaining what I think they mean:[10]

One To aim at the good_1 of others from benevolent motives is to do something morally good_2, whereas to aim merely at one's own good_1 or to aim at the good_1 of others from merely self-interested motives is to do something morally indifferent.

Two The only genuinely benevolent motives to actions are the natural affections.

Good_1: weal, welfare, best interests, prosperity, flourishing

Good_2 ('morally good'): worthy, meritorious, commendable, virtuous

Principle one is intended to capture the other-regarding, altruistic or ethical benevolist character of Shaftesbury's system, principle two its sentimentalist basis. The former states that all and only benevolence-motivated actions are meritorious. The latter claims, negatively, that unless an act is motivated by (what Shaftesbury calls) a natural affection, it cannot be said to be benevolent (and so by principle one "truly good"). But we may also read the second principle positively, to claim that the natural affections are needed in order to explain the possibility of truly benevolent or altruistic beneficence. (". . . all social love, friendship, gratitude, or whatever else is of this generous kind, does by its nature take place of the self-interesting passions, draws us out of ourselves, and makes us disregardful of our own convenience . . ."[11]) Natural affections explain how agents can be motivated to aim at the interests of others by what they do, independently of considerations of their own self-interest. For a creature devoid of natural affection, genuine altruism would be impossible.[12]

The sense and mutual coherence of the two principles obviously depend on what Shaftesbury means by a natural affection, on the one hand, and what he would understand by a genuinely benevolent action on the other.

[9] p. 1. [10] I offer a much fuller extraction in chapter 3. [11] II, I, I, 6.

[12] Of course we must remember that the terms "altruism" (*altruisme*) and "altruistic" were popularized by followers of Auguste Comte and are foreign to the writings of the early Moralists. I use them for convenience in comparing early eighteenth and late twentieth-century views, and in the noncommittal sense of "in the interests of others and not merely in one's own."

Shaftesbury lists over thirty natural affections, *ambulando*. On the most elemental or biological end of the spectrum are innate predispositions to propagate and to love and nurture one's offspring, show parental affection and so forth; at the other we find such very settled attitudes toward others as good will, a sense of partnership with mankind, desire for equity and the "relief of strangers." Some natural affections are diffusive and enduring qualities of character or temperament such as lenity, mildness, modesty, kindness, affability, candor, gratitude and bounty. Somewhere near the core stand affections we should today call altruistic emotions – love, human sympathy, compassion, pity, concern for others (Shaftesbury adds "delight in others' welfare"). Focusing particularly upon these core affections we may say that a natural affection is an other-regarding, motivating desire, sentiment or emotion that takes another person in light of his weal and woe as its object and embodies a positive or pro-attitude towards his welfare or a negative attitude towards his distress. The central natural affections thus appear to involve both an active, conative, orectic or passional, and an attentive, perceptual or intentional dimension. They are no mere idle hopes or wishes; the agent possessed of a natural affection to his kind is disposed, other things being equal, to take necessary and available steps to promote the interest or prosperity (as he understands it) of one or more fellow humans. Nor is a natural affection merely a feeling. To speak of being affected by pity, compassion *et al.* is to speak of a relationship between an attending subject and some object of interest and concern. Affection, like perception, is more than a subjective state; it necessarily involves the relation of the subject to what is being affected upon (or perceived). Thus Shaftesbury appears to pack a certain (dare I say rational?) structure into the notion of a natural affection. To be motivated by natural affection is to act neither irrationally nor blindly, but rather from robust recognition of the reality of others and of their weal or woe, flourishing or travail.

Moreover it is clear that natural affection is by no means the unitary and likely fictitious "love of mankind merely as such" ridiculed by Berkeley and Hume. Rather the generic predicate "is natural affection" stands for an entire family or web of interrelated and mutually reinforcing other-regarding and benevolent desires, attachments, attitudes, sentiments and emotions. (Incidentally I think that in refusing the temptation to reduce moral interest and motivation to the operation of some single sentiment or other principle Shaftesbury offers a richer and potentially more suggestive and realistic psychology of altruism than Hutcheson's, Hume's or Smith's.)

Suppose we grant that such affections exist and are frequently motives to beneficent actions. Why should they be regarded the only genuinely benevolent motives? Shaftesbury apparently conjoins the ideas of benevolence and disinterestedness and several separable thoughts: only benevolent motives are good or virtuous (for reasons nowhere clearly given); only truly disinterested motives can be benevolent ones; only natural affections are genuinely disinterested.

We can best grasp Shaftesbury's conception of disinterested motivation by looking backwards from Kant's, which is more familiar. Kant's position is superficially like Shaftsbury's: a beneficent act achieves truly moral status only when it is the product of a disinterested motive. But a Kantian moral motive is disinterested not merely in the sense that it is not a desire of the agent to further his own interest, but in the sense that it does not aim at the furtherance of anyone's interests (for then it would be merely an inclination, to which no special worth may be attached). A Shaftesburyan moral motive, in contrast, does aim at the furtherance of others' interests. Natural affections are directed upon others in light of their weal and woe and involve a kind of direct conation toward their good (as one perceives it). A natural affection just is a desire for another's good. So it is interested in the Kantian sense.[13]

We have two problems already. Kant offers reasons for imagining that interest (in his sense) disqualifies a motive from genuine worth. Shaftesbury offers no argument, though, why we should withhold merit from beneficent deeds done not disinterestedly – in his sense, that is, out of affections towards others' good. Moreover he seems willing to call any motivation to act in others' interests a natural affection so long as it is not just redirected self-interest. Apparently he is unable to imagine, or unwilling to admit, a motive to help others that is neither a form of fellow-feeling nor a form of self-interestedness.

But then Shaftesbury's principles appear to leave us with moral worth merely by fiat or intuition, on the one hand, and a vacuous (because definitionally trivial) motivational explanation for the possibility of benevolence, on the other. (We act benevolently or disinterestedly – out of desires for others' good – only when we are motivated by natural affections – desires for others' good.)

[13] Compare David Walford, in the introduction to his edition of *An Inquiry*: "Like Aristotle, Shaftesbury would wish to maintain that a person has become a fully moral being once he actually *wants* to perform moral actions. [But] when Aristotle and Shaftesbury define the truly virtuous man as the man who performs virtuous actions for their own sake they are not . . . maintaining the Kantian position. Both Aristotle and Shaftesbury would have found Kant's theory of action wholly incomprehensible." (p. xix.)

Perhaps his thought in principle one was this: If a person acts beneficently, not from genuine concern for the weal of a fellow, but from some other motive (dutiful routine, religious obedience, self-interest) we should perhaps be glad at the outcome (a good was conveyed) but should hardly hold the agent in positive esteem for it. His motivation falls short of direct, spontaneous and uncalculative engagement in the other's good, of genuine moral concern. (Basil Willey: "A man is not 'good' if he acts rightly against will and inclination."[14]) This can be argued; perhaps there is something too disinterested, too detached in Kantian duty or otherwise rationalistic disinterestedness for it to count as truly virtuous motivation.[15]

I believe that sentimental moralists, beginning with Shaftesbury, have always wavered between this sort of tactic and another view, prominent in Hume, according to which purely rational motivation, altruistic or otherwise, simply does not exist, that reason apart from desire is perfectly motivationally inert, that all motivation is necessarily motivation by wants. If we concentrate on the first, benevolist strand of sentimentalism we are apt to conclude that it can at most provide a theory of the good and not of the right, so that trying to oppose sentimentalism to rationalism must therefore be hopeless or simply boring (apples and oranges). I am convinced however that something like the rational standards sought by rationalists can be given a sentimentalistic justification, but one that begins from sentimentalism's motivational rather than its aretaic or benevolist enterprise. So I leave (for later chapters) the problem of explaining why benevolent motives are morally good, and return to our question from earlier, how it is that altruistic motivation is possible.

In the introduction to his *Guide to the British Moralists*, D. H. Monro discerns three general eighteenth-century positions:

1 All motives are selfish or interested in the ordinary sense of these words: that is to say, they arise from desires other than those which are directed to the welfare of others and which would normally be called "disinterested."

2 All motives arise from some desire or other, not excluding "disinterested" desires for the welfare of others.

(Monro: "The second of these may seem to be a mere tautology, until it is given Hume's challenging formulation, that 'reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions.' Then some people may be moved to suggest a third possibility:")

[14] *The English Moralists*, p. 224.

[15] Michael Stocker has argued something very like this in "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories." See also Blum, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality* (*passim*).

3 The realisation that something is the case (in particular that some things are good or some actions right, in a sense quite different from Hobbes's) may be a sufficient motive for action, without the mediation of any desire.[16]

Hobbes's position is best represented in 1; certainly that is Mandeville's. Reid and Price are the most thorough defenders of 3; certainly Clarke belongs in that camp, and Wollaston and Butler seem committed to it too. Some have tried in effect to locate Shaftesbury alongside of the early rationalists under 3.[17] That is simply wrong; he belongs squarely under 2, with Hutcheson, Hume and Smith. Shaftesbury's denial of the possibility of passionless motivation (that is of position 3) is clear in his principle, crucial to the argument of book 2, that "[w]hatsoever is done or acted by any creature as such, is done through some affection, as of fear, love or hatred moving him."[18] His skepticism toward (something like) contemporary rationalism's faith in reason's normal sufficiency to motivate compliance with ethical requirements is disclosed in this aphorism from the *Miscellaneous Reflections*: "Thus we see after all, that 'tis not merely what we call principle but a taste which governs men. They may think for certain, 'this is right, or that wrong' . . . yet if the savour of things lies cross to honesty . . . the conduct will infallibly turn this . . . way."[19]

Shaftesbury perceived no real need, in disputing Hobbes, to deny that humans are governed (motivated) by their passions. Indeed much of the originality and ingenuity of his response consists precisely in this. He grants the fundamentally passional or orectic nature of human motivation but then goes on to insist that people are susceptible to altruistic motivational influences precisely because, *contra* Hobbes (and Mandeville and apparently Kant) and as a matter of fact not every affection aims at some putative good of the self. Many emotions and desires are frequently motivationally sufficient to action in the normal course of life and clearly disinterested in his sense. And they are so not by definitional fiat but because of the way humans are built. Only "miscreants" are "by their nature strangers to natural affection."

[16] P. 16f. Regrettably this very helpful anthology is now out of print.

[17] See for example Vergilius Ture Anselm Ferm's *The Encyclopedia of Morals* (1956): "[R]eason plays an important part, both cognitive and conative: We must know what affections lead to an harmonious system . . . This knowledge is furthermore considered by Shaftesbury to be a necessary condition of virtuous acting not only in the sense that without it we wouldn't know what we ought to do, but also in the sense that it provides a motive to the will." I deny this last part of the interpretation, though I certainly agree that on Shaftesbury's picture "reason and appetite are both necessary, but neither sufficient, for virtuous action, with appetite in some sense the more important." (p. 110f.)

[18] II, I, III, 2. [19] *Characteristics*, p. 681.

The fundamental opposition of sentimentalism to rationalism regarding the nature of ethical justification begins to emerge when we recast position 2 in terms of reasons for action. It lends itself quite naturally to the view, still widely defended in contemporary philosophy, according to which reasons for acting are necessarily desire-dependent, internal, or instrumental. Unless you can connect up a fact, consideration or principle with some desire, interest or concern of the agent to whom it is offered – whether you choose to speak of his "pro-attitudes" or his "subjective motivational set" – you cannot sensibly expect it to have any motivational influence on his behavior.[20] And if no such influence is possible you fail to suggest a genuine practical reason (the internalism requirement again).

SENTIMENTALISM AND RATIONALISM

We still lack an overall structure for sentimentalism considered as a type of ethical theory and we need more of its rationale. I propose to rev up our time machine once again for it seems to me that Nagel, a formidable contemporary rationalist, provides what is in effect a nice structural portrait of (what I call) sentimentalism in the course of explaining his own determination to reject accounts of that type.

If the internalism requirement is correct it behooves moralists to connect up their proposed justifications to some account of how it is that rational persons can be motivated to act according to them. But there is, Nagel suggests, both a right and a wrong way to do this. The right (rationalistic) way is to "uncover a motivational structure which is specifically ethical and which is explained by precisely what explains [ethical] requirements." The wrong way, taken by Hobbes and Hume, is rather to "appropriate an antecedently comprehensible motivational foundation on which to base its [ethical] requirements."[21] Each camp "ties motivational influence to the truth conditions of moral claims, with the consequence that if someone recognizes their grounds, he cannot but be affected accordingly."[22] But Hobbes tied the moral motive to the necessity of obeying certain laws of nature by drawing such rules as consequences of a presupposed source of motivation (fear and hope). Nagel would have us instead search for ethical principles "so fundamental that they cannot be derived from or defined in terms of previously understood motivations," principles that "define motivational

[20] See for example Bernard Williams, "Internal and External Reasons," reprinted in his *Moral Luck*.
[21] p. 12.
[22] p. 29. Actually I think this involves a mistake; Nagel should have said, "tie motivational influence to the *necessary and sufficient conditions of the truth of* moral claims."

possibilities, rather than presupposing them."[23] Whatever the independent merits of Nagel's Kantian-like program may be, surely he is quite right about Hobbes. We might say that the truth of Hobbes's ethical principles just *is* their conduciveness to what we need or want (peace, safety, honor, commodious living or whatever). His system is therefore "simply a development of certain consequences of [an independently comprehensible] motive in the conduct of a rational and fully-informed individual."[24] On Hobbes's view one "begins from psychology, and ethics is an elaboration of it."

I believe that this is straightforwardly true not only of Hobbes but also of all the early British sentimentalists.

Hume made the same mistake, according to Nagel, by appealing to a presupposed (although now non-egoistic) motivation. On Hume's internal account of justification, and given the assumption that reasons can motivate, hypothetical imperatives are the only ethical principles that are possible.[25] They are the only principles whose acceptance can motivate. They affect behavior because they petition our sympathy or the principle of humanity.

Hobbes, Shaftesbury, Hume and the others obey the internalism requirement, as the rationalists try to do, but draw their motivational mechanisms from the passional rather than the (purely) rational side of human nature. Ethical considerations (reasons) can motivate because they appeal to desires that can of themselves motivate, independently of considerations of ethical principles. Still, on their view the acceptance of ethical principles implies (in a fashion quite different from Kant's, or Nagel's) the existence of motivations for acting according to them.

I suggest that the sentimentalists must have reasoned somewhat as follows: Nothing can justify morals that cannot also explain how virtue is possible (their version of the requirement). Virtues issue in actions. Nothing can explain actions but something that motivates actions. Now we know that our passions motivate. Passions can motivate because they are (salient) causes of actions. But whether a justification (reason) to be moral can actually motivate (cause) a person to act accordingly depends on what passions of hers it can enlist into her behavior. (Otherwise how could the perception of another's plight, or the acceptance of some rule, possibly bring about changes in the motions of her body?)

Nagel is perfectly correct, I believe, to say that if we follow Hume "any [moral] justification ends finally with the rationally gratuitous presence of

[23] p. 14. [24] p. 9.

[25] As Nagel says, on Hume's view "among the conditions for the presence of a reason for acting there must always be a desire or inclination capable of motivating one to act accordingly." (p. 10.)

the emotion of sympathy; if that condition were not met, one would simply have no reason to be moral."[26] What especially intrigues me is how such a consequence should evoke something approaching outright horror in so many contemporary ethical theorists, when the first few sentimental British Moralists seem not to have been troubled by it at all.

Now given these considerations, what will a sentimentalistic justification of important altruistic ethical principles be like when spelled out positively? This is where Shaftesbury's notion of moral sense may be most suggestive. Consider this fanciful illustration from book 1:

> Let us suppose a Creature, who wanting Reason, and being unable to reflect, has, notwithstanding, many good Qualitys and Affections; as Love to his Kind, Courage, Gratitude, or Pity. 'Tis certain that if you give to this Creature a reflecting Faculty, it will at the same instant approve of Gratitude, Kindness and Pity; be taken with any shew or representation of the social Passion, and think nothing more amiable than this, or more odious than the contrary. And this is *to be capable* of VIRTUE, and *to have a Sense of* RIGHT *and* WRONG.[27]

Interpretations of Shaftesbury's moral sense abound and none is very satisfying. Here I propose to read it (admittedly freely) as a quaintly homespun anatomy of abstract ethical justification.

A sentimentalistic justification of altruistic ethical principles, I suggest, will essentially be an attempt to show that reflective and fully informed individuals who are possessed of some modicum of fellow-feeling will be naturally disposed to take it upon themselves to live as much as possible by them, to recommend them to other members of their communities, teach them to their children and so on; they will view such principles as worthy of assent and adherence to by sensible people; they will recognize their grounds, their underlying rationale, given their basic capacities of sympathy for others and their understanding of the human condition. Shaftesbury's description of reflection's superaddition to natural affection reminds me of the justificational procedure advanced by Richard B. Brandt in "The Psychology of Benevolence and its Implications for Philosophy." That is, perhaps the sentimentalist can justify altruistic ethical principles by showing that each of us would choose[28] to support them as parts of the moral

[26] p. 11.

[27] I, III, III, 5. Here I preserve Shaftesbury's orthography as rendered in Walford's edition of the 1714 version of *An Inquiry*.

[28] I follow Brandt in introducing the hypothetical "would choose . . . if . . ." for the following reason. It captures our sense that given a person's basic objectives (in a condition of full knowledge) and given a moral system that would seem to do best in attaining these objectives, there is a clear sense in which his objectives and knowledge justify his acceptance (choice) of the moral system;

code of the society in which we expected to live, if we were fully conversant with available knowledge concerning human nature, human motivations, and the rewards and hazards of human social life generally – and of course if we were benevolent (possessed of natural affection to our kind) already. A basic disposition to humanitarian fellow-concern is presupposed as morality's bottom-line justificational anchor in human nature. Sentimentalists can willingly follow Nagel in pronouncing sympathy, compassion *et al.* "rationally gratuitous" so long as this is understood to mean simply that we cannot be required by reason to have such concerns and emotions in the first place. Such factors are hardly gratuitous to a full understanding of human beings and their ethical possibilities; sentimentalists insist that they are not gratuitous to the success of moral justification, either.

It must be admitted of course that some relatively few people appear to lack even the makings of benevolence. Many natural affections are probably beyond the capacities of the very young, the feeble-minded and the very severely mentally retarded. Probably some persons lack benevolent desires owing to the sheer harshness and cruelty of their environments and upbringings. Others are sociopathic, barely able to respond to others' weal and woe at all. Here I think the sentimentalist must be willing to accept the hard consequence that such persons are simply beyond the pale of any rational justification anyone could give for living life according to altruistic ethical principles – for a large part of morality as it is ordinarily conceived.[29] She can also acknowledge the obvious fact that many men and women exhibit very little altruistic behavior in their dealings with others. In regard to ethics surely the sentimentalist can admit a further consequence, namely that philosophers who demand on the basis of *a priori* reflections that altruistic motivation be required or inescapable, or that morality be "guaranteed universal application" (as Nagel says) are simply out of luck.

If my reconstruction of early sentimentalism is correct it is easy to see why the proper job of ethics cannot, for a sentimentalist, be to prove the rational force of unconditional requirements on motivation and action in

but it avoids the impression that the formula expressing the relation of benevolent sentiment to the acceptance of a recommendation to follow (altruistic) moral principles is supposed to mirror some actual psychological process of choosing, in the individual. In any event clearly the benevolent sentiments themselves are in no sense chosen. Though susceptible to refinement, generalization, focus, sophistication, etc. (by attention and 'reflection') they are assumed (on any sentimentalist theory) as given.

[29] Compare Brandt: "The simple fact is that, if fully-informed people are benevolent to some degree, we can successfully recommend the support of a benevolence-type moral system; if they are not, we cannot." "The Psychology of Benevolence," p. 449.

abstraction from what real people actually do want, take interest in and care about. Rather it must be to trace in full the implications of the existence of (something like) the principle of natural affection for the characters and conduct of fully informed and reflective individuals living in society, and for the content of their ethical principles. Notice that again the internalism requirement is met: The (reflective) reasons why certain acts are good or right – that they conduce to the (prereflective) ends of benevolence or natural affection – and the motives we have for doing such acts – we naturally care about others in various ways – are roughly the same. The reason why an act is good or right is the motive for doing it. Sympathetic and reflective persons, and only they, can be (ethically) practically rational.

My entire revisitation and reconstruction may be summarized baldly like this: Take the *a posteriori* and internalist structure of Hobbes's system, unplug the psychological egoism, plug in a more realistic anatomy of actual human motivation (such as Shaftesbury's) and begin your justifications from the naturally other-regarding and benevolent passional sources of interest and motivation documented therein. What you then have is ethical sentimentalism. My proposal is simply that sentimentalism be defined as the set of historical or present-day accounts of ethics that share in the *a posteriori*, internalist and (psychological and ethical) benevolist form of Shaftesbury's original enterprise.

One unexpected consequence is that Schopenhauer, who argued that the basis of morality is compassion in opposition to egoism and malice, was a sentimentalist. Now, he and Rousseau may seem strange bedfellows but that doesn't bother me, since no one else has proposed a structural and 'precising' definition of sentimentalism in ethics. Besides, Schopenhauer cites Rousseau approvingly many times – and Rousseau admired "Shaftsburi."

OBJECTIONS TO SENTIMENTALISM

I shall now explain how sentimentalism can be given a fighting chance in contemporary ethical theory against the type of objection most widely supposed to count decisively against it. Nagel has been helpful from the outset, so I will examine his stated reasons for rejecting accounts such as the ones we have briefly explored. I believe the considerations he adduces against sentimentalism are nugatory, but that they reveal what sort of objections a modern-day sentimentalist ought to take most seriously.

Nagel's complaints hinge on the difficulty of seeing how one could possibly get from a study of contingent human desires to anything like authoritative standards of conduct. Any desire, he claims, even if it is in fact

universal, is still "merely an affection (not susceptible to rational assessment) to which one is either subject or not." Ethical considerations are thus left to depend on "attitudes which we are not required to accept." This precludes sentimental-type accounts from meeting "the conditions of inescapability which should attach to ethics."

> One can escape a rational requirement if one fails to meet its conditions in some way. One is then allowed to beg off . . . But at some point the retreat must come to an end: one must reach a requirement . . . from which it is not possible to escape . . . It is natural to suppose that principles of this sort must underlie ethics, if it exists.[30]

On this supposition and in light of the internalism requirement it seems to follow that "if ethics is to contain practical requirements . . . the theory of rational motivation must contain results that are similarly inescapable." Such motivational requirements must "apply to us in virtue of particularly deep features of our make-up, features which we cannot alter."

> It will . . . not do to rest the motivational influence of ethical considerations on fortuitous or escapable inclinations. Their hold on us must be deep, and it must be essentially tied to the ethical principles themselves.[31]

The only alternative is "to abandon the objectivity of ethics." The objectivity of ethics depends on its being "guaranteed universal application"; this forces *a posteriori* internalist accounts such as Shaftesbury's and Hume's to "make the presence of reasons for altruistic behavior depend on a desire present in all men." "No wonder," he later adds, "that self-interest has so often been preferred to altruism as the foundation of justice and the other social virtues."[32]

Finally Nagel is concerned for the autonomy of ethical theory, its independence of other sorts of philosophical or psychological inquiry. He notes correctly that for Hobbes (and by extension for the early sentimentalists) it is not ethical theory that explains how the basic motivations being appealed to are possible in the first place (fear of death, natural affection). So there is "a component in human motivation, which can be understood independently of ethics, on which the force of ethics ultimately depends." "That sort of dependence," Nagel contends, "must be eliminated from ethical theory."[33]

Now I wish to be fair to Nagel, if that is even possible without summarizing and criticizing his complicated positive account in great detail. We must remember that his essay is not an explicit attack against any theory but

[30] p. 3–5. [31] p. 6. [32] p. 28. [33] p. 13.

rather aims to be "better" than competing non-rationalist accounts, so rendering them all "superfluous." But I feel obliged to call attention to a certain oddity in the way he handles these competitors in trying to explain his own proposed methodology. Though he "should prefer to avoid any pronouncements about the modal status of [his positive] claims,"[34] he relies exclusively on modals in his discussion of ethics and of why sentimental-type approaches are inadequate: sentimentalism cannot provide the conditions of inescapability which should attach to ethics, which conditions it must be possible to supply in some other way if ethics is to exist at all; since ethics must contain purely rational requirements there must be motivations you cannot escape from either; since such requirements must apply whatever our inclinations it will not do to rest their motivational efficacy on desires, as these cannot be rationally criticized; the dependence of philosophy on such inclinations must be eliminated (and so on). Nagel's tactic seems to be to lay down various unargued desiderata for ethical theory, and then go on to argue that accounts of morality (morals, moral experience, the moral institution of life) such as Hume's cannot possibly live up to them. Apart from the empty form of his critique, and the fact that Hume could not possibly historically speaking have shared in his own preferences for moral theory, several particular difficulties prevent Nagel's considerations from amounting to genuine objections to sentimentalism in ethics.

The sentimentalist has hopes of universality and objectivity in ethics too. Hume and the others fully realized that some at least tacit *consensus gentium* is needed if ethics is to have principles at all. They simply bit the psychological benevolist bullet, by claiming that the relevant desires, and the reasons they generate, are present, and motivationally efficacious, in all or nearly all men and women. Shaftesbury might have the strongest case; it is hard to imagine how a human who lacked a fair measure of sympathy and the other natural affections could be a fit subject of ethical justification, or how all these desires and emotions could prove to be philosophical fictions. Besides, there is obviously more than one way to understand the sort of objectivity to which ethics can or should aspire. Hume would have found the suggestion baffling, that moral precepts could have more than an imaginary objectivity unless they could present credentials drawn heavily from history, experience and the "common sentiments of mankind." I am unable to determine from his text whether Nagel actually wishes to deny that altruistic desires (unmotivated purely by perceptions of external circumstances in conjunction with entirely formal features of practical reason)

[34] p. 19.

exist in all or nearly all men and women. If he does surely he is wrong. With so many musts, cannots, must nots, and it will not dos flying about, the disengagement from *a posteriori* modes of reasoning about motives and morals so utterly complete, I fear that rationalism makes ethics (again in Bernard Williams's apt phrase) "transcendental to life, existing in a space quite outside the practice it is supposed to regulate and justify."[35]

Next it sounds odd to speak of sympathy, pity *et al.* as "merely fortuitous inclinations" or to contrast rationality to fellow-feeling by saying that the former but not the latter is "a part of us we cannot alter." Apart from its suggestion of an awfully crude dichotomy of reasons and inclinations, of the very sort Shaftesbury and the others were evidently at pain to avoid, Nagel's worries trade on the fallacy that if something is contingent then there must be a serious possibility of our imagining it to have turned out otherwise. Humans might have evolved in such a way as to render what we call sympathy superfluous to their physical constitution and form of life. (It is at least logically possible.) But we did not. In any case it is hard to see why that naked possibility should militate against one type of ethical theory in support of another.

Further, I cannot understand why we are supposed to be able to rationally assess a motivation only if we can demonstrate that it is a motivation we are required to accept. Would not something like duty or sense of rational obligation then remain the only sort of motivation about which anything relevant and interesting could possibly be said by way of assessment, criticism, focus and direction? We do not have at our disposal a satisfactory general theory of affect, which might fully explain how rational assessment of desire is possible or how exactly it should proceed; but a theory that generated this conclusion would be bizarre.

Finally, in regard to the autonomy of ethics, I cannot see what the point could be of eliminating the dependence of ethics on a component in motivation comprehensible apart from ethics if, as phenomena seem to indicate, there *is* such a component, or rather a whole host of them, in altruistic motivation. We do not need ethics to tell us that people are frequently moved by their emotions to help one another. We need it (and much else) to understand and interpret altruistic phenomena (and self-interested phenomena, and malevolent phenomena . . .) and (if and where possible) to derive practical consequences from them. In any event you cannot show that the early-modern sentimental moralists conformed to the internalism requirement in the wrong fashion, or from the wrong direction, just by

[35] *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, p. 110.

showing that their approach imposes certain limits upon the pretensions of (rationalistic) ethical theory.

Nagel offers a separate rationale for discounting sentiment-based views, which finally goes beyond *a priori* reflection to matters of fact. Agreeing, in effect, with Shaftesbury and the others that "a defense of altruism in terms of self-interest is . . . unlikely to be successful," he acknowledges "other interests to which appeal may be made, including the indiscriminate general sentiments of sympathy or benevolence." But,

> it is possible to argue against such hypotheses on the ground that the psychological and societal principles to which they appeal are neither universal nor obvious enough to account for the extent of altruistic motivation, and that they are evidently false to the phenomena.[36]

There simply isn't enough benevolent fellow-concern around in the world, in other words, to explain the actual prevalence of altruistic behavior. This is most puzzling. First, what is the supposed instrument of measurement by which we might compare quantity of affect to quantity of helpfulness, if not just personal experience, judgment and intuition? Strictly speaking it is only other people's behavior that we can observe. My impressions do not correspond to Nagel's at all. The specific altruistic 'phenomena' to which sympathy *et al.* are supposed by Nagel to be superfluous are these: telling someone he has a wasp on his hamburger, telling someone he has a flat tire, removing one's boot from another's gouty toes. One might question if such trivial social behaviors should be counted altruistic in the first place or whether they are not best explained by training, habit and conformity. But at least Nagel's suggestion has the ring of a genuine objection to it, for it leaves his opponents with some room to breathe. We might ask how purely formal features of practical reason are supposed adequately to explain altruistic behavior in very young children, or Koko the gorilla's tender treatment of her pet cat. (Or we might wonder with Schopenhauer whether reason could ever arrest murderous dagger-thrusts in mid-course.)

Nagel's real difficulty, it seems to me, is not that of imagining how fellow-feeling could explain this or that particular bit of helping behavior. Rather it is to see how sentiment and interest could, in principle, adequately explain how altruistic motivation is possible in each and every case in which it is (on his own theory) rationally required. But this folds his second sort of objection back onto the first, which is no real objection, and leaves us at the mercy of an extremely strict and most questionable reading of the formula,

[36] p. 90.

'*ought* implies *can*.' Nagel's criticisms reveal a pattern, which I believe has in fact characterized most traditional skepticism toward sentimentalism: Presume that moral reasons, if they exist, must be very strong. They must apply necessarily, obtain categorically, command unconditionally and motivate inescapably. Then point out that sentimental-type reasons cannot do such things. Should someone like Shaftesbury or Hutcheson or Hume claim to trace the foundations of morals to human sentiment, well, then, he has either failed adequately to grasp 'the' concept of morality or patently overestimated the force of sympathy in human affairs.

Frankly, this seems rather lame. The two pillars of the critique (a strict legalistic pattern for justification, an obviously impoverished view of sentimental motivation) lean so heavily against one another for support that one wonders what firm ground it is upon which each is supposed separately to stand. The critique could be considerably strengthened by arguing that moral considerations absolutely must fit that pattern, rather than inflicting that view on oneself and one's readers from the outset, and by questioning, wholly independently, whether various manifestations of fellow-feeling might not after all be inherently fickle, unreliable, transitory, flaccid, subtly egoistic or whatever. My point is that both sides to the argument are needed if either is to have any force as an objection to sentimentalism, and that rationalists characteristically fail to see this. Then the two sorts of claim might be conjoined, like this: How can any form of appeal to (weak, rare, capricious) fellow-feeling serve adequately to justify (firm, unchanging, authoritative) moral principles? Not everyone cares about his neighbor's lot, and no one is consistently compassionate, so how can such sentiments and interests provide each person with sufficient reason, and motivation, to be moral?

But even to this serious rebuilt objection there would be a clear and promising avenue of response for the sentimentalist: to set forth a positive account of affect, reason and motivation in morals, in which one defended the motivational adequacy of various forms of fellow-concern, while simultaneously challenging those traditional justificational assumptions about morality's universality and rational necessity which provide grist for the rationalists' mill.

CHAPTER 3

Shaftesbury's ethical system

SHAFTESBURY AS MORALIST

Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713) was, on my account of sentimentalism, its true founder. In order to justify this claim fully I propose to reconsider Shaftesbury's ethical philosophy and re-evaluate its importance in the history of ethics. But first we need to understand what his ethical philosophy is, and that is the aim of the present chapter. Shaftesbury ought to be of interest to both historians of ideas and philosophers of ethics, first because so many writers (past and present) seem so very ambivalent towards him and his achievements, and second because no one seems to have explained clearly what exactly he was saying about ethics.

Regarding the first point, nobody denies that his *Characteristics* was a seminal work in early modern philosophy. But Shaftesbury's reputation as a forward-looking Augustan moralist is overshadowed by his reputation as a moralist, period – as a contributor to the subject of ethics in a spirit of *philosophia perennis*. On that score he is widely regarded as a second-rate thinker at best, by nearly all leading twentieth-century commentators. (It is too soon to tell about the twenty-first.) The incongruity between the two reputations is very strange; there is nothing like it at work in our judgments of any of the other leading British Moralists.

To illustrate: no doubt the appearance in 1711 of *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* marked "a turning point in the history of English ethical speculation"[1] and the "starting point for the opposition between empirical and rational systems of ethics in the British Moralist tradition."[2] His eloquent rebuttal of the political and theological absolutisms of Hobbes and Locke, respectively, helped to "force moral philosophy from these bases

[1] Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics for English Readers*, p. 207.
[2] Ferm (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Morals*, p. 112.

to that of human nature and rationally conceived utility."[3] This "first moralist who distinctly takes psychological experience as the basis of ethics"[4] was clearly the main progenitor of such later sentimentalist and moral sense systems as Hutcheson's, Hume's and Smith's; he was imitated by Butler and influenced Kant; no one before him "had yet definitely transferred the centre of ethical interest away from Reason, conceived as apprehending either abstract moral distinctions or laws of divine legislation, to the emotional impulses that prompt to social duty."[5] His search for a credible humanistic basis for traditional moral idealism did much to set ethics "on its own feet."[6] "That he was a bold originator and an intrepid leader who stamped his ideas upon the thought and literature of his century can never be gainsaid."[7]

Fine. But historians of ethics generally offer a very low estimation of Shaftesbury when they stop merely appreciating his ideas in their original setting and begin weighing them as lasting contributions to ethical philosophy as such. We seldom if ever revisit *Characteristics* in the way we often return to Hume's *Treatise* with an eye to suggestive problems, and there is a sense that not merely a few of Shaftesbury's ideas had an immediate historical significance now entirely lost. To Bernard Bosanquet he seemed "far from being a great philosopher," rather one who "did little more than reproduce in terms of the individual's sensibility the current ideas of his age."[8] "No one supposes that Shaftesbury's thought is very profound or very coherent," Willey reported in the 1960s.[9] One reads of "the unsystematic Shaftesbury" (Ward Smith)[10] and of "the inconclusiveness" and "logical insufficiency" of his philosophy (Robertson).[11] Bonar (as we saw) went so far as to say, in *Moral Sense* (1930), that "no coherent view can be extracted from Shaftesbury . . . about moral theory in general."[12] Such widespread dissatisfaction and impatience is understandable, and Shaftesbury is himself largely to blame. Never one to argue his claims, he left most of his central terminology unexplained. His style, "a gentlemanlike discursiveness and want of visible method,"[13] "a strange mixture of bombast and eloquence,"[14] renders the sort of precision nowadays expected of good philosophy all but impossible. In a way Shaftesbury's thought is amateur; to argue that he ought to be ranked up there with Plato, Aristotle, Hume or Kant would be silly as well as hopeless.

[3] Robertson (ed.), *Characteristics*, p. xxxvii. (Hereafter 'Robertson.') [4] Sidgwick, *Outlines*, p. 190.
[5] *Ibid*. p. 184. [6] Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 5, p. 212.
[7] Aldermann, "The Significance of Shaftesbury in English Speculation," p. 195.
[8] *Logic*, p. 3. [9] Willey, *The English Moralists*, p. 227.
[10] Ward Smith, "The British Moralists and the Fallacy of Psychologism," p. 163.
[11] Robertson, p. xx. [12] p. 17. [13] Robertson, p. xx.
[14] Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 2, p. 27.

Still, a lot in Shaftesbury's writings on morality was suggestive in its day, and that certainly partly explains their enormous influence. His very syncretism and eclecticism, with all of its attendant imprecision and ambiguity, supplied much of the impetus for just that sort of later refinement and analysis we find welcome in the works of such of his successors as Butler, Hume and Kant. But that is hardly a sufficient answer to Bonar and Robertson, who, writing at the turn of the last century, were bothered less by Shaftesbury's imprecision than by his seeming failure to expound a genuine ethical system of any kind at all – a "coherent [logically sufficient] view of moral theory."

And I think we know what it is that they found lacking (and this brings us to my second reason for finding him still intriguing). What are Shaftesbury's doctrines, exactly? How would he answer such fundamental questions of philosophical ethics as these: What is the standard of right, the criterion of right action? What is the nature, or definition, of the Good? By what authority do moral demands claim to direct reasonable choice and action? (Why, after all, should we be moral?) What motivates men and women to act morally (or immorally) when they do? What actions and motives are praiseworthy or blameworthy, and why? Whatever answers Shaftesbury has to offer are implied rather than stated and argued – they need extracting. What are the principles of ethics, for Shaftesbury? Despite continuing disagreement over details, it seems we can say fairly clearly what Butler's principle of the natural supremacy of conscience means, or what Kant intended by his principle of autonomy. Shaftesbury, in contrast, is a strange, elusive bird; often it is extremely hard to know quite what he is getting at. On the other hand the widely held view that there simply isn't any Shaftesburyan ethical system, or that he has no moral-theoretical principles, would be far more compelling if anyone had ever vigorously tried to extract such a formal system or such principles from his writings and failed. Since that has not happened, the argument as it stands is merely a kind of appeal to ignorance. Moreover in order to be certain that the prevailing pessimism were justified, wouldn't one also need some account of just what something must be in order to count as a genuine ethical theory or system? Because Shaftesbury's past critics offered no such account, the whole question remains (it seems to me) quite open.

I think we can best assess the prospects of getting some sort of contemporary theoretical handle on Shaftesbury's overall account of ethics by actually trying to shape one. In doing so I will examine (what I take to be) the best traditional literature that is explicitly devoted to isolating and explaining a theoretical component in Shaftesbury's earliest treatise, *An*

Inquiry Concerning Virtue, in Two Discourses (1699). It simply doesn't do the trick, as I will show, but taking a look at it will at least supply a kind of road map for a fresh reading and reveal the major interpretive obstacles and intellectual cul-de-sacs awaiting the Shaftesbury scholar whose interests include matters of moral theory. But I also want to advance the positive claim that the *Inquiry* contains the makings, at least, of a genuine ethical system. A work does so, I shall suppose, if it proves possible to extract from it, with suitable textual justification, answers to the traditional questions of ethics mentioned above, and to show that these answers, 1) are not wildly implausible, but can be supported by reasons for thinking them correct; 2) are interesting and challenging from the perspective of present-day moral philosophy generally; and 3) cohere among themselves in ways comparable to the ways in which competing answers given by other moralists cohere, moralists whose claims to have produced genuinely systematic accounts of ethics are not disputed. Vague as it is this seems better than what we are offered by critics who flatly assert that Shaftesbury has no system and will suffice, I believe, for purposes of this study. It seems to me that the more we can come to see Shaftesbury as being in the same game as (say) Kant – as a moralist with questions, answers, explanations, justifications, principles – and the less his ethical speculations compare with (for example) Ben Franklin's or Walt Whitman's rambling ethical pronouncements, the closer we will have come to undermining those negative judgments of his place in ethical theory which underlie our present-day ambivalence toward him.

One last prefatory note: Unlike the great majority of Shaftesbury commentators I shall rely, in reconstructing Shaftesbury's ethics, exclusively on citations from the 1699 (Toland) edition of *An Inquiry* rather than from the "corrected" version as it appears in the 1711 and 1714 editions of *Characteristics*. Why do I do this? Why not stick to tradition's reliance on the revised version, in *Characteristics*? That is the form in which my author chose to bequeath his thoughts. Moreover the Toland, besides being a complete mess, stylistically, influenced practically nobody, while *Characteristics* helped to shape European thought for more than a century. I have two reasons. The first, which I will only be prepared to explain adequately at the very end of the present chapter, is philosophical: the Toland version is superior to the latter for purposes of moral theory. My second reason has to do more with the general literary style and 'spirit' of the earlier version, which Shaftesbury himself reports having composed when he was "but twenty." It is the work of a prodigy, who was anxious to make his literary mark now that he had become a young man, but who was also genuinely disturbed by

the possible skeptical implications of the new empirical mode of enquiry epitomized by Locke and the very real popular influence of Hobbes. The clumsiness of the Toland version is more than compensated by its sincerity, straightforwardness and moral urgency. Moreover it is difficult to find a major idea at work in *Characteristics* that is not at least foreshadowed in the 1699 *Inquiry*; Robertson may have understated matters in calling the work "in some respects his most weighty performance."[15] Also, as Shaftesbury grew older he became, I think, more elegant but less substantive. In every subsequent work we find him progressively consumed by the question of "the theatrical status of the published book and the relation between authors and readers" (David Marshall).[16] Already by 1704 his writing had begun to take on that curiously affected self-consciousness, that bombast and stiffness, for which it is notorious. (To Lamb he seemed to have "written with his coronet on, his Earl's mantle before him."[17]) In the 1690s, though, his consuming problem was neither impressiveness of style nor the character of his own literary persona, but rather how to refashion and defend traditional moral idealism in terms convincing to a new more skeptical age. The Toland, however we may finally judge it as a treatise of ethics, is "heroic" in a way that *Characteristics* as a whole is not.

THE GOOD

It isn't difficult to summarize the general doctrine of Shaftesbury's earliest treatise. Perhaps the best traditional short synopsis, which I here take the liberty of paraphrasing, may be found in Ernest Albee's "The Relation of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson to Utilitarianism" (1896).

Hobbes had attempted to reduce ethical principles to axioms of private safety and self-interest, escape devices, so to speak, from a dangerous state of nature. Shaftesbury could imagine nothing so utterly improbable or so grossly unnatural as the Hobbesian state of nature. Humans are social creatures by nature, prior to any mutual bargain. So in order to understand the true motivations and interests of individuals we must first grasp their natural relations to their "systems" – families, communities, societies, ultimately the human species. Hobbes is quite right to say that nothing can be more natural than that which makes for self-preservation.

[15] p. xii.

[16] *The Figure of Theater*, p. 1f. Chapters 1 and 2 of this work contain a very good discussion of *Characteristics* and the *Philosophical Regimen*. Significantly, Marshall makes no mention of the *Inquiry* in his analysis of the author-reader relationship in Shaftesbury's thought.

[17] Cited in Alderman, "The Style of Shaftesbury," p. 212.

"Every creature has a private interest of his own; which Nature has compelled him to seek." But in "higher," social creatures, Shaftesbury goes on to observe, "If eating and drinking be natural, herding is so too. If any appetite or sense be natural, the sense of fellowship is the same."[18] In addition to their "self affections" (hunger, thirst, desire for safety and comfort) human creatures possess other "natural" affections such as compassion, love of offspring, friendship, fellow-concern and so on, which bear plain reference to the good of others. Yet we should not suppose that in acting from such public-spirited motives we necessarily, or even typically, go against our own private interests. Indeed, such other-regarding and benevolent desires are the source of nearly all the true enjoyments of life. Since both sorts of affections are necessary to private good and interest, the popular antithesis of egoism and altruism upon which Hobbes's account depends is mainly artificial. We may, if we like, distinguish the self from the natural affections, and these from a third class of "unnatural" affections (malice, spite, arrogance, exaggerated pride) which "tend [neither] to any good of the public [nor] the private, but contrariwise." But only affections of the last sort are intrinsically bad. Virtue, therefore, needn't suppress self-love in favor of benevolence; the trick rather is to strike a suitable balance or "harmony" among the self-interested and altruistic passions while eliminating harmful desires. Vice is essentially a kind of emotional unhealthiness or psychic imbalance, stemming mainly from failure to attend to one's own true interests and from society's artificial suppression of natural humanity and fellow-concern.

Once one gets used to Shaftesbury's talk of affections it becomes clear, I think, that what he says is mostly true. Hobbes was surely wrong to imagine that he could find a basis for morality, or a definite starting-point for ethics, in the isolated individual. No one can deny the ingenuity of Shaftesbury's rebuttal, with its ethologist's-eye picture of the human animal and accompanying dynamic typology of the passions. As Robert Voitle notes,[19] two Hobbesian premises that especially irked his adversaries were that global psychological egoism is true and that all human activity is motivated (caused) by passions. Shaftesbury distinguished himself from earlier critics of Hobbes, notably the Cambridge Platonists, by embracing the second premise so as better to refute the first. Granting the fundamentally passional or orectic nature of human motivation, he proceeded to argue that not every desire aims at some putative good of the self. Many are directed to

[18] Robertson, *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, vol. 1, p. 74.
[19] "Shaftesbury's Moral Sense," p. 27.

the welfare of others and operate independently of selfish calculation, and this is why humans are capable of and often disposed to genuine altruism in their dealings with one another.

Where one goes from here depends largely on what questions one brings to the text. Albee believes the early British Moralists tried to answer two questions: What is the (objective) "end" of moral action – at what does the virtuous in human nature aim? What is the nature of man and "in what relation" does this stand to the "end"? The problem is that Shaftesbury "was so concerned with the question regarding the nature of man . . . that he practically failed to give the first question . . . explicit treatment."[20] In view of his persistent emphasis on humanity's social nature it seems that the good of all must be the ultimate objective or end of moral action. But what exactly is the good of all? Though Shaftesbury's interpretation of the Good often seems hedonistic in the fashion of the later utilitarians,

> [his] frequent use of the word "happiness" is not itself decisive. Happiness . . . is the necessary concommitant of the right state of being in question [but] this latter seems at first to be regarded as the thing most important . . .[21]
>
> Shaftesbury, in his explicit opposition to Hobbes and his implicit opposition to the Intellectualists, had tended to identify virtue with benevolence. At the same time, his fundamental thought seems to have been that virtue consists in the harmony of the "natural" and "self" affections.[22]
>
> [In Cumberland we find] "happiness" and "perfection" as distinct, but parallel principles. In Shaftesbury we do not, as it seems to me, find them thus in mechanical juxtaposition, but wrought together, so that they appear as different aspects of the same fact of moral health or harmony.[23]

This seems perfectly right; nowhere does Shaftesbury explicitly identify the Good with either personal or public happiness, nor does he propose anything like a calculus for determining the worth of acts or types of acts by their public utility. A point similar to Albee's can be seen by attending, not to the Good which is the object or aim of moral endeavor, but instead to what is good in respect of the desire, or motivation, to pursue the Good. Shaftesbury never identifies virtuous motivation with benevolence, as Hutcheson will; he repeatedly insists that immoderate natural affection is as destructive of the poise or harmony necessary for virtue as excessive self-interestedness, so that moderate self-concern is actually a necessary condition of virtue.

But "Work towards humanity's moral health or harmony!" is neither very imposing nor very useful considered as a principle of ethics. Nor is

[20] "The Relation of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson to Utilitarianism," p. 26.
[21] *Ibid* , p. 29. [22] *Ibid.*, p. 30. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Albee's judiciousness in resisting the idea that Shaftesbury was a utilitarian encouraging, given our purposes: It should discourage any hopes of short-cutting, as it were, by straightforwardly classifying Shaftesbury according to conventional modern "isms" and then ascribing to him the tenets or principles of whatever type of ethical theory we decide he must have meant to uphold. Such distinctions as naturalist *versus* non-naturalist, deontological *versus* consequentialist, cognitivist *versus* noncognitivist, intuitionist *versus* hedonist and so on evolved later, often in response to questions of detail suggested by Shaftesbury's own imprecision and eclecticism, and so are largely useless for interpreting him. As John Laird says in *The Idea of Value* (1920), "Shaftesbury conjoined . . . what his successors were at pain to separate."[24] One probably can find intimations in Shaftesbury of just about every modern approach to ethics. Laird's observation also raises the disturbing possibility that Shaftesbury, far from having no ethical system, offered the makings, at least, of two, three or four.

OBLIGATION

One way to get something systematic out of Shaftesbury is rather obvious and has suggested itself to more than one scholar, namely to turn attention away from his favored conception of the ethical good, to a concept that is widely thought to be even more central to ethics, namely the moral ought or moral obligation. Book 2 of the *Inquiry* is argumentative in a way that no other part of Shaftesbury's work is, and its introduction contains his only explicit mention of obligation;[25] it is there that he seems ready to address head-on what is surely a genuine and familiar question of ethics, namely, why should I be moral? "It remains now to shew, WHAT OBLIGATION THERE IS TO VIRTUE, and ["or" in the 1711 version] how any one may have reason to imbrace Virtue, and shun Vice." The notion of moral obligation, the idea that some things are morally required, or demanded, is surely part of the ordinary moral consciousness and so something of which any ethical system ought to give some account.

Shaftesbury argues explicitly and persuasively that having one's affections in harmony is necessary for one's own happiness, and that to have them way out of order (as it were) is the height of misery. Therefore (these scholars suggest) virtue is obligatory. One obvious problem with that approach is

[24] p. 188.

[25] "Book the Second" is subtitled "OF THE OBLIGATIONS TO VIRTUE" (note the plural), though Toland may have made up this heading; no such heading appears in the revised versions of 1711 and 1714.

that it necessitates importing a premise into the argument that is never stated by the author, something to the effect that (as Bernard Peach would have it) "Everything conducive to the happiness of the agent is obligatory."[26] Similarly Gregory W. Trianosky asserts that "to provide a rational creature with good self-interested reasons for having or cultivating the natural affections . . . [is to provide] some plausible argument for the obligation to be virtuous."[27] The argument, I take it, is supposed to go something like this:

(1) An agent is happy only if she is virtuous.
(2) An agent is obligated to do whatever is necessary in order for her to be happy.
  Therefore, every agent is obligated to be virtuous.

This strategy of 'importation' may seem attractive simply in light of the obvious alternatives. Shaftesbury starts by telling us that he will explain what obligation there is to virtue. But if we organize what Shaftesbury then actually says in Book 2 into a single valid argument stretching throughout the discussion, I believe we get something like this, instead:

(1) An agent is virtuous if and only if her natural affections are strong, her self-affections are moderate and she is free of unnatural affections. (by definition, I suppose, from Book 1)
(2) An agent is happy only if her natural affections are strong, her self-affections are moderate, and she is free of unnatural affections. (by observation and induction in Book 2)
  Therefore, only if an agent is virtuous is she happy.

Mutatis mutandis for vice and misery; that is, assuming that "vicious" is equivalent to "not virtuous," "miserable" to "not happy," the argument can show that if an agent is vicious he is miserable. And Shaftesbury does argue this, most convincingly. Simply looking at the argument we see its validity. Its premises, and so its conclusion, may well be true.[28]

But it is boring. For one reason or other virtually every moralist of Shaftesbury's day was concerned to show that traditional virtue was (as Butler would say) in our interests, or at least not contrary to them. In any event, "Happy is she whose affections harmonize!" is hardly what we could mean by a fundamental principle of ethics.

[26] "Shaftesbury's 'Moral Arithmeticks,'" pp. 20–22. Of course there is also the problem that Peach's suppressed premise seems incredible on the face of it. A summer visit to the shore, which makes me very happy, is not therefore obligatory. And it also seems to imply that sacrificing one's own happiness for the sake of humanity's good can never be justified, and there is no evidence that Shaftesbury would maintain this.

[27] "On the Obligation to be Virtuous: Shaftesbury and the Question, Why be Moral?," p. 296.

[28] As Shaftesbury actually states his conclusion, "Virtue is the GOOD, Vice the ILL, of EVERY ONE."

It has always been a problem (as I pointed out in chapter 1) to derive from a study of the passions anything like moral obligations, moral oughts. But (on the present suggestion) if that state of harmony among the passions which constitutes virtue is necessary (and normally sufficient) to the state of well being and satisfaction we call happiness, and if every agent has conclusive reason, or is obligated, to do whatever she believes will in the long run make her happy (on Peach's "suppressed" premise or something like it), then every agent has an overriding reason to try, at least, to be virtuous (moral).

One little problem, however, remains: that is the view of nearly all of Shaftesbury's leading eighteenth-century opponents! Shaftesbury is, of course, famous for insisting on the disinterestedness of virtue. The moral life, we thought we were told (in Book 1), is found good and becoming for its own sake and in the very living of it. Religious morality, he said, detracts from (true) morality by seeking to motivate conduct it calls good by promising and threatening rewards and punishments. Such motives are merely forms of self-interest and so are no more praiseworthy than any other self-interested desire. Indeed there "is not, nor ever can be . . . any Virtue or Goodness" in believers so motivated, "any more than as it may be said perhaps, that there is . . . innocence and sobriety in a Monky under the disciplin of the Whip."[29]

Thus to accept the idea that Shaftesbury's one extended argument is really aimed at establishing a general obligation to be moral would really sink our whole enterprise, for it would confirm Basil Willey's accusation that "What he has in effect done has been to maintain both that virtue should be disinterestedly pursued, and also that it should be cultivated for hedonistic reasons."

> He favors disinterestedness when he is criticizing religion for securing virtue by promises and threats. But when he is refuting Hobbes and the doctrine of self-love he becomes a hedonist: the motive to virtue is the realization of the intensest kind of pleasure, and selfishness is bad and wrong because it is not *really* pleasant. As long as the reward of virtue comes here and now, he accepts it as part of the beautiful order of things; remove it beyond this life, and he rejects it with disdain.[30]

If Willey is right, then in order to preserve bare consistency we would have to jettison one or the other half of Shaftesbury's only systematic book: either keep what I would call his ethical benevolism – the attachment of moral worth to disinterested fellow-feeling, the critique of selfish moral

[29] *An Inquiry*, p. 55f. Unless otherwise noted all citations are from the Toland edition.
[30] *The Eighteenth-Century Background*, p. 74.

motivation, his intuitionism and so on, which make up most of Book 1 – and dismiss Book 2, which is thought by Sidgwick and many others (including Peach and Trianosky) to contain his system properly speaking; or leave out (ignore) all of that, and read him as frankly justifying moral endeavor wholly prudentially. The latter alternative would certainly be cleaner – after all, the view of practical reason as simple prudence has been argued with much force in the recent literature of ethics[31] – but . . . it just wouldn't be Shaftesbury. The "passion towards Self-good" cannot be what supplies a Shaftesburyan justification of living ethically; something subtler, and harder to articulate, is needed.

DISINTERESTEDNESS

Before deciding what that something might be, we need to take a close look at Shaftesbury's benevolism and particularly his notion of disinterestedness; otherwise we could never decide with certainty whether or not whatever reasons he means to offer us to "imbrace" virtue are interested in the same sense in which his favored moral motives (in Book 1) are not.

Consider first his ethical benevolism, which unfolds in the rambling and tortuous discussion of "good and ill in sensible creatures" in Book 1, section II. Several distinguishable, if not entirely separable, theses emerge. One is that it is not so much a person's particular selfish or benevolent actions that determine his moral character as it is his settled "temper" or temperament. Shaftesbury "hold[s] to the ideal conception that the whole character must be moral, so that it may broadly evince itself in the moral life, not in individual acts."[32] This he calls "intire affection." But it all remains awfully vague and tendentious, if not downright vacuous. Thomas Fowler (*Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, 1882) also noticed that Shaftesbury "says almost nothing of actions, what he almost exclusively concerns himself with being 'temper' and character."

> As, however, character must give birth to actions, and as a man's actions are determined by his character, if we can ascertain what, in this system, is the test of a good or bad character, we shall also have ascertained what is the test of right or wrong action.[33]

But this is also unpromising, for two reasons. First, harmony among the self and natural affections is the criterion of good character, but what is the

[31] See for example, Bittner, *What Reason Demands*.
[32] Carter, *Parallel Themes and their Treatment in Schiller and Shaftesbury*, p. 26. [33] p. 72f.

test of harmony of affection? Second, it is very doubtful whether to the particular virtues there correspond specific classes of actions or act-categories. As G. H. Von Wright has observed, "Killing a tiger and jumping into cold water can both be acts of courage, though 'outwardly' most dissimilar."[34]

A second thesis, also vague, is that the truly moral agent has sufficient motivational resources at her disposal to act "immediately," "directly" to benefit her fellows. Hesitation, calculation and (even) reflection are taken as signs of "insufficient or unequal affection." Her actions are, as Allan L. Carter has written, "spontaneous, unasked and undebated."[35] Apparently Shaftesbury wished to oppose his preferred mode of altruistic motivation not only to selfish beneficence but to sense of duty as well. His passing references in later works to obedience, laws, "severe reflections on our duty" and the like are consistently skeptical if not disparaging. "Obedience" suggests servility, and failure to find in oneself the spontaneous care and compassion for others that should render consideration of abstract moral oughts superfluous. Willey reads him (in a more generous passage) to say that "an act of charity springing from an impulse of sympathy for a fellow creature would be . . . morally superior to one discharged mechanically as a mere routine duty."[36] Elsewhere Willey writes that, for Shaftesbury,

A virtuous man . . . is virtuous . . . by taste and inclination. A good man is a rational being who makes virtue the object, not only of duty, but of his affections. He is one whose impulses "naturally" impel him towards right attitudes and behaviour to others. A man is not "good" if he acts rightly against will and inclination.[37]

This theme has quite interesting parallels in the contemporary literature of ethics but is never really developed in Shaftesbury's text, being soon refolded into the author's critique of "interested" (selfish) beneficence:

WHATSOEVER therefore is done that happens to be of good to the Species, or to the System as above, through this affection towards self-good, or separat privat Good, dos not imply any more Goodness in the Creature than as the affection is good. And if that affection in it self be not to be stiled a good or virtuous Affection; whatsoever happens through it, is not Goodness nor Virtue, nor the Creature any more a virtuous or good Creature; but let him do whatsoever Good, if it be *only* that vitious affection of exorbitant selfishness, or an excessively extended Apetite towards Self-good, which moves him; and that there be wanting therefore to move him any good affection, such as ought of right to do it; the Creature is in it self still vitious, and will always be so in some degree, whilst the passion towards Self-good,

[34] *The Varieties of Goodness*, p. 36. [35] *Parallel Themes*, p. 18.
[36] *The Eighteenth-Century Background*, p. 61. [37] *The English Moralists*, p. 224.

tho ever so moderate and reasonable, is in any degree his motive in the doing that which a natural affection to his kind should have mov'd him to; but, which natural Affection is wanting in him, or so weakly implanted as to be insufficient to move him without help from the other.[38]

This is a very difficult, even painful passage. Shaftesbury is trying, awkwardly, to hold on to what Albee calls his "fundamental thought," that virtue is harmony of the self and benevolent affections, by retaining his insistence that a healthy self-love is necessary, and not inimical, to goodness of character. At the same time he is insisting that it is benevolent desire, after all, which confers moral worth upon actions.

It all more or less boils down to this: To aim at others' good (weal, welfare) from benevolent motives is generally to do something morally good (worthy, meritorious), whereas to aim at one's own good, or to aim at the good of others merely from self-interested motives is to do something morally indifferent. And this is something like a principle: it has 'bite' at least in the minimal sense that one may dispute it and know what one is saying. Kant, for instance, would deny that a beneficent deed motivated by benevolence (considered as a passion, and so an inclination) has achieved truly moral status.

Before doing any engraving, though, we should return to the question of Shaftesburyan disinterestedness. An obvious problem is that "disinterested" appears only once in each version of *An Inquiry*, where its meaning is far from self-evident. But the concept of disinterestedness works in the text, I suggest, in two ways: by means of its opposite, interestedness, and in connection with the author's conception of "moral objects of good and ill."

"Interest" denotes either the long-range good (welfare) of individuals and communities, or the desire, or motivation, to pursue such goods and interests. As motive, it is used always with the desire of "private good" in mind. The self affections "constitute whatever we call interestedness or self-love." Disinterested motives, it would seem, then, are (roughly) benevolent ones – the natural affections.[39]

[38] *An Inquiry*, p. 22.

[39] One contemporary commentator, David Walford, reads Shaftesbury in this way (and I agree with him): "Like Aristotle, Shaftesbury would wish to maintain that a person has become a fully moral being once he actually *wants* to perform moral actions. When Aristotle and Shaftesbury define the truly virtuous man as the man who performs virtuous actions for their own sake they are not, it must be emphasized, maintaining the Kantian position. Both Aristotle and Shaftesbury would have found Kant's theory of action wholly incomprehensible. What they are maintaining is merely that the truly virtuous man performs moral actions not from ulterior motives designed to further the agent's own interest, but because he wishes to further the interests of others." Editor's introduction to *An Inquiry*, p. xix.

But despite its initial attractiveness this reading generates several serious problems. If disinterested just means motivated by natural affections (benevolent desires) it appears that Shaftesbury is either unable to imagine, or unwilling to admit, a motive to help others which is neither a form of fellow-feeling (and so of disinterestedness) nor a form of self-interestedness (interest). In fact he usually seems willing to call any motivation to act ethically well a natural affection, so long as it is not just redirected self-interest. But this seems counterintuitive. Cannot one help others out from a sense of duty, or even out of simple habit? Next, Kant offers reasons for imagining that interest (in his sense of inclination, whether to one's own or to others' good) disqualifies a motive from genuine moral worth. Shaftesbury, however, apparently expects us to "just see" that all and only disinterested motives (in his sense, which we are still investigating) are genuinely morally worthy. Further, recall that the other-regardingness or disinterestedness of the natural affections was supposed not only to confer merit on the actions they inspire but to explain them as well. Natural affections explain how agents can be motivated to promote the interests of others, independently of "the passion towards Self-good." But then (as noted in the preceding chapter) we appear to be left with a vacuous, because definitionally trivial, explanation of the very possibility of genuine altruism that Hobbes denied. Finally it just sounds odd to say disinterested when we mean desirous of social good. Certainly we intend something quite different in speaking of aesthetic disinterestedness – a concept that traces its modern roots to Shaftesbury himself.

But, in fact, not every Shaftesburyan moral affection is either self-interested or benevolent. Shaftesbury also postulates a type of affection (still called "natural") toward "rational objects of moral good."

> . . . but as soon as [a person] is come to have any one single good Affection, any Affection towards what is good and worthy, sociable, human, or any way morally good, as liking and affecting this for its own *sake*, and as good and amiable in *it self*; then is he in some degree Good and Virtuous, and not till then.[40]

Later he speaks of "the very love of Virtue"[41] and "the contemplation of what is worthy in it self," and of "*love* to *Virtue* for its own sake, as well as for being believ'd advantageous[!]"[42] Shaftesbury evidently would understand disinterested affection to include not only such directly altruistic desires as pity, love and so on, but this new abstract admiration and liking for what is good and right, as such, as well. Natural affection goes

[40] *An Inquiry*, p. 68. [41] *Ibid.*, p. 72. [42] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

beyond merely wanting; it encompasses a special mode of attention and concern, or appreciation, reaching beyond the sphere of practical choice and action.[43]

Before inquiring into the precise nature of this "love to Virtue in it self" let's try to nail down what systematic results, however meager, we have managed to extract thus far. My proposed normative principle must be amended as follows:

One To aim at the $good_1$ of others from disinterested motives is to do something morally $good_2$, whereas to aim merely at one's own $good_1$, or to aim at the $good_1$ of others from merely self-interested motives is to do something morally indifferent.

$Good_1$: weal, welfare, best interests, "moral health or harmony"

$Good_2$: ('morally good'): worthy, meritorious, commendable, virtuous

Disinterested: EITHER directly altruistic (other-regarding and benevolent) OR out of regard to what is "good and virtuous in itself"

This principle, which I submit pretty well captures the essence of Shaftesbury's ethical benevolism, is clearly normative; it tells us how we ought to go about judging the relative moral worth of actions, considered as expressions of an agent's general moral temperament or character. Whence and how this ought is derived, what reasons there are for accepting it as true, or binding, remain to be seen. (Notice that it is a third person or spectatorial rather than a first person ought; it would appear to offer no specific guidance to an agent wondering what he should do in given circumstances.)

I believe it is also possible to extract a second principle, which coheres with the first and expresses and preserves the author's sentimentalism, *viz.*,

Two The only genuinely disinterested motives to action are the natural affections.

Shaftesbury names dozens of natural affections. Some we should today call altruistic emotions – love, human sympathy, compassion, pity, concern (for others), and "delight in others' welfare." Others are more like enduring qualities of personal character or temperament – lenity, mildness, modesty, kindness, affability, candor, gratitude and bounty. What is important here is that they are all, as he conceives them, affections, or desires. And again, Shaftesbury shows absolutely no impulse to reduce moral interest and motivation to the operation of some single sentiment or desire. Apparently the

[43] In "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness'" (1961), Jerome Stolnitz writes that "[i]n these passages, Shaftesbury is rejecting 'interestedness.' But he is not urging concern for some desired consequence other than self-good. He is urging, rather, that genuine moral and religious concern are with what is intrinsic and that they are therefore terminal. They are not instrumental and therefore anticipatory. The whole selfishness-unselfishness controversy has now been transcended . . ." (p. 132.) (Apparently so, but how has it been transcended?)

more different natural affections there are the better – so long as none of them "carries us away" (upsets our inner harmony).

This second principle not only finds clear support in the text; it is essential for maintaining the contrast with Kant and rational ethical systems generally. Shaftesbury holds that a beneficent deed is genuinely moral if it is inspired by "the contemplation of what is worthy in itself." This has a distinctly Kantian flavor, being strongly reminiscent (or rather prescient) of Kant's conception of reverence for the moral law. Yet according to Shaftesbury a different act is no less morally worthy for being motivated by a simple desire to promote another's welfare, independently of any occurrent abstract regard for what is right or good as such. Kant would deny this, on most interpretations of him. (But perhaps Kantian disinterestedness excludes too much, is too disinterested, too detached, to count as truly virtuous.)

What is Shaftesbury's argument for this second principle? I believe he tries, if clumsily, to derive it from a third, still broader principle, to the effect that all motivation, moral or otherwise, is motivation by affections (desires). Kantian reverence is supposed to operate by motivating action directly, unmediated by desire (inclination). But Shaftesbury evidently could have formed no idea at all of such purely rational, passionless motivation: "WHATSOEVER therefore is done or acted by any Animal *as such*, is done and can be done only through some Affection or Passion, as of Fear, Love or Hatred, moving him."[44] Even disinterested regard for what is good and (so) amiable, insofar as it has motivational content at all, has it in virtue of its remaining at bottom a "liking," an affection. So it is interested in the Kantian sense. This is crucial, as we saw, to the critique of Hobbes, which gains force from the admission that all actions are motivated (caused) by wants. It is also a premise in Book 2, which assumes that "THE Affections or Passions which must influence and govern the Animal" are either "THE natural ones," "OR the self-ones" "OR such as are neither of these" (and so unnatural).

For Shaftesbury, willing is affecting; he appears to embrace what nowadays is called (by philosophers) psychological determinism (or inclinationism). This is (roughly) the view that one can perform any action whatsoever only if one has motivational energy of the appropriate kind and strength – where "energy" is understood in terms of felt inclinations and behavioral dispositions which themselves have causes and are not under the direct or immediate control of one's will. Thus a complete extraction and defense

[44] *An Inquiry*, p. 88.

of Shaftesburyan sentimentalism would be constrained by, and could build upon, a third principle, *viz.*,

Three Psychological determinism is true. (There is no such thing as passionless motivation.)

The doctrine of natural affection, finally, is intended mainly to explain why and how, even though principle three is true, and *contra* Hobbes,

Four Psychological egoism (the selfish theory) is false (and psychological benevolism is true).

The belief in disinterested desire (psychological benevolism) is necessary, too, to Shaftesbury's ethical benevolism (principle one), presuming that a very simple and straightforward version of the principle "*ought* implies *can*" is true. Natural affections explain how we can act as we ought to – roughly, benevolently, and therefore (why?) meritoriously. Though it would not be strictly logically contradictory to attach merit to all and only disinterested acts of beneficence while denying that anyone ever acts that way – as Mandeville arguably does, in effect, in *The Fable of the Bees* – Shaftesbury clearly believes that we often do so act, precisely because fellow-concern "runs through our whole lives."

We have, I think, got somewhere, even if the process has been rather like pulling teeth. It is possible to extract some genuine and mutually coherent principles from Shaftesbury, so Bonar's claim that it is impossible to extract any coherent moral-theoretical view from his writings is simply false. But I am afraid that the progress we have made has only exacerbated the paradox of Shaftesbury's appeal to self-interested considerations in Book 2, from which we began. If the virtuous person acts rightly either from benevolent desires and emotions or from disinterested appreciation of what is morally good for its own sake, why must she be convinced that being virtuous will leave her feeling satisfied and happy? It isn't at all clear how one could embrace virtue for its own sake and ("as well as") for the reason that one believes it to be a means to personal pleasure and happiness; nor on the other side is it clear what it could mean to reinforce something that stands securely anyway. Shaftesburyan virtue still appears to be frail, impure (partly selfish) or both.

WHY SHOULD I BE MORAL?

Traditional discussions of this problem in Shaftesbury are generally weak (as we began to see already). In "Shaftesbury's Moral Sense" (1955) Voitle writes that Shaftesbury argued that "benevolent emotions are pleasurable" but "only in the hope that once virtuous behavior had been established for

vicarious considerations, the individual might turn to the true motive."[45] But in his later book, *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury, 1671–1713* (1984), Voitle reverses the story. Of the introduction to Book 2 he states that Shaftesbury deliberately chose to "divide his book there" in order to "emphasize the difference between being virtuous and enjoying the resulting happiness." One must "be virtuous first and the other will follow, and virtue sought solely on account of its byproducts could never be virtue."[46] Both readings seem *ad hoc* and unsatisfying in any case. James Martineau, in his *Types of Ethical Theory* (1901), says that if we went no further than book 1 "we should suppose the virtue which he has been describing to be binding on its own account, and to need no credentials for its imperative authority." But,

> to back up obligation by interest, and treat it as holding its commission from the balance of profit, is a downward step from his own level to the platform of hedonism; and I do not see how it can be defended . . .[47]
>
> In consequence of this apparent forgetfulness of his own prior positions, Shaftesbury's second part of his 'Enquiry' seems to belong to a different system from the first.[48]

To explain away inconsistency by forgetfulness seems even more *ad hoc*, though Martineau's eventual conclusion is not at all implausible, namely that it "was in the interest of [his] optimism, which constituted his religion, that he was concerned to show, how favoured by nature was the lot of true goodness."[49]

In a similar vein, Alexander Lyons (*Shaftesbury's Ethical Principle of Adaptation to Universal Harmony*, 1909) surmises that Shaftesbury was "so enamoured of the good . . . that he conceded to human weakness by providing for the securance of virtue through the added attraction of a hedonistic motive."[50] Lyons asserts that whereas in *An Inquiry* there is a "decided balance in favor of those who would claim Shaftesbury for hedonism," Shaftesbury is more "emphatic and impressive" when he "presents morality in its intuitional phase."

> [I]n a letter to Lord Somners he says of himself, "The greatest part of what I do in the world is not because I hope anything, but because I think I must be doing." . . . he finds an inherent compulsion in duty or virtue . . . He . . . leaves the reader with the impression that [virtue] is something that needs only be known in order to be done . . . It is represented as autonomous or self-enacting.

Had Shaftesbury made this his official position it would have "redounded to the dignity of his system and placed it squarely on the side of

[45] p. 23. [46] p. 130. [47] Vol. 2, p. 500. [48] *Ibid.*, p. 508. [49] *Ibid.*, p. 510. [50] p. 39.

intuitionalism." And yet Shaftesbury's intuitionalism "does not hold." "Theoretically it is valid, practically it does not work." So what should we conclude is Shaftesbury's view? Lyons answers that "in characterizing Shaftesbury's system, we should say that in intention it is intuitional, but becomes hedonistic in its realization."[51] To my ears this says nothing; nor do I know what it could mean to call virtue "self-enacting." Also, Shaftesbury's eloquence in Book 2 suggests that his idea of happiness is far too rich to be captured simply by calling it an 'added attraction' to virtue.

One possibly useful attempt to resolve the supposed paradox may be found in Ferm's *Encyclopedia of Morals* (1956). Ferm begins from the typical disclaimer that since Shaftesbury "was much more a moralist and a suggester than a philosopher in any systematic sense" it would be "churlish to criticize him for failing to accomplish something he didn't even attempt to accomplish" (put forth a genuine ethical system, I suppose). His doctrine that "the life of virtue is a life that is found good in the living of it" combined with "his concern to show that we are obliged to virtue because of the compatibility of personal and public affections" no doubt represent an "apparent inconsistency . . . which seems major enough to warrant attention." But this "need not be considered a contradiction in any logical sense." Rather it is "a revelation of the complication of the facts and language of morality." If we "remain within the system which Shaftesbury first proposes" (in Book 1, I suppose he means) the question "what reason is there for my being virtuous?" is "inappropriate," for "within Shaftesbury's explanation of what virtue is, the very description of an act's being virtuous carries with it, though implicitly, the ultimate reason for doing it." (What that reason is, Ferm does not say.) But then why raise the question at all?

In effect what Shaftesbury does in answering the question 'What reason is there for pursuing virtue?' is simply to shift to a more inclusive framework within which the whole process of acting virtuously can in fact be questioned. Within this more inclusive framework it is appropriate to ask why anyone should be affected practically by the explanation of virtue which Shaftesbury has formulated. Butler, it may be noticed, in his famous "cool hour" passage was dealing with the same kind of problem. What is implicit in these cases, and important to learn from these writers, is that the moral context, broad, vague, ramified as it may be, is an *included* context that still permits challenge and demand for justification. To this recognition Shaftesbury's writings, whether he explicitly intended so or not, represent significant contributions.[52]

[51] pp. 37–39. [52] *Encyclopedia of Morals*, p. 112f.

This seems right as far as it goes; by raising the question at all Shaftesbury is no doubt 'including' morality in some still broader context of justification. But what is that context? Who, argumentatively speaking, is supposed to be doing the challenging, and just what sort of justification is being demanded? None of the authors surveyed considers these questions. Nevertheless, they all roughly share, I think, a single view of what the author is doing in Book 2: by raising the question of how anyone may have reason to live virtuously he is asking for considerations of personal long-term utility, and in response is seeking to show, in the fashion of Plato and Aristotle, that acting morally always lies in one's own interest in the long run and is demanded (obligatory) for just this reason.

But if that is what Shaftesbury intends, his account faces severe difficulties. First, as Rüdiger Bittner argues in *What Reason Demands* (1989), although we can imagine particular situations in which the question 'Why should I be moral?' is intended in this way, no one who clear-headedly asks it in a general way can really be asking for considerations of long-term utility. For he must already know that many actions usually thought to be morally demanded must run counter to his self-interest, so that no considerations of personal long-term utility could in principle justify the demand to act morally generally.[53] This is precisely what gives the general question, 'Why should I be moral?' its point. Why should I even consider subjecting myself to moral demands, when that would surely interfere with what I would choose to do if only my own interests or happiness were to be of concern to me?

But perhaps Shaftesbury means to contest the very opposition in principle between morality and self-interest that the question, understood in this way, presupposes. He realizes that some morally demanded actions might run counter to long-term self-interest, and that common sense holds that they often do, but tries to show that they in fact never really do. In view of the many troubles, discomforts and losses that inevitably befall the agent who flouts moral considerations, even if she manages to escape external sanctions, the life of virtue strikes a positive balance overall. Only the moral are truly happy; those who desire not to be moral deceive themselves about their own real interests. So moral reasons recommend only actions that are in the interest of the agent anyway.

Admittedly this is one natural reading of Shaftesbury, and it accords with traditional interpretations of him. It is also close to the position of

[53] p. 8.

Philippa Foot, at least when she composed "Moral Beliefs" in 1958.[54] But this account underestimates the demands of living morally and overestimates the goodness of how the world goes. As Bittner says, "[a] just action that currently is burdensome may well prove salutary in the long run. But sometimes it does not, no matter how long one waits. Sometimes one is harmed by one's justice."[55] Similar objections actually led Foot to abandon her original view.[56]

Whether one interprets Shaftesbury as conforming to the model of Plato and Aristotle or instead to that of "Moral Beliefs" matters little if the goal is to defend as well as extract his ethical system. On either reading his actual presentation plays into the hands of critics who have charged him over nearly three centuries with special pleading: he obliges us to be moral only by asking so very little of us – "a serene inactive hedonistic mental virtuousness," as J. B. Broadbent once said[57] – while ignoring, on the other side, the torments inflicted on even the most mildly moral by a world which as often as not rewards those who will have nothing to do with virtue.[58] Nor has any of this really helped to diffuse the original difficulty of preserving the disinterestedness of Shaftesburyan moral motivation. What good does it really do to "shift to a more inclusive framework" in order to show how anyone can be "affected practically" (that is, actually motivated) by moral considerations, if that framework is again just self-interest or personal long-term utility?

My own solution begins from the hypothesis that the traditional view of Shaftesbury's intentions in composing Book 2 must somehow be seriously mistaken. All of the authors we have surveyed make two assumptions. The first is that in the interest of justifying the moral life, Shaftesbury is proposing to compensate virtue, by showing that being virtuous is a means to an end that everyone desires or must desire (happiness). The second is that he is attempting to offer a conclusive general justification for being moral, a justification of what he (supposedly) takes to be a general demand to act morally. He is trying, in other words, to controvert the moral skeptic, who claims to see no reason why she (or anyone else) should recognize an overriding general reason to be moral. And his answer is problematic because it

[54] Reprinted in *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*.

[55] *What Reason Demands*, p. 16.

[56] See *Virtues and Vices*, p. xiiif.

[57] "Shaftesbury's Horses of Instruction," in Hugh Sykes Davies and George Watson, (eds), *The English Mind: Studies in the English Moralists Presented to Basil Willey*, p. 81.

[58] "Standing amidst the relics of the desperate struggle of this life, amongst the carnage and shrieks of the wounded and the brutal triumph of the conquerors, Shaftesbury finds a solace in his elegant smelling bottle, skillfully compounded of the best philosophical essences." (Leslie Stephen, *Essays on Freethinking and Plainspeaking*, p. 14.)

claims that we are rationally obligated to be (disinterestedly) moral by our (interested) desire for the happiness to which virtue is a necessary means. I submit, in contrast, that Shaftesbury neither recommends virtue as a means to any end, nor seeks to justify any general demand to be moral.

The first assumption asks us to conceive Shaftesburyan virtue as a state separable, both in principle and in practice, from (Shaftesburyan) happiness. But that is to ignore the main lesson of Albee's insightful discussion of his relation to utilitarianism: Happiness and good ethical character are not "distinct parallel" principles but "so wrought together as to appear as different aspects of the same fact of moral health or harmony." Yes, Shaftesbury sometimes expresses himself in ways that support the traditional selfish reading: virtue causes happiness; it is advantageous; fellow-feeling is our "chief means of self-enjoyment" and so on. But if we read Book 2 at one sitting, as it were, what do we feel is its central message, moral, or point? Is it really that we are required to be moral by the sheer personal utility of being so? I should think that his point, rather, were that questions of expected overall benefit or loss will seem moot to anyone who has actually achieved, and so experienced, moral health or harmony of affection. Virtue is experienced as being its own reward. Shaftesbury simply defends this commonplace and largely true bit of folk wisdom against what he takes to be the philosophical extravagances of Hobbes and Locke.[59]

Consider an analogy between virtue and the pleasantness of virtuous states, on the one hand, and health and the pleasantness of being healthy on the other. Health is pleasant but is not a means to pleasure; we do not ordinarily do things that we believe will preserve our health from the motive of pleasure. Health is valued for its own sake or (as Shaftesbury might say)

[59] As Frederick Michael has aptly written (in an unpublished commentary on an early version of the present chapter): "Shaftesbury's position is not that the life of virtue leads to, or produces pleasure, that it is merely a means to the ultimate end, which is to live a happy life. Rather he contends that the exercise of the virtues, friendly feeling, being benevolent, showing gratitude, engaging in contemplative activities, together with the immediate consequences of these, enjoying the esteem and friendship of others, having a serene conscience, are themselves the highest pleasures of which we are capable. His point is that virtue, as he sees it, doesn't need compensation; the life of virtue is itself the happy life. Virtue is not a burden to be borne for the sake of some reward, here or hereafter. We have an interest in being virtuous, in exercising the natural affections, just because the life of virtue for us is the happy life. A person whose natural affections are as they should be acts virtuously not because it is a duty, nor because of anticipated consequences; for such a person, acting virtuously is itself a pleasure." Whether this is a correct explication of Shaftesbury's principal thesis is left to the reader; my point here is that Michael's paraphrase reinforces Albee's analysis while denying tradition's first assumption. At least one other contemporary writer seems to have expressed the matter accurately (if aridly), as it seems to me: J. B. Schneewind writes that for Shaftesbury, "virtue is sufficient as an end, as it consists in having one's inner life in proper order, and happiness itself is no more than such order." (*Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant*, volume 2, p. 484.)

"in it self." Yet it makes perfect sense, in answer to the question "Why should I be healthy?" – meaning "Why is health better than, preferable to, for whatever reason, illness?" – to note the pleasantness of health (whereas to the questions "Why avoid pain?" or "Why avoid boredom?" no answer can be given). But we should not think a person who offered this as a reason a hedonist for eating well, exercising and visiting his doctor. Similarly the Shaftesburyan moral agent should not be considered selfish (or "undignified," as Lyons insinuated) simply for enjoying being benevolent.

Next consider tradition's other assumption, according to which Shaftesbury is attempting to obligate even the skeptic by proving the rational force of a general demand to act morally. Many contemporary ethical theorists of course take it as a virtual article of faith that there is such a demand, so that their own central task can only be to show how and why this is so. Again, this conviction is typically expressed in terms of practical reasons for action: Moral reasons are necessary (unconditional), universal and overriding; moral considerations give reasons for acting to each and every person; moral action is 'rationally required.' But first of all there is absolutely no evidence in the text that Shaftesbury himself believed in any such claims on behalf of moral considerations, and secondly what is claimed for moral reasons by those who nowadays defend such a picture just (in Ira Gershwin's immortal words) "ain't necessarily so."

Shaftesbury says that he will show "what obligation" there is to be moral but what he actually claims is considerably weaker: that "for every particular in its System, to work to the good of that System or Public, and to its own good, is all one, and not to be divided. By which means natural Rectitude or Virtue must be the advantage, and Vice the injury and disadvantage of every Creature."[60] He only urges that, since having one's inner emotional life in proper order is definitive of both virtue and happiness, human "creatures" obviously have some reason to be inclined to virtue distinct from those reasons to be moral which are implicit in, or generated by, their standing benevolent desires (natural affections). This, and the fact that the concept of rational moral obligations is otherwise entirely absent from the *Inquiry* and from *Characteristics* as a whole, justify, I believe, the conclusion that Shaftesbury's solitary reference to obligation is totally innocuous.

Foot, after abandoning her claim in "Moral Beliefs" that moral demands are justified because everyone has reasons based on personal utility to heed them, remained convinced that something's being a good reason depends on particular agents' actual interests or desires. Whether one does or does not

[60] *An Inquiry*, p. 87.

have reason to act morally depends on what one wants. But, she observes, very much in the spirit of Shaftesbury, human desires are not limited to selfish or self-interested aims. Many people want to do right by others and to see them prosper, and so have every good reason to aim at such things.

> We readily accept private affection as giving reasons for actions without the least hint of self-interest; why should a more extended fellow-feeling not do the same? If a man has that basic sense of identification with others that makes him care whether or not they lead wretched lives, has he not the best possible reason for charitable action?[61]

Bittner, who, unlike Foot, explicitly criticizes every leading attempt to justify philosophically a general demand to be moral, arrives by a different route at much the same conclusion, namely that "what is a good reason for action depends on the agent's interests, and . . . moral laws do not have binding force."[62] Bittner takes the further step of identifying good reasons for action as reasons that fit sensibly into a person's conception of her whole future life, and so justify actions that belong to her own envisaged happiness. Only reasons of prudence, so understood, are good reasons. Of course prudential reasons have no more binding force than moral demands since "whoever does not care about happiness may be indifferent about whether a plan will fit in a sensible way into whatever else she wants."[63] But we do, Bittner thinks, want to be happy.

Should I, then, be moral, seeing that I don't have to? Bittner's answer, strictly speaking, is "If you want to be, yes; otherwise no."[64] For practical purposes, though, his own assessment (if I understand correctly) is that "much speaks in favor" of being so.[65] Most of us have good reason to cultivate the virtues and follow basic moral rules of action because to do so fits sensibly together with our various other projects, aims and experiences as human, social beings. But since good reasons are reasons of prudence, this must be understood as simply a piece of advice Bittner would be willing to extend to anyone in particular who wanted to be happy (and wished to listen) – not as proof that living morally is demanded of anyone (let alone everyone). And that is precisely how I think the *Inquiry*'s second book must be understood.

In a very suggestive passage Bittner proposes replacing the juridical metaphors prevalent in contemporary theory of reasons for action with one of "diet," in the old-fashioned sense of "advice for pursuing a healthy way of life."

[61] "Reasons for Action and Desires," in *Virtues and Vices*, p. 154f.
[62] *What Reason Demands*, p. 138. [63] *Ibid.*, p. 122. [64] *Ibid.*, p. 107. [65] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

The philosophical understanding of an object is embodied in the metaphors used in describing that object; and the metaphors, in turn, set limits on new ways of understanding . . . In the theory of practical reason, concerning good reason for actions, juridical metaphors prevail. What is good to do is regarded as something in accord with some law, or at least not contrary to it. What is supported by good reasons counts as obligatory. What is not in one's power cannot be imputed to one . . . The preceding considerations suggest replacing the juridical metaphor of practical reason with the dietetic metaphor. What is good to do is not a case of something lawful, but of something beneficial and wholesome. Practical reason is not a judge, but a physician. A judge declares what is demanded of certain parties, regardless of their desires and will. A physician advises actions that can be expected to lead to a better life . . . True, this, again, is no new idea: "It appears, then, that virtue is as it were the health and comeliness and well being of the soul, as wickedness is disease, deformity, and weakness," as Plato wrote.[66]

Keeping this contrast in mind we should be amazed, I think, at the very tone of Shaftesbury's youthful treatise, its near-perfect freedom from the language of laws, requirements, demands, obligations and duties. Shaftesbury, whom Herder would denominate "the Divine Plato of Europe," did not merely secularize the traditional European 'Divine Law' conception of morality – as Hobbes arguably did – but instead managed to throw off the law conception altogether in favor of one that returned to the Greeks' preoccupation with life, growth, health and hygiene. Given the considerable intellectual and moral-political resistance such freethinking was bound to encounter in his day – comparable, perhaps, to the prevailing bias toward Kantian and otherwise rationalistic ethical theories in our own – we ought to regard this as a significant achievement.

To sum up: Shaftesbury has no explicit theory of (good) reasons for action but we can extract some theoretical considerations from him that bear interestingly on the question, 'Why should I be moral?' In inviting the question he is requesting neither proof that acting morally is always in one's own best self-interest nor justification of a (supposed) general demand to be moral having 'force' irrespective of one's desires and interests. So he certainly cannot be seeking to establish a general demand to be moral by appealing to self-interest. Rather the question is simply, 'Why is being virtuous preferable, for whatever reason, to being immoral or indifferent?' His answer, in effect, conjoins Foot's and Bittner's. He agrees with both that moral considerations have no unmediated, categorical, automatic force. One doesn't have to be virtuous. But, with Foot, Shaftesbury holds that

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

most of us, at least, do care about the weal and woe of others and so have every good reason to adopt and live according to altruistic moral principles of action. As I argued earlier, a basic element of humanitarian fellow-concern is presupposed (by all the sentimentalists) as the ultimate justificational anchor in human practical reason. Since he isn't committed to the view that moral considerations necessarily give reasons for action to every person, he needn't show (any more than Foot needs to) that it is always in one's self-interest to be moral. What then is the relation of virtue and self-interest? His position seems to me to be indistinguishable from that of (the later) Foot, who says that, "One does not want to deny a general connection between virtue and happiness, but no one who acts justly or charitably only where it pays him to do so will qualify as a just or benevolent man." This almost seems a paraphrase of the first Shaftesburyan principle we extracted earlier. (In fact it seems fair to say that Shaftesbury stated – if awkwardly – Foot's view.) "A moral man must be ready to go against his interests in the particular case, and if he has reason to act morally the reason will lie rather in what he wants than in what is to his advantage."[67] (Compare Shaftesbury's assertion that our natural affections (wants) can neutralize and so supersede considerations of self-interest: It often happens that "that reconciling Affection towards a Species or fellowship of Creatures with whom we are bred, and live; that social Kindness, or whatever else . . . takes the place of the self-interesting Passions, and draws us as it were out of our selves, so as to make us disregardful of our own convenience and safety . . ."[68])

Where Foot doesn't wish to deny a general connection between virtue and happiness, Shaftesbury wishes to affirm one and say just what it is. The connection is supplied by a natural regard for one's own psychological well being or "moral health." He need not follow Bittner in identifying good reasons with reasons of one's own envisaged happiness; but neither does he wish to exclude prudential considerations from practical reflection on how best to live. From this perspective much speaks in favor of living virtuously. Robust concern for others, conjoined to moderate self-regard, simply is moral health, as Shaftesbury sees it. In short, virtue is healthy for one, even if it often entails self-sacrifice on specific occasions, and is advisable, though not mandatory, for just this reason.

Thus, the question from which we began, whether the second part of the *Inquiry* is really inconsistent with the first, can be replaced, for purposes of moral theory, by the question whether Foot's and Bittner's modern-day

[67] "Reasons for Action and Desires," p. 154. [68] *An Inquiry*, p. 86.

accounts of the 'Why be moral?' issue are mutually inconsistent. Considering how very broadly Foot and Bittner define "our interests or desires" and "prudence," respectively, I cannot see that they are.

SHAFTESBURY'S MORAL SENSE

We have seen that while Shaftesbury's ethical sentimentalism (his restriction of moral motives to disinterested affections) and his benevolism (his assignment of moral worth to those affections) cohere, the discussion of virtue and happiness in Book 2, though not inconsistent with these two doctrines, probably will not suffice by itself to round them out into a genuine ethical system. This would appear to leave only what is traditionally called his intuitionism in Book 1. Returning then to his idea that virtue (in principle) "need only be known in order to be done," we are led to ask two important questions: First, how are human beings able to know, and consequently be attracted to or affected by, such abstract objects of reflection as "what is morally good" and "what is worthy in it self"? Second, what is the precise nature of these putative objects of moral intuition, or knowledge, and passion? (Are they merely "notions" or do they have ontological standing independently of human judgment and affection? If the latter, how are they supposed to arouse human attention and desire?) Any answers must surely be sought in connection with Shaftesbury's famous doctrine of moral sense.

Fortunately here is one place where Shaftesbury's intentions, at least, are fairly well understood. He wished to show that ethical knowledge (of some kind) is antecedent to and independent of religious belief, and to defend traditional moral idealism against Hobbes's depiction of morality as mere invention. To be ethical, and to judge reliably of right and wrong, good and bad, had to be shown to be natural. Now, reason and sentiment are equally natural to humankind. But the rise of scientific thought in the seventeenth century had brought about a serious erosion of reason's claim to moral authority. For the medieval scholastics, and even the Renaissance humanists and the Cambridge Platonists, reason represented a faculty almost divine, a "candle of the Lord" whose agency put each of us directly into contact with moral absolutes, which were supposed in turn to be genuine realities, parts of the fabric of a supernaturally created universe. But as Aristotelian science began to give way to empirical study of nature, including human nature, reason came to be thought of less as an agent and more as simply a logical mechanism of the human mind, as ratiocination. And as Voitle explains,

In this situation, the moralist who believed moral absolutes were founded in the nature of things and were at least in part discernible by man without the mediation of revelation or other authority ecclesiastical or civil was confronted with a serious problem. Reason as a simple logical process might well perform wonders with the data available to it, but it was no better than the now wholly naturalistic data supplied to it. Hedonistic, utilitarian, and other naturalistic moral theories were well served by such a faculty; for the moral absolutist, such a concept of reason had no more authority than a calculating machine, and he had either to eschew empirical psychology completely or, as most did, search more deeply in the springs of human behavior for some morally authoritative impulse, usually emotional.[69]

Shaftesbury, of course, pioneered the latter route. But as Locke's protege he felt constrained, too, by Locke's persuasive attack on the possibility of innate knowledge, whether speculative (theoretical) or practical (moral). He responded that even if no ideas are innate, certain powerful, shared emotional dispositions favorable to ethically good behavior certainly are. The real issue, he would later state explicitly, was "not whether the very propositions about right and wrong were innate: but whether the passion or affection toward [the good of] society was such . . . whether it was natural and came of itself or taught by art."[70]

But (again) how can passion (or the study of it) generate ethical knowledge – true and justifiable propositions about right and wrong, or certain and reliable principles of ethical conduct? Evidently Shaftesbury reasoned that, even if neither reason – the new stripped down ratiocination of Hobbes and Locke – nor passion – considered as simple desire – can alone do so, perhaps the application of reason to the experience of our passions can. Reason, when conjoined in a particular way to our spontaneous or "conatural" disposition to desire the good of others as well as our own, can produce in us both a "science" (knowledge) of what is right and good as opposed to what is wrong and ill, and "another kind of affection" towards what we instinctually feel to be right and good. This process, "comprehending in one the soundness both of Judgment and Affection" is "the sense of right and wrong," our "natural moral sense." Here is the original moral sense passage in full:

IN a Creature capable of forming general Notions of things, not only the sensible things that offer themselves to the sense, are the objects of the Affection; but the very *actions* themselves, and the *affections* of Pity, Charity, Kindness, Justice, and so their contraries, being brought into the Mind by reflection, become Objects;

[69] "Shaftesbury's Moral Sense," p. 25.
[70] Letter to General Stanhope, 7 November 1709, in Benjamin Rand, (ed.), *Life, Letters and Philosophical Regimen*, p. 415.

as even that very thing it self of a good and virtuous Life, or the PART of a good and virtuous Creature, having a thorow good Affection, or intire good Affections: so that, by means of this reflected sense, there arises another kind of Affection, which is towards the very Affections themselves that were first felt and are now the subject of a new feeling, when either they cause a liking or aversion. And thus the several Motions, Inclinations, Passions, Dispositions, and consequent Carriage and Behavior of Creatures in the various parts of Life, being in several scenes represented to the Mind, which readily discerns the good and the ill towards the Species or Public; it proves afterwards a new work for the Affection, either virtuously and soundly to incline to, and affect what is just and right, and disaffect what is contrary; or, vitiously and corruptly to affect what is ill, and disregard or hate what is worthy or good.

AND in this case alone it is that we call any Creature virtuous, when it can have a notion of Good, and can make Goodness and Illness an object, or have the speculation or science of what is morally good and ill, of what is admirable or blameable, right or wrong: for tho we may call a Horse *a vitious* Horse; and so in the case of other Animals and things (as a vitious Medicin, a vitious Stomach) yet we never say of a good Horse, or even of an Idiot or Changeling, tho ever so well natur'd and good, that he is *virtuous*.

SO that if a Creature be generous, kind, constant, compassionate; yet if he cannot reflect on what he dos, nor approve of what he dos or sees others do, by observing what that thing is that is generous, just, or honest; and making that idea or conception of Goodness, or a good Action done through good Affection, to be an object of his Affection, he has not the name of being virtuous: for thus, and no otherwise, he is capable of having a *sense*, in *any kind*, of *what is right* or *wrong*; that is to say, of what is done through just, equal and good Affection, or what is not so.[71]

Traditional opinion holds that although Shaftesbury's intentions and hopes in postulating moral sense in this passage are clear, his logic is not. There is a pervasive confusion as to the precise mechanics of moral sense and considerable skepticism toward the author's claim to have derived the independent source of ethical knowledge he needs from the various psychological elements he assumes. In Ferm we find the judgment that he "speaks of a natural sense of right and wrong, a moral sense and conscience, without attempting to distinguish them or the relative components of reason and sentiment involved in each."[72] Aldridge complains that moral sense "represents Shaftesbury's most highly-publicized contribution to thought and the weakest part of his system . . . the concept . . . is nowhere clearly defined or explained. In some sections . . . it is not to be distinguished from reason, and in others it is almost equivalent to innate ideas."[73]

[71] *An Inquiry*, p. 27ff. [72] *Encyclopedia of Morals*, p. 111.
[73] "Shaftesbury and the Deist Manifesto," p. 302.

But I suspect that Shaftesbury was making sense and that it is our difficulties in entering into his terminology that make the temptation to dismiss his argument so very strong. Shaftesbury, writing in his early twenties, had to forge a wholly new kind of philosophical discourse in order to jettison medieval conceptions of reason while steering clear of innate ideas and describing something he sincerely believed to be really there at work in us. Even so, I am afraid that my own view is that, whereas the conative or motivational function of moral sense is fairly clear, and even credible, the logic of its major purported cognitive role in moral experience and choice remains – despite three centuries of commentary and criticism – utterly mysterious.

I would like to begin by proposing a "working lexicon of Shaftesburyan moral sense-element terms" (as used in the original Toland edition):

1. (Primary) AFFECTIONS are simple desires for, or aversions to, objects or persons. As desires they are conative or orectic. The agent subject to hunger is somewhat disposed, other things equal, to pursue and then to eat food. A person subject to the affection, or emotion, of love is disposed to promote the weal or to relieve the woe of her whom he loves. Primary affections involve a feeling element; the lover (for example) experiences a felt attraction to, and pleasure in, the welfare of the beloved. But they are also partly cognitive: minimally, a person subject to the emotion of (for example) pity must regard the object of pity as being in a state of woe. Thus, even primary affections are intentional, in being directed upon objects in virtue of some feature(s) that the object of affection is seen or believed to possess.

2. REASON stands for two kinds of intellectual activity. The first (2a) is simply the capacity to discern causal relations. Compassion generally confers benefit on others, hatred harm and so on.

Reason also includes (2b) the power of REFLECTION, which in turn comprises two sorts of mental activity. The first (2bi) is simply intellective abstraction or concept formation. By reflection in this sense one "forms general NOTIONS of things," including concepts of general types of actions (helping, harming) and affections (pity, hatred). Reflection in this sense is obviously necessary to cause and effect reasoning as in 2a, above.

Shaftesbury also uses REFLECTION in these passages in Locke's special sense (2bii) of "that notice which the mind takes of its own operations." By reflection in this Lockean sense one may go beyond merely feeling pity, to being conscious that one is feeling pity. This sort of reflection is simply self-awareness-in-affecting, in-intending and so on, a kind of direct acquaintance with or experience of one's own mental activities and states.

3. REFLECTED SENSE is Shaftesbury's name for mental representation, whether of types of acts and affections in general, as in 2bi, above, or of one's own particular occurrent desires and intentions, as in 2bii. By reflected sense such things become (mental) OBJECTS.

4. (Second-order) AFFECTIONS, or "another kind of Affection . . . toward the very Affections themselves," "new feelings" of "liking or aversion," are secondary desires for, or aversions to, the objects of reflected sense. By means of this capacity one may not only desire (say) food, but also desire that one not desire it; feel pity and "like," or approve of, the pity one experiences; be vicious (live a life driven by harmful affections) and want to be (or want not to be) vicious, and so forth.

5. Finally, MIND appears to stand for all of the above possibilities of primary (first-order) desire and aversion, reasoning (causally), reflecting (representing, both in forming general concepts and in being self-aware in affecting), and second-order desiring.

Once the various elements are spelled out in this way, the logical structure of moral sense, at least in so far as its conative or motivational aspect is concerned, becomes, I suggest, fairly clear. By hypothesis, human agents have, in addition to various desires for things they conceive to be means to their own safety, pleasure and convenience, other desires and emotions such as pity, compassion and love, which aim at the welfare of others (as they themselves conceive it). They not only have these desires; they are conscious of having them and possess general concepts of them. By causal reasoning they know that kindness and kind action, concern for others and benevolent activity, and so on, are conducive to others' welfare. But it is precisely this welfare that is the object of their original, prereflective non-egoistic desires. Since, in general, to want X is (other things equal) to want, approve of, or have a "pro-attitude" toward whatever one believes to be a necessary means to X, people will naturally want and approve of kindness and kind action, fellow-concern and benevolent activity and so forth. This does not seem at all mysterious. It follows a straightforward common sense belief/desire model of rational motivation. If one wants others' good as well as one's own and believes that certain classes of motives and actions – "even that very thing it self of a good and virtuous life" – are causally necessary to the attainment of that good, then one will naturally be attracted to, approve of, or like, these things. Nor is it particularly mysterious that these second-order desires or attitudes should themselves have motivational content, in the sense that they can help explain why one would go beyond merely acting on whatever benevolent first-order wants one happens to

have, to having a settled disposition or determination to practice virtue in an ongoing fashion. Having developed such a "new liking" one would be disposed, for example, to approve of or commend altruism when one saw it, to accept and recommend altruistic ethical principles, to encourage the development of fellow-feeling in one's children and so on. Of course none of this may happen, as our author judiciously admits; having reflected on the conduciveness of certain classes of acts and affections to society's good or ill one might instead (secondarily) "affect what is ill, and hate what is good." But Shaftesbury doubts very much whether this will occur, at least in very many people. Believing, as Voitle puts it, that "there is a spark of social affection in all men," his only argument, if it can be called that, is to claim that such a result is "in a manner impossible to suppose." As we will see later in detail, if my interpretation of the moral sense passage is correct then much of what Hutcheson, Hume and Smith have to say about ethical justification amounts to little more than elaboration and defense of Shaftesbury's original twenty-something exercise in ethical psychology.

So – Shaftesbury has betrayed neither common sense nor his own apparent desire, at least early in life, to remain a good empiricist. Has he satisfactorily acccounted for ethical knowledge, knowledge "of moral Good, of Justice and Right"? Hardly! Obviously there is a great gulf between knowing that such-and-such motives and actions are conducive to social welfare (and even liking them for it), and knowing that to desire and pursue social welfare is right. At best Shaftesbury has explained how one might come to approve of such a course, or to call it right. He might respond that to be right means to be approved by all or nearly all reflective agents who have benevolent desires as well as self-interested ones. To know what is right would then simply be a matter of knowing what are (in Hume's words) "the common sentiments of mankind." (C. D. Broad articulates something very like this position and attributes it to all who defend "moral sense theories in ethics" – as we will see in chapter 6.) Alternatively he might take the step of simply identifying moral value with the natural quality of productivity of social welfare. Moral knowledge would then be just a species of causal knowledge.

But neither reading will do. The first entirely ignores the objectivist force of Shaftesbury's language in describing moral sense; the second has it that he was after all a utilitarian. Both are inconsistent with his insistence on "the eternal measures and true nature of virtue." Both reduce virtue to merely instrumental goodness, a means to the satisfaction of benevolent desire, whereas Shaftesbury (as we saw) requires "love of virtue for its own

sake" (whatever exactly that means) as a condition of fully ethical character. Finally, one point of calling the faculty of moral cognition a "sense" is to maintain that we typically apprehend moral value immediately and non-inferentially. But we can know the common sentiments of mankind only empirically, and utilitarian reasoning is thoroughly calculative.

It is a commonplace of Shaftesbury interpretation that he maintained that moral value has a real objective and independent existence of its own. Walford claims that the doctrine of moral sense is meant "not so much to throw light on the question of how we acquire moral knowledge as to emphasize that our apprehension of moral values does not constitute an explanation of their existence." "With respect to both natural and moral qualities Shaftesbury would have maintained that *esse* is not *percipi* . . . both natural and moral qualities exist independently of our perceiving them."[74] But exist how, where? Walford surmises that Shaftesbury subscribed to a naïvely realist view of moral properties (or rather that he "would have" had he known what that was) and furthermore was "foreshadowing the non-naturalistic ethics of Kant and Moore: the natural quality of being productive of the greatest happiness is not to be identified with the moral quality of being good."[75] Possibly, but since Shaftesbury had no view of properties, moral or otherwise, and no argument comparable to Moore's "open-question" argument for the irreducibility of "good" to other concepts, we seem to have hit yet another dead end: the very parts of Shaftesbury's exposition of moral sense that are clearest, most credible and most ingenious, relative to his purpose of controverting Hobbesian egoism and evading Locke's ban on innate ideas, appear to be utterly irrelevant to the question of how ethical knowledge – of the robust sort Shaftesbury insists that we have – is possible.

As would-be systematizers of Shaftesbury we simply must give things one more try. He clearly wants to say that moral value is objective and autonomous (of political or religious authority) and knowable as such, yet still something that we intuit (somehow) through our emotions. But how on his terms can this be explained? The normative principle we extracted earlier needs epistemological credentials that we expect can only come from the doctrine of moral sense. To accede to Sidgwick's judgment that moral sense can, because it is vague, be only "the capstone, rather than the key" to his system is to be forced back yet again to the conclusion that Shaftesbury's system is just the proof that virtue and happiness coincide – and we certainly do not want that.

[74] Editor's introduction to *An Inquiry*, p. xvf. [75] *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

Perhaps a clue may be found in the thought of his immediate successors, who tried to separate what he had conjoined. In "The British Moralists and the Fallacy of Psychologism" (1950), James Ward Smith purports to document a significant trend in the thought of a particular group of early British Moralists, namely Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler, and Hume. Briefly, each author makes it a bit easier than his predecessor did to argue, as Hume finally does, that moral values simply consist of feelings of approval or disapproval, or in other words that judgments of value are rendered true, if at all, by people's very states of approval or disapproval towards the things being evaluated. Shaftesbury is said to be farthest away, both chronologically and philosophically, from this "psychologism." This sounds promising; let's consider the account of valuation Ward Smith ascribes jointly to Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

According to these two, valuations or valuational attitudes are immediate and nonrational feeling-states of approval or disapproval. But this means neither that judgments of value cannot be true or false, nor that they cannot by some independent means be rationally corroborated. It is just to say that they are basically emotive, affective states not brought about by rational reflection. But ethical values themselves are not merely affective states. Feelings have a cognitive function, and the feeling of approval "sees" distinctions of value that "pre-exist in nature."

> All good things are approved, but they are approved because they are good, they are not good because they are approved.[76]

> In valuing we approve; but our approval can be well or ill grounded; what we approve is value possessed independently . . . [77]

> Any attribution of goodness to an action or object is rendered true, if at all, by some characteristic that object possesses prior to our approval.[78]

Hutcheson believed that the distinguishing characteristic of 'really good' actions and motives is their benevolence, which in turn tends to promote "the greatest happiness, for the greatest numbers." Yet if we do not ordinarily reflect on public utility in coming to approve of good actions, affections and so on, why do we spontaneously approve of all and only the ones that do appear, on reflection, to conduce to public happiness? God so created us that we approve of the objectively good. (At least, so the standard story goes.)

Now what, for Shaftesbury, is the objective characteristic (apart from their being approved of by those whose moral sense is in proper order) that all and only genuinely valuable things possess, and in virtue of which ethical valuations are rendered correct or incorrect, true or false?

[76] p. 162. [77] *Ibid.*, p. 161. [78] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

This characteristic is that of harmony.[79]

There is an objective standard of good and bad, right and wrong: the standard of harmony.[80]

[a thing is really good if it] in fact contributes to social harmony.[81]

Oh no! Now we have: the harmony of self-interested and benevolent passions that is virtue; the moral health or harmony of individuals whose affections so harmonize; the social harmony that results when individuals' affections and actions conduce to (harmonize with) society's good (moral health or harmony); the natural correspondence (harmony) between the affective deliverances of uncorrupted moral sense and those acts, affections and characters which are truly valuable (because they contribute to social harmony) or disvaluable and so objectively worthy of approval or contempt. By the way, what explains this last harmony? Since his ethics are ostensibly nontheological and since he gives no other sort of explanation, besides "Nature," Ward Smith appears correct in saying that Shaftesbury's connection between valuation and the truly valuable is "arbitrary."[82] (Leslie Stephen: "The further question remains, what is the criterion of morality? . . . What are the actions which the moral sense approves? To such questions Shaftesbury replies – so far as he makes any explicit reply – by dwelling upon his favourite doctrine of the universal harmony . . ."[83] "Harmony is Shaftesbury's catchword."[84] "And yet one would like to have a rule rather more easy of application . . . With thy harmony, one might say, thou beginnest to be a bore to us."[85])

THE LIMITS OF SHAFTESBURYAN SENTIMENTALISM

This might seem an odd, even perverse note on which to end, given my obvious desire to vindicate young Lord Shaftesbury against the charges of incoherence and turbidity. Actually the mere fact that we can form some idea of what his philosophy of ethics would need, in place of some of these harmonies, to come out coherent points in the same direction as my other results: Shaftesbury has some sensible theoretical principles, which cohere; his sentimentalism and benevolism are suggestive individually and complement each other rather well; his treatment of reasons to be moral builds on these two doctrines and seems synoptic and judicious besides. The concept of the natural affections runs through the whole, considerably unifying his justification of altruistic ethical principles, his explanation of

[79] *Ibid.* [80] *Ibid.*, p. 160. [81] *Ibid.*, p. 174. [82] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[83] *History of English Thought*, vol. 2, p. 30. [84] *Ibid.*, p. 26. [85] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

altruistic behavior, and his advocacy of the moral life in preference to a life of rottenness or indifference. Only his account of ethical cognition is incoherent, because incomplete, as it stands. Could contemporary philosophy somehow supply him with a plausible epistemology, consonant with his emphasis on the basically emotive sources of moral judgment yet sufficient to justify his belief in the possibility of objectivity in moral matters? This question reaches far beyond the limits of the present chapter (though I will certainly give it a try when we come to Hutcheson). Does Shaftesbury offer a genuine ethical system or not? That question has served its guiding purpose and would grow tiresome if pressed further. Doubtless he fails to explain how one might be certain that she had "soundly affected" what is truly right and good. Butler, though, never addresses the possibility that a person's conscience, for all its natural supremacy, might tell him to do "the vilest things,"[86] and Kant can hardly be truly said to have explained clearly the relation of our noumenal to our phenomenal selves. In ethics, coherence probably must always remain a matter of degree.

I stated earlier that I had a purely philosophical reason for preferring the Toland *Inquiry* to the polished version, and here it is: there is in fact one very significant intellectual difference between the two *Inquiries*; Aldridge seems to me quite wrong to say that "the outline and fundamental principles of the 1699 version are essentially the same as those of 1711, as far as thought is concerned."[87] If the non-reader of Shaftesbury knows but one thing about him it is that his ethical theory is 'aesthetic.' In the Toland he says, in passing, that "the fairest matter of Speculation, the goodliest view and contemplation on Earth, [is] that of a beautiful, proportionable, and becoming action . . ."[88] This aesthetic analogy then drops away; but by the time he had prepared *Characteristics* for publication it can fairly be said that it had become his new "fundamental thought." In revising the Toland, Shaftesbury inserted into the moral sense passage three new paragraphs whose effect is virtually to identify the moral sense with the sense of beauty which by then had

[86] G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," reprinted in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, vol. III, p. 27.

[87] "Two Versions of Shaftesbury's Inquiry Concerning Virtue," p. 209. Here I must also respectfully disagree with Rivers, who writes that, "The earliest work [in *Characteristics*] was the *Inquiry*: it was written in the early 1690s and published by Toland in 1699. This edition differs substantially in wording and organisation but not at all in fundamental argument from the revised version in *Characteristics*." (*Reason, Grace, and Sentiment II*, p. 100.) However, she later on notes (very perceptively, on p. 147) that although "it can be safely stated that the reality of this equation [between beauty and virtue] becomes one of the most important features of Shaftesbury's philosophy," "the equation of the good with the beautiful is missing ["interestingly"] from the 1699 version of the *Inquiry*."

[88] p. 110.

come to be uppermost in his thoughts. Now the mind is said to feel "the soft and harsh, the agreeable and disagreeable, in the affections," and to find "a foul and fair, a harmonious and a dissonant, as really and truly here, as in any musical numbers, or in the outward forms or representations of sensible things." He also carefully revised every description of "objects of reflection" so as to make them "beautiful, proportioned, and becoming" as well as virtuous and good.[89] "This analogy, or, as it might almost be styled, identification, pervades Shaftesbury's entire system, and his theory of ethics, consequently, easily admits of being translated into a theory of aesthetics" (Fowler).[90] "Shaftesbury's ethical theory thus turns out to be very nearly indistinguishable from an aesthetic theory" (Stolnitz).[91] Why did Shaftesbury do this? Voitle thinks it was to make moral sense "more credible and authoritative" by portraying it as "involving the recognition of values no less real and objective than aesthetic standards were commonly thought to be so in his day."[92] This seems at best a partial and questionable answer; but in any case we must still wonder whether Shaftesbury's aestheticization of morals was after all a good idea.

I think it was a very bad move on his part, for three reasons. First, if Shaftesbury's moral theory is really an aesthetic theory, what is his aesthetic theory? I have absolutely no idea and wonder whether anyone else does either. (I would of course welcome any serious detailed attempt to extract one from his writings.[93]) Second, his celebrated identification of the Good and the Beautiful has almost always been found unconvincing. It surely enhanced his renown in the eighteenth century; probably many a salon

[89] See Voitle, "Shaftesbury's Moral Sense," p. 30. [90] *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, p. 126.

[91] "Aesthetic Disinterestedness," p. 133. [92] "Shaftesbury's Moral Sense," p. 37f.

[93] I believe the following is about all there is to be said interestingly on the matter (Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment II*, p. 150): "What [all the various passages in which Shaftesbury carries out his equation] stress in an unsystematic way is that moral beauty is both a product of and perceived by the human mind, that it has a greater value and reality than any other kinds of beauty that humans enjoy, material, artistic, or speculative, and that it is a reflection of the beauty of the universal mind."

Both John Andrew Bernstein ("Shaftesbury's Identification of the Good With the Beautiful") and Dabney Townsend ("Shaftesbury's Aesthetic Theory") offer very nice summaries of what Shaftesbury had to say in aesthetics (on beauty, taste, disinterestedness, enthusiasm and so on) but neither seems to me to come anywhere close to extracting principles from him. To be sure, generalizations are formulated; but each and every one seems completely 'dreary.' Townsend says that for Shaftesbury "the enemy of taste is fancy" (p. 210) so that "one must drive a wedge between interest and pleasure" (p. 212); that "the aesthetic objective is to discover the true form instead of the . . . outward appearance" (p. 207); Bernstein avers that "because the beautiful is at once the true, the good, and the *agreeable*, he who sees the good as beautiful is a man who loves goodness, and he who sees the true as beautiful loves reason and truth" (p. 322). He then concludes his twenty-page article by noting that "some scholars have wondered whether Shaftesbury's identification of the good with the beautiful means much of anything" and finally decides that it "means too much" since it "combines, for purposes of inspiration, ideas which, for purposes of analysis, had better be kept distinct." I say: give the whole thing up.

intellectual was impressed to learn that "[w]hat is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable; what is harmonious and proportionable is true; and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good." Most thoughtful philosophers, though, were quick to denounce this equation as pretentious nonsense. I speculate that the aestheticization of his own earlier thought has been a leading cause of his poor reputation as a moralist in our own times, because it has always distracted modern readers from appreciating what serious moral philosophy there is in the *Inquiry*. This appears, undiluted as it were, in the Toland.

Last and most importantly, the whole thing is incoherent. Beauty is a kind of good, not the Good. Suppose that every good or right act were also beautiful, what then? Voitle speaks as though beauty might conceivably turn out to be the missing link from earlier, the objective characteristic of truly good things by virtue of which a moral criterion or "test," as Stephen said, could be rendered correct or incorrect, true or false. But such a criterion would have to be of the form, "Whatever has characteristic Ø is *pro tanto* good (or right or virtuous)." If 'Ø' could only be replaced by beauty, and if judgments of beauty could be seen to be demonstrably true or false, then we might indeed have finally found the Shaftesburyan standard by which to test, calibrate and (so) educate the moral sense. But the whole idea is a non-starter, and not because of any alleged subjectivity of aesthetic judgments.

One indispensable function of the moral criteria specified by genuine ethical systems such as utilitarianism is to offer a means by which to judge the moral worth of acts, motives, policies or states of affairs with which we are not (or not yet) acquainted in experience, on the basis of descriptions of those things. But aesthetic judgment is always judgment of individuals, and this presupposes direct acquaintance with what is judged. Shaftesbury's faith later in life in the 'oneness' of beauty and goodness had the effect, sadly, of blinding him to this and other genuine differences between the Beautiful and the Good, and to the many interesting, frequently painful disharmonies between the sense of beauty and the sense of right and wrong. As Mary Mothersill has written, in the quite different context of her own aesthetic theory:

> Nothing exists that may not prove beautiful; nothing that exists (or might exist) is such that, on the basis of mere description, we can infer that it is beautiful or not beautiful. There are, in contrast, situations which on the basis of description we recognize as bad and actions or action types which on the basis of description we recognize as wrong. Perception involves a capacity for minimal description but is compatible with a failure to grasp the practical import of the context in which it occurs. In the course of a war that is bloody, horrible and unjust an event may

occur, a cavalry charge, say, which is beautiful. A man intent on murder may move with unmistakable grace, a corrupt politician in the very act of accepting a bribe may be a fine figure, expressive of saintly benevolence. So for bombed cities or the victims of famine and disease. Natural evil or human wrongdoing is neither justified nor mitigated by the emergence of a component that is beautiful. On the other hand, the demands of practical reason, including the duty to alleviate suffering, do not extinguish beauty. What they prohibit is time spent in appreciation. Forest fires . . . can be quite spectacular, but since they are also extremely hazardous, it is imprudent to dwell on their beauty. In works of art, which do not destroy cities, the conflict is genuine. So . . . the *Pisan Cantos* have a genuine poetic merit but are pervaded by a hatred of the Jews that makes them offensive, and one can understand the dispute generated by the proposal to award the Bollingen Prize to Ezra Pound . . .[94]

I leave the question of Shaftesbury's importance to moral philosophy here, at least for the time being, confident that I have delivered most of what I promised and hopeful that my efforts to defend Shaftesbury as a genuine moralist will encourage and enhance future scholarship in this area.

[94] *Beauty Restored*, p. 411f.

CHAPTER 4

Hutcheson's moral sense

A SAD TALE?

No account of the school of sentiment could fail to consider in detail the ethical writings of Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746). Hutcheson was the sentimentalist *par excellence*, if anyone was. But how successful was he at articulating and defending sentimentalism? Though I have never seen this question addressed head-on, I believe there is a widely accepted response implicit in the literature of history of ethics. It is, to state things bluntly, "not very well." Why that should be the prevailing judgment is best expressed as a brief narrative of how things generally worked themselves out for the sentimental school, beginning in the 1720s.

Hutcheson was Shaftesbury's chief heir and systematizer among the British Moralists. He defended Shaftesbury's portrait of human nature and its ethical capacities against attack both from the earliest modern rationalists (Clarke, Wollaston, and Balguy) and the traditional natural law theorists and "voluntarist" religious moralists – all the while fending off Mandeville, the new popular spokesman for Hobbesian egoism and moral skepticism. Hutcheson is principally memorialized for making it almost his life's work, at least until fairly late in his literary career, to champion Shaftesbury's suggestion that we are moral beings by virtue of our having a moral sense or sense of right and wrong.

In doing so, Hutcheson introduced several awkward complications into what eventually became known as "moral sense theory," which contributed almost from the very start to the historical decline of sentimentalism. Moral approbation, he argued, could not be accounted for by means of self-love, nor could it be explained by any operation of reason. There must therefore be a distinct mental faculty, a moral sense, a special form of perception comparable to the sense of beauty, which leads us naturally to approve of benevolence, that is, conduct motivated by "kind affections which incline us to make others happy."

And this was a bad move, even to the minds of Hutcheson's successors among the sentimentalists, Hume and Smith, who challenged the need for such a "peculiar" sense. The perceptual analogy suggested the doubtful view that moral truths are apprehended directly and immediately by a specific mental faculty – which the early Shaftesbury, at least, does not seem to have maintained. If that were so, then why should people's moral judgments so often diverge, far more than their commonplace perceptual judgments, the judgments of their ordinary five senses, normally do? And the apparent vagueness of any criteria that could possibly be supplied by an alleged moral sense exposed the sentimental moralists to Bentham's and Mill's later charges of subjectivism or "ipse-dixitism" – arguing that such-and-such is morally right or wrong "because I say so."

Moreover even though the language of moral laws, requirements, duties and demands is foreign to the work of Hutcheson (as it was to Shaftesbury's), later moralists, beginning with Bishop Butler, were drawn to a juridical model of moral justification in which such concepts are more at home at least partly by the difficulty of seeing how appealing to the existence of a faculty like Hutcheson's could justify important moral principles conceived as requirements on action, as opposed to mere preferences we are disposed to have because we have a moral sense. Such later adherence to a legalistic model of moral justification is mainly what ultimately did ethical sentimentalism in, historically speaking.

Butler is not generally regarded as a sentimentalist but certainly his approach to ethics, and much of his language, shows him to have affinities with the sentimental school. His debt to Shaftesbury is generally acknowledged (though probably not nearly enough). Butler is a brilliant psychologist of ethics, especially on the subject of the relation of benevolence and self-interest. But despite his sentimental-type talk of "kind affections" and "perceptions of the heart," his central and most famous doctrine, that of the "natural supremacy of conscience," reinstates legalistic and rationalistic language and suppositions into the British Moralist tradition and paves the way ultimately for Kant's hyper-rationalistic denial of genuine intrinsic moral value to sentiments of any kind. Butler famously criticizes Shaftesbury's account of our moral faculty for "not taking into consideration [the] authority, which is implied in the idea of reflex approbation [of actions]" and consequently of being unable to account for how "the greatest degree of scepticism [about virtue's conduciveness to self-interest] will still leave men under the strictest moral obligations." To whatever extent Hutcheson's moral sense lacks that authority Butler is after in his doctrine of conscience,

Butler's critique of Shaftesbury, if valid, would seem to be equally damaging to Hutcheson's account of the moral faculty.

Further, in accordance with his central doctrine, Butler distinguishes between benevolence as a natural affection and beneficence as a virtuous principle – something that can be commanded. Conscience requires benevolence; the moral sense only approves of it. And that is what – according to almost all later moralists – is fundamentally wrong with sentimentalism. The necessity we attach to our most basic moral principles, even such simple ones as that we ought to act in ways that show regard for others' well-being, cannot be accounted for by anything like a mere sense we (contingently) have that 'feels' they ought to be followed.

In recent years another chapter has been added to this narrative, having to do with Hutcheson's own development as a philosophical moralist. Briefly, it appears that from early in his career Hutcheson conceived the moral sense as the source not only of moral approval but also of moral motivation. But if moral sense is primarily a sensation (a feeling of approval), how can it motivate moral (benevolent) action? (Benevolence, as a desire, seems to be an active principle, while sensation is passive and involuntary, in Hutcheson.) Lately it has become clear that Hutcheson steadily moved away from relying on various indirect mechanisms by which this could be explained (all of which seem to involve subtly hedonistic or self-interested considerations) towards a quite different conception of moral sense, on which moral sense has a kind of direct authority to regulate all our desires. Moral sense ceases to be a feeling at all. It becomes a faculty of approval or disapproval (especially) of one's own motives, which operates by confirming a newly posited natural desire for moral excellence that is neither self-interested nor benevolent. "This moral sense from its very nature appears to be designed for regulating and controlling all our powers. This dignity and commanding nature we are immediately conscious of, as we are conscious of the power itself."[1]

The conclusion of the story is this: not only did Hutcheson's sentimental successors as well as his rational critics find his original account and defense of the moral sense to be inadequate, he himself came to feel the same way. The moral sense ceased to be recognizably sentimentalistic at all, all in the span of twenty years, in the hands of its own discoverer. It became (if I may coin one term) "Butlerized."[2]

[1] *A System of Moral Philosophy in Three Books* (1755).

[2] ". . . Hume took seriously Hutcheson's criticisms of Book III of the *Treatise*, even though he was unconvinced by them, and in turn . . . offered detailed criticisms of Hutcheson's Latin compend, regretting the influence of Butler on Hutcheson's account of the moral sense . . ." Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, p. 243.

Thus the tale of sentimentalism's early days is, in a way, a rather sad one. It began to do itself in almost from the start. Hutcheson tried initially to refine and defend Shaftesburyan sentimentalism. Various rational moralists attacked it. Some, like Mandeville, poked fun at it. Butler, ostensibly allied with the sentimentalists against Hobbes, effectively torpedoed it as a credible account of moral motivation and obligation – so effectively that its principal advocate in the 1720s, Hutcheson, eventually decided, in effect, to give the whole thing up. I have never heard the entire story told quite this way, but will bet that most readers who are acquainted with the literature on the subject will find my telling of it fairly convincing.

Now what, if anything, is wrong with this picture?

Well, the first thing that worries me is that Hutcheson was obviously among the most astute, argumentative and compelling moralists of the whole period. But the story makes him out to be a kind of incompetent bumbler, especially during the most productive and exciting period of his literary career (in Dublin). By making the defense of Shaftesbury's moral sense the keystone of his ethical system he bet, as it were, on a losing horse. If the idea of a moral sense is really hopeless for one reason or another, then all of Hutcheson's subtle observations concerning our experience of its (supposed) reality, his careful clarifications regarding its definition, and his ingenious arguments to show that the systems of his rational rivals all presuppose a moral sense, can be passed over in silence or given a respectful nod in a few paragraphs in histories of ethics – as they almost always are.[3]

What literature there is on moral sense since Hutcheson's day is hardly fully satisfactory (as we will see). And some recent work on Hutcheson reveals almost a sense of gladness that he moved away from his earlier sentimental conception of moral sense towards one that is barely distinguishable from Butler's idea of conscience. (In fact, Hutcheson renames his moral sense "conscience" in the posthumously published *A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy*.[4])

If moral sense theory in anything like its original form really is hopeless, this could even be hailed as a mark of courage. Good philosophers, like good scientists, are supposed to abandon their own theories gracefully when they come to see that they were wrong. But this worries me too. No one seems willing even to consider whether this might have been a bad move on Hutcheson's part. Even to speculate that it might have been would put one (me in particular) in the awkward position of suggesting that Hutcheson's

[3] For example by J. B. Schneewind in his lengthy and detailed history of the early-modern period in ethics, *The Invention of Autonomy*. (See especially p. 341.)

[4] *A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy, in three books; containing the Elements of Ethicks and the Law of Nature* (1747).

growing affinity to Butler represented not philosophical courage but instead a kind of retreat, a loss of nerve.

Another disconcerting thing about the story pertains to the relation of sentimentalism to moral sense theory. It says that what did the sentimental school in was its allegiance (in the early Hutcheson) to Shaftesbury's idea that morality is based on our natural moral sense. True, sentimentalism and moral sense have always gone hand-in-hand, not only in Shaftesbury and Hutcheson but also in the popular and literary imagination, the literature of history of ethics and even (in a way) in Hume and Smith – despite their own best efforts to keep the idea of a peculiar sense out of their own philosophies or at least at comfortable arm's length. Some dictionaries and encyclopedias of philosophy, for example, simply identify moral sense theory with sentimentalism, referring readers to "moral sense" when they look up "sentimentalism" or vice versa. But why must moral sense theory be sentimentalistic, and why exactly must sentimentalism be committed to there being a moral sense? I do not see that anyone has ever answered this question, or even tried.

One could try to separate them, by arguing for ethical sentimentalism (as defined earlier) without breathing a word about a moral sense. But that would seem historically illegitimate, even supposing the two were conceptually disseverable – which I doubt they are. I am trying to show how sentimentalism as traditionally understood can be not only appreciated but also defended, and that would be taking the horse but leaving the carriage (or vice versa, as nobody has yet explained which is which).

But what bothers me most of all is this: the story seems to assume, if mainly unspokenly, the view that I am contesting throughout this book, according to which sentimentalism was flawed from the start since, according to the dominant objection against it, it could never have given us what we want from a theory of morality, namely an incontrovertible rational proof that a general demand to act morally exists no matter what anyone's (or even everyone's) sentiments happen to be. But that assumption reminds me of the saw that history is written by the winners. In philosophy we should always be free to go back and ask whether a given thinker or school of thought really ought to have won or lost in the battle for acceptance and influence. That is what I would like to do, and I can think of only two ways of doing it.

One would be to deconstruct the received story through critical historical exegesis and analysis. How good were Hutcheson's own arguments for moral sense as the basis of moral justification and motivation? Have we understood him correctly all along? How successful were Hutcheson's arguments against

Hobbes, Mandeville, Clarke, Wollaston *et al.*? Can we extract adequate rejoinders to Price's, Mill's and Bentham's later objections to moral sense theory from Hutcheson's ideas? Can a plausible account of how moral sense can motivate be teased out of his original description of it? And so on. One could argue by some such means that Hutchesonian sentimentalism, though it did lose out historically speaking, did not really deserve to die because it was not fully understood and appreciated by the concerned parties to the debate over it. That might be a worthy pursuit, but I choose not to follow it. I remain haunted by Broad's statement (cited in chapter 1) that his primary interest in studying past moralists was to "find out what is true and what is false about ethics" and that the arguments of his subjects are only really interesting in so far as "they suggest possible answers to this question."

Speaking historically and philosophically, ethical sentimentalism stands or falls with the early Hutcheson. That is my working hypothesis. And Hutcheson's moral philosophy stands or falls with moral sense theory. So to defend sentimentalism in the spirit Broad suggests, I will just have to try as best I can to defend moral sense theory. That is, I will argue that there is indeed a moral sense and that Hutcheson was the philosopher who in fact discovered it. Obviously it will not be easy to explain what it means to say that there is in each of us a moral sense, let alone to defend the claim that there really is one. I will need help – but I believe I know just where to look for it.

HUTCHESON'S MORAL SENSE

We must begin by looking carefully at what Hutcheson says about moral sense. My first suggestion is that to understand him correctly we need to read his two best-known works (which he produced while in Dublin) in tandem, shuttling between them as though they were parts of a single long argument: *Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* (1728) and the slightly earlier *An Inquiry Concerning the Original of our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good* (1725).[5] The *Inquiry* contains most of the specific arguments for

[5] Hutcheson published *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (two essays bound together in a single volume) in 1725 (fourth edition, 1738); I use *Inquiry* to stand for Treatise II of that volume, "An Inquiry Concerning the Original of Our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good." In 1728 Hutcheson published another double volume, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*. Hutcheson refers to *An Essay* as "Treatise III" and to the *Illustrations* as "Treatise IV." The selections from both "Treatises" in D. D. Raphael's *British Moralists 1650–1800*, volume I (Hobbes-Gay) are based on the third edition of 1742. Raphael's selections from *An Inquiry* are based on the revised fourth edition of 1738.

the reality of disinterested benevolence and the existence of the "superior sense" by which benevolent actions "have to men an immediate goodness . . . without any view of natural advantage from them."[6] But the *Illustrations* reveal the author's sense that he is flexing some sentimental muscle not only against the egoists (Hobbes, La Rochefoucauld and, particularly, Mandeville), but against the early-modern anti-Hobbesian rationalists, most notably William Wollaston – who had by then already begun to criticize Hutcheson in print.[7] As a result, they are better for purposes of understanding the contrast Hutcheson meant to draw between his account of the foundations of morality and rival, non-sentimental, non-moral sense theories; they pose Hutcheson's problematic as a moralist more coherently. He seems to me to have realized this; their introduction has the feel of a second try at doing so. (And there is already less mere cheerleading for Shaftesbury.)

Hutcheson begins in the *Illustrations* from the plainest of distinctions: actions that cause happiness or misery to their agents are privately useful or hurtful (harmful), respectively; actions that cause happiness or misery to others are publicly useful or harmful. Obviously some actions may be privately useful and publicly harmful, both privately and publicly hurtful, and so on. Now we may ask first, "What quality in any action determines our election of it?" ("What motives or desires excite us" to do it, make us want to do it?) And secondly, "What quality determines our approbation of one action, rather than the contrary action?"[8] Hutcheson takes both "election" and "approbation" to denote simple unanalyzable (Lockean) ideas, which are "known by consciousness" and "cannot be further explained."[9] He does offer a kind of mini-phenomenology of approbation. When we approve our own action we take "a pleasure in the contemplation of it, and in reflection upon the affections which inclined us to it." In approving another's action there is always "some little pleasure attending it in the observer" conjoined to some "love toward the agent, in whom the quality approved is deemed to reside."[10] Perhaps "love" is a bit strong; elsewhere Hutcheson speaks of "esteem" or "complacence" for the agent. The qualities of actions that

[6] *Raphael I*, p. 263. After considering several alternatives I have chosen to use Raphael's two-volume *British Moralists 1650–1800* as the source, in this chapter, of my citations from Hutcheson (and Price), referred to in the footnotes, as here, as *Raphael I* (or *Raphael II*). It not only seems the most readily available (virtually every library holds it) but also allows readers to flip back and forth conveniently between the two original works under discussion here. Also, Raphael's modernized orthography and spelling make for ease of reading, and convey the sense of modernity I wish to claim on behalf of Hutcheson's main early ideas.

[7] As had Gilbert Burnet, son of the Bishop of Salisbury (also Gilbert Burnet), in the *London Journal*. See Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment II*, pp. 162f.

[8] *Raphael I*, p. 305. [9] *Ibid.*, p. 261. [10] *Ibid.*, p. 305.

dispose us to be moved to perform them, and the qualities of actions that dispose us to approve of them, are in principle quite distinct. Often we do not approve of the things we ourselves do, and approve of things we might have done but did not. Regarding the actions of others, it is possible (even) to wish for reasons of our own self-interest that another would do something we disapprove of, or not do something we would approve of if he did.

Hutcheson's "search into the qualities exciting either election or approbation" proceeds by "consider[ing] the several notions advanced [by moralists] of moral good and evil in both these respects."[11] But in the *Inquiry* he actually considers only two such notions: that of Hobbes (and egoists before and since) and his own, which he takes to be implicit in ordinary unphilosophical thought and speech and, moreover, true. (He will take up the rationalists' conception of moral motivation and justification in due course, in the *Illustrations*.) Once these notions are evaluated and the first is rejected, Hutcheson will inquire, as he somewhat question-beggingly puts it in the later work, "what senses, instincts, or affections, must be necessarily supposed to account for our approbation or election."[12] (This is question-begging for the obvious reason that his intellectualist rivals will want to insist that no senses, instincts or affections are necessary, since reason and understanding are sufficient to account for both moral approval and motivation.)

The egoist's position is the familiar one that all actions are motivated by "self-love, or desire of private happiness," to which "all the desires of the human mind . . . are reducible," and that (correspondingly) "what determines any agent to approve his own action, is its tendency to his private happiness," while "the approbation of the action of another, is from an opinion of its tendency to the happiness of the approver." On that view since there obviously are publicly useful actions, it must be that "each agent may discover it to be the surest way to promote his private happiness, to do publicly useful actions, and to abstain from those which are publicly hurtful." (Before dismissing that picture of things as simple-minded or merely quaint we should remind ourselves that it is still defended today by some psychologists and philosophers, as well as countless barflies and cafe-sitters.)

But there is another "entirely opposite" opinion:

> . . . that we have not only *self-love*, but *benevolent affections* also toward others, in various degrees, making us desire their happiness as an *ultimate end*, without any view to private happiness: that we have a *moral sense* or determination of our mind,

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 306. [12] *Ibid.*

to *approve* every *kind affection* either in ourselves or others, and all publicly useful actions which we imagine flow from such affection, without our having a view to our *private happiness*, in our approbation of these actions.

> These two opinions seem both intelligible, each consistent with itself. The former seems not to represent human nature as it is; the other seems to do it.[13]

And this other opinion just is, in a very real sense, Hutcheson's moral theory. Everything else arguably amounts to elaborations, defenses, accouterments, illustrations of these two principles. We have benevolent affections, and we are psychologically very strongly disposed to approve of benevolent affections – because we have a moral sense.

Now, it would be nice if in the *Inquiry* Hutcheson had simply argued that, one, psychological benevolism is true; two, that we approve of all and only benevolent, disinterested actions and affections; and, three, that this can only be accounted for if there is in each of us a moral sense (and if he had told us exactly and in detail what he means by moral sense). These conclusions are all more or less presupposed in the body of the *Illustrations*. He does all three of these things eventually there in the earlier work, but only in the course of a very non-linear tour of a whole host of topics that do not interlock in any readily visible way – as if he were not working from an outline, which he probably was not: the affective roots of the traditional virtues, the "lower good-will and esteem" of non-human animals, the psychology of praise, the relation of desire to uneasiness and so on. He seems particularly exercised by the sort of "reward-event" theory of motivation mentioned before in connection with Hobbes's psychology, specifically the idea that benevolence can exist only because "we desire the happiness of others, as conceiving it necessary to procure some pleasant sensations which we expect to feel upon seeing others happy."[14] So disconcerted, in fact, that he appears to construct an imaginary opponent for himself, who sounds like a peculiar sort of Hobbes-ized Shaftesbury and does not seem to espouse the doctrines of any actual contemporary of his. The twists and turns make it easy not to notice that the argument for benevolism and the argument for the moral sense are interwoven, dialectically reciprocally reinforcing in a very interesting yin-and-yang sort of way that is very hard to represent formally.

What are Hutcheson's basic arguments for believing in benevolence and in the moral sense that approves of it? As to the first, if truth be told, it is hard to see any real arguments that could be represented as neat syllogisms

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 307. [14] *Ibid.*, p. 263.

as opposed to examples, illustrations.[15] Most of the illustrations are similar in character to this one: surely the "honest farmer will tell you" that he really does care about his children and not about any pleasure he might happen to get from seeing to it that their needs are met. Egoist philosophers will tell him that "in loving them we but love ourselves in them," seeing that "children are parts of ourselves."

> How are they parts of ourselves? 'But their bodies were formed from parts of ours.' So is a fly or a maggot . . . very dear insects surely! there must be something else then which makes children parts of ourselves; and what is this but that affection, which NATURE determines us to have toward them? This love makes them parts of ourselves, and therefore does not flow from their being so before.[16]

It is often said that Bishop Butler first refuted Hobbesian egoism but I think you could make the case that Hutcheson did it first and in more telling psychological detail. Hutcheson's critique is simply more light-hearted and homespun, and lacking in that self-seriousness philosophers tend so much to like. It is aimed at the salon Hobbists as much as against Hobbes himself. He simply illustrates, by exposing the shallowness of various philosophers' arguments to bring it into question, that psychological benevolism is the default position, so to speak, enshrined and confirmed in common sense and doing just fine at capturing what is (quite often) really going on between ordinary people. The reality of benevolence speaks for itself once we tire of listening to the bamboozlers.

Yet it would not be right to say that the reality of benevolence is for Hutcheson just a raw datum of introspection or our quotidian social encounters. Our experience of benevolence is everywhere intertwined – in Hutcheson's arguments, as well as, on his view, in real life – with our experience of approval. "We . . . find that we necessarily love and approve of the possessors" of "honesty, faith, generosity and kindness."[17] It is difficult to see which way the argument (if any) runs; Hutcheson often appears to argue from moral sense to the existence of its object, rather than from the existence of benevolence to the necessity of there being a moral sense to explain why, once we contemplate it, we like it. We find that we spontaneously and involuntarily approve and "love" agents if and only if we believe that "they study the interest, and desire the happiness of other beings with whom they converse."[18] In approving them we naturally take it

[15] As Schneewind points out, "Hutcheson relies on Lockean theory and Lockean tactics" and is quite sure that "we all already know the data he needs to prove his points." "The Lockeanism is unspoken and unargued for"; Hutcheson "simply proceeds on its basis to pile up examples of the relevant kind of experiences and draw the appropriate conclusions." (*The Invention of Autonomy*, p. 336.)

[16] *Raphael I*, p. 279. [17] *Ibid.*, p. 261. [18] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

for granted that what we approve in them is genuinely there; benevolence is presupposed by our spontaneous approval of it.

Hutcheson is admirably clear about what benevolence *is*: "*Benevolence* is the desire of the happiness of another."[19] It is distinct from self-interest, though "these two principles may jointly excite a man to the same action." Either benevolence or self-interest alone can motivate us to elect publicly useful actions. "[S]ometimes they conspire, sometimes are indifferent to each other, and sometimes are in some degree opposite."[20] But "we never call that man *benevolent*, who is in fact useful to others, but at the same time only intends his own interest, without any ultimate desire of the good of others." "If there be any real good-will or kindness at all, it must be disinterested; for the most useful action imaginable loses all appearance of benevolence, as soon as we discern that it only flowed from self-love, or interest."[21] Exactly what Shaftesbury was trying to say! But Hutcheson is far clearer than Shaftesbury, in fact very clear, about when and how, human nature being what it is, benevolence arises.

Never directly voluntarily, for "neither benevolence nor any other affection or desire can be directly raised by volition."[22] (Hutcheson is thus plainly – in the language we used in connection with Shaftesbury – a psychological determinist or "inclinationist.") Yet, very generously, Hutcheson thinks we can voluntarily call up benevolence in ourselves indirectly, just about anytime, through a simple act of attention. "To raise benevolence, no more is required than calmly to consider any sensitive nature not pernicious to others."[23] In the terminology used earlier in connection with Shaftesbury, to attend to another in light of his weal and woe just causes us, or at least disposes us – barring interference from jealousy, anger, belief in the other's guilt and so on – to feel some degree of benevolence towards him. Again, benevolence is certainly not a simple conation, like hunger or lust, for it involves cognition of and attention to other persons and their circumstances, as well as to what 'moves' us and moves and affects others.

There is another way that benevolence arises, and that is through our moral sense. We tend to feel benevolence towards those of whose affections our moral sense approves. This has been called "responsive benevolence" by some commentators[24] and is one of the indirect means Hutcheson employs to explain moral motivation that I mentioned in the introduction to this

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 272. [20] *Ibid.*, p. 273. [21] *Ibid.*, p. 272. [22] *Ibid.*, p. 274. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[24] See for example John D. Bishop, "Moral Motivation and the Development of Francis Hutcheson's Philosophy."

chapter. "Love" seems (in the early Hutcheson) to cover both our approval (esteem) of benevolence in others and our responsive benevolence towards them. The moral sense causes us not only to approve but also to desire the happiness of the agent of whom we approve, and since desires can motivate, the moral sense can motivate actions – if indirectly.[25] Benevolism is interlocked with the argument for moral sense in another way as well, through the concept of disinterestedness. The approval caused by our having moral sense is, like benevolence, disinterested – which benevolence is by definition. But unlike benevolence, approval is not *per se* a desire for any natural good for ourselves or anyone else. Rather it is a "distinct perception" of "excellence" in benevolence. Yet although it is not supposed to be a desire, Hutcheson never quite manages to characterize this perception of excellence, this approval, wholly non-conatively. Just like Shaftesbury's "sense of right and wrong," it always involves joy, liking. Nor does he ever quite clearly explain how perception of moral excellence in benevolence is linked to approval of it – nor, for that matter, precisely how benevolence comes to be seen to be excellent in the first place. We simply see it. Hutcheson's complacency (in the modern sense) about the mechanics of moral sense gives the overall argument a ring of circularity. Even so, the perceptions of moral sense – its approvals – are clearly disinterested, at least in the obvious sense that, to the extent that a benevolent action is (by definition) motivated by a desire to convey natural goods to someone or other, the "joy within us" as we contemplate it is pleasure over the fact that the action was aimed at bringing good to others, not to ourselves. If it indeed does benefit others (and it may not; it may even harm them) it is their benefit that pleases us (even if, as Hutcheson admits, the sheer "admiration" we have for it is also pleasurable for us – the reward event problem again).

Eventually, something more like a general argument from experience to the existence of moral sense emerges. It occupies less than two paragraphs. It appeals to one positive (pleasurable) sort of experience, one negative, involves one distinction, between natural and moral good, and hangs on a single stipulative definition, that of a sense. Yet in a way even this argument of Hutcheson's for the existence of a moral sense simply is his distinction between natural and moral goods and his phenomenology of our differing perceptions of them.

[25] In the fourth edition of the *Inquiry* (1748) he adds this clarification: "Complacence denotes approbation of any person by our moral sense; and is rather a perception than an affection; though the affection of good-will is ordinarily subsequent to it. Benevolence is the desire of the happiness of another." (*Raphael I*, p. 272.)

Suppose we reap the same advantage from two men, one of whom serves us from an ultimate desire of our happiness, or good-will toward us; the other from views of self-interest, or by constraint: both are in this case equally beneficial or advantageous to us, and yet we shall have quite different sentiments of them. We must then certainly have other perceptions of moral actions, than those of [our own] advantage: and that power of receiving these perceptions may be called a MORAL SENSE, since the definition agrees to it, viz. a determination of the mind, to receive any idea from the presence of an object which occurs to us, independent of our will.

This perhaps will be equally evident from our ideas of evil, done to us designedly by a rational agent. Our senses of natural good and evil [operating alone] would make us receive, with equal serenity and composure, an assault, a buffet, an affront from a neighbour, a cheat from a partner, or trustee, as we would an equal damage from the fall of a beam, a tile, or a tempest; and we should have the same affections and sentiments on both occasions. Villainy, treachery, cruelty, would be as meekly resented as a blast, or mildew, or an overflowing stream. But I fancy every one is very differently affected on these occasions, though there may be equal natural evil in both.[26]

Thus (he feels) is proven his earlier assertion that,

We are all then conscious of the difference between that *approbation* or perception of *moral excellence*, which *benevolence* excites toward the person in whom we observe it, and that opinion of *natural goodness*, which only raises *desire* of possession toward the good object. Now "what should make this difference, if all approbation, or sense of good be from prospect of advantage? Do not inanimate objects promote our advantage as well as benevolent persons, who do us offices of kindness and friendship? should we not then have the same endearing approbation of both? or only the same cold opinion of advantage in both?" The reason why it is not so, must be this, 'that we have a distinct perception of *beauty* or *excellence* in the kind affections of rational agents; whence we are determined to admire and love such characters and persons.'[27]

What is the real argument here? Simple – if we did not have moral sense, we would not approve of anything unless it was to our own advantage; but we do approve of benevolence, find it to be excellent, whether it is to our own advantage or not; therefore we have moral sense.

In the very next paragraph Hutcheson gives a slightly different argument that is perhaps subtler but sounds, frankly, very peculiar. We have at least two distinct notions of good, or two distinct types of experience of goodness: private good, things that bring pleasure and happiness to us (or other persons) and are desired by us (or others) as such; and moral good, things

[26] *Raphael I*, p. 265. [27] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

that are good because they evoke a distinctive emotion, approval, in agents who contemplate them (either in themselves or in others). These moral good things, as we also find by reflecting on the experience we have of our own tendencies to approve of different things, are simply benevolent desires and intentions. Now (the strange part), private good is wholly explicable by, or equivalent to, pleasures people get by means of their ordinary five senses. But moral good, and the approval that it evokes, are not. Therefore there must be a distinct sense through which we get these ideas, perceptions, pleasing emotions. A sixth sense. It – this sense – is their "original." Indeed it is the source, the original, of all our moral ideas. A moral sense must exist, if we are to explain the experiences and emotions we are disposed to have, and the judgments we are disposed to make, when we reflect on human conduct, since the ordinary senses cannot do the job of giving us the ideas that are necessarily involved in the having of these experiences and emotions and the making of these judgments. "To conclude this subject, we may . . . see the true original of moral ideas, viz. *this moral sense of excellence in every appearance, or evidence of benevolence*."[28]

So the moral sense furnishes us with ideas that the ordinary senses cannot give us, and strongly disposes us to feel certain ways about agents' motives, ways we would not feel if we lacked moral sense. How can this be? What is this moral sense? Reason surely gives us certain ideas not derived (in the sense of copied) from the ideas given to us by experience through our ordinary five senses, ideas such as equality or identity, perhaps. But there is another type of idea, derived neither from reason, nor from the five senses – the idea that certain emotions (affections) and the actions they cause are excellent, worthy, praiseworthy, whether or not they benefit us, or indeed anyone at all. This idea just comes to us, from an entirely different source, a source that lies within us. It is not simply a concept – an innate idea as usually understood – though Hutcheson often lumps it together with "our ideas." It is an involuntary, irresistible feeling, a responsive disposition, a determination of our minds. To do what? To approve of kind affections. This disposition is evidently innate, original. It must be. It comes neither from our reason nor from our ordinary senses. This is what Hutcheson says. But it sounds, frankly, a bit spooky when spelled out this way.

I have set aside one sentence in my synopsis, surely the strangest of all, which seems always to be overlooked or disregarded by Hutcheson's commentators. Think back for a moment to Shaftesbury's moral sense. Shaftesbury took it for granted that we social creatures have innate

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 292.

("conatural") desires for the good of others. We also have the power of reason or reflection. And since we already desire others' good, we will quite naturally approve, on reflection, of all affections (motives) that lead us, or anyone at all for that matter, to promote it. Simple! Why wouldn't we? That, in a nutshell, is why moral sense was merely the "capstone, and not the key," as Sidgwick long ago said, to his ethical system.

But it *is* the key to Hutcheson's system, and look at exactly what he says. In trying to illustrate further "the original" of moral ideas he asks us to "observe the moral ideas unmixed with those of natural good or evil," by "reflect[ing] upon the actions which affect other persons only."

> For let it be here observed, that *those senses by which we perceive pleasure in natural objects, could never raise in us any desire of public good, but only of what was good to ourselves in particular*. Nor could they ever make us approve an action merely because of its promoting the happiness of others. And yet, as soon as any action is represented to us as flowing from love, humanity, gratitude, compassion, a study of the good of others, and an ultimate desire of their happiness, though it were in the most distant part of the world, or in some past age, we feel joy within us, admire the lovely action, and praise its author.[29]

So our ordinary five senses could never raise any desire in us for anyone's natural good but our own; only the moral sense can do that. But since all of our acts are motivated by desires, this means that unless we had another sense, a moral sense, we would all be Hobbesian egoists in practice. If no moral sense, then no benevolence. Shaftesburyan moral sense-approval is superadded to benevolence. For Hutcheson it appears that our disposition to approve of benevolence, and our capacity to feel benevolence itself, to be benevolent, are naturally, innately inseparable – both a function of the same "generous instinct." They are equally operations of the moral sense; they come into the world, through us, together. Amidst the yin-and-yang of Hutcheson's argument they appear as two aspects of the same innate moral sense. "Strange" may not be quite the right word to describe this; it will be very hard to find a way to make genuine sense of the idea, let alone defend it. (Something innate, which explains both our capacity to care what happens to others and our disposition to approve of people for feeling likewise . . .)[30]

[29] *Ibid*., p. 265, emphasis added.

[30] One problem, interpretively, is that much of what Hutcheson says about moral sense makes his attribution of both functions to it seem incoherent. David Fate Norton says simply that, "certain facts of human experience can only be explained if we suppose humanity equipped with a moral sense – with a sense that motivates us to useful and kindly actions, and that also approves actions of this sort." ("Hume, Human Nature, and the Foundations of Morality," p. 155.) But as Bishop notes, this is inconsistent with much of what Hutcheson wants to say about the moral sense in the *Inquiry* and *Illustrations*. Usually "the moral sense is a sense; as such it is the origin of sensations of some sort, but sensations are not desires . . ." ("Moral Motivation and the Development of Hutcheson's Philosophy," p. 281.)

Certainly the data, the relevant types of experience Hutcheson adduces for moral sense, are wholly uncontroversial. People simply have quite different sentiments about cheating partners than towards moldy shower curtains. We all resent cruel treatment, but only recoil from falling two-by-fours. We surely have "other perceptions of moral actions, than those of advantage." Do we all therefore have a moral sense? Is there moral sense?

FOUR NAÏVE QUESTIONS CONCERNING MORAL SENSE

Here we should pause and ask a few naïve questions (as one of my own undergraduate professors used to call them) about moral sense as Hutcheson has described and illustrated it so far, before even beginning to wonder how its existence might be proved.

First, why only benevolence? That is, how do we get from "having other perceptions of moral actions" than those of personal advantage to "that approbation or perception of moral excellence, which benevolence excites towards the person in whom we observe it"? Can we not approve disinterestedly of other (disinterested) sorts of moral actions and motives? Is every act of honesty or promise keeping, for example, which we certainly do tend to approve, really motivated by some "kind affection in a rational agent"? That is, don't people sometimes act honestly or beneficently (advantageously to others) simply because they think it the right thing to do on that occasion, without feeling any special affection towards anyone? (And don't others involuntarily approve of them for that?) But do we each then therefore have two moral senses, one for (what I would call) sentimental benevolence, and another for duty or conscientiousness? We might call this 'the problem of multiplying senses.' And in Treatise III, "An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions," Hutcheson notoriously does just that. Re-deploying his definition of a sense he proposes that "we shall find many other senses besides those commonly explained," though it "is not easy to assign accurate divisions."[31] The moral sense has an aesthetic sense, a sense of "regular, harmonious, uniform objects" to keep it company. Then there is the "public sense," a "determination to be pleased with the happiness of others, and to be uneasy at their misery" – which sounds rather like a hybrid of Shaftesburyan natural affection and reflected sense. (It is not the same as moral sense proper whereby "we perceive virtue or vice, in ourselves or others," since "many are strongly affected with the fortunes of others, who seldom reflect upon virtue or vice . . . as an object.") Next, there is a sense of honor and shame; maybe another sense of "decency,

[31] *Raphael I*, p. 301.

dignity, suitableness to human nature." But then why not (we might ask) a sense of elegance in scientific or mathematical truth, distinct from the bare understanding of such truth? (Though perhaps this is really a function of the sense of beauty.) Or a sense of grammaticality or linguistic appropriateness? This multiplication will (I predict) prove to be a problem for anyone who employs "sense-talk" in ethics – though it is by no means the only problem with such talk.[32]

A second obvious question: if a moral sense really exists, why and in what sense must it be "implanted," innate? Of course, Hutcheson believed that just as God "has determined us to receive, by our external senses, pleasant or disagreeable ideas of objects, according as they are useful or hurtful to our bodies, and to receive from uniform objects the pleasures of beauty and harmony," "in the same manner he has given us a MORAL SENSE, to direct our actions . . . "[33] Yet we "are not to imagine, that this moral sense, more than the other senses, supposes any innate ideas, knowledge, or practical propositions."

> We mean by it only a determination of our minds to receive the simple ideas of approbation or condemnation, from actions observed, antecedent to any opinions of advantage or loss to redound to ourselves from them; even as we are pleased with a regular form, or an harmonious composition, without having any knowledge of mathematics, or seeing any advantage in that form or composition, different from the immediate pleasure.

Later, in discussing the "*motives* of human actions, or their immediate causes," Hutcheson concludes that the "true spring of virtuous actions" is "some determination of our nature to study the good of others; or some *instinct*, antecedent to all reason from interest, which influences us to the love of others, even as the moral sense . . . determines us to approve the actions which flow from this love in ourselves or others."[34] Probably there is an innate component of some kind in our capacity to be affected by the weal and woe of others, even an innate disposition towards attachment or affiliation with certain of them, but in what sense could this determination to approve possibly be innate? (This will prove a big problem for my own proposed reconstitution of moral sense theory in the final two chapters.) A bit earlier in the *Inquiry* Hutcheson had argued that, given "that we have some other amiable idea of action than that of advantageous to ourselves, we may conclude,"

[32] One contemporary critic of Hutcheson, John Gay, wondered why "the *Pecuniary* Sense, a Sense of *Power* and *Party*, etc. were not mention'd."

[33] *Raphael I*, p. 269. [34] *Ibid.*, p. 278.

'that this perception of moral good is not derived from custom, education, example, or study.' These give us no new ideas: they might make us see private advantage . . . but they never could have made us apprehend actions as amiable or odious, without any consideration of our own advantage.[35]

But on any ordinary notion of approving something this is a non sequitur. Is it obviously true that parents cannot get their children to approve of things other than what promotes their own self-interest without relying on some innate perception or instinct in them to do so? And rationalists like Clarke and Wollaston will surely want to insist that one can approve of (say) a helpful action wholly by intellect, simply as a result of understanding that the act was suitable to, or fitting in, the nature of the situation at hand.

A third, related naïve question: why all the emotion (sentiment)? Why must moral judgment, and moral motivation, be so much a matter of liking, joy, love, so "touchy-feely"? Why cannot moral approval be conceived as a simple matter of understanding something about the types of actions commonly denominated right or wrong, good or evil, and then approving of the right and good ones precisely on the basis of that understanding – in the sense of finding them justified, whatever anyone in particular may happen to feel about them? And why, similarly, must moral motivation necessarily involve feelings, love, compassion, desire, at all? Why in short must "senses, instincts, or affections" be involved in the first place to account for (either or both) our "approbation or election" of moral actions? (And this reintroduces our earlier pair of questions: why must moral sense be sentimental, and why must sentimentalism conceive of moral judgment as the function of a moral sense?)

That moral judgment need not involve sensations or emotions at all was precisely the view of Hutcheson's keenest rationalist critic (whom he did not live to answer directly), Richard Price (1723–91), whose *A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals* appeared in 1758. "A late very distinguished writer, Dr. Hutcheson, deduces our moral ideas from a *moral sense*; meaning by this *sense*, a power within us, different from reason, which renders certain actions pleasing and others displeasing to us."[36]

[A]ccording to Dr. Hutcheson, we are so made, that certain affections and actions of moral agents shall be the necessary occasions of agreeable or disagreeable sensations in us, and procure our love or dislike of them. He has indeed well shown, that we have a faculty determining us *immediately* to approve or disapprove actions, abstracted from all views of private advantage; and that the highest pleasures of life depend upon this faculty. Had he proceeded no farther, and intended nothing

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 268f. [36] *Raphael II*, p. 131.

more by the *moral sense*, than our *moral faculty* in general, little room would have been left for any objections: but then he would have meant by it nothing *new*, and he could not have been considered as the *discoverer* of it.[37]

[T]he question now returns – What is the power within us that perceives the distinctions of *right* and *wrong*? My answer is. The UNDERSTANDING.[38]

Finally: *what* exactly do we *perceive* by moral sense? Moral sense is said to be "the *perception of* moral good and evil," "a distinct perception of the *excellence in* the kind affections," a "sense of goodness and moral beauty *in* actions." But how can this be, if moral sense is "*only* a determination of our minds to receive the simple ideas of approbation or condemnation, from actions observed"? This question is so difficult, as it turns out, that it has spawned whole schools of thought on the subject – as well as the following chapter of this book.

Now the real difficulty here is deciding where to go for answers to these questions. They are, it seems to me, quite sensible questions that naturally come to mind while reading Hutcheson. What inevitably happens here, though, is that people's interest starts to wane. And it seems doubtful that good answers will be found simply by poring over Hutcheson's own writings more closely. There are many reasons for this. One is simply that Hutcheson was too busy to attend to such questions carefully during the early (and most original) part of his literary career. He had some big fish to fry in the polemical sphere: refuting Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, providing an alternative to theological voluntarism, updating the Christian concept of *agape* and so on, not to mention composing and delivering Sunday lectures, running his dissenting academy and caring for his wife and children. All of which helps make the 1720s 'roaring', historically speaking, but confusing from the perspective of philosophical analysis. Another is simply that Hutcheson, for all his cleverness, was, like every other moralist of the period, an amateur. His moral sense theory, for all its roots in the facts of everyday life, makes some strong claims about perception, knowledge, emotion, motivation, justification, innateness and so on, subjects that remain deeply puzzling to philosophers and psychologists living today. The real problem with Hutcheson's theory is not so much that his claims are incredible; rather it is that we are not sure exactly what is being claimed and how it is being supported. It is principally the vagueness of his concept of moral sense that has led professional philosophers to consign moral sense theory to the hall of relics and suppose (along with Hume and Smith) that ethics had best be done without talk of an innate moral sense that

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 132. [38] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

does various things and thereby explains and justifies ethical judgment and choice.

What we need is some sort of reconstructive analysis of Hutcheson's whole moral sense theory, which can make it (at least) plausible to us, today. It needs restating in the form of a sensible general argument for the existence of a moral sense, suitably defined, whose validity can be assessed, and whose premises and conclusion are intelligible, whether or not one finally decides to accept them as true. Again I would like to make a case in my own way for the proposition that there is (Hutchesonian) moral sense.

I can think of two, and only two, promising courses. The first is to use resources from post-Hutchesonian philosophy to reconstruct the basic idea of moral sense in terms of the logical analysis of moral judgments and the epistemology of moral beliefs (chapter 6). The second is to reach well outside of traditional ethics to make a case for something very like Hutchesonian moral sense using the resources of the natural sciences – particularly evolutionary biology – and the social sciences that study moral behavior in social groups – particularly the family (chapter 7).

But first there is the important – I would say crucial – matter of Hutchesonian sense perception. How can we say what moral sense is and whether it exists, until we know what it is that we sense by it?

CHAPTER 5

What do we perceive by moral sense?

THREE RECEIVED VIEWS

What exactly do we perceive by moral sense? The question sounds simple, but is most likely the hardest to answer – and the most interesting – when it comes to interpreting Hutcheson's moral sense theory. In one place he calls moral sense "the perception of moral good and evil," but what exactly does that mean? I have concluded – hesitantly – that scholars of Hutcheson have never successfully answered that question. The purpose of this chapter is to show how and why this is so, and then (and this is all I promise) to try to do better – by building on what is helpful in the literature while criticizing what seems to me unhelpful or mistaken.

To begin to see why this is such a difficult problem (saving for a moment the question of its importance), consider again the passage in which Hutcheson says that, "by a superior sense, which I call a moral one, we perceive pleasure in the contemplation of [certain] actions in others." Or the other in which he states that, "we mean" by "this moral sense" "only a determination of our minds to receive amiable or disagreeable ideas of actions, when they occur to our observation." Hutcheson seems to say explicitly that in judging an act or motive to be morally good or bad, right or wrong, by our moral sense we are simply feeling a distinctive kind of pleasure or displeasure in contemplating it, and that feeling this pleasure or displeasure, or receiving this pleasant or unpleasant idea, simply is our approval or disapproval of the act or motive in question. And this is, at least roughly, what his most astute eighteenth-century critic, Price, took him to be saying. "[A]ccording to Dr. Hutcheson . . . [m]oral right and wrong signify nothing in themselves to which they are applied . . . but only certain effects in us. Our perception of right, or moral good in actions, is that agreeable emotion or feeling which certain actions produce in us; and of wrong, or moral evil, the contrary." Moral sense is the "original," the one and only source, of all of our moral

ideas.[1] Yet if moral sense is just that capacity to receive ideas of actions as amiable and disagreeable, then to the question, what do we perceive by it (as opposed to ordinary perception and inference), the answer would seem to be just certain kinds of pleasure or displeasure (pleasant or unpleasant feelings of approbation or disapprobation).[2] And to the related question, what is it in acts and motives themselves that we perceive, the answer should apparently be, quite simply, "nothing."

These answers, or their near equivalents, are carefully supported in William Frankena's "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory" (1965), which I take to have set a kind of gold standard for concise, discerning treatments of Hutcheson's moral sense. And since Frankena's interpretation corresponds well, generally, to the way in which Hutcheson was understood by most if not all of his leading contemporaries and successors – and even by a majority of living commentators – I shall designate it the default account of what moral sense perceives,[3] and begin by trying to see in what ways, if any, it can be seen to be partial, inaccurate or otherwise unsatisfactory.

As I read Hutcheson . . . his position is this: in passing moral approbation as such on an action I am not cognizing and ascribing any indefinable property of goodness, etc., in or to the action, and I am not cognizing or asserting any fact about the actual or possible reactions of any spectator to the action. I am simply feeling a unique sort of pleasure in contemplating the action, and I am *expressing* this feeling by my verbal utterance, perhaps also expressing (but not asserting) a conviction that others will feel this pleasure if similarly situated, and almost certainly intending to evoke similar feelings in my hearers. That is, my moral approbation as such is wholly non-cognitive . . .

. . . Hutcheson is holding a form of the interjectional theory: purely moral judgments on actions and persons do not involve a cognition or assertion of a truth of any kind, they involve only the feeling, expression, and evocation of a peculiarly moral pleasure or pain.[4]

[1] "Without the moral sense no explication can be given of our ideas of morality." Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment II*, p. 207.

[2] It sounds odd, of course, to us, to say that we perceive pleasure or that in feeling pleasure we are receiving a pleasant idea of whatever is the cause of our pleasure; but we simply must get used to Hutcheson's Lockean language on this score (and try not to let ourselves be misled by it).

[3] We must also exercise caution in order to avoid confusing general questions about Hutcheson's psychology of moral judgments with narrower questions about the precise nature of moral sense itself and what role exactly it plays in those judgments. As I read Hutcheson, moral sense is not all there is to moral judgment – intellectual and other factors are at work too (see below). Also, what we perceive by moral sense (if anything) may well be distinguishable from what quality in motives and actions (if any) causes us (in virtue of our having a moral sense) to judge them to be good or bad, right or wrong.

> . . . moral judgments do not assert propositions and are not true or false . . . instead, they embody, express, and convey a peculiar sort of reaction, emotional and attitudinal in nature, to contemplated actions and qualities of character.[5]

Thus, and returning to our guiding question, "perceiving moral goodness and feeling approbation are the same." There is nothing, no quality of or 'in' actions or persons that we perceive, properly speaking, by virtue of our having moral sense. Hutcheson's position on this general interpretation, which Frankena chooses to call non-cognitive or interjectional, has been given (or saddled with) other labels by other authors (non-cognitivist, subjectivist[6], emotivist, even "empirico-sentimentalist"[7]); but for reasons that will soon be clear I will instead name it "the expressive interpretation" of moral sense.

Sounds fine, so far; but what is the expressive interpretation going to say about such passages from Hutcheson as these?[8]

> Esteem . . . Dislike . . . are entirely excited by some Moral Qualities, good or evil, apprehended to be in the Objects . . .[9]
>
> We may observe, that no Action of any other Person was ever approv'd by us, but upon some Apprehension, well or ill grounded, of some really good Moral Quality.[10]
>
> The apprehension of morally good Qualities, is the necessary Cause of approbation, by our moral sense . . .[11]

In the very opening paragraph of the *Inquiry* Hutcheson specifies that, "[t]he word moral goodness, in this treatise, denotes our idea of some quality

[4] "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory," p. 372. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 375.

[6] Kenneth P. Winkler, "Hutcheson's Alleged Realism," p. 179.

[7] J. Martin Stafford, "Hutcheson, Hume, and the Ontology of Morals," p. 136.

[8] In this chapter I need to cite many passages from Hutcheson that are not contained in the Raphael anthology. I have chosen the recent and enormously helpful Liberty Fund editions of the four "Treatises" as my sources: *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, edited and with an introduction by Wolfgang Leidhold, and *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, edited and with an introduction by Aaron Garrett (Natural Law and Enlightenment Classics, *The Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*). (Not only are the printed versions quite inexpensive but their complete texts are also available without cost on the Internet – www.libertyfund.org) The first volume contains Treatise I, *Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design* and Treatise II, *Concerning Moral Good and Evil*; the second volume Treatises III and IV (the *Essay* and the *Illustrations*). In order to save space and avoid confusion I refer to these in the notes simply as *Beauty*, *Good and Evil*, *Essay*, and *Illustrations*, respectively, followed by the appropriate page number(s).

I cite passages from *A Compend of Logic*, *A Synopsis of Metaphysics* and Hutcheson's *Inaugural Oration* by page number(s) in the new (and long awaited) Liberty Fund edition, *Logic, Metaphysics, and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, edited by James Moore and Michael Silverthorne, texts translated from the Latin by Michael Silverthorne, introduction by Michael Silverthorne. I also follow these editions in preserving, in longer citations, Hutcheson's original (rather charming) orthography and spelling.

[9] *Inquiry*, p. 103. [10] *Good and Evil*, p. 136. [11] *Essay*, p. 66.

apprehended *in* actions, which *procures* approbation, and love toward the actor . . ."[12] (Frankena: "This seems to me very confusing.") Such passages, as Frankena himself grants, contain "phrases suggesting a more objectivist interpretation – that moral goodness is a quality in actions and persons which happens to procure approbation."

And that seems to be the reading advanced by another leading interpreter, David Fate Norton, which I will call the "realist" interpretation of moral sense. Norton holds, in opposition to Frankena, that for Hutcheson our "ideas of virtue and vice . . . are representative of an external or objective moral reality," and that "virtue and vice are real and objective features of the world" [so that] "by means of our moral sense we are capable of distinguishing between what is in fact virtuous and what is in fact vicious."[13] Hutcheson is, therefore, after all, a cognitivist.

> . . . Hutcheson took the moral sense to be that principle of human nature which can and does enable us to apprehend and distinguish particular, objectively real . . . moral features, with the consequence that we may be said to know the difference between vice and virtue, and to make moral judgments that are correct or incorrect, true or false.[14]

Before going any further, I believe it is important to raise yet another naïve-sounding question, namely why any of this is important. There are several reasons. One is simply that it is here, especially, that Hutcheson's claims and arguments tow us into the midst of long-standing disputes – which he himself helped to articulate – about the nature and function of ethical judgments and the overarching issue of whether (and if so how) such judgments can be objective – into the epistemology of ethics, in other words. (So, naturally, philosophers' ears tend to perk up.) And, into related ontological issues concerning what types of things are involved in such judgments – reasons, feelings, properties, principles, norms, and so on. So the issue of whether Hutcheson's ethical psychology is realistic or not (and what exactly this should be taken to mean) is interesting in the way all such philosophical questions are. Besides that, we simply want to be fair and accurate in our characterizations of what past philosophers meant to say, and of how the questions they addressed would have originally presented themselves to them. And when the philosopher in question is an obviously "good" one like Hutcheson, we want our interpretations to be charitable, we want to make our subject's thoughts out to be as self-consistent and intellectually absorbing, and his arguments as persuasive,

[12] *Good and Evil*, p. 85, emphasis added.
[13] "Hutcheson's Moral Realism," p. 415, note 26. [14] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

as we can. But where two seemingly inconsistent readings of our subject (such as Frankena's and Norton's) are supportable at all, we have a duty to investigate (one or the other must be wrong, or maybe our philosopher isn't so good after all). Finally, there is the fact that Hutcheson's whole ethical theory revolves around the moral sense, so we need to try to say as precisely as possible what moral sense is; but obviously we cannot do that until we have a reasoned account of what, if anything, it is supposed to enable us to sense, see, understand, know, perceive, that we would be unable to 'without' it.[15]

Now apart from their respective renderings of Hutcheson's theory of moral sense as a whole (and especially of those particular passages each one chooses to feature) what arguments do Frankena and Norton offer in support of them? Having read their works on the subject many times, it is difficult for me to see that they have any.

Frankena proceeds mainly by way of elimination, criticizing (quite convincingly) two competing interpretations that were on the scene at the time, while offering some defensive arguments on behalf of his thesis that Hutcheson must have maintained "some form of the emotive or non-cognitive theory of ethics." Confusingly – in light of my own terms and designs – they are called "subjectivism" – which I will call "the subjective theory interpretation" – and "naïve realism." What he calls subjectivism is a "form

[15] I also have a distinct selfish reason of my own for needing a defensible answer to our question: I want to defend the existence of a moral sense (in as Hutchesonian a sense of "moral sense" as I can); yet obviously I cannot adopt everything he had to say about it as my own; I need to take some of its features as essential while allowing that others may be, as MacIntyre alleged, artifactual. (To say more about this here would be premature.)

I also wish to note here, and set aside as not really that interesting, some easy answers to the whole "expressive *versus* realist" problem in interpreting Hutchesonian moral sense perception. One is to say that the whole idea of moral sense is just hopelessly muddled – perhaps too many different jobs are ascribed to it, and that Hutcheson may have come to suspect this himself. Another is to suppose that he out and out changed his mind about moral sense before composing the *System*, the *Short Introduction* and the other Latin works. Just as he changed moral sense from a sentiment into a faculty, perhaps he slowly came to believe in the existence of objective moral properties when he had not before; there is somewhat more talk of qualities in the later works. A third is that the Dublin works were composed for gentlemen whereas the others were intended to be "suitable for the instruction of youth," and that this (somehow) led their author to adopt a more capacious moral ontology. Finally (and this one I have not actually seen proposed explicitly) perhaps the whole Lockean "way of ideas" Hutcheson chose to adopt, more or less, in defending his ideas simply renders the "realist or not?" question irresolvable in principle; there may be, in other words, no coherent answer to whether or not our moral ideas objectively represent real properties. Once an idea is defined to mean any perception of the mind and a quality as any power to produce any such perception, it becomes possible to say all kinds of strange-sounding things – such as that our sense of taste "represents meats as pleasant" – and as a result hard if not impossible to say just what after all is objective in our moral experience and in our world. On this last possibility see especially Peter Kivy's introduction to his edition of *An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design*, pp. 14–20.

of naturalism, according to which ethical judgments are cognitive, and all ethical terms complex and definable by reference to empirical concepts or characteristics."[16] (I will set out this reading momentarily, and eventually go on to endorse it myself.) Naïve realism is the view "that ethical characteristics are empirical but simple and apprehended by a special 'sense.'" "On this view ethical judgments are cognitive; in fact the view would be a kind of intuitionism though not rationalistic or non-naturalistic."[17] This is the "more objectivist interpretation" mentioned earlier, and if it were correct it would mean that "Hutcheson is naïvely realistic about moral excellence." (Whether this is Norton's view – which would not appear in print for twenty more years – is rather hard to say, though I believe it is not.) And Frankena's main defensive argument is aimed at this interpretation. First, the term "sense" in Hutcheson "does not always mean a faculty which apprehends objective properties of objects such as size and shape," but can stand for plain feelings (though universal and involuntary ones) such as the public sense, "our determination to be pleased with the happiness of others and to be uneasy at their misery," which we can safely say "is not a cognitive faculty at all."[18] Second, in the eighteenth century "perceive" and "perception" "covered feelings as well as external sensations," as in "perceive pleasure in contemplating" an object or person. Both points are true. So "a distinct perception of beauty or excellence in the kind affections of rational agents" could well mean 'a feeling of pleasure at seeing' such affections. Likewise with "apprehend," in "some quality apprehended in actions, which procures approbation"; "apprehended" might simply mean "judged to be" or even (just) "supposed to be," as in "[a]ll men who speak of moral good, acknowledge that it procures love toward those we apprehend possessed of it" or "[t]he virtuous agent is never apprehended by us as acting only from views of his own interest." To this argument I would add the suggestion that when Hutcheson says that esteem and dislike are "excited by some moral qualities, good or evil, apprehended to be in the objects," and that "no action of any other person was ever approved by us, but upon some apprehension, well or ill grounded, of some really good moral quality," he simply means to refer to the qualities of whole persons, such as kindness, qualities the moral sense itself "perceives pleasure in contemplating."[19] Thus it could remain true that Hutchesonian moral

[16] "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory," p. 357. [17] *Ibid.*, p. 365f. [18] *Ibid.*, p. 368.

[19] I will want to say: reason, taking cues from quotidian experience, apprehends the action or person as kind, as having this quality; by what I would call moral sense proper – our actual affective response to such kindness – we receive pleasure in contemplating it. And only then does it become not just a quality of some person but a really good moral one.

judgments only "embody, express, and convey a peculiar sort of reaction, emotional and attitudinal in nature, to contemplated actions and qualities of character." Finally there is the problem that Hutcheson says that, "we should call no action virtuous, unless we have some reason to conclude it to be virtuous." But elsewhere moral sense is said to be the source of all "justifying reasons"; so what kind of reason to judge an action good could it be that leads us to call it so, to conclude that it is? For Frankena the justifying reasons in question are simply "certain factual beliefs, namely, beliefs about the benevolent or malevolent intentions or consequences of actions and qualities of character."[20] And this seems clearly enough supported in Hutcheson's works.[21]

Similarly, what Norton offers in favor of his own statements concerning moral sense does not appear to me to amount to a positive argument why we must read Hutcheson realistically. What we seem to get instead is a hypothetical reconstruction of what Hutcheson's epistemology of moral perception in general must be, or might have been, or should have been, on the hypothesis that he did believe in objectively real moral features that our moral ideas and affections represent.[22] So how exactly is the moral

[20] "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory," p. 373.

[21] Some examples: from "Reasons for Election different from those for Approbation": "*Approbation* is plainly a *Perception* arising without previous *Volition*, or Choice of it, because of any concomitant *Pleasure*. The Occasion of it is the *Perception of benevolent Affections* in our selves, or the discovering the like in others, even when we are incapable of any *Action* or *Election*. The *Reasons* determining *Approbation* are such as shew that an Action evidenced *kind Affections* . . ." (*Illustrations*, p. 155.) From "The Power of Oratory founded on it [Moral Sense]," "When any Person is to be recommended, display his Humanity, Generosity, Study of the publick Good, and Capacity to promote it . . . and you are sure to procure him Love and Esteem . . . The same way, would you make a Person . . . despis'd and hated, represent him as cruel, inhuman, or treacherous . . . or shew him only to be selfish . . . and you have gain'd your Point as soon as you prove what you alledge." (*Good and Evil*, p. 172.) From "Benevolence the sole ground of Approbation": "[N]o action of any other Person was ever approv'd by us, but upon some Apprehension, well or ill grounded, of some really good moral Quality. If we observe the Sentiments of Men concerning Actions, we shall find, that it is always some really amiable and benevolent Appearance which engages their Approbation . . . it is . . . some apparent Species of Benevolence which commands our Approbation." (*Good and Evil*, p. 136.) And from "All Virtue Benevolent": "If we examine all the Actions which are counted amiable any where, and enquire into the Grounds upon which they are approv'd, we shall find, that in the Opinion of the Person who approves them, they always appear as Benevolent, or flowing from Love of others . . . Nor shall we find any thing amiable in any Action whatsoever, where there is no Benevolence imagin'd . . ." (*Good and Evil*, p. 116.) Finally (from "Moral Sense judges of Laws"): "It must then first be supposed, that there is something in Actions which is apprehended absolutely good; and this is Benevolence, or a Tendency to the publick natural happiness of rational Agents; and that our moral Sense perceives this Excellence." (*Good and Evil*, p. 181.) Of course this last passage is just ambiguous enough to leave room for realist doubt.

[22] Actually that isn't quite fair; Norton does argue that only by affirming the existence of such objective moral features or properties could Hutcheson have satisfied himself that he had proven what he calls "the reality of virtue" against the moral skeptics, specifically Hobbes and Mandeville. But this is

sense supposed by Norton to function cognitively, thereby giving us genuine knowledge of objective moral reality? For Hutcheson, "calling the ideas of virtue and vice perceptions of a sense" does not "diminish their reality."

On the contrary, these ideas arise upon the occasion of what are clearly independently existing actions or affections of an agent, and they serve as signs of the moral nature of those actions or affections. An individual with a well-functioning moral sense . . . will, upon the observation of an agent's actions or affections, feel approbation or disapprobation. If approbation is felt, this will be accompanied by the idea of virtue, an idea that represents the moral character of the agent or action under observation. If disapprobation is felt, then it will be the idea of vice that is concomitant and representative. Whether approbation or disapprobation is felt, the observer's feelings or affections will have again served as signs of objective reality, this time of objective moral reality. When we experience these kinds of ideas together . . . we have an idea of moral objects, or moral knowledge.[23]

Norton's idiosyncratic (though very interesting) interpretation was extensively criticized in the mid-1980s and there would be no point in my rehashing or re-entering the debate (the relevant papers are still readily available).[24] But I would make two points that seem not to have been raised by his critics at that time. One is that, even granting his claim that Hutcheson believed in 'representative concomitant ideas of virtue and vice,' Norton never succeeds at making clear how these – even when combined with other sorts of ideas, feelings and (supposed) objective properties – generate moral knowledge. Let O stand for us (or rather any arbitrarily chosen observer with a moral sense), A be the agent (complete with kind affections) whom O is observing, F be O's feelings of approval, I be O's concomitant idea of A's virtue, and V be the objective quality of virtuousness that A (let us assume) really possesses. So, O observes A, feels F, and this (somehow) causes O to have the accompanying I, which finally represents or is a sign of the V which A possesses. How, on Norton's account, are all these factors supposed to 'add up' to knowledge of V, that is, to moral sense

question-begging so long as there is no other plausible way in which he could have satisfied himself and his readers, one that does not involve appeal to such properties. And certainly there is, namely his defense of the reality of benevolence and corresponding denial of egoism, and his extensive arguments against the claim that distinctions of virtue and vice are conventional – made up by politicians – or even voluntary, here meaning created solely by the power and decree of God.

[23] *David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician*, p. 84ff.

[24] David Fate Norton, "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory Reconsidered," "Hutcheson on Perception and Moral Perception," *David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician*, "Hutcheson's Moral Realism"; Kenneth P. Winkler, "Hutcheson's Alleged Realism"; J. Martin Stafford, "Hutcheson, Hume and the Ontology of Morals." See also W. Leidhold, *Ethik und Politik bei Francis Hutcheson*.

cognition of moral reality? Normally we suppose that our minds can represent objects and persons as having all sorts of qualities but this doesn't mean that they really do have them, let alone that we know they do. (As Elizabeth Anscombe once noted, "there is point in speaking of knowledge only where a contrast exists between 'he *knows*' and 'he (merely) *thinks* he knows.'"[25]) 'O has idea I of A's V' (O represents to himself A as having V) by no means entails 'O *knows* that A has V' – unless, of course, we take "representing A's V" to mean "*truly* (accurately) representing A has having V." But how are we to do that without begging the question whether I is not merely representative but truly representative?[26] One could try to close this gap – at least in this special important case – through metaphysical theology, and it is not impossible that this was Hutcheson's intention. That is, perhaps God providentially annexed these three things: O's feelings of approval, her concomitant idea I of A's virtue, and I's true representativeness of it. If He did, then you cannot have one without the other two (at least if anyone with a moral sense is observing A at all). (And then once O feels approval he automatically knows that A is certainly V; the contrast between "he approves of A's virtue" and "he merely thinks he approves of A for his virtue" would no longer exist.[27]) Yet – at some risk of impiety – why would God want to do that? It certainly seems uneconomical, for it would make either the feeling of approval or our "truly representative concomitant idea" into a fifth wheel, a psychological factor that does no theoretical (epistemological) work.[28] Why not simply annex our feelings of approval to our apprehension (through reason and ordinary experience) of people's kind affections (which really are there, on everyone's interpretation)? In fact I believe that this is just what Hutcheson believed God did.[29]

[25] *Intention*, p. 14.

[26] Remember that we landed in a parallel difficulty in chapter 3 over Shaftesbury's appeal to a harmony between our valuations and what is truly valuable; as Ward Smith noted, it seemed arbitrary.

[27] At least where we are dealing with "an individual with a well-functioning moral sense" – which would still leave Norton with the problem of defining that idea without circularity.

[28] This is not to say that God could not, if He had chosen to, affix or annex objective moral properties directly onto human actions and motives. (That would be impious, at least for the majority of Hutcheson's peers.) But then would that not be a violation, of some sort, of the consistent anti-voluntarism of Hutcheson's own theodicy? (See below.)

[29] Alternatively, He could have annexed O's cognition of A's action to a truly representative concomitant idea of his virtue, thus making A's feelings epistemically superfluous – and I think that is essentially what some rationalist moral philosophers of the eighteenth century, including Price, believed that He did.

An even bigger problem – and this has been pointed out before – is that Hutcheson nowhere says anything close to what Norton would need for him to say in order to make out his own realist account of moral sense cognition credible as an interpretation of him. (At the time Winkler gently remarked that, "Norton's commentary bears only a faint resemblance to" the targeted passages; Stafford

My second point is merely a suggestion: I often suspect that Norton and other Hutcheson scholars are confusing an epistemological and ontological issue – whether we need to believe in objectively real moral features in order to do justice to moral language and experience, or in our best explanation of it – with a psychological problem, namely why we almost irresistibly believe and speak as if acts and persons do really have' such properties. I myself am a firm believer in a dispositional, non-naïvely realistic account of color perception (as Hobbes long ago insisted, red is not in blood in the same way that blood is in cloth); but that certainly is not going to stop me from telling my neighbor that he has too much red in his front garden. Nor will I – can I – cease to act, feel and believe as though my own pain is in my shoulder. But all this seems to me more a problem for empirical psychology than for philosophy; I question how far purely philosophical discussions of reference, for example, are going to take us towards explaining how the mind of an amputee can somehow refer her felt pain into the empty space where her arm used to be, or why, when I call one of my sons a good guy, we both so naturally conceive of his goodness to be in him. Hutcheson himself, in his *Metaphysics*, observes that, "the sensible qualities which are called *sensitive*, which are perceived by one sense alone . . . are senses or states or modifications of the mind itself, although external things often seem to

declared that, "Hutcheson never said, or at least never wrote, any such thing.") Worse still, for the proposed interpretation, neither does Hutcheson anywhere even say that there are concomitant ideas of morality (virtue and vice). Yet as recently as 2006, James Moore and Michael Silverthorne write that, "Hutcheson's theory that ideas of pure intellect are generated by internal sensation and therefore include ideas of beauty and virtue, and other concomitant ideas . . . constitutes the principal point of connection between his logic and his writings on aesthetics and morals." (Introduction to *Logic, Metaphysics, and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, p. 12f.) I would simply challenge all these scholars to bring forth any passage (in English or in Latin) in which Hutcheson expressly affirms the existence of concomitant ideas of morality (virtue and vice), let alone representative ones. I believe there is no such passage.

Finally Norton himself never makes clear precisely how moral concomitants would function in a realist epistemology of moral sense. He writes that, though he has "been explaining moral concomitance as though the experience of a particular feeling were the occasion (cause) of a particular moral idea which captures intellectually (represents) the moral quality of the agent or action that occasions the feeling," it is "possible . . . that Hutcheson's moral concomitants are sometimes particular moral feelings that are occasioned (caused) by the experience of specifically moral ideas apprehended by our moral sense. [Hutcheson] says, for example, that 'the *apprehension* of morally good qualities, is the necessary cause of *approbation*, by our moral sense, and of stronger *love*.'" ("Hutcheson's Moral Realism," p. 410, note 20.) My own view – sad to say – is that there probably just isn't anything like a complete moral epistemology there to be extracted from Hutcheson's Latin works, and therefore no way of supporting or rejecting such scholarly speculations about, for example, his understanding of how concomitant ideas might function in moral sense-judgments. I may well be wrong about this and even hope that I am. Emily Michael offers a cogent account of a kind of Hutchesonian aesthetic epistemology, which employs the concept of concomitant ideas and also parallels in certain respects Norton's realist interpretation of moral sense, in "Francis Hutcheson on Aesthetic Perception and Aesthetic Pleasure."

be endowed with them or affected by them."[30] Obviously the key word is "seem": on the default interpretation of what moral sense perceives[31] we somehow – by means of our moral sentiments – endow actions, motives and affections with qualities of goodness even as in so doing we seem to ourselves to be perceiving them in them. (Hume will say that we "paint" or "color" them, Smith that we "stamp" them.) And if that is the correct reading, it would be quite reasonable to ascribe to Hutcheson the belief that, regarding both moral judgment and ordinary (e.g.) color perception, and to borrow an expression from Alan H. Goldman, "we must regard the phenomenology of the experience which generates judgments ascribing the properties to objects as mistaken, as a matter of projecting subjective perceptual or evaluative responses onto their objects."[32]

Before venturing any sort of final judgment concerning Norton's account of Hutcheson's moral realism I want to elaborate briefly on a suggestion of his that seems not to have gotten enough attention in the discussion of it.[33] It is that in moral judgments – as Hutcheson understood them – there are always "objective correlates" corresponding to our (subjective) moral feelings. Yet if I am not mistaken it was actually C. D. Broad who first made use of this expression in connection with Hutcheson, in his famous paper, "Some Reflections on Moral-Sense Theories in Ethics" (1944–45).[34] I propose to return us for a moment to Broad's original conception of objective (and subjective) correlates (and then stick to it throughout the rest of this book). What, in Broad's original sense of the term, could the objective correlates of our moral sense experiences and judgments (and of our ordinary perceptual judgments) possibly be? Norton's main premise seems to be that Hutcheson "thought the moral sense to be analogous to the external senses" and argued "that the analogy, although imperfect in one respect ["there is no moral organ"], is perfect in all crucial respects." I recommend that we take this claim seriously and see how, how well and

[30] *Logic, Metaphysics and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, p. 104. Compare this passage (from "How beings are known"): "Although our minds cannot make contact without the intervention of some *idea*, whether proper or analogical, since it is not things themselves but ideas or perceptions which are presented directly to the mind, nevertheless we are compelled by nature itself to relate most of our ideas to external things as their images or representations." (p. 66.) And this, from Part II, "On the Human Mind": "The *senses* report to the *understanding*, which is those powers or that ordering of the soul by which, at the prompting of certain things, it immediately receives certain ideas, which are not alterable at its discretion, but which a certain superior nature, the parent and creator of the soul, seems to have formed; and he has so structured the mind that it refers certain sensations to external things, as images which depict their nature or qualities." (p. 112f.)

[31] And, I would suggest, on the subjective theory reading, to be considered next.

[32] "Red and Right," p. 356.

[33] Even if this ends up leading us in a direction of which he himself would not approve.

[34] Hereafter "Reflections."

how far the analogy can be drawn, while staying true to Hutcheson's own writings.[35]

One certainly need not be trained in philosophy to grasp Broad's distinction between naïvely realistic and dispositional accounts of such ordinary judgments of perception as "That thing is yellow." The "plain man in his plainer moments"

> uncritically takes it for granted that the very same sensible quality of yellowness which is presented to him when he looks at a bit of gold in white light literally pervades the surface of that bit of gold, not only when he is looking at it in white light but also and in precisely the same sense when no one is looking at it and when it is in the dark. He believes that looking at the thing and its being illuminated by white light serve only to *reveal* to him the yellowness which has been there all the time in precisely the form in which it is now presented to him.[36]

And the naïvely realistic theorist of perception would take that to be true. The dispositional theorist, on the other hand, would insist that "X is yellow" means only that X would "present a yellow appearance to any normal human being who might at any time view it in white light" and that "the whole meaning of such judgments . . . is a conditional proposition" of that form. However, if a (thoughtful) person "believes that a certain thing would present a yellow appearance to any normal human being" etc., "he does not generally accept this conditional proposition as an ultimate fact" but "generally amplifies it as follows."

> He ascribes to the thing a certain intrinsic property, and he ascribes to each human being a certain other intrinsic property correlated with the former. Let us call these respectively the "objective" and the "subjective correlate" in the perception of yellowness. It is held that when and only when a certain relationship is set up between a human being and this thing, the subjective correlate in the person and the objective correlate in the thing together cause the thing to present a yellow appearance to the person.[37]

The naïve realist can accept this amplification but there will be "a profound difference" between him and the "holder" of the dispositional account "in point of detail." For the former, the objective correlate "just is that

[35] One proviso: I take it that if there is a true theory of ordinary external perception to be had, it will be a causal theory of some sort. That is, "S perceives X" (by her ordinary five senses) will entail that X, or some feature (property) of X, will necessarily figure as a causal factor in a complete explanation of S's perception of X. And I take it that if moral perception is analogous to ordinary perception in all crucial respects, it will be a causal process of some kind as well. Norton approvingly cites Adam Smith as one who "saw" that Hutcheson "presents us with a causal theory of moral perception" ("Hutcheson's Moral Realism," p. 416), so I take it that he would agree to my proviso.

[36] "Reflections," p. 368.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 368f.

quality of sensible yellowness which . . . is spread out over the surface of the thing ready to be presented," while the subjective correlate just is "the power of prehending the yellowness of yellow things," a power that is "activated whenever a person who possesses it stands in a certain bodily and mental relation to a thing which possesses yellowness." On the dispositional account, in contrast, the objective correlate is "generally held to be a certain kind of minute structure and internal agitation in a thing which is not itself literally and non-dispositionally coloured." But the subjective correlate is "not now the power of prehending the objective correlate." For we "have no such power."[38] Rather it is "the capacity to have sensations of a certain kind, called 'sensations of yellowness'; and these are *not* prehensions of a quality of yellowness inherent in the thing perceived. *There is no such quality* [my emphasis]." Further it is highly unlikely that any dispositional theorist would ever think to "give the name 'yellowness' to that minute structure and internal agitation of a colourless object," which, according to him, "is the objective correlate of sensations of yellow."[39]

So far, so clear. And notice how Broad makes it beautifully easy to be fair to both parties (if there are such) in any corresponding dispute between a naïvely realistic and a dispositional account of moral perception, by calling the objective correlate simply "this thing." Following Broad, we can therefore say that the objective correlate in Hutchesonian moral sense perception is whatever it is about (or in) human motives, actions and characters that objectively belongs to them, remaining the same whatever anyone's moral perceptions of them may or may not be, or even whether or not anyone at all ever perceives them with, or through, her moral sense. Now, obviously, the first logical question to ask is whether Broad's distinction between naïvely realistic and dispositional accounts applies to Hutcheson's understanding of ordinary sense perception. I cannot see how it couldn't, for he is clearly arguing for the reality and specifying the nature of moral sense within a conceptual framework laid down to a great degree in advance in the work of Galileo, Hobbes, and especially Locke, in which (I submit) the same distinction as Broad's between naïvely realistic and dispositional accounts of our visual perceptions (and other ideas) is already solidly in place.[40] And the same therefore goes, I propose, for the distinction between objective

[38] Following my earlier distinction between moral judgment and moral sense proper, I suggest that for Hutcheson we do have a power to prehend the objective correlate of our moral sensations – but that power is not the moral sense. Rather it is ordinary observation and inference.

[39] "Reflections," p. 369.

[40] To give just one textual example, the sense of beauty is "an internal sense," a "natural power of perception," a "determination of the mind" "to receive necessarily certain ideas from the presence of objects." "Nor does there seem any thing more difficult in this matter, than that the Mind should

and subjective correlates.[41] This means that Norton is in no way out of line in demanding that the moral sentiments, the determinations of the moral sense, do, for Hutcheson, have objective correlates – of some kind.[42]

However, there do not seem to be many candidates for moral objective correlates if we stick to the letter and spirit of Hutcheson's own writings. Certainly they cannot be physical properties, certain "structures and agitations" in human bodies – or even of them (behaviors). Moreover, it isn't clear exactly what Norton himself wants to hold up as the objective correlate of, the "objective moral reality" somehow corresponding to, our sentiment of approbation or our sense of virtue. One contemporaneous critic thought it must be "virtue" while another took it to be "the agent's goodness."[43] But I must agree with the latter that "there is no evidence" that Hutcheson believes in the existence of a quality of goodness that is distinct from the agent's actual motivations – even what they are as inferred by the reason of the person doing the judging – and distinct from the actual approbation of that person's moral sense of those motivations. Since the approbation of moral sense (the pleasing sentiment) is said by Norton to reveal or to be a "sign" of "the real and objective nature of virtue," perhaps the objective correlate is, after all, simply virtue. But then we would need to ask, following Broad, "virtue conceived naïvely realistically, or dispositionally?" If the former, then since virtue is not supposed to simply be identical with the agent's motivations, or the moral sense's response to them, this would seem to commit

be always determined to receive the Idea of Sweet, when Particles of such a Form enter the Pores of the Tongue; or to have the Idea of Sound upon any quick Undulation of the Air. The one seems to have as little Connection [i.e resemblance] with its Idea, as the other." *Beauty*, p. 67.

41 I do not believe that I am being ahistorical or *a priori* constructivist (these are Norton's terms) in making this claim, for the simple reason that Broad's distinctions are themselves clearly derived from Locke's epistemology, specifically his distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

By the way, I happen to agree with Norton that one serious weakness in Winkler's original critique of him was to assume that Hutcheson's understanding and typology of ideas corresponded nearly perfectly to Locke's, and that he largely adopted wholesale what Winkler calls the "received [i.e. Lockean] account of the perception of secondary qualities." I also agree that while Hutcheson's "theory of perception is in some respects similar to Locke's" he is also "indebted to other philosophers" (including Loudon and Carmichael) who are "known as critics of Locke." ("Hutcheson's Moral Realism," p. 399.) Compare Rivers: "Unlike Shaftesbury, Hutcheson was ambivalent in his attitude to Locke, and this ambivalence was to produce some curious contortions. On the one hand he wished to associate himself with the fashionable Lockean epistemology, and thus he insisted . . . that the internal sense and especially the moral sense have nothing to do with innate ideas. On the other hand he thought that dangerous use had been made of arguments from Locke . . . he regretted that the 'beloved maxim' that all our ideas are from sensation and reflection was interpreted to mean external sensation, pointing out that Locke described reflection as internal sensation and deliberately associating his own use of the phrase internal sense with it." (*Reason, Grace, and Sentiment II*, p. 208.) See especially the important passage from the *Essay* (p. 130.) quoted in full by Rivers.

42 The sense of beauty definitely has objective correlates, as we will soon see.

43 Stafford and Winkler, respectively.

Hutcheson to something like what G. E. Moore – a moral realist if ever there was one – held "goodness" to be: a simple, indefinable, non-natural property, which certain actions and states of affairs simply possess, and which we simply intuit.[44] But once again, there seems to be no evidence that Hutcheson held to any such idea of perceptible yet non-natural properties of actions and motives (nor any indication that he could have even formed such an idea).[45] And it would be very strange (I should say incredible) to hold that while Hutcheson's understanding of ordinary perception was thoroughly dispositional, his account of moral perception was naïve. It follows, I think, that he simply wasn't either non-naturalistically realistic or naïvely realistic (in Frankena's sense of that term).

If the latter, then – in parallel with Broad's dispositional analysis of yellowness as "the property which certain things have of giving rise to certain sensations in a normal human observer when he views them in white light" – we should have to say something like this: "Virtuousness is a property certain things (actions and motives) have of giving rise to certain sensations (involuntary pleasing sentiments of approbation) and certain (representative concomitant) ideas in a normal human observer (i.e. one with a moral sense) when he views them in the right light, that is, when he has accurately cognized the agent's motives, isn't angry with him and so on." We still have to ask what things (for Hutcheson) could have this dispositional property. It seems to me that to answer simply "virtuous ones" would be circular; the virtuousness of actions and motives could do no conceptual work – any more than the yellowness of an egg's yolk could really explain anything, on Broad's naïvely realistic theory, about our perception of "yellow things."[46]

[44] And then, how would we intuit it? It cannot be through reason, intellect, for reason "raises no new ideas." Perhaps it is through moral feelings themselves, and at times this seems to be what Norton wants to say; he writes that for Hume "the character of our feeling serves to reveal the moral character of an objective (publicly available) situation." But then the nature of 'apprehending' objective features of reality through feeling would have to be explained, which it is not.

[45] I simply cannot believe that any moral properties that might be at work in Hutchesonian moral sense theory could be non-natural, because his argument for the very existence of internal senses is thoroughly empiricist (see below). But that would drive him back to naïve realism.

[46] One possibility (though I have not seen it defended in the literature) is that the objective correlate of our idea of virtue is, for Hutcheson, "that action . . . which procures the greatest happiness, for the greatest numbers." "The vast Diversity of moral Principles," Hutcheson writes, while "indeed a good Argument against innate Ideas," "will not evidence Mankind to be void of a moral Sense to perceive Virtue or Vice in Actions, when they occur to their Observation." (*Good and Evil*, p. 137.) For even in ancient Sparta, where "a hardy shifting Youth" and "Theft, if dexterously performed" met with public approval, "the Approbation [was] founded on Benevolence, because of some real, or apparent Tendency to the publick Good." The "Ground on which any Action is approved, is still some Tendency to the greater natural Good of others, apprehended by those who approve it."

So if Hutcheson isn't naïvely (morally) realistic or non-naturally realistic about what we perceive, and if his account of moral sense cannot be made out dispositionally realistically without becoming empty, then how can we consider him to be any sort of moral realist at all? Before trying to answer, I propose that we go back to Treatise I, to the sense of beauty and its objective correlate:

> So our Sense of Beauty does not, without Reflection, Instruction, or Observation, give us Ideas of the regular Solids, Temples, Cirques, and Theatres; but determines us to approve and delight in Uniformity amidst Variety, wherever we observe it.[47]

The objective correlate (though remember that this is nowhere Hutcheson's own expression) of our sense of beauty is obviously "uniformity amidst variety." And how was that determined?

> Let it be observ'd, that in the following Papers, the Word Beauty is taken for the Idea rais'd in us, and a Sense of Beauty for our Power of receiving this Idea. . . . In the following Sections, an Attempt is made to discover "what is the immediate Occasion of these pleasant Ideas, or what *real Quality in the Objects* ordinarily excites them."[48]
>
> Since it is certain that we have Ideas of Beauty and Harmony, let us examine *what Quality in Objects excites these Ideas, or is the occasion of them*. And let it be here observed, that our Inquiry is only about the Qualitys which are beautiful to Men; or about the Foundation of their Sense of Beauty: for, as was above hinted, *Beauty has always relation to the Sense of some Mind*; and when we afterwards show how generally the Objects which occur to us, are beautiful, we mean that such Objects are agreeable [i.e. *pleasant*] to the sense of Men . . .
>
> The Figures which excite in us the Ideas of Beauty, seem to be those in which there is Uniformity amidst Variety.[49]

I believe it is now time for a judgment call and mine is this: whereas the analogy between moral sense perception and that of our ordinary five senses falters fairly early on in the game (and how very hard it breaks down,

(p. 138.) The problem is, quite simply, that "tendency to public good" is not an idea we owe to the moral sense, as Hutcheson goes on right away to make clear:

> For we are not to imagine, that this Sense should give us, without Observation, Ideas of complex Actions, or of their natural Tendencys to Good or Evil: It only determines us to approve Benevolence, whenever it appears in any Action, and to hate the contrary. (*Ibid.*)

It may well be (presumably through God's kind work) that when the honest farmer spontaneously approves of benevolence, the actions and motives he approves of objectively correlate with what tends to the greatest happiness – though I can hardly picture him reflecting on that connection as he goes about caring for his family. But that is hardly moral realism where it is what the moral sense perceives that is at issue. One could say that moral sense detects or perceives the objective greatest happiness through its subjective approvals, but again that would seem to be nothing like anything Hutcheson actually says.

[47] *Good and Evil*, p. 138. [48] *Beauty*, p. 23, my emphasis. [49] *Beauty*, p. 28, my emphasis.

we have yet to see fully), the analogy in Hutcheson between the sense of beauty and the moral sense is perfect in every crucial respect. The objective correlate of the former is uniformity amidst variety, a complex relational property (if you will) that we perceive by the ordinary senses – we "observe" it. But beauty itself, in turn, is not for Hutcheson an objectively real feature of paintings, mountainsides and cirques, or even an aesthetic property of the objects being appreciated which supervenes on or is otherwise possessed by the uniformity-in-variety of those objects.[50] It is a relish, an approval, or an 'idea' of the objects as beautiful. Either way, our "power of perceiving the beauty of regularity, order, harmony" – what I would call our sense of beauty, proper – simply is "our power of receiving this idea." Correspondingly, the objective correlate of our moral sense is – hands down, I would insist – kind affection (benevolence). And we do not, strictly speaking, even perceive benevolence (which is an objective property of actions and motives) at all; we infer it by reason from what we do perceive (and perceive not by our moral sense, but by our five mundane ones), namely conduct. ("We mean by [moral sense] only a determination of our minds to receive amiable or disagreeable ideas of action, when they occur to our observation . . . even as we are pleased with a regular form, or an harmonious composition . . .") So, in so far as Norton's reading demands that the objective correlates of our moral sense judgments be moral properties, features, of acts and persons – or even features of benevolence itself – it cannot be right.[51]

Does this mean that Norton is wrong to read Hutcheson as being, in some interesting sense, a moral realist? No! Before I explain, let me mention, at least, a third possible interpretation of moral sense.

What I call "the subjective theory interpretation" also has its origins in Broad's "Reflections." Strictly speaking, the view Broad elaborates and defends – and which he eventually comes to call simply "the Theory" – should be called "the trans-subjective emotional/dispositional form of the Moral Sense Theory," but for convenience I will simply call it the subjective theory. On such a view of moral judgments,

> . . . the moral feeling which a person has when he contemplates an act neither is nor involves a prehension by him of an independent non-dispositional characteristic of rightness inherent in the act. On [this variety of the moral sense theory] a person who says that an act is right means, roughly speaking, no more than that any normal person who should contemplate this act when he was in a normal condition would have a moral pro-feeling.

[50] Although see Michael, "Francis Hutcheson on Aesthetic Perception and Aesthetic Pleasure."

[51] What I am claiming here (in other words) is that, although moral sense represents kind affection as good (morally beautiful) – roughly in the way our sense of taste represents meats as pleasant – it does not represent moral goodness at all.

I have little doubt that most upholders of the Moral Sense Theory meant to assert the trans-subjective variety of the dispositional form of it. But they did not always make this clear to their readers, and perhaps they were not always clear about it themselves.[52]

I do not think that we shall be unfair to the theory if we confine attention to the trans-subjective variety of it and if we assume that moral feeling is of the nature of emotion rather than sensation.[53]

In essence the theory is that such judgments as "That act is right (or wrong)" are analogous to such judgments as "That food is nice (or is nasty)." The correct analysis of them is some variant on the formula, "That act would evoke a moral pro-emotion (or anti-emotion) in any human being who might at any time contemplate it." There might have to be qualifications about the individual being "normal" and being "in a normal state," but we need not trouble about them at present.[54]

The subjective theory reading bids us step back from the nuances of Hutcheson's particular arguments (once we have considered them carefully) and ask ourselves what, at the end of the day, it means on his view to judge an act to be right or wrong. And it suggests that the answer can only be, in effect, "It means that (normal) people's moral sense will react positively or negatively towards it." They will have moral pro-emotions or moral anti-emotions towards it. The subjective theory interpretation (at least as I shall develop it) asks that we read Hutcheson much in the spirit of what Hume later on calls his own definitions of virtue (or as Broad might say, his analyses of it):

It is the nature, and, indeed, the definition of virtue, that it is *a quality of the mind agreeable to or approved of by every one who considers or contemplates it*.[55]

The hypothesis which we embrace is plain. It maintains that morality is determined by sentiment. It defines virtue to be *whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation*; and vice the contrary.[56]

Saving the (grueling) details for the next chapter, I must state right away that of the available (received) interpretations, Broad's subjective theory is the one that seems to me to be far and away the one that best captures, overall, Hutcheson's moral sense theory. I must however also note one serious problem with the Theory considered as an interpretation of Hutcheson, which was aptly stated by Frankena.

. . . on a subjective view moral judgments are empirical propositions about the incidence of feelings of pleasure and pain, etc., and so are subject to empirical investigation. But then they are deliverances, not of some sense, but of our power of discovering true propositions, which, by Hutcheson's definition, is reason.[57]

[52] "Reflections," p. 370. [53] *Ibid.*, p. 374. [54] *Ibid.*, p. 375. [55] *Enquiries*, p. 261.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 289. [57] "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory," p. 371.

The subjective theory reading would in consequence seem "inconsistent with at least the spirit of what Hutcheson is contending [against the rationalists] when he says that moral distinctions are not perceived by reason but by a sense." It would leave open at least the logical possibility that on his view one could find out what is right or good without using one's own moral sense at all – by discovering what sorts of actions etc. do in fact evoke moral pro-emotions in 'any (normal) human being.'[58]

DEFINING HUTCHESON'S MORAL "REALISM"

Assuming that the problems I have identified in interpretations 2 and 3 are real, where does this leave our original default, expressive reading? In my view it is as it stands too partial and uncharitable (in the sense explained). Would Hutcheson ever agree (with Frankena) that our moral judgments "involve only" feelings?[59] I do not think so; nor can I imagine him ever agreeing that they "do not assert propositions and are not true or false." The brute feeling of approbation or disapprobation (that "unique sort of pleasure or displeasure," that "peculiar emotional reaction") is no doubt the *eau* of any full-blooded moral judgment – which is why I called it moral sense proper. But this secret sense is invariably surrounded by a constellation of other factors: bodily movements, ordinary sensory perceptions, remembered experiences, inferred motivations, imaginative representations, tacit mutual human understandings – even divine intentions, moral sensations and providential annexations.[60] Each element in the whole process is doubtless just as real as all the others. Moreover, if the determinations of our moral sense only embody, express, and convey affective reactions, it is difficult

[58] And this in turn raises a very serious genuinely philosophical problem, which I must defer until the next chapter. But let the reader simply ask himself here (as a sort of brain teaser): how, following Frankena's objection, could one possibly go about doing the empirical investigation moral judgments would be subject to, on this reading of moral sense theory?

[59] In a quite interesting (though mostly forgotten) article published in *Mind* in 1917, "Moral Sense, Moral Reason, and Moral Sentiment," E. W. Hirst – who at that time was defending the ideas of the original moral sense theorists against certain criticisms of them leveled by Hastings Rashdall in *Is Conscience an Emotion?* (1914) – writes, "Dr. Rashdall . . . appears to us scarcely to do justice to the real teaching of this school. We cannot find, as he declares, that either Shaftesbury or Hutcheson held that moral approbation was "simply a particular feeling or emotion." There is, on the contrary, distinct recognition by these writers of the cognitive aspect of moral experience . . . Hutcheson even went so far in his recognition of the intellectual character of the Moral Sense as to hold that it supplied "justifying reasons" for action, although such justification was not of a discursive nature, but depended upon 'some immediate disposition or determination of soul.'" (P. 147.)

[60] ". . . as the Author of our nature has determined us to receive, by our external senses, pleasant or disagreeable ideas of objects . . . he has given us a moral sense, to direct our actions, and to give us still nobler pleasures . . ."

to see what the point could be of calling them judgments, as opposed to exclamations, interjections or admonitions.[61] And if they are no more than attitudinal reactions then when the attitudes of two observers do not correspond, how is anyone to go about determining who is right? Hutcheson speaks as if genuine disagreement between two observers each with a moral sense is possible, if exceedingly rare; and where this happens although the natural presumption is always in favor of differences in belief, it might be that the moral sense of one of them is "subject to . . . disorder, as to have different perceptions, from the same apprehended affections in an agent" (though when this is actually happening "is not easy to determine").[62] At any rate, he never suggests that it could make no sense in such a case to take one of the resultant judgments to be true, the other false. In the *Metaphysics* there is this cryptic yet intriguing pair of definitions: "Logical truth is the agreement of a proposition with things themselves. Ethical truth is the agreement of a proposition with the sentiment of the mind."[63] Given Hutcheson's belief that the moral judgments of men and women are "pretty uniform" I can see no reason why, on his view, most of them at least cannot be properly said to be true.[64]

Admittedly, the result of this study (so far) of moral sense from the historical and philological point of view is hardly satisfying. Each of the received twentieth-century interpretations faces considerable difficulties, so that, in an obvious sense, it is absurd to ask which is right (and silly to ponder further whether, for example, "Hutcheson was an emotivist" is true). Each captures an element of truth about Hutcheson's moral sense

[61] William T. Blackstone (*Francis Hutcheson and Contemporary Ethical Theory)* offers a "good reasons" interpretation of Hutcheson's moral sense, obviously largely inspired by the work of his own contemporary, Stephen Toulmin. I have chosen not to discuss it separately, mainly because I see so little support for it in Hutcheson's texts, though I certainly do agree with Blackstone that, "for Hutcheson we are doing much more when we make moral judgments than simply expressing our feelings. Some moral judgments are justified, he claims, while others are not. Moral judgments must be supported by 'justifying reasons' if they are to have validity. Hutcheson, then, would differ significantly from Ayer who claims that moral judgments have 'no objective validity.'" (p. 67.) The main problem with Blackstone's effort to expand this suggestion into a useful full-scale interpretation of moral sense is that there seems to be only one justifying reason, in Hutcheson, for approving anything – namely that it is benevolent.

[62] *Raphael I*, p. 319.

[63] *Logic, Metaphysics and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, p. 80.

[64] "'How are we sure that what *we* approve, *all others* shall also approve?' Of this we can be sure upon *no Scheme*; but 'tis highly probable that the *Senses* of all Men are pretty *uniform*: That the DEITY also approves *kind Affections*, otherwise he would not have implanted them in us, nor determined us by a *moral Sense* to approve them. Now since the *Probability that Men shall judge truly*, abstracting from any presupposed *Prejudice*, is greater than that *they shall judge falsly*; 'tis more probable, when our Actions are really *kind* and *publickly useful*, that *all Observers* shall judge *truly* of our *Intentions*, and of the *Tendency* of our Actions, and consequently approve what *we* approve our selves, than that they shall judge *falsly* and condemn them." *Illustrations*, p. 176.

yet is just fine-grained, just analytical enough, to miss much else that is important. Does this mean that no one has ever quite made complete sense of Hutcheson's moral sense? I believe it does. And, that the explanation for this has principally to do with the (probably irresistible) temptation to 'read back into' the works of the early-modern moralists our own philosophical categories and concerns. Accordingly, here I propose that the key to a deeper understanding of Hutcheson is more history and philology, not further analysis. Now I have certainly been 'hardest' on the realist interpretation; nevertheless it seems to me that the question of his 'moral realism' remains critically important.

So was Hutcheson a moral realist? My answer is yes. He, Francis Hutcheson, was a realist, in an important sense of moral realism. But how can that be, if the objective correlates of our moral sense judgments are kind affections and not objectively real moral entities of any kind, whether objects, properties, qualities or relations? (Our moral ideas are surely real ideas, but that is another matter.) And if moral realism requires some such entities, and if Hutcheson was a moral realist, then how can his writings fail to support (as I have argued they do) a realistic reading of moral sense itself?

To begin to explain I must employ the sort of question that people who dislike philosophy positively hate – and swallow my earlier pride in questioning the critical importance of thought experiments for ethics. Suppose that a small group of boys douses a stray cat with flammable liquid and ignite it just to watch the cat burn to death, and that they thoroughly enjoy the scene. Is this wrong, for Hutcheson? Of course it is. Why, then, do they do it? Why are they so utterly morally blind to its wrongness? Their moral senses must be dull, "weakened," corrupted by ignorance, overwhelmed by peer pressure, and so on; and let us suppose this corruption irreversible. But (to resort to a philosopher's counterfactual) surely any potential observer with a well functioning moral sense would judge what they did to be wrong, were they actually to observe it. But what if – in the spirit of Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* – the boys are alone on a forsaken island, all adults on the planet having been obliterated in a nuclear conflagration? (Leave out aliens too – suppose that we humans are alone – and the cat, which, though doubtless displeased, lacks specifically moral feelings of disapproval, resentment, etc.) Would what the boys did still be wrong? Yes – and could anyone who has ever carefully read Hutcheson (including Frankena and Broad) really doubt that this would be his answer? Hutcheson's rationalistic opponents could certainly maintain that this is true and would remain true under any counterfactual conditions, for they affirm eternal verities or relations (such

as fittingness) in the things themselves, which such actions necessarily deny or violate. But how could Hutcheson maintain it? On both the expressive and the subjective theory readings, it seems he couldn't; for nowhere in the universe does, nor could anyone experience unpleasant moral feelings or moral anti-emotions towards what happened; there just are no observers at all.[65] Yet Hutcheson would say that what they did was wrong, even on this scenario.

But (and this is my first real point) to ask him to give a reason why it would still be wrong would be to ask him to do one of two things. One, become a moral rationalist who believes that what is good and evil does not, ultimately, necessarily involve anyone's feelings at all. He would need to give up the central thesis in all of his moral philosophy, that all justifying reasons "presuppose a moral sense."[66] Or two, leave empirical observation, moral philosophy, metaphysics and psychology ("pneumatology") behind, and ascend to metaphysical theology.

It is the latter course (my second point) that Hutcheson actually followed. It is important to remember that moral sense theory is only one part of Hutcheson's complete philosophy. It is only roughly half of his moral philosophy, the other being his extensive treatment of natural jurisprudence, including questions of justice, which itself is only occasionally punctuated by remarks on moral sense. But even moral sense plus natural law theory fail to constitute his complete world view, his philosophy, which is clearly founded on the belief in a supremely wise and (especially) wholly benevolent God. Moral sense itself is held to operate independently of the religious convictions, or lack thereof, of those who have it. But Hutcheson's moral theory is, at the end of the day and *in toto*, "creationist."[67] Norton is absolutely right that Hutcheson "clearly subscribed" to the view that, "as we are God's creatures, and as he is a wise, omnipotent, and benevolent Creator, we can not only be certain that our faculties come from God, but also that they are good, wisely contrived, reliable faculties," so that "if our moral sense naturally leads us to believe that there is a real difference between

[65] Perhaps everyone should hate such questions as genuinely sophistical. Just as Freud suggested that no one alive can really imagine her own death without reintroducing herself into what is imagined as an observer, perhaps no one with a moral sense can possibly even entertain the idea that what the boys did was fine, under any hypothetical scenario. But perhaps that suggestion is itself Hutchesonian, at least in spirit.

[66] Whereas for Hutcheson, as I read him, we simply cannot form any idea of the wrongness of the boys' killing the cat, distinct from our own feelings of disapprobation and repugnance at it.

[67] Compare James Moore in his introduction to *Logic, Metaphysics and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*: "He had made provision for final causes in his ontology, for internal sensibilities and calm desires in his pneumatology, for the communication of divine attributes, notably benevolence, in his natural theology." (p. xix.)

virtue and vice" we can be "sure that this belief is veracious."[68] What moral realism there is to his ethical theory – roughly, his absolute assurance that our approvals of kind actions really do show that they are really virtuous – depends on final causes (just as Hume originally complained).[69] Since we have 'killed' everyone else in our perverse thought experiment we might as well go after the Creator Himself and ask Hutcheson, "if God did not exist (so that there were no intelligent morally sensitive beings in the universe) would what the boys did still be wrong?" But Hutcheson would be simply, constitutionally unable to follow us in this; he could not have sincerely entertained this as a serious possibility. It would go beyond the limits of his philosophy.[70]

Much of the confusion surrounding this topic stems from failure to distinguish between what I would call the property realism defended and debated in contemporary analytic philosophy, on the one hand, and on the other the real difference realism reflected in the passage from Norton just cited. These contemporary moral realisms all claim, roughly, that objective moral properties – good, right, rational – must be genuine (objective, observer-independent) properties of actions and persons because they feature in the best explanations we can give of the moral judgments we actually make – which themselves seem to us to represent things as having those properties. But this type of realism, I claim, simply cannot be supported by Hutcheson's own writings, or perhaps even be formulated within his philosophical language. If I had to choose one sentence from Hutcheson's texts that best sums up the sort of realism I think he embraced (and not just in his moral philosophy) it would be this, from the Appendix to *A Compend of Logic* (Chapter I, IV, on "Ethical Topics"): "No sane man is mistaken in things which are exposed to a long and full scrutiny by his senses."[71]

[68] "Hutcheson's Moral Realism," p. 417.

[69] Compare Rivers: "Hume firmly identifies Hutcheson as the proponent of the ethics of sentiment and himself as Hutcheson's follower. But there were crucial differences . . . Hume spelt out a number of disagreements between them, including a very important point . . . Hutcheson's understanding of the natural and of sentiment quite illogically depended on final causes and the existence of superior beings, which from Hume's perspective were utterly unknowable." *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment II*, p. 242.

[70] I think Hutcheson was realistic in the additional sense that he believed that the real difference between good and evil was not decreed or constituted by God, any more than it is by us when we exercise our moral sense. But this may represent another outer limit to his complete philosophy. For excellent discussions of Hutcheson's theodicy see Elizabeth S. Radcliffe, "Love and Benevolence in Hutcheson's and Hume's Theories of the Passions," especially section V, and James Moore, "Hutcheson's Theodicy: The Argument and the Contexts of *A System of Moral Philosophy*," in *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation*, edited by Paul Wood.

[71] *Logic, Metaphysics and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, p. 51.

Can we go beyond intuition ("Yes, for Hutcheson we can be sure that torching the cat would still be wrong") to say, more precisely what Hutcheson's moral realism consists of? Certain intellectual historians of the Scottish Enlightenment have already done so fairly satisfactorily. James Moore convincingly shows that one of Hutcheson's paramount concerns (as philosopher and particularly as educator) was to combat what Moore calls the "Augustinian dualism" pervasive in the writings of Arnauld, Nicole, Malebranche, De Vries, Pufendorf, Crousaz, Loudon and Carmichael – and even in an odd secular fashion in Hobbes and Mandeville – which dominated the mentality and teaching at Glasgow and other Scottish universities as the eighteenth century began. All of these authors "were Augustinian in their theology, convinced of the sinfulness of fallen man and the gulf which separates his sensations, imagination, passions, morals, and politics from the ideal or heavenly world available through divine grace . . . It was this Augustinian mentality which Hutcheson would soon confront in his philosophical and pedagogic initiatives." Hutcheson's "formal attack" on this dualism, his attempt to bridge the gulf,

> was to remind his readers that the senses of beauty and virtue were natural powers of perception; that our normal experience cannot fail to excite the distinctive prompting of these internal senses; that when we are in error in our moral and aesthetic judgements it is never due to the sinfulness of our natural or native disposition: we are misled instead by artifice, by treachery, by bad education, by custom, and by misleading associations of ideas. Once we cease to be imposed upon by philosophers and educators who would convince us of the sinfulness of man, we cannot fail to apprehend beauty and virtue by the natural faculties of internal sensation.[72]

In a similar vein, Knud Haakonssen argues that the "mainstream of Scottish moral philosophy in the eighteenth century" is "a basically cognitivist and realist tradition," which "stretches from Francis Hutcheson via Lord Kames, Adam Ferguson, Thomas Reid and the Common Sense philosophers, to Dugald Stewart and his circle."[73] "The crucial figure in this situation is Francis Hutcheson." And in what, precisely, did Hutcheson's realism consist?

[72] "The Two Systems of Francis Hutcheson: On the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment," p. 51. Compare Hutcheson in his *Inaugural Oration* at Glasgow: "The weakness of our nature appears to have been willed by the good and great God in the excellent wisdom of his counsel; yet all our innate desires strive against that weakness and declare that such weakness is not the end of our duties, much less the goal which nature has set for our actions." *Logic, Metaphysics and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, p. 197.

[73] "Natural Law and Moral Realism: The Scottish Synthesis," p. 64.

First, that moral judgements have a truth-value; second, that some moral judgements are true, i.e. that there are facts about which moral judgements are true; third, that such facts . . . [are not] reducible to subjective states, whether cognitive or affective, of the person judging morally about them.[74]

. . . for Hutcheson our putative moral judgements are in fact real judgements . . . the putative objects of such judgements are in fact real objects; and . . . these objects are empirically ascertainable features of human nature.[75]

I have already endorsed, in effect, all of these interpretive claims.[76] If they collectively and reliably represent Hutcheson's realism – and I think they do – then I say, Hutcheson was a realist.[77] And, setting aside for a moment Hutcheson's metaphysical-theological arguments (justifications) for them, are any of these claims logically incompatible with the default, expressive reading – or for that matter the subjective theory interpretation – of Hutcheson's moral sense? I do not see that they really are, at least if we edit out some of their proponents' hyperbole.[78] Were anyone to aspire to a grand synthesis of Hutcheson's complete moral philosophy, a careful reconciliation of the three readings (along lines suggested here) might be a very good place to start.[79]

[74] *Ibid*., p. 68.

[75] *Ibid*., p. 73. Strangely, when Haakonssen – after asserting that "a moral realism like the one ascribed to Hutcheson by recent commentators [namely Norton, and "more indistinctly, Leidhold"] makes perfect sense" – comes to say "what this something is, which our moral judgment represents or which makes it true or false," he writes that, "on this point Hutcheson is . . . clear. It is love or benevolence, which 'excites toward the person in whom we observe it,' an 'esteem, or perception of moral excellence.'" (p. 75.)

[76] My interpretive conclusion may sound paradoxical but it really isn't. Hutcheson (he, Francis, the man) most surely was a moral realist, in the sense that he believed that certain things would be good, others evil, certain ethical propositions true, others false, even were no one ever to perceive any of this through his moral sense. But his moral sense theory *per se*, considered apart from his metaphysical theology and as an exercise in ethical empiricism, must be understood to be, ultimately, a form of non-cognitivism, non-realism. Compare Moore: "It was characteristic of Hutcheson's Latin writings that moral distinctions were thought to be dependent upon a metaphysical foundation that included natural theology and the attributes of divinity. Such dependence appears to have been absent, however, from his *Inquiry*, *Essay*, and *Illustrations*, written not for scholars but for gentlemen. There, following Shaftesbury, Hutcheson considered metaphysical reasoning unnecessary and misleading." Introduction to *Logic, Metaphysics and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, p. xvii, note 28.

[77] I would add that, if this form of realism should be found by some contemporary analytic moral philosophers not to be robust enough to excite their own interest, then their type of moral property-realism probably would not excite Hutcheson, either.

[78] For example Frankena's claim that "purely moral" judgments "involve *only*" the feeling of moral pleasure and pain, Haakonssen's assertion (which I edited out of the quote just given from him) that the "facts about which moral judgments are true" are "*in no sense of the term* . . . reducible to subjective states," and Broad's suggestion that on moral sense theory to say 'that act is right' "means *no more than*" that "any normal person who should contemplate, etc."

[79] This is not to say of course that such a unifying project could absolutely succeed, though I do find it strange that although no one (with the possible exception of W. R. Scott, in his *Francis Hutcheson*, 1900) has seriously made such an attempt, some writers have already announced that Hutcheson's "various writings do not cohere together" and similar things.

CHARTING THE RETURN JOURNEY

That is obviously not exactly what I myself am about in this work, for I wish not only to interpret moral sense, but to defend its existence as well. And I believe that now is the time to begin our reverse pilgrimage, our return to the present day in ethics (though I am nowhere near finished with Hutcheson, yet). Obviously, I cannot bring back everything with me from our period of interest – roughly the first thirty years of the eighteenth century, when the school of moral sense-sentimentalism was created by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. So let me try to explain my theoretical choices of what to try to carry back, in a principled (though preliminary) way.

Hutcheson opposed not only Augustinian dualism in theology, and egoism in moral psychology (Hobbes, Mandeville and Pufendorf), but also rationalism in ethics, the views of Clarke and Wollaston in particular. And (as Frankena says) against them "he argues on epistemological and psychological grounds, along the lines of post-Lockean empiricism."[80] Crucial to his argument is his rejection of innate ideas, or his empiricism (once again our term, not his): "All of our ideas, or the materials of our reasoning or judging, are received by some immediate powers of perception external or internal, which we may call senses."[81] Some actions "have to men an immediate goodness" that is "perfectly different from those of natural good or advantage." But "reasoning or intellect seems to raise no new species of ideas." The simple idea of moral goodness must, therefore, though not itself innate, be the product of a distinctive sense, which is innate. Hutcheson fully agrees with his opponents (I again cite the crucial passage from Frankena featured in chapter 1), "that we must, may, and do give reasons in support of our ethical judgments."[82] Such reasons may be factual (the action was inspired by kind affection) or instrumental (it was a means to the general happiness); it may appeal to some particular end or general rule; but what Hutcheson is arguing, first and foremost, is that "in the process of justification we sooner or later head up in a proposition which is the end of the road so far as justification goes . . . and that this proposition is not a deliverance of reason (e.g. a self-evident truth) but a commitment of the moral sense."

[80] "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory," p. 357. And I believe that this important part of his complete moral sense theory is expressly independent of theology, even of metaphysics.

[81] Compare *Metaphysics*, p. 121: "From those powers of perception, the mind acquires for itself all the furniture of ideas that the faculty of judging and reasoning makes use of, and preserves them by means of memory . . . there is no imagination or notion whose simpler elements the mind has not previously taken in by some external or internal sense."

[82] "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory," p. 362.

> Hutcheson is not saying merely that we elect or pursue the public good or any other ultimate end, not because of reason, but because of some instinct or affection. He is saying that our *approval* of the end or rule which constitutes our final justifying reason is the work not of reason but of a moral sense – a much more interesting thesis.[83]

Interesting indeed! And this is essentially what I shall be arguing in the remainder of this book. This thought, more than any other owed by us to the original school of moral sense, is the treasure I hope to return, as it were, to Canterbury.

Preserving the treasure on the return journey will not be easy, for two very important reasons. First, to whatever extent Hutcheson's original view of moral sense was realistic (in the sense explained), I am afraid that this realism will largely prove to be a burden. Hutcheson's realism is just not, in my own view, consilient with the scientific account of our world that so powerfully shapes (or ought to shape) the contemporary mind, when it comes to questions of ethics. It is, to put things bluntly, too scientifically *un*realistic. It is just as irretrievable, and (again in my own view) just as unnecessary to successful moral sense theory, as was Shaftesbury's universal harmony.

Let me explain this claim before even mentioning the second reason why the return will necessarily be arduous. Our next stopover is British ethics in the 1940s; I will elaborate and defend Broad's subjective theory rendition of moral sense theory – principally in its own right but also as enriching our understanding of Hutcheson. But why would I do that, rather than, say, look for some sort of grand unification of all three interpretations we have explored, and defend that? Partly it is because the interjectional theory of moral judgments does not, to my mind, capture enough of the richness of Hutcheson (besides which I think it is false); while any moral realistic account of his thought reads too much into it – or, to be more charitable, it demands that I carry back with me more of what he says about moral sense than I can honestly endorse and defend. Broad's "Theory," on the other hand, seems to fit the bill almost perfectly – for reasons to be explained. As I see it, the subjective theory or something very like it is the way to go in defending moral sense theory in the present day.

The rest of the answer is that I simply do not see that moral realism has much at all going for it. If I am right, whatever realism there is in Hutcheson's original moral sense theory depends crucially on theological principles, which, for reasons of my own, I simply cannot endorse. But that isn't really the point, for various contemporary philosophers have formulated all sorts of sophisticated non-theological versions of moral realism;

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 362f.

and it is really their shared approach to understanding moral judgments that I find to lack merit. I cannot bring myself to believe that when we make at least such a general judgment as that "kindness towards children is right and good," our judgment represents anything moral at all. (And I firmly believe that in this, at least, I am following Hutcheson.) Just as (back in chapter 1) I pressed a general skepticism about moral reasons lying about attached to various things and waiting to be recognized through reflection, I cannot find good reason to believe in moral features or properties in things, independently of the subjective responses of particular persons or collections of persons, standing ready somehow to guide those responses[84] – properties which, as John McDowell writes, would be "there to be experienced" independently of any "subjective state that purports to be an experience of them."[85]

I do not, in other words, believe in what Gibbard calls "normative facts": "Do normative judgments naturally represent some special kind of substantive fact about the situation judged? It seems the answer must be no."[86] His central claim is this: "We . . . accept normative claims; clearly, for example (and to say the least), it is wrong to torture people [and, I would add, cats] for fun. [However] we can explain how we come to think this without citing, in our explanation, the wrongness of torturing people for fun."[87] This seems right; I simply cannot believe that when we form moral judgments within our minds, and express them to others, we are exercising "a power to apprehend facts of a special kind, much as the [ordinary] senses involve a power to apprehend the layout of surrounding objects."[88] Adapting the gist of his argument to our example of the boys (and let's pretend the story is true, that it really happened): the boys believe that they share their island with a cat; their judgment (belief) that they do naturally represents what it purports to represent, namely the fact that there is a cat on the island with them. And in order to explain their judgment we must invoke both evolutionary considerations to account for why "we do have a system that adjusts features of our descriptive beliefs to correspond to features of the world," and the features of the world that make their beliefs true (and which are naturally represented by their judgment – the cat and its presence on the island).

[84] On the first point that is just to say that I am not a rationalist, but a sentimentalist. And I would argue that in order to be a rationalist one must embrace some form of realism, realism about what is rational. But a sentimentalist could, in principle, be either realistic about moral properties, or not be. I choose to be non-realistic, for reasons that I hope to make clear in the sequel.

[85] "Virtues and Secondary Qualities," p. 114.

[86] *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, p. 112. [87] *Ibid.*, p. 124. [88] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Of course some of our judgments represent features of the world not naturally, but artificially. Suppose the leader of the boys calls a meeting to plan what to do with the cat; he places a different shell in a circle drawn in the sand to represent each boy as he shows up, then counts the shells; he then judges that "everyone is here." In this case his judgment represents the world "not by any Darwinian surrogate for design, but by design itself." Yet even in this case in order to explain fully why he forms this judgment we need to talk not only about shells but also about boys (and their features, here their presence at the meeting). Analogously, physicists "invent elaborate schemes of representation" which artificially represent the subject matter of their investigations and in whose terms they express their scientific judgments, e.g. their belief in the existence of electrons. They believe in electrons as strongly as they believe in boys and cats; and this is because electrons necessarily figure in the best explanations they can find for observed phenomena, e.g. the results of Millikan's famous 1911 experiments on oil droplets in an electric field. We explain Millikan's conclusion by telling what he observed, and "we explain why he observed what he did – why the phenomenon was there to be observed – by citing electrons. No explanation without electrons will be complete and credible."[89]

Returning to our own (and Hutcheson's) moral judgment that what the boys did was wrong: is there good reason to think that it represents *its* content in either of these ways? Surely it represents something about (or in) what went on, but does it represent the wrongness of what they did? It would seem that it does not; what it naturally represents are substantive facts about it – they agreed to what they were about to do beforehand, what they did showed indifference to the cat's pain and so on. But the complete content of our judgment, what our judgment expresses, outstrips those substantive facts. (Gibbard would say that it expresses our acceptance of some norm, whereas I would want to say that it expresses a moral sentiment.[90]) We can see this by reflecting that, "where normative judgment naturally represents something, a plainly non-normative judgment could naturally represent the same thing."[91] But suppose there are normative facts about what they did, which our minds (somehow) manage to represent,

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

[90] One is certainly free to postulate moral properties and invoke these in trying to explain whatever expressive element is there in the full ethical judgment. This is, in effect, what Price did in criticizing Hutcheson; our moral feelings, he held, are "merely the effects and concomitants" of our cognition of moral properties by means of the understanding – and these are what moral judgments represent. And probably no wholly general argument against 'normative fact' or 'property' realism could ever be conclusive; as Gibbard says, one must work "uncertainly by exhaustion."

[91] *Wise Choice, Apt Feelings*, p. 114.

though not, naturally, in the way they represent boys and cats.[92] That will seem extremely unlikely to whatever degree that "we can explain why we have the normative beliefs we do without citing any normative facts." ("To explain, in contrast, why atomic physicists have the beliefs they do, we have to talk about atoms."[93]) Of course this argument will only be as strong at the end of the day as how well we can understand and explain normative beliefs and judgments without citing any normative facts, e.g. moral analogues of stones and electrons (and cats) and their natural properties – without moral properties.

And I simply believe that we can explain how we come to make the moral judgments we do without citing the moral goodness or evil of the things we judge to be good or evil – though the explanation is far from complete, at present (as is the philosophical work necessary to underwrite such a claim). The next chapter, on Broad's subjective theory, is partly devoted to showing how the attempt to do this might make good sense in terms of moral theory. I want to go still further in the final chapter, to argue that in the sought-after explanation we must invoke something very like what Hutcheson originally called the moral sense – and that we can, in principle as well as to a respectable degree in fact, explain the existence in us of a moral sense naturalistically, here meaning scientifically. I propose, that is, eventually to leave behind not only metaphysical theology, but moral theory.

There is much more to do by way of getting back to the present in terms of moral philosophy itself, by which I mean making sense of moral sense theory; and this brings us to the second reason why the return journey must be very hard. The attentive reader will have noticed that, up until this point, I have questioned ethical rationalism, and to some extent defended moral sense sentimentalism. (Though the work of explaining quite what that is is not nearly finished.) But nowhere have I yet offered an "offensive" argument in favor of the latter. By that I mean simply some persuasive general argument, based in conceptual analysis and/or scientific (or merely quotidian) fact, for preferring it, on the whole, to rival objectivist, rationalist or formalist ethical theories in the tradition leading from Clarke, Wollaston and Price and into the present day (as represented by, to name just one philosopher, Nagel). At the end of the final chapter I will propose such an

[92] Norton asserts that for Hutcheson our moral sentiments represent moral realities (virtue and vice) "in the way signs are representative." But again, signs can represent naturally (a cry of pain) or artificially (a mark in a teacher's roll book). One could of course argue that moral approbation represents virtue artificially, by "design itself," i.e. God's; but that would go beyond (at least) my philosophy.

[93] *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, p. 121.

argument of my own, which builds on both Hutcheson's and Broad's positive arguments in favor of moral sense theory and against rationalism, and with that my reconstruction and defense of Hutcheson's moral sense theory will be completed. What makes this so difficult is simply that Hutcheson's and Broad's arguments, while very good (suggestive and important) are, at the end of the day – this day, today – inadequate. Yet the reasons why they prove to be so are revealing; they help bring into focus what might prove to be rationalism's Achilles heel.

HUTCHESON'S "OFFENSIVE" ARGUMENT AGAINST ETHICAL RATIONALISM

I believe there are three general ways to argue 'totalistically' against the intellectual school of ethics in favor of the sentimental/moral sense one. First, by a kind of *reductio*, that any theory that purports to explain how altruistic motivation is possible, and why altruistic practices and principles are justified, presupposes benevolent affections and a moral sense. Second, by demonstrating that in order to be made out coherently, non-moral sense theories must make epistemological or metaphysical claims that are suspect on independent grounds. (They postulate queer non-natural moral facts, shadowy modal operators, synthetic *a priori* relations or truths, and funny ways of knowing and being moved by them.) Third, by showing that intellectualism in ethics is committed to a certain psychology of ethical motivation and justification that is for one reason or other simply incredible – because it is wholly unrealistic. Roughly speaking, Hutcheson's way is the first, Broad's is the second, and mine will be the third (and my own builds on the first two, even as it reaches beyond them). But let's begin by returning, yet again, to Hutcheson.

Hutcheson was the first moralist to go beyond suggesting an alternative to ethical rationalism to making an argument against it: reason is our "power of finding out true propositions," but this capacity alone cannot satisfactorily explain either how agents act for reasons or how actions can be justified by reasons; therefore rationalism cannot account for either motivation or justification in general, or for moral motivation or moral justification in particular. One might object (even before looking at the particular arguments) that Hutcheson's restriction of reason to finding out truths is question-begging; but that isn't really so. For he allows that the truths in question might take a host of forms; they might (in more modern terms) be *a priori*, or necessary, or concern abstract relations among things (or ideas) and so on. Rationalists can stretch truth to cover whatever they

wish it to comprehend, so long as they do not argue in circles (and clearly explain what they mean). Hutcheson's specific arguments have a way of getting themselves praised as ingenious and then skipped over entirely in histories of ethics, and I propose we take a brief look at them.

Wollaston bluntly defined wrong as action "interfering with truth" and right as "conformity with truth." But this won't work, since "whatever attribute can be ascribed to a generous kind action, the contrary attribute may as truly be ascribed to a selfish cruel action." There is conformity "between every true proposition and its object"; therefore bare truth cannot make us "choose or approve one action more than its contrary, for it is found in all actions alike." Perhaps 'right' means conformity to what is *reasonable* rather than what is true; but if reasonableness is not the same as conformity to truth, then "it were to be wished that these gentlemen, who make it the original idea of moral good . . . would explain it, and show how it determines us . . . either to election or approbation."[94]

When we ask the reason of an action, we sometimes mean, 'What truth shows a quality in the action, exciting [i.e. motivating] the agent to do it?' Thus, why does a luxurious man pursue wealth? The reason is given by this truth, 'Wealth is useful to purchase pleasures.' Sometimes for a reason of actions we show the truth expressing a quality, engaging our approbation. Thus the reason of hazarding life in just war, is, that 'it tends to preserve our honest countrymen, or evidences public spirit:' the reason for temperance, and against luxury is given thus, 'Luxury evidences a selfish base temper.' The former sort of reasons we will call *exciting*, and the latter *justifying*. Now we shall find that all *exciting reasons* presuppose *instincts* and *affections*; and the *justifying* presuppose a *moral sense*.

Thus actions are only sensibly called reasonable in the motivational (exciting) sense when they are seen as the means to satisfying pre-existent desires, and can only be reasonable in the justificational sense when they are the means to ends that we have a standing, extra-rational disposition to approve of – that is, a moral sense. ("Virtue may have whatever is meant by merit . . . [only] upon the supposition, that it is perceived by a sense, and elected from affection or instinct."[95])

Concerning exciting reasons the argument is this: 1. "In every calm rational [i.e. voluntary] action some end is desired or intended." 2. Every end is pursued because [for the reason that] an agent has an affection towards it; therefore there can be "no exciting reason previous to affection." Since all affections fall into one of four classes, namely self-love, self-hatred,

[94] *Raphael I*, p. 308. Here again I revert to Raphael's orthography, for its modern 'feel.'
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 320.

benevolence and malice, all rational motivation is motivation by desires for (naturally) good or bad things for ourselves or for others.[96] No general argument is offered to show that we simply must conceive rational action on this picture, as the pursuit of ends supplied by our *de facto* desires; instead we are (again) asked to consider various illustrations. Obviously, if pleasure is my end, I have a reason for pursuing wealth as a means to it; but what of things that don't seem to be the means to anything else – pleasure itself, for instance? Or self-love (my own best interests)? Can't any reason be given for pursuing such ultimate ends, or preferring one of them above another? Hutcheson answers, quite consistently, no. "To *subordinate ends* those *reasons* or *truths* excite, which show them to be conducive to the *ultimate end*, and show one object to be more effectual than another: thus *subordinate ends* may be called *reasonable*. But as to the *ultimate ends*, to suppose exciting reasons for them, would infer [imply], that there is no ultimate end, but that we desire one thing for another in an infinite series."[97] (This may be the first clear statement in ethics of what has since come to be called instrumentalism in regard to practical reason, although that view is customarily traced back to Hume, not Hutcheson.[98]) But from a moral point of view, at least, isn't benevolence more reasonable than self-love? Again, no. "I doubt if any reason can be assigned which excites in us either the desire of private happiness or public." And even if some rationalist philosopher or other could make out an idea of motivating reasons involving no appeal to finding out truth, there would still be the plain (psychological) facts that "[f]or the former none ever alleged any

[96] In other words if we did not love or despise ourselves or love or despise others we simply would not have ends, goals, to pursue. Hutcheson appears in some passages to reverse Butler's account of the relation between "principles" and "particular passions." If we didn't all have a standing affection towards our own good (or a moral sense) we wouldn't be moved to do anything. Our passions would have nothing to 'employ themselves about,' in Butler's terms.

[97] *Raphael I*, p. 309.

[98] Compare Donald C. Hubin ("The Groundless Normativity of Instrumental Rationality"), who defends "neo-Humean intrumentalism": "Humean instrumentalism grounds an agent's reasons for acting on the agent's desires, values, or some other subjective, contingent, conative states of the agent." "For the neo-Humean, the agent's ultimate ends . . . are neither rationally advisable nor rationally inadvisable, in themselves. They are, rather, the brute facts about the agent's psychology in virtue of a relationship to which policies, plans, and actions can be rationally advisable or inadvisable. The agent's ultimate ends confer this status on policies, plans, and actions not because these ends have some normative standing in themselves. They do this because the particular property of being rationally advisable just is the property of being properly related to these brute facts . . ." (p. 467). Our ultimate ends may thus themselves be simply groundless, yet still normative (capable of guiding action instrumentally). As I read Hutcheson this is exactly his view, so long as 'affections' are understood extremely broadly to encompass all of an agent's 'ultimate ends,' and provided that the determinations of one's moral sense are included in the 'brute facts' of one's psychology – which they plainly *are* on his account.

exciting reason; and a benevolent temper finds as little reason exciting him to the latter; which he desires without any view to private good." (In sum, as I would state the matter, and contrary to Nagel, Gibbard and a host of others, we simply don't need a concept of substantive or non-instrumental rationality in order to explain human motivation, moral or otherwise.)

Next to the arguments concerning justificatory reasons, and for the really interesting claim that it cannot be for "conformity to any truth, or reasonableness, that actions are ultimately approved," so that all justifying reasons – all reasons for approving of any action (apart from purely self-interested ones) – therefore presuppose a moral sense. What specific reasons (or truths) are offered by rational moralists to justify actions without appealing to instincts, affections or a moral sense? It cannot be that an action is good or right merely because it is "fit to attain [some] end," for we only approve of an action if it is judged fit (by reason) to promote an end that we approve of. The worst actions are just as conducive to their ends as the best are to theirs. "The justifying reasons then must be about the ends themselves, especially the ultimate ends."

> The question then is, 'Does a conformity to any truth make us approve an ultimate end, previously to any moral sense?' For example, we approve pursuing the public good. For what *reason*? Or what is the *truth* for conformity to which we call it a *reasonable end*? I fancy we can find none in these cases, more than we could give for our liking any pleasant fruit.[99]

Suppose next that the intellectualists try appealing to the truth of some abstract disinterested and impartial principle, such as "that it is best all be happy," which mentions nobody's particular ends.

> But here again, what means *best*? morally best, or naturally best? If the former, they explain the same word by itself in a circle: if they mean the latter, that 'it is the most happy state where all are happy;' then, most happy, for whom? the system, or the individual? If for the former, what reason makes us approve the happiness of a system? Here we must recur to a sense or kind affections. Is it most happy for the individual? Then the quality moving approbation is again tendency to private happiness, not reasonableness.[100]

What about Samuel Clarke's appeal to the fittingness of actions, which was adopted later with few changes by Price? Reason motivates approval of what is good and right because such things merit, are fitting objects of, moral approval, independently of anyone's joy and esteem (or their pro-emotions) in contemplating them. If there are indeed certain "eternal and unalterable

[99] *Raphael I*, p. 310. [100] *Ibid.*, p. 310f.

relations in the nature of things themselves . . . [so that] actions agreeable [fitting] to these relations are morally good, and that the contrary actions are morally evil," then purely intellectual discernment of these relations ought to be able to justify approval of the morally good ones. Here Hutcheson deploys an astute critical analysis of the concept of relations – and carries Locke's empiricism right up to the front door of Hume's. Clarke held that we act rightly (as we ought) when our actions agree to the relation of "fitness" between our "qualifications" and the "circumstances" in which we find ourselves, and that this fitness is an example of the "eternal and unalterable relations in the natures of the things themselves." Hutcheson complains first that the word "wrong" in "no wrong affection" "should have been first explained," and secondly that *ought* (as in "these eternal relations ought to determine the choice of all rationals") is "another unlucky word in morals." (How I wish he had explained that remark. And guess who picked up on it in what is probably his most famous argument of all.[101]) But the real move is to defend a kind of idealism in regard to relations, which closely parallels his (sentimentalist) account of what is really in approved actions, given earlier.

> [U]pon comparing two *ideas* there arises a relative idea, generally when the two ideas compared have in them any modes of the same simple idea . . . Thus every extended being may be compared to any other of the same kinds of dimensions; and *relative ideas* [may] be formed of greater, less, equal, double, triple, subduple, etc. with infinite variety. This may let us see that relations are not *real qualities* inherent in external natures, but only *ideas* necessarily accompanying our *perception* of two objects at once, and comparing them.[102] *Relative ideas* continue, when the external objects do not exist, provided we retain the *two ideas*. But what the *eternal relations*, in the natures of things do mean, is not so easy perhaps to be conceived.

Doubtless there is a relation of fitness between compassion and its end, making others happy, and a relation of unfitness between malice and that same end. So compassion and malice are both fit and unfit, depending on your end. So (the rationalists must hold) moral fitness must be fitness of ends, not of means. "The *moral fitness* must be that of the ultimate end itself: the *public good* alone is a *fit end*, therefore the means fit for this end alone are good." It sounds good, but there is a problem:

[101] ". . . as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it." Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 469.

[102] And here I would ask (harking back to the issue of what moral sense perceives), if relations are not real qualities, how can "being such as to promote the greatest happiness" possibly be among the qualities that Hutcheson's moral sense approves of?

What means the *fitness of an ultimate end*? For what is it fit? Why, it is an *ultimate end*, not fit for any thing farther, but *absolutely fit*. What means that word *fit*? If it notes a *simple idea* it must be the *perception of some sense*: thus we must recur, upon this scheme too, to a *moral sense*.[103]

This is obviously very good stuff. The concise analytical style is striking; remember, we are still in the 1720s. Hutcheson shaped subsequent moral philosophy to a considerable degree simply by managing to shake off the clumsiness of the early Shaftesbury (and the bombast of the later Shaftesbury) and Hobbes's biblical baggage and tortuously obverse reasoning. I am inclined to attach a good deal of weight to Hutcheson's arguments, but that is probably because I already accept something like the sort of Hume-type, desire-based, instrumental means/ends theory of practical reasoning that Hutcheson so brilliantly deploys against rationalists of his day. And (as it seems to me) to refute rationalism in favor of moral sense theory the surest way would be to have Humean instrumentalism 'win', at least in the sphere of ethics. But how would that happen? Would we simply wait until all Kantian, non-instrumental rationalists get tired and go home, or surrender? Or keep doing just what Hutcheson does (and what Broad will do, in the next chapter): hammer away at particular rationalist theories with skeptical questions of the form, "what precisely do you understand by reasonable" (rational, rationally required, demanded, and so on)? ("It were to be wished that these gentlemen . . . would explain it") and wait to see if their answers show themselves to be plainly incoherent, or coherent only in so far as they must "recur to a moral sense."[104]

Hutcheson's arguments are valid as far as they go, against the rationalists of his own time. But we must go further. I think we need to go beyond

[103] *Ibid.*, p. 315. As a final bear hug on his opponents (and in clear anticipation of Smith) Hutcheson proposes that "reasonable" might mean something like what an "impartial spectator" would favor, so that altruism might turn out to be "rationally preferable" to self-concern. But "[I]f the meaning of the question be this, 'does not every *spectator approve* the pursuit of public good more than private' the answer is obvious, that he does: but not for any *reason* or *truth*, but from a *moral sense* in the constitution of the soul."

[104] Rational moralists, for their part, can go on doing what they do best, namely vying among themselves to produce the "best" theory to show that (as Darwall said) it is "contrary to reason to flout ethics" whatever anyone's "merely fortuitous inclinations" (as Nagel had said) may be, while constantly shaking their heads in disbelief that anyone would imagine that the theory of practical reasons on which moral sense sentimentalism so heavily depends could ever give us what we want in our moral theory. For reasons to be transmitted by beliefs from ends to means there must be reasons for those ends; there must be reasons that are not conditioned on the subjective contingent, conative states of particular agents; there must be ends that are rational to pursue, period. Ethical ends must be among them – otherwise ethics will be left to depend (horrors!) on actual people's mere feelings, their sentiments. And lose its precious autonomy of all other fields of inquiry – including empirical psychology – to boot.

Hutcheson's form of persuasion, which is after all mainly *a priori* in nature, into the messy business of figuring out how the human mind actually works – particularly when forming moral judgments. Broad will take us halfway through that territory (in the next chapter) and James Wilson will bring us almost to where we need to be (in the last) to appreciate the force of what I will term the "hyperoffensive" argument against rationalism. Unlike Hutcheson I shall not restrict reason to the idea of finding out truths or discerning eternal relations; rationalists may pack whatever powers they want into their conception of practical rationality so long as they do not invoke sentiment either to justify their proposed moral demands or rational ethical norms, or to explain how real people are, or can be, motivated to comply with them. My own argument – building on Broad's as well as Hutcheson's – will be that rational moral agency as the intellectualists conceive it may well be logically possible, coherently conceivable (though I doubt even that), but is and will always remain psychologically impossible.

CHAPTER 6

C. D. Broad's defense of moral sense theories in ethics

"SOME REFLECTIONS"

To my knowledge, "Some Reflections on Moral Sense Theories in Ethics" is the only work in twentieth-century analytical moral philosophy that states and defends a version of moral sense theory. It is a provocative and ironic essay that is very underappreciated nowadays. I propose to revisit it in some detail, for several reasons. Most importantly I find its argument to be of extraordinary value as a coherent statement of what a modern moral sense theory might be like, and how it might be defended against (mainly rationalistic) critics who would attack or merely dismiss it. Broad shows fairness, ingenuity, humor and plain good sense in exploring what we are doing when we make ethical judgments; and despite the technicality of some of his language, his own illustrations to support moral sense theory – for example his discussion of "how we learn ethical words as children" – always seem to me to be true to what is "real, not invented or imagined." Finally, although he mentions Hutcheson's name only once in the paper, and though his stated purpose is "to treat independently and in modern terminology some of the questions with which [Richard] Price was mainly concerned" in his *A Review of the Principal Questions of Morals*,[1] I cannot help believing that he has taken many important cues from Hutcheson himself in shaping his own case. Most scholars of ethics have read the piece at least once, but I wonder how many of them have noticed how very well and often the propositions Broad lays on the table for consideration as plausible logical analyses of such judgments as "That act is right (or good)" capture the content and force of Hutcheson's arguments for moral

[1] Originally published in 1758 as *A Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*; third edition (1787). Again for the reader's convenience I will cite from Raphael, *British Moralists 1650–1800*, volume II (hereafter *Raphael II*).

sense, particularly in the *Illustrations*.[2] Revisiting "Reflections" (as I'll call the paper for short) will, I hope, add a bit of electricity to our understanding of Hutcheson's moral sense by allowing us to consider it afresh through the lens of British ethics in the 1940s, a period in moral philosophy that is contiguous and continuous with our own. I must add that I also admire the manner in which Broad stands up for the original moral sense philosophers without feeling any need to shoehorn their specific pronouncements into the more modern categories he employs to construct his own defense of moral sense theory – which is precisely what I am trying to do.

The discussion surrounding Broad's piece took place before my time and I am not sure how extensive it was. Some of Broad's concerns seem naturally a bit dated; the distinctions he uses heavily in making a case for moral sense theory (for example, analytic *versus* synthetic propositions) have for numerous reasons receded into the background, in ethics.[3] Similarly the issue of whether ethics can be carried out wholly "naturalistically" is no longer on the front burner. "Professor [G. E.] Moore" lurks in the shadows of "Reflections." Broad plainly has an agenda of his own in the piece, namely to undermine or at least poke fun at certain assumptions that led Moore to a non-naturalistic theory of judgments of goodness and rightness. The paper is still easily accessible in the anthology *Readings in Ethical Theory* (1952) by Wilfred Sellars and John Hospers, which served almost as a bible for several generations of students of ethics, including my own.[4] There it is aptly catalogued under the heading, "The Naturalistic Rejoinder." That very fact raises the interesting question whether moral sense theory, when restated in somewhat more modern terms as an attempt to provide an attractive alternative to rationalistic theories of ethical judgment and epistemology, is indeed a form of ethical naturalism; and I will argue that it is.

My plan for extracting the most theoretical fuel from Broad's analysis is quite simple. After allowing him to state in his own way what he eventually comes to call simply "the Theory," I will examine how he treats three "difficulties" for it that he raises (on behalf of Price), while in the meantime

[2] I will draw attention in the notes as we go along to what I take to be the main correspondences – rather than argue explicitly in the text that what I called the subjective theory interpretation of Hutcheson's moral sense is 'good' or 'better than the others.'

[3] In fact Broad himself questions the usefulness of the analytic/synthetic distinction in a way that foreshadows W. V. O. Quine's famous paper, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," though I am not aware of any attempt to trace Quine's argument back to Broad's essay.

[4] It is also reprinted in Broad's *Critical Essays in Moral Philosophy*.

posing and attempting to answer several other "natural" objections to the idea of basing ethics on a moral sense.[5]

THE SUBJECTIVE THEORY

Very true to form, Broad proceeds by drawing exhaustive distinctions among a wide array of possible philosophical positions on various questions and coolly gauging the strengths and liabilities of each. His primary concern is deontic sentences such as "That act is right" and "Any act of promise-breaking tends as such to be wrong," and the relations that might obtain between, on the one hand, "certain alternative [logical] analyses . . . for the situations expressed by" such sentences, and on the other, "certain alternative theories which might be held concerning deontic knowledge or belief."[6]

Now, when a person utters such a deontic sentence, he seems to be expressing a judgment of some act (or act-type), and one moreover in which he applies to the act a predicate that "has no reference to his own or other men's sensations, emotions, desires, or opinions."[7] But appearances can be misleading. It is at least possible, absent considerations to the contrary, that such a person is really doing something analogous to reporting that "This food is nice" or "That thing is yellow." After all, the grammatical form is the same in both cases. In the latter sort of case the predicates "nice" and "yellow" might naturally be held actually to refer to the speaker's own sensations of taste or to the visual sensations of (all or nearly all) human beings, respectively. Yet they may sensibly be called judgments. So, do such sentences as "That act is right" express judgments of actions at all (and if so, what type of judgments), and if they do not express judgments, what do they express?

Probably in a swipe at A. J. Ayer and C. L. Stevenson, Broad lumps together theories that claim that deontic sentences do not express judgments

[5] For clarity I will call Broad's considerations against moral sense theory (as he does) "difficulties," while reserving the term "objections" for my own. And I appeal to my readers for a bit of artistic and historical license as I try to answer these objections on behalf of all three of us – myself, Broad and Hutcheson.

[6] "Reflections," p. 364. Broad's focus on judgments of right and wrong might suggest that his analysis is irrelevant to reconstructing Hutcheson's moral sense theory, since Hutcheson's philosophy is preeminently a theory of the good, not the right. But it soon becomes clear that, at the level of abstraction on which they are carried out, Broad's reflections on the logic of deontic sentences (and our possible knowledge of their truth or falsity) can apply *mutatis mutandis* to judgments of the form "That act was done from a good motive," or even "Acts of unkindness tend as such to be bad."

[7] *Ibid.*

at all, but instead "only certain emotions felt by the speaker, or certain desires of his, or certain commands" as "The Interjectional Theory" and rejects it as "extreme." (It soon becomes clear that he means 'too extremely subjective.') Had such a theory been put to Price he probably would have found it "too fantastically absurd to be taken seriously."[8] Suppose then that deontic sentences do express judgments and that "at any rate the fact that they are in the indicative mood is not misleading." We might be attracted to a theory that is subjective though not interjectional.

> The next suggestion is that the judgments which they express are really about certain experiences, certain sensations or emotions or desires . . .
>
> The factor common to all forms of the Subjective Theory [i.e. moral sense theories generally] is that there is a peculiar kind of experience which human beings are liable to have when they contemplate certain acts, e.g., acts of promise-keeping or treachery, just as there is a peculiar kind of experience which they have when they look at certain objects, e.g., at snow or soot.[9]

Broad uses the "intentionally vague" term "moral feeling" to denote this "peculiar kind of experience" because "it covers both sensation and emotion." Subjective theories are next subdivided (naturally) into "sensational" and "emotional" versions "according to whether moral feeling is held to be analogous to sensation and moral judgments to be analogous [to] judgments of sense-perception, or whether the feeling is held to be a form of emotion and the judgments to be concerned with that emotion."[10] Both types assume that moral feeling can take two opposite forms; the "pro-form" of moral feeling will be associated with judgments of rightness, the "anti-form" with judgments of wrongness.[11]

Subjective theories may then be subdivided further into "Intra-subjective" and "Trans-subjective" varieties, according to whether they hold that when someone makes a judgment that so-and-so is right he is asserting something only about his own moral pro-feelings, or "asserting something about all men, or most men, or a certain restricted class of men, and not only about himself." Finally each of these two varieties may be divided into "occurrent" and "dispositional" forms. According to the first when someone says that so-and-so is right he is asserting only (on the intra-subjective variety) that at the present moment he feels a moral pro-feeling

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 365. And he might have said the same about Hutcheson, as we will soon see; and this will lead us naturally to further doubts about the adequacy of Frankena's expressive interpretation of him, considered in the previous chapter.

[9] *Ibid.* [10] *Ibid.*

[11] Recall that Hutcheson makes the identical distinction (in livelier terms) between "joy and esteem" and "abhorrence and aversion."

towards it, or (on the trans-subjective variety) that all or most members of a certain class of people (Americans, members of the *Athenaeum*) are feeling that way; according to the second form of the trans-subjective variety, the dispositional form, he is "asserting that all or most men or all or most members of a certain class of men [even the set of all 'normal' human beings] have a disposition to [have a moral pro-feeling] when they contemplate so-and-so or other acts like it."[12] He might believe this even if he lacked, on a particular occasion or in general, that very disposition himself.[13]

The upshot of Broad's scrupulous but sensible typology is that the only form of the subjective theory "worth serious consideration" is the trans-subjective dispositional form, according to which when someone judges that so-and-so is right he is really asserting, roughly, that "all men or most men have a disposition to have moral pro-feelings when they contemplate so-and-so or other acts like it." It is the only form that conceivably could be developed so as seriously to rival objective accounts of moral judgment, such as Price's. In fact, I propose that in so far as any contemporary version of moral sense-sentimentalism has, or supports, any certain analysis of deontic-type moral judgments at all, this has to be very nearly it. Just as importantly, I want to claim that moral sense-sentimentalism *is* subjective, in precisely the sense in which Broad's logical and epistemic defense of "the subjective theory" is.

Let's assume for discussion's sake that some version of "subjective/trans-subjective/dispositional" logical analysis of deontic judgments can be made out and move on to what Broad calls moral epistemology. What sort of *cognition*, if any, is involved in the sort of theory being considered when a person judges that so-and-so is right? That will depend on whether one's view is "sensational" or "emotional." Should the moral feeling referred to – or somehow otherwise involved in – deontic moral judgments be thought of as analogous to sensation (sense perception), or emotion?[14] The very name "moral *sense* theory" suggests that its original defenders intended "at least to assert that [singular deontic judgments] are analogous in certain important respects to judgments of sense-perception such as 'That thing is

[12] "Reflections," p. 367.

[13] The difference between the intra-subjective occurrent subjective theory and the interjectional theory seems to me a bit artificial, because it is hard to see how in stating that I, on this occasion, feel a certain emotion towards an act I am making a judgment as opposed to "expressing only certain emotions." Broad may have made one distinction too many.

[14] And correspondingly, was the basic "determination of the mind" in Hutcheson's moral sense meant to be primarily an emotion, or a sensation? I believe the correct answer is "an emotion."

yellow.'"[15] But again (unsurprisingly) two very different accounts might be given of such moral sense-perceptual judgments, corresponding to the two very different accounts of ordinary perceptual judgments we encountered in the previous chapter. Broad terms these (naturally) the "Naïvely Realistic Account" and the "Dispositional Account" – not to be confused with the earlier dispositional/subjective as opposed to occurent/subjective analyses of deontic judgments. (Only the first is important here, since Broad's objections to it turn out to apply to both.) The first account would model itself on the naïve realism of our "plain man in his plainer moments," who naturally assumes that the color he sees or the texture he feels are literally there, pervading the surfaces of the objects he sees or touches whether or not he or anyone else ever looks at or touches them. Such a view of moral sensation would hold that we directly sense or see the property of rightness or goodness in an act (say) of promise-keeping – a property that would belong "literally and non-dispositionally to the act quite independently of whether anyone happens to contemplate it and have a moral pro-feeling [here a sensation] when doing so." Broad's (very astute, I should say) argument is then that a naïvely realistic sensational moral sense theory will prove fruitless "if singular deontic judgments differ from judgments of visual and tactual [tactile] perception in just those respects which make a naïvely realistic interpretation of the latter plausible."[16] And Broad makes two very good arguments that they do – that is, against the whole idea that the sort of moral feeling involved in deontic judgments is analogous at all to the sensations we experience in ordinary sensory perception. The first is that "as a subject of moral predicates" an action such as writing a check "is a different act according to the different intentions with which it is done." And we "contemplate" others' intentions only in the sense of "making them objects of thought and never in that of *perceiving* them." All we perceive is overt behavior, not treachery, promise-keeping and so on; we simply do not have direct perceptual access to exactly what others are up to or, *a fortiori*, into the rightness or wrongness of what they are doing. And it seems that this "suffices to wreck the [sensational] version of moral sense theory . . . in regard to deontic judgments made about the acts of another."[17] We have a kind of immediate knowledge of our own intentions, and "we might suppose that [each agent] derives his notions of rightness and wrongness from perceiving those characteristics in certain of his own acts by means of moral sensations" and then proceeds to "apply them to the acts of other persons", on the basis

[15] "Reflections," p. 368. And recall that this was essentially Norton's suggestion, which he took to support a realist or objectivist reading of Hutcheson.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 371. [17] *Ibid.*

of his "conceptual cognition about them." (This seems incredible anyway.) However,

> It is certain that I have moral pro-feelings and anti-feelings both when I introspect or remember certain acts of my own and when I conceptually cognise the similar acts of other persons. Now I cannot detect any relevant difference between my moral feelings in the two cases.[18] But . . . it is impossible in the latter case to hold that there is any analogy to visual sense-perception [understood naïvely realistically] . . . *It is impossible to hold here that the moral feeling* [i.e. sensation] *is a state of acquaintance with an objective characteristic of rightness or wrongness in the cognised act* [my emphasis[19]]. Therefore it seems unreasonable to suppose that the precisely similar moral feelings which one has when introspectively perceiving or remembering one's own acts is susceptible of a [realistic sensational] interpretation.[20]

Another rather telling disanalogy between the moral feeling held (on the subjective/sensational view under consideration) to be involved in ethical cognition and ordinary sense perception (whether understood naïvely realistically or dispositionally) is suggested by the fact that whenever one judges an action right or wrong it always makes sense to ask what *makes* the act right or wrong. We expect to be told of some non-ethical characteristics of the action that are (simply) cognized, for example, that it is an act of promise keeping. But the connection between such "right-inclining" characteristics and the tendency of an act to be right seems to be "necessary and self-evident, not causal and contingent." In contrast, to ask "what makes the bit of gold yellow?" makes sense only if understood causally. Consequently, the relations involved between (let's say) the molecular structure of the gold (its "minute structure and agitation"), the workings of the human visual system, and the resulting sensation of the gold's

[18] This claim is at once suggestive and very peculiar. Broad doesn't say what he means by there being no detectable "relevant difference" in the two cases – perhaps that the only difference is the object of the anti-emotion in each case and that this is not relevant to evaluating the theory as a whole. But would not the moral feeling in the first-person case be pride or shame, and in the second case joy or aversion, as Hutcheson would say? Shame is one moral anti-emotion, disapproval (of what someone else does) is another, it seems to me. And I certainly do not (for one thing) detect any "quale" (or, with apologies to Bertrand Russell, any "moral sense-datum") common to shame at myself and disapproval of others – though I might naturally express my disapproval as "Shame on you!" But this would mean (something like) "You would feel ashamed (if you correctly cognized your own action), as I do when I perform similar actions (and cognize them correctly)." (Or simply "I would be ashamed if I were you.") They feel different because they are different.

[19] Notice! If Broad's argument is conclusive, then if Hutcheson was a naïve realist about moral sense and if his moral sense was a matter of having moral sensations, then his view must have been wrong – it is wrecked. But I have already argued that he was not naïvely realistic about moral sense, and will now propose that he held an emotional, as opposed to sensational, view of how our minds are affected (what ideas we receive) when we exercise our moral sense.

[20] "Reflections," p. 373.

yellowness must all be contingent. And the connection between promise keeping and rightness "does not *seem* to be in the least like this [emphasis added]."[21]

Much more could be said here but I propose – on the basis of these two arguments alone – that we simply drop the whole idea of modeling moral sense judgments on ordinary sensations – as opposed to full-bodied emotional responses to what we "cognize" as going on about us and in ourselves.[22] Let's move on to the "trans-subjective, dispositional, emotional" version of the subjective theory that Broad actually defends – the Theory. Now an emotion, as distinct from a generalized mood, is "always directed to a cognized object." The object may be real or imagined and, if real, "may be correctly or more or less incorrectly cognized." Next, emotions are usually "mediated" by the characteristics their objects are believed (rightly or wrongly) to possess. Of course it is possible simply to like or dislike someone without being able to identify any "mediating characteristics" you believe his personality or behavior to possess (such as his having helped or insulted you) and in respect of which you feel the emotion. But normally you can find some. Third, every occurrence of any emotion may be presumed to have a "total cause." Typically an important part of that total cause is some set of characteristics that the object of the emotion actually possesses; lightning

[21] Broad's argument here suggests yet another consideration against what I called "property realism" in ethics. If asked "what makes promise-breaking wrong?" it would sound stupid to reply simply, "its wrongness" – as (analogously) it seems silly to explain our visual perceptions of egg yolks as yellow by saying that those perceptions are "caused by the yolks 'yellowness.'" Wrongness is an ethical characteristic, not a non-ethical one, but we need to cite some non-ethical characteristic (it is an act of promise-breaking; it caused horrible pain to the defenseless cat) both in justifying our judgment that the act in question is wrong, and in explaining why (on moral sense theory) we experience a moral anti-emotion towards it. Ethical properties should be the *explananda* in any ethical theory that invokes them, never part of the *explanans*.

[22] Apart from all of that, a moral sense, supposing we have one, obviously lacks the defining features of the ordinary sensory-perceptive modalities. The question, "Where is the sensory organ for moral perception?" may sound sophomoric but it actually points to a rather powerful consideration against any literally perceptional, sensational view. Sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste are literal ports through which sentient organisms detect and respond to physical properties of and events in their external environments. We may well have a sixth, proprioceptive sense and a seventh, vomeronasal (pheromone-detecting) sense, but there are neural pathways, semicircular canals and (probably) specialized pits in the nasal passageways to help account for them. Moreover motion and position relative to the earth's gravitational pull are physical properties, and pheromones are molecules; but rightness and goodness, even supposing they could be made out (by philosophers) to be objective properties of actions (complete with motives and intentions), cannot be properties of behavior at all (as Broad notes), let alone physical properties. Where are those properties, that they may cause moral sensations in us, and how do we detect them, supposing they are there (wherever there is)? We may have distinctive sensations while making ethical judgments but surely (as it seems to me) these must come packaged in full-bodied emotional responses to what (we cognize) is in our moral environment. On the ordinary senses as perceptual modalities see especially Brian L. Keeley, "Making Sense of the Senses: Individuating Modalities in Humans and Other Animals."

really is dangerous, which helps explain why people fear it. Such "evoking characteristics" of the object, and those characteristics one believes it to have which mediate his emotion towards it, are often largely or entirely the same, but they can and do diverge when the object "does not really have the characteristics which the experient believes it to have and in respect of which he feels his emotion towards it."[23] Finally, common sense holds that particular emotions may be appropriate or inappropriate to their objects within a fairly narrow range of appropriateness, depending on the evoking characteristics they are supposed really to have. (My former lack of fear of house-and-garden centipedes would be inappropriate now that I know some of them do have fangs and will bite.) All of this is quite uncontroversial, I think.[24] But it is important to the Theory.

So, what is the Theory? I believe we have already arrived at it in the very process of following Broad through all his distinction drawing. For "on the present account" – the trans-subjective, dispositional emotional version of the subjective theory – "the analysis of deontic judgments has roughly the form, 'That act would evoke a moral [pro- or] anti-emotion in any [normal] human being who might at any time contemplate it.'"[25] The part of the theory specifically concerned with ethical cognition claims, negatively – as we have already seen, though Broad never quite spells this out explicitly – that in making deontic judgments we do not simply sense (have sensations of) the rightness or wrongness of certain acts or act-types, in anything like the way in which we simply see that gold is yellow. Nor (though this remains to be argued) are we simply "cognizing" moral features (characteristics of rightness or wrongness) of the actions we judge. Positively, it holds that, in making deontic (and other ethical) judgments, we are feeling certain positive or negative emotions towards those acts or act-types as a result of certain non-ethical characteristics we believe them to have, and that these emotions are necessary in some sense (along with those mediating characteristics) to ground our judgments of them. This simply *is* Broad's Theory – in so far as it can be put into a very few sentences.

Before considering any of the difficulties Broad himself raises, let's just pause to ask ourselves, what if the theory is true? If it is, then I would say that a certain conclusion follows that is surprising if not downright disturbing – and by that I mean disturbing to our ordinary ways of thinking about

[23] "Reflections," p. 375.

[24] And, I would add, it is all quite consistent with what Hutcheson himself had to say about the emotions. It may seem a bit labored but it is important for answering the first Pricean difficulty Broad raises for the Theory.

[25] "Reflections," p. 375.

what we are doing in making ethical judgments. (It doesn't seem to bother Broad at all except as it suggests possible logical objections needing to be rejoined or mollified.) It is that a judgment such as "That act is wrong" is analogous, deeply and not superficially, to judgments such as "That food is nasty" or "That guy is creepy." "For [once again] on the present account the analysis of deontic judgments has roughly the form, 'That act would evoke a moral anti-emotion in any [normal] human being who might at any time contemplate it.'" Now, certainly to judge that someone on the subway (tube) is "creepy" is neither to render a deontic judgment of him nor to feel a moral emotion towards him. But it is to feel an anti-emotion of some kind towards him and to judge him on that basis; in fact, it seems quite plausible to hold that to judge that he is creepy simply is to feel an anti-emotion towards him in respect of whatever mediating characteristics have caught one's attention (certain things about his dress, eyes, demeanor, and so on) – and possibly it is to judge that anyone else who is normal and similarly situated would feel the same way. One need not be a philosopher to appreciate that such a judgment is, in a very real sense, subjective; if no one ever felt that he was creepy, could the judgment that he is creepy possibly be true? But the subjective Theory is claiming that something quite similar is true of all of our moral judgments.[26]

This may seem an odd turning point for the remainder of my argument in this book, but that is just what it is. Henceforth I shall refer to Broad's analysis as simply "the Theory," and my argument will be that it is, on the whole, and at the end of the day, true. It is not only Broad's Theory (at least in this one paper of his); it is mine as well. That is, just as I endorsed both Schopenhauer's normative (*neminem laede*) principle and his axiological principle that compassion (natural affection) has moral value, whereas egoism and malice do not, I should now like to adopt and defend Broad's analytic proposal that "X is good (has moral value)" means that X is such that most – or perhaps rather all normal – men and women will strongly tend to feel moral pro-emotions towards X.

And, forgetting X's and pro-emotions and so on for just a moment – and whether any of this could actually be true – just listen to what the proposal is saying. It suggests that we do not approve of (say) kindness to children because kindness to children is good; it says that kindness to children is good because we approve it, experience moral pro-emotions towards it. It asserts that, in this setting, namely very abstract debate over the logic

[26] Of course this will provide fertile ground for objections to the present account, consisting of arguments why the two sorts of judgments are not analogous.

and epistemology of the foundations of ethics, Euthyphro was right! If the Theory is correct, then since "good" just means (*ceteris paribus*) "approved," things simply would not be good (or bad) unless people did as a matter of fact approve (or disapprove) of them. But that is just what (more or less) moral sense theory – as I am developing it – claims. So if it can be made out that the Theory (the present account, its favored analysis) is right, this is a way of arguing for moral sense theory, rather than merely appreciating it (as a philosophical artifact).

An obvious objection, even at this early stage – call it (my own) objection one – is simply to question whether we even know what it could mean for a particular analysis of moral judgments – in this rather strange speculative realm – to be "right." And just as Euthyphro was subjected to Socrates' demand that he prove that all the gods approved of his own self-supposedly pious act (prosecuting his own father for murder), will not moral sense theorists need (as it were) to argue that promise keeping, kindness to children and so on are indeed approved of, if not by the gods then at least by all men? Yes, and that is precisely where Broad will take us – eventually.[27] Notice, however, that the Theory certainly does escape at least the objection (Broad's) to the sensational moral sense view, that we do not perceive others' intentions and so cannot perceive their actions as objects of deontic judgments, sense them as right or wrong. For "we can and do have emotions towards objects which are cognized only conceptually, and we can and do feel such emotions in respect of characteristics whose presence is only conceived and not perceived."[28]

Broad's remaining defense of the Theory is simply to try to answer as well as possible three questions that represent the greatest difficulties for it – as a rationalist (whether Price himself or a mid-twentieth-century one) would pose them.

(i) Can it deal with the fact that judgments like "That act is right" seem always to be grounded upon the supposed presence in the act of some non-ethical right-inclining characteristic, such as being the fulfillment of a promise?

[27] That the present account is one very natural reading of Hutcheson's view of the matter is confirmed by Price's restatement of it – which seemed, earlier, to support an interjectional interpretation: "Our perception of right, or moral good, in actions, is that agreeable emotion, or feeling, which certain actions produce in us [i.e. most or all of us], and of wrong, or moral evil, the contrary." (*Raphael II*, p. 132f.) Price also helps remind us how extremely counterintuitive moral sense theory really is – which likely helps explain its enormous unpopularity.

[28] "Reflections," p. 375. And this must have been Hutcheson's considered view of things – otherwise how could we feel "love, compassion, indignation and hatred toward even feigned characters, in the most distant ages, and nations"?

This first difficulty is really no difficulty at all, given the distinctions Broad has already drawn: the right-inclining characteristics that ground a particular judgment that "That act is right" simply are the mediating characteristics of whatever pro-emotion is (or would be) felt towards that act. This entails that, on the Theory, every moral emotion is a mediated emotion – which seems true. It also means that every particular judgment of this type can be undermined, and (normally) caused to be retracted, by demonstrating that its mediating characteristics do not in fact correspond with the genuine evoking characteristics of the action being judged. (Writing that check was not wrong after all since it was intended as a donation, not a bribe.) And this also seems true.

The second and third difficulties, in contrast, are anything but easy; and Broad's responses to them constitute his real logical defense of moral sense theory.

> (ii) [Can the Theory] deal with the further fact that the connexion between a right-inclining characteristic and the rightness which it tends to convey *seems* [emphasis added] to be necessary and synthetic?
>
> And (iii) can it deal with the fact that it *seems* [emphasis added] not only intelligible but also true to say that moral pro-emotion is felt towards an act in respect of the characteristic of *rightness* and moral anti-emotion is felt towards an act in respect of the characteristic of *wrongness*?

For the sake of clarity I have emphasized the word "seems" in difficulties (ii) and (iii) because it turns out to be the operative term in the rest of the argument. Broad will both deny that the connection mentioned in (ii) is really necessary and synthetic and seriously question whether we do in fact feel moral pro- and anti-emotions in respect of (our belief in) actions' rightness and wrongness – and so will I.[29]

[29] One commentator on Hutcheson's moral sense, Henning Jensen, seems to me to have been extremely confused about the role of these difficulties in Broad's argument, and indeed about the whole relationship of "Reflections" to Hutcheson's original account. Jensen ascribes to Hutcheson an "ideal observer" theory of moral judgments (for which I find almost no support in Hutcheson's texts). He writes that (for Hutcheson so interpreted), "there are certain implicit claims about the attitudes expressed by moral judgments," whereas "what Broad clearly has in mind is [not these but] rather the relationship, on such a theory as Hutcheson's, of benevolence to ethical characteristics. And on this score . . . on Hutcheson's theory this relationship is contingent, not necessary. Broad, at this point, would argue that, on the contrary, the connection between such a right-inclining characteristic – assuming that it is indeed right-inclining – and rightness is necessary and synthetic." (*Motivation and the Moral Sense in Francis Hutcheson's Ethical Theory*, p. 65.) The relationship between "is benevolent" and "is good" on Hutcheson's theory is contingent if only in the sense that had God not given us moral sense we would not perceive benevolence as good. But the whole point of Broad's argument is that the connection can be made out to be analytically (not synthetically) necessary by means of an empirically informed definition of a "normal human being." Broad is arguing that the three difficulties are not real difficulties for a theory such as Hutcheson's, not using them to distance himself from Hutcheson. And I will simply leave it to my own readers to judge whether I am right about this.

I shall consider these difficulties in reverse order (as I think Broad should have) for the following reason. Before we can even begin to take the Theory seriously as a wholesale alternative to Pricean, rational accounts of moral judgment, we must come to terms with another very general objection to the whole enterprise – call it objection two. It is that the (subjective) Theory is so plainly counterintuitive that no one could ever really believe in it. At some risk of opening a Pandora's box, we simply must consider what analysis could mean in this whole context, specifically the question whether a defensible analysis of ethical terms and concepts needs to be intuitively plausible, or agreeable to common sense. After all the Theory claims that when deontic judgments are "properly analyzed" they will be seen to be far more like the judgment, "that rotting meat over there is really disgusting" (or "people who talk about themselves all day long make me sick") than the judgment "the Earth is round" (has the objective property of roundness – even if it 'feels' flat). Certainly when "real" people judge, for example, pederasty to be wrong, they seem to themselves to be offering a judgment of the latter, objective sort; and the Theory must somehow explain this, or explain it away.

The key to defusing this second objection, I believe, is to be found in Broad's answer to the question of how moral emotion is related to the characteristics of rightness and wrongness – that is, his own solution to difficulty (iii). There is another closely related question, namely in precisely what sense Broad's reconstruction of moral sense theory is subjective.[30] The two questions, and their answers, are inseparable (and this is by far the most difficult stage in the argument). But as it turns out, the reason why they are inseparable *is* the solution to the nagging problem – explained at the beginning of chapter 4 – of why moral sense theory is sentimentalistic and why sentimentalism is committed – despite the misgivings of Hume and Smith – to there being moral sense.

ANALYSIS PART I: WHY MORAL SENSE THEORY IS SENTIMENTALISTIC

Let's take things a step at a time and begin from the intuition that the Theory simply does not harmonize, somehow, with what we seem to ourselves to be saying when we make ethical judgments (objection two) – roughly, that, for example, promise-keeping is objectively right, that it simply has that feature, rightness, which we are simply (as it were) drawing attention to when we judge it to be right. How could it possibly be that when we judge

[30] And Hutcheson's original view, supposing they match at this level of abstract logical analysis.

that "X is right" what we are really saying or all that we really can mean is something like "Everyone who contemplates X will tend to feel certain emotions towards it"? How could this be the "logic of the situation expressed by" such a sentence? It is quite possible by reasoning with intelligent persons to convince them that when they call a bit of gold yellow what they are really talking about is a complex interactive process involving photons, the lens, retina and optic nerve, the visual cortex, the minute structure of the table's material (the objective correlate), perhaps subjective "qualia" produced in their minds, and so forth – even if some scientific literacy on their parts is necessary. It is also possible (I find) to persuade such persons that there really are no distinct "races" in any scientifically meaningful sense even though they may seem to see people as belonging to them.[31] But how to convince anyone that, when she says that keeping promises is right, she is really saying something about her own, and (nearly) all other people's, emotional reactions to promise-keeping, not (simply) about promises? Never mind that 'grammatical form may be misleading.' To name just one problem, if she believes that promise keeping is right, surely this does not commit her to any beliefs about how others will feel about it (or does it?). People simply do not (normally) pause to consider how people generally will respond emotionally to an act when they judge it to be right or wrong. Someone who always did would be the very picture of a lack of ethical and emotional confidence, to say the least.[32]

Ever in character, Broad blandly notes that it "is quite obvious that a number of persons who accept different and incompatible analyses of a

[31] See Richard Dawkins's intriguing discussion of this matter in *The Ancestor's Tale: A Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Evolution*, pp. 397–414. By the way, though this is now my absolute favorite book of science, I wrote my book (with its historical pilgrimage format) before Dawkins published his.

[32] Nevertheless (and this is my point, not Broad's) it seems to me that we normally pay some heed to the sentiments of most men when we ourselves form ethical judgments – even if that regard is (dare I say) largely unconscious. As Hume said, we often feel the need to "prop our tottering judgment on the correspondent approbation of mankind." (*Enquiries*, p. 276.) According to Hutcheson we "presume the [moral] sense of others to be constituted like our own; and that any other person, would he attend to the actions which we approve, would also approve them." (*Illustrations*, p. 181f.) In that passage he is most concerned to emphasize that when "we find that another does not approve what we approve" our first impulse is naturally to suspect that there is something wrong with his affections. But surely it works both ways! If I perceive that my moral emotions towards action X are "anti" whereas X appears such as to evoke "pro" emotions in "all normal men," will I not normally and irresistibly feel a pang of self-doubt? And compare Hutcheson, again: although whether or not "our moral sense be subject to disorder" is "not easy to determine," he suggests that "reason could correct" the disorder, if at all, only by "suggesting to its remembrance its former approbations, and *representing the general sense of mankind* [my emphasis]." (*Illustrations*, p. 178.) I merely suggest that there may well be some subtle and implicit reference to others' moral sentiments whenever we (confidently) make a judgment such as that promise-breaking (or pederasty or rape) is wrong. Of course if I ever were to meet someone who (I believed) honestly felt that, for example, rape were "all right," I would immediately conclude that there must be something seriously (psychologically) wrong with *him*.

proposition may all believe it; and therefore there must be a sense in which at least some of them believe it without *ipso facto* believing the proposition which is its correct analysis."[33] So even if the proposed moral sense analysis were proven true (how?) this would not entail that the correct analysis of "A believes that X is right" is "A believes that any normal person who contemplates X will feel a moral pro-emotion towards it."[34] Now to our ears this will likely sound haughty as well as unsatisfying, perhaps because we take philosophical analysis to have more modest goals than it was assumed to have in that Age of Analysis in Britain (of which Broad's piece is so exemplary). But what he says is still correct.[35] I judge that the weather is "perfect" and you reply "That's the truth!" It may be that philosophers who assert a redundancy or disquotational theory of truth have indeed finally become clear about what truth is; but that certainly would not entail that you believe or are asserting anything like "'The weather is perfect' is true if and only if the weather is perfect, and you are quite right that it is!" (Or even that you would have a clue what I was talking about were I to judge that this is "all that you really mean."[36])

It is important that Broad say something about proper analysis here, for the following very important reason, which is quite easy to miss amid

[33] "Reflections," p. 386.

[34] This carries Broad into a tortuous digression on whether moral sense theorists could without absurdity accept their own analysis of "X is right" even as they make deontic judgments themselves, which ultimately proves wholly unnecessary to his main defense of moral sense theories in ethics. But why is it ultimately unnecessary? It is because what Broad just claimed is true – people can accept a proposition, e.g. that "murder is wrong" without believing or even having any idea what proposition is its correct analysis; and this will be part of my solution to the statistics charge in the following section.

And what is all this about? Part of the answer is simply that Broad is harassing certain of his fellow analysts in British ethics of the 1940s, particularly those whom he viewed as disciples of Moore. When all is said and done "Reflections" is a period piece; by adopting such a "who cares?" attitude about whether philosophical analysis does or does not conflict with common sense, Broad is poking fun at all non-naturalistic moralists who argue that "good" must be indefinable or that goodness must be simply intuited because this is what we find, by introspection, to be the only analysis of "good" left standing when we ask the open question about all other analyses. (As if to mock someone who might ask, in their spirit: "Is what all or most people's moral sense leads them to feel approval of really good? I am not really sure, but the mere fact that I can ask the question at all proves that 'good' cannot be defined as 'what people's moral sense approves of.'") Broad is enjoying himself grilling (very subtly and sophisticatedly) not only Price, but also – in effigy – Moore, Ewing, and Sir David Ross.

[35] The subjective Theory is not committed to saying that when we (as individuals) judge promise-keeping to be right we do so as a result of considering that all normal men would tend to feel moral pro-emotions towards; it only claims that when we step back to reflect on what "right" means, we can (possibly) be persuaded that it means, ultimately, something like "promise-keeping is such as to evoke moral pro-emotions," etc.

[36] Or consider Gibbard's analysis of "X is wrong" as "such that it makes sense to feel angry at someone's doing X," or his claim that when I say that keeping promises is right I am "avowing a norm that permits it." Certainly such analyses, if they are to be allowed to do any philosophical work, cannot be refuted merely by appeal to the verbal intuitions of passers-by.

all the twists and turns: up until this point Broad has assumed for the sake of the dialectics of the matter that the mediating characteristics for all moral emotions are indeed the rightness or wrongness of acts, or more properly, agents' beliefs about their rightness or wrongness. Unfortunately, this tends to obscure what I think is one of Broad's most important moves on behalf of moral sense theory (and I believe that this has quite often been missed heretofore). This is to drop altogether from the Theory (just as the emotivists did from theirs) the idea that actions possess objective properties of rightness and wrongness, goodness and badness, at all – while at the same time accepting and (eventually) accounting for the fact that people do normally seem to believe that actions really have such properties. Recall "difficulty (iii)": Can the Theory deal with the fact that "it seems not only intelligible but also true to say that moral pro-emotion is felt towards an act in respect of the characteristic of rightness and moral anti-emotion is felt towards an act in respect of the characteristic of wrongness?" Broad's solution – and I am being clearer about it than he was – is simply to deny that this is a fact. It cannot be a fact, because there just are no such characteristics – at least we do not need them in order to account for moral judgments. What I find most interesting about his argument here is that, whereas Gibbard's case for a type of moral anti-realism was mainly grounded in abstract considerations about philosophy of language and scientific explanation, Broad appeals directly to the phenomenology of moral experience – as well as common sense observations about children.

Remember that rational moralists (like Price) want to claim that the mediating characteristics of acts that ground deontic judgments – as well as any pro- or anti-emotions anyone may or may not feel towards them – are always their rightness or wrongness as cognized by the understanding (their evoking characteristics, we might say, simply are their rightness or wrongness). This is the Objective Theory. Accordingly, a deontic judgment ascribes to an action a certain quality – or perhaps a certain relational property such as moral fittingness – which has "no reference to the feelings or desires . . . of anyone else concerning [that] act." Such judgments could be significant and often true "even if no human being had ever had moral feelings of any kind."[37] Therefore moral feelings must result from deontic judgments, not ground (justify) them. Broad's rebuttal seems to be simply

[37] "Reflections," p. 367. Indeed Price (whom Broad never cites directly) says that "some emotion or other accompanies, perhaps, all our perceptions; but more remarkably our perceptions of right and wrong." "But these are merely [the] effects and concomitants, and not the perceptions [of virtue and vice] themselves." (*Raphael II*, p. 144.)

to deny on the basis of introspection – at the very end of the paper – that this is in fact how things work. "What is happening when a person is said to be feeling [an] emotion towards an act in respect of his belief that it is right or that it is wrong?"

It *seems* to me that in such cases I do not first recognize or think that I recognise a quality or relation of rightness or wrongness in the act, and *then* begin to feel a moral pro-emotion or anti-emotion towards it in respect of this knowledge or belief. What I seem to do is to consider the act and its probable consequences under various familiar headings. "Would it do more harm than good? Would it be deceitful? Should I be showing ingratitude to a benefactor if I were to do it? Should I be shifting onto another person's shoulders a burden or responsibility which I do not care to bear for myself?" In respect of each of these aspects of the act and its consequences I have a tendency to feel towards the act a certain kind of moral emotion of a certain degree of intensity. These emotional dispositions were largely built up in me by my parents, schoolmasters, friends and colleagues; and I know that in the main they correspond with those of other persons of my own nation and class. It seems to me that I call the act "right" or "wrong" in accordance with my final moral-emotional reaction to it, after viewing it under all these various aspects, and after trying to allow for any permanent or temporary emotional peculiarities in myself which may make my emotional reaction eccentric or unbalanced. By the time that this has happened the features which I had distinguished and had viewed and reacted to separately have fallen into the background and are again fused. They are the real mediating characteristics of my moral pro-emotion or anti-emotion; but I now use the omnibus words "right" or "wrong" to cover them all, and say that I feel that emotion towards the act in respect of my belief that it is right or that it is wrong.[38]

If the "real mediating characteristics" are all non-moral features, it follows that the (supposed) moral features of rightness and wrongness are not the mediating characteristics of Broad's final judgment. (The latter sort of features just do not appear anywhere, here, having become mere shadows of "omnibus words.") This is a peculiar passage. But I cannot imagine a better illustration of what Hume must have meant to say by surmising that, "reason and sentiment concur in almost all moral determinations and conclusions." I would even be willing to adopt it as a model for any sentimentalistic account of many if not most of our actual moral judgments. That is, reason first considers the action under various non-ethical descriptions, and while these no doubt play an essential part in both eliciting Broad's moral emotions and grounding his final judgment, the judgment itself, the "final sentence" as Hume called it, derives from, or simply is, his "final moral-emotional reaction." Unless his moral pro- and anti-emotions were

[38] "Reflections," p. 387f.

in play it is doubtful whether Broad would be motivated to make any moral judgment at all. And notice, too, how perfectly this accords with Frankena's statement of Hutcheson's "much more interesting thesis," which seems to keep drawing us back to itself: that "our *approval* of the end or rule [e.g. "one ought to be grateful to benefactors"] which constitutes our final justifying reason is the work not of reason but of a moral sense."

Consider next a passage from another short (and much less well known nowadays) paper of Broad's, written ten years before "Reflections," entitled "Is 'Goodness' a Name of a Simple Non-Natural Quality?"[39] At that time (1933–34) Broad seems to have been particularly vexed by Moore's intuitionism and non-naturalistic theory of moral goodness – and nearly as disgruntled with the emotivism of Ayer and Stevensen. He was, however, somewhat impressed with Austin Duncan-Jones's restatement of certain insights of the emotivists – or at least willing to use them to attack Moore. (Though he was genuinely impressed enough, I think, to incorporate them into his later Theory in "Reflections.") Moore had just assumed that "good" is "a name of some characteristic or other," so that the only important question could be what kind of characteristic "good" is. "X is good" certainly shares the grammatical form of many sentences "which undoubtedly do state that a certain thing has a certain characteristic," for example "X is square." But – and this is Broad's main point in the paper – while the omnibus judgment "X is good" is apparently "grammatically indicative," our everyday, real ethical utterances may actually be partly or even entirely interjectional ("the expression of an emotion which the speaker is feeling"), evocative (serving to arouse moral emotion "in the hearer") or imperative ("That's an act of self-sacrifice. Imitate it!").[40] Duncan-Jones's insight is "further supported by reflecting on how we learn ethical words as children." For a small child good and right acts are "practically co-extensive with those which its mother or nurse names in a certain tone and with a smile or which she exhorts it to do," bad or wrong acts with those named in a "certain other tone and with a frown or which she forbids it to do." These ethical words soon "acquire the same rhetorical or imperative force as the tone of voice or the facial expression or the explicit command or forbidding." Broad also notes that many of the ethical words children learn

[39] *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 34 (1933–34); also available on the Internet at www.ditext.com/broad/gnq.html

[40] This is all familiar stuff nowadays; but back then what Broad thought was most important in the emotivist theory (which he took to be "quite plausible enough to deserve very serious consideration") was that unless and until it is refuted, to ask whether the "ethical name" 'good' is 'unanalyzable' or not would be "like asking whether unicorns are or are not cloven-hoofed."

early on are "amphibious," "partly non-ethical and partly ethical." "That is a statement made with the intention of producing a false belief" employs "purely non-ethical terms," whereas in "That is a lie" the predicate is "partly non-ethical and partly ethical." (Nowadays we would say – and mean the same thing – that the second statement employs a thick ethical concept.)

> Now it is quite certain that the second sentence does commonly *express or stimulate an emotion* [my emphasis] which the first does not. And it is plausible to hold that *this is the only difference* [emphasis mine] between the first, which is purely non-ethical, and the second, which is partly ethical.

Now if that is true, then

> words like "good" and "bad" do not mean anything in the sense in which words like "white" and "square" do. *There are no characteristics of which they are names* [emphasis added]. A person who utters sentences in which they occur as grammatical predicates is not using them to convey the belief that a certain subject has a certain peculiar characteristic of which the grammatical predicate is a name. And a person who hears such sentences and understands them is being exhorted or commanded or emotionally stimulated, but *is not receiving any special kind of information about the subject of the sentence* [emphasis added].[41]

All of this serves to remind us that the Theory is not a species of moral property realism – and might even turn out to be a contemporary moral realist's worst nightmare. (The latter passage seems to me hardly distinguishable from Gibbard's argument against normative facts.) Our moral emotions are no doubt real, as are (at least) most of their evoking characteristics, but there are no characteristics picked out (denoted, named) by ethical terms and, *a fortiori*, referred to in our ethical judgments.

However, at this point someone might legitimately raise a third objection, that neither Broad's phenomenology of deontic judgments, nor his own statements concerning what is plausible to suppose is going on when children learn ethical words (and go on using them in the same way as adults) really amounts to an argument for the Subjective Theory and against the Objective Theory. That may well be true. I myself find Broad's considerations quite convincing, but this is probably because his analytical claims seem very realistic (in my own sense of "realistic" explained in chapter 1). But allow me to return (one last time) to the problem of the seeming counterintuitiveness of the Subjective Theory (objection two). Counterintuitive compared to what? To which alternative philosophical positions on how

[41] If such a view is correct then Professor Moore's theory is wrecked because it "breaks down at the first move." And "so too do the theories of most of his opponents," by the way.

to analyze "X is right (or wrong)"? Let's try at least three on for size: "X is wrong" means (is correctly analyzable as):

1. "I cognize X as having a certain (unanalyzable?) objective characteristic of which "wrong" is the, or at least one, name, and so I am sure that anyone else who contemplates it (correctly?) will cognize that same characteristic, whether they feel any certain way about the act or not. And X would certainly still be wrong, i.e. have this characteristic, wrongness, whether or not anyone else but me, or indeed anyone at all, ever cognized it as being wrong (not to mention feeling any certain way about it)." (The Objective Theory)
2. "When I contemplate the non-ethical characteristics of X, I feel like shouting "Blast!" and/or trying to discourage others from doing X by frowning in disgust or forbidding them to do it, because I do not like it when they do it." (The too subjective Interjectional Theory)
3. "I have a very bad emotional reaction to X when I contemplate it (cognize its non-ethical characteristics), so that is why I say it is wrong, and I feel quite sure that everyone else would feel exactly the same way if they contemplated it too (they – the human race – will back me up on this one)." (The Subjective – trans-subjective, dispositional, emotional, moral sense – Theory)

Now, frankly, 3 seems to me a decent compromise between 1 and 2. (As one of my students might say, "It works for me.") It says pretty much what I think I mean when I call acts of theft, murder, cruelty, etc. wrong, and importantly, it doesn't say more than I believe I am willing to say about such acts. What I am trying to say certainly seems to express and stimulate emotion. Nevertheless it is a judgment – Broad is right about that. It says something about the act, namely that its non-ethical characteristics as I cognize them are what make me respond so emotionally-negatively to it (mediate my moral anti-feeling towards it). And it also judges – I suppose informally and empirically, on the basis of everyday social experience (I have not actually carried out any studies) – that others will or would feel the same way, that their moral emotions will be mediated in the same way as mine. I am just not absolutely sure that even pederasty and rape have an objective property of being wrong in abstraction from all human feeling about such practices. (Perhaps this – or something like it – is the sort of objectivity that moral theorists should be looking for, instead of trying to ground moral demands wholly in *a priori* logical necessities accessible through pure reflection on reasons for action.)

In other words (as I will say in the next section) the analysis is subjective without being subjectivistic. It captures some of the solid insights of the

emotivists without denying that there are one or more objective factors in moral judgments. It just says that what makes ethical judgments objective, what is left when you leave out the 'oomph' of expressing and stimulating and just say something about the action, what you are really talking about when you judge an action, is not any intrinsic ethical property of the act, but instead (something like) we humans' entrenched emotional dispositions to respond positively and negatively (and for the most part consistently and involuntarily) to (the non-ethical characteristics of) various types of behaviors. The interjectional part of the judgment is pretty well captured (I would say) by my statement of my own emotional reaction to X, or (if you will) my expression of it. The rest of 3 correctly analyzes the part of the judgment that is objective, or if you like, is what is objective in the complete judgment. I believe I will accept it as the correct analysis of what I mean when I call acts and act-types wrong – at least until some philosopher can show me why it doesn't, or can't, include everything important I mean to say.

True, any analysis along the lines of 3 appears to have one consequence for understanding morality that, for whatever reason, most philosophers, in fact most people who think about it, find unpleasant. It is that unless all or nearly all human beings felt a moral anti-emotion when contemplating (e.g.) murder, murder simply would not be wrong. There would be no way to make it out that it was wrong. In other words, unless we all had a moral sense, or sentiment, murder would not be either right or wrong. (Although Hutcheson may not have been able to accept this, I do.)

Now, the very attentive reader may have noticed that in the previous chapter, on what we perceive by moral sense, I never quite answered my own question. And I am now at last able to answer it, speaking for myself alone: nothing. "Perceiving the moral rightness or wrongness of an action (or in one)" should be regarded as a mere *façon de parler*, albeit a natural or even irresistible one.[42] In any situation like the one described in the first, phenomenological passage from Broad, I would say is that the rightness or wrongness of the action in question is not perceived in it, not cognized or

[42] And what of Broad (what did his moral sense perceive, if anything, in "such cases" as he just described)? He says that he "calls" the act right or wrong in virtue of his "final moral-emotional reaction to it" but (only) "says" that he feels that reaction in respect of his "belief" that it is right or wrong. But (once he has put down his philosopher's pen) does he really believe that the act is right or wrong, that his moral-emotional response to its non-moral "mediating features" (even if now "fused") really make it right or wrong, justify the belief that it is wrong? I believe he does. And suppose that he does; then why not say he perceives its rightness or wrongness? You certainly can say that; but then I would say that the genuinely philosophical question that confronted Hutcheson in his day and time has melted away; it has faded into what is really a question about how to use the word "perceive" in the matter of moral judgment-making.

intuited in it, but rather provided by the reflecting agent's feelings about it. Rightness and goodness are qualities we (so to speak) bring into the world, not discover in it.

And this is why moral sense theory – at least in any form I can see clear to defend – is subjective. And why, when you think about it, moral sense theory is necessarily sentimentalistic. Actions' rightness and wrongness are supplied by our sentiments (moral pro- and anti-emotions) about them, not cognized in them.[43]

With Broad's help I would say we have pretty much solved the riddle of why moral sense and ethical sentimentalism are inseparable.

ANALYSIS PART 2: SUBJECTIVISM VERSUS NATURALISM, OR, ARE ETHICAL PROPOSITIONS STATISTICAL?

How, more precisely, is the subjective Theory subjective? It spells out the meaning of "right" not by means of moral features, but in terms of people's dispositions to experience distinctive positive emotions towards certain types of acts. Rightness is conferred on an act, as it were, by people's emotional responses to it, not discovered in it by cognition of an objective property it has, rightness. That does seem very subjectivist, and this is essentially what so horrified Bentham and Mill (to name only two prominent critics) about moral sense theory. If actions are not really right or wrong in themselves then they must be right or wrong merely "because I say so"; there seems to be no room for objectivity of any kind in ethical judgment. But this is a mistake. Moral sense theory is subjective – in Broad's sense of the term – but is not a kind of subjectivism in ethics. Moral sense-sentimentalism may harbor dangers (or plain confusions) but ipse-dixitism isn't one of them – despite almost three centuries of commentary to the contrary.

To see exactly why this is so, consider what subjectivist was taken to mean, and why it was rejected, by one of Broad's notable peers, A. C. Ewing, whose "Subjectivism and Naturalism in Ethics" appeared in 1944,[44] nearly contemporaneously with Broad's "Reflections." Ewing wished to show (very

[43] Have I now left Hutcheson behind? Not really, as can be shown by simply recasting what I just said about the properties of rightness and wrongness, and about sentiment, in terms of reasons. Reasons for approving or disapproving actions, or for doing or not doing them, simply cannot attach or apply to them independently of real, normal people's emotions and desires regarding them – their "senses and affections." And this is why, for Hutcheson, reason and understanding alone cannot either justify doing or approving them, or explain why people do or approve of them when they do. And why Hutcheson is a sentimentalist, indeed the sentimentalist *par excellence*, on my definition of sentimentalism.

[44] *Mind* (53); reprinted in Sellars and Hospers.

much in the spirit of Price) that ethical judgments are necessarily objective, so that what Broad calls the Objective Theory is the only account of them that could possibly be true. He defines "objective" by enumerating propositions about ethical judgments that any objectivist moral theory would deny.

(a) that they are not really judgements at all but, e.g., exclamations, commands, or wishes [Broad's 'Interjectional Theory']; (b) that, though judgements, they are all false or at least that we are never justified in thinking them true [moral skepticism(?)]; (c) that, though they are judgements and true judgements, they merely refer to the psychological state or the psychological dispositions of the person who makes them . . . the simplest form [being] that according to which . . . 'This is good' . . . becomes 'I have an emotion of approval in considering this.' [Broad's 'Intra-Personal Occurrent and Dispositional Subjective Theories'][45]

The standard objections to all such accounts are familiar. Views (a) and (c) entail: that no ethical judgment can ever be false unless the person making it is mistaken about his own psychology (or is just lying about it); that no two people can ever mean the same thing even when they seem to agree on an ethical judgment, since each one really means by "X is right" "X is approved by me"; that the judgments "X is right" and "X is wrong" are not in the least logically incompatible so long as they are made by different people (or one person, at different times); that the only facts that can ever be relevant to supporting or questioning any ethical judgment are psychological facts about the person making the judgment. These objections certainly are conclusive, I would say, against interjectionalism (which, as we saw, is intra-subjective).[46] But they are not really objections to our Theory, which Ewing, interestingly, did not see as a subjectivist view (like (a) and (c) above) at all, choosing instead to label it "naturalistic" in contrast to subjectivist. He took it to be wholly immune to these four objections. What worried him about the Theory was something quite different.

A typical example of a [non-subjectivist] naturalist ethics would be the theory that to say some action is right or some experience good merely means that most men, or most men in a certain group, tend to have a particular kind of feeling about it. On such a view "good" and "right" still stand for objective facts quite independent of the attitude towards them of the person who makes the ethical judgement in question, i.e. they stand for facts about a class of people or people in general . . . The forms of naturalist ethics in question do not differ from "non-naturalist" ethics in denying the objectivity of ethics, for judgements of psychology are objective, but in making ethics a branch of a factual science.

[45] "Naturalism and Subjectivism in Ethics," p. 116f.

[46] They are often discussed in introductory ethics classes, though (strangely) they seem (empirically) not to affect the judgment of students for whom it is self-evident that "morality is personal."

I will not treat this as a separate objection to the Theory, because I, for one, do not see what could be so wrong after all with making ethics (eventually) into a branch of science. I would rather know this: if the moral sense Theory escapes the standard objections to subjectivism in ethics, what is wrong with it as an ethical theory?

Ewing raises two objections. First, following Moore, he claims that naturalistic theories are simply incapable of capturing what is distinctive about moral thinking, moral judgment, and moral concepts – and this drags us right back into the problem of analysis. (Let's call this one, objection four, the "analysis objection.") When we say "Acts of promise-keeping tend as such to be right" it certainly does not seem that we intend to say anything factual about most people's emotions. (And given the objections to interjectionalism just enumerated, it must be that we intend to do something more than express our own.) And on Ewing's brand of analysis, at least, although "it is never possible to *prove* that an analysis of a concept is correct" (though it "may be possible to prove that it is incorrect") "in the last resort . . . we are forced to fall back upon our consciousness of whether a proposed analysis does or does not express what we mean." And even if the analysis "expresses something more than what we mean, it at least must include all that we mean."

> Now in the case of naturalistic definitions of "good," so far from my seeing this I see quite definitely the contrary. I see that propositions about good in some senses of "good" are propositions which cannot be analyzed adequately in psychological terms almost as clearly as I see that they cannot be analyzed adequately in terms of physics or mathematics.[47]

Ewing thought he could "just see" by the "immediate awareness of introspection" that good, right, duty, ought and morality are "just not the sort of concepts which can ever be analyzed completely in terms of psychology."[48]

My own answer to this objection is that I simply do not see that this is true, nor do I generally find warnings about "the naturalistic fallacy"

47 "Naturalism and Subjectivism in Ethics," p. 120.

48 There may only be one ethical concept that is irreducible to other concepts, and so *a fortiori* "incapable of analysis" naturalistically, but

> there is one, ought, and . . . this notion of ought is either included in or entailed by the notion of good in any sense of "good" in which the good is a rational end of action. That what is good ought to be promoted . . . seems to me an *a priori* proposition, though I am doubtful whether it is analytic or synthetic. (P. 126.)

This is the article in which Ewing famously declared that, "Obligation is what subjectivist and naturalist theories leave out, and to have an ethics without obligation is like playing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark."

very worrisome (or accounts of it very coherent). But Ewing has raised a genuine problem for the Theory. Being itself subjective, even though not subjectivist, how will it explain (convincingly) what sort of ethical objectivity moral judgments may lay claim to? How exactly can human sentiment, however widely shared or psychologically entrenched, justify full-blooded moral (whether deontic or axiological) judgments? In other words, what sorts of ought-statements can it uphold as true? If promise-keeping is right then doesn't this mean (inter-personally or trans-subjectively) that we all ought to keep them?[49] There is undeniably a gap (at least at this stage of things) between "promise-keeping is right means we all have pro-emotions towards it" and "we should keep our promises."

And this leads us to Ewing's second objection to naturalistic theories that are not subjectivist. Here, ironically, he cites Broad's objection to Hume's account of moral judgment, which Broad had stated at the very end of the chapter on Hume in his famous *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, published in 1930. And (what may be worse) in that work Broad clearly ascribed to Hume a theory of moral judgments that is virtually indistinguishable from the Theory (of "Reflections").

Professor Broad points out that the logical consequences of such a view is "not [as with subjectivism] that in disputes on moral questions there comes a point beyond which we can only say '*de gustibus non est disputandum*.'" On the contrary, "the logical consequence is that all such disputes *could* be settled, and that the way to settle them is to collect statistics of how people in fact do feel. And to me [*viz.* Broad] this kind of answer seems utterly irrelevant to this kind of question."

This objection "would apply to all forms of naturalism which are not subjectiv[ist]," "for all such views would equate ethical propositions with propositions about the psychology of men" and thereby "make ethical propositions identical with propositions about statistics (except that they were vaguely expressed)."

For the difference between vagueness and definiteness is only the difference between saying 'most' and saying '882 out of 1024.' Yet ethical propositions, whatever they are, are surely not just vague propositions about statistics.

I propose to call this fifth objection "the statistics charge." Recall (from the previous chapter) Frankena's objection to the subjective theory interpretation of Hutcheson's moral sense: since on the subjective theory moral

[49] As we saw, Hutcheson considered "ought" an "unlucky word in morals," and Broad appears to steer clear of it too. But that does not excuse the Theory from owing us some sort of proposal for solving the traditional problem of is and ought.

judgments are "empirical propositions about the *incidence* [my emphasis] of feelings of pleasure and pain, etc., and so are subject to empirical investigation" it seems "inconsistent with at least the spirit of what Hutcheson is contending [against the rationalists] when he says that moral distinctions are not perceived by reason but by a sense." But how would we ever know what that "incidence" is, without gathering statistics on people's feelings? And if the Theory requires that we collect them, why does Broad not supply them? And if the subjective theory reading of Hutcheson were correct, then why would he feel no need (as he obviously didn't) to go out collecting before asserting that kind affections raise joy and esteem? (And then why also would he have not traced our perception of moral distinctions to reason rather than a sense?) Worst of all, if Ewing – and the earlier Broad – are right to complain that statistics are irrelevant to justifying ethical propositions and if moral sense theory needs them, then isn't all moral sense theory as such plainly false, if not ridiculous? Some scholars of Hutcheson appear to have gotten themselves all worked up over the statistics charge, but in my view the whole objection is superficial and my answer to it is this.

First, the whole thing hinges on a fallacy, namely equivocation on "ethical propositions". Not all ethical judgments (propositions) are alike, and neither Broad nor Hutcheson – nor Hume, for that matter – is engaged in resolving moral disputes. Hutcheson's natural jurisprudence involves something like casuistry, but the particular ethical propositions he defends (about telling the truth, keeping promises, respecting one's family, etc.) are all justified by the greatest happiness principle. This natural law part of his theory picks up where the moral sense theory ends, for he is now assuming what everyone's moral sense approves – roughly whatever affections foster public happiness. ("How are we sure that what *we* approve, all others shall also approve? Of this we can be sure upon no scheme; but 'tis highly probable that the senses of men are pretty uniform."[50]) But given that assumption, why in the world would he need to collect statistics in order to prove that these benevolent affections really are excellent? If we know that benevolence is good on moral sense theory because (normal) humans involuntarily respond approvingly to it, is it really necessary to take a vote on its worthiness, or should we instead qualify his claim to take into account the rare individuals for whom benevolent motives do not do anything? (All right, benevolence is ninety-eight per cent good.) Hutcheson says that although moral sense "is not a rule," we can "find

[50] *Illustrations*, p. 176.

out" a rule by it, but he means a rule of thumb such as "promote the happiness of the greatest number of people you can as you go about your daily business," not one like "abortion is always morally wrong." No doubt philosophers have failed to prove that the latter proposition is correct, or incorrect (could they ever?), and there is no doubt that collecting statistics could never settle its truth or falsity posed this way as one side in a moral dispute. Moral sense theory simply isn't going to solve any issues in applied ethics, if such a subject really exists in the first place. And if you are looking for a supreme practical principle for moral sense theory, or perhaps for sentimental ethics in general, probably the best you are going to get is something like Schopenhauer's motto for compassion, "Harm no one, but rather help everyone."

And what about Broad? I do not wish to spoil the ending for those unfamiliar with "Reflections" so let me just say that Broad thinks there is a scheme on which it is highly probable that our moral pro-emotions must have as their objects "acts whose performance . . . is essential to the stability and efficient working of any society" while our anti-emotions must be evoked by "acts which, if done on many occasions and by many people, would be utterly destructive." Earlier I used "That guy is creepy" to illustrate a subjective judgment, but here I would also ask: would we need to collect statistics to establish (even) that brightly colored snakes are scary or that rotting meat and vegetables are nasty? Consider this moral analogue: child abuse is revolting, for virtually everyone, and at the end of the day what is the difference between saying that and calling it "morally repugnant" or "evil"? To my ears, at least, "Child abuse is revolting" sounds rather objective (not to mention true), even though – on the Theory – it does implicitly make reference to "all (normal) men's" feelings.

Second, why cannot Ewing see that ethics can't be reduced to psychology as clearly as he can see that it can't be reduced to physics? Why only "almost as clearly"? Perhaps (heresy!) there is something to be said for the view that ethics should somehow be made a branch of empirical science, some form of psychology in particular, and that those parts of it that cannot be (excepting perhaps some routine conceptual clarification) should be simply junked as too detached from or transcendental to what we know about ourselves ever to qualify as genuine knowledge. Finally, Ewing just assumes that the sort of "propositions about the psychology of men" that are relevant to ethical analysis (on any naturalistic view) must simply be "propositions about statistics." He assumes, in other words, that ethical naturalism can only succeed by analyzing ethical terms in purely descriptive terms. But empirical psychology aspires to be explanatory as well as descriptive, and it

would be a terrible disappointment if all it could do was to gather statistical data on people's (present) feelings while remaining silent on every question regarding the deep psychological sources of human moral affect, behavior and judgment. Fortunately (as we are about to see) this simply isn't the case.

BROAD'S DEFENSE, (ALMOST) CONCLUDED

We are now prepared (at last) to consider Broad's proposed solution to the second (and final) Pricean difficulty for moral sense theory, that whereas "the connection between a right-inclining characteristic [e.g. that it is the keeping of a promise] and the rightness which it tends to convey seems to be necessary and synthetic," the relation between such characteristics and people's emotional responses to them (and therefore their final judgments that acts having such characteristics are indeed right) seems to be quite non-necessary, that is, purely contingent.

Here the danger of confusing his readers (and of me confusing mine) becomes particularly acute, for at least two reasons. In order to do justice to both Price's objective theory and to the moral sense alternative to it, Broad makes heavy use of those dicey distinctions mentioned earlier, "necessary and self-evident," "synthetic (*versus* analytic) *a priori*," and so on.[51] Yet his own defense of moral sense theory questions how iron-clad and reliable these distinctions are even as he uses them to state and evaluate both rationalist and moral sense epistemologies of moral judgment. Also, the second difficulty can only really be appreciated as being a difficulty if we understand moral sense theory to be asserting a contradictory view, but what is that view?[52] Broad simply never spells out the moral sense

[51] A good friend once told me that until she became a philosopher she "thought that analytic and synthetic were settings on a clothes dryer."

[52] Here is my own summary of Broad's whole argument: on moral sense theory, the connection between "is the keeping of a promise" and "is right" is necessary, but it is (ultimately) causally, rather than logically or metaphysically, necessary. On the other hand, "Normal people will have pro-emotions towards the keeping of promises," though it certainly seems contingent (they might not have had any moral emotions at all), turns out to be true by definition – the definition of "a normal person" – so that the proposition just mentioned is really analytic, not synthetic. And since – as we must keep reminding ourselves if we are to remain sane – "right" now simply means "such as to evoke moral pro-emotions in normal persons" (that is its proper analysis), it turns out that "For normal people, keeping a promise is right" is necessarily true, because it is analytically true – on both the definition of "right," and the definition of "normal person." (It is necessary, but not synthetic.) But then (and this is the missing link) why should we accept, as a definition of "normal human being," "a being whose moral pro-emotions will be evoked by promise-keeping" (and who will, accordingly, be compelled to take promise-keeping to be right)? Because empirical science provides very good (evolutionary) reasons to believe that any human being will necessarily – causally necessarily, that

view, as a whole; we have to collect it from his separate rejoinders to the objections (stated in Broad's own terms) of a rational moralist like Price. So let me begin by stating Price's "most important objection to the moral sense theory" commonsensically without relying on Broad's distinctions too heavily.

Price believes (on Broad's reconstruction of him) that the truth of the ethical judgment "Promise-keeping is right" is "necessary, synthetic, and knowable *a priori*." Essentially what he means is that, once an action is seen to have a certain non-moral characteristic (being the fulfillment of a promise), reason judges that its rightness simply follows from that fact. And it follows necessarily – whether anyone approves of the act or not. Our emotional dispositions, in contrast (and this is what so offends Price about Hutcheson's view) just happen to be as they are, they could have been otherwise. (They are in other words non-necessary and knowable only *a posteriori*.) So they simply cannot be what makes promise keeping right. And Price's view does make a good deal of common sense. Most people can see that, supposing promise keeping to be really right, it does not just happen to be right the way kitchen tables tend to have four legs. (The proposition is necessary as opposed to contingent.) Also, we naturally assume that promise-keeping is not right merely by the definitions of "promise-keeping" and "right." (The proposition is synthetic, not analytic.) And finally, that however we might know promise-keeping to be right, supposing we do, it isn't by studying the practices of promising, promise-keeping and promise-breaking to find out that the second is right, the third wrong; we do not feel the need to do research into promising to know that breaking promises is generally wrong. (We know it – somehow – *a priori*.) On the other side most people can see, or think they can see, that there isn't anything self-evident or necessary about claims to the effect that all or most people have the emotional reactions in such matters that they in fact (contingently) do.

But our Theory, if it is to keep up with the rationalists' assertion that deontic judgments are necessary, synthetic and *a priori*, will have to hold that "Any act of promise-keeping tends as such to be right" is "equivalent to something like the following proposition: 'It is necessary, self-evident and synthetic that any human being who contemplates an act which he believed to be one of promise-keeping would tend to feel a moral pro-emotion towards it, and that he would tend to feel a moral anti-emotion towards any act which he believed to be one of promise-breaking.'"

is – experience moral pro-emotions towards actions that have the mediating characteristic of being the fulfillment of a promise. That characteristic, and own nature (psychology), force us, we might say, to take it as a "right-inclining" – a genuinely moral – characteristic, and to judge accordingly.

Now it might be objected that the latter statement is certainly false. It is a purely contingent fact that human beings have a disposition to feel moral emotions at all. They might have been as devoid of them as they are of a disposition to have special sensations in the presence of magnets. Moreover, granted that they do have such an emotional disposition, it is a purely contingent fact that moral emotions are mediated in the particular ways in which they are. It is quite conceivable [i.e. considered *a priori*] that the belief that an act is one of promise-keeping should have mediated a moral *anti*-emotion, and that the belief that it is one of promise-breaking should have mediated a moral *pro*-emotion; just as it is conceivable that men should have liked the taste of castor oil and disliked that of sugar. In that case, on the present theory, promise-breaking would have tended to be right and promise-keeping to be wrong, just as castor oil would have been nice and sugar nasty.[53]

Note that you have just read what is probably the clearest statement in all the literature of what most gets the goats of moral philosophers who do not like moral sense theory – which is to say nearly all moral philosophers from the 1720s into the present day. So the toughest objection of all is that if the moral sense theory were true, "certain propositions which are in fact necessary and knowable *a priori* would have been contingent and knowable only empirically."

Therefore the theory is false. I am sure that this is the most important of Price's objections to the Moral Sense Theory, though I have developed it in my own way. What are we to say about it?

It is plain that there are only two lines of defence open to the present form of the Moral Sense Theory. (a) One is to argue that propositions like "Any act of promise-keeping tends as such to be right" are *not* necessary. (b) The other is to argue that propositions like "any human being who should contemplate an act which he believed to be one of promise-keeping would tend to feel a moral pro-emotion towards it" are *not* contingent.[54]

I shall consider these two lines of defense in reverse order. However things turn out, Broad has certainly identified the bull whose horns he means to grab.

To argue that "the proposition about human emotional dispositions which, according to the Theory, is equivalent to 'Any act of promise-keeping tends as such to be right'" is not contingent will be a very hard sell. Notice first of all that "Any human being has a disposition to feel a moral pro-emotion when he contemplates an act which he believes to be one of promise-keeping" isn't even true. To make it true we must add at least the qualifications, "any normal human being" and "when he is in a

[53] "Reflections," p. 377. [54] *Ibid.*

normal state," i.e. not in any of the "occurrent conditions under which . . . inhibitions or reversals of moral emotion tend to take place," such as being angry with, jealous of or frightened by the agent whose act he is contemplating.

Now it might be argued that, when the proposition is thus qualified, it *is* necessary. For . . . it has then become *analytic*. It is part of the definition of a "normal" human being that he has a disposition to feel moral emotion, and that he will feel that emotion in its pro-form towards acts which he believes to be ones of promise-keeping, truth-telling, of beneficence, and so on. And it is part of the definition of "being in a normal state" that when one is in such a state this moral-emotional disposition will not be inhibited altogether or excited in abnormal ways.[55]

But the proponent of the Objective Theory will surely insist that "Any act of promise-keeping tends, as such, to be right" is not only necessary but synthetic – so that even if it were true that having such-and-such emotional dispositions when in a normal state were part of the definition of a normal human being, this would just go to show that no statement about the emotional dispositions of human beings can be equivalent to the proposition about promise-keeping, since no analytic proposition can be logically equivalent to any synthetic one. Broad's tactic here is to challenge the legitimacy of the analytic/synthetic distinction altogether (in a distinctly Quinean fashion), at least as it might be used in the context of such an abstract discussion of the nature of ethical judgment. Consider an "analytic proposition of real life" such as "The sun rises in the east," which is analytic if east and west are defined by means of the sun, but becomes synthetic if they are defined by means of the magnetic compass. Or compare the moral sense analysis of "X is right" to a more complex analytic statement, such as "Pure water boils at 100 degrees Centigrade under a pressure of 76 centimeters of mercury." This statement is "necessary and knowable *a priori*" – because it is analytic. (Rather as the proposition, "Five out of ten Americans who take I.Q. tests score below 100" turns out to be analytically true, and not an indictment of the American educational system.) But – crucially – it is analytic or true by definition only because it "has at the back of it a whole system of interconnected empirical generalizations, apart from which it would never have been worth anyone's while to formulate it." Similarly,

It is an empirical fact that the vast majority of men have a disposition to feel moral emotions, and that the minority who lack it differ in many other ways from the majority of their fellows. It is an empirical fact that there is very substantial agreement among men in the kinds of act which call forth moral pro-emotion

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 380.

and in the kinds which call forth moral anti-emotion. The small minority of men who habitually feel moral pro-emotion where most of their fellows feel moral anti-emotion, or *vice versa*, are generally found to be odd and abnormal in many other ways. There is, in fact, so high a degree of positive association between moral and non-moral normality that it would make very little difference in practice whether we defined a "normal" man solely by reference to his moral dispositions or solely by reference to his non-moral dispositions, or by reference to a mixture of both. But the proposition that any normal human being would tend to feel a moral pro-emotion towards any act which he believed to be one of promise-keeping would be synthetic if one defined "normality" solely by reference to non-moral dispositions, whilst it might well be analytic if one defined it wholly or partly in terms of moral dispositions.[56]

Similarly, "if the tendency to feel moral pro-emotion towards any act which is believed to be one of promise-keeping were included in the definition of 'normality,' the proposition that any normal man would tend to feel such an emotion towards such acts would be analytic; whilst, if this were omitted and 'normality' were defined by reference to some of the other mediating characteristics of moral emotion, this proposition would be synthetic."[57]

All of this sounds rather arid, but I suggest that it is a very good way for moral sense theorists to argue. What Broad is really suggesting is that it might make perfect sense, given the right "system of interconnected empirical generalizations," to define a normal specimen of *Homo sapiens* – for

[56] *Ibid*., p. 382. And here once again I propose that Hutcheson was in fact arguing for moral sense in a very similar manner. In responding to the objection that we must be able to determine whether actions are (morally) reasonable or unreasonable "antecedent to any sense," since "we judge even of our affections and senses themselves, whether they are morally good or evil," he says,

> Every one judges of the *affections* of others by his own *sense*; so that it seems not impossible that in these senses men might differ as they do in taste. A sense approving benevolence would disapprove that temper, which a sense approving malice would delight in. [Compare Broad, above.] The former would judge of the latter by his own sense, so would the latter of the former. Each one would at first think the sense of the other perverted. But then, is there no difference? Are both senses equally *good*?
>
> No, certainly, any *man* who observed them would think the sense of the former more desirable than the latter; but this is, because the *moral sense* of every *man* is constituted in the former manner. (*Raphael I*, p. 311; Hutcheson's own emphasis)

Further, when Hutcheson claims that "any man" will feel positive moral emotion towards benevolent acts, he means (yes) every normal man when in a normal state. Just as we "denominate objects from the appearances they make to us in an uniform medium, when our organs are in no disorder, and the object not very distant," so our moral judgments are reliable only in so far as "our moral sense be [not] subject to such a disorder." Could this passage have provided the inspiration for Hume's "general point of view"? (". . . every particular man has a peculiar position with regard to others; and 'tis impossible we cou'd ever converse together on any reasonable terms, were each of us to consider characters and persons, only as they appear from his peculiar point of view. In order, therefore, to prevent those continual contradictions, and arrive at a more stable judgement of things, we fix on some steady and general points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation." *Treatise*, p. 581f.)

[57] "Reflections," p. 382.

purposes of ethical theory, at least – as "a being with a moral sense." Of course a being with a moral sense means, here, one whose moral pro-emotions tend to be aroused when he or she cognizes actions as having mediating characteristics relevantly similar or identical to acts "of promise-keeping, truth-telling, of beneficence, and so on."[58] And *if* we see clear to do that, then it *does* become "necessary and self-evident" that "any human being who contemplates an act which he believed to be one of promise-keeping would tend to feel a moral pro-emotion towards it."

So, could we all suddenly switch senses, could all of our moral pro- and anti-emotions begin responding to mediating characteristics of actions opposite to those they now respond to? It is logically possible that this might happen. (Of course, if it did, we would then need to find all new analytic definitions for "normal human" and "moral sense" – since the empirical generalizations we used to support our original definitions would now all have been falsified.) Considering the matter wholly *a priori*, there is no reason (at least on moral sense theory) why we humans should not approve of random violence and child molestation. But if moral sense theory is to keep up with the objectivists we will still need to find some reason why we (most certainly in fact) do not – or better, a reason why this could never happen, never could have come to be so. But the reason will not be an *a priori* one (as it must be for any Objective Theory). It will be more akin to a "whole system of interconnected empirical generalizations, apart from which it would never have been worth anyone's while" to define ourselves as animals with a moral sense.

So much for the first part of Broad's defense of the Theory against difficulty (iii), *viz.* that "Any human being who contemplated (etc.)" is arguably necessary, because analytic. The flip side is to argue that "Promise-keeping tends, as such, to be right" is not really "necessary and knowable *a priori*." It only *seems* necessary, to every "civilised" individual. Here is what Broad says, which I take it to be his most pregnant suggestion of all, for ethics, in "Reflections":

> Civilised men throughout human history have been assiduously conditioned in infancy and youth by parents, nurses, schoolmasters, etc., to feel moral pro-emotions towards acts of certain kinds and to feel moral anti-emotions towards acts of certain other kinds. Moreover, if we consider what kinds of acts are the objects of moral pro-emotions and what kinds are the objects of moral anti-emotions we notice the following facts about them. The former are acts whose performance by

[58] I leave it to the reader to decide how closely this corresponds to Hutcheson's own conception of moral sense; I would say that it matches it quite well.

most people on most occasions when they are relevant is essential to the stability and efficient working of any society. The latter are acts which, if done on many occasions and by many people, would be utterly destructive to any society. On the other hand, the former are acts which an individual is often strongly tempted to omit, and the latter are acts which he is often strongly tempted to commit. This is either because we have strong natural impulses moving us to omit the former and to commit the latter, or because the attractive consequences of the former and the repellent consequences of the latter are often remote, collateral, and secondary. It follows that any group of men in which, from no matter what cause, a strong pro-emotion had become associated with acts of the first kind and a strong anti-emotion with acts of the second kind would be likely to win in the struggle for existence with other groups in which no such emotions existed or in which they were differently directed. Therefore it is likely that most of the members of all societies which now exist would be descendants of persons in whom strong moral pro-emotions had become attached to acts of the first kind and strong anti-emotions to acts of the second kind. And most existing societies will be historically and culturally continuous with societies in which such emotions had become attached to such acts. These causes, it might be argued, conspire to produce so strong an association between such emotions and such acts in most members of every existing society that the connexion between the emotion and the act seems to each individual to be necessary.

No doubt this line of argument will produce different effects on different persons. For my own part I am inclined to attach a good deal of weight to it.[59]

I take this to be absolutely brilliant – and representative of the very best of 1940s British ethics. Notice, first, how Broad has cleverly "exchanged swords" with his dialectical opponents. Price and his rationalistic relations were arguing that no subjective moral sense theory could ever explain our knowledge of "Promise keeping is right" because it cannot account for the necessity of that knowledge – since the facts about human emotional dispositions that it invokes in its analysis of such propositions are contingent, they could have been otherwise. Now, the Theory is claiming that the alleged logical synthetic necessity of deontic judgments might after all turn out to be an illusion, or a useful construction, of the human mind – one that results from the necessity, in a causal, elemental, biological sense, of our having the moral-emotional dispositions (sentiments) we do, in fact, now possess.[60] And such dispositions are so necessary a part of our form of life, our ethology, one could say, as members of *Homo sapiens*, that our having them may even legitimately be incorporated into our very definition of ourselves – thus making the proposition "Every normal man will

[59] "Reflections," p. 379f.

[60] We might say that the fact that we have such sentiments (and that they take the particular direction they do) is contingent in a purely logical sense, but nonetheless necessary in an evolutionary one.

be disposed to have a moral pro-emotion (etc.)" also necessary, logically necessary, because it is now analytic.

But far more important than this swordplay, as I see it, is the way in which Broad's proposal is at least roughly consistent (consilient) with contemporary factual science, in so far as behavioral scientists address the nature and sources of ethical judgments. The account goes far beyond surveying people's (in various cultures) patterns of emotional response to acts of beneficence or violence, promise-keeping or breaking etc., to propose a deep sort of explanation for why those patterns are found to be as they are – or, if you like, would be found to be what they are once all the (anthropological?) statistics were in. It is an explanation moreover that arguably carries "a good deal of weight," whatever "different effects" it may have on "different persons." The *explanans* of what basic patterns of human ethical judgment and moral emotion there really are has to do, in Hume's language, with "the original fabric and formation of the human mind," which is "naturally adapted" to have such emotions and to make such judgments. And "this line of argument" is persuasive, to the extent it is, because it appeals to and accords with the efforts of researchers in what is nowadays called evolutionary psychology, not statisticians.

And, with that move, Broad's defense of moral sense theories in ethics is completed.[61] But I am still not quite finished with him, yet.

BROAD'S OFFENSIVE ARGUMENT AGAINST ETHICAL RATIONALISM

We saw that Hutcheson's offensive arguments against rationalism as defended by his own peers (Clarke, Wollaston and Burnet) were quite persuasive, and even (I, for one, would say) devastating. How effective would they be (in some hypothetical argument space) against rationalism in Price? That would be an interesting question to pursue in some other place. What Broad has shown us so far, I believe, is that a more modern

[61] In the name of historical accuracy and legitimacy, I simply must raise and answer one last question. In "Reflections" Broad has certainly supplied a host of interesting suggestions for defending some version of a modern moral sense theory, by presenting its original defenders' insights in twentieth rather than eighteenth-century terms; and this has had the side effect of helping me to argue (in the next chapter) that something like Hutcheson's moral sense in fact really exists. But what has Broad really done in this famous paper in the general context of his own times and the issues that presented themselves most vividly to him and his peers? I would say this: he has shown how a suggestive and plausible theory of ethical judgments might do a good deal of justice to the emotional factors that really are at work in such judgments, without accepting emotivism as an adequate account of the matter, all the while (using stealthy "commando" tactics) utterly destroying Moorean non-naturalistic intuitionism as a serious contender for the job.

version of Hutchesonian moral sense theory can (at least) withstand, through creative enhancement, Price's original objections to Hutcheson. But for Broad, Price is fairly obviously a stand-in for subsequent moral theories, such as those of Kant, Prichard, Moore, Ross, and Ewing. And he does sketch an offensive line of argument against objectivist views of moral judgment – including rationalism – but only in the most general of terms. I wish to conclude this chapter by taking a brief look at this argument and reserving some of its force for use in my own offensive argument against rationalism (at the end of the next and final chapter of this book).

We must go back to Broad's reformulation of "the most important of Price's objections to the Moral Sense Theory." On moral sense theory, a statement such as "Any act of promise-keeping tends as such to be right" must (allegedly) be equivalent to something like "It is necessary, self-evident and synthetic that any human being who should contemplate an act of promise-keeping would tend to feel a moral pro-emotion towards it." The defensive line of argument for moral sense theory, remember, was that "Any act of promise-keeping tends to be right" is not, despite appearances, a necessary statement – because its truth depends ultimately on contingent facts about human beings' psychology, evolution, social life and innate dispositions to emotional response – and that "Any human being who contemplates promise-keeping will tend to feel moral pro-emotion etc." is not, despite appearances, contingent – because it is analytically true. I passed over what Broad calls the offensive line of the first half of the argument, which would "take the opposite view (*viz.* that "Any act of promise-keeping tends as such to be right" is a necessary, self-evident and synthetic proposition) and try to show that it is untenable." "What precisely do our opponents maintain?"

If we may take Price as their ablest representative, they seem to assert something like the following doctrine. Suppose that a person reflects, e.g., on the situation of being asked a question and on the notions of responding to it by a true answer and responding to it by a false answer. Then he will find it self-evident that the former kind of response has a certain relation of "moral fittingness" and that the latter has an opposite relation of "moral unfittingness" to such a situation. This relation of moral fittingness or unfittingness is held to be unique and unanalyzable. And the process of recognizing that it necesarily holds between certain kinds of response and certain kinds of situation is held to be analogous to that of recognising that certain mathematical terms, e.g., stand in certain mathematical relations.

Now the objection which will be made by supporters of the Moral Sense Theory is twofold. It will be said that the doctrine just enunciated involves *a priori* concepts and synthetic *a priori* judgments, and that neither of these is admissible.[62]

[62] "Reflections," p. 377f.

Now in so far as Price's (and other rationalists') views (and their attacks on moral sense theory) depend on such notions, and I believe they generally do, it is certainly open to the moral sense theorist to question them as fishy. Moral fittingness is not revealed by any of the ordinary senses (any more than Hutcheson's excellence is) nor (as far as I can tell) to introspection of our own experiences as we make ethical judgments. But that leaves the rationalist with the option of simply declaring it to be a simple unanalyzable *a priori* concept that we neither derive from experience, the way we literally see that one colored patch is surrounded by another or hear that one musical note is discordant with another, nor construct in thought from ideas derived from sensation or introspection. That is not acceptable to empiricists, but rationalists in ethics are not, as a rule, empiricists in epistemology. So the objection still begs the whole question at issue between the empirical and rational schools of early-modern moralists. Something similar applies to the objection that on Price's view the connection between the non-ethical characteristic of being an act of promise keeping and the ethical characteristic of tending to be right must be both necessary and synthetic, and that this is 'bad'. Broad is right to say that Price "would have been completely unmoved" by this kind of general argument: "For he held, in full knowledge of Hume's doctrine [that every idea is derived from an impression or recombined intellectually or imaginatively out of ideas derived from impressions] that there are plenty of synthetic necessary facts in other departments beside that of morals."[63] Facts about causal necessity, for instance.[64] Thus it is probably "rather futile to rely on a general argument of this kind" in challenging rationalistic alternatives to moral sense theory.

So let's forget fittingness – which doesn't seem to me to have got anyone anywhere in the last 300 years – and return one last time to Price's account of moral emotion, of which Broad is plainly suspicious. Remember that moral sense theory had to answer the objection that while it is true that a normal person experiences a moral anti-emotion when he contemplates acts that he does as a matter of fact believe to be wrong, this is because his belief in the actions' wrongness is what causes him to feel such an emotion. That, in other words, the wrongness of the act (as he sees it) is the mediating characteristic of his moral anti-emotion. But suppose that he believed the act to be one of promise-breaking but did not believe that such acts tend to be wrong. "Then, it might be alleged, there is no reason to think that

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

[64] In fact Price repeatedly and approvingly cites Cudworth, possibly the most rationalistic of the Cambridge Platonists, endorsing his official 'proleptical' theory of knowledge while ignoring what he had to say (particularly in his public sermons) about the indispensability of love to morality.

he would feel a moral anti-emotion towards it."[65] This precisely matches what Price says.[66] Further, for Price it is a necessary proposition of some kind that any rational being who contemplated an act he believed to be one of promise-breaking would tend to feel a moral anti-emotion towards it. But this is not self-evident; rather it follows from two more fundamental propositions, each of which is self-evident: (a) It is self-evident to any rational being that promise-breaking is wrong; and (b) It is self-evident that any rational being who contemplated an act which he believed to be wrong would feel a moral anti-emotion towards it. The moral sense Theory, recall, argued that (a) is true only if amended somewhat as follows: Due to their emotional constitution, their need for society and the evolutionary history of their species it will inevitably seem self-evident to each rational person that promise-breaking is necessarily wrong. (The objective property of wrongness went out the window and only the strong tendency to call it wrong, even to believe it to be wrong, because of one's moral anti-feelings, remained.)

But what about the second proposition, that it is "self-evident" that any rational being contemplating an act he takes to be wrong will feel a moral anti-emotion towards it? Quite sensibly (and I would say once again, brilliantly) Broad remarks that, "everything depends here on how much we put into the connotation of the phrase 'rational being.'"[67] A rational being on the narrowest interpretation "means roughly one who is capable of comparing, abstracting, and forming general notions; who is capable of seeing necessary connexions and disconnexions between terms and between propositions; and who has the power of making inferences, both deductive and inductive." This is the narrowest interpretation since "it takes account only of cognitive characteristics and leaves out emotional and conative ones." To widen it to the next stage we might include "purely intellectual" emotions and conations, such as "intellectual curiosity, taking pleasure in neat arguments and displeasure in clumsy ones, desire for consistency in one's beliefs, and desire to apportion the strength of one's beliefs to the weight of the evidence."[68]

Let us say that a person who had [only] the cognitive, conative and emotional dispositions which I have just enumerated would be rational "in the ethically

[65] "Reflections," p. 383.

[66] Nor do we need moral emotions for election on Price's view. Motivation "belongs to the very ideas of moral right and wrong," and will follow directly from cognition of rightness and wrongness in actions "whenever there is nothing to oppose it" – a view that seems indistinguishable from Nagel's in *The Possibility of Altruism*.

[67] "Reflections," p. 384.

[68] Would Broad include Nagel's aversion to metaphysical "dissociation"?

> neutral sense." Suppose that Price were correct in thinking that moral fittingness and unfittingness are relations which hold of necessity between certain types of response and certain types of situation. Then a person who was rational in the ethically neutral sense would in principle be capable of having ideas of right and wrong and of making moral judgments . . . But so far as I can see, *there would not be the slightest inconsistency in supposing that a being who was rational in the ethically neutral sense, and did in fact have the ideas of right and wrong and make moral judgments, was completely devoid of specifically moral emotion and conation* [my emphasis]. The fact that he knew or believed A to be right and B to be wrong might arouse in him neither moral pro-emotion towards the former nor moral anti-emotions towards the latter, and it might not evoke in him the slightest desire to do A or to avoid doing B or *vice versa*. I cannot see any *logical* impossibility in the existence of such a being; whether it would involve a conflict with some of the *de facto* laws of psychology I do not know.[69]

And this takes care of part (b) of the Pricean account of moral emotion, which is alleged to render moral sense superfluous. It simply isn't true that "any rational being who contemplated . . . will feel a moral anti-emotion etc." is a synthetic necessary proposition. If specifically moral emotion is excluded from the definition of rationality, then we are not constrained by logic, or by any capacity we allegedly have just to grasp synthetic necessary connections among concepts, to accept Price's claim. It is, logically speaking, wholly possible that the agent who is rational in the ethically neutral sense should feel no moral emotions at all.

Characteristically, Broad proceeds immediately to diagnose our belief that claim (b) is necessary and synthetic as the result of a "confusion in our minds." It is logically impossible that a being who was not at least rational in the ethically neutral sense could experience specifically moral emotions, for as we saw "their characteristic objects can be presented only by a process of reflective thinking." Further we find by experience that (at least) the vast majority of beings whom we know to be rational in that sense do feel moral pro-emotions towards acts they believe to be right and moral anti-emotions towards acts they believe to be wrong, and are in fact "to some extent attracted towards doing the former and repelled from doing the latter." In ordinary life, as a result, we simply do not use the ethically neutral concept of rationality; we habitually adopt the widest concept of rationality, which "includes these specifically moral conative and emotional characteristics" as well as those that define rationality in the ethically neutral sense. Now,

[69] "Reflections," p. 384f, emphasis added.

It is, of course, logically impossible that a person who is rational in this widest sense should fail to feel moral pro-emotion towards what he believes to be right and moral anti-emotion towards what he believes to be wrong. But this is a merely analytical proposition. *It is synthetic and contingent that a person who is rational in the ethically neutral sense should be so in the wider ethical sense also.*[70]

This is more than a clever parry against the intellectualists. It will actually form the first half of my own argument. But I myself will go one step further, to claim that it obviously *is* synthetic and contingent that narrow (ethically neutral) and wide rationality go together, come in the same packages (us). True, most of us have never encountered a being who was rational only in the ethically neutral sense. (Or if we have we may not have recognized that he was.) No wonder then, that we are confused into thinking that "the proposition that any rational being would feel a moral pro-emotion towards any act which he believed to be right and a moral anti-emotion towards any that he believed to be wrong is both necessary and synthetic."

Once again, and one last time, Broad's deadpan delivery blinds many readers to his own roguish irony and, in this very important case, to the sheer potential power of his mode of argument. In professing ignorance as to whether the existence of a being such as we are imagining "would involve a conflict with some of the *de facto* laws of psychology" what is Broad really doing? I believe he is hinting at what should be presented as the rest of the real offensive argument against ethical rationalism (and will be, in the conclusion of the next chapter). Broad hated it when scientists dabbled in ethics so he did not wish to appear to be trespassing onto psychologists' turf, and he wanted (I suppose) to stick to his strictly logical framework in reflecting on moral sense theories using the categories that were the coin of the realm in his day. But I myself have no such qualms. The best way to argue against ethical rationalism is precisely to inquire into what are "the *de facto* laws of psychology." And this will at last return us, on our journey, to the present day.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 385, emphasis added.

CHAPTER 7

What is innate in moral sense?

MORAL SENSE THEORY: HUTCHESON, BROAD AND BEYOND

So – there is a type of moral theory, moral sense theory, which begins from the credible (and quite Hutchesonian) assertion that, as Broad said, "there is a peculiar kind of experience which human beings are liable to have when they contemplate certain acts." This kind of experience (on the variety of moral sense theory we chose for good reasons to follow) is distinctly emotional in nature. But instead of explaining these moral feelings as merely "effects and concomitants," as Price said, of more fundamental purely rational judgments of rightness and wrongness, moral sense theory holds (roughly) that having such emotions or sentiments just is what taking certain acts to be right or wrong, good or bad, consists of. It further claims, correspondingly (and again quite roughly) that an action's being good or bad, right or wrong, is not a matter of its possessing objective moral properties picked out (named) by those terms; rather a good action is good because it possesses other non-moral properties, which, human psychology being what it is, typically evoke (cause) certain moral pro-emotions in (all normal) human beings. The Theory grounds what objectivity moral judgments have in the shared and compelling nature of these positive and negative emotional dispositions and experiences concerning certain types of acts, and neither in any putative rational requirement of impartiality or consistency in assessing actions nor supposed "moral facts" about them. And thanks to Broad's skillful swordsmanship we saw that moral sense theory can be made to do a pretty decent job actually competing with Price-type rationalism (objectivism) as an account of what we are saying, doing and knowing when we make ethical judgments.

That we wound up discarding both the sensational moral sense view, and the claim that what we sense in moral judgment is some objective property of rightness and wrongness in actions, suggests that the whole sense metaphor has very likely done much more harm than good, since

Hutcheson's own day, to what I am (still) calling moral sense theory.[1] What we have is not so much a mode of perception (like touch and vision) as a set of powerful dispositions, presumably partly innately constituted, to respond emotionally to specific kinds of human behaviors, and their motivations, in distinctive positive and negative ways. If we could rewrite 300 years in the history of ethics, it might be far better to speak of the theory of moral sentiment than of moral sense theory, but the latter is the name that stuck. Then again it is surprising how often one finds evolutionary biologists and empirical psychologists speaking of our (human) moral sense as though the idea were wholly uncontroversial, whereas there is almost a hatred of the notion among professional moral philosophers.

What, besides settling upon a general offensive argument (and as powerful a one as possible) for moral sense-sentimentalism and against rationalism, have we so far not achieved? Quite a lot. Remember our three still unanswered naïve questions about Hutcheson's original statement of moral sense theory: why should only benevolence be approved of (evoke a moral pro-emotion)? Why must the moral faculty be affective as opposed to purely cognitive or ratiocinative? And (hardest of all) what is innate in moral sense? I think I can answer the first two, at least. My response to the first is to soften in some measure the original Hutchesonian claim. I believe it is not only (what I named) sentimental benevolence that our moral sense disposes us to approve of; rather it is something more inclusive, something like Broad's "acts whose performance by most people on most occasions when they are relevant is essential to the stability and efficient working of any society." Butler was surely right to assert (clearly against Hutcheson) that, "benevolence and the want of it, singly considered, are by no means the whole of virtue and vice." Sentimental benevolence simply hogs too much of the field of ethically valuable characteristics in Hutcheson, probably because kind affection is more or less identical in his ethical worldview to Christian charity (*agape*). Social cooperation, contractual reliability (sticking to promises and bargains), self-control, honesty, fair dealing and so on are approved too, as far as I can make out. Perhaps there is even room in sentimental moral theory for conscientiousness or sense of duty – provided that it is informed by genuine concern for others. As Leibniz said, philosophers go wrong more often when they deny things than when they affirm them. At

[1] Compare Hirst (again, writing in 1917): "It must . . . be conceded that the term 'sense' was badly chosen to express the teaching of the pioneers of the school." "[T]he activity of a sense is mostly special in kind, implying differentiation of organs with appropriate functioning, whereas the moral consciousness has cognitive, affective and conative aspects which indicate that the mind as a whole is at work." "Moral Sense, Moral Reason, and Moral Sentiment," p. 146.

the same time Hutcheson seems right to feature sentimental benevolence. Disinterested felt concern for others is especially evocative of our approval; benevolence is the *eau* of our altruistic, prosocial impulses. Fair dealing is fine, but it is the milk of human kindness that really grabs our "joy and esteem."

But why, or rather, why should it? One inviting feature of moral sense theory as originally articulated by Hutcheson is often overlooked. It seems we may have been mistaken to worry earlier over Shaftesbury's failure to present anything like an argument for the singular ethical worthiness of social love, natural affection, fellow-feeling, sentimental benevolence. On Hutcheson's view our moral sense simply finds such concern for others charming, meritorious, excellent, so that his whole argument for moral sense itself amounts, in part, to a sort of clever end run around the whole issue of why benevolence is good. For Hutcheson the "wherefore" of our esteem for benevolence just are our "sweetest" affections, and so long as we have those no argument, no justification for our preference is needed or (perhaps) even possible. But what are the roots of those affections, and how exactly is their bare presence in normal people linked to their approval of charity, kindness and so on? I will propose an answer shortly; the point here is just that to claim (with Hutcheson) that no non-question begging justification of our approval of benevolence is possible is not to deny that some interesting explanation for it might be found.

Next question: why is moral sense affective? The pat answer is that this is just what moral sense theory is all about; our version of it, at least, claims that the distinctive experience involved in moral judgment is fundamentally affective (emotional) in nature. Ethical evaluation is at bottom not a matter of choosing or applying principles or apprehending moral facts or properties, but rather of spontaneously feeling certain ways about certain kinds of acts and motives, and expressing our feelings and encouraging certain corresponding feelings and responses in others through our approval or disapproval of them. My proposed version of moral sense theory, at least, allied as it is with Broad's Theory, is much closer to twentieth-century emotivism (in Stevenson and Duncan-Jones) than to any brand of perceptual intuitionism (as one finds, for instance, in Moore). There is however another very important reason why moral sense must be affective. Following Broad's final suggestion, as well as Hutcheson's original conception, moral sense theory holds that certain discernible patterns in our ethical judgments – our shared habits of approving and disapproving – are innate. But if any factors in ethical judgment (and motivation) are innate, or involve one or more innate components or mechanisms of some kind, and if we

assume (along with Hutcheson) that there are no innate ideas, it seems impossible to imagine what else those factors could be like if they are not affective (elemental, orectic, passional, perhaps even endocrinal) in nature. (This is obviously vague, but it is a start.) There is something innate in human beings that is the source, ultimately, of both benevolence and our approval of it, and if no such "generous instinct" can be found my assertion that Hutcheson discovered the moral sense must be false if not absurd. But what could this "something" be? Unless we choose to appeal to metaphysical theology we must look, I think, to science for at least a hint at an answer. There certainly are innate patterns of affective response in infants and (I believe) adults too. But is it plausible to hold that there is such a thing as innate moral sense and affection in anything like Hutcheson's sense of these terms? Could there be an innate moral sentiment? Many non-mad scientists believe that there is, and there is where the journey takes us next: beyond philosophy and into the biological and empirical social sciences. I am not a scientist and certainly cannot pronounce on the question of whether Hutchesonian moral sense makes scientific sense, but I do feel qualified to argue as follows: given what in very general terms we now know or think we know about what innate factors may be at work in moral aptitude, judgment, etc., it might make very good sense, or even turn out to be true, to say that we all possess an innate moral sense. And this will form the basis of my own proposed offensive argument for moral sense-sentimentalism, my carrying through to the end of Hutcheson's and Broad's own arguments. Roughly: if there are multiple innate factors at work in moral motivation and judgment (and justification), without reference to which these phenomena simply cannot be understood, and if ethical rationalism invariably denies their crucial importance, then ethical rationalism is false. Then, since egoism is (presumably) psychologically erroneous, moral sense-sentimentalism is therefore true.

So what scientific evidence and what philosophical considerations, judiciously woven together, could convince us that there is a moral sense, and even then what could be the correct answer to my question, exactly what is innate in it? Broad's "struggle for existence" scenario is brilliant as a clever parry against Pricean rationalism, but considered as a scientific hypothesis it is somewhat a mess, and probably too crude to take us very far in the direction we need to go. I happen to be an avid consumer of the (mostly non-technical) literature of zoology, evolutionary biology, sociobiology, evolutionary psychology and so on, and also of the work of philosophers who strive to use such scientific materials to address the subject of "evolution and ethics." And I am of the opinion that on the whole the latter subject is also a mess; I think it is simply far too soon to tell exactly how Darwinian science

is relevant or irrelevant, helpful or destructive, to moral theory on anyone's understanding of what the latter pursuit consists in. Nonetheless, Darwin himself firmly believed in the existence of what he called a moral sense (partly through his reading of Hume) and his scientific and philosophic legacy has much to offer concerning the specific question to be addressed here.[2] There are a hundred things I would like to say but quite as many more Pandora's boxes I cannot afford to open. My solution is to cheat by selecting one social scientist, sociologist James Q. Wilson, to be our initial guide on this last leg of the pilgrimage. I do this principally because his 1993 book *The Moral Sense* is a perceptive distillation of various discoveries in the social and biological sciences into a case for something very like Hutcheson's original implanted moral sense (and because Wilson explicitly recognizes those affinities). I will extract from Wilson a simple account of moral sense that can stand on its own, entirely apart from the author's own ideological crusade against certain thinkers, especially Marx, Freud, A. J. Ayer and Richard Rorty, whom he blames for undermining our confidence in morality,[3] and which is both suggestive and credible independently

[2] Perhaps too much. To step into this literature is in a real sense to immerse oneself in some of the deepest philosophical (and scientific) perplexities there are – the problem of is and ought, the relation of our 'evolutionary *telos*' (as Gibbard calls the reproduction of our genes) to our reflective reasons for acting, the relation of scientific explanation to normative justification, indeed the whole mind/body problem in all its daunting complexity. What most attracts me to James Wilson is that, while he certainly accepts an evolutionary framework for understanding moral psychology, his principal subject-matter is always mothers, fathers, infants, toddlers and their needs and desires – and not utterly impersonal epigenetic rules – as in Edward O. Wilson and philosopher Michael Ruse – or evolved psychic modules, the favored innate mechanism of evolutionary psychologists. See E. O. Wilson, *Consilience*; Ruse, *Taking Darwin Seriously*; Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, editors, *The Adapted Mind*. For a balanced critique of five competing scientific programs (human sociobology, human behavioral ecology, evolutionary psychology, memetics and gene-culture co-evolution) see Kevin N. Laland and Gillian R. Brown, *Sense and Nonsense: Evolutionary Perspectives on Human Behaviour*. For a detailed critique of evolutionary psychology see David J. Buller, *Adapting Minds: Evolutionary Psychology and the Persistent Quest for Human Nature*.

More popular treatments of these subjects include Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal: Evolutionary Psychology and Everyday Life*, and Matt Ridley, *The Origins of Virtue: Human Instincts and the Evolution of Co-operation*.

The main problem I see with works of this sort is that their authors tend to weave back and forth between what philosopher Daniel Dennett (in his first book, *Content and Consciousness*) termed the "personal" and the "sub-personal" levels of explanation, as though this were wholly unproblematic when in fact it is very much so.

One quite recent book on the subject of morality and evolution, *Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved* puts many of these issues into vivid perspective through a lively exchange between primatologist Frans de Waal and four able critics (Wright, Korsgaard, Philip Kitcher, and Peter Singer).

[3] Wilson's work is richly wrought but not without its own conceptual problems. I agree with several of its original reviewers who complain that Wilson's polemical purposes introduce an overall incoherence into the argument that detracts from the author's careful distillation. See especially Alan Ryan, "Reasons of the Heart," *New York Review of Books* XL 15 (September 23, 1993), and MacIntyre's brief (yet mainly favorable) review, "The Truth is in the Details," *The New York Times Book Review* (August 29, 1993).

of particular disputes within (or among) philosophy, evolutionary psychology and so on. Wilson's methodology is to "scavenge through science" in order to illuminate "what is general, non arbitrary and emotionally compelling about human [moral] nature." And I will in turn scavenge through Wilson for clues to answering my own question, precisely what is innate in moral sense.

JAMES Q. WILSON'S *THE MORAL SENSE*

Striking similarities between Wilson's and Hutcheson's conceptions of moral sense, and between the forms of argument employed by each, appear at once. "The argument of this book is that people have a natural moral sense, a sense that is formed out of the interaction of their innate dispositions with their earliest familial experiences. To different degrees among different people, but to some important degree in almost all people, that moral sense shapes human behavior and the judgments people make of the behavior of others."[4] Wilson's moral sense "exists in two meanings of the word." First, "virtually everyone, beginning at a very young age, makes moral judgments that, though they may vary greatly in complexity, sophistication, and wisdom, distinguish between actions on the grounds that some are right and others wrong, and virtually everyone recognizes that for these distinctions to be persuasive to others they must be, or at least appear to be, disinterested." Second, nearly everyone, again from a very early age, "acquires a set of social habits that we ordinarily find pleasing in others and satisfying when we practice them ourselves."[5]

Wilson's account not only echoes Hutcheson's skepticism regarding the role of reason in ordinary ethical motivation and judgment; it has clear affinities with the (dispositional, trans-subjective emotional) moral sense Theory articulated and defended by Broad. When people act "fairly or sympathetically" it is "rarely because they have engaged in much systematic reasoning."

Much of the time our inclination toward fair play or our sympathy for the plight of others are immediate and instinctive, a reflex of our emotions more than an act of

[4] *The Moral Sense*, p. 2. Wilson conceives his own effort as "a continuation of work begun by certain eighteenth-century English and Scottish thinkers, notably Joseph Butler, Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and Adam Smith." He will simply "add to this tradition . . . a knowledge of what the biological and social sciences have since learned about what they were the first to call moral sense."

[5] In his *Presidential Address* Wilson stated his central thesis as follows: "It is now clear that nature has prepared the child to be an active participant in his social development and disposed him to see and judge the world in moral terms." (p. 3.)

our intellect and in those cases in which we do deliberate (for example, by struggling to decide what fair play entails or duty requires in a particular case), our deliberation begins, not with philosophical premises (much less with the justification for them), but with feelings – in short, with a moral sense.[6]

Now, what is innate? As I reconstruct what Wilson says there are really five types of things that represent distinguishable (though blended, in real child development) innate components in the development of a fully functioning moral sense, which I will describe – or rather let Wilson describe – in this order:

1. a general disposition to engage in prosocial behavior
2. an innate desire on the part of every infant for attachment or affiliation
3. empathy, or a sensitivity to the distress of others
4. an innate disposition to imitate (especially) parental behaviors and attitudes
5. something rather more shadowy that Wilson calls "moralizing instinct" or "prepared judgment."

It sounds awfully vague but may be crucial for finding exactly what I am after: evidence for an innate component of some kind in moral *approval*.

1. Let's begin at the beginning, with a newborn baby. Wilson's claim is that neonatal behavior cannot be wholly explained purely reflexively and that infants appear to be "prepared" biologically for "natural sociability." Given the helplessness of the human infant and consequent need for "prolonged postpartum care," we can be sure that evolution has selected for "two things – the parent's willingness to provide care and the infant's capacity to elicit it." Infants elicit the behavior they need from parents by engaging in "rudimentary social activity," "prosocial behavior" that is not learned.

> They root, suck, and express distress at the sound of other babies crying. They prefer human sounds to other sounds, female sounds to male ones, and maternal sounds to other female sounds . . . Infants born blind will smile though they have never seen a smile; infants born both deaf and blind will laugh during play, though they have never heard laughter, and frown when angry, though they have never seen a frown.[7]

Infants will mimic certain facial and hand gestures (opening the mouth, sticking out the tongue, wiggling fingers) as early as thirty-two hours after birth; at two weeks they will "cry at the sound of another baby crying, but not at the recorded sound of their own crying." At three months or so they seem fascinated with their mothers' faces and begin work on their captivating smile-byplay. Within six months they respond differently to

[6] *The Moral Sense*, p. 7f. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

the faces of friendly and unfriendly adults. By age two nearly all children will show off things and ask for a response, share objects and activities with others, "help others do things, and bring things or offer consolation to people in distress." Although there is room for respectful disagreement, here, I heartily agree with Wilson that children simply do come into the world prepared, somehow, to do and learn these things. "Infants and young children are prepared, biologically, for sociability."[8]

2. So far we have mostly left out the mother and (where available) the father. No one doubts that parental care of offspring is evolutionarily adaptive in all social animals, and it may be the most primal of 'altruistic' human behaviors. But how to explain the infant's prosocial dispositions in a general theory of reproductive success and inclusive fitness? To answer – and this is really the heart of Wilson's contribution to our search – we must remember that "what evolution selects for is not *behavior*, whether moral or otherwise; it only selects for *mechanisms* that produce a behavior or predispose an animal to it. Failing to ask what psychological mechanism produces moral behavior makes it impossible to understand such behavior."

> The mechanism underlying human moral conduct is the desire for attachment or affiliation. That desire is evident in the instinctively prosocial behavior of the newborn infant and in the instinctively caring response that parents make to that behavior. It is all the more remarkable because not only does the infant initiate social contact by exchanging glances, coos, and smiles, but it also makes demands – many of them insistent, some of them unpleasant – on those who respond to its initiatives. There must be something about a baby that provides a signal or cue (in evolutionary jargon a "releaser") that elicits the parental response.[9]

Adult humans naturally spontaneously "attach value" to such releaser traits, all of which do seem to "imply sociability." These include large eyes relative to the size of the skull, round features, playfulness, awkward movements, softness, a distinctive smell – in short, "cuteness." We even prize similar characteristics in the nonhuman animals we select and breed as pets. And while there is little or nothing in the evolutionary theory of inclusive fitness to explain that, any mystery disappears as soon as we recognize first, that what we really seem to want from our pets is companionship, and secondly that "what evolution has selected for is a disposition to attachment." (At last an argument for what one innate component in moral sense must be.) "Attachment, thus triggered, is the mechanism out of which sociability emerges, and sociability, in turn, is the state in which moral understandings are shaped."[10] Our innate sociability, our desire to be attached to others,

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 126. [9] *Ibid.*, p. 126f. [10] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

begins to rise to the level of moral understanding in the family. Of course. Sociability "not only makes possible but animates the kind of family life in which people can learn at a very early age that play requires fair play, that if help is expected help must be offered" and so on.[11] It is approximately during the "terrible twos" that the child is busy "converting prosocial behavior into moral judgments" precisely as he learns both to "make claims for himself" and to "recognize the claims of others."[12] Is this where moral behavior and judgment begin for each and every one of us? I believe it is. And consider, if we were not naturally social creatures with an innate desire for attachment, none of this could happen; but we are, so it can, it does, it must. (And isn't this essentially what Shaftesbury was insisting, against Hobbes?)

But what of every parent's intuitive conviction that it is she who is, through instruction, mainly linguistic, teaching her child the rudiments of moral behavior?

> What is striking about the newer findings of child psychologists is that the emergence of a moral sense occurs before the child has acquired much in the way of a language. The rudiments of moral action – a regard for the well-being of others and anxiety at having failed to perform according to a standard – are present well before anything like moral reasoning could occur. If mankind were not by nature social, if morality had to be written on a blank slate wholly by means of instruction, then it would not emerge until well after language had been acquired so that concepts could be understood, and by that time it would probably be too late . . . Indeed, the acquisition of language itself, rather than a necessary precursor of moral action, is itself a manifestation of *the natural sociability of mankind* . . . [13]

At this point someone might object that whatever is innate in the child's capacity for developing moral sense is of relatively little importance compared to what the child learns to do with it in the family, and that the behavioral dynamics of nuclear-familial relationships are determined by culture, not nature. So the mother is right; she gives moral sense to her child. (Even here, as Herodotus said, "Custom is King.") Wilson's response is to assert bluntly that family processes themselves "do not much depend on invention, self-discovery, written instructions, or educated people; they depend on instincts, mutual attractions, and organic relationships," which were themselves "forged by millennia of natural selection." Only such instincts and attractions can explain why the family is "a universal human

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 132. [12] *Ibid.*, p. 130.
[13] *Ibid*, emphasis added. Hutcheson's 1730 inaugural oration at Glasgow was entitled "*de naturali hominum socialitate*" – on the natural sociability of mankind.

institution."[14] (Again quite contrary to Hobbes, for whom it was just "the littlest monarchy.")

3. Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume and Smith all affirmed that an innate sensitivity of some kind to the well-being and (especially) distress of others is a necessary condition of moral judgment and altruistic motivation. Wilson agrees, and points to evidence linking the successful development of empathy in the child to affiliation, or more precisely to how well the neonate's instinctual desire for attachment is realized in "a strong and affectionate bond to the parents, especially to the mother." Such a strong early bond makes for a secure child, which in turn appears to be associated even many years later with "more sociable behavior."

> Securely attached children are more self-reliant, curious, and involved, and they get along better with playmates than their less securely attached comrades . . . Of special importance is the fact that securely attached children show greater empathy than do avoidant children, probably because, having experienced empathy themselves, they have a greater capacity to display it toward others. Though the distribution of attachment patterns among infants differs across cultures, the positive relationship between secure attachment and sociable behavior seems universal.[15]

We all know that infants instinctually assert their own needs; what may surprise (even) parents is that they also "bring to their own rearing a keen sensitivity to the distress of others."

> As early as ten months of age, toddlers react visibly to signs of distress in others, often becoming agitated; when they are one and a half years old they seek to do something to alleviate the others' distress; by the time they are two years old they verbally sympathize, offer toys, make suggestions, and look for help. Though these youngsters are no doubt expressing some learned reactions to distress, they seem prepared to learn those things. It is obvious that infants are biologically inclined to seek attention; it may also be that they are biologically inclined to give it.[16]

Inclined by what? By their "innate sensitivity to the feelings of others." In sum, the hypothesis that "securely attached children, as they grow older, will develop a moral sense more easily than will be the case for insecurely attached ones" is "consistent with what little we know about the tendency of children with strong bonds to their mothers" to display such sensitivity, and consequently to be "concerned about and try to help other children in distress."[17]

How do innate sociability, desire for attachment and sensitivity to others' feelings conspire (in the family setting) to produce habits of behavior

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 158. [15] *Ibid.*, p. 146f. [16] *Ibid.*, p. 139f.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 148. Notice that Wilson, like Hutcheson, includes a disposition to benevolence in his moral sense.

that are (broadly speaking) benevolent? Wilson's answer is admirably clear – and credible. Teaching, encouragement, and emotional nurture are indispensable, but the child is really doing most of the teaching himself, guided by his own innate dispositions.

Children are by nature sociable; in the family they learn to extend sociability into generosity. Such learning requires the instruction and example of parents, other kin, and older playmates. The innate sociability of children makes them sensitive to the moods and actions of others. At first they try to control those moods and actions simply for their own pleasure; later they grasp that what pleases them may not please others, and so they act on the basis of some knowledge of the feelings of others. For most children the ability to be affected by the emotional state of others leads to a concern for the well-being of others. Children learn without much instruction that their own happiness is in some ways affected by the happiness of others; with some instruction, they learn that the happiness of others can be improved by modest sacrifices in their own well-being. Their own experiences and the teachings of others produce habits of action that routinely take into account the feelings of others. All this occurs early in life, before the children have understood sermons, mastered moral precepts, or read cautionary tales.[18]

The pay-off so far is this: if Wilson is right then at least three psychological factors or mechanisms that are necessary for benevolence ("being concerned about and trying to help" others) *are* innate: desire for affiliation, the rudimentary prosocial behavior that expresses and enables it, and sensitivity to others' distress. And I should say that this is already roughly the first 'half' of what is innate in Hutcheson's moral sense.

But what about the other half, the disposition to approve of benevolence? That is the hard part. If there is anything innate at work in that it certainly must depend heavily on complex forms of nurture and social interaction that are not reducible to simple innate behavioral mechanisms. Wilson offers this:

Let us be clear about what is going on here. It is probably not the case that a secure child simply acquires a moral sense. More likely, secure children are confident and easy to be with, and so *they elicit confidence-building and friendly reactions from others* [emphasis added]. Insecure children handle their frustrated instinct for bonding by exaggerated behavior, displaying either anger and aloofness or an off-putting demand for attention. Other people find these to be unattractive qualities, and so treat the child warily, coldly, or inconsistently. This reaction confirms the child's view of the world – that it is unfriendly, cold, or undependable – and this confirmation inclines the child to act in what it takes to be a rational way: by ignoring, attacking, or manipulating others.[19]

[S]o long as the child's evolving moral sense is met by a compatible parental response – so long, that is, as its desire for affection is met by affection and its

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 46. [19] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

openness to learning is met by teaching that is consistent and principled – then the fundamental moralizing instincts of the child will flourish, and differences among children will be relatively modest.[20]

Now it seems to me that a suitable synonym for "confidence building and friendly reactions" in this context is "approval". (And that this is very important.) Certainly no child could ever learn to approve of benevolence or other socially attractive qualities in others without having first experienced on many occasions approval of her own prosocial (helpful, benevolent) reactions and behaviors, and watching adults and other children approving and disapproving of one another's similar behaviors. Now Hutcheson neither denies nor affirms this; but what he does insist is that once a person begins to feel and express approval, her primary (pro-benevolence) patterns of approval are involuntary, and that this is so because a disposition to have these feelings (as opposed to their opposites, or some other feelings altogether) are in some manner innate, instinctual, implanted. But can contemporary science make any sense of this that moves us beyond Broad's rather crude "struggle for existence" hypothesis?

4. But first, what does common sense hold to be the explanation for why children learn, not only to behave considerately or otherwise prosocially, but to feel and judge that such behavior is right or good – that is, to approve it? (In Broad's language, to be disposed to feel moral pro-emotions towards it.) Part of the answer, at least, has got to be by imitation. Children (at least initially!) approve and disapprove of what their parents approve and disapprove of. Why their parents, in preference to strangers or cartoon characters? Because it is the parents to whom they are strongly attached. But imitation is an innate mechanism in its own right. If children only learned what they were formally taught, then "to inculcate any habit or rule, a parent would have to reward the right behavior and punish the wrong one when each appeared," which would have been difficult, time-consuming and downright dangerous in the course our species' evolutionary history. "Doing the right thing, practically and morally, is so important for survival that these tendencies must be rapidly acquired, and that can only happen if children are biologically disposed to imitate behavior and learn the underlying rules of that behavior directly, by observation."[21] But is moral approval then just a habit built up – learned – by imitation, albeit a habit that depends on the prior (innate) mechanism of attachment? Children want to be like others (and be liked by them), and this is a manifestation of their innate desire for affiliation. Approval and disapproval, on this

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 157. [21] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

suggestion, might then be just another one of the myriad largely imitative social and linguistic games young children willingly enter into as part of their efforts to join up with, develop attachments to, family members and playmates. Common sense endorses Broad's earlier proposal that "for a small child, 'good' and 'right' acts are practically co-extensive with those which its mother or nurse names in a certain tone and with a smile or which she exhorts it to do." There is a good deal of truth in this, but is it the whole truth?

I find at least two problems in the idea that moral approval and disapproval are completely explicable in terms of attachment, empathy, imitation, and operant conditioning (smiles and frowns). First, it introduces an odd chicken-or-the-egg problem. Why does the mother feel the need to approve of sociable behavior in the first place? Because her mother did? Perhaps that is just a silly question; parents in every human generation just need their children to get along, share things, show empathy, and so on – and eventually perhaps to respond approvingly to those same things, in themselves as well as in others, on their own. Otherwise they would go crazy. That is the element of truth in the Hobbesian view, which Hume would later name "the selfish theory" of moral approbation. Approval, as Hutcheson clearly did recognize, has a reinforcing function in human intercourse; it is a natural and indispensable part of our way of life, given those other innate factors that shape it. Perhaps all of this is right, and common sense, and Wilson's first four innate factors, suffice. But if that is correct, then moral approval, at least initially in the parent-child relationship, is *not* disinterested. It is a psychological self-defense mechanism on the part of the parent, which the child picks up as part of her effort to go along and be included (rewarded). It is basically a deal. But perhaps it is partly disinterested, in the sense that every (good) parent wants her child eventually to approve of things that (she takes it) really are good in themselves, such as benevolence. But then why does the parent want that? Hutcheson would of course say that it is because she has moral sense – and leave it, as he did, at that. My other problem is historical-philosophical as well as theoretical. What I want is a sentimentalist account of approval, not a rationalist explanation for approval in very young children – whatever that could be – or a Hobbesian one claiming, as Hutcheson puts it, that "the *approbation* of the action of another, is from an opinion of its tendency to the happiness of the *approver*." Hutcheson claims that not only a disposition to benevolence, but also an involuntary disposition to approve disinterestedly of benevolence, is innate. And without some account of the second innate disposition we

might have something like Hume's principle of humanity – but not moral sense.

HOW DO VERY YOUNG CHILDREN COME TO APPROVE (AND DISAPPROVE)? OCCULTISM *VERSUS* OBSCURANTISM

Consider Wilson's fifth and final innate factor, which he calls "the fundamental moralizing instincts of the child."

> The child . . . is an intuitive moralist. His tendency to moralize comes from his desire to socialize, but moralizing does not reflect simply a desire to please; were that the case, we would act only in ways that made us popular and praise the actions of others only if they pleased us. The human passion to moralize – that is, to judge the actions and motives of others as worthy or unworthy – reflects something deeper in our nature than just a penchant for approval, important as that is. If it is true that we are *intuitive* moralists, we must spontaneously organize our judgments into something approximating moral categories.
>
> That we do this is evident from the fact that, beginning at an early age, children can tell the difference between moral and non-moral issues . . . Moreover, there are some things that young children regard as wrong whether they are middle-class residents of Hyde Park, Illinois, or Hindus living in the Indian village of Bhubaneswar. These include breaking a promise, stealing flowers, kicking a harmless animal, and destroying another's property.
>
> In ways that we do not fully understand, nature has prepared us for making distinctions and organizing judgments. What we learn from our interaction with families and friends builds on that prepared ground, developing, shaping, modifying, or in some cases deforming it, but never quite supplanting it.[22]

But what is that "something deeper in our nature than just a penchant for approval" (of ourselves, by others)? What is it that impels us even as very young children to "organize our judgments" precisely so as to disapprove of stealing flowers and kicking stray cats? What is this "it"? Wilson senses that the question is intriguing and in all likelihood legitimate, and I believe he also realizes that his own scavenging has failed to turn up an answer. "It" begins to sound dangerously closer to innate ideas, epigenetic rules or bloodless impersonal neural circuits – and further from the organic, instinctual, biological, wet-and-slippery *wants* we are presumably after. Wilson has definitely helped find and organize evidence for something like Hutcheson's sense; but on this stubborn vexatious subject of approval I am afraid he has led us right back into Hutcheson's black box in which our minds simply receive ideas of occult qualities.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 141f.

This might seem like just another in a long series of dead ends, but the fact that we were led there, not by a somewhat complacent Christian minister living in a Newtonian (and pre-Darwinian) world, but instead by a living social scientist with a keen eye for what is essential in all the relevant biological and psychological data presently available to us, seems to me to portend something of rather serious importance, not only for the history of sentimentalism but also for present-day attempts to understand our own nature as moral beings. First, I suggest that Wilson helps us (very indirectly) bring into focus a defining moment in the career of moral sense-sentimentalism – roughly, the beginning of its end as an historical school of ethics. As indicated earlier Hutcheson himself moved away from the conception of moral sense as a brute feeling, but his successors, Hume and Smith, rejected it entirely. For the two of them there is no black box, only cognition, imagination and sympathy. They both thought that an innate disposition to approve was superfluous, since moral approval could be wholly explained by sympathy with the joys and sorrows, and motives, of other persons (plus reflection, of course). In Hume's case Hutcheson's moral sense was absorbed into "humanity or concern for others"; moral approbation became a (pleasant) manifestation of sympathy or humanity (which is indeed innate). So the first half of Hutcheson's sense suffices. For Smith if I approve of your actions and the desires (motives) that prompted them, this just means that were I in your shoes I would feel just the way you do; I sympathize with the feelings that (I imagine) motivated you. (I have always found this to be implausible, though I am not sure quite why.) Hume's and Smith's accounts of how moral approval operates were (fairly) clearly stated by them and have been widely discussed in the literature on their work.[23]

But Hutcheson, I further suggest, wanted to keep his (early) moral sense a black box. He positively asserted that the mind's power of generating disinterested approval of benevolent motives not only is but must always remain "a mystery."

[23] In fact Wilson borrows a page right out of Smith in his one explicit discussion of moral approval. "We approve the conduct and character of another person if, when we imagine ourselves in his position, our feelings correspond to those that we think motivate him." (*The Moral Sense*, p. 32.) But sympathy has now gone beyond mere innate empathy with others' distress to encompass "our sense of another's feelings and of their appropriateness given the circumstances." Sympathy is "the basis of our judgment." "More bluntly, to sympathize *is* to judge." (*Ibid.*, p. 34.) It is not that this idea simply didn't occur to Hutcheson. Rather, in a deep sense, it was not open to him. For Hutcheson, as we saw, feelings (of the sort that motivate) cannot sensibly be called "appropriate to circumstances" *simpliciter*. They can only be appropriate (fitting) relative to some desired end or (yet again) some sense. But that gets us nowhere in looking for an innate component in moral sense that explains our approval.

One might at this point try constructing a Hutchesonian argument, in the spirit of H. A. Prichard, to the effect that my own search for an explanation of why humans spontaneously and involuntarily approve of benevolence, in terms of some innate factor other than the "approving function" of moral sense itself, "rests on a mistake."[24] The arguments could hardly be strictly parallel, since our question has been, not what justifies our approving of certain things or judging them right, as it was in Prichard – Hutcheson's answer to that question is of course our moral sense – but rather what explains why very young children form approval responses to the behaviors of others (what causes them to do it). Still (a modern-day Hutcheson might say), babies want attachment, they elicit it from others, they feel empathy, they imitate their parents, and while all of that might explain why they come eventually to act and speak as if they felt benevolence to be good, it could never explain their actually coming to feel *that* it is, i.e. actually to approve it, themselves. You just cannot derive (disinterested) approval from an (interested) need for approval. But just look – when they "get face to face" (as Prichard said) with a particular instance of benevolence (say at age two or three), they just will "directly appreciate" its value. The only way to understand why and how toddlers come to approve of kindness, helpfulness and so on is to imagine being one and let one's imaginatively reactivated juvenile moral sense do its work. This might sound a bit stretched but I honestly think that some such thoughts were at work in Hutcheson's mind when deciding what to say – and what not to say – about his moral sense.

Children start by wanting approval, receiving it, and watching as others both grant and secure it; they end up (very quickly) approving and disapproving "all by themselves." But why is it so extraordinarily hard to say how that happens?[25] Can evolutionary psychology, or developmental

[24] "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" *Mind* 21 (1912), reprinted in Sellars and Hospers.

[25] And remember first of all that the whole problem of explaining disinterested approval (at this level of abstraction) is only a problem for benevolists, people who believe in disinterested affections in the first place. Hobbes would see no problem explaining why people verbally or through other signs reinforce others to behave as they themselves want them to (though he would say it is by glorifying them, not approving of them). And John Gay, a contemporary critic of Hutcheson, proposed that approval of socially useful acts comes about in the same way a miser comes to love money itself, by forgetting (through association of ideas) what he wanted it for in the first place, namely what it could get him. (No problem there, either.) What Wilson is arguing in much of his book, I think, is that, in effect, Gay was wrong. Secondly (and more importantly) the problem as I have stated it, in terms of the black box, is a problem only for moral sense-sentimentalists, among believers in genuine benevolence. It is a problem, in other words, only for Hutcheson and anyone who wishes to defend his conception of moral sense, *viz.* myself and to a great extent (as I think we can see) Wilson. So it is a defining moment, argumentatively speaking, for moral sense-sentimentalism not only then, but now.

psychology, or plain common sense tell us anything more about what may be going on inside that Hutcheson/Wilson black box? I have come to believe that they can't, and that is what I wish to argue next – on behalf of both Hutcheson and myself. I wish to restate and update Hutcheson's own direct argument for the existence of moral sense, while sticking to the general form of the original. But whereas his proceeded by demanding a justification for approving anything (for example the public good), mine calls for an explanation.

Wilson takes one last shot at explaining moral approval scientifically:

> Insofar as they arise out of sympathy . . . our moral sentiments originate in our natural sociability. Because we like the company and desire the approval of others, we adjust our actions to conform to others' expectations. If that were the end of the matter, we might properly conclude that morality is little more than a popularity contest. But that is not the whole story. Our natural sociability leads us not only to act so as to please others but also [how?] to judge how others act toward us; and in judging them we learn [how?] to judge ourselves. We want the approval of others, but – to a degree that cannot be explained by immediate self-interest – we also want to deserve that approval [why?]. In other words, we desire not only respect but self-respect.[26]

But again how do they (all of us, as children) get from sizing up others on a scale of how helpful (benevolent) they are to them, to approving disinterestedly of benevolence in a second party towards a third (let alone benevolence in themselves towards others)? Wilson's answer, for all I am able to tell, is that they just do. Because of their "moralizing instincts," because of their "evolving moral sense."

But this is obviously still no good – neither scientifically nor philosophically satisfying. Yet to explain why it is no good, specifically by arguing that a better explanation can't be given, is certainly to step onto very thin ice. It is to invite my readers (as Richard Robinson put it in his important paper of 1971, "Arguing from Ignorance") "to adopt a conclusion in view of our own ignorance." I do not wish to drag us into technicalities of (informal) logic. I would simply note, first, that not every argument from ignorance is invalid, and secondly that many arguments beginning with questions of the form "Who can?" (as here, in "who can do better than Wilson?"), though "illegitimate as a means of *inferring from* our ignorance," are "legitimate as a means of *indicating* our ignorance."[27]

[26] *The Moral Sense*, p. 34.

[27] "Arguing from Ignorance," p. 105. I certainly agree with Robinson that arguments from ignorance generally speaking are "bad." "Ignorance is not one of the sources of knowledge [and I will not be arguing that it is a source of knowledge]; and premisses about our ignorance do not reasonably

It is important to concede that Hutcheson's own overall argument against rationalists of his own day, and in favor of believing in moral sense, is a form of argument from ignorance. "For what reason do we approve X? I fancy we can find none; therefore we must recur to a sense."[28] And I think that Hutcheson must have been well aware of this. Locke had criticized the argument from ignorance in the *Essay* – which we know Hutcheson studied very carefully – as a false attempt to "require the adversary to admit what they allege as a proof, or to assign a better." "It proves not another man to be in the right way, nor that I ought to take the same with him, because I know not a better . . . I may be ignorant, and not be able to produce a better." Also, the fact (if it was one) that rationalists of Hutcheson's day could not without circularity or obscurity justify core ethical judgments in their own terms certainly does not prove that some other rationalist (in our own time, perhaps) might not succeed at doing so; still less does it prove that a moral sense must exist to do it instead.[29]

give conclusions about our knowledge." "Ignorance is a good ground for suspending judgement, but not for taking a side." "The argument from ignorance neglects the facts that every statement has its contradictory and our job is to choose between the two contradictories." (p. 102.) It will be obvious (I hope) that I am not arguing that "since we do not know that there is not a moral sense, there is one." But what, in the literature of ethics, is the contradictory of "a moral sense exists"? It is significant that no one nowadays seems to take the trouble to argue that there isn't a moral sense; rather the claim (or assumption) seems to be that we do not need to postulate (or even talk about) one, since there are (following Nagel) better accounts of moral judgment, which render moral sense-talk superfluous. I find that unconvincing, as it obviously begs the question (by simply choosing not to look into it) whether some moralizing instinct might not turn out, after all, not to be superfluous. Nor am I at all suggesting that it is in principle impossible for the life sciences to improve our understanding in the future of what that instinct actually is and how humans evolved (or co-evolved themselves, through culture) to have it.

I could try arguing from the premises that scientific generalizations about nature are in a way arguments from ignorance and that they are not invalid, and then posing my demand for an explanation as some sort of scientific generalization. The law of gravity is true because we cannot disprove it. But such arguments have "two unusual and redeeming features." First, "the ignorance cited is not the ignorance of some particular man who has not thought about the question; it is the ignorance of careful inquirers after they, or some of them, have tried very hard to find evidence that the generalization is false." So far so good for me; but secondly, "in good science our ignorance that our generalizations are false is combined with the knowledge that they do explain a great deal that we know." (*Ibid.*, p. 107.) I simply cannot claim that a moralizing instinct really explains a great deal that we know. It is a placeholder for (indicator of) our ignorance, not an *explanans per se* at all. Nor could "all children approve disinterestedly because of a moral sense" even be a lawlike scientific generalization in the first place, as it cannot (it seems to me) be empirically confirmed or disconfirmed (at least yet).

[28] We need to appeal to an ineffable instinctual psychological determination, as Frankena called it, because every justification that has actually been proposed in terms of reasons for approving, or moral qualities in the things approved, sooner or later hits a dead-end; and this gives us good grounds of some kind for adopting the conclusion that future justifications will fail, too.

[29] As Robinson shows, many forms of argument which appear to be invalid arguments from ignorance turn out on inspection not to be arguments from ignorance at all; for example, some "how can . . . ?" forms of argument, such as Kant's famous argument beginning from the question, "How are *a priori*

But to repeat, my own question is not how moral judgments can be justified but rather how they can be explained. (So if I do end up committing a fallacy it will be one of the explanation, as opposed to the proof, or interrogative forms.[30]) What precisely do I mean by a moral sense? I mean by it essentially what Wilson does: an instinctual, prepared, innate, nonrational psychological mechanism that causes young children to see and judge the world in particular moral terms and within a fairly determinate range (no pulling hair or kicking stray cats), and about which nothing further can interestingly be said.

But it may be that the question at the heart of Wilson's account, and my own argument, is illegitimate. "How can very young children approve disinterestedly?" It might first of all be that they simply cannot, that all their approvals are (perhaps in some subtle Hobbesian reward event manner) interested, "friendly confidence building gesture-getting" devices that humans evolved so as to deploy while young children, as strategies (so to speak) of their own selfish genes.[31] But that is not philosophically problematical, for I simply do deny that as a matter of fact their judgments are all 'interested.'[32] In *The Concept of Mind* Gilbert Ryle suggested that a

synthetic judgments possible?" By asking the question Kant commits himself to the statement that they are possible (for he takes them to be actual), but the form of his argument is really "p, but not p unless q, therefore q," which is not an appeal to ignorance. ("The 'how can?' form gives vividness to this train of thought: p. but how is p possible?, not p unless q, therefore q. It is fair, however, to suggest that the 'not p unless q' premiss is put in a somewhat dazzling light by the preceding 'How can?'" "Arguing from Ignorance," p. 105.) Hutcheson wants to argue most generally that, "justified moral judgments are possible, for even young children make them, but how can that be unless there is some nonrational commitment at work in them, so there is." But that merely returns us to the beginning, wondering why that must (cannot not) be – and to a form of argument that does appeal to ignorance, namely the inability of his rivals to 'produce a better' account.

[30] Something like: "You know no explanation of q (the children's judgments); therefore the explanation of q is (or must be) p (the moral sense); therefore the moral sense exists."

[31] I do not dispute Gibbard's central idea that evolutionary theory can in principle explain why we humans make normative judgments at all, and in fact I believe it can. Normative governance (in his special sense of that term) enabled joint planning, co-ordination, co-operation, and thereby enhanced (individual) genetic fitness in ancestral populations. "Shared evaluation is central to human life, I suggest, because it serves biological functions of rehearsal and coordination." (*Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, p. 72.) But (if I understand correctly) what motivates normative discussion generally is actually a subtle form of self-interestedness. We are motivated to shape our individual choices according to socially agreed upon co-ordinating norms, all the while trying (at some level) to tilt the balance of those norms in the direction of our own (perceived) welfare and (underlying) reproductive success. We want them (in Butler's words) to work "in our own interests, or at least not contrary to them." (That is obviously too simple a sketch of his idea and may not even be an accurate reflection of his views.) Science can explain why there should be pressure towards putative or purported disinterestedness in normative discussion, but can it really explain what I am about to call the first judgment of a single real individual child?

[32] On what grounds? On grounds, I suppose, of an appeal to the ordinary moral consciousness, as well as to my own experience and observation as a father to three young children.

"how can?" question is very often what he called a "wires and pulleys" question, a false suggestion that "there exists a mechanical or para-mechanical problem (like those that are properly asked about conjuring tricks and automatic telephones)."[33] That is an interesting worry; my response is just to claim that my reconstruction of Wilson's account of what is innate in moral sense is precisely an argument to show that the question is not false or para-mechanical. Toddlers simply conjure up genuinely disinterested moral judgments of their own. Even if we cannot answer it, the question of how they do so seems perfectly legitimate; after all, look at how much we (following Wilson's lead) did come up with precisely by pursuing it.

And it simply is a fact that very young children – even younger than two, as it seems to me – are able to feel, and to express, disinterested approval and disapproval of what others do. They just can make, if in a very simple way, what adults call moral judgments – such as that "hitting is bad" or "you are a bad boy."[34] (My own sense is that they learn to disapprove before learning to approve, though I know of no way to justify that suggestion.) Naturally we cannot expect toddlers to explain to us how they learn to do this in a satisfying way, as they are just learning to speak and to think.[35] Yet just as Wilson suggests, they are learning a lot of things around the age of two, about the expectations family members have of one another, about their own burgeoning independence, about how to elicit attention from others (and withhold it from them) and so on. And Wilson is right, they are not passive vessels in all of this; on the contrary some of their own judgments about what is going on appear to be genuine convictions on their parts, not just copies of what others say. It follows, I think, that each young (normal) child must, at a particular instant in time, make a 'first judgment.' And that first judgment cannot be regarded as an accident, a fluke, for every normal child goes on to develop practically seamlessly into a real young moralist, with complex feelings to express and judgments to make about how things human and social should and should not be carried out in the world he or

[33] p. 251.

[34] Nichols (who is an empirical psychologist as well as a philosopher) defines "the capacity for core moral judgment" as "the capacity to recognize that harm-based violations are very serious, authority independent, generalizable and that the actions are wrong because of welfare considerations," and that is more or less what I am talking about here. (*Sentimental Rules*, p. 7.) However in his very short section on "Sentimental Rules and the Moral Sense," he states that, "Eighteen-month-old human infants can probably respond with reactive distress and concern; yet it would be a stretch to say that such infants have the capacity for core moral judgment." (p. 62) With that, I must respectfully, but emphatically, disagree.

[35] It is interesting to note that even we adults are not very good at explaining why hitting is bad; a typical response is "because it hurts." See Nichols, *Sentimental Rules*, p. 20 note 9.

she inhabits. So we all already know that, in the real world, at some point each child must move beyond cooing, courting, affiliating, mimicking and demanding attention, to a stage wherein her ripening understanding of relations within the family finally issues forth in her own ethical appraisals of what is going on.

Now it should be possible to give a coherent and consilient account of how little children first come to offer disinterested appraisals of what others (such as their playmates) do. Again it is a fact that sooner or later they do this. But apparently this is not possible. One cannot but be struck by the way in which an eminent social scientist like Wilson feels the need finally to throw up his hands and reduce himself to jargon about children "moving to the next stage," the "prepared learning" they exhibit and their "evolving moral sense." And has anyone else really done any better?[36] I have not found any book of developmental psychology that genuinely improves at all on Wilson's own account. In each one, and at practically the same moment, every purported explanation takes the same turn into obscurantism. And I mean to level this charge against all contemporary psychologists, biologists, social scientists and philosophers – including myself. I am not being lazy here; I have actually tried on numerous occasions to explain clearly in a few sentences or paragraphs how children advance from engaging in innate prosocial behavior, affiliating, imitating, and empathizing to making disinterested judgments of moral approbation and condemnation on their own – and failed.[37] Wilson's own account trails off into obscurity with talk of nature having prepared children for moral judgment in ways we do not fully understand, and then simply labels this preparation their moralizing instincts. But I simply challenge anyone to do better, or to show me any passage in which anyone actually has. I believe – though admittedly it seems a bit strange – that Wilson's moralizing instinct simply is Hutcheson's moral sense proper.

It could of course be that a purely philosophical, rationalist account of moral approbation, one that covers children as well as adults, has already or will someday be produced, which succeeds, or will succeed, precisely by ignoring Wilson's and Hutcheson's and my own preoccupation with feelings (such as becoming upset) and desires (for attachment, for example). After all attention to these, it might be argued, at the expense of

[36] Here is the part of my argument that likely is an appeal to ignorance.

[37] And each time I failed precisely by being obscure. As a sort of experiment I even published one in the student-edited journal of my own university's honors program; this elicited many a "Hmm . . . that's interesting" – and many of our students are also parents – but absolutely nothing, I am quite convinced, approaching genuine enlightenment.

concentration on moral reasons, is precisely what has led Wilson to the dead end, into the black box. And, what makes moral sense theory so hopelessly misguided.

But that seems quite implausible. And this is not so much because to explain a child's first judgment by saying that he or she has finally come (at age two) to apprehend moral reasons for approving or disapproving (or some such) would seem incredibly hollow; nor is it even because no such account (to my knowledge) has ever actually been offered.[38] Rather, it is because it seems impossible even to conceive how such an account could be made consilient with all of the biological and social facts adduced by Wilson in his (reasonably solid) attempt to explain the child's first judgment. The first four innate factors must play important roles but they remain jointly insufficient to account for the phenomenon we seek to understand. Yet any purely rationalist account of it would, I presume, proceed without reference to any such factors – suckling, coos and giggles, smiles and frowns, "good girls!" (confidence building gestures) – at all.

So until a successful rationalistic (or sociological, or psychiatric, or evolutionary psychological) account presents itself, or unless we are all willing to rest content with obscurantist pseudo-scientific cant, there is as it seems to me only one option left open to us. And that is simply to say, with Hutcheson, that the whole thing *is* a mystery.

> This *natural determination* to approve and admire, or hate and dislike actions, is, no doubt, an occult quality. But is it any way more mysterious, that the idea of an action should raise esteem or contempt, than that the motion or tearing of flesh should give pleasure or pain; or the act of volition should move flesh and bones? In the latter case, we have got the brain, and elastic fibres, and animal spirits, and elastic fluids, like the Indian's elephant, and tortoise, to bear the burden of the difficulty: but go one step farther, and you find the whole as difficult as at first, and equally a mystery with this determination to love and approve, or condemn and despise actions and agents, without any views of *interest*, as they appear *benevolent*, or the contrary.[39]

This choice amounts to admitting that there is a black box in each child's mind and that no one, not I, nor you, nor scientists, nor even thoughtful parents can express or even conceive what is inside it. We know we need it in order to account fully for our moral judgments but cannot quite say how it would do so. It enables and justifies them but we cannot understand how or why this is the case. We try using it to plug the gap in our understanding

[38] Perhaps some moral realist has tried giving one and if so I would be happy to read it (though not hopeful it could succeed).

[39] *Raphael I*, p. 295.

of how disinterested moral judgment in very young children is possible, and though unable to say what it is, we know with certainty that the gap in our knowledge remains real. We cannot get into, under or behind it, yet we just do somehow know it is there. And all of this is just to say that – at least for anything anyone has shown to the contrary – Hutcheson's occultism is justified, and his moral sense is real.

My own overall argument is legitimate as a way of indicating our ignorance.[40] Moral sense exists, is real, at least to the extent that it stands for that very ignorance, which we ought, all of us, to admit. But in philosophical ethics, at least, even that result – given the near-universal hatred of the idea of moral sense – seems substantial.

THE "HYPEROFFENSIVE" ARGUMENT AGAINST ETHICAL RATIONALISM

The time has come to state what I wish to call (for both clarity and fun) the hyperoffensive argument against rationalism, meaning by that simply the strongest possible way in which to argue that ethical rationalism cannot be true. Could rationalism in ethics ever be decisively refuted? My own considered view may seem surprising. Just as British sentimentalism was never actually discredited but only came to be overshadowed by utilitarianism, Kantianism and so on, probably no conclusive purely philosophical refutation of rationalism is even possible.[41] Rationalism in ethics is hydra-headed; you might articulate a fatal flaw in one or a dozen particular philosophers'

[40] My argument is not so much an attempt to win but rather so to speak to level the field. As Robinson aptly notes, in theoretical discussions (as opposed, say, to legal proceedings) "a burden of proof lies on all those persons, and only those persons, who want to change somebody else's mind." "If two persons each want to change the other's mind, there is a burden of proof on each of them. If the writers of a book wish to convince their readers, the burden of proof is on the writers." ("Arguing from Ignorance," p. 107.) And I do hope to have persuaded at least some readers to change their minds, from "moral sense is a mere philosophical artifact" to "moral sense may be a scientific reality" ("so perhaps I had best suspend judgment, at least for the time being").

[41] Oddly, I myself do not find purported refutations of particular rationalistic theories to be very convincing – even, or especially, critiques of Nagel's own view. Nagel argues that whoever refuses to acknowledge universal and objective practical judgments violates a requirement of altruism inherent in practical reason, because that person is abandoning the metaphysical idea of herself as merely one person among others. Bittner responds by claiming that "[s]omeone who considers herself a person among others may indeed have to regard all judgments she makes about herself as transferable, in the sense that everything she says of herself may also be meaningfully said of others," but that "she need not herself acknowledge [such judgments] as valid." Therefore any "altruism that does follow" from the idea of oneself as one person among others "remains [merely] formal," so that "there can be no question of substantial moral consequences." Nagel's entire argument "rests on a confusion." (*What Reason Demands*, p. 35f.) But this does not really meaningfully engage Nagel's sophisticated positive argument to show that our metaphysical idea of ourselves does require that we acknowledge

theories but I doubt there will ever be a shortage of new heads to spring forth, new refinements, new accounts of reasons for action, motivation, rational demands and so on. The nexus of reason and morality is tight in Western thought and (unsurprisingly) in ethics as well. "The tie of morals to reason supports the whole of moral theory," as Gibbard remarks (before adding a wry " – perhaps").[42] I also do not imagine that the traditional sentimental *versus* rational rivalry within moral philosophy will go away anytime soon. Philosophers love reasons, and reason (I think) undeniably plays some indispensable part in moral development, judgment etc.

Nevertheless it is at least possible, I believe, that rationalistic ethical theory will someday encounter a fate analogous to that of sentimentalism in the eighteenth century. But whereas the school of sentiment was largely undermined by increasing demands from within philosophy for normative guidance and authority, rationalism well might slowly come to be seen as less interesting, less persuasive, because of a different sort of demand – namely

certain objective practical judgments to be valid, specifically judgments about the importance taking anyone's interests into account in deciding what to do.

Philippa Foot's critique of Nagel seems even more perfunctory: "When anyone has a reason for bringing anything about there has to be a reason for that thing 'to happen,' and Nagel says that in acting for a reason one must be able to regard oneself as 'promoting an objectively valuable end.' But if it means nothing to speak of an 'objectively valuable end' then there are no reasons such as Nagel describes and I may say that another has reason to aim at his own good without implying that I too have reason to promote this end." So Nagel's entire account is "basically the same argument as Moore's." ("Reasons for Action and Desires," p. 154.) But that seems simply to beg the issue in favor of her own account, on which there is no "special, automatic reason-giving force of moral judgement."

Gibbard is almost dismissive; after naming several writers who "speak of 'reasons' in a non-Humean way, and indeed try to ground ethical theory on a non-Humean concept of reasons" (Grice, Bond and Nagel), simply complains that "[n]one of them, so far as I can discover, explains what he is using the term 'reason' to mean." (*Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, p. 161, note 6.) I suspect that may be true in Nagel's case, but surely Nagel has earned the right to see that assessment spelled out through careful critical analysis of the various passages in which he actually employs the term. (Also we should be told what counts as adequately explaining what "reason" means.)

I must add that I myself do not wish to imply, anywhere, that Nagel's views are somehow or other "crazy"; it is only the details of his formal account of morality and their anti-sentimental implications with which I take issue. In his excellent introductory text, *What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy* (which I have used in my own classes with very good results), Nagel writes (p. 67), "The basis of morality is a belief that good and harm to particular people (or animals) is good or bad not just from their point of view, which every thinking person can understand. That means that each person has a reason to consider not only his own interests but the interests of others in deciding what to do. And it isn't enough if he is considerate only of some others – his family and friends, those he specially cares about. Of course he will care more about certain people, and also about himself. But he has some reason to consider the effect of what he does on the good or harm of everyone. If he's like most of us, that is what he thinks others should do with regard to him, even if they aren't friends of his." I would say, of anyone who would not admit this to be a *part* of "what is true and false about ethics," that he or she must be the crazy one!

[42] *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, p. 5.

that ethics be realistic. Not in precisely my own sense of that term in the first chapter, but realistic in a scientific sense. The pace of new discovery in the biological and human sciences is unprecedented, at times frightening. Scientific inquiry might even soon yield what philosophers have lacked for a very long time – a satisfactory general theory of human affect (in relation to perception, cognition, motivation and so on), rooted no doubt in evolutionary biology. I also foresee a growth of interest in the sort of empirically informed ethics represented (for example) by Nichols. And all of this helps explain the form of my carrying through of Hutcheson's, Hume's and Broad's (and Wilson's) arguments against rationalism. It is intended not as some grand confutation but instead as one example of how scientific discoveries can put intellectual pressure on rationalist theories of morality. Predictions in philosophy are almost always bad, but I would venture that future challenges to such theories will continue to exemplify the spirit of Hutcheson's and Broad's critiques but will become increasingly empirical in inspiration and orientation.

We must begin by rewinding (so to speak) to that passage in which Broad states that he finds nothing logically impossible in the existence of a being "who was rational in the ethically neutral sense, and did in fact have the ideas of right and wrong and make moral judgments" yet was "completely devoid of specifically moral emotion and conation." We saw that what Broad calls the offensive argument never really breaks out beyond Hutcheson's and Hume's arguments to show that morality is determined by sentiment. All of those arguments rely on or (better) express a theory of practical reason that rational moralists are strongly loath or constitutionally unable to accept, and so they remain, in an important sense, question-begging.

Price held that the existence of beings who were rational only in the ethically neutral sense was synthetically and necessarily impossible. In other, simpler terms, any being who is rational must be ethical, be motivated to be ethical (or at least have suitable motivations available to him). (And is this not the essence of what rationalists, all rationalists, wish to claim?) Broad has successfully shown Price's claim to be false. There may be such beings.

But the simple fact is that there are quite a few such beings. And not only does the existence of such beings not violate any laws of psychology, there are law-like generalizations in empirical psychology that strongly suggest that such beings, when they do exist, are utterly – causally and contingently, not analytically and necessarily – unethical. In using the term "unethical" here, I do not mean to issue a moral judgment, to call them evil. Rather I mean (of course) unsusceptible of altruistic motivation and immune to successful ethical justification.

They used to be called the "morally insane." Then for a long time they were known as psychopaths, though nowadays the preferred term (among behavioral scientists) is sociopaths. But who is the sociopath? The classic attempt to answer that question is, of course, Hervey Cleckley's *The Mask of Sanity*.[43] But the following seems to me a fairly typical passage in the more recent literature, from the late Linda Mealey:[44]

> Whether criminal or not, sociopaths typically exhibit what is generally considered to be irresponsible and unreliable behavior; their attributes include egocentrism, an inability to form lasting personal commitments and a marked degree of impulsivity. Underlying a superficial veneer of sociability and charm, sociopaths are characterized by a deficit of the social emotions (love, shame, guilt, empathy, and remorse). On the other hand, they are not intellectually handicapped, and are often able to deceive and manipulate others through elaborate scams and ruses including fraud, bigamy, embezzlement, and other crimes which rely on the trust and cooperation of others . . . This cold-hearted and selfish approach to human interaction at one time garnered for sociopathy the moniker "moral insanity."[45]

Now rationalism is the view that reason (whatever that is supposed on a given rationalist theory to mean) is sufficient both to justify ethical conduct and to motivate it. Sentimentalism is the view that while reason is necessary to both ethical justification and ethical motivation it is insufficient in the absence of moral emotion (as that idea is spelled out by it) either to justify or to motivate ethical conduct. In the literature of psychopathology, both reason and emotion are typically used in quite mundane senses, which I would say reflect the basic common sense default understanding of those terms. Sociopaths have reason. But they lack moral emotion. And their daily conduct is blatantly unethical (again in a quite ordinary sense), and that is what interests and frightens us – psychiatrists and non-psychiatrists alike – about them so very much.[46] Moreover they seem to me to lack

[43] *The Mask of Sanity: An attempt to clarify some issues about the so-called psychopathic personality*.

[44] "The Sociobiology of Sociopathy: An Integrated Evolutionary Model," p. 523.

[45] Wilson offers something quite similar as part of his own argument to prove the reality of a (sentimental) moral sense: "Psychopaths lie without compunction, injure without remorse, and cheat with little fear of detection. Wholly self-centered and unaware of the emotional needs of others, they are, in the fullest sense of the term, unsocial. They can mimic feelings without experiencing them. If man were simply the pure calculator that some economists and game theorists imagine, this is what he would be. (*The Moral Sense*, p. 107) Compare Cleckley: "The psychopath cannot be depended upon to show the ordinary responsiveness to special consideration or kindness or trust . . . The ordinary axiom of human existence that one good turn deserves another, a principle sometimes honored by cannibals and uncommonly callous assassins, has only superficial validity for him although he can cite it with eloquent casuistry when trying to obtain parole, discharge from the hospital, or some other end." (*The Mask of Sanity*, p. 354.)

[46] In 2003, two years after drafting this chapter (and I am being quite honest here), I happened to discover an article by Shaun Nichols entitled "How Psychopaths Threaten Moral Rationalism, or

what rational moral philosophers call "genuinely practical moral reason" – and this brings us all the way back to Korsgaard's internalism requirement, discussed in chapter 1. "Practical reason-claims" "must be capable of motivating rational persons" if they are to "present genuine reasons for acting." Psychopaths are apparently capable of being motivated by many practical reason-claims – specifically claims about what they must or ought to do that appeal solely to their own interests and desires – just not by any moral (other-regarding) ones. No justification of living morally is capable, apparently, of motivating them to act altruistically. Rationalism is incapable of explaining this fact. Rationalism is therefore false, at least of those beings, in both its explanatory and its justificational enterprises. Moral sense sentimentalism, in contrast, has a quite sensible and credible explanation to offer. Moral sense is thoroughly affective in nature and involves multiple innate components having nothing to do as such with reason. And psychopaths lack moral sense.

In his classic children's poem *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, Dr Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel) speaking as narrator, broaches the question why "The Grinch *hated* Christmas! The whole Christmas season!"

Now, please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.
It *could* be his head wasn't screwed on just right. It *could* be, perhaps, that his shoes were too tight. But I think that the most likely reason of all
May have been that his heart was two sizes too small.[47]

Is it Irrational to Be Amoral?" Moral philosophers have occasionally worried about psychopaths over the years but Nichols's argument is *very* similar to my own. There is considerable empirical evidence that psychopaths share a "distinctive affective deficit," in that they "show considerably heightened physiological response to threatening stimuli, but show abnormally low responsiveness to distress cues." This deficiency of affective response to harm in others plausibly explains "why they fail to treat harm norms as distinctive" and supports the general claim that (contrary to what Nichols labels "Empirical Rationalism") "an affective mechanism plays a critical role in the capacity for moral judgment." There is a "salient psychological difference between psychopaths and other groups, but it's not a difference in rational capacities, [rather] it's a difference in *affective response*." Nichols even goes on to conclude that "[t]he evidence on psychopaths thus seems not to support Empirical Rationalism at all, but rather, rationalism's rival, sentimentalism." He has since gone on to incorporate that paper, and other arguments and materials on psychopaths, into *Sentimental Rules*. My argument differs mainly in being imbedded in a broader (no pun intended) discussion of rationality in both a full and an ethically neutral sense; but then one might well read Broad retrospectively as having already contributed to the skeptical interrogation of what Nichols calls "Conceptual Rationalism," the view that it is simply "part of our concept of morality that moral requirements are requirements of reason." I would add (apropos of my argument in the preceding section) that while I agree with Nichols's central idea that "the capacity for core moral judgment depends on both a body of information about which actions are prohibited (a normative theory) and an affective mechanism that confers a special status on the norms" (p. 5), I do not see that he anywhere adequately explains where the normative theory in question comes from.

[47] Second stanza (no pagination given in the text).

As virtually every child in Westernized countries knows, the last hypothesis eventually receives support when (". . . in *Who*-ville they say," at least) "the minute his heart didn't feel quite so tight, He whizzed with his load through the bright morning light" – to rejoin society and engage at last in some rudimentary mundane altruism (undoing what he only now knew he had "wrongly" done, and personally carving the "roast beast").

I certainly do not wish to trivialize the tragedy that is human psychopathy, much less offer any amateur diagnosis of its underlying causes – which are no doubt dauntingly complex and very poorly understood. I only wish to call attention to the fact that the passages cited from contemporary social scientists, and from Broad, and the Grinch story, naturally and faithfully capture a good deal of what common sense has to say about the relative importance of reason and affect in moral motivation and understanding. The last also offers a simple and memorable (if whimsical) model with which to display the bottom-line opposition of the sentimental to the intellectual camp in ethics. Its "could be" and "quite knows" and "may have been" are at the same time precious reminders that no one really even approximately understands the whole nature of human motivation and the respective roles of cognition and affect therein. Its very childish simplicity is good, too. The rationality, and affectivity, of *Homo sapiens* are very complex; the variegated interrelated capacities, dispositions, sensitivities etc. that make us practically and ethically what we are should only really be crudely bisected into "reason" and "sentiment" when philosophical curiosity has dragged us into the realm of sheer abstraction that Broad's "Reflections" and the original Hutcheson *versus* Price rivalry need to inhabit in order to breathe on their own at all. On the other hand much of the literature of psychopathology, for whatever reasons of its own, displays a parallel if not identical bifurcation.

Rationalists no doubt will claim that they can plausibly explain the fact that sociopaths are intellectually adept yet behave "practically morally irrationally." I have never seen such an explanation, however.[48] Perhaps their unsocial attitudes and manipulative actions are the result of what Nagel called "contrary influences or interferences" that prevent their "acceptance of first-person reasons for action" from "usually becoming operative." As rational beings, they must be capable of "accepting first-person practical reasons for action." So then why are they not motivated by practical

[48] This isn't quite true; Michael Smith proposes (rather implausibly) that "the successful criminal" (though not the psychopath specifically) suffers from "the all too common vice of *intellectual arrogance*," and therefore "doesn't feel the force of arguments that come from *others* at all." See Nichols, *Sentimental Rules*, p. 80f.

ethical considerations? Is it that their selfish desires are simply plain stronger than ordinary people's and consequently overwhelm their rational faculties? I find that hard to believe. Or is the supposed contrary interference more banal in nature, possibly a lifelong irritability or hypersensitivity to little things? (Their shoes are too tight.) In the spirit of Price, a contemporary rationalist might propose alternatively that although sociopaths cognize moral properties of actions and acknowledge ("accept") practical reasons available to everyone for acting altruistically, these cognitions and rational capacities fail to cause in turn any moral emotions in them. But why? And if that is what is going on then would not Mill's methods suggest that it is therefore their lack of emotion, not some defect of cognition, which explains their failure to act? And since ethical cognition was supposed to be capable of motivating altruism in the absence of these superfluous interests or desires anyway, why aren't sociopaths so moved?

Rationalists could argue that I am being unfair in demanding an account of lack of motivation in sociopaths on the grounds that such persons are (by definition?) already not really part of the moral community. But that would simply beg the whole logical and epistemological question of which school of thought best describes and explains ethical justification and motivation in those who are. Moral sense theory accepts that they are not part of the community but rather than excluding them by fiat it at least justifies withholding from them, despite their apparent rationality in every other department of life besides mutual concern and respect (a big department), the designation "fully human." They really exclude themselves or (better perhaps) they are compelled by impersonal forces to act in ways that invariably lead to their exclusion. And philosophically speaking, that they deserve to be excluded is far more a synthetic and contingent proposition than it is a necessary one (following Broad's argument). Any (non-analytic) necessity involved is causal, and is supplied by facts of their endocrinology and cerebral-limbic neuroanatomy (as well in all likelihood as their early childhood experiences), not by philosophy.[49]

So, until rationalist moral philosophers propose a better answer, or even deign to try proposing one, I am afraid I will simply have to defer to the authority of contemporary psychiatry (given what little I know about it)

[49] Psychopaths inherit parents, not just genes. In the majority of cases, did their parents respond to their infantile and juvenile expressions of desire for attachment with "friendly and confidence-building gestures"? Moral sense theorists would bet they did not. We would also go on to speculate that this factor carries far more weight in the total cause than how educated, thoughtful or principled (how rational?) those parents were.

and the folk wisdom of "every *Who* down in *Who*-ville." Sociopaths are emotionally dysphasic, affectively cold and dead, and therefore (causally) necessarily incapable of really becoming emotionally engaged with others and so of being concerned about anyone's interests but their own – no matter what justifications are proposed to them. They contemplate various types of acts, and perhaps even accept that some are right and others wrong; but since they feel no genuine moral pro- or anti-emotions they lack the conative and emotional characteristics that (we sentimentalists claim) are necessary for moral motivation and justification.

Now, it would be nice in a sick sort of way if we could use Mill's methods to settle the whole dispute. Perhaps someday scientists might somehow disengage what rational moralists call practical reason from what sentimental ones call moral sense, in the laboratory. (First we philosophers would need to do a much better job spelling out exactly what that would mean.) They might then present their subjects with assorted ethical conundrums to see how the ones whose reason was still activated but whose moral sentiments were disengaged would stack up, responsively and motivationally, against the ones whose feelings were fine but whose rational faculties were paralyzed. But until that day comes – and I hope it never does – we must, I think, make do with something closer to twin studies. Not literally genetically identical twins, of course, but rather something more like what Wilson calls "outwardly normal persons with apparently logical minds" for whom "the ordinary emotions of life have no meaning" and their "twins," namely most of the rest of us, who possess logical minds and (most of the time) meaningful emotional engagements with others. But that is just roughly what psychopathologists do in their studies. Surprisingly (or not) there seems to be consensus that a law-like generalization of something like this form is roughly true: "If no genuine emotion, then no genuine ethical understanding, and no ethical motivation." To whatever degree that is so, it seems to me that sentimentalism is confirmed and rationalism is disconfirmed.[50]

[50] Unless of course rationalists choose to assert – and I take it that some do – that anthropology – as Kant branded all questions of "what people really are" – is utterly irrelevant to moral theory. Nagel writes (in 1978) that if ethics is "a theoretical inquiry that can be approached by rational methods and that has internal standards of justification and criticism, the attempt to understand it from outside by means of biology will be much less valuable [than if ethics is] just a certain type of behavioral pattern or habit, accompanied by some emotional responses." "Biology may tell us about perceptual and motivational starting points, but in its present state it has little bearing on the thinking process by which these starting points are transcended." ("Ethics as an Autonomous Theoretical Subject," p. 204.) My own view (of course) is that conceiving ethics as either "just a behavioral pattern or habit" or as completely autonomous of all matters of biology is (rather obviously) a false choice to begin with.

IDEAS WITHOUT WILL

But my argument does not really hang only on the existence of sociopaths, anyway. Let's face it, we are all sociopathic to some degree or other at some times or others. Our egoism renders us all largely moral-emotionally dysphasic, blind and numb to our neighbors' joys and sorrows, their weal or woe. We hate others because we do not know them; we turn coldly away from them because we do not care. But (the sentimentalist claims) the solution is to find ways to come to attend to and care more for our fellows – where psychologically possible – not to ponder coolly the reason of things.

Of course many living moral theorists will have none of this. Ethics, moral theory, they will insist, must be autonomous of merely empirical considerations. Fine. (Fine for them, not for me.) But long before anything like empirical psychology or psychiatry came along, Hume proposed a broadly analogous argument involving only 'normal' human agency.

If any man, from a cold insensibility or narrow selfishness of temper, is unaffected with the images of human happiness or misery, he must be equally indifferent to the images of vice and virtue . . .

That is the conclusion, on my retelling of the story of sentimentalism. The premises are doubtless empirical:

[Y]et none [He should have said *almost* none] are so entirely indifferent to the interests of their fellow creatures as to perceive no distinctions of moral good and evil, in consequence of the different tendencies of actions and principles.

Let us suppose a person ever so selfish, let private interest have engrossed ever so much his attention, yet in instances where that is not concerned he must avoidably feel *some* propensity to the good of mankind and make it an object of choice, if everything else be equal. Would any man who is walking alone tread as willingly on another's gouty toes, whom he has no quarrel with, as on the hard flint and pavement?

And if the principles of humanity are capable, in many instances, of influencing our actions, they must, at all times, have *some* authority over our sentiments and give us a general approbation of what is useful to society, and blame of what is dangerous or pernicious. The degrees of these sentiments may be the subject of controversy, but the reality of their existence, one should think, must be admitted in every theory or system.[51]

Hume is arguing, *contra* Hobbes, for the bare existence of genuine moral sentiment and disinterested approbation, and what he says does not speak

[51] *Enquiries*, p. 225f.

directly to the truth of what I am calling the conclusion, namely that such sentiment is necessary to ethical justification and motivation, being engaged by virtue and vice. But it takes little imagination to see how what he says could be relevant to doing just that. In *The Possibility of Altruism* Nagel co-opts the gouty toes example, proceeding as though if his own theory can explain why nearly all of us do avoid stepping on such toes, then "the indiscriminate general sentiments of sympathy or benevolence" will of course be unmasked as being not only incapable of explaining the actual prevalence of such altruism (if that is what it really is) but "superfluous" to doing that or to justifying a general motivating reason to be moral that we are "required to accept." But what would we really think if we encountered a being who was human in appearance but who did "tread as willingly" on other people's toes as on the hard flint and pavement or (even worse) on the soft grass of Central Park? That the being in question suffered from a "dissociation" between his conception of himself *simpliciter* and his conception of himself as "merely one individual among others"? Is that really why most of us would, without pausing to think, involuntarily feel an overwhelming moral anti-emotion, at the very least, or more likely become emotionally paralyzed in disbelief, and then probably immediately shift, again involuntarily, into a "fight or flight" mode ourselves? If actually pressed for an explanation of why the being should behave that way, most of us, I should think, would suppose either that the aliens had finally landed or that someone had left the wrong door unlocked in the psychiatric ward of a nearby hospital.[52]

That is what would happen in this world, our world. Are there possible worlds in which such toe-treading behavior was the norm? Absolutely. One hundred years after Hume, George Santayana envisaged at least two, the first inhabited by something like what contemporary science fiction writers and their fans might call androids or bio-automata, the second inhabited, I would say, by precisely what Broad called beings who were rational only in the ethically neutral sense.[53]

[52] Sometimes persons with autism behave in ways that suggest that they are indifferent to others' pains and pleasures, though this is probably not from any deficit in moral understanding but rather from some neurological disability distinct from that (presumably) at work in sociopaths.

[53] Compare Cleckley: "In all the orthodox psychoses . . . there is a more or less obvious alteration of reasoning processes or of some other demonstrable personality feature. In the psychopath this is not seen. The observer is confronted with a convincing mask of sanity . . . Furthermore, this personality structure in all theoretical situations functions in a manner apparently identical with that of the normal, sane functioning. Logical thought processes may be seen in perfect operation . . . All judgments of value and emotional appraisals are sane and appropriate when the psychopath is tested in verbal examinations. Only very slowly and by a complex estimation or judgment based on

[T]he race of man might have existed upon the earth and acquired all the arts necessary for its subsistence without possessing a single sensation, idea or emotion. Natural selection might have secured the survival of those automata which made useful reactions to their environment. An instinct of self-preservation would have developed, dangers would have been shunned without being feared and injuries revenged without being felt.

[B]y a less violent abstraction . . . we might conceive of beings of purely intellectual cast, minds in which the transformations of nature were mirrored without any emotion. Every event would then have been noted, its relations would be observed, its recurrence might even be expected: but all this would happen without a shadow of desire, or pleasure or regret. We might, in a word, have a world of ideas without a world of will.[54]

To sum up this chapter, indeed this entire book: what is innate in moral sense? Prosociality, desire for attachment or affiliation, empathy, imitation, and something else, which no one as yet fully understands, which is needed to explain fully disinterested moral approval of other-regarding, benevolent motives and the acts they inspire. Why can ethical rationalism never be a satisfactory theory of morality? Because it leaves out our natural moral sense.

POSTSCRIPT: HUME, SMITH AND THE END OF THE SENTIMENTAL SCHOOL

Historians of ideas already know in a general way why the sentimental school in ethics died out.[55] Surely among the reasons for its decline

multitudinous small impressions does the conviction come upon us that, despite these intact rational processes, these normal emotional affirmations, and their consistent application in all directions, we are dealing here not with a complete man at all but with something that suggests a subtly constructed reflex machine which can mimic the human personality perfectly. This smoothly operating psychic apparatus reproduces consistently not only specimens of good human reasoning but also appropriate simulations of normal human emotion in response to nearly all the varied stimuli of life. So perfect is this reproduction of a whole and normal man that no one who examines him in a clinical setting can point out in scientific or objective terms why, or how, he is not real. And yet we eventually come to know or feel that reality, in the sense of full, healthy experiencing of life, is not here . . . Fortunately for the purpose of this discussion, but unfortunately indeed in any other light, an objective demonstration is available which coincides perfectly with our slowly emerging impression. The psychopath, however perfectly he mimics man theoretically, that is to say, when he speaks for himself in words, fails when he is put into the practice of actual living. His failure is so complete and so dramatic that it is difficult to see how such a failure could be achieved by anyone less defective than a downright *madman*. Or by a person totally or almost totally unable to grasp emotionally the major components of meaning or feeling implicit in the thoughts that he expresses or the experiences he appears to go through." *The Mask of Sanity*, p. 369f.

[54] *The Sense of Beauty*, p. 15.

[55] Given that, hardly anything I have to say here will sound very original; I follow rather closely J. B. Schneewind's excellent discussion of the demise of sentimentalism, in *The Invention of Autonomy*. I am also indebted to Frederick Michael, in personal correspondence.

were various weaknesses, inconsistencies or limitations in the sentimentalists' own thought, about morality, affect, the human condition, human psychology and so on; these conspired with certain broad trends in philosophy, history and literature, including the displacement of Augustan by Romantic thought generally, to make sentimentalism and the moral sense seem not so much wrong as irrelevant. These ideas simply were not built to keep pace with transformations in the wider intellectual and social world and the increasing complexity of life in the more industrialized and internationalized societies of Europe and (now) the Americas. There were more specific causes within philosophy itself, of course, though we should not expect to achieve very much precision in spelling these out. Changes in the philosophical landscape are never purely a matter of rational persuasion, cool reflective conviction. Decisive refutations of philosophical theories are rare if they happen at all; to every objection there is a retort, which will to at least some seem convincing.[56] Certainly moral sense-sentimentalism was not refuted; rather it came to be overshadowed and then mainly ignored. Kant's *Fundamental Principles* appeared in 1785; Bentham's *Principles of Morals and Legislation* was published in 1789.[57] Such works as these included new criticisms of sentimentalism, certainly, but more than that they re-framed how philosophers saw what they were doing in moral philosophy. What seemed even to Price to be the depths of Hutcheson's philosophy quickly came to appear shallow; its original lessons froze into doctrines that seemed to have run their course.

It seems sad, or simply odd, that two such brilliant and eloquent philosophers as Hume and Smith should have manned the last bastions. Both were *bona fide* sentimentalists, each invoking fellow-feeling in his manner to explain and to justify morality. In Hume the principal ideas of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson are restated as though they were certitudes, announced before the world of letters pridefully, triumphally. Reason, Hume declares – echoing Hutcheson precisely – is competent to "instruct us in the pernicious or useful tendency of qualities and actions" but even when "fully

[56] To give just one example: the notion that Scottish philosophy ended when J. S. Mill refuted Sir William Hamilton is a myth – Scottish realism or "common sense" philosophy may even be experiencing a full-fledged revival in our own time. What is more likely is that idealism from the Continent captured the imagination of a new generation of thinkers for whom the ideas of the Scottish philosophers after Smith simply came to seem old hat. Idealism was in due course supplanted by the work of Russell and Moore, which appealed to yet a new generation, and so forth. New schools of thought do not spring forth overnight, either. It is unlikely that very many professional philosophers knew quite what Russell was getting at, at the time, in "On Denoting"; it would take philosophers twenty years or so to begin to appreciate it, find it relevant.

[57] Though Bentham reports that the work was "printed so long ago as the year 1780" with imperfections "pervading the whole mass."

assisted and improved" is "not alone sufficient to produce any moral blame or approbation."

Utility is only a tendency to a certain end; and were the end totally indifferent to us, we should feel the same indifference toward the means. It is requisite a *sentiment* should here display itself in order to give a preference to the useful above the pernicious tendencies. This sentiment can be no other than a feeling for the happiness of mankind, and a resentment of their misery, since these are the different ends which virtue and vice have a tendency to promote. Here, therefore, *reason* instructs us in the several tendencies of actions, and *humanity* makes a distinction in favor of those which are useful and beneficial.[58]

In Hume ethical sentimentalism at last finds a mooring in a comprehensive psychology of motivation and theory of action, a "science of human nature" in which "the distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and of *taste* are easily ascertained."[59]

The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood; the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution; the other has a productive faculty; and gilding or staining all natural objects with the colors borrowed from internal sentiment raises, in a manner, a new creation. Reason, being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, and directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination by showing us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding misery. Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action and is the first spring or impulse to desire and volition.[60]

But Hume's self-assurance, bordering on arrogance, cannot wholly disguise a parallel movement in his own thought, specifically a growing ambivalence towards reason, and a corresponding, if somewhat grudging respect for his opponents, the rational moralists.

The final sentence, it is probable, which pronounces characters and actions amiable or odious, praiseworthy or blamable; that which stamps on them the mark of honor or infamy, approbation or censure; that which renders morality an active principle and constitutes virtue our happiness, and vice our misery – it is probable, I say, that this final sentence depends on some internal sense or feeling which nature has made universal in the whole species. For what else can have an influence of this nature? But in order to pave the way for such a sentiment and give a proper discernment of

[58] *Enquiries*, p. 285f.

[59] "It appears evident that the ultimate ends of human actions [*all* human actions] can never, in any case, be accounted for by *reason*, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind without any dependence on the intellectual faculties. Ask a man *why he uses exercise*; . . ."

[60] *Enquiries*, p. 294.

its object, it is often necessary, we find, that much reasoning should precede, that nice distinctions be made, just conclusions drawn, distant comparisons formed, complicated relations examined, and general facts fixed and ascertained . . . There are just grounds to conclude that moral beauty . . . demands the assistance of our intellectual faculties in order to give it a suitable influence on the human mind.[61]

Something has definitely changed since the early years of the sentimental school; both Hume and Smith seem determined, in a way their predecessors were not, to assess coolly and accurately how (in Hume's own words) "*reason* and *sentiment* concur in almost all moral determinations and conclusions." Hume and Smith struggled to reconcile the fact, only insinuated by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, that our sympathies are partial – we just do care more for relatives, friends and countrymen than we do about strangers – with the intuition that full-bodied moral appraisal is, or at least ought to aim to be, impartial. Consequently there is a detectable movement away from early sentimentalism in each author – towards utilitarianism in Hume, and something like rationalism, in Smith.[62]

Hume affirms that, "in displaying the praises of any humane, beneficent man, there is one circumstance which never fails to be amply insisted on, namely the happiness and satisfaction derived to society." Surely it makes no sense to say that Hume was a utilitarian.[63] Still it is almost as if Hume wanted to propose some kind of objective standard for resolving moral

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 172f.

[62] Schneewind sugggests that Smith's and Price's accounts of morality are "surprisingly close," and I tend to agree. (*The Invention of Autonomy*, p. 391–3.) Smith's moral faculty works by imagination as well as reason, to be sure; much of his eloquence is an appeal to intuition, the use of one or another moral paragon to judge one's own past or contemplated actions. ("What might Seneca think about what I am about to do?") But when it comes to its role in actual moral motivation it is legislative, juridical, "Butlerized." "Upon whatever we suppose our moral faculties are founded, whether upon a certain modification of reason, [or] upon an original instinct, called a moral sense . . . it cannot be doubted that they were given us for the direction of our conduct in this life. They carry along with them the most evident badges of this authority." "[T]hose general rules which our moral faculties observe in approving or condemning whatever sentiment or action is subjected to their examination, may much more justly [than our sentiments] be denominated [laws]"; these "viceregents of God within us, never fail to punish the violation of them, by the torments of inward shame, and self-condemnation; and on the contrary, always reward obedience with tranquility of mind, with contentment, and self satisfaction." (And with financial success too, in Smith's world view.) As I have hinted all along (without quite explicitly asserting), once you come to think of moral disapproval as not so much a kind of disliking as a sort of absolute verdict on a man or woman, you have become a perfect candidate for the rational school in ethics. Apart from all of that, while it would certainly not be right to categorize Smith as a rationalist, with Price, his *Theory* centers about the concept of impartiality, which occupied later rationalists and is central to rationalistic ethics (for example, Nagel's) in the present day (as well as to virtually all utilitarian moral theory).

[63] I agree with Schneewind that Hume "does not think that we either do or should appeal to one single principle in making our moral judgments" and nowhere states that "the point of morality is to bring about a maximum of pleasure and a minimum of pain." (*The Invention of Autonomy*, p. 377.)

disputes but was held back by his prior allegiance to the more humble ambitions of sentimentalism. J. B. Schneewind writes that Hume "offers his theory as an explanation of our moral judgments, not as a warrant for them [which is surely correct] and certainly not as a calculus of reform. His theory could, however, easily be turned in that direction; and his attack on the monkish virtues points the way."[64] And that, I think, is exactly what happened.

A lot in Hume's ethics amounts to not much more than refining and polishing Hutcheson's ideas. But once that was accomplished other philosophers – and there really were some professional philosophers by then – wanted something more than Hutchesonian psychology. They wanted specific answers to questions of justice, decision procedures, as we say today; the mainstream of ethics after Hume and Smith abandoned the restricted aims of sentimentalism. Ethics came to be, for lack of a better word, professionalized. And this turning away by philosophers from the modesty of Hutcheson's, Hume's and Smith's empirical projects was undeniably among the more specific causes of sentimentalism's downfall. Ironically, Smith may have been the one who finally did it in, by retaining (and advertising) this very modesty.

Smith, though he was among the first ethics professors in the British Moralist tradition, refused to engage in casuistry. Contemporary philosophers dismiss sentimentalism because it cannot supply what we want, a proof that morality is rationally demanded and a list of what the demands are. Smith avers that, "[t]o direct the judgments of this inmate [the "man within the breast"] is the great purpose of all systems of morality," but what form can such direction take on his own basically sentimental principles? It can only be rhetorical, and that is why *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is so eloquently composed and was so very popular in its own day. The best Smith thought he could do to require morality was to portray "the sentiment of the heart" upon which each "virtue of beneficence" is founded, thereby hopefully "inflam[ing] our natural love of virtue" and "producing upon the flexibility of youth, the noblest and most lasting impressions."[65] It isn't difficult to imagine why newly officialized philosophers should have found this pursuit unsatisfying. Smith thought that philosophers, by illuminating the actual process of forming ethical judgments, might somehow enable professors to improve on the work of their students' parents – by making still nobler impressions on those youth of yesteryear. But how many doctors of philosophy could now be satisfied in that job? Improving

[64] *Ibid.* [65] *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 328f.

on Aristotle, Cicero and (now) Smith would be no mean feat, and that is not why most of them went into the business of academic moral philosophy anyway. Professional moralists should be able, if they are to be worth their salt, to ground our moral judgments, justifying them even to a skeptic whose parents had failed for whatever reason to rouse in him any affection for virtue. But (as Schneewind writes) such impatience "misses the force of Smith's theory of approval." On Smith's theory,

> to ask for a justification of a set of moral judgments just is to ask whether the impartial spectator would approve of them. An affirmative answer is all the justification for morality there can be. Smith thinks that we cannot escape from our moral sentiments to some other level of warrant.[66]

Smith rejected casuistry as an ill-conceived attempt "to direct by precise rules what it belongs to feelings and sentiment only to judge of." On Smith's view (I again cite Schneewind),

> there seems to be not much that philosophy itself can do to direct the judgments of the impartial spectator. Others, we know, expected more from moral philosophy. Smith may well have led them to think that they would have to look elsewhere than to sentimentalism for what they wanted.[67]

Quite right. The aspiration to "escape from our moral sentiments to some other level of warrant" is largely what killed sentimentalism within philosophy itself. As I said at the beginning, it was never really refuted, only laid aside.

But if what the British sentimentalists argued is true, then that aspiration is not only misguided, it is futile. To escape from our internal sentiment, even only in studious reflection, would amount to self-imposed exile from our new creation, into that colorless world of ideas without will.

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 393. [67] *Ibid.*, p. 395.

Bibliography

Albee, Ernest, “The Relation of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson to Utilitarianism,” *The Philosophical Review*, 5, 1 (1896).

Alderman, William E, “The Significance of Shaftesbury in English Speculation,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 38, 1 (1923).

“The Style of Shaftesbury,” *Modern Language Notes*, 38, 4 (1923).

Aldridge, Alfred Owen, “Shaftesbury and the Deist Manifesto,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series 41, Part 2 (1951).

“Shaftesbury’s Earliest Critic,” *Modern Philology*, 44, 1 (August 1946).

“Two Versions of Shaftesbury’s Inquiry Concerning Virtue,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 13, 2 (1950).

Anscombe, G. E. M, “Modern Moral Philosophy,” *Philosophy*, 33 (1958), reprinted in *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G. E. M. Anscombe*, vol. 3, Ethics, Religion and Politics (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981).

Arpaly, Nomy, “Moral Worth,” *The Journal of Philosophy*, XCIX, 5 (May 2002).

Aubrey, John, *Brief Lives, chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the Years 1669 and 1696*, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford: 1898).

Bernstein, John Andrew, “Shaftesbury’s Identification of the Good with the Beautiful,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 10, 3 (Spring 1977).

Bishop, John D, “Moral Motivation and the Development of Hutcheson’s Philosophy,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 57, 2 (1996).

Bittner, Rüdiger, *What Reason Demands*. trans. Theodore Talbot (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Originally published as *Moralisches Gebot oder Autonomie* (Verlag Karl Alber GmbH, 1983).

Blackburn, Simon, *Ruling Passions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

Blackstone, William T, *Francis Hutcheson and Contemporary Ethical Theory* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1965).

Blum, Lawrence A, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

Bonar, James, *Moral Sense* (New York: Macmillan, 1930).

Bosanquet, Bernard, *Logic. In Three Books: Of Thought. Of Investigation. Of Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884).

Brandt, Richard, “The Psychology of Benevolence and its Implications for Philosophy,” *The Journal of Philosophy*, 73 (1976).

Broad, Charles Dunbar, *Critical Essays in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Humanities Press, 1971).

Five Types of Ethical Theory (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1930).

"Is 'Goodness' a Name of a Simple Non-Natural Quality?" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 34 (1933–34).

Broadbent, J. B, "Shaftesbury's Horses of Instruction," in Hugh Sykes Davies and George Watson (eds), *The English Mind: Studies in the English Moralists presented to Basil Willey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

Buller, David J, *Adapting Minds: Evolutionary Psychology and the Persistent Quest for Human Nature* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press/Bradford Books, 2005).

Butler, Joseph, *Fifteen Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel*, 2nd edn, corrected, to which is added a Preface (London: W. Botham for James and John Knapton, 1729).

Five Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel and A Dissertation upon the Nature of Virtue, edited, with introduction and notes, by Stephen L. Darwall (New York: Hackett, 1983).

Carey, Daniel, *Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Carter, Allan L, *Parallel Themes and their Treatment in Schiller and Shaftesbury*, Ph.D. thesis (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1919).

Casals, Pablo, *Joys and Sorrows*, his own story as told to Albert E. Kahn (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

Cavell, Marcia, "Taste and the Moral Sense," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 34, 1 (1975).

Cleckley, Hervey, *The Mask of Sanity: An attempt to clarify some issues about the so-called psychopathic personality*, 5th edn (St. Lous: J. Mosby Publishers, 1976).

Copleston, Frederick, S. J, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. five, part I, *The British Philosophers: Hobbes to Paley* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1962).

Cosmides, Leda, and John Tooby (eds.) *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

D'Arms, Justin, and Daniel Jacobson, "Sentiment and Value," *Ethics*, Volume 110, Number 4 (July 2000).

Darwall, Stephen, *The British moralists and the internal 'ought': 1640–1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Impartial Reason (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983).

Dawkins, Richard, *The Ancestor's Tale. A Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Evolution* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004).

The Selfish Gene, new edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

Dennett, Daniel, *Content and Consciousness* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul/New York: Humanities Press, 1969).

Ewing, A. C, "Naturalism and Subjectivism in Ethics," *Mind*, 53 (1944).

Ferm, Vergilius Ture Anselm, *The Encyclopedia of Morals* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956).

Foot, Philippa, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

Fowler, Thomas, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson* (London: Putnam's Sons, 1883).

Frankena, William, "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 16, 3 (June 1955).

Gibbard, Allan, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings. A Theory of Normative Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

Goldman, Alan H, "Red and Right," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 84, 7 (1987).

Haakonssen, Knud, "Natural Law and Moral Realism: The Scottish Synthesis," *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. M. A. Stewart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Hirst, E. W, "Moral Sense, Moral Reason, and Moral Sentiment," *Mind*, New Series, 26, 102 (April 1917).

Hobbes, Thomas, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic;* Part I, *Human Nature;* Part II, *De Corpore Politico; with Three Lives*, edited with an introduction by J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Leviathan, with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668, edited, with Introduction and Notes by Edwin Curley (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994).

Hubin, Donald C, "The Groundless Normativity of Instrumental Rationality," *The Journal of Philosophy*, XCVIII, 9 (September 2001).

Hume, David, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, reprinted from the Posthumous edition of 1777 and edited with Introduction, Comparative Table of Contents, and Analytical Index by L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd edn, with Text Revised and Notes by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

A Treatise of Human Nature, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd edn, revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

Hutcheson, Francis, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections. With Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, by the Author of the Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (London: for J. and J. Knapton, John Darby, Thomas Osborne, Jauton Gilliver, John Crownfield, 1730).

An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense, edited and with an Introduction by Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002).

An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises. I. Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design. II. Concerning Moral Good and Evil, 4th edn (London: 1738).

An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design, edited with an Introduction and Notes by Peter Kivy (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973).

An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises, edited and with an Introduction by Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004).

A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy, in three books; containing the Elements of Ethicks and the Law of Nature (Glasgow: Robert Foulis, 1747).

A System of Moral Philosophy in Three Books, written by the late Francis Hutcheson, LL.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. 2 vols (London, 1755).

Logic, Metaphysics, and the Natural Sociability of Mankind, edited by James Moore and Michael Siverthorne. Texts translated from the Latin by Michael Silverthorne. Introduction by James Moore (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2006).

Jensen, Henning, *Motivation and the Moral Sense in Francis Hutcheson's Ethical Theory* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971).

Kagan, Shelly, *The Limits of Morality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

Keeley, Brian L, "Making Sense of the Senses: Individuating Modalities in Humans and Other Animals," *The Journal of Philosophy*, XCIX, 1 (January 2002).

Korsgaard, Christine M, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

"Morality and the Distinctiveness of Human Action," in Frans de Waal, Christine M. Korsgaard, Philip Kitcher and Peter Singer, *Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved*, edited and introduced by Stephen Macedo and Josiah Ober (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).

"Skepticism about Practical Reason," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 83 (January 1986).

The Sources of Normativity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Laland, Kevin N, and Gillian R. Brown, *Sense and Nonsense. Evolutionary Perspectives on Human Behavior* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Laird, John, *The Idea of Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929).

Leidhold, W, *Ethik und Politic bei Francis Hutcheson* (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1985).

Lyons, Alexander, *Shaftesbury's Ethical Principle of Adaptation to Universal Harmony*. Ph.D. Thesis (New York: New York University, 1909).

MacIntyre, Alasdair, "The Truth is in the Details," review of James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense. The New York Times Book Review*, August 29, 1993.

Whose Justice? Which Rationality? (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

Marshall, David, *The Figure of Theater* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Martineau, James, *Types of Ethical Theory*. 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885).

Martinelli-Fernandez, Susan, review of Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England 1660–1780. vol. 2: Shaftesbury to Hume. Hume Studies*, 30, 2 (November 2004).

McDowell, John, "Values and Secondary Qualities," in T. Honderich (ed.), *Morality and Objectivity:* A Tribute to J. L. Mackie (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).

Mealey, Linda, "The Sociobology of Sociopathy: An Integrated Evolutionary Model," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 18, 3 (1995).

Michael, Emily, "Francis Hutcheson on Aesthetic Perception and Aesthetic Pleasure," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 24, 3 (Summer 1984).

Miller, Henry, *Black Spring* (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

Monro, D. H, *A Guide to the British Moralists* (London: William Collins' Sons, 1972).

Moore, James, "Hutcheson's Theodicy: The Argument and the Contexts of *A System of Moral Philosophy*," in Paul Wood (ed.), *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000).

"The Two Systems of Francis Hutcheson: On the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment," in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by M. A. Stewart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Morillo, Carolyn R, "The Reward Event and Motivation." *The Journal of Philosophy*, 87, 4 (April, 1990).

Mothersill, Mary, *Beauty Restored* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

Murdoch, Iris, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970).

Nagel, Thomas, "Ethics as an Autonomous Theoretical Subject," in Gunther S. Stent (ed), *Morality as a Biological Phenomenon* (Berlin: Dahlem Konferenzen, 1979).

The Possibility of Altruism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

Nichols, Shaun, "How Psychopaths Threaten Moral Rationalism, or Is it Irrational to be Amoral?" *The Monist*, 85 (2002).

Sentimental Rules: On the Natural Foundations of Moral Judgment (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Norton, David Fate, *David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

"Hume, Human Nature, and the Foundations of Morality," in *The Cambridge Companion to David Hume*, David Fate Norton (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

"Hutcheson on Perception and Moral Perception," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 59 (1977).

"Hutcheson's Moral Realism," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 23 (1985).

"Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory Reconsidered," *Dialogue*, 13 (1974).

O'Neill, Onora, *Towards Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Peach, Bernard, "Shaftesbury's 'Moral Arithmeticks,'" *The Personalist*, 39, 1 (1958).

Peacocke, Christopher, "Moral Rationalism," *The Journal of Philosophy*, CI, 10 (October 2004).

Pinker, Steven, *How the Mind Works* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977).

Price, Richard, *A Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*, 3rd edn (London 1787).

Prichard, H. A, "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" *Mind*, 21 (1912).

Rachels, James, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1986).

Radcliffe, Elizabeth S, "Love and Benevolence in Hutcheson's and Hume's Theories of the Passions," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 12, 4 (2004).

Raphael, D. D (ed.), *British Moralists 1650–1800*, 2 vols, Vol. I: Hobbes-Gay; Vol. II: Hume-Bentham and Index (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

Ridley, Matt, *The Origins of Virtue: Human Instincts and the Evolution of Cooperation*. (London: Viking, 1996).

Rivers, Isabel, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780*, vol. I: Whichcote to Wesley; vol II: Shaftesbury to Hume (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991/2000).

Robinson, Richard, "Arguing from Ignorance," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 21, 83 (April 1971).

Ruse, Michael, *Taking Darwin Seriously: A Naturalistic Approach to Philosophy* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

Ryan, Alan, "Reasons of the Heart," review of James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense. New York Review of Books*, XL, 15 (September 23, 1993).

Ryle, Gilbert, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1949).

Santayana, George, *The Sense of Beauty* (New York: Scribner, 1896).

Schneewind, J. B (ed.), *Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant. An Anthology*, two vols, edited and with introductions by J. B. Schneewind (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

The Invention of Autonomy. A History of Modern Moral Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Schopenhauer, Arthur, *The Basis of Morality*, translated with an introduction and notes by Arthur Brodrick Bullock (New York: Macmillan, 1915).

Scott, William Robert, *Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teaching, and Position in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901).

Sellars, Wilfred, and John Hospers (eds), *Readings in Ethical Theory* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952).

Seuss, Dr [Theodor Seuss Geisel], *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (New York: Random House, 1957).

Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, three vols (London: 1711).

Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, by the Right Honorable Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury, two vols, edited by John Robertson (London: Grant Richards, 1900).

An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit, edited by David Walford (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977).

An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, In Two Discourses (1699) By Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury. A Photoreproduction with an Introduction by Joseph Filonowicz (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1991).

The Life, unpublished letters, and Philosophical regimen of Anthony, earl of Shaftesbury, edited by Benjamin Rand (London: S. Sonnenshein & Company, Limited, 1900).

Sidgwick, Henry, *Outlines of the History of Ethics for English Readers* (New York: Macmillan, 1886), 7th edn (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981).

Smith, Adam, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, edited by D. D. Raphael and A. L. Mackfie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

Smith, Michael, *The Moral Problem* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994).

Stafford, J. Martin, "Hutcheson, Hume, and the Ontology of Morals," *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 19 (1985).

Stephen, Sir Leslie, *Essays on Freethinking and Plainspeaking* (London: Longmans, Green & Company, 1873).

A History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, two vols (London: P. Smith, 1876).

Stocker, Michael, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 63 (August 1976).

Stolnitz, Jerome, "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 20, 2 (1961).

Townsend, Dabney, "Shaftesbury's Aesthetic Theory," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 41, 2 (1982).

Voitle, Robert B, "Shaftesbury's Moral Sense," *Studies in Philology*, 7 (1955).

The Third Earl of Shaftesbury 1671–1713 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984).

Ward Smith, James, "The British Moralists and the Fallacy of Psychologism," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 11, 2 (1950).

Wiggins, David, "A Sensible Subjectivism," in David Wiggins, *Needs, Values, Truth: Essays in the Philosophy of Value*, 3rd edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Willey, Basil, *The Eighteenth-Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1940).

The English Moralists (London: Chatto and Windus, 1964; London: Methuen and Company, 1965).

Williams, Bernard, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Wilson, Edward O, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).

Wilson, James Q, *The Moral Sense* (New York: The Free Press, 1993).

"The Moral Sense," Presidential Address to the American Political Science Association, 1992, *The American Political Science Review*, 87, 1 (1993).

Winkler, Kenneth P, "Hutcheson's Alleged Realism," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 23 (1985).

Wright, G. H. von, *The Varieties of Goodness* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963).

Wright, Robert, *The Moral Animal. Evolutionary Psychology and Everyday Life* (New York: Pantheon, 1994).

Index

advice, moral 34, 36, 88
affection(s), natural 5, 50-54, 70, 71, 77, 79, 87, 99, 113, 170, 203, 211
Albee, Ernest 69–71, 86
Aldridge, Alfred Owen 93, 100
altruism 15, 17, 18, 48, 50, 60, 63, 70, 78, 154, 208, 209, 210, 227, 228, 229, 232
animals, non-human 9, 63, 74, 93, 112, 144, 208
Anscombe, G. E. M. 20n25, 100n86, 132
approval and disapproval, moral 16, 98, 104, 105, 106, 110–1, 112, 113, 116, 118, 120, 121, 124, 125, 129, 137, 142, 144, 146, 157, 171, 178, 186, 189, 193, 202, 203, 207, 211–22, 231, 235
Arpaly, Nomy 34n44
attachment (or affiliation), innate desire for 120, 208–11, 212
Aubrey, John 28
autonomy, moral (see also self-governance, normative)
Ayer, A. J. 163, 178

beauty 36, 100, 102–3, 104, 116, 120, 129, 136n40, 139–40, 236
benevolence 104, 106, 111, 113, 114–5, 116, 119, 140, 156, 186, 202, 211, 212, 213, 216, 222, 232
Bentham, Jeremy 105, 182, 234
Bittner, Rüdiger 20n25, 83, 84, 85, 88–9, 90
Blum, Lawrence 10n10, 40
Bonar, James 49, 66
Bosanquet, Bernard 66
Brandt, Richard B. 57, 58n29
Broad, C. D. 42, 96, 109, 134–8, 140–1 (chapter 6) 201, 202, 206, 213, 225, 232
Broadbent, J. B. 85
Butler, Bishop Joseph 3, 6, 14n16, 73, 83, 84, 100, 105–6, 108, 156n96, 202

Carter, Allan L. 76
Casals, Pablo 36
Cavell, Marcia 11n12
characteristics, ethical; see properties, moral
children, moral approval and disapproval in 1, 37, 178–9, 193, 206–23
Clarke, Samuel 157
Cleckley, Hervey 226, 232n53
cognition, ethical; see knowledge, ethical
concern (for others) 17, 21, 51, 63, 64, 70, 90, 95, 118, 202, 209, 210, 211, 215, 229, 230, 231, 236
conscience, natural supremacy of (in Butler) 105
consilience 26, 39, 150, 195, 221, 222
correlates, objective (of moral feelings) 134–40, 144

Darwall, Stephen L. 8, 48n3
Darwin, Charles 205
Dawkins, Richard 27n31, 174n31
demands, moral 6–7, 25, 72–91, 105, 108, 159, 180, 202, 232, 237
determinism, psychological 80, 114
disagreement, moral 143, 183, 187
disinterestedness, aesthetic 78
disinterestedness, of moral motivation and judgment 52–3, 74, 75–81, 114, 115, 119, 206, 213, 219, 220, 221
dualism, Augustinian 147, 149
Duncan-Jones, Austin 178
duties, moral; see demands, moral

egoism 16, 26–31, 70, 81, 111, 113, 118, 149, 204, 231
emotivism (in ethics) 128, 176, 181, 195n61, 203
empathy 210–1

facts, normative 151, 152, 153, 179, 201
features, moral; see properties, moral
fellow-feeling 4, 5, 25, 49, 52, 62, 63, 64, 78, 96, 203, 234
feminism (in ethics) 41
Ferm, Vergilius Ture Anselm 83, 93
fittingness, moral 121, 145, 158–9, 176, 196, 197, 199
Foot, Philippa 85, 87–8, 89, 90

Fowler, Thomas 75
Frankena, William 35, 125–6, 127, 128–30, 138, 141, 142, 149–50, 178, 185
Freud, Sigmund 145n65

Gaskin, J. C. A. 27n30
Gershwin, Ira 87
Gibbard, Allan 40n48, 153, 175n36, 176, 179, 219n31, 224
God; see theology, metaphysical
Golding, William
Goldman, Alan H. 134
gratitude 50, 51, 57, 70, 79, 118, 177, 194–5
Grinch, the 227–8

Haakonssen, Knud 147–8
Herodotus 209
Hobbes, Thomas 3, 13, 25–31, 55, 69, 70, 89, 91, 111, 112, 113, 133, 147, 159, 209, 210, 213, 215, 216n25
Hume, David 3, 21, 25, 56, 61, 96, 105, 106n2, 108, 134, 141, 146, 156, 158n101, 159, 174n32, 177, 185, 186, 192n56, 195, 197, 205, 213, 214, 231–2, 234–7
Hutcheson, Francis 1–2, 3, 23n29, 98
(chapter 4)
(chapter 5) 161–2, 174n32, 181, 182n43, 186, 192n56, 193n58, 202, 203, 206, 209n13, 211, 212, 213, 215, 218, 222, 234, 237

ideas, concomitant (of morality) 131–2, 132n29
ignorance, arguments from 217–23
imitation (of parents by children) 212–3
innateness 21, 70, 79, 92, 117, 118, 122, 149, 177, 194–5
(chapter 7)
instinct, moralizing; see judgment (moral), prepared
intellectualism (in ethics); see rationalism (in ethics)
interjectional theory (of moral judgments) 125, 150, 164, 165n13, 180, 183
ipse-dixitism 105, 182

judgment (moral), prepared 212, 214–7, 221
judgments, moral 105, 117, 124, 126, 127, 129, 141, 142, 143, 146, 148, 151, 152, 153, 163, 167, 169, 170, 173, 176, 177, 179, 180, 181, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188, 189, 195, 197, 199, 201, 203, 206, 209, 212, 214, 217, 220, 222, 224, 237
jursiprudence, natural 145, 186
justification, ethical 4–5, 24, 55, 56, 57–9, 64, 89, 96, 121, 122, 149, 157, 185, 186, 203, 207, 216, 217, 222, 225, 226, 227, 230, 238

Kant, Immanuel 52, 77, 77n39, 78, 80, 100, 105, 230n50, 234
knowledge, ethical 91, 92, 93, 96, 121, 131–2, 165, 180, 181, 182, 187, 189, 190, 194, 229
Korsgaard, Christine M. 9–10, 47, 227

Laird, John 72
Leibniz, G. W. F. 202
Locke, John 92, 94, 113n15, 136, 137n41, 218
Lyons, Alexander 82–3

MacIntyre, Alisdair 36
malice 15, 17, 70, 130, 158, 170
Mandeville, Bernard 3, 81, 104, 122, 147
Marshall, David 69
Martineau, James 82
Martinelli-Fernandez, Susan 42
McDowell, John 151
Mealey, Linda 226
Michael, Emily 133n29, 140n50
Michael, Frederick Seymour 90, 233n55
Mill, John Stuart 105, 182
Miller, Arthur 35n44
Miller, Henry 10–11, 12n13, 13
Monro, D. H. 51, 53
Moore, G. E. 138, 162, 175n34, 178, 179n41, 184, 195n61
Moore, James 147
Mothersill, Mary 102
motivation, moral 8–10, 16, 17–19, 24, 31, 46–8, 53–6, 60, 62, 63, 64, 71, 74, 76, 79, 95, 106, 114, 118, 120, 122, 157, 198n66, 199, 225, 226, 227, 228, 235
Murdoch, Iris 41
Murillo, Carolyn R. 29–31

Nagel, Thomas 17–19, 47–8, 55–7, 59–64, 153, 198, 198n66, 223n41, 228, 230n50, 232
naturalism (in ethics) 162, 182–8
naturalistic fallacy, the 184
Nichols, Shaun 33, 42, 220n34, 225, 226n46
norms, ethical 6, 127, 152
Norton, David Fate 127, 130–4, 137, 140, 145, 146

obligations, moral; see demands, moral
options, moral 6, 21

Peach, Bernard 73, 74
perception, moral 15, 21, 51, 53, 97, 122
(chapter 5) 166, 181, 186
Pinker, Steven 27n31
Platonists, Cambridge 3, 5, 70, 91, 197n64

Price, Richard 121–2, 124, 161, 162, 164, 165, 171n27, 183, 188, 189, 190, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 201, 225, 234
Prichard, H. A. 216
pro- and anti-emotions, moral 141, 142, 164–5, 166, 167, 169, 170, 172, 175, 176, 177, 180, 181, 183, 185, 187, 189, 190, 191, 193, 198, 199, 201, 212, 230, 232
properties, moral 126, 127, 129, 130, 133, 137, 138, 144, 151, 153, 166, 167, 168n22, 169, 172, 173, 176–82, 201
prosocial behavior (in infants and young children) 207–8, 212, 213
prudence 88, 90
psychologism 98
psychology, evolutionary 195, 204, 216

qualities, moral; see properties, moral
Quine, W. V. O. 162n3, 191

Rachels, James 28n33
rationalism (in ethics) 24, 45, 46–8, 63, 89, 121, 144, 145, 149, 153, 154, 159, 171, 173, 188, 194, 195–200, 201, 213, 218, 221–22, 223–33, 235, 236
realism, moral 129, 138, 139, 140, 142–53, 168n21, 179, 222n38
reason(s), practical 7–10, 18, 21, 35, 46, 89, 156, 160, 225, 227, 228, 230
reasons-theory (in ethics); see also rationalism (in ethics) 6–10, 12, 13, 16, 24, 33, 42
reward-event theory (of motivation) 27–31, 112, 115, 219
Rivers, Isabel 42
Robertson, John 66, 69
Robinson, Richard 217
Royce, Josiah 34, 36
Ryle, Gilbert 219

Santayana, George 232–3
Schopenhauer, Arthur 16, 22–4, 59, 63, 170, 187
Selby-Bigge, Sir L. A. 2
self-convenience 14, 15, 17, 50, 90, 95
selfishness 14, 15, 226, 229, 231
self-governance (or government), normative; see also autonomy, moral 9–10, 19, 24
sense, moral 2, 2n1, 91–102
(chapter 4)
(chapter 5)
(chapter 6)
(chapter 7)
sentences, deontic 163, 164
sentimentalism (in ethics) 2–5, 22–5, 39
(chapter 2) 79, 104, 105, 108, 149, 153, 173, 177, 182, 182n43, 187, 204, 213, 215, 223, 224, 227, 230, 231, 233–8
Seuss, Dr (Theodor Seuss Geisel) 227
Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of 3, 45, 49–54, 57–9, 61
(chapter 3) 104, 107, 117, 149, 150, 159, 203, 209
shame 26, 167n18, 226
Sidgwick, Henry 97, 118
Smith, Adam 3, 105, 108, 134, 159n103, 215, 215n23, 236n62, 237–8
Smith, John Maynard 26
sociability, natural 207, 208, 209, 209n13, 210, 211, 214, 217
sociopaths 58, 226–31
Socrates 171
statistics (relevance of to the truth or falsity of moral judgments)
Stephen, Sir Leslie 99
Stevenson, C. L. 163, 178
subjective theory of moral judgments, the 140–1, 150, 164–5, 173, 179, 180, 182, 185, 187, 194, 203, 206
subjectivism (in ethics) 128, 182–3, 184

theology, metaphysical 132, 145–6, 148, 150
thought experiments (in ethics) 33, 144
Trianosky, Gregory W. 73

utilitarianism (in ethics) 71, 96, 223, 236

value, moral; see worth, moral
Voitle, Robert 70, 81, 91, 96, 101
Von Wright, G. H. 76

Walford, David 97
Ward Smith, James 66, 98–9
Willey, Basil 66, 74, 76
Williams, Bernard 34, 42n50, 62
Wilson, James Q. 20, 32n38, 32n39, 33, 205–21, 230
Wollaston, William 110, 155
worth, moral 5, 6–10, 16, 23, 24, 32, 40, 52, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 97, 105, 117, 149, 170, 203, 214