

Freedom of the Heart*

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Abstract

Philosophical accounts of freedom typically fail to capture an important kind of freedom—freedom to change what one cares about—that is central to our understanding of what it is to be a person. This paper articulates this kind of freedom more clearly, distinguishing it from freedom of action and freedom of the will, and gives an account of how it is possible. Central to this account is an understanding of the role of emotions in determining what we value, thus motivating a rethinking of the importance of emotions in the mental lives of persons.

1 Introduction

Harry Frankfurt, in his widely influential paper, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person,”¹ identifies the ability for a certain kind of self-conscious decision making as a necessary ingredient in being a person. Briefly, his claims are these. One’s will consists of those desires that do in fact, or would when the time is appropriate, move one to act; such desires he calls one’s *effective desires*. A creature has freedom of the will to the extent that it has the will it wants to have, and so freedom of the will requires being able to form *second-order volitions*—desires that certain other desires be effective. Given this much, he claims, we can distinguish persons from what he calls “wantons” in light of the possibility of freedom of the will. *Wantons*, on the one hand, have desires and are able to reason about how best to fulfill these desires, but they “not only . . . pursue whatever course of action [they are] most strongly inclined to pursue, but [they do] not care which of [their] inclinations is the strongest” (p. 17). *Persons*, on the other hand, can form second-order volitions. This means that for a person, but not for a wanton, there is the potential for a difference between the

* *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 77 (1996), pp. 71-87.

¹In *The Importance of What We Care About: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 11-25. All page numbers, unless otherwise noted, are to this collection.

will he in fact has and the will he wants to have, and this opens up the possibility of freedom of the will. Given this much, Frankfurt claims,

A person who . . . enjoys both freedom of action and freedom of the will . . . has, in that case, all the freedom it is possible to desire or to conceive. There are other good things in life, and he may not possess some of them. But *there is nothing in the way of freedom that he lacks*. [pp. 22-23, my italics]

This last claim, I believe, is false, and its falsity indicates deeper problems with Frankfurt's conception of what kind of creatures we persons are.

To see this, consider the case of Martin.²

Martin is a corporate executive for whom his work and career are very important. He puts in long hours attending important meetings and finishing reports, and he often has to travel away from his family for days at a time. When he does get home, he finds himself unable and unwilling to muster the physical and emotional energy required to interact meaningfully with his wife and two kids. It is so difficult to make the transition between being a good executive and a good father that making that transition just feels like an unwelcome chore. He is, after all, providing for them as well as he can, and he is proud of how well he has done in his career. What more can be expected? Intellectually, however, he can appreciate that this single-minded devotion to his career is having deleterious effects on his family. His wife tells him how disappointed and hurt their children are when he misses, for example, his son's school play or his daughter's soccer games. Though he does think he is setting a good example for his children, he remembers how his own father was such an important part of his life, and he comes to see (again intellectually) that in focusing so much on his career both he and his children are missing something. Their lives are slipping away without him, and, what's worse, he finds that he *feels* no great loss. He resolves, therefore, not just to take a more active part in their lives and to spend more time at home—he has tried doing that and not yet succeeded because he finds it such a chore; in addition, he resolves to come to care about and take an interest in his family's interests and so to achieve a new balance in what is important to him.

²Much of this example is drawn from case studies of the effects being a doctor or medical student has on one's family life. See Lane Gerber's *Married to their Careers: Career and Family Dilemmas in Doctors' Lives* (New York: Tavistok, 1983), especially Chapter 6. I have changed the example to avoid ethical questions that might arise from a doctor's cutting back on the time and amount of care put into providing health care.

The point of this example is that the decision Martin makes is one concerning not the *will* he wants to have but rather what he wants to *care* about, where he wants his “heart” to lie. Although the will is clearly involved in reaching this goal, such caring is something “deeper” and is therefore a distinct issue. In trying to achieve this new balance in what is important to him, Martin must first exercise his will so as to act against his natural inclinations to do things he does not yet care about, and it is only later and through much effort that his attitudes will (if at all) fall in line. This suggests that questions concerning “freedom of the heart”—freedom to care about what one wants to care about—are distinct from both freedom of action and freedom of the will, contrary to Frankfurt’s claims in the passage just quoted.

If this is right then, while accepting much of Frankfurt’s project, it seems we can make a distinction in terms of freedom of the heart between persons and what I call “emotional wantons” (for reasons that will emerge below). Although emotional wantons can care about things in the world, they do not concern themselves with what they care about—about where their hearts lie. Persons, on the other hand, because they can concern themselves with their hearts, have the potential for a difference between what heart they want to have and the heart they in fact have, thus opening up the possibility of freedom of the heart. Frankfurt, with the account of the will and freedom of the will he gives, is unable to acknowledge such freedom of the heart as distinct from freedom of the will and thereby misses an entire dimension of what it is to be a person. My purpose in this paper therefore is to investigate what kind of freedom such freedom of the heart is and how it is related to both the will and freedom of the will. The result will be a new and deeper understanding not only of the will and the heart but also of what kind of creature we persons are.

I begin, in §2, by outlining Frankfurt’s current, somewhat modified understanding of the will and freedom of the will, which he articulates in part in terms of a notion of “caring.” In §3, I argue that Frankfurt’s conception of caring and its relation to the will is untenable and that we need to make a clear distinction, lacking in Frankfurt’s account, between willing something and caring about it. In §4 I present an alternative account of what it is to care about something largely in terms of the emotions, an account that gets applied in §5 in making more carefully the distinction just described between emotional wantons and persons in part in terms of a distinction between caring and valuing. Finally, in §6 I examine how freedom of the heart is possible in light of this account of caring, valuing, and the emotions.

2 Frankfurt on Caring and Wholeheartedness

Frankfurt’s current understanding of the will and freedom of the will develops in response to problems he sees with his older view. According to the older account,

one can at times have a will that is “external” to the kind of person one wants to be and is therefore not under one’s control. Frankfurt’s paradigm for this kind of case is that of the unwilling addict, who is moved to act by an addiction-based desire for a cigarette, say, even though what she really wants is to quit smoking. In such a case, he claims, the desire that moves her is *external* to her because of the conflict with what she in some sense “really” wants: the desire “operates without [her] participation” (p. 21). But this, as Frankfurt seems implicitly to recognize, runs contrary to the intuition that, as he puts it, “a person’s will is that by which he moves himself” (p. 84). So it seems that what happens in the case of the unwilling addict is that her will is *ineffective* and so unable to overcome desires that are themselves external to her will: “the addiction may defeat [her] will.”³ If one’s will on particular occasions can be ineffective, then we cannot simply identify one’s will with one’s effective desires. To understand what the will is, then, seems to require understanding what it is for a desire to be *internal* so as to be able to make out the contrast with those desires that are external.

Frankfurt’s intuition at this point is that desires are internal to one and so a part of one’s will just in case one *cares* about satisfying them or is *identified* with them, where these terms are supposed to be roughly synonymous (p. 83).⁴ Over the course of several papers,⁵ Frankfurt analyzes the notion of caring about some end in terms of a wholehearted decision. The decision is to “endorse” that end by forming a second-order volition for it (i.e., wanting to be moved to act by a desire for it), and such a decision is *wholehearted* in the sense that one arrives at it “without reservation” (p. 168) and in “an absence of restlessness or resistance” (TFP, p. 12). Frankfurt claims that such wholeheartedness (or ‘*self-satisfaction*,’ as he also calls it) cannot consist in any particular “deliberate attitude or belief or feeling or intention” (TFP, p. 13), for if that were true then that attitude itself would have to be wholehearted and so internal to one by virtue of a further attitude, thus resulting in an infinite regress. Consequently, Frankfurt claims,

Satisfaction with one’s self requires . . . no adoption of any cognitive,

³“The Faintest Passion,” *Proceedings and Addresses of the APA*, 66 (1992), pp. 5-16, at p. 9. (I will henceforth cite this in the text as “TFP”)

⁴It is a mistake simply to assimilate the notion of caring to that of identification, as Frankfurt does. Frankfurt seems to be right in trying to understand how a desire can be internal to one in terms of one’s caring about the object of that desire insofar as it fits our intuitions about how to distinguish the unwilling addict’s desire for a cigarette (as external) from her desire to quit (as internal). Nonetheless, such caring is a far cry from *identifying* oneself with such a desire. Identification seems to carry with it the idea that one is putting oneself at stake in a way that is far “deeper” than what is at issue in the unwilling addict’s desire to quit smoking. Thus, identification is much more like what I call “valuing” below (§5), though I shall not pursue this issue further here.

⁵See “The Importance of What We Care About” and “Identification and Wholeheartedness,” both in *The Importance of What We Care About*; and see “The Faintest Passion.”

attitudinal, affective, or intentional stance. It does not require the performance of a particular act; and it also does not require any deliberate abstention. Satisfaction is a state of the entire psychic system—a state constituted just by the *absence* of any tendency or inclination to alter its condition. [TFP, p. 13, my emphasis]

This means that self-satisfaction requires that “psychic elements of certain kinds *do not occur*” (TFP, p. 13).⁶ Consequently, being identified with or caring about a particular desire “is constituted neatly by an endorsing higher-order desire with which the person is satisfied” (TFP, p. 14), and it is these desires that make up one’s will: “If the person is not identified with them . . . they are, in that sense, external to [her] will” (TFP, p. 9). One’s will, on Frankfurt’s current understanding of it, therefore consists of those desires one cares about in this sense.⁷

3 Willing and Caring: Second Thoughts

This account of the notion of caring and of its relation to the will is problematic for several reasons.

First, caring about something is *not*, contrary to what Frankfurt says (p. 88), a fact about one’s will, for one can force oneself to do something—because one is told to, for example—even though one does not care about it. For the same reason, the mere fact that a desire is part of one’s will is not sufficient to say that one cares about or identifies with it (cf. p. 170). This can be confirmed in light of the example with which I began. Martin’s decision to try to care more about the interests and projects of his wife and children by itself merely sets up an intention to change his attitudes and behavior. To act on this intention, Martin must force himself against his natural inclinations by exercising his will to do things he does not yet care about, and it is only later, we might expect, that his attitudes—and whether he cares about his family and their interests—will fall in line. (I will have more to say about how this works in §6.) Indeed, extreme cases in which one exercises one’s will to do things one

⁶Frankfurt also claims that such an absence must itself be something the person endorses upon self-conscious reflection. This endorsement is required so that the person “takes responsibility for the fact of having the desire” (p. 170), rather than simply being apathetic concerning its occurrence—being a *wanton*.

⁷This new understanding of the will leads Frankfurt to alter his conception of freedom of the will. Freedom of the will, he now thinks, is to be understood in terms of wholeheartedness, for “wholeheartedness means exactly that there is in [one] no endogenous desire to be volitionally different than [one] is” (TFP, p. 11). Of course, this is wholeheartedness not with respect to the endorsing higher-order desires that make a desire be something one cares about and so part of one’s will. Rather, it is wholeheartedness with respect to those desires that constitute one’s will, a wholeheartedness that requires that there be no internal conflict within one’s will.

positively cares about not doing are also possible. In Stanley Milgram's experiments into blind obedience many subjects forced themselves, in spite of being obviously disturbed about what they were doing, to obey the experimenter and apply what they believed to be dangerous electrical shocks to patients complaining of heart problems.⁸ Consequently, because Frankfurt understands a desire to be a part of one's will just in case one cares about it, he seems unable to acknowledge the possibility that one can exercise one's will so as to change what one cares about and so the kind of person one is; such change, however, is readily intelligible. For these reasons we must maintain a distinction between those things one wills and those things one cares about.⁹

Second, the conditions Frankfurt spells out for caring, namely that one wholeheartedly decide to endorse a particular desire, are neither necessary nor sufficient. They are not sufficient because, for example, one may have a second-order desire to help victims of a distant famine and have no desires that inherently conflict with this higher-order desire—that is, one can make a wholehearted decision to endorse it—but this does not mean that one actually does care about it. They are not necessary either. First, caring does not require wholeheartedness (the first half of Frankfurt's definition). A spurned parent, who genuinely cares about his child, may nonetheless wish he did not care so much and so question those attitudes he finds a part of himself; but such doubts need not diminish his caring. Second, caring does not require reflective, self-conscious decision-making (the other half of his definition). One can be thrust into a role and genuinely come to care about fulfilling that role without having thought about why one would do that or what other options are available to one. Thus, the traditional housewife of the 1950s may not have thought at all about whether staying at home, cooking, cleaning, etc. was something she wanted to do but may nonetheless have taken great pride and satisfaction in a well-run home.

Finally, Frankfurt's account of caring, apart from the reflective deliberation he thinks is needed to establish or initiate one's caring, makes caring about something lie in the *absence* of mental states of a certain kind rather than in the having of them.

⁸“Behavioral Study of Obedience,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67, pp. 371-78.

⁹Making this distinction requires in large part articulating an account of the will as an ability one can exercise in this way (rather than, as it is for Frankfurt, a collection of desires of a certain sort). Though it is not my purpose here to give an account of the will, I do think common sense provides the outlines of the answer, and Frankfurt provides some of the tools for filling in that outline. Thus, the will is the ability to control the motives on the basis of which one acts, and we can understand this in part in terms of one's having a second-order volition and exerting an effort on its behalf so as to overcome *psychological* obstacles to the effectiveness of one's first-order desire. This is in principle no more mysterious than our exerting an effort on behalf of our first-order desires by acting so as to overcome *physical* obstacles. (Freedom of the will, then, can be understood quite straightforwardly as the ability to do this successfully.) Of course, this is all too rough a sketch of the will and freedom of the will, though I think it is the sort of thing Frankfurt *should* say (and it is what Frankfurt might seem to have been saying before he confused the issue by talking about caring).

His argument for this, as I noted, is motivated by the infinite regress that would be generated if caring about something depended on a *particular* attitude, an attitude that itself may or may not be one the subject cares about and so itself may be “external.” But this account makes caring seem too passive (caring is, after all, something we *do* even if doing it is not always up to us), and it is not necessary to avoid the regress. A “state of the entire psychic system” (TFP, p. 13) can be a state that depends on the *having* of mental states of a certain kind in the appropriate situations such that the question of whether or not one cares about their common object can be answered in terms of the way those states cohere together and fit into one’s mental life as a whole. The infinite regress Frankfurt is rightly worried about can be avoided by the appeal to this kind of holism without needing to say that it is only the absence of mental states of a certain kind that is relevant.

4 Caring and the Emotions

The question, of course, is: What sort of mental states are relevant for this sort of holism, and precisely how must they “cohere” for the person genuinely to care about something? The answer, as I have argued elsewhere,¹⁰ must centrally involve the emotions. Emotions themselves are essentially intentional responses to things one cares about, and so having particular emotions seems to presuppose that there truly are things one cares about. Conversely, it seems that it does not make sense to say that one cares about something if one did not or would not respond emotionally no matter what when it is affected favorably or adversely, and so caring about something seems to presuppose having the capacity for emotions. Emotions, then, seem to be both necessary and sufficient conditions of caring about something.¹¹ If this is right, then one’s emotions form at least a large part of the psychic state in terms of which there is a determinate answer to the question of what one cares about. Of course, as Frankfurt has argued, having just one emotion at a particular time cannot be all there is to caring about the object of that emotion, for that emotion itself might be “external.” How, then, can we avoid Frankfurt’s infinite regress?

The answer is to understand one’s caring about something not in terms of its being the object of a particular emotion but in terms of its being in general a suitable object of emotional response for one. This suitability, I have argued, emerges in a projectible pattern of rationality one must display in one’s behavior, actually and counterfactually, in order to have emotions at all. Thus, for example, to care about

¹⁰“The Significance of Emotions,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 31 (1994), pp. 319-31. For a more detailed defense, see my *Significance, Emotions, and Objectivity*, PhD Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1994.

¹¹The situation is actually more complicated than this suggests, and I shall eventually claim that one’s desires must also be in the picture.

some goal is not only to want it but also (other things being equal) to be afraid when its accomplishment is threatened, to be hopeful when it might well be achieved, to be angry at those who impede one's progress, to be frustrated at repeated failures, etc. These various emotions thus converge on a common object (and would consistently continue to do so in the relevant counterfactual situations), and it is in this way that they form a projectible pattern. Such a pattern, moreover, is a pattern of rationality insofar as (a) one rationally ought to respond emotionally when the focus of the pattern of emotions is affected in the relevant ways, and (b) one rationally ought not to respond emotionally when this object is not thus affected. Particular emotions are thus *normal*, and so are responses to what is thereby constituted as a suitable object of emotions for one, as something one cares about, in light of their coherence with the consistent pattern of emotional responses one does or would make. Emotions that are *abnormal* (in that they do not fit into such a coherent pattern) are abnormal in part because they are not responses to something one genuinely cares about.¹² It is this consistent rational pattern in one's emotions generally (and the consequent normality or abnormality of particular emotions) that makes possible one's caring about something.

In claiming that emotions have this essential role in determining what one cares about, I am not claiming that this is all there is to such caring. One's desires are also relevant (hence the initial persuasiveness of Frankfurt's account). This is clear from the fact that to care about something is not just for it to be a suitable object of one's emotions, but also for it to be worth pursuing or avoiding for one. Indeed, the two must go hand in hand: We could not make sense of something genuinely being worthy of pursuit or avoidance for one if, in the relevant situations, an emotional response to it were not also normal and appropriate; and we could not make sense of something being a suitable object of one's emotions if it were not also worthwhile to pursue or avoid it. Hence the actual or potential satisfaction or frustration of desires must normally result in the appropriate emotion *because* their objects are worthy of pursuit or avoidance; and, conversely, one's emotions must be able to provoke particular desires *because* these emotions are a response to something one cares about. To care about something, then, one's emotional *and* desiderative responses to that thing must be by and large "in sync;" failure to display this kind of coherence is, once again, a kind of irrationality. Thus, consistently to display such a projectible pattern of rationality in both one's emotions and one's desires just *is* to care about

¹²Note incidentally that abnormality is not the same as inappropriateness. Although all abnormal emotions are for that reason inappropriate, some inappropriate emotions can nonetheless be normal because they are responses to something one genuinely cares about, though they are inappropriate because one does not have sufficient warrant for making the particular evaluation implicit in the emotion. For more on this distinction, see my "The Significance of Emotions."

the focus of that pattern.¹³

These rational connections among one's emotions and desires can explain why too much ambivalence in one's attitudes, emotional or desiderative, undermines the intelligibility of one's caring about something. If one's emotions and desires were not mostly "in sync," the rational structure in terms of which it makes sense to talk about something as being for one a suitable object of the emotions or as being worthy of pursuit or avoidance disappears. Nonetheless, this does not mean, as Frankfurt thinks, that ambivalence is impossible in every case. In particular cases, one can be ambivalent and still truly care so long as there is enough consistency in one's emotions and desires to make up the relevant pattern of rationality, as the example of the spurned parent given above illustrates.

This rational coherence among one's desires and emotions thus constitutes what I call one's *heart*. One's heart consists of those things one cares about and those psychological states that are normal in that they are properly reflective of what one cares about. Desires or emotions that are abnormal in that they do not fit into this rational pattern are thus external to one's heart.

5 Caring, Valuing, Emotional Wantons, and Persons

So far I have presented an account of caring as wholly unreflective and unself-conscious, as simply implicit in the structure of one's emotions and desires. Nonetheless, there is a difference between those things one happens to care about and those things one cares about at least in part because of an understanding of the kind of person one finds worth being. We therefore need to distinguish between what one cares about and, I shall say, what one *values*: To value something is to be concerned with caring about it (i.e., with its being a part of one's heart) because of such an understanding. This notion of valuing, which needs to be clarified, is very close to the notion of caring that Frankfurt intends, and it may therefore seem that the dispute I have been having with Frankfurt is largely terminological. It is not, for being able to make this distinction makes a very big difference.

Just as Frankfurt is able to make the distinction between mere wantons and persons in terms of freedom of the will, a freedom made possible by the ability persons (but not wantons) have to reflect on and choose what desires they want to be

¹³The details of why this is so are quite tangled, and I cannot go into them here. The main problem is one of making sense of a kind of "objectivity" in what one cares about (one can be mistaken about it in having abnormal desires and emotions) in spite of the fact that caring is also "subjective" in being relative to the individual—i.e., what you care about need not be what I care about. Making sense of this dual objectivity and subjectivity of caring is only possible in terms of the kind of holistic rational pattern in one's emotions and desires I have just described. All of this is argued in more detail in my "The Significance of Emotions."

moved by, so too we can make an important distinction between *emotional wantons* and persons in terms of a distinct kind of freedom made possible by the ability persons have to be concerned with what they care about. *Emotional wantons* are creatures like dogs and cats that have the capacity for emotions and desires and so genuinely do care about things in the world. But they do not—indeed cannot—care about what hearts they have and so can have no motivation to change their hearts. But *persons*, unlike emotional wantons, can concern themselves with what they care about—about where their hearts lie—and so for persons but not for emotional wantons there is the possibility of a difference between the heart they want to have and the heart they in fact have, thus motivating them to change their hearts. This is illustrated by the case of Martin, who wants to care about his children and their interests and so to have them be a part of his heart but does not do so (at least to the extent that he thinks he ought). That this is possible for persons opens up the possibility of *freedom of the heart*, analogous to the notion of freedom of the will. One's heart is free just in case one is able successfully to control what one in fact cares about, what heart one in fact has, and it is one's values that motivate this control. Freedom of the heart, because of the independence of the notions of caring and of the will, is thus distinct from freedom of the will.

To value something, to be concerned that one cares about it, is in part to want that caring to form an enduring part of one's own psychological makeup. To have values, therefore, is in effect to be concerned with the kind of person one wants to be and the motives for action that are most truly one's own, a concern which includes a (partial) understanding or sense of the kind of person one wants to be. This is part of the reason why values and the possibility of controlling one's heart are so important and central to us as persons.

One natural way of making sense of this self-understanding that is a part of one's values is by appealing to explicit self-conscious deliberation. When one is faced with a conflict in which control over one's heart is called for, as in the case of Martin, such valuing may well arise from self-conscious deliberation about the kind of person one finds worth being, resulting in a decision and a desire for having a particular heart and so for being a certain kind of person. Thus it may seem that values *require* explicit and self-conscious choice and that such choice is for this reason essential to any attempt to control one's heart. But this, I think, distorts the phenomenon of valuing in much the same way that Frankfurt's account of caring distorts that phenomenon. In particular, I shall argue, such a self-understanding or sense of the kind of person one wants to be, and hence one's values themselves, can also be implicit in the projectible patterns of one's emotions and desires.

Valuing something—being concerned with caring about it—can take the form of a kind of *reflexive caring*: caring that one cares about it. In general, I have argued, to care about something is for it to be for one both a suitable object of emotions

and worthy of desire—for it to be good or bad for one; this goodness or badness is constituted by a consistent and projectible pattern of rationality in one’s desires and emotions (cf. §4). In having values, however, what one evaluates is not what is good or bad in the world but what is good or bad in one’s heart. In having values, one evaluates not particular ends but *motives*, broadly construed so as to include desires, emotions, and other “pro-attitudes,” as worthy or base constituents of the kind of person one is. Consequently, the emotions constitutive of one’s caring about having a particular heart—constitutive of reflexive caring—must include *reflexive emotions*, such as pride, shame, remorse, self-approbation, and contrition, for it is these emotions that are evaluative responses to one’s own motives. Thus, for example, in valuing courage (in this way)—in caring that courage be something one cares about—one must consistently take pride in particular actions because they exhibit courage and be ashamed when one does not act courageously when the opportunity arises.

Consequently, caring that one cares about something—valuing it in this way—requires that one consistently respond with such reflexive emotions when one is motivated to act in ways that are for one worthy or base and not otherwise. Such a projectible pattern in one’s reflexive emotions¹⁴ is constitutive of one’s motives as being for one worthy or base components of who one is. The particular emotions that make up that pattern, because they implicitly evaluate particular motives in light of such worth, must be understood as a kind of sensitivity to the kind of person one finds worth being: to take pride in a courageous act is, in essence, to *feel* the worthiness of being a courageous person.¹⁵ Such a sensitivity to the worthiness of being a certain kind of person is all that is required for having values and so motivating one to exercise control over one’s heart, and it is in this way a kind of implicit self-understanding.

Values, therefore, do not require self-conscious deliberation about what one wants to care about. Of course, one’s values and the self-understanding that is an essential part of one’s values *can* come about as the result of self-conscious deliberation, but they need not, for they can be implicit in one’s reflexive caring. Caring in general does not presuppose that one has previously engaged in self-conscious deliberation about the worth of its object, and there is no reason to think that reflexive caring is special in this regard. Indeed, persons generally undergo such deliberation mostly when conflicts arise among the various things they value and not when they come to have these values in the first place. The relevant pattern of reflexive emotions and desires normally constitutive of one’s values, and so the implicit sense of the kind of

¹⁴I should note that I am simplifying here by talking only about one’s reflexive emotions, for just as in the case of non-reflexive caring, one’s desires must also be a part of the pattern of rationality (though in this case the desires will also be second-order desires).

¹⁵For more on this understanding of emotions as evaluative feelings (or “intentional feelings of significance,” as I also call them), see “The Significance of Emotions.”

person one finds worth being that is a part of that pattern, can be instilled in one as the result of one's upbringing and without reflective choice (as in the case of the traditional housewife of the 1950s).

Consequently, the kind of understanding or sense of the kind of person it is worth being that is a part of one's values, like an aesthetic sense, need not be explicitly articulated in advance of having those values. All that is required is something like a desire to live well and a sense of what that requires.¹⁶ Nonetheless, such a sense must involve the ability to identify what activities constitute living well for one in concrete situations by coming to have the relevant emotions or desires and in this way implicitly to articulate more clearly what living well is for one. Of course, one might come to have particular values because one has explicitly thought about the kind of person one wants to be, but this need not always be the case and, I think, generally is not. Although self-conscious deliberation about one's values and the kind of person one wants to be surely has an important role in articulating, refining, and criticizing oneself and one's values, this role should not be confused with what it is to have values in the first place.

Although I have been speaking as if these two ways of valuing are distinct, in the normal case valuing is constituted both implicitly by patterns in one's reflexive emotions and second-order desires and explicitly by self-conscious deliberation and choice. People usually know what they value and can understand and appreciate their emotional responses in light of that knowledge; and people usually feel emotions appropriate to their self-conscious understanding of what's important. Nonetheless, the possibility exists for considerable self-ignorance, self-deception and internal conflict within a person, and this understanding of both implicit and explicit sources of values can help us make sense of such possibilities.¹⁷

6 How Freedom of the Heart Is Possible

I have claimed that persons are to be distinguished from emotional wantons in that persons but not emotional wantons have values and hence the possibility of a difference between the heart they in fact have and the heart they are concerned with having. The potential for this difference opens up the possibility of freedom of the heart, namely the ability to control what heart one has in light of one's values and

¹⁶I am, of course, alluding to Aristotle's notion of *eudaimonia* as it functions in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. For insightful commentary on this, see John McDowell's "The Role of *Eudaimonia* in Aristotle's Ethics" in Amélie Rorty (ed.), *Essays in Aristotle's Ethics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 359-76.

¹⁷See my "Integration and Fragmentation of the Self" (forthcoming in *Southern Journal of Philosophy*) for an initial attempt at working some of this out.

self-understanding. But how is such control possible? The answer, I believe, is that it is possible only indirectly through the exercise of one's will.

To exercise one's will, I have suggested (cf. note 9, above), is to control one's *behavior*. What is important now is that successful and consistent control of one's behavior over a period of time can result in the acquisition of new *habits* and consequently a change in the kinds of motives for action that are natural for one. This is important because it is by doing so that one can change one's emotional makeup and so where one's heart lies. One can do this in a way similar to that recommended by Pascal for believing in God: To get yourself to believe in God, Pascal says, you must behave as if you believe, and eventually genuine belief might well follow. The same is true of the emotions: If you simulate caring about something long enough, consistently behaving as if you have the emotions constitutive of that caring when they are appropriate, such behavior may well become habitual and so genuine.

Clearly there seems to be some sleight of hand here, for even granting that consistently behaving this way will produce the habit of doing so, all one can get, it seems, is the habit of behaving *as if* one has these emotions when they are appropriate. But simulated emotions are no less simulated when the simulation is habitual. How, then, can one acquire emotions and so change one's heart by exercising one's will? This is no less a problem for Pascal's account of how to acquire a belief. Simply behaving as if one has a certain belief, even if that behavior becomes habitual, is still only a simulation. Pascal recognizes this difficulty in claiming that genuine belief will come only after divine grace, to which one becomes more open by behaving as if one believes. The question, then, is what the emotional equivalent of divine grace is.

The answer depends on what habit one acquires by behaving as if one has the relevant pattern of emotions. If, as the objection rightly points out, one acquires the habit of simulating these emotions whenever they are appropriate, then such simulation cannot be genuine no matter how habitual. This is because to have a genuine emotion is to respond passively (or habitually) when such a response is appropriate and out of the kind of motivation emotions provide *because* the emotion is appropriate. In simulating an emotion, however, one is responding in the characteristic ways when appropriate for the wrong reason—because, for example, one thinks one ought to have the emotion. To simulate the emotion is not genuinely to have it because the motivation for acting is mediated by the desire to simulate it, even though that desire, in being habitual, may itself be a response to the appropriateness of the emotion to the situation. But if the habit one acquires through the exercise of one's will in simulating emotions when they are appropriate is one in which the mediating desire drops out, so that one is habitually motivated to act in the characteristic ways because such emotions are appropriate, then one is being motivated passively for the right reasons, and this is to have genuine emotions. Emotions just are responses of a certain sort to the apparent adverse or favorable effects on something one cares about, responses

that provide one with certain motives for action and with respect to which one is passive.¹⁸ This is why Aristotle was right to claim that the “moral excellences”—that is, those states of character by virtue of which we feel the right emotions and desires at the right times (or not)—and consequently the emotions and desires themselves, “come about as a result of habit” (1103a16) and so are things that we can acquire only “by first exercising them” (1103a30).

By acquiring the habit of having particular desires and emotions in the relevant situations, one can institute the relevant pattern of emotional and desiderative rationality for genuinely caring about something. This is true whether the emotions and desires are non-reflexive, so that one comes to care about something in the world, or whether the emotions and desires are reflexive as well, so that one comes to value particular psychological states as being for one worthy constituents of one’s heart. Consequently, in exercising one’s will in this way, one can alter both what one cares about and what one values, and it is in this way that one can change one’s heart and so resolve conflicts that might arise within one among its various constituents.¹⁹

This can be clarified by returning to the case of Martin. In trying to come to care about, for example, his daughter’s interest in soccer, Martin must come to have a range of emotions and desires. He must come to look forward to her games and be disappointed when he cannot be there. He must come to hope that her team can pull off an upset, to fear last minute rallies by her opponents, to be happy when she wins, to be sad when she loses, and, of course, to be angry at the referees for poor or biased officiating. But Martin not only wants to care about her soccer games; he wants to value her interests because he thinks it is demanded of good fathers, which is what he aspires to be. Thus he ought to feel guilty for thinking about work while he is at her games, to be ashamed for wishing he were back at the office or finding attendance at her games a burden, and to be proud of himself when he effortlessly makes the responses he thinks he ought. To come to have these emotions, he must try to pay attention to his daughter’s involvement in soccer and, at least initially, to imitate particular emotional responses when appropriate by force of will. Through much effort and practice, these responses can become habitual and motivated immediately by the appropriateness of the situation for the emotion, and so the responses themselves, because of the sort of responses emotions are, become genuine. Likewise, to come to have the relevant desires, he must again consistently

¹⁸There is, of course, no guarantee that the mediating desire will drop out, though this is, I submit, what happens when one is successful in changing one’s emotions by exercising one’s will. Precisely how this works is not something I can tackle here, for it depends directly or indirectly on many complicated psychological and social factors, which I can only mention in the text below.

¹⁹The possibility of such a conflict among the things one values gives rise to the question of what it is for a person to be more or less integrated, a question that I take up in my “Integration and Fragmentation of the Self.”

force himself to do what he thinks he ought, at times even when doing so conflicts with his own interests and projects. It is in this way that Martin can come to care about things he thinks he ought to care about and so to change his heart and who he is.

Although my intent here is only to understand the theoretical problem of how control over the patterns in one's emotions and so over one's heart is intelligible, I don't want to minimize the enormous practical difficulties involved in controlling one's heart in this way in light of the complexity of human psychology. I want here to mention only three of these difficulties. First, part of the practical problem seems to arise from the need for the desire partly constitutive of valuing to be properly motivated by a sense of the kind of person one finds worth being. To the extent that one's efforts to have new patterns in one's emotions and so to change one's heart come up short (the mediating desire does not drop out), we might think, those efforts are not properly motivated. It is plausible to think that this motivation must at least in part be experienced emotionally (in the form of a pattern of reflexive emotions) rather than merely understood intellectually. This is why I have focused on the way one's values (normally) involve one's reflexive emotions, though much remains to be said about the kinds of rational interconnections there can be between one's emotions (and implicit emotional sense of self-worth) and one's evaluative judgments (and explicit understanding of self-worth).

Second, coming to care or value something new is complicated by the fact that such cares or values may conflict in a variety of ways with existing cares or values. Making room for new cares, therefore, may involve a change of priorities or, more radically, coming to have a new integration among all that is important to one. Thus, for Martin genuinely coming to care about his daughter's soccer games may require overcoming to some extent ambivalence that arises from his dedication to his job. Failure to overcome this ambivalence would result in a kind of fragmentation that may well block the attempt to come to have new cares or values.²⁰

Finally, another part of the practical problem arises from the fact that we are social creatures and are affected significantly by the often subtle ways in which others perceive and respond to us. Though we may try to change ourselves by exercising our wills in the ways I have outlined, these attempts may be undermined by our relations with others. This is compounded by the fact that our sub-conscious habits—how we carry ourselves in relation to the world and others around us—strongly influence our social relations as well as the structure of our emotions, and these habits are instituted and maintained in us by the social and political structures we cannot but find ourselves a part of.²¹ So there will be much more to a complete account

²⁰I discuss this and other kinds of fragmentation in my "Integration and Fragmentation of the Self."

²¹For the beginnings of an account of the ways in which our sub-conscious habits define our under-

of how we can in fact get ourselves to change our hearts than I have outlined here. Nonetheless, though in practice the problem of freedom of the heart is considerably more complicated than my limited account suggests, I hope to have made some headway in articulating the intelligibility of a solution to that problem.

One important consequence of this account of how it is we can change our hearts and who we are is that it is necessary that we be able to exercise our wills in order to act *out* of character so as to change our characters. This feature of the will is, I think, essential to any account of how we can change what we care about, and so to any account of how to reconcile our minds and our hearts. It is a substantial flaw in Frankfurt's theory of the will and freedom of the will that he cannot accommodate this.

7 Conclusion

I have argued that Frankfurt is wrong to think that freedom of action and freedom of the will are the only kinds of freedom a person might enjoy, for there is also what I have called freedom of the heart. Nonetheless, although it is a distinct kind of freedom in its own right, freedom of the heart is only possible for someone who is able to control her will more or less successfully—who has, at least to some extent, freedom of the will. As a result, freedom of the will is a necessary condition of freedom of the heart. But the two must be distinct. In addition to freedom of the will, freedom of the heart requires that one have some values and the self-understanding implicit in these values. Without these the question of a difference between the heart one in fact has and the heart one cares about having simply does not arise, no matter how strong one's will is.

Having the potential for freedom of the heart is part of what distinguishes us as caring creatures from the animals—from emotional wantons. For animals, because they lack the requisite values and the implicit (or explicit) self-understanding they essentially involve, there can be only instrumental or hedonistic reasons for what they care about, if there are such reasons at all. But we persons, through self-conscious deliberation, second-order desires, *and* reflexive emotions, can be responsive to non-instrumental reasons for caring about things. Such desires and emotions therefore make possible our exercising our wills on behalf of what we think we ought to care about. It is in this way that we can change our hearts and our values and so have a say in what makes life worth living.

standing of ourselves and of the world, as well as how others understand us, see Sandra Lee Bartky's "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," in *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp.63-82.