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Editorial: Introducing the *Journal of Philosophy of Emotion*

Dear Readers and Contributors,

The idea for the *Journal of Philosophy of Emotion (JPE)*, as well as the associated Society for Philosophy of Emotion (SPE), was first conceived a little before January 2016. Around that time, I observed a need for something like the *JPE* and the SPE. Although there are several journals and societies that focus on the study of emotions, there were none, and there are still very few that focus on the interdisciplinary study of emotions from a philosophical perspective. This was, therefore, one of the most important factors at the time of the *JPE*'s conception.

Approximately three years have passed, and the *JPE* has considerably developed since its conception. It was initially offered a five year contract with the Philosophy Documentation Center, for which I'd like to thank George Leaman. Although I decided to forego the contract in order to implement its current publishing model, his offer encouraged me to continue on with this project. I was grateful to George for the offer, but I chose instead to respond to the various concerns that were being raised by fellow scholars. These concerns were primarily about the problematic conditions for scholarly research and publishing that had been established by both for-profit and non-profit, non-open access, fee-based publishers (such as those that charge subscription fees), especially for marginalized scholars. I also learned more about the differences between U.S. and international publishing requirements, which hindered the international recognition and communication of scholarly research and, as such, stood in the way of progress for both U.S. and international scholarship.

My response to these concerns was to implement the *JPE*'s current Gold open access model. According to this model, the *JPE* provides open access to all of its

published contents and authors are charged a nominal fee (\$35 USD) to submit a manuscript. Any profit will also be equally shared among its various contributors, including contributing authors, editorial board and non-editorial board referees, editors, administrative assistants, IT administrators, and editorial advisory board members. The plan, however, is to eventually transition to a Platinum (i.e., sponsored or Diamond) open access model similar to the one implemented by the *Journal of World Philosophy*, *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, *Phenomenology and Mind*, or the *Journal of Social Ontology*, which would allow the *JPE* to remove any impediments on authors submitting high quality, rigorous research.

Given its current model, however, the *JPE* is not able to provide contributors with some of the services that they have become accustomed to with a fee-based publishing model (e.g., copy editing services and extensive indexing services). I hope that contributors will discover how they can further improve and develop their skills when such services are not taken for granted, and that the scholarly community will be able to realize how much impact a paper can make through word of mouth and the appropriate use of scholarly citations. As I understand things, word of mouth is still the most effective method of sharing information and the use of appropriate citations ought to be, and we hope that the open access we provide will help increase the effectiveness of such methods.

I also hope that readers and contributors will appreciate the value of the *JPE*'s commitment to diversity and accessibility, not only with its open access to all its contents, but also with its provision of audio recordings and its use of accessible typographic styles and formatting, which attempted to balance the needs and desires of its various stakeholders. It is in these ways that the *JPE* will fulfill its intent to be a journal for the scholarly community, by the scholarly community.

There will always be a place for a fee-based model of scholarly publishing, but it is important to find a place for alternative models within the current system. Not only do such models inspire the kind of cooperation that must be cultivated in order for scholars, and societies in general, to continue to progress, especially in this age of hyper-capitalism and detrimental monopolies, but it should also help scholars and the public further assess the value of fee-based models for scholarly publishing. The *JPE* is, therefore, also an integral aspect of what is, ultimately, a capitalistic market economy in scholarly publishing. It acts as a corrective to the system.

I would like to thank all of those who were involved with the creation of the *JPE* since its conception. There are many people who can be mentioned, too many to do so by name. The *JPE*, however, will be acknowledging all of the referees for our Winter

2019 and Summer 2020 publications in our Winter 2020 publication. I would also like to especially thank Flavia Felletti and Juan R. Loaiza for their contributions as an editorial assistant or IT administrator. I wish both of you the best in your philosophic endeavors, and please note that you are always welcome to rejoin the *JPE* team. I also thank the editorial advisory board members and Ronald de Sousa. I have learned much from all of you, and I appreciate your continued support!

Finally, I hope all the readers enjoy the various articles and book symposium in this inaugural issue, which has been made possible by the cooperative efforts of all of its contributors. The collection of papers and commentaries published here reflect the current interests of those of our scholarly community, which is what the *JPE* aims to publish, and it should not be too much of a surprise that such scholarly work reflects the current concerns of the greater society.

Much has happened, historically, both in the United States (U.S.) and internationally since the *JPE*'s conception. On November 8, 2016, Donald Trump was elected the 45th U.S. president. Just recently, on December 18, 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives impeached President Trump for the abuse of power and the obstruction of Congress. Prior to and throughout Trump's presidency, we have witnessed major upheavals in the U.S. regarding political and class warfare, racism, sexism, trans rights, and environmental degradation, especially with the We Are the 99% movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, challenges to Trump's immigration policies, the #MeToo movement, legal battles over trans access to public bathrooms, and the environmental activism inspired by the Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg.

We have also witnessed similar struggles around the world with Hong Kong's anti-extradition protests against mainland China, Brexit in the United Kingdom, the Yellow Jacket movement in France, the decriminalization of abortion in Chile and Ireland, Uruguay's first conviction for femicide since it was outlawed in 2017, the cooperative strike between Palestinian and Jewish women against the murder of 16 year-old Yara Ayoub and 13 year-old Silvana Tsegai, the Ni Una Menos movement, which originated in Argentina, the growing global legalization of same-sex marriage, the growing global support for legal gender recognition, and the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement, from which President Trump withdrew.

While reflecting on some of these concerns, we begin the inaugural issue with Iskra Fileva's article on envy, in which she highlights the possible role that the envied have in being envied. She ultimately argues for a joint effort in ameliorating such negative emotions. We then move on to Ronald de Sousa's article on contempt, in which he argues that although there may be at least some argument theoretically

supporting the moral appropriateness of strong contempt, it is never morally appropriate in practice. Next, Anthony Aumann and Zac Cogley's article addresses how an understanding of anger can help resolve some concerns regarding forgiveness, especially the paradox of forgiving someone while continuing to judge the act in question to be morally wrong, and Evan Simpson's article challenges what he refers to as the "philosophical criterion of rationality," arguing that such a conception of rationality fails to acknowledge the significance of emotions and public discourse in rational, ethical decision-making. Finally, we end the inaugural issue with a symposium on Rick A. Furtak's book, *Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness and Recognition in Affective Experience*, which covers a wide range of concerns in the philosophy of emotion, including questions about the distinction between contemporary cognitivist and non-cognitivist theories of emotion, the unification of feelings and emotions, the intentionality of emotions and the need for a representational framework, as well as concerns regarding the kind of knowing—truth and recognition—involved in emotions.

I hope that readers will consider the contents of this inaugural issue with current events in mind, and that they find it worthwhile to support the *JPE* in its endeavors by joining the conversation and supporting its work in other ways as well.

Best wishes,

Cecilea Mun, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief



Envy's Non-Innocent Victims

Iskra Fileva

Department of Philosophy, University of Colorado, United States

Abstract: Envy has often been seen as a vice and the envied as its victims. I suggest that this plausible view has an important limitation: the envied sometimes actively try to provoke envy. They may, thus, be non-innocent victims. Having argued for this thesis, I draw some practical implications.

Keywords: envy, vice, virtue, victim

There are strings in the human heart . . . that had better not be vibrated.

Mr. Tappertit to Miggs, Charles Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge*

Envy is a vice, and the envied are its victims. This is one of the major strands in our thinking about envy. Thus, we say such things as, "Be careful with Bertha, she envies you," or, "Don't believe what Gus says about Ethan—it's envy speaking," alleging that Bertha may harm you out of spite or that Gus is speaking to undermine Ethan's reputation behind his back. We find this view in literature as well: Dumas' Count of Monte Cristo, for instance, is so envied for his personal qualities, quick rise in the ranks, and the love of a beautiful woman that he is framed for a crime. In Jean Genet's play *The Maids*, two maids envy their mistress and conspire to kill her. Balzac's character Bette, from *The Cousin Bette*, envies the social status and superior physical beauty of her cousin, Hortense Hulot, and plots to destroy Hortense's happiness. The view of envy as a vice with the envied as its victims goes as far back as the Book of Genesis, where we find the story about Cain and Abel: Cain, envious of God's love for Abel, kills Abel. And in the *Parson's Tale*, Geoffrey Chaucer suggests that envy is the worst of all sins, "For truly, all other sins are sometimes only against one special virtue, but

Corresponding Author: Iskra Fileva, Department of Philosophy, University of Colorado, UCB 232, Boulder, CO, 80309-0232, United States; email: iskra.fileva@gmail.com.

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certainly Envy is against all virtues and against all goodness. For it is sorry of all the goodness of his neighbor, and in this manner it is diverse from all other sins" (Chaucer [1387-1400] 2011, 66).

Philosophers have, historically, been sympathetic to this conception of envy as well. For instance, in the *Rhetoric* ([384 BC-322 BC] 2015), Aristotle suggests that envy can lead us to be unfair and deny pity where pity is owed, writing:

If therefore we ourselves with whom the decision rests are put into an envious state of mind, and those for whom our pity, or the award of something desirable, is claimed are such as have been described, it is obvious that they will win no pity from us (1388a25-30).

And Kant says that envy "aims, at least in terms of one's wishes, at destroying others' good fortune" (1998, 459).

There are other strands in thinking about envy and its moral assessment. For instance, it has been argued recently that there are different kinds of envy, and that some—the kind that takes as its object the good of the person envied rather than that person him- or herself and that does not wish to deprive the envied of said good—are not malicious (Protasi 2016).¹ It can be argued also that envy is not so much a moral vice as a cognitive defect, that it is irrational or perhaps, childish and immature (cf. Farrell 1980); or contrariwise, that it has an important moral function: to attune us to injustice (La Caze 2001; La Caze 2002; Thomason 2015; cf. Frye 2016; and Bankovsky 2018). And literature offers examples of people who envy, but see themselves—rather than the object of envy—as the victim. For instance, in Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady* (1909, 6), Gilbert Osmond has the following exchange with Elizabeth Archer about his envy:

"As good as he's good-looking do you mean? He's very good-looking. How detestably fortunate! – to be a great English magnate, to be clever and handsome into the bargain, and, by way of finishing off, to enjoy your high favour! That's a man I could envy."

Isabel considered him with interest. "You seem to me to be always envying someone. Yesterday it was the Pope; to-day it's poor Lord Warburton."

"My envy's not dangerous; it wouldn't hurt a mouse. I don't want to destroy the people – I only want to BE them. You see it would destroy only myself."

Similarly, in the tale I referenced earlier, Chaucer goes on to say that envy, unlike other sins, has no "delight in itself" but only "anguish and sorrow."² And an internet

search reveals a remarkably high number of Google hits for the phrase "dealing with envy" (read Becker 2016; Houghton 2011; Villines 2013).³

So the view that envy is to be classified simply as a moral vice whose victims are the envied has detractors. Who is right? The answer to this question is important, because the way we see envy has implications for the practical question of what to do about it. If envy is a vice, and the envied are its victims, then a natural suggestion would be that enviers must get rid of the vice. If, on the other hand, envy is irrational, then what an envier has to do is recognize the irrationality involved. Again, if envy is a sign that there is an injustice in the social structure, then perhaps, we ought to amend the social structure.

In what follows, I will argue that there is truth to several of the accounts of the nature of envy and the accompanying proposals regarding how to deal with envy, but there is an important aspect of the problem that has received scant attention so far, at least on the part of philosophers: the role frequently played by the people envied in the genesis of envy. As I will suggest, envy's purported victims—the envied—are sometimes less than innocent. This view has implications regarding the question of how to deal with envy.

Before I turn to the question that interests me, a clarification is due. In speaking of envy, I have in mind the view I take to be implicit in ordinary language: roughly, pain at another's good combined with a desire for said good. Other authors have distinguished different kinds of envy, and I will return to some of these distinctions later, but for my purposes, speaking of envy simpliciter will be best. Second, "envy" may refer to discrete emotional episodes as well as to a character propensity. I take it that on the envy-as-a-moral-vice view, discrete emotional episodes are generally expressive of a character propensity. (A person may sometimes act out of character and perhaps, feel out of character but not too frequently or too intensely.) When I discuss instances of discrete emotional episodes, I do so on the assumption that if envy is a character flaw, those instances are expressive of that flaw in much the way instances of feeling inordinate pride in oneself and one's achievement are expressive of the character trait of vainglory.⁴

A FEW PROPOSALS MADE BY OTHERS

Proposal 1: Envy is a character flaw, and it must be overcome by the envier.

There is something deeply intuitive about the idea of envy as a moral vice. Perhaps, what's particularly morally troublesome about it is the element of ill will. This may manifest itself as a wish to destroy another's good future, as Kant suggests in the

passage quoted earlier, but it may also be simply pain. Pain of this sort seems bad enough all by itself, and sufficient to classify envy as a moral vice: we ought to rejoice in another's good fortune, not be pained by it. This precept must be qualified. Pain at unjustly acquired good fortune—for instance, wealth accumulated by purloining public funds—is not morally bad, and likely not envy but moral outrage, unless perhaps it is accompanied by a desire to be in the place of the person purloining funds. Again, if someone's joke at your expense provokes laughter, your being pained by this rather than pleased by the other's ability to make the audience laugh is not morally bad either (though envying the other's sense of humor in general would seem morally bad). But in the usual case, envy appears morally problematic.

This view can be disputed. For instance, one can argue that envy is an emotion, and that emotions cannot be morally evaluated.⁵ Or else one can claim, as we will see in the discussion of proposal five (5) below, that our private psychological states—whether or not they can be morally evaluated—are no one else's business. But let us assume, for the sake of argument, that envy is a moral vice. What is to be done about it?

A broadly Aristotelian approach to dealing with envy seems natural. Aristotle suggested that we can align our emotions with virtue by first acting virtuously. Emotions can, on this view, be largely expected to follow suit. If we apply this proposal to envy, we can say that an envious person can free him- or herself of envy by electing to act as though he or she isn't envious. For instance, Bryan can congratulate his rival Gerry on winning a game of chess the two played, perhaps even praise a particularly ingenious move of Gerry's. On this view, Bryan can gradually get rid of his envy (on the assumption that Gerry continues to win). There is a separate and important question concerning the precise mechanism involved here. I suspect that different mechanisms will underlie the acquisition of different virtues. Aristotle likened moral virtue to excellence in other practical domains, for instance, the excellence of a horseman or an archer: anyone who wishes to be an excellent horseman must get into the habit of riding. Similarly, those who wish to possess moral virtue must get into the habit of choosing the right thing.

The Aristotelian view fits well with the acquisition of virtuous habits, such as self-restraint in the use of the internet or going to the gym. But what about envy? I think it is fair to say that acting in accordance with virtue would likely loosen the internal resistance to virtuous action and, in that sense, bring one's motivation closer to that of the virtuous person.⁶ In addition, we can note, going beyond Aristotle, that acting virtuously is consistent with self-respect and so is inherently pleasant. Thus,

it is connected to virtuous emotions not just via the channel of habituation but via a second channel: that of the pleasure we derive from respecting ourselves. The person who congratulates a chess rival on the rival's victory likely derives pleasure from the act, and that mitigates the pain of envy.

This proposal has much going for it. The morally troublesome consequences of envy would be taken care of if the proposal could be successfully implemented in every case. No less importantly, even if envy is not a moral vice, it is, as Chaucer suggests, a painful emotion to feel. If envy is eliminated, so will be the pain associated with it.

The strategy can sometimes be successfully implemented; but not always. This is because first, acting magnanimously may not be open to the envious person. The object of envy may be someone with whom the envious person has no direct interaction, and so no occasion to behave magnanimously. Thus, a person may envy someone higher up in the hierarchy at the company where he works, someone with whom he does not directly communicate. Without an occasion to behave magnanimously, the pleasure of behaving with self-respect may not be available to the envier.⁷ Perhaps the envious can derive a modicum of pleasure by refocusing their thoughts and not dwelling on the objects of their envy, in a manner consistent with self-respect. But without any witnesses, this strategy will often prove insufficient. Eliminating envy as a side-effect of habituation may be difficult or impossible when what one must habituate oneself to is refocusing one's thoughts rather than acting. We have much less control over thoughts than we have over actions. What else could be done?

Proposal 2: Envy is irrational, and it can be eliminated by recognizing the irrationality.

It can be argued that the envious make a mistake: their own good is neither increased nor diminished as a result of another's good or lack thereof.⁸ Suppose Corey envies Daniel and begrudges him his good looks. Corey, on this view, is being less than fully rational: his own looks are what they are regardless of Daniel's looks. If we recognize envy as irrational, then perhaps the recognition will help us rid ourselves of it. Consider a comparison: if Ben is afraid that Sam is going to hurt him because he's had a dream in which Sam hurts him, recognizing that fear as groundless and irrational will typically lessen or eliminate it, at least if Ben is moderately rational (of course, that may not happen if Ben is paranoid).

There is something to this argument. There are billions of people on the planet, and the looks of one particular person will usually have no measurable impact on one's own looks-related prospects. Analogous considerations will apply to many other cases of envy. However, it would be a stretch to say that envy is always irrational.

There is likely a reason why Corey is not envious of better-looking men in general but is envious of Daniel in particular: perhaps Daniel is a cousin treated better by the extended family on account of his better looks; or else Daniel and Corey socialize with the same group of people, and women show much less interest in Corey when Daniel is there.⁹

More generally, it is hardly irrational to have an emotional response to one's position relative to comparable others.¹⁰ What we get in life often depends not simply on our own qualities considered in isolation, but on how our qualities compare to those of others. Indeed, there is evidence that others' assessments of us are often influenced by whom others compare us to. Perhaps Corey would be ranked as good-looking if raters see only a picture of him, but ranked as less good-looking if they first see a picture of the strikingly good-looking Daniel.¹¹ Similarly, a teenager wearing a pair of jeans with an old cut is not irrational to envy a classmate who has swanky new jeans. The reason is that part of what's bad for a teenager about wearing old-fashioned jeans is that classmates are unlikely to accept the teenager with the old-fashioned jeans as one of the "cool kids." If, however, all kids had old model jeans, then no teenager would be particularly bothered by the fact that his or her own jeans were not new.

Note, finally, that even if our relative position were of no practical consequence, our human tendency to compare ourselves to other people is so deeply ingrained that pronouncing it "irrational," even on perfectly good grounds, would likely do little to counteract it, so the practical problem of what to do about envy would remain.

Proposal 3: Envy is a character flaw when malicious, but it need not be; malicious envy ought to be converted into non-malicious envy.

I derive this proposal from some remarks Sara Protasi makes at the end of her discussion of the varieties of envy. She suggests that steps can be taken to convert malicious envy into one of its non-malicious brethren, for instance, emulative envy (Protasi 2016, 544). Emulative envy, as Protasi understands this term, is a motivator for self-improvement: the person who feels this type of envy is focused on the good the envied person possesses, rather than on that person him- or herself, and she feels the good to be within her reach, not in the sense that she can take it from the envied person but in the sense that she can obtain it independently. For the person who feels this type of envy, the one envied is a model to be emulated. This type of envy is not morally pernicious, since the envier does not seek to harm the envied and deprive the envied of the desired good.¹² In addition, emulative envy can be commended on prudential grounds: it may provide an incentive for personal growth.

This proposal has key advantages, paramount among which is the motivation for self-improvement. However, the suggestion has limitations as well. Most importantly, perhaps, the good possessed by the envier may be simply unobtainable, as when the short and broad-nosed Corey envies the athletic Daniel, whose face resembles that of an Apollo statue. When the desired good is unobtainable, envy will typically remain inert, and thereby, painful. Moreover, as Protasi herself notes, all varieties of envy are painful, even the least harmful one in her view, emulative envy (451).¹³ Can anything be done about that pain?

Proposal 4: Envy is a sign of injustice in the social system. Eliminate the injustice, and you will eliminate the envy.

I take this next proposal to be implied in the accounts of authors who argue that envy—or at least some forms of it—helps attune us to injustice (La Caze 2001; Frye 2016) and can be quite excusable (Bankovsky 2018). If that's right, then perhaps we can eliminate envy by eliminating social injustice.¹⁴

I have doubts about the idea that envy attunes us to injustice.¹⁵ The proper response to a perceived social injustice is not envy but righteous indignation or something of that sort. Consider: a slave who envies his or her master and wants to be a master rather than abolish slavery is showing a morally inappropriate response to slavery (though perhaps not an irrational or unfitting response).¹⁶ Nonetheless, I am sympathetic to the idea that if we eliminate social injustice, we will thereby reduce envy, whether or not envy attunes us to social and moral injustice.

There is a second worry, however. Envy is often experienced in response to a perceived advantage of another which is not—and is not deemed by the envier—to be a result of social injustice. People may envy another's talents, calm disposition, smoothness of manners, and a variety of other things that are not due to injustice.¹⁷ In all those cases, there will be prudential as well as moral reasons to try to deal with envy in some other way.¹⁸

Proposal 5: Envy experienced in private is no one's business but the envier's. We don't need to deal with envy but only with its outward manifestations.

This is the last proposal I wish to discuss before turning to my own. I saved it for last because I think that this is the view closest to the one most ordinary people hold implicitly. In an essay under the title "Concealment and Exposure," Thomas Nagel (1998) has argued that we need not try to eliminate negative emotions—including envy—either on moral or on prudential grounds. Many of us, Nagel maintains, are secretly mean people, secretly envy the success of friends, or wish bad things to

happen to others. That in itself is not a problem, however. A problem, according to Nagel, would arise if we start speaking our hearts on each and every occasion. But we need not do so. What is more, we need not feel guilty for the occasional fumbling of our hearts. All we need to do *vis-à-vis* our untoward thoughts and feelings is relegate them to a "private sphere" and give up on the attempt of subjecting that sphere to public moral standards: it is just healthy, Nagel's intuition seems to be, to indulge in some emotions that have traditionally been regarded as morally suspect, including envy. The wide adoption of such an attitude is a sign of progress in society. There are two reasons for this. One has to do with social cohesion: it is easy to preserve peace with others if we relegate unpolished episodes from our emotional lives to a private sphere. Doing so is also a means to a kind of liberation. It is enough that we have to edit what we say and do. We do not, in addition, need to censor what we think and feel. Nagel writes: "To internalize too much of one's social being and regard inner feelings and thoughts that conflict with it as unworthy or impure is disastrous. Everyone is entitled to commit murder in the imagination once in a while, not to mention lesser infractions" (Nagel 1998, 7).

There is something intuitive about Nagel's suggestion. It seems that what's really liberating about the news that "God is dead" is not, *pace* Ivan Karamazov, that we can conclude that everything is permitted. No, because that conclusion is false. Fears such as those of Mrs. Wilberforce, "who, upon hearing about Darwin's theory of evolution remarked 'Let's hope that it is not true but if it is true, let's hope that it does not become widely known,'" (Brown 1994, 70) seem to have been ungrounded. Our standards of public behavior have not changed significantly as a result of the disenchantment of the universe, except perhaps in those aspects that concern religion directly. What has changed are the norms we perceive as applicable to our inner lives. God used to be seen as an observer of that part of us. In a secular world, there is no observer—or rather, none other than us. We have our conscience, to be sure, but it may be good for us to loosen its grip somewhat. And if this invites the charge that a moral theory that takes this route provides a justification for not-so-virtuous human drives, the reply should probably be that moral theory need not take the place of the now absent God. That it should for once stop worrying about how to make people better and busy itself with the question of how to make them happier. Now that God is dead, our inner life can be assumed to be our own business.

I think it would be fair to say that something like this view is held by most of us. A psychiatrist I know shared with me once that patients never go to see a psychiatrist because they want to correct a moral flaw, for instance, in order to free themselves

of racist biases. This came to me as no surprise. Most of us probably think that while a person can choose to counteract a negative emotion such as envy, whether to improve her own character or for prudential reasons, a person does not have to do that (let alone pay to correct a moral flaw hidden from view). It is something optional. All that is really required is to behave in accordance with moral precepts, not to make our emotions conform to those precepts.

I believe, however, that this proposal, for all its strengths, has limitations as well, and they are of two kinds.¹⁹ First, some normative constraints on our private realms are probably indispensable. Thus, if a father discovers that he is envious of his son's achievements, he should probably try to get rid of the envy, and ideally, replace it with pride.²⁰ More generally, the flipside of the complete inner freedom is that others may do whatever they like with us, so long as they do it in private. I think that somewhere deep in our hearts we hope they will be generous enough to treat us gently.

Second, and more importantly for my present purposes, even if there are no moral reasons to try to eliminate envy, there are still prudential reasons to do so. Envy remains painful even when engaging in such things as fantasizing about the envied person's failure provides a small amount of counterbalancing pleasure. In addition, the achievement of a unified self, which is probably the healthiest brand of selfhood, requires that we attempt to forestall the opening of too great a gap between our public and private 'I,' avoid getting into the habit of thinking one thing and saying another.²¹ Aristotle thought something similar and declared virtue the most important ingredient of happiness, but as mentioned previously, his strategy for cultivating virtuous emotions will sometimes fail. What I wish to do now is outline one more strategy.

MY ALTERNATIVE: ENVY AS A COMMON PROBLEM, TO BE DEALT WITH BY JOINT EFFORT

Consider the following quotations:

Man will do many things to get himself loved; he will do all things to get himself envied. (Mark Twain [1897] 1989, 206)

Grandcourt did believe that Deronda, poor devil, who he had no doubt was his cousin by the father's side, inwardly winced under their mutual position; wherefore the presence of that less lucky person was more agreeable to him than it would otherwise have been. An imaginary envy, the idea that others feel their comparative deficiency, is the ordinary cortège of egoism; and his

pet dogs were not the only beings that Grandcourt liked to feel his power over in making them jealous. (George Eliot [1876] 1996, 231)

What these quotations suggest is that being envied may sometimes be the envied's fault, at least partly. This will be so when the envied either aims to provoke envy (and succeeds) or else is utterly oblivious to the possibility of provoking envy in others. The former type of behavior may be selfish and irresponsible while the latter is generally insensitive. What I wish to argue is that we have responsibility to try not to provoke envy in others. The degree to which we ought to try not to provoke envy will depend on the circumstances, but in principle, we must keep in mind that envy is a painful emotion to feel, and other things being equal, we ought not cause gratuitous pain to others.

It is natural to object to this point by saying that even if so, one's being consumed by envy is one's own fault, that only people prone to envy would feel envy. That only those with a bad character would. It could be suggested also that perhaps the person envied has succeeded thanks to very hard work, but that those who envy see the reward only, not the effort behind it. And finally, that whatever the case, the envious would do well to focus on what they themselves can do to earn a reward, rather than looking at the plates of others.

There is truth to all these points, but all must be qualified. Note, first, that envy needn't betray a flaw in one's moral character. There are situations in which envy would be a natural response on the part of an otherwise virtuous human being. Consider an example. Jennifer and Amelie are schoolgirls. Amelie is a very intelligent and beautiful girl while Jennifer is a hard-working girl of average skills and looks. One day, the class of Amelie and Jennifer goes out on a picnic. Amelie goes, and Jennifer doesn't. The reason Jennifer does not go is that the literature teacher has mentioned there might be a test on the next day, and Jennifer wants to prepare well for the test. Amelie goes. The literature teacher does, indeed, give a test on the next day. As becomes clear later, Amelie gets an A and Jennifer a B-. If Jennifer feels envy in this case, does that mean she has a flawed character? I would argue not.

What I wish to suggest is that Amelie here can either improve or exacerbate this situation. On the one hand, she can flaunt her accomplishment, talking about how fun the picnic was or how easy the test was. She can "rub it in," as the expression goes. Or she can be mindful of Jennifer's feelings and point out, for instance, that, even though before the picnic in question she had not studied for the test coming the next day, she generally reads a lot of literature, a lot more than is actually required,

and that her richer background knowledge helps her find her way better whenever there is a test, and so on.

All that, of course, is a very delicate matter. Amelie can attempt to do the things I suggest but do them with such haughtiness as to make Jennifer even more upset. But all that follows from this is that doing the right thing—here and elsewhere—may be hard. It does not follow that Amelie may disregard Jennifer's feelings.

Note that my argument does not depend on accepting my assessment of the Jennifer and Amelie case. One can probably think of examples in which the case for responsibility on the part of the envied may be even stronger. For instance, consider two brothers, Jack and Jim. Jack is the younger brother and is in a committed, loving relationship with a woman named Lily. Jim, on the other hand, though older, has had no luck in love yet and has gone through three painful breakups in the last two years. It would be quite natural—and not vicious—of Jim to feel some envy in this case. Knowing this, Jack should take some steps not to provoke envy, for instance, by pointing out that he's had painful breakups as well or that things between him and Lily are not as picture-perfect as they seem (if they are not).

As for the point that one should make the best of one's own situation instead of looking at what others have, that point is well taken. Many would perhaps remember the Biblical story in which three men start out unequal, one having a lot, one some, and one very little money. In a year or so God goes to see what they did with their money and finds out that the man who had a lot made a great fortune, while the one who had very little lost even that. The moral of the story is typically taken to be that we should all try to make the best of what we have and not spend time envying our neighbor or complaining about initial disadvantages.

There is wisdom to this moral. It seems undeniable that whatever one's initial position, one would do well to make the most of it. But acknowledging this can go hand in hand with the recognition that very often, who envies and who is envied depends not on character but on luck. If the tables were turned—if, for instance, Jennifer and Amelie or Jack and Jim from my examples were to swap places—the envy would likely flow the other way.

All this is compatible with acknowledging that a person who is truly good will tend to rejoice in another's success or happiness even when he himself fails or is full of sorrow.²² On the other hand, there may be people whose envy cannot be mitigated even with the best efforts of the one who envies. My point is that these two ends of the spectrum, like the ends of any spectrum, are—for all their theoretical interest—of limited practical importance. Most cases fall somewhere in between, in between the

saintly and the beastly, the virtuous and the vicious, in the realm where one envies or is envied, pains others or suffers pain depending on the situation one finds oneself in.

Moreover, even to the extent envy is a genuine moral flaw, we may have responsibility to take steps not to provoke envy: we ought not mindlessly—let alone intentionally—do things that make others worse people. Consider an analogy: we ought not provoke a person we know to be prone to anger, because we enjoy observing him lose control of himself and become a plaything of his passions. This is true even though proneness to anger may be a character flaw. Same with triggering envy. More generally, though our primary responsibility is for our own dispositions, we have some responsibility for the dispositions of nearby others.

There is a qualification I wish to make here. A person can go too far in an attempt not to provoke the envy of others. A psychotherapist I once met told me that she was in the process of treating a patient who was constantly sabotaging herself for fear of surpassing her sister. This patient, much like Amelie from my example, happened to be both more intelligent and more beautiful than her sister, and it pained her to see her sister disadvantaged. This problem can be dealt with by means of common effort too, but this time, the burden would be largely on the sibling in a less enviable position to encourage her sister not to sabotage herself, perhaps by showing pride in her sister's accomplishments. Thus, while I here focused on the responsibility of the one envied for the envy he or she provokes, my main point is that envy is best managed with common effort. This might mean releasing the person in an enviable position from potential feelings of guilt.

Note that I am not recommending the strategy outlined here as a sole remedy for all cases of envy. Sometimes, recognizing envy as irrational may suffice (as when Pete envies his brother for winning a chess tournament but realizes that had he won, he'd be expected to play more chess, which he doesn't want to do). More importantly, the moral vice account is, as we just saw, true of some people—those at the extreme end of the spectrum. People who would be prone to strong envy despite the best efforts of the envied not to provoke it. There is a further question of whether such people ought to work on that flaw or simply on its outward manifestations, as Nagel suggests; or else whether they should try to convert malicious into emulative envy, as Protasi suggests (each route may sometimes be appropriate). There is also a case to be made for the view that social reforms that eliminate injustice may reduce envy as well even if I am right that moral indignation and not envy is the appropriate response to injustice. So I am not rejecting the accounts I discussed. Rather, my aim

was to show that none of them taken singly nor all of them together suffice. My purpose is to add a tool to the toolbox (not ruling out future additions by others).

There is an important question to consider at this point. Do I intend to claim that people have an obligation to try to forestall another's envy? I do not wish to put the point quite so strongly. There is probably a duty to avoid intentionally provoking envy in others. That's malice. There may also be a duty to avoid certain types of behavior that often lead to envy, such as bragging.²³ But the normative reasons may not underwrite a duty in other cases. Sometimes, taking steps to ensure others do not envy one would be the virtuous thing to do without being morally required. The important point is this: negative emotions such as envy may seem recalcitrant, but are much less so if we come to view them as a common problem, to be dealt with by means of joint effort. This is not to suggest that we can eliminate envy entirely and build an envy-free utopia, but we can reduce it greatly.

Finally, the following objection may be on the minds of those who are not persuaded: "What if the person envied truly enjoys being envied? What's the argument that such a person should forego the satisfaction in question?" Sure, I've given moral reasons. But we know those often fail to motivate. Are there any self-interested reasons to proceed as I suggest, or are there only moral reasons?

I believe there are self-interested reasons as well. One harkens back to something I mentioned earlier—in treating others gently and with care, we establish grounds for ourselves to be treated in a like manner. This point may not convince everyone, however. Perhaps we think that others we may potentially envy cannot be trusted to attempt not to provoke our envy, and that the best we can do is mitigate the situation for ourselves by provoking someone else's envy and thence deriving pleasure that counterbalances the pain caused by our own envy.²⁴

I confess that I have nothing but an intuitive feeling to argue for here, but it seems to me that the kind of satisfaction one can derive from another's envy is not the best kind. I doubt we really want to take the risk of having those who envy us say all manner of cruel things behind our backs, when we are not there to defend ourselves. More generally, some people have managed to be successful without being resented and to be fortunate yet still loved. I would conjecture that those are happier—more flourishing—people compared to those who rely on others' envy to float their boats.

In conclusion, the main point I wanted to make here is that our emotions are not simply our own business. Not in the sense that we are morally responsible for what we feel and so others somehow have a say in that. Nagel is probably right that for the most part they do not. But we are at least partly responsible for what others feel.

And it is not as though they always have a "say" in what we do to make them feel the way they feel either. What I've argued is that we may need to respond to and attempt to forestall their pain even if the pain is such as they should, according to all public conventions, keep to themselves and try to deal with, as best as they can, in private.

Notes

1. Protasi calls the type of envy in question "emulative." *Read* also Roberts 1991 and Neu 1980 here. As Protasi notes, however, Justin D'Arms (2016) has argued that there is no such thing as non-malicious envy. *Read* also D'Arms and Kerr 2008.
2. Chaucer [1387-1400] 2011, 66.
3. 11,400,000 hits, to be more precise. For perspective, "Hiroshima bombing" has 13,100,000, while "Richard Nixon" has 43,700,000 hits.
4. I thank an anonymous referee for pressing me to clarify this point.
5. Roberts (1991) ascribes this view to Scheman (1979). Nic Bommarito (2017) argues forcefully that inner states are subject to moral appraisal independently of action tendencies.
6. Although there is, on the other hand, the phenomenon known as "moral licensing"—roughly, the tendency to take (mostly unconsciously) one's present moral actions as a license to act immorally in the future. *Read*, for instance, Sadcheva, Iliev, and Medin 2009; Merritt, Effron, and Monin 2010.
7. An anonymous referee suggests that in this case, the envier may behave magnanimously by praising the envied to third parties. I agree that this will often be possible. However, there are cases in which it won't be practically feasible. For instance, suppose X envies his high school friend Y who achieved great success. X now lives in NYC, far from his hometown in rural Alabama, and none of his friends know or care to hear about Y so there is simply no one X can praise Y to.
8. Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson (2000, 82) ascribe the view that envy is irrational to John Rawls but claim that Rawls' argument is "belied by human nature and the prevalence of positional goods."
9. There are interesting questions related to the psychology of envy, and the conditions that give rise to it. People may envy one colleague but not another, seemingly similarly positioned and perhaps, more successful than the first. Envy may thus seem to resemble falling in love: a person may fall in love with X rather than Y despite the fact she judges X to be more lovable. But this is a side point. For the question here is simply whether envy is irrational in the cases in which it does arise. It isn't, and the fact that it may not arise in relevantly similar circumstances does not show it to be so.
10. Farrell 1980 considers a parallel argument with regard to jealousy—that is, that

jealousy involves some kind of error—and he rejects it for reasons similar to mine here. It could be argued, Farrell says, that the jealous espouse a "commodity theory" of affection according to which the more affection my partner gives to another, the less there is for me. But this theory is false, and the jealousy it grounds rests on a mistake. Farrell says in response that jealousy need not involve an error of this sort, "[T]he jealous party's desire for exclusivity might be based not on the (presumably false) belief that love and affection, say, are (in the relevant respect) like scarce commodities, but on the (perhaps quite plausible) assumption that he or she will compare quite unfavorably with any competitor and hence on the consequent desire not to have any competitors with whom to be compared" (1980, 551).

11. This phenomenon in its general form is referred to by economists as a "contrast effect." Listen to Hartzmark and Shue 2018, and the authors' discussion of their research on the Freakonomics podcast (Dubner 2016).

12. Ronald de Sousa 2018 makes a similar case with regard to jealousy, arguing that the pain a person may experience when witnessing the pleasure his or her beloved takes in the company of another can be transformed into the positive, pleasurable state of compersion.

13. Protasi here appeals to Van de Van, Zeelenberg, and Pieters 2009.

14. La Caze, Bankovsky, and Frye all make proposals along these lines.

15. The attempt to see envy as a source of moral knowledge can be classified as a special case of the general attempt, associated especially with Antonio Damasio but also with philosophers such as Ronald de Sousa and Robert Solomon, to see emotions as important sources of knowledge that have a crucial role to play in practical reasoning. Read Damasio 2005, de Sousa 1987, and Solomon 1977. I have a lot of sympathy with the general program. However, I also share a concern expressed recently by Christine Tappolet: some emotions do not readily lend themselves to the sort of rehabilitation Damasio advocates. Read Tappolet 2018.

16. A view along these lines is defended by one of La Caze's critics, Stan van Hooft (2002). Another critic, Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, argues relatedly that envy is not a moral emotion because "its core evaluative concern – namely, the negative evaluation of our undeserved inferiority – is not moral. This concern does not express a moral concern regarding how people should be treated, but merely a personal concern regarding what our fortune should be" (2002, 151).

17. An anonymous referee suggests, plausibly, that many of the goods people desire

that are, at first glance, not due to social injustice, e.g., good looks, have a social injustice component because what looks are rewarded or considered good may depend on an unjust social hierarchy. I think that's right, but there are many desired goods that are not due to injustice. If two researchers are working on a problem, and one of them solves it first, getting all sorts of accolades, the other may be envious. Injustice may have nothing to do with who solved the problem first (in fact, the researcher who solves the problem first may well be the one coming from a less privileged background).

18. Jerome Neu, similarly, expresses skepticism with regard to the prospect of eliminating jealousy by means of social reforms. He writes, "It was one of the hopes of the sixties (as of many other periods) that by restructuring social relations, it might be possible to eliminate jealousy and other painful, 'bourgeois,' passions. This was the hope that inspired many in the commune movement. It has been largely, I think, a failed hope" (1980, 427). I am sympathetic to this point though, of course, social reforms are always needed to address cases of injustice. What effect those reforms may or may not have on envy is a separate issue altogether. There would be strong moral reasons to deal with injustice even if it that had no measurable impact on envy. On the flip side, a world is imaginable in which all those who benefit from injustice in a society cultivate the disposition to be mindful and to try not to provoke envy in others in much the way I suggest, so there is grave injustice but not much envy. This injustice will remain a moral problem that we ought to deal with.

19. Anthony Kenny (1963) rejects the view that emotions can be seen as Cartesian private events. Daniel Farrell (1980, 541) cites Kenny's discussion approvingly. I mention this issue only in passing as discussing it would take me too far afield.

20. Protasi (2017) makes a somewhat different proposal: that we should aim for an ideal of wise love that makes room for envy but seeks to replace malicious with emulative envy. Though I think there is something deeply humanist about Protasi's view—we should, indeed, adopt ideals that accommodate human psychological propensities—I think that an envy-free love is better and a worthy ideal. However, which of us is right does not matter for present purposes since the two of us agree on the main point I make here, namely, that there are normative constraints on our private realms. Protasi suggests that we ought to convert envy for a beloved into a good kind of envy while I think that ideally, we ought to eliminate it, but we both think that something ought to be done, something more than just ensuring that the envy not manifest itself in action.

21. Several authors have emphasized the importance of agential unity, most prominently, perhaps, Frankfurt and Korsgaard. Read Frankfurt 1988 and Korsgaard 1989, 2009.

22. Indeed, someone who intentionally tries to provoke the envy of a very good person may end up being the one who envies when she discovers that the other's goodness serves as a protective shield, immunizing her against envy.

23. There is empirical evidence for a connection between boasting and malicious envy. Read Smith and Kim 2007. I thank an anonymous referee for JPE for drawing my attention to this. The referee suggests also that the claim one mustn't be boastful can be defended on independent grounds that have nothing to do with envy. What I would say in response is that a defense of a "no boasting" principle that misses the possible connection to envy would miss something of crucial importance. In all likelihood, boasting would not be seen as a character flaw at all without a propensity to compare ourselves to others, and to envy when the comparison is unfavorable to us.

24. In a *This American Life* episode called "Suckers," aired September 27, 2002, a young couple are persuaded to pay a lot more for a house than the house is worth. They then steal some bolts from a big supply chain. Host Ira Glass says about the petty theft, "The opportunity presented itself. They took advantage. And, my friend, it felt good to steal. It felt good to make someone else the sucker. They think they are going to do it again. That is what they have learned from the previous owners of their house." Transcript available at: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/222/transcript>. Despite the psychological benefits of this sort of vicarious revenge, however, I think we should agree that this type of behavior—passing on the victimization buck, so to speak—is both a bad idea and morally bad.

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Is Contempt Redeemable?

Ronald de Sousa

Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto, Canada

Abstract: In this essay, I will focus on the two main objections that have been adduced against the moral acceptability of contempt: the fact that it embraces a whole person and not merely some deed or aspect of a person's character, and the way that when addressed to a person in this way, it amounts to a denial of the very personhood of its target.

Keywords: contempt, moral emotions, reactive attitudes, intentional objects, love

Contempt has had a bad name in philosophy. However objectionable a person's character or behavior, philosophers have tended to follow Kant in proscribing contempt as "incompatible with a fundamental duty of respect" (Hill 2000, 88). Recently, however, there have been attempts at rehabilitation of nasty emotions in general: there have been pleas for shame (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011), jealousy (Kristjánsson 2002), and other "shadowy emotions" (Tappolet, Teroni, and Ziv 2018).

Contempt is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "the holding or treating as of little account, or as vile and worthless; the mental attitude in which a thing is so considered." It is widely regarded as a nasty emotion that cannot be morally justified. Two objections, traceable to Kant, have been adduced against it. The first is that it embraces a whole person globally and not merely some deed or local aspect of a person's character. The second is that contempt amounts to a denial of the very personhood of its target. The two are closely related: targeting "the sin, not the sinner" seems compatible with retaining a basic respect for the latter. But an

attitude that regards a person as globally worthless suggests that there is nothing left to be the object of respect.

Nevertheless, the moral worth of contempt has recently found at least three champions. Michelle Mason (2003) has argued not only that contempt is sometimes morally justified, but that it is in itself a moral emotion. Kate Abramson (2010) has argued against the broad consensus that views contempt as unacceptably "globalizing"; and Macalester Bell (2013) has mounted an ingenious defense of contempt as morally warranted in certain specific circumstances.

A fair consideration of these defenses of contempt will require us to say more about its nature, as well as about the sort of respect of persons it is charged with violating. I will therefore begin with a distinction between a common, weaker sense and a stronger construal of the word "contempt." I will later link those two construals of contempt to corresponding species of respect. What will emerge is that some of the defenses of contempt rely on construing it in its weaker sense, linked to a mode of respect that admits of degrees. Only one of its three champions, at best, succeeds in justifying certain cases of what I shall call "strong contempt."

COMMON AND STRONG CONTEMPT

In common usage, "contempt" designates an attitude of superiority, grounded in a conviction that the target of contempt lacks some particularly important human characteristic. Often, though not always, that lack is a moral one: contempt targets someone who is incapable of basic decency or of any concern for others, for example. But for some, a person's most important virtues may not be moral: some clever people, those who profess to "not suffer fools gladly," might be said to hold people of low intelligence in contempt.

Contempt differs from related negative emotions such as hatred, resentment, or anger in that it is both globalizing and dismissive. The two are closely related. They gather up the moral objections that have been adduced against contempt. To say that contempt is "globalizing" is to say that it somehow englobes the whole person, regarding her as inherently inferior, not in regard to some specific fault but in herself. This calls for elucidation. But whatever it means exactly, the charge of globalizing, in viewing its target not merely as inferior in some respect but in herself, motivates the characteristic Kantian objection that contempt regards its target as worthless: not merely a flawed person, but a non-person: "Kant famously complains that to hold another in contempt is to deny her 'all moral worth' If someone has no moral worth, Kant continues, he 'could never be improved either,' which is objectionable

on the grounds that persons as such can 'never lose all predisposition to the good'" (Abramson 2010, 191).

More specifically, contempt differs importantly from hatred: for hatred focuses intensely on the person targeted and her faults, admitting or perhaps even requiring a kind of equality between enemies. Thus Nietzsche: "The noble person will respect his enemy, and respect is already a bridge to love . . . he requires his enemy for himself, as his mark of distinction, nor could he tolerate any other enemy than one in whom he finds nothing to despise and much to esteem" (Nietzsche 1967). Contempt, on the contrary, aims at withholding attention from its target altogether, and the main complaint against it is that it amounts to denying them the very dignity of enmity.

In practice, a great many defects can elicit localized contempt, understood as targeting not the person as a whole but some specific failing. Here, for example, is a list that Abramson has culled from Hume: "malice, a total lack of social virtues, dishonesty, iniquity, miserly avarice, infidelity and/or disloyalty, meanness or 'abjectness,' cowardice with respect to the defense of one's own country, impudence, a disposition to abandon oneself entirely to 'dissolute pleasures and womanish superstition' once in the safety of high office, and being at once 'indolent, profuse and addicted to low pleasures'" (Abramson 2010, 209).

In addition, contempt can be mixed so thoroughly with a great many other emotions as to make them hard to tell apart:

Most of us will have no trouble imagining contempt colluding with pity as well as scorn and derision; amusement as well as smugness, haughtiness, disgust, revulsion, and horror; love (as with cats and even children) as well as hatred, indifference, disdain, snubbing, ignoring, sneering, and an array of sentiments which motivate various forms of laughter and smiles: the sardonic, the sarcastic, and the indulgent (again as with pets and children). (Miller 1995, 481)

I will make no attempt to explore the rich diversity of nuance that can attend contemptuous superiority. Instead, I want to distinguish such an attitude, directed at some specific characteristic, from that which is sometimes, curiously, expressed by saying that someone is "beneath contempt." "Regarding another with contempt," Michelle Mason has written, "does not thereby objectify another person; rather, it is regarding him as beneath contempt that signals we have exiled him from moral community with us" (Mason 2003, 263). What I call strong contempt, then, might be equivalent to regarding someone as beneath contempt in what I shall call the common sense of the word. It is strong contempt that effectively relegates a person to

the status of a nonperson. The superiority implied in such a verdict is a simple binary one: although the target was *prima facie* a person merely by virtue of belonging to the species *Homo sapiens*, or in virtue of a past connection, she is regarded as no longer worthy of eliciting the kind of response that we think of as appropriate to a person capable of moral agency. It is principally to that strong contempt that moral objections have been particularly directed. I propose to address some of the considerations adduced in defense of contempt—of one kind or another—by the three champions I have mentioned. While those defenses have some force for common contempt, I shall argue that, with one exception, they are not adequate to justify strong contempt.

INTENTIONAL OBJECTS

But first, the "globalizing" objection needs to be clarified. As I understand it, it targets an interpretation of contempt as bearing on the individual as a whole rather than a specific action or characteristic of that individual. That might be taken to commit the common mistake of confounding different categories of intentional objects.

The logical structure of most standard emotions involves different categories of intentional objects. Confusing these different sorts of objects has been at the root of at least one significant mistake in the history of philosophy. It underlies the preposterous conception of love put forward by Socrates in Plato's *Symposium*, in which Plato concludes that once we realize that the beloved boy is loved for his beauty, we are entitled to discard him in favor of that most unlikely rival, his own beauty, and ultimately Beauty itself.

Common sense and a modest application of grammatical analysis will establish that if we keep certain distinctions in mind, that strange view cannot get off the ground. The boy is the target of my love, and his beauty, for which (we may grant) he is loved, is the focus of the lover's attention and perhaps the causally effective property that makes him lovable. If my love is to be fitting, moreover, then the boy must indeed possess the characteristic identified as the formal object that defines that emotion. But there is no need to switch my affection from the boy to Beauty itself.¹ In support of this commonsense view, consider what we would say if someone claimed they used to think they liked ice-cream, but now realized they did not; instead what they liked was the taste of ice-cream. Surely, we find that just silly. The ice-cream is not in competition with its own taste. Neither is the boy competing for love with his own beauty. Similarly, one might protest, contempt, like love, targets a person, but it does so because my attention has focused on the defects that make her inferior.

Should we then conclude that when contempt is accused of being "globalizing," this is the result of a similar confusion? No. In both the cases of love and contempt, more is at stake than a mere confusion of target and focus.

THE CONTINUUM OF LOVE AND CONTEMPT

The case of love affords an apposite analogy, for two reasons. First, if we consider the range of attitudes that a person can inspire, we might find it plausible to say that love and contempt are polar opposites on a continuum that measures respect. Love focuses intensely on the autonomous individual core of a unique individual, while contempt ignores it entirely. Mere respect is the minimal threshold condition for regarding a person as an autonomous agent.

How much autonomy does anyone ever actually have? David Velleman (1999) has argued that the proper object of love is the other's core autonomous self. While unconvincing as an account of love, this is suggestive in inviting us to regard love as a sort of mathematical limit of respect. But if autonomy admits of degrees, then so do love and respect, and if respect is a minimal condition of love, then contempt lies below that threshold.² In this perspective, then, contempt is the absolute antithesis of love. And although respect is not yet love, it amounts first, perhaps, to the acknowledgement of a certain kind of universal equality with a Kantian flavor. At the other end of this continuum of respect, contempt withholds respect altogether, and in that way fails to recognize the other as a human agent.

What this rather hazy metaphor of a continuum of respect is intended to convey is that we can, for both love and contempt, make good sense of the claim that one's attitude of respect admits of degrees, and is responsive to properties or features of a person, as distinct from the person herself. It is one thing to love a person, and another to love her generosity, her beauty, her rebelliousness, or her virtuous character. Similarly, it is one thing to say one feels contemptuous of a man's cowardice, or disloyalty, or inability to fulfill some important obligation; it is another to say, on the basis of those failings, that one has contempt for the man himself. Only in the latter case, might one be tempted to regard the target of one's contempt as no longer worthy of being regarded as a person. This would make "strong contempt" also into something like a limiting case, in the sense that it would lead to a kind of disregard which, while not exactly indifference, might no longer qualify as an emotion.³

This, in effect, is the burden of Abramson's (2010) argument against the view that contempt is necessarily globalizing. She writes:

The central worry at issue here thus remains: globalizing attitudes preclude appreciation of someone's redeeming qualities. Save for barely conceivable cases of monolithically shameful, contemptible, and/or disdainful characters, it seems reasonable to think that the global forms of these attitudes—those directed toward a person as a whole, or the whole of their character—are always morally inappropriate. And contempt, shame, and disdain only come in the global form, or so the thought goes. (194)

In fact, Abramson argues, common contempt does not necessarily target a person. It can target some trait, deed or aspect of a person instead, which is not the same as targeting the person because of that trait. In other words, while her allusion to "monolithically rotten characters" may seem to allow for some "barely conceivable" exceptions (198), her discussion focuses on common rather than global contempt.

But this leaves open the question of contempt's moral worth. Is it ever morally right to target the person rather than the person's act or trait? Christians preach, though rarely practice, the doctrine that one should "hate the sin, but love the sinner." If, as Abramson argues, it is possible for contempt, as for hatred, to target the sin, not the sinner, are we always obligated to limit ourselves in that way?

CONTEMPT AS A REACTIVE ATTITUDE

There is reason to think that contempt differs in this regard from other attitudes that can target either the sin or the sinner. The reason, adduced by both Mason and Abramson, is that contempt is a reactive attitude. In the sense elaborated by Peter Strawson (1962), reactive attitudes are responses that treat another human being as an autonomous rational agent who expects to be held responsible for what she does. A reactive attitude is independent of the opinion one might have as to the objective reality of free-will, or on the causes that explain the behavior for which an agent is being held responsible. Thus, "regarding someone as within the scope of the reactive attitudes is constitutive of regarding him as a moral agent" (Mason 2003, 245). In a spirit of existentialist aspiration, one might go further and say that in adopting a reactive stance we assume that ought implies can, but without being committed to its contrapositive: although ought implies can, cannot does not exonerate from ought. Respect for another as an autonomous agent entails granting them a right to be blamed (Houston 1992), even if they couldn't really help themselves.

One further differentia, according to Abramson, distinguishes contempt from other reactive attitudes such as anger or resentment: the latter are essentially second person attitudes, in the sense explored by Stephen Darwall (Darwall 2006):

When we are angry or resentful toward someone, we do not simply make a claim about her responsibility; rather . . . we hold her accountable. To do so . . . we adopt a second-person standpoint. The relevant contrast here is with aesthetic judgments of persons or spectator's judgments . . . To regard someone as "ugly" I need not think of myself as someone who does, or even could, interact with her. The standpoint from which properly moralized contempt is felt is not spectatorial in this way. Properly moralized contempt presents someone as "to be avoided" with respect to specific sphere(s) of interpersonal interactions. (Abramson 2010, 208)

If this is right, then there is indeed something special about contempt. Even if it can be local rather than globalizing, it affects one's second person connection to another person. Strong contempt, in particular, excludes the target person altogether from being held responsible as an autonomous human agent. Although it is directed at a person, contempt breaks from the second person point of view; it shifts into a spectatorial perspective in which the other is no longer seen as a possible interlocutor.

An objector might interject: does not common contempt admit of degrees? A person might be regarded as lower than one person but not as low as another. In an aristocratic or caste culture, the target of one person's contempt can usually find someone lower still whom they may comfortably hold in contempt. Corresponding to this common notion of contempt is a notion of appraisal respect which also admits of degrees.⁴ A person might earn appraisal respect by their talent or achievements, and having earned it, they might also forfeit it; but although I might no longer respect an artist who has, as we say, "sold out" for money or fame, that does not necessarily amount to (or warrant) a radical dismissal of that person from the basic form of recognition respect. But respect can admit of degrees even when it isn't earned. That is the point of rank or "degree / Whereto we see in all things nature tends," says Iago—who should know. As William Miller characterizes it, aristocratic contempt looks like the contempt of complacency, never doubting their superiority of rank. It is the contempt of the master for the man, the lord for the villein, the lady for the maid. Those who are lower simply do not merit strong affect. They are noticed only sufficiently to notice that they are not notice worthy (Miller 1995, 482).

In contrast to common contempt, strong contempt does not admit of degrees. It is a radical rejection of the target from the respect normally due to a fellow human

being. To hold someone in contempt in this sense is to deem them to have forfeited their claim to be treated as responsible autonomous agents. It is to withhold from them basic recognition respect, as opposed to appraisal respect, either of the earned kind or the sort that comes with social rank.

Although strong contempt is absolute, the difference between it and common contempt, which correspond roughly to the loss of these two forms of respect, may look like a difference of degree. While the master really does tend to lose sight of the humanity of the serf, he may, like Tolstoy, be subject to occasional fits of Christian fellow-feeling. Strong contempt is like a mathematical limit that can be indefinitely approached without ever being reached. But when it is achieved, one can think of it as effecting a radical break between two qualitatively different states. I will shortly say more about the question of how absolute, on-or-off, strong contempt might relate to grounds that can be more or less strong. First, however, I turn to the views of Michelle Mason, our second champion of contempt.

CONTEMPT AS A "MORAL EMOTION"

Drawing again on Strawson's criteria for reactive resentment, Mason lists four necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for "properly focused" contempt:

1. It is directed at a person as a response to his violation of an interpersonal ideal of the person,
2. which violation stems from a morally evaluable character trait,
3. the expression of which character trait is one for which the agent is appropriately held responsible, for example,
 - a) the agent was not on the occasion of acting innocently ignorant of causing offense or injury, compelled, or forced,
 - b) the agent was not on the occasion of acting "not herself,"
 - c) the agent is not psychologically abnormal or morally undeveloped, and
4. there exists a legitimate expectation or demand that the agent approximate the interpersonal ideal. (Mason 2003, 250)

Like Abramson, Mason is careful to avoid the notorious "moralistic fallacy" against which D'Arms and Jacobson (2000) have warned: "although contempt may be fitting a person in virtue of evidence concerning his or her character, that is not sufficient to establish its moral propriety; there may be overriding moral reasons that make it morally objectionable in the circumstances" (Mason 2003, 237). She goes further, however, in characterizing contempt as a "moral emotion."

The term moral emotion invites confusion. First, it might be construed evaluatively, contrasting with immoral. Some have spoken of compassion as a "moral emotion," for example, meaning one that is morally good. Generosity would be a moral emotion in that sense; by contrast, most of us are inclined to think of some emotions, such as envy or spite, as being *prima facie* morally reprehensible. Contempt has sometimes been counted among the latter sort; but in the recent literature, as I noted above, some have been eager to rehabilitate such *prima facie* nasty emotions in general (Tappolet et al. 2018). If Mason intends the above phrase evaluatively, she is directly contradicting the view that contempt is inherently nasty. In the categorial sense, however, a morally evil emotion would also be a moral emotion—that is, one that it makes sense to evaluate from the moral point of view. In this sense, spite might also be a "moral emotion"; and the application of the term to contempt would amount simply to asserting that it can be assessed in moral terms. This is not true of just any emotion: fear, for example, may be irrational, as in fear of flying, but it wouldn't make sense to say it is immoral. Cutting across this source of ambiguity, it can also be unclear whether the qualifier "moral" pertains to the judgment implicit in the emotion, or whether it constitutes a judgment on the emotion itself. (Blame might be said to be "moral" in the first sense; compassion might claim to be a moral emotion in the latter sense.)

Mason seems to construe the term "moral attitude" in both these last senses. A moral emotion, she specifies, is "moral both in the sense that it is an attitude possessing moral content and in the sense that it can be, in what I dub its properly focused form, a morally justified attitude to take toward another" (Mason 2003, 235).

The list quoted above purports to give us criteria for making contempt fitting to its target. Two more requirements that must be satisfied if the attitude is to be morally justified are as follows:

5. The attitude is directed by an agent who does not possess a similar fault or, if he does, is committed to regarding himself in the relevant circumstances as likewise contemptible in virtue of it.
6. The attitude is responsive to evidence that would count in favor of forgiveness or some other relevant change in attitude. (Mason 2003, 253)

As for whether contempt is "globalizing," or whether it can selectively target some attribute of the target, that is not determined by Mason's list of conditions.

We can infer from condition 6, however, that strong contempt will never be morally justified. For strong contempt dismisses the other as a second-person interlocutor. It is therefore by definition not "responsive to evidence," including evidence of change.

Such responsiveness might still, however, be compatible with common contempt. As we have seen, common contempt admits of degrees; and one might think of strong contempt as just the maximal degree of common contempt. In fact, however, the two seem to be different in kind. To explain why, let me draw a parallel between the dismissal of another as an autonomous agent involved in strong contempt, and the dismissal of potential counter-evidence to a settled view.

THE EPISTEMIC PARALLEL

As we saw a moment ago, there is a qualitative break between the grounds for contempt, which admit of degrees, and strong contempt, which is either on or off. The sort of break I have in mind might be compared to a familiar problem in epistemology: the question of when we can legitimately ignore a view or theory. Just as it is always logically possible for some crackpot view to turn out to be true, it might be suggested, so it is always possible for someone who has demonstrated their "monolithically rotten" character to surprise us. When are we entitled to give up on someone, and shift from low appraisal respect to a withdrawal of recognitional respect?

Many of us regard some questions as definitively settled: the earth is not flat; astrology is not a science; humans are products of evolution; there are no gods or immaterial souls. Taking that stance exposes us, from those who disagree, to charges of closed-mindedness.⁵ Yet there comes a time when the balance of evidence is such, on some issue, that it would seem irrational—a waste of precious time—to continue assessing fresh evidence. Something like this constitutes Hume's argument against the reasonableness of believing in any particular miracle: however large the number of those who claimed to have witnessed that miracle might be, it is always inferior to the weight of evidence that supports the law of nature or generalization contradicted by the alleged miracle. Alternatively, if the weight of the evidence for the law is wanting, it may be that there was no genuine law there in the first place, and so its supposed violation is no miracle (Hume 1975, Sec. 10).

One can quibble about the criteria for such a refusal to consider new evidence: obviously they can be more or less reasonable. But, actually, the two states correspond to qualitatively different mental functions, both misleadingly called "belief." One, sometimes called Bayesian belief, subjective probability, or degree of confidence, relates to what you do when you make decisions in accord with your wants or desires (Jeffrey 1965). It can approach certainty only asymptotically. The other, which you might call acceptance or assent, is the one used when we assume that a proposition can be taken as a premise in an inference. It is unqualified by probability, even when it

is accepted on the basis of less than conclusive evidence (de Sousa 1971). Attempting to set a threshold sufficient to warrant certainty leads to the well-known "lottery paradox": for any level at which you might set the threshold for full-fledged assent, you can arrange a fair lottery selling at least that number of tickets (Harman 1967). You are then warranted in assenting to "this ticket will lose" for every ticket; and the conjunction of those assertions contradicts your knowledge that some ticket will win. For purposes of efficient reasoning, however, a combination of probability and explanatory power on the one hand with a certain level of risk on the other is treated as sufficient to assert or deny a proposition without qualification.

Despite the analogy between the dismissal of a proposition and the dismissal of a person's claim to recognitional respect, there are three important disanalogies between the two cases. First, a false belief implicates only me, except insofar as what I do on the basis of it may affect others. Second, even the most improbable remains logically possible. That much is true of both sorts of dismissals. Relegating a person to the status of non-person has historically been done in several ways, from ostracism to shunning, to capital punishment; in any given case, it might have been based on an error. Facts don't change, although our information about them may change when the error is discovered. That holds for information about a person as for anything else: new information might earn a revision of one's considered view. Thus far, the objection to strong contempt is analogous to one of the more powerful objections to capital punishment: when a person is relegated to the status of a non-person without the possibility of appeal, there is always the risk that we have made a mistake; and that mistake involves more than merely saddling oneself with a false belief.

In the case of the denial of personhood, however, there is an additional possibility that might warrant a change of heart. For the target of the contempt might also change, in such a way as to produce not new information but radically new facts. This is the third and most important difference: even if I am right about the character of the person for whom I have contempt, I should allow for a change not of evidence but of facts. A person might grow out of being contemptible: "under some circumstances contempt might be overcome by new evidence of attitudes in the target person that deserve forgiveness" (Mason 2003, 256). This third difference seems crucial, for no amount of information about a person at one time can conclusively preclude a change of character or disposition at a later time. Sinners have repented and become saints. (One might have liked them better as sinners than as saints. That is surely illustrated by the fact that between pre-conversion sinner Augustine and post-conversion Saint

Augustine, the latter is so much more repellent than the former. But that does not affect the point.)

These disanalogies suggest that strong contempt for a person cannot be justified as easily as dismissing a crackpot theory. Even if it is possible to have some degree of common contempt for some character or action of a person, the globalizing and dismissive features of strong contempt do, after all, turn out to be incompatible with the Kantian duty to treat human beings as having "dignity" or absolute worth. For strong contempt does undeniably amount to treating as worthless something (a person) that the Kantian regards as having absolute worth. Hence the question posed by Thomas E. Hill: "Even if we grant that everyone is initially owed some respect as a human being, is there any reason to deny that some extremely bad characters, by their immoral deeds, forfeit all respect, justifying our viewing them with utter contempt?" (Hill 2000, 88). He argues that the answer can be positive; but we need to acknowledge that it is hard to refute a more cynical answer.

The reason we are moved by the Kantian objection, the cynical answer might go, is that we fear the consequences of admitting that the notion of unconditional worth, of dignity as contrasted with price, is little more than the ghost of a religious myth. It is a metaphysical fantasy that preserves the traces of the mythical individual soul rather as water for believers in homeopathy preserves the memory of substances of which no molecule remains. Only a conventional superstition supports the myth that "all men are created equal." But we fear that unless human life and dignity are held sacred, we will witness a second death of God in which "everything is permitted." As Yuval Harari has written, "Without recourse to eternal souls and a Creator God, it becomes embarrassingly difficult for liberals to explain what is so special about individual Sapiens" (Harari 2014, 231). And it remains unacceptable, Harari writes on the same page, to deny that humans have a metaphysical absolute worth that transcends their biological nature, because such a denial, with its stance of biological realism, is associated with Nazi ideology.

Before concluding this section, let me note one last important lesson that might be garnered from the epistemic parallel. In practice, how thoroughly we inquire into a crackpot idea depends on its relevance to our lives. About some facts—gossip about celebrities, perhaps, or abstruse details of some historical event—whether or not we get it right may be so unimportant that it is not worth wasting time on further investigation. Even a modicum of evidence might be quite sufficient to decide that a view is not worth giving any more time to, whether one decides to believe it, reject it, or suspend belief. On the other hand, a significant ideology deserves more thorough

scrutiny. Similarly, the importance of our attitude to a person might depend on the nature of the relationship that precedes it. When one encounters someone in an entirely casual way, there is no engagement in the first place; one is therefore not in the presence of any large stakes when one decides simply to ignore them.

Suppose you are at a concert or movie, and there is, in a crowded theatre, just one free seat. Next to it, a man has placed a coat on the vacant seat, and claims that it is taken. If at the end of the evening no one has come to claim it, you might be inclined to think the guarding of it unconscionable. One might deem that a sufficient justification for contempt. Such behavior, in a small way, exhibits a vice of superiority. Who does he think he is? How can he be so churlish? Of course, it's possible that his partner was genuinely delayed—perhaps had a serious accident—in which case you are the churlish one for thinking so ill of him on the basis of so little. But it hardly matters: you weren't about to have an important relationship with this man in any case. On the other hand, if you think you have discovered, after ten years of partnership, that someone has done something despicable, you ought to delve a little deeper before you allow yourself, as Camille does in Godard's film *Contempt* (Mason 2003, 236), to dismiss your partner as simply contemptible.

BELL'S JIU-JITSU

How, then, if we are not simply convinced by the cynical answer, should we argue that there is still some sense in which every member of *Homo sapiens* is a person in the relevant sense? The basis of Hill's neo-Kantian argument is that, well, we might be wrong about the target's contemptible nature, and only God can tell: "Which error would be worse? From a moral point of view, I suggest, it is generally worse to risk denying respect where it is due than to risk granting respect where it is not due" (Hill 2000, 108). I have found some reason, in the course of comparing the denial of respect to the dismissal of a view or theory, to think such a precautionary principle is a wise one. Nevertheless, perhaps we can find in contempt's third champion support for the intuition that contempt is sometimes although rarely justified.

Macalester Bell (2013) defines the formal object of contempt—setting out when contempt is fitting—as follows:

1. The target of contempt has failed to meet some standard that is part of the subject's personal baseline;
2. The failure to meet the standard implicates the whole person;
3. In light of the failure, the target of contempt has been rendered "low";

4. The failing is a reason to withdraw from the target of contempt.
(Bell 2013, 59)

I will not add to the worries expressed above about what the idea of "implicating the whole person" might mean. Assuming we can understand that phrase, Bell's conditions define the formal object of contempt, specifying when it is fitting in its own terms. As expected, these conditions also allow for contempt to be fitting without being morally justified. Like Abramson and Mason, Bell sets further conditions that will turn fitting contempt into justified contempt. But her conditions are more restrictive. In a kind of jiu-jitsu-like move, she argues that it is all and only those who are guilty of vices of superiority that deserve to be regarded with contempt. In effect, contempt is warranted just when it is a response to unwarranted contempt.

Strong contempt, as I have defined it, involves a withholding of basic recognitional respect. It entails treating a person as a non-person. The paradox lurking in this formulation is apparent: while we don't respect inanimate objects, neither do we hold them in contempt. Only a person can deserve contempt; and strong contempt denies its target the essential nature of persons. One who views another as no better than an insect need not hold insects in contempt. So, in the very act of dismissing someone from the class of those humans worthy of basic respect, you have to acknowledge her *prima facie* right to that respect. Contempt is reserved not for things but for people who have allowed themselves to become mere things. In other words, you have to respect someone as a person in order to dismiss them as unworthy of being so respected.

The paradox evaporates, however, if my willingness to treat her as a person is met with a vacuum because she has already withdrawn from the sort of second person connection on the basis of which a community of persons treat one another with mutual respect. That is the community of those that recognize in one another an agent capable of reactive attitudes in the second-person mode. What better reason for contempt, then, than that its target has already withdrawn from participation in the moral community? Those who are guilty of the vices of superiority have done just that. Thus, Macalester Bell's proposal seems to promise a reasonable accommodation, neither condoning contempt as an attitude of superiority, nor relying on abstruse Kantian metaphysics, and allowing her to identify the one sort of situation in which, despite the Kantian duty of respect, one might be justified in withholding respect in the mode of strong contempt.

But might not some other sorts of behavior qualify, on a par with vices of superiority? When the other seems to behave like an automaton, for example: in

fanaticism, or in a profound inability to regard others with minimal respect. Those things, if anything, seem to call for contempt. The answer is that again, in such cases, the contemptuous response might be mitigated by doubt, if not by compassion. We can never exclude the possibility that the other's weakness, or their aggression, or their lack of empathy, might stem from some trauma or some deficiency for which they bear no responsibility. In that case, settling for contempt might itself seem contemptible. Thus Bell's jiu-jitsu move might be effective in placing vices of superiority in a category of their own, which alone might make contempt morally acceptable.

TWO ODDITIES: UPWARD CONTEMPT, AND SELF-CONTEMPT

In general, then, I have failed to talk myself out of a qualified endorsement of the Kantian verdict on contempt. It remains, in almost all cases, a nasty emotion that is not to be condoned. The cases that satisfy Bell's conditions appear to be the only plausible exceptions. But there are two cases that might undermine the very notion of strong contempt: upward contempt, and self- contempt.

Upward contempt is "the contempt that the low have for the high . . . the contempt teenagers have for adults, women for men, servants for masters, workers for bosses, Jews for Christians, Blacks for Whites, uneducated for the educated, and so forth" (Miller 1995, 477). Here is Miller's vivid description of his confrontation with a mason whose tattoos, vulgarity of style and speech, and macho stance inspire him to contempt:

At the same time I was having feelings of contempt for him I was also . . . indulging in no small amount of self-contempt, for my lack of physicality, for my certainty that I could not win a fight with him, for my doubts about the social value of what I do, and for my feeling contemptuous of him while at the same time realising (or supposing) he was utterly untroubled by his contempt for me . . . I actually had to remind myself that he is of equal value with me, of the same dignity, and so forth. Moreover, he merited respect for the skill he had, and for doing his job well, for which indeed I did respect him. . . . Although I feel a sense of my own failure to live up to some high toned principles about human equality, dignity, and value, I also experience a genuine pleasure in thinking myself superior to those I feel contempt for. (Miller 1995, 478-9)

Two things seem remarkable about this confession. First, the contempt that Miller experiences—and disapproves of—targets the mason on the basis of certain characteristics. The mason also has other characteristics that Miller respects. It is

therefore quite compatible with Abramson's observation that the target of contempt need not be identified with the focal properties that motivate it. Second, Miller's confession implies not only that he resembles the mason in taking social status rather too seriously, but also that he is uneasy about his assumption that certain ranges of qualities are more valuable than others. The mason's acknowledged superiority in strength and brawn, as well as his professional skill, are worth little in comparison with Miller's superiority in intellect, social status and sophistication, of which a crucial mark is his ability to feel embarrassed about his own contempt. There is nothing specifically moral, however, about that particular hierarchy of values. We therefore can understand it as a form of common contempt, making no pretense to being a moral attitude in Mason's sense. By contrast, the second order self-contempt to which Miller owns up does seem to count as a moral attitude, in that it is based on what he himself regards as morally unacceptable.

One reason to object morally to contempt is that it exaggerates merit no less than social position (Hill 2000, 89–90). Miller's mason feels contempt for the educated, well-off, well-dressed, upper-class law professor; he takes him, perhaps, to have had too easy a life, and to be too comfortable with privileges that he hasn't done much to merit. Miller's reciprocating contempt is grounded in class superiority, which is by definition unearned. Far from being ashamed of their unearned privileges, however, aristocrats in hierarchic traditions despised those whose money was earned in the professions, or even worse, in commerce. In this perspective, by Bell's criterion, Miller may deserve contempt for his vice of superiority; the mason does not.

What complicates this is that Miller experiences self-contempt, which in the light of my characterization is a puzzling phenomenon. Michelle Mason remarks that its very "possibility suggests that one who directs contempt at another does not thereby necessarily view himself as superior" (Mason 2003 250). The reason, presumably, is that one cannot be superior to oneself. But this seems unconvincing, even for the ordinary form of contempt. For in many situations we have second order desires, emotions, or evaluations. The second-order I looks down on the first-order desire or emotion as inferior by the standards of the second-order self.

This does not seem excessively paradoxical, though we are not quite sure how to cash out the metaphor in terms of either phenomenology or neuroscience. As for how Mason's remark would apply to strong contempt, that would seem even more problematic. For to deny oneself the status of an autonomous human being seems uncomfortably close to what might be a syndrome known to psychiatry: analogous, perhaps, to Cotard's delusion, the peculiar condition in which people assert that

they are dead (Soniak 2014). So there remains something paradoxical about "self-contempt," if the word is used in my strong sense. For just as hypocrisy, as La Rochefoucauld remarked, is the tribute that vice pays to virtue, so does the moral force of Miller's self-contempt bear witness to the force in him of the standards he blames himself for having violated. Aristotle thought the depraved or *akolastos*, who lacked a desire for the right ends, worse than the akratic, who acted despite such a desire. If either is worthy of contempt, it would be the *akolastos* (Aristotle 1984, vii-4). Miller's attitude is closer to the akratic's.

CONCLUSION

Most of my discussion has zeroed in on strong contempt, which I have argued is not the kind that either Mason or Abramson, unlike Bell, actually defends. But it is not clear how often people actually indulge in strong contempt. The common kind, by contrast, is all around us. It plays a significant role in social life and its regulation. We saw that there is a threshold of probability (and abductive evidence, in the form of inferences to the best explanation) that we deem sufficient in practice for asserting or rejecting a given proposition absolutely for purposes of argument and inference. Similarly, we doubtless apply certain tests, whether consciously or not, before deciding to ignore someone's claim to be human. We do so, for example, when they are completely unwilling or unable to take another person's claim to humanity seriously. This is what I have referred to as Bell's jiu-jitsu move: only for unwarranted contempt is contempt warranted. In other sorts of cases, I have acknowledged that strictly speaking, we are never morally entitled to snap to strong unconditional contempt—or at least, there is no really satisfactory basis for such a verdict. Insofar as strong contempt is an intrinsically moral emotion it is never fitting unless it is also morally right. By contraposition, since it is never morally right, neither is it ever truly apt.

The argument for this conclusion applies strictly only to strong contempt. I have tried to show that both Mason's and Abramson's treatments are aimed at common contempt rather than strong contempt. The former is, in fact, what is usually intended in most contexts. In that weaker sense, it is logically possible for contempt to be warranted, at least as far as the two Kantian objections considered are concerned. The reason is simply that those objections have force only against strong contempt, which neither Mason nor Abramson defends. But just as the conditions under which assenting to a proposition unconditionally vary with the importance of what is at stake in the argument, so the degree of relationship and the importance of what is at stake set up a sort of sliding scale. The more a person matters to us in the first place,

Notes

1. For a taxonomy of "objects of emotion," read de Sousa 1987.
2. That would make sense, perhaps, of the puzzling injunction to love one's neighbor as oneself, which, as Adam Phillips (2015) recently recalled, Jacques Lacan once suggested was a joke, by which Jesus meant to allude to the fact that people actually hate themselves.
3. Thanks to an anonymous referee for this point.
4. The distinction between appraisal respect and recognition respect is due to Stephen Darwall (1977). Only the first admits of degrees, and is related to the actual qualities of its target. Only the second can be held to be morally required in relation to any human agent.
5. For a comedic take on "You're so sure of your position/But you're just closed-minded," watch Tim Minchin's spoken poem, "Storm" (Minchin 2009).

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Forgiveness and the Multiple Functions of Anger

Antony G. Aumann

Department of Philosophy, Northern Michigan University, United States

Zac Cogley

Department of Philosophy, Northern Michigan University, United States &
Balto Software, St. Louis, Missouri, United States

Abstract: This paper defends an account of forgiveness that is sensitive to recent work on anger. Like others, we claim anger involves an appraisal, namely that someone has done something wrong. But, we add, anger has two further functions. First, anger communicates to the wrongdoer that her act has been appraised as wrong and demands she feel guilty. This function enables us to explain why apologies make it reasonable to forgo anger and forgive. Second, anger sanctions the wrongdoer for what she has done. This function allows us to explore the moral status of forgiveness, including why forgiveness is typically elective.

Keywords: anger, communication, forgiveness, moral theory, sanction

Forgiveness is a diverse phenomenon. Sometimes it has to do with forgetting or wiping away a transgression (Allais 2008; Rye et al. 2001). Other times it is a matter of forbearing punishment or cancelling a moral debt (Twambley 1976; Warmke 2013, 2016a). And still other times it is connected to seeking reconciliation (Card 2004; Pettigrove 2012, 12–17; Quinn 2004, 222; Roberts 1995, 299). Finally, as a number of scholars have noted, forgiving a person is sometimes about overcoming, letting go of, or forswearing our anger with her for what she has done.¹

We will focus our attention on this last account. In particular, although we will vary our language for stylistic reasons, we will construe forgiveness as the act of

Corresponding Author: Antony G. Aumann, Department of Philosophy, Northern Michigan University, 239 Gries Hall, 1401 Presque Isle Ave., Marquette, MI 49855, United States; email: aaumann@nmu.edu.

forswearing anger. On our view, forswearing anger is the commitment to leave behind one's angry feelings as much as possible and to refrain from expressing or acting on them to the degree that they remain or if they recur. This commitment may take the form of an outward speech act (read Pettigrove 2004; Warmke 2016b). But it can also remain a purely internal decision—something that happens in our hearts (M. M. Adams 1991, 294)—as is often the case with forgiving the dead. Importantly, we do not regard this account as a comprehensive definition; we do not take it to cover all aspects of every case we might intuitively categorize as forgiveness. Indeed, following a number of scholars (Neblett 1974, 273; Smith 2013, 134; Warmke and McKenna 2013, 189–201), we are skeptical that an all-encompassing definition could ever be provided. Still, the idea of forswearing anger captures a central part of a large number of cases of forgiveness and thus merits philosophical scrutiny.

Insofar as forgiveness is a matter of forswearing anger, understanding forgiveness requires a clear view of anger.² Now there are several ways to think about anger. On a folk level, anger is often seen as an expansive phenomenon. It is taken to pick out a general kind of emotional upset we feel in response to anything that causes something to happen that we dislike. As such, it can be directed towards not only people but also objects (such as stalled cars) and situations (such as bad weather). We wish to set aside this broad use of the word. For we care about the kind of anger that is relevant to the act of forgiveness, and we do not typically conceive of ourselves as forgiving our cars for not starting or the rain for ruining our picnic (Averill 1982, 166; Hughes 1993). Thus, when we speak of anger, we will have its narrower, moral sense in mind.

Our starting point here is P. F. Strawson's (1962) claim that moral anger is a reactive attitude. Reactive attitudes are emotional responses to interpersonal situations. These emotional responses are constituted in part by a characteristic appraisal of the situation.³ There are disagreements about how exactly to interpret the appraisal at stake in the case of moral anger.⁴ But in what follows we will embrace the view defended by Zac Cogley (2013a, 2013b). According to his view, the appraisal at the heart of moral anger is of some person (the wrongdoer) as doing wrong out of ill will toward or insufficient moral concern for another person (the victim).

Some accounts of forgiveness, such as those forwarded by Lucy Allais (2008) and Pamela Hieronymi (2001), focus primarily on this appraisal function of moral anger. We think that this approach represents one useful paradigm for thinking about forgiveness, and we do not wish to reject it or even level serious objections against it. Instead, we wish to propose an alternative paradigm that also has significant

explanatory power. What will set our approach apart is that we will look beyond the appraisal function of moral anger. We will take into account the fact that moral anger also has two other important functions. First, it has a communicative function: it often conveys to the wrongdoer that his action was morally wrong (Keltner and Haidt 1999; Macnamara 2013a; Parkinson 1996; Van Kleef 2009). Second, moral anger has a sanctioning function: it often sanctions or punishes the wrongdoer for what he did (Cogley 2013b; Nussbaum 2016, 14–56). To be clear, by highlighting these three functions—appraising, communicating, and sanctioning—we are not presenting an account of the essence of moral anger. It is not our view that all and only cases of moral anger possess these three features. Rather, what we maintain is that appraising, communicating, and sanctioning are central characteristics of many cases of moral anger. And we believe that taking all three functions into account can help explain the inner workings of many cases of forgiveness.

In sum, our goal in this paper is to develop the idea that anger often has more than just an appraisal function and to use this idea to shed light on one important kind of forgiveness. In so doing, we will contribute to the literature on emotion by revealing some of the explanatory payoffs to be gained in the moral realm when we look beyond the appraisal function of anger. In addition, we will contribute to the literature on forgiveness by solving some notorious puzzles concerning forgiveness that can be hard to handle if we restrict ourselves to talking about the appraisal function of moral anger.

To accomplish these goals, we will begin by describing two classic philosophical challenges facing all accounts of forgiveness—one having to do with distinguishing forgiveness from related phenomena and the other having to do with the rationality of forgiveness. We will then explain how appealing to the communicative function of anger provides a satisfying response to these challenges. We will also lay out the details of the sanctioning function of anger. Finally, we will use our account of anger's sanctioning function to address a well-known puzzle about the moral status of forgiveness, namely the fact that it is typically elective but can sometimes be either morally required or morally forbidden.⁵

TWO PHILOSOPHICAL CHALLENGES FACING ACCOUNTS OF FORGIVENESS

Accounts of forgiveness face two well-known challenges. The first challenge, raised by Jeffrie Murphy (1990a, 20; 2004, 13–14) and developed by others (Allais 2008, 34–36; Griswold 2007, 47; Hampton 1990, 84n; Hieronymi 2001, 529–30; Hughes and

Warmke 2017; Pettigrove 2007), has to do with distinguishing forgiveness from other things that resemble it and are sometimes confused with it. The source of the trouble here is that there are different kinds of reasons why we forswear our anger with people, and some of these reasons are constitutive of either excusing or justifying a person's action rather than forgiving it.

Examples illustrate the point. First, suppose I think my friend wrongs me during a night out together at a local bar by drinking all my beer. As a result, I get angry and think, "What she did was wrong!" After a moment of reflection, however, I change my mind. What she did was not wrong after all. For it was not my beer she drank. She was drinking her own beer—I had just gotten confused. In response to recognizing these facts, I forswear my anger.

Or, take a different version of the same example. Suppose my friend actually does drink all my beer. I am not confused or mistaken; the beer really was mine. So, I once again become angry with her and think, "What she did was wrong!" Yet, upon consideration, I decide my friend was not responsible for her misdeed because she did not know it was my beer she was drinking. It looked like hers, and the glasses had been switched around on the table. The whole thing was just an accident or a mistake, and so I disavow my anger.⁶

What is important about these cases is that neither one of them describes an instance of forgiveness. Renouncing my anger with my friend because I have decided she did nothing morally wrong, as in the first example, is to see her action as justified. Forswearing my anger with her because I have determined she was not morally responsible for her misdeed, as in the second example, is to excuse her. Yet, as Murphy (2004, 13) points out, justifying and excusing are not forgiving; they are ways of recognizing that "there is nothing here to forgive." Put differently, justifying and excusing are ways of discovering that the situation did not warrant anger in the first place. In both cases, it is easy to understand why a reasonable person would decide to leave behind their anger: anger's appraisal was not accurate.⁷

Forgiveness is different. It requires something more than simply forswearing anger. It requires forswearing anger while continuing to think that the person's action was wrongly and culpably done. In other words, it requires forswearing anger while continuing to hold on to the appraisal at the heart of anger. As Jean Hampton (1990, 84n) puts it, "forgiveness, like a pardon, presupposes guilt."

Yet, this lesson leads to a second challenge, one most famously raised by Aurel Kolnai (1974, 95–99): Why would it ever make sense to do that? Why would it ever be reasonable to commit to abandoning our anger when we still think that the person

morally wronged us and is without an excuse? What reasons could we have for forswearing our anger if the appraisal at the heart of our anger is accurate—that is, it reflects the facts? If the original offense still subsists, Kolnai (1974, 98) says, by renouncing our anger, are we not just acquiescing to it or condoning it?

There are at least two ways to address Kolnai's challenge. One way is to focus on the appraisal at the heart of anger. The strategy here involves claiming that anger's appraisal is more complicated than meets the eye. Being angry with someone involves more than just viewing his action as wrongly and culpably done. It includes some additional thought or judgment as well. For instance, as Hieronymi (2001, 546) develops the view, anger also may involve interpreting the person's wrongful action as a threat—that is, as "say[ing], in effect, that you can be treated in this way, and that such treatment is acceptable." Or, on Allais's version of the view, anger also may involve regarding the person as bad or rotten because of his misdeed. In her own words, it may involve "seeing her differently, as 'lowered,' as a result of her wrongdoing" or "in a more negative way, corresponding to her specific wrongdoing"(Allais 2008, 56, 59; read also Hampton 1990, 83–85; Holmgren 2012, 100).

On this first way of addressing Kolnai's challenge, forgiveness makes sense when you continue to think that the person's action was morally wrong but you change your mind about one of these additional thoughts. For Hieronymi (2001, 545–52), this means you disavow your anger because you determine that the person's action, although wrong, is no longer a threat. For Allais (2013, 56–59), it means you reject your anger because you decide the person's moral character is not diminished by the wrong he has done. To summarize, forgiveness is rational on this first way of addressing Kolnai's challenge insofar as you judge that the appraisal that stands at the heart of your anger is no longer fully accurate. The assessment of the wrongdoer as guilty remains, but the additional judgment(s) justifying your anger have fallen away.

There is something to this first line of response to Kolnai's challenge, and we will return to it later. Right now, however, we wish to point out that there is a second way to handle the challenge. Instead of focusing on the appraisal at the heart of anger, it is possible to focus on the fact that anger is not just an appraisal. It has additional functions besides construing another person's behavior in a specific way. As we noted at the beginning of the paper, it also involves communicating to the person that what he did was wrong and sanctioning or punishing him for what he has done.

On this second way of addressing Kolnai's challenge, forgiveness makes sense or is rational when you continue to think that the person's action was wrong, but

you determine that one of these additional functions is no longer appropriate. For example, you forego your anger because it becomes apparent that continuing to communicate anger's message no longer makes sense. Or, you disavow your anger because you recognize that continuing to punish the person for his action is no longer justified. In what follows, we will develop the details of this second response.⁸

THE COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTION OF ANGER

People do not always express their anger outwardly. And, when they do express it outwardly, they tend to do so in different ways (Averill 1983, 1147). Nevertheless, many episodes of anger show characteristic facial, vocal, and bodily responses. A person may point toward the target, stretch out frontally, and move laterally (Wallbott 1998). Certain speech patterns are also representative of anger (Scherer 1986; Scherer et al. 1991) and it has commonly-recognized facial expressions (Ekman 1999). We do not mean here to commit to the thesis that anger is cross-culturally or universally recognizable by specific outward expressions. As James A. Russell's (1994) work suggests, this may go too far. Still, there do seem to be common associations between inner states and outward appearances. And these associations are strong enough to enable us with some reliability to let others know when we are angry.

This raises an obvious question. Why is it important to let others know about our anger? What is the point of this behavior? Following Gerben Van Kleef (2009; 2012), we think the answer to this question has to do with the fact that anger has a social function and, more specifically, a communicative function (*read* also Averill 1982, 3–32; Cogley 2013a, 2013b; Keltner and Haidt 1999; Macnamara 2013a; Parkinson 1996; Strawson 1962, 21–22). The communicative function or goal of anger is to convey to someone that she has done something wrong. More precisely, it is to get the wrongdoer to feel guilty or remorseful because she has wronged us out of ill will or insufficient concern (Baumeister et al. 2007, 189). By guilt or remorse, we have in mind what Marilyn Frye (1983, 88) and Nancy Potter (2000, 480–83) describe as the emotional uptake of the appraisal at the heart of anger. Such emotional uptake includes devoting attention to the appraisal, taking it seriously, trying to understand it from the victim's point of view, and appropriately modifying their behavior going forward.⁹

For example, consider a victim who is angry with someone because she cuts him off on the bike path, causing him to fall. His anger at her—whether expressed by finger-pointing, a verbal outburst, or in some other way—aims in part to get her to

see herself as having acted wrongly, to feel guilty about it, and not to do it again in the future.

There are several reasons one might hesitate to attribute this communicative function to anger. As noted before, anger often goes unexpressed, in which case it cannot elicit guilt.¹⁰ In addition, anger is not always successful at eliciting guilt. Nor is it always intended to do so. To return to the bike example, the person who has fallen down may not say or do anything but rather inwardly stew in his resentment. Or, he may scream at the top of his lungs only to have his assailant laugh at him in return.

Thus, we are not claiming that every instance of anger successfully communicates in the way described above. Nor are we saying it is always intended to do so. Our view is that anger, like many other psychological processes, has what Peter McLaughlin (2000, 11–12) calls nonintentional purposiveness. More colloquially, anger has functions apart from the intentions of the person feeling it—that is, regardless of whether the functions are intended by the person experiencing it.

Function and intention often come apart like this (McLaughlin 2000, 42–62). We intentionally use hammers to prop open doors even though that is not one of their functions. Conversely, ornate dinnerware has the function of holding and serving food and beverages even though we do not always use it for that purpose, preferring instead to enjoy it as decorative art. To use a biological example, we intentionally use our noses to hold up our glasses, but supporting glasses is not the function of our noses. Conversely, long-distance running is one of the functions of human legs even though many of us never put them to such use.

We adopt the etiological theory of function ascription to explain these facts (read Macnamara 2013a, 8–9; McLaughlin 2000, 118–38). On the etiological theory, something is a function of an item just in case (1) that function is an effect of past items of that type and (2) this fact about the items in part explains the current existence of items of that type. Holding and serving food and beverages is one of the functions of ornate dinnerware because ornate dinnerware of the past held and served food and beverages, and that is partly why it is still around. Similarly, running long distances is one of the functions of human legs because the legs of earlier humans enabled them to travel long distances and that is one reason why we have these sorts of legs today.

We can apply the etiological theory to anger as follows. Eliciting guilt (i.e., the emotional uptake of anger's appraisal) meets the two etiological conditions for being a function of anger (Macnamara 2013a, 8–9). Past instances of anger had the effect of eliciting guilt or remorse in their target, and those past effects are among the reasons anger exists today (Giner-Sorolla and Espinosa 2010).¹¹ This effect is

communicative: it serves to convey to the wrongdoer that the victim has appraised her action as wrongful and wants the wrongdoer to uptake that assessment.¹²

The Felicity Conditions of Anger

It is common to say that anger has more than one communicative function. Indeed, several theorists identify two distinct communicative acts involved in moral anger (Hieronymi 2001, 530; Holmgren 2012, 31–32; Macnamara 2013b; Strawson 1962, 21–22). First, anger involves an assertion: it asserts that what the person did was morally wrong. In other words, it aims to get the target to believe that she has shown ill will or insufficient concern in her wrongful conduct. Second, anger involves a demand. In particular, it demands that the person feel guilty for her wrongful conduct (i.e., give uptake of anger's appraisal), as demonstrated by an apology, modified behavior, and the like (Potter 2000, 480).

Acts that have communicative functions have felicity conditions. Felicity conditions are the conditions under which a communicative act is reasonably performed (read Austin 1975; Searle 1969). Since anger involves both an assertion and a demand, it inherits the felicity conditions for both acts. On John Searle's (1969, 66) canonical account, assertions and demands possess a variety of felicity conditions. We will focus on the ones that are directly relevant to the kind of forgiveness we are discussing. To wit, it must not be obvious to both the speaker and the hearer that the hearer already believes what is being asserted or has already done what is being demanded. In other words, if both parties appreciate that the hearer already knows p , then it is infelicitous for the speaker to continue to assert p . Similarly, if both parties appreciate that the hearer has already done a , then it is infelicitous for the speaker to demand that the hearer do a .

Examples help. Suppose I tell my friend Michelle that Elizabeth Warren will run for President in 2020. But Michelle responds that she already knows this. In fact, she is volunteering for Warren's campaign. In this situation, my assertion about Warren is gratuitous. So, there is no reason to continue with it. Similarly, suppose I demand that my roommate turn in her half of the rent for the month. But she says that she has already put her rent check on my desk. In this scenario, it does not make sense for me to continue to demand that she produce the check. Such a demand is out of place because she has already done what is being demanded of her.

These lessons apply to anger. We noted before that being angry often involves the assertion that what the person did was wrong—for example, that her drinking my beer is wrong. But if she readily admits that it was wrong to drink my beer, then it

does not make sense for me to continue asserting this point by way of my anger. My assertion's aim has already been achieved and so keeping at it would be gratuitous. Similarly, we said above that anger often involves the demand that the person feel guilty for what she has done—for instance, for drinking all of my beer. But suppose she already feels guilty. Indeed, suppose she has demonstrated emotional uptake by discussing the matter with me, empathizing with my point of view, apologizing for her transgression, and ceasing to drink my beer any more. In such a case, it is not appropriate to continue demanding that she give uptake. The goal of my demand has already been met (*read McGeer 2013, 174–75*).

Forgiveness and the Felicity Conditions of Anger

To review, the kind of forgiveness that interests us in this paper involves forswearing one's anger with a person for a wrong he has done out of ill will or insufficient concern. Yet forgiveness is not just any kind of disavowing anger. For there are ways of rejecting anger that do not count as forgiveness but rather as either excusing or justifying. Thus we hold that forgiveness of the sort under discussion involves forswearing our anger with a person while continuing to believe that what he did was wrong. The puzzle raised by Kolnai is why it might make sense to do this—why it might be reasonable to forswear our anger even though we still think the person has wronged us.

We can now explain our answer to Kolnai's puzzle. We believe it is reasonable to forgive when the communicative functions of moral anger cease to be appropriate. And the communicative functions of moral anger cease to be appropriate when their felicity conditions no longer obtain: it is obvious that the wrongdoer already believes that he has done wrong and already feels guilty about it. Now a wrongdoer may convey to the victim that these conditions no longer obtain in a variety of ways. But one primary way is by issuing a sincere apology and modifying his behavior. When this happens, we say that the victim has a reason to forgive because the communicative goals of her anger are satisfied. It no longer makes sense to try to get the wrongdoer to believe he has done something wrong and to feel guilty for doing it because he has already done both.

Allais's View of Forgiveness

In Section 3, we noted that there are other ways to handle the philosophical challenges facing accounts of forgiveness. One popular alternative to our approach is to focus solely on anger's appraisal. In particular, some scholars proceed by

expanding the propositional content of anger's appraisal (Allais 2008; Hampton 1990, 83–85; Hieronymi 2001; Holmgren 2012, 100; Zaragoza 2012). In addition to seeing the wrongdoer's action as morally wrong and culpably done, they claim that the person feeling anger makes some further judgment. Forgiveness then becomes reasonable when the angry person changes his mind about the correctness of this further judgment.

There are several proposals for the additional judgment. While we will not canvas all of them, we will consider a representative one, namely Allais's (2008) proposal that the person who is angry also sees the target of her anger as bad or corrupt. According to Allais, the angry person makes a compound judgment. Not only does she (1) view the wrongdoer's action as morally wrong and culpably done, but she also (2) views him, as a person, to be morally compromised as a result (Allais 2008, 56–59, 62). In other words, she sees the wrongdoer as having diminished moral worth on account of having committed some wrongful act.¹³ One advantage of this view is that it offers Allais a way of overcoming the first challenge facing accounts of forgiveness. She has no trouble distinguishing between forgiving, on the one hand, and either justifying or excusing on the other hand. On her account, a victim justifies or excuses a wrongdoer if she changes her mind regarding judgment (1) and no longer considers the wrongdoer's action morally wrong or culpably done. A victim forgives a wrongdoer, by contrast, if she holds fast to judgment (1) but changes her mind regarding judgment (2). That is to say, she holds fixed her view of the wrongdoer's action but undergoes a change of heart regarding the wrongdoer himself. She ceases to consider his moral worth to be compromised on account of his action (Allais 2008, 57, 62). To use Augustine's famous turn of phrase, forgiveness on Allais's view involves separating the "sin" from the "sinner" and no longer taking a dim view of the latter because of the former.

What Our View of Forgiveness Adds

The appeal of Allais's strategy is that it can handle the first challenge facing accounts of forgiveness. But it faces a difficulty when it comes to the second challenge, the one raised by Kolnai. To wit, although it can explain why forgiveness in the sense of forswearing anger is rational in many cases, there are some cases where it cannot do so. For, according to Allais, we have a reason to forgive only if we have a reason to revise our negative judgment about the moral standing of the wrongdoer. In particular, we must have a reason to think the wrongdoer's moral worth is not compromised on account of his action (*read* Allais 2008, 59–63). This explanation presupposes that

we initially thought the wrongdoer's moral worth was compromised. In Allais's (2008, 56) words, it presupposes that our anger involved "seeing [the wrongdoer] differently, as 'lowered', as a result of her wrongdoing." Many cases of anger may be like this. But not all of them. And it is the cases that deviate from this norm that Allais cannot accommodate.

We do not think this problem warrants rejecting Allais's approach. As we said at the outset, we doubt that there is a single account of forgiveness that can handle all aspects of all cases. Instead, we bring up the problem because it allows us to highlight one respect in which our paradigm is more helpful. It can handle some important cases that create difficulties for Allais's paradigm.

Perhaps the clearest examples of the kind of cases we have in mind have to do with loved ones we hold in high esteem who commit minor offenses against us. Susan Wolf (2011) discusses several such examples in "Blame, Italian Style." Wolf describes her family as being close-knit and deeply caring. Yet, from time to time, there are events that lead to "slammed doors and raised voices or . . . dirty looks and tight jaws" (2011, 334). For instance, she relates how her daughter repeatedly raids her closet to borrow clothes and shoes without first asking for permission (2011, 334). She also recounts how her husband has a tendency to tell her that he is ready to go—only to make her wait while he finds his glasses, washes his coffee cup, or gathers his books (2011, 334). Wolf finds herself getting angry about these things and blaming her family members for what they have done. Yet, she claims that her anger does not involve lowering her estimation of her daughter's or husband's character. The reason is that the actions in question are minor missteps. They are not indicative of any robust pattern of vice. If they reveal anything, Wolf says, it is that her daughter and husband are imperfectly virtuous (2011, 337–38). Although generally respectful, they commit small acts of inconsiderateness from time to time, as all people do. Since Wolf never took her family members to be perfectly virtuous, their transgressions are not new data that require her to lower her estimation of their moral standing.

It follows that Wolf cannot forgive her daughter or her husband for the reasons Allais describes. She cannot forswear her anger with them on the grounds that she no longer sees them as bad or corrupt for what they have done. For their actions did not lead her to see them as bad or corrupt in the first place. In particular, Wolf cannot cease to consider her daughter's moral worth to be compromised on account of stealing her clothes because Wolf never took these "thefts" to be indicative of some great deficiency in her daughter. Similarly, she cannot cease to take a dim view

of her husband on account of the fact that he sometimes keeps her waiting because his occasional tardiness never led her to take a dim view of him.

One virtue of the approach to forgiveness we are forwarding in this paper is that it is able to handle Wolf's cases. As we see it, Wolf's anger at her daughter and her husband serves a communicative function. It lets them know that she thinks what they did was wrong, and it asks them to own up to their mistakes. These communicative goals make sense. Even if her daughter's misstep was minor and not revelatory of a deeper vice, it is reasonable for Wolf to want her daughter to acknowledge that it was indeed a misstep. Even if her husband's inconsiderateness did not impair their marital relationship, it is reasonable for Wolf to want him to acknowledge the frustration it caused. On our view, Wolf has a reason to forgive her family members once these communicative goals have been satisfied. In other words, she has a reason to forswear her moral anger with her husband and daughter once they have felt a fitting amount of guilt and apologized.

THE SANCTIONING FUNCTION OF ANGER

Our central claim in this paper is that it is possible to shed light on the nature of one important kind of forgiveness by appealing to the various functions of anger. Up to this point, we have been focusing on conceptual issues, such as Murphy's question about how to distinguish forgiveness from related phenomena and Kolnai's famous challenge. We now wish to slightly shift directions. In the remaining sections of the paper, we will discuss how our functional account of anger can shed light on the moral status of forgiveness. In particular, we will use our view of anger to explain how—depending on the situation—forgiveness can be forbidden, required, or elective.

Turning to the moral status of forgiveness will require looking beyond the communicative function of anger to the sanctioning function of anger. To see why, we can return to one of Wolf's examples. Suppose Wolf angrily confronts her daughter for stealing clothes from her closet, thereby trying to get her daughter to feel guilty for her wrongdoing. It quickly becomes apparent that her daughter does feel guilty; she even issues a sincere apology to demonstrate her guilt. Yet, imagine that Wolf refuses to disavow her anger with her daughter. Because the communicative goal of her anger has been satisfied, continuing to be angry is infelicitous—being angry with her daughter no longer makes good communicative sense. But is there anything morally wrong with Wolf's holding on to it? Is she morally required to forgive her daughter after she has repented of her misdeed?

To answer these questions, we do not need to advance a full account of what makes conduct morally wrong. For our purposes, it is enough to assert as a placeholder that wrongful conduct typically affects the other party negatively in some way, for example by hurting her or frustrating her interests. Our view is that anger typically affects the target in this way. It negatively affects people psychologically and emotionally. This is why it makes sense to say some instances of anger are morally wrong.

We can explicate this fact by appealing to what we will call the sanctioning function of anger. The sanctioning function of anger is to impose unwanted costs on the wrongdoer aimed at expressing condemnation of his wrongful conduct (Allais 2008, 48; Cogley 2013a, 2013b). These costs are imposed in three main ways. First, anger often produces guilt in the target, which is inherently painful. Second, the characteristic bodily expressions of anger (facial expressions, gestures, postures, etc.) are inherently unpleasant for the targets of anger to experience. Third, other angry behaviors (refusing to cooperate, screaming, physical attack, denial of a benefit, etc.) often result in pain and other losses to the target.

As with the communicative function, there are reasons to hesitate when it comes to attributing the sanctioning function to anger. Anger is not always intended to impose costs. In addition, it is not always successful at doing so. Finally, it is often suppressed, in which case it cannot impose costs.[‡] Nevertheless, sanctioning counts as a function of anger for the same reasons that eliciting guilt does. Past instances of anger have had the effect of imposing sanctions and these past effects are part of the reason why anger exists today.

Our account here resembles the one Martha Nussbaum forwards in *Anger and Forgiveness*. In keeping with the cognitivist view of the emotions she has defended elsewhere, Nussbaum holds that anger involves a judgment. To be angry, she claims, is in part to think that someone has wronged us (or wronged someone or something we care about) (Nussbaum 2016, 17–18). Yet, like us, Nussbaum thinks there are other components to anger. Most notably, she sees anger as conceptually tied to the desire for revenge (2016, 17). She writes, “[T]he idea of payback or retribution—in some form, however subtle—is a conceptual part of anger” (2016, 15) and “a wish for payback is a conceptual part of anger” (2016, 22).

Nussbaum sees the link to payback as central to the philosophical tradition on anger. She cites Aristotle, the Stoics, Joseph Butler, and Adam Smith as prominent figures who endorse the connection between anger or resentment and the desire for revenge (2016, 22). She could also appeal to Charles Griswold (2007, 26), who describes anger as “a reactive as well as retributive passion that instinctively seeks to exact a

due measure of punishment." But there have been dissenters to this popular view. Lactantius, for instance, claims that anger is not always connected with revenge. Sometimes it is aroused "in order that discipline be preserved, morals corrected, and license suppressed" (Lactantius 1965, 101). Judith Boss makes a similar point. She notes that victims of domestic abuse do not always possess a desire to "get even." Often their anger is simply a matter of wanting the abuse to stop (Boss 1997, 236). Finally, Averill, to whom Nussbaum appeals for empirical support, is not in complete agreement with her. His work does show that anger is bound up with an impulse towards aggression, an instinctive desire to impose direct or indirect costs on the offender (Averill 1983, 1148). Over 80% of people in one of his studies reported an impulse towards verbal or symbolic aggression while angry; another 59% reported an impulse towards denying or removing some benefit from the offending party and 40% an impulse towards physical aggression. (1982, 193). Yet Averill points out that there is a variety of motives connected with anger's aggressive impulse. One of them is revenge, as Nussbaum would have it. But others are more "constructively motivated" (1983, 1148). In fact, in one of Averill's (1982, 177–78) studies, people appeal to self-defense or a desire to educate the offending party just as frequently as they appeal to vengeance in order to explain their angry aggression.

Thus, we agree with the spirit of Nussbaum's position. A desire to impose (or have there be imposed) some kind of unwanted costs on the wrongdoer is at the core of moral anger. But, pace Nussbaum, we believe that these unwanted costs do not always aim at payback or revenge. Other motivations may also come into play here, such as self-defense, deterrence, rehabilitation, or education.¹⁵ To accommodate this broader focus, we prefer to speak of anger as having a sanctioning function rather than a retributive function.¹⁶

Moral Conditions On the Sanctioning Function of Anger

Several conditions must obtain in order for the sanctioning function of anger to be morally justified. Some of them arise because of connections with the other functions of anger. Two are particularly important, and we will refer to them as the desert conditions for the sanctions imposed by anger (*read* Cogley 2013a). First, the sanctioning function of anger is justified only if anger's core appraisal is correct. The reason for this condition is that a sanction is not a cost imposed for any old reason. A sanction is a cost imposed in response to a wrongful action. Therefore, it is deserved only if the action was in fact a wrong motivated by ill will or insufficient concern. Second, for similar reasons, the sanctioning function of anger is justified only if

the communicative functions of anger are felicitous. For a sanction is not just any negative response to a wrongful action. It is a response that imposes a cost aimed at expressing condemnation.¹⁷ Thus, sanctions are deserved only if condemning the action is appropriate—that is, only if the communicative functions are felicitous.¹⁸

Although these two desert conditions are necessary for the sanctioning function to be morally justified, they are not sufficient. What else must obtain depends on the ultimate purpose of the sanctions. Here is where our disagreement with Nussbaum helps us. She identifies the purpose of anger's sanctioning function as retribution. As a result, anger is morally justified on her view only insofar as payback is morally justified. Yet Nussbaum thinks payback is never morally justified. It involves either "magical thinking" or a "narcissistic tendency to focus on one's own status" (Nussbaum 2016, 24, 54). Thus, she concludes that anger is inherently irrational. She writes, "[T]he payback idea is normatively problematic, and anger, therefore, with it" (2016, 15).

We are somewhat inclined to agree with Nussbaum about the irrationality of revenge. But, as stated before, we think that the sanctioning function of anger can have other purposes. These include self-defense, general deterrence, and the education or reform of the wrongdoer. We believe these purposes are sometimes both rationally justified and morally warranted. Thus, we do not accept Nussbaum's notorious conclusion that anger is inevitably "stupid" (2016, 249; *read* Thomason 2017).

The Moral Status of Forgiveness

Although some scholars maintain that forgiveness is sometimes morally required, few propose that it is so in every situation (*read* Gamlund 2010; Holmgren 2012, 65). Most maintain that it is often or always elective (e.g., Allais 2008, 37; 2013, 637; Calhoun 1992, 81; Gamlund 2010, 543–45; Sussman 2005, 104; Zaragoza 2012, 617). It is up to the victim whether to forswear anger, and it is morally permissible for her to refuse. Others add that forgiveness is sometimes morally impermissible (Murphy 1990a, 17–18). Some offenses, especially particularly heinous ones, are literally unforgivable. It is morally inappropriate for us ever to forswear our anger toward them (Jankélévitch 2005, 156–66). A final virtue of our account is that it helps to explain this variability in the moral status of forgiveness.

On our view, it is possible—at least in principle—for forgiveness to be morally impermissible. If the core appraisal is accurate, the communicative functions are felicitous, the sanctioning function is deserved, and no other moral considerations tell against continued anger at the wrongdoer, then anger is morally required and

the action is unforgivable.¹⁹ The victim not only has good reasons to hold on to her anger but also lacks a reason to forswear it. Of course, it may well be that there are no such cases. Reasons that tell against being angry may always be present, and so determining whether the communicative and sanctioning functions are appropriate may always require balancing between various pro tanto considerations. If so, then forgiveness will always be at least permissible.

In addition, on our view, forgiveness is morally required in at least some cases. In particular, it is required if the wrongdoer has felt the fitting amount of guilt (i.e., given emotional uptake) and sincerely apologized (*read* Gamlund 2010, 553–55). Under such circumstances, there is no point to a continued negative emotional response toward the wrongdoer because of his wrongdoing.²⁰ It is infelicitous to communicate the appraisal to the wrongdoer because he already believes and has internalized it. In addition, since the sanctioning function presupposes the communicative function, the sanction is also undeserved. Most importantly, since anger imposes unwanted costs on the wrongdoer, continuing with them when they do no good is a moral evil. Thus, the victim is required to forswear them.

Under most circumstances, however, things are much less clear (*read* G. S. Adams and Inesi 2016). How much guilt is fitting for any moral transgression cannot be measured precisely. Additionally, whether apologies and amends are sincere can be in doubt. These considerations concern the appraisal and communicative functions of anger. Things become more difficult still when we attend to all the reasons we may have for and against the sanctioning function of anger. As noted before, anger's sanctions may serve a role in moral education—to motivate the wrongdoer to internalize the appraisal and feel guilty about what she has done. They may also aid in self- or other-defense. That is, they might motivate the wrongdoer to change her behavior regardless of whether she internalizes the appraisal. Finally, as Nussbaum thinks, anger's sanctions may be retributive. They may serve to make the wrongdoer suffer in return for having made the victim suffer (Griswold 2007, 39; Murphy 1990b).

In addition to the variety of reasons that may support sanctions, there are a variety of reasons that may oppose them. First, the offense might be minor or far in the past, in which case we might stand to gain little or nothing by imposing anger's sanctions. Thus, given the costs associated with imposing them, it might serve us better to move on (Emerick 2017; Enright and Song 2017). Second, anger's sanctions might not be the most efficient way for us to achieve our goals. There might be readily available alternatives that are less costly and more effective at educating the wrongdoer and defending ourselves against him (Holmgren 2012, 66–75). Third,

the wrongdoer might be the sort of person who will make reparations on his own and is unlikely to reoffend. Thus, some of what we hope to accomplish with anger's sanctions might happen anyway. To this degree, anger's sanctions will be superfluous (Hieronymi 2001, 548).

The victim can thus have *pro tanto* reasons to forswear her anger with the wrongdoer as well as *pro tanto* reasons to hold on to it. Determining the right course of action will require balancing these reasons and adjudicating between them. This is not an easy task. Compounding matters is the fact that many of the reasons are scalar; they come in degrees of severity and seriousness. Additionally, they can be of qualitatively different kinds or sorts. For instance, the communicative function might be reasonable but the victim's continued anger might do significant collateral damage to his loved ones. It is unclear to us how detrimental continued anger must be to innocent bystanders in order to render inappropriate the project of eliciting guilt in the wrongdoer. It strikes us that minor discomfort to bystanders is probably not enough to render anger inappropriate in cases of major wrongdoings. In addition, it seems plausible that major discomfort to bystanders is probably sufficient to render anger inappropriate in cases of minor wrongdoings. But we find many vague cases between these two extremes.

In the end, it will often be unclear what the outcome of our calculations regarding anger should be. Reasonable people may come to different conclusions. (That does not mean anything goes, of course. Some weightings will be irrational.) We maintain that in such cases whether to forgive is an elective matter. The decision about how to weigh reasons for and against anger ought to be left to the person whose anger is in question. Typically, this will be the victim. But not always. As Pettigrove (2012, 33–39) points out, we sometimes get angry about—and then forgive—wrongs that do not directly harm us.

CONCLUSION

We have argued that focusing on the appraisal, communicative, and sanctioning functions of moral anger allows us to develop a new account of forgiveness. We do not believe our account ought to supplant all existing accounts of forgiveness. But we do maintain that it deserves to be considered as one promising approach among a number of other fruitful approaches to the topic because it has tremendous explanatory power. First, it can straightforwardly distinguish forgiveness from related phenomena, such as excuse and justification. Second, it perspicuously explains why forgiveness is reasonable when it is so. In particular, our account can explain how forgiveness works in cases where we become angry with loved ones for minor offenses. Finally, our account sheds light on why determining the moral status of forgiveness is so difficult: balancing the diverse reasons for and against the various functions of anger is no easy task.

Notes

1. For endorsements of the view that forgiving someone involves overcoming, letting go of, or for-swearing anger, read Allais (2008, 37, 39), Garrard and McNaughton (2003, 42–45; 2017, 96), Hieronymi (2001, 529–31), Holmgren (2012, 32), Murphy (1990a, 15, 20), Pettigrove (2012, 1–9), and Strawson (1962, 76). Bishop Joseph Butler is sometimes regarded as holding this view as well in his *Fifteen Sermons* (1900), but this interpretation has been disputed by Garcia (2011), Griswold (2007, 19–37), and Newberry (2001).

2. Philosophers almost always call the relevant emotion “resentment” or “indignation,” while psy-chologists prefer to talk of “anger.” We opt for the latter formulation because of the relevance of psychology to our argument, though we are dissatisfied with the connotations of all our terminolog-ical options. Some use “anger” in a way that allows the emotion to be directed at objects and the weather; “resentment” has the connotation of a long-lasting characterological disposition, and so on. We are not focusing on lexical matters, so if talk of anger sounds foreign we invite the reader to substitute whatever term seems more appropriate.

3. One interpretation of Strawson’s thought is that feeling emotions such as anger toward people’s conduct just is to make appraisals and that making emotional appraisals just is to attribute moral re-sponsibility to someone (Wallace 1994).

4. For instance, according to Lazarus (1991, 223), anger involves viewing someone’s act as a “personal slight or demeaning offense.” Prinz and Nichols (2010, 122) maintain that anger involves seeing someone as “violat[ing] autonomy norms.” Shaver et al. (1987, 1078) hold that anger’s appraisal involves thinking that “the situation is illegitimate, wrong, unfair, contrary to what ought to be.” Finally, Averill (1983, 1150) asserts, “[A]nger is a value judgment. More than anything else, anger is an attribution of blame.”

5. For other discussions of the puzzle about whether forgiveness is elective, read Gamlund (2010) and Allais (2013).

6. Here and throughout the paper, we discuss simple, quotidian examples. We do so because such ex-amples allow us to focus attention on the features of anger and forgiveness that are integral to our arguments. In addition, as will become clear, our central objection to Allais’s account of forgiveness is that it has trouble with quotidian examples. Of course, we do believe that our analysis of for-giveness would apply to more complicated and contentious examples. But making the case for this

claim will have to wait for another paper.

7. On the issue of the accuracy or correctness of emotions, read D'Arms and Jacobson (2000).

8. Our strategy commits us to rejecting theories of emotion that treat emotions as nothing but appraisals or judgments. For instance, we must reject the idea that anger is nothing but the judgment that someone did wrong out of ill will or insufficient concern. But we are happy to accept this consequence. Theories that treat emotion as nothing but appraisals or judgments are falling out of fashion. As we discuss later, even Martha Nussbaum, who is sometimes seen as advocating such a theory, has argued in her recent work that anger does more than just appraise or judge (Nussbaum 2016, 17–18).

9. Here we expand on the typical view of guilt as a feeling associated with a negative judgment about a specific action undertaken by the self (H. B. Lewis 1971; M. Lewis 2018; Tangney and Dearing 2002; Tracy and Robins 2013).

10. At least, anger often goes almost completely unexpressed. It is difficult not to express one's emotions on one's face in some way or other. This is especially true when it comes to negative emotions, such as anger (Porter and ten Brinke 2008).

11. On this account, anger may have other communicative functions than eliciting guilt in the wrongdoer, such as getting the wrongdoer to make amends or publicly protesting the wrong (or wrongs of the same sort). These functions are interesting because they may be appropriate when eliciting guilt is not. We will largely leave them aside in what follows, but we think their investigation is ripe for future research.

12. Anger may also communicate to third parties—to people other than the wrongdoer or the victim—that the wrongdoer's action has been appraised as wrongful. We leave this complexity aside in what follows.

13. Scholars tend to deny that the angry person sees the wrongdoer as having lost his or her moral status. For that would imply that the wrongdoer is no longer worthy of moral consideration or recognition. They sometimes put the point by saying that the angry person loses evaluative or esteem respect for the wrongdoer but not recognition respect (Allais 2008, 45, 53; Dillon 2001, 66–71; Holmgren 2012, 114).

14. For example, in Averill's (1982, 193) classic study, although anger is almost always accompanied by an impulse towards aggression of some kind or other, including verbal or symbolic aggression, fewer than half of respondents acted on their aggressive impulses. Only 10% of respondents reported acting on their impulse to

physical aggression in particular.

15. It is common in the literature to draw distinctions between the various different goals that we might have for sanctioning or punishing a person. In particular, retribution, deterrence, and rehabilitation are all taken to be distinct ends. We will treat them as such in this paper.

16. In other words, we will treat sanctioning as an umbrella term that can be driven by a variety of different goals, including rehabilitation, deterrence, and retribution. Thus, we are not denying that retribution is one of the goals of anger's sanctions. We are only denying that it is the only such goal.

17. Things get tricky here. The very same cost can either be a sanction or not be a sanction depending on the reason it is imposed. For example, both fines and fees require that money be paid. But only fines are sanctions, since only in that case is the money extracted because wrong was done (Boonin 2008, 22).

18. There may be exceptional cases where the sanctioning function does not depend on the accuracy of the appraisal or the felicity of the communicative function (read Calhoun 1989). We will leave aside these complications given the scope of this investigation into forgiveness for wrongdoing.

19. We presuppose here that there are only two functions of anger besides appraisal: communication and sanction. But we are in principle open to the possibility that other functions exist. Thus, strictly speaking, anger is required—and thus forgiveness is impermissible—only if these other functions are appropriate as well.

20. Here, again, we presuppose communicating and sanctioning are the only two functions of anger (besides appraisal), and thus anger has no point only if both of these functions are inappropriate. As noted before, however, we are in principle open to the possibility that other functions exist. Thus, strictly speaking, anger is impermissible and forgiveness is required only if these other functions are also inappropriate.

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Emotions, Reasons, and Norms

Evan Simpson

Department of Philosophy, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada

Abstract: A tension between acting morally and acting rationally is apparent in analyses of moral emotions that ascribe an inherent subjectivity to ethical thinking, leading thence to irresolvable differences between rational agents. This paper offers an account of emotional worthiness that shows how, even if moral reasons fall short of philosophical criteria of rationality, we can still accord reasonableness to them and recognize that the deliberative weight of social norms is sufficient to address the moral limitations of strategic rationality.

Keywords: collective intentionality, emotional fittingness, emotional worthiness, rationality, reasonableness

The familiar dichotomy between reasoned and emotional responses to things is pretty clearly too sharp. After all, fear is a fitting response when one perceives a threat: the particular threat is a reason for the fear. Although it would not be irrational to feel nothing, the fearful response has a cognitive rationale absent from fear of something obviously harmless. Indeed, even fitting fears are subject to thoughtful criticism, as when one who accepts military norms suggests that fear of the enemy is not worthy of a soldier. Since such norms are themselves open to criticism, however, judgments of emotional worthiness may generate disputes that have no clear resolution, leading to a tension between norm-conformity and a philosophical understanding of rationality that has been identified by the anthropologist Michael Tomasello, among others. This discussion explicates and relaxes that tension.

The problem is clear for moral emotions—such as sympathy and respect. They motivate us to care about others' well-being in ways that may seem to collide with the philosophical criterion of rationality. According to this criterion, rational people

arguably find it difficult to respect their promises, for example. If I make you a promise, but the opportunity then arises to do better for you by breaking it, then, surely, I should do that in violation of the norms of promising. There are many ways of responding to such problems, but the one developed here starts from the semantic fact that most ethical concepts are both evaluative and descriptive. It is framed by the assumption that the evaluative component is emotive and proceeds in three stages. The result is to show how mastery of ethical language enables norms of virtuous behavior to provide good moral reasons even while defying strictly rational agreement.¹

The first stage reviews Tomasello's findings about human norm conformity and a problem for such conformity resulting from what he identifies as the dominant philosophical conception of rationality. The often-neglected distinction between emotional fittingness and emotional worthiness will be important to formulating a broader conception of a well-reasoned argument. The next stage identifies the scope for reasonable norm conformity in the constant evaluative valences of ethical terms, as distinguished from more descriptive and institutional language. Developing these distinctions will help to show how the difference between semantic agreement and ethical agreement creates an area for emotional worthiness within the space of reasons. In the third stage, I argue that the semantics of the thick ethical concepts whose use is prominent in moral deliberation entails that linguistically competent human beings have good but rarely conclusive reason to be bound by ethical as well as linguistic norms.

RATIONALITY VS. NORM CONFORMITY IN TOMASELLO'S FINDINGS

Tomasello's natural histories of human thinking (Tomasello 2014) and morality (Tomasello 2016) both develop an account of mental attributes that human beings share with great apes and our immediate common ancestors. All members of the human species have had the ability to recognize both physical and agentive causality, that is, the physical effects of some things upon others and the way in which an animal's goals lead to its actions. Such agency is a "self-regulated, cognitive way of doing things" that is "basically identical to the classic belief-desire model of rational action in philosophy: a goal or desire coupled with an epistemic connection to the world . . . creates an intention to act in a particular way" (Tomasello 2014, 9). So far, this is only "individual intentionality," since (if Tomasello is right) the great apes are self-interested and manipulative rather than moral agents. They are well aware of social structures, recognizing dominance and affiliation, but use this knowledge as

data for generating their own advantage. In short, they display the philosophical conception of rational action, as described by Tomasello.²

Within Tomasello's evolutionary story, the selective pressures which led early humans to hunt big game together also led to the development of "we-" or "joint intentionality" from individual intentionality, "we-" or "joint intentionality" being a mode of social engagement consisting of agents deliberately working together on tasks that neither could accomplish alone.³ Eventually, the material successes of such collaborations resulted in conditions favoring the full "collective intentionality" that is marked by accepting social norms of cooperation.

Expanding societies created the problem of dealing with strangers. It was solved by the creation of cultural conventions, such as institutions whose constitutive rules are public knowledge, enabling everyone to conform to the expectations of anonymous others. Those rules form part of the socially established roles (such as owner, spouse, or president), along with their rights and responsibilities, that recognize and integrate individuals into their broader societies.

Tomasello's story includes plausible accounts of the development of language from iconic gestures and pantomimes to propositionally structured speech. It also depicts the emergence of "a commitment to informing others of things honestly and accurately" (Tomasello 2014, 51). But with the emergence of this commitment the species no longer clearly reflects the "model of rational action in philosophy" (Tomasello 2014, 51). On the one hand, there is the joint intentionality that enables people to assess one another's tendency to cooperate given each person's interest in realizing their own desires. On the other hand, we have the willingness to communicate clearly and honestly, even in cases when dissimulation would better realize an agent's desires. The imperatives of socialization then allow the motive of conformity to the rules to overcome the benefits of instrumental calculation.

The philosophical challenge posed by Tomasello's psychological findings is that they make it doubtful whether human beings can be both fundamentally norm-conforming creatures and also rational agents. While instrumentally rational individuals must observe the general practice of telling the truth for the most part, that fact does not imply any further concern for honesty or any susceptibility to emotions of resentment, indignation, and guilt for violating agreements. These emotions may certainly be fitting, and thus supported by reasons in this sense, but they are arguably unworthy emotions because they violate the philosophical criterion of rationality.

The tension between norm-conformity and rationality seems behaviorally unstable, but Tomasello perceives a necessary connection between recognizing social rules and accepting their validity. That is, he notes how we place the rules within a communal framework that provides public standards against which one's behavior is evaluated. Recognizing these standards, individuals regard the values of their society as moral facts. Thus, in the course of our development we modern humans will have experienced coordination problems whose "solution on the behavioral level was the creation of group-wide, agent-neutral conventions, norms, and institutions, to which everyone expected everyone, in cultural common ground, to conform" (Tomasello 2014, 113).

However, this solution extends beyond behavioral conformity to accepting the norms as valid deontic constraints upon one's action. That may be broadly psychologically accurate, but it still leaves the philosophical issue about rationality open.⁴ No doubt most of us do usually act according to prevailing norms and even happily internalize them, but that is another thing from rationally accepting them. To engage in rational action, in Tomasello's philosophical sense, is to understand that we should hold ourselves apart from social norms, as when we recognize institutional facts but qualify our commitment to the institution in question in order to maximize our personal goals. In short, the objectivity of social norms and the rationality of endorsing them remain competing notions within human thinking.

Tomasello is fully aware of this tension and poses the "gaping question" of why we "reify and objectify" our social constructions, regarding them as real in a way that justifies using the language of "true" and "right" of them rather than focusing on them as the inherently contestable norms of different social groups (Tomasello 2014, 153). In his *Natural History of Human Morality*, in particular, he consistently places the words "objective" and "objectivity" in scare quotes (Tomasello 2014, 85-6). I propose a means of addressing these philosophical concerns by identifying in the competent use of ethical language—the language of virtues and vices, moral worthiness, and guilt—a quest for emotional worthiness that justifies rule-following by displacing, without forsaking, the strategic model of rational action Tomasello finds in philosophy. The key task is showing how the moral emotions manifest a complementary model of good but still contestable reasons for conformity.

We can begin by looking at the important moment in Tomasello's story of language that occurs with modern humans conventionalizing their natural gestures into collective linguistic practices, and gaining in the process powerful new resources for thinking. This part of the story is consistent with an individualistic view of our pre-

linguistic judgments as being enhanced through a common tongue that transforms primitive thinking and gives human beings intellectual capacities scarcely comparable to the rudimentary thoughts of other animals.⁵ The emergence of reason along with the development of perspicuous words evidently requires "voluntary signs" whose meaning is fixed across different individuals by a kind of contract. Speakers of the same language cooperate in employing these signs to elicit matching conceptions, achieving the same understanding of the words by common consent.

However, the development of clear words on this broadly Hobbesian view is not an outcome of reasoned agreement because it is a condition of reasoning, implying that linguistic practices differ from the cooperative agreements that are typical of agents who practice joint intentionality.⁶ It is not a matter of deciding to comply with them or to take the consequences. As a result, established facts of the sort, "red" means red in English, persist because they cannot be seriously questioned by self-interested individuals. As Joseph Heath notes, we are not self-sufficient agents who might coherently choose to abandon the social rules governing the meaning of our spoken words.⁷ Hence, we can normally trust others to mean what they seem to mean by their sentences.

While we cooperate semantically, however, wanting the thoughts we express to be clear, we may also want to use speech to deceive an audience about what we actually believe. Speaking is thus a two-level process. At the first level—expressing communicative intention—there is usually no possibility of meaningful defection, but the situation changes at the second level—expressing propositional states—when one can calculatingly advance personal goals by making misleading assertions. Whereas social norms of meaning are observed without fail, social norms of truth-telling may be violated by people who are pursuing their separate interests.

Lying for personal advantage is the obvious illustration of such separateness.⁸ It shows that first-level understandings do not entail second-level trustworthiness, creating the problem that commitment to telling the truth (and observing moral norms generally) can be contrary to the strategic desire-belief model of rational action. As we have noted, Tomasello recognizes this conflict, but empirical models are not sufficient to address it. In discussing the origin of "social norms of morality," he notes that early humans "not only experienced individual instrumental pressure but also experienced second-personal social pressure from their partners in social engagements." Psychologically, this pressure may not only include accepting moral norms and making one susceptible to the moral emotions they support, but doing so

also leaves open the philosophical question of whether an individual's instrumental reasoning may override social norms when the imperatives collide.

By focusing upon specifically evaluative requirements harbored within the language of virtues and vices, which expresses our emotional responses to things, we will be able to describe a measure of reasonable collective intentionality—a tendency to norm-conformity—without underplaying the role of personal desires that may collide with established moral rules.

The philosophical model of rationality is not confined to practical considerations. On this model rationality also enables people who have made valid inferences from the same true premises to agree in their conclusions. Thinking about virtues notably departs from this ideal of theoretical reason. As Hobbes complained, the language of virtue and vice "gives every thing a tincture of our different passions" and renders applications of this language "inconstant," preventing it from being "true grounds of any ratiocination" (Hobbes [1651] 1991, 31). Since ratiocination for Hobbes is simply truth-preserving "reckoning" or inference, rational agreements about ethical ascriptions—claims of virtue and vice—are not to be expected for such emotionally tinged thinking. Thus, even when everyone agrees on all of the descriptive features of a threat, they may differ about its fear-worthiness, hence about the wisdom of fleeing it.

Impartial knowledge cannot be counted upon to resolve such differences, leaving "wisdom" and the like emotionally laden, but inadequate markers for rational inference. If one person calls wisdom what another calls fear they may not be disagreeing about the facts, but championing certain inclusions within the word's applications. Where you may consider it appropriate to address fear by fleeing the threat, I may demur, regarding the action you call "wise" as a sign of timidity, or inability to see beyond the fittingness of the fear to the value of fighting to protect a good. Similarly, "cruel" and "just" may be used to characterize pains visited upon people who violate their agreements, but they also convey conflicting views about the worthiness of sympathizing with those pains. We then differ about whether causing pain is warranted hence just, or objectionable hence cruel. We therefore need to understand how it is possible to have meaningful arguments about these differences.

It is widely recognized that the language of virtues and vices is typically "thick," conveying elements of both description and evaluation (in contrast to "just" and "cruel," "good" and "bad" provide little or no descriptive information⁹). The language of virtues and vices is also emotionally laden. "Just" and "wise" convey admiration, "cruel" and "timid" convey contempt. These properties show that the ethical language

would be unnecessary if we responded only dispassionately to pains, threats, and the other things we emotionally care about. But how are we to understand differences in the way different people apply thick terms?

The classical emotivist answer sharply separates the meaning of these terms into a descriptive component, referring to an observer-independent quality, and a tincture of passion or preferential state that differs non-cognitively between individual persons. Thus, "just" refers to certain pains that one approves, whereas "cruel" connotes disapproval of them, leaving people who agree on the facts about pain without grounds for arguing significantly whether a painful action is cruel or just. However, there is another way of unravelling the meaning of thick ethical terms largely original to this essay, namely by identifying both the descriptive reasons for their use and the reasons for the associated judgments of emotion-worthiness. Their explication then includes both pains and the view that these pains are (in the case of justice) worthy of approval or (in the case of cruelty) worthy of disapproval. Understanding the words thereby presupposes the reasons that support the evaluation in question even if the giving of those reasons does not involve the kind of truth-preserving reasoning that is typical of the mathematical and empirical sciences.¹⁰

Judgments of emotional fittingness can be seen as concerning the descriptive dimension of ethical argument, whereas judgments of emotional worthiness concern the evaluative dimension. All too often the difference between these forms of judgment is neglected or overlooked. In discussing "the fundamentality of fit," for example, Christopher Howard (2018, 2019) says, "the normative relation of fittingness is the relation in which a response stands to an object when the object merits—or is worthy of—that response."¹¹ This conflation should be avoided, since, as we have noted, fearful responses can be recognized as fitting even if deemed unworthy, and a similar point can be made for emotions generally. It is sometimes said that anger or envy are unfitting responses to another's inconsiderateness or good fortune, but the intended judgments call upon the conceptual resources of emotional worthiness.

Of course, one might reject the distinction between fittingness and worthiness by speaking of worthiness of approval as just another way of expressing approval.¹² This would be to deny the possibility of significant reasoning about passionate responses, leaving judgments to be influenced by rhetorical persuasion rather than solid evidence. There would then be no philosophically good reason for expecting ethical agreement. The alternative is to develop the point that reasoning is not restricted to rationality.¹³ We should be able to agree that I have a reason to cause others pain if I am fittingly angered by their having caused me an injury, but we need not agree

that it is a rationally sufficient reason: you may reasonably maintain that my anger is unworthy of the offense—because the offense was, perhaps, not serious enough. Our respective reasoning is fully consistent with the complaint that there are no adequate natural criteria for evaluative norms, so that even people in command of all the describable facts may differ in their ethical judgments. Our thinking about virtues, therefore, does not satisfy a principal condition of rational judgment. That is, it does not express rational judgments in the sense of "rational" that seeks the agreement of fully knowledgeable people. All of this is compatible with recognizing that beliefs about emotional worthiness may be backed by strong reasons.

Reasons for ethical ascriptions are most clearly available as long as one can appeal to what is considered normal by the prevailing collective standards that constitute common sense. However, this opening to reasons leaves an obvious problem for any moral rationalism that supposes that contests about emotional worthiness can be definitively settled. As we have noticed with respect to the "objectivity" of Tomasello's social norms, references to the property require scare quotes. After all, common sense is inherently changeable. Its standards are open to question and challenge.

Our command of ethical language includes the semantic knowledge that causing excessive pain is cruel, hence undesirable, but in the absence of natural measures of excess one has only other accepted examples of the ethical property to call upon in identifying new cases. An action is cruel in comparison to some established paradigm of cruelty. In the case of virtues as well, one cannot do better than to provide comparisons that most people accept as exemplars of kindness, justice, and other desirable qualities of action and character. Because such comparisons are open to question, the philosophical challenge is to understand how they can provide good reasons in practical deliberation and yet do not compel agreement.

REASONABLE NORM CONFORMITY, LINGUISTIC AND ETHICAL

The thesis that good evaluative reasons do not have to be rationally demonstrable can be summarized in this way: ethical differences may be epistemically faultless. That is, people's competing opinions about ethical matters need not result only from errors and omissions (although these are a frequent source of moral conflict), but can also arise from conflicting emotional responses. I may sympathize with a person's distress and you may agree that my response is fitting, but deny that it is the most worthy one. In place of normative objectivity in such matters there are patterns of reaction that may differ from individual to individual. Supposing this to be the case for ascriptions of virtue and vice generally,¹⁴ disputes about them need not constitute

strict disagreements.¹⁵ In other words, they do not entail errors by one party or another; and in this respect are not subject to rational adjudication. However, this is a narrow technical point. It does not imply that our different emotions—her sympathy for my pain, his approval of that pain—preclude constructive examination. Rather, the point is important for encouraging the realization that when ethical differences arise, or moral common sense is confounded, we need reasonable discussion. In order to make this case I will develop elements of difference between descriptive, institutional, and ethical language.

In contrast to thick ethical language, our use of simple descriptive terms rarely produces extended debate. Even if we understand these terms as labels for inner experiences (an open question), they easily become referentially trustworthy. Participation in a linguistic community enables me to suppose that your use of the word "gold," "colored," or "square" has pretty much the same extension as mine unless too many persistent conflicts occur between our statements. In this case, one of us might be suspected of speaking in some kind of code or changing the subject. So long as such conflicts and suspicions do not emerge, mutual confidence in one another's speech is warranted because the references of our words is underwritten by linguistic agreements that are true to the world. A similar story can be told about words for "secondary qualities." In using color words dependably we accept public, linguistic norms despite the possibility that they mark subjective sensory kinds that have no public expression. Even if we cannot convey the subjective content of our perceptions of color to others (another open question), the word "red" refers to the visible similarity of objects that English speakers agree are red.

Successful communicative cooperation between us evidently holds in principle for all descriptive language, but it may become problematic in the case of words for institutional kinds. Terms like "widow" obviously presuppose social conditions in expressing a community's customary arrangements: only people in groups count a woman whose mate has died as a "widow." However, institutional realities may become disrupted. As Sally Haslanger notes, "commitment to certain kinds or categories is at least partly a political choice" about which there is potential room for continuing dispute.¹⁶ The acceptability of the constitutive rules for conventional kinds can be contested, leaving these institutional forms inherently subject to instability. Of course, there are many unproblematic social kinds in which tendencies to reject conventions are entirely dormant. Widows constitute a social category that poses no challenge to common sense unless there are dubious obligations upon female

survivors that cause the social category to be resisted, its moral implications disputed, and the use of "widow" avoided.

To be sure, if some people do reject the word for an institutional kind as a valid marker and refuse to defer semantically to its defenders, our capacity to reason together about its referents becomes more difficult. Under such circumstances a political response to these disputes can be appealing. Legal or other means of social authority may provide a definition of "widow," just as they can establish that a deformed infant is a "person"¹⁷ and therefore subject to the protections available to other people. The reference of the word for widows, persons, or other conventional kinds can be reliably fixed in this way. As Philip Pettit puts it, social authority can establish "an order of public meanings in an area where such an order is not spontaneously available, restoring the power of words to provide people with common bearings and shared reasons" (Pettit 2008, 132).

Of course, in the absence of any natural fact of the matter, the references of "widow," "person," etc., may be fixed differently in different jurisdictions. In one state "person" may be defined by physical attributes, in another by mental competence or the age of majority. In each case the definition is potentially subject to criticism by referring to the statutes of other states or through expressions of conscientious objection. Nevertheless, the legal norms provide local clarity and thereby suggest one possible way of handling the inconstancy of the names of virtues and vices.

The suggestion should be resisted. There are unwelcome consequences to modeling ethical language on the rules governing words for institutional facts in stable regimes. On this model, the reference of "justice" and "cruelty" can be fixed like that of "widow," "person," and other conventional kinds by a recognized authority, or Great Definer.¹⁸ In this way the state overcomes the descriptive openness of dictionary definitions of ethical language. A dictionary will say that justice is conformity to a principle that determines just conduct without specifying what that principle is or it will refer to giving everyone their due without saying what that is. Legal authority will provide those practical details with all the descriptive precision required for identifying what is to be included in a code of justice. Certain describable properties then count as institutional or ethical facts.

The problem for this idea is that the law or other means of social authority cannot succeed in securing authoritative public references for "just" and "cruel" as it does for "widow" and "person." We can see why this is the case by giving closer consideration to the proposition that one person calls "cruelty" what another calls "justice." Cruelty includes causing physical or mental pain; justice is giving people what is due to them,

for example by enforcing covenants through punishments for defection. Enforcing covenants can be painful, but it is not necessarily cruel because painfulness and cruelty are distinct concepts. The former is descriptively determinate whereas the latter is not, for there can be general evidence-based agreement that an experience is painful although people may differ in their assessment of its cruelty.

The crucial issue with respect to cruelty is whether the pain in question is excessive or undue, hence worthy of moral disdain. This is not a simple quantitative matter, but an evaluative one that deprives assertions of cruelty of a robust naturalistic test of truth and thus denies the question a technically rational answer. The model of institutional facts is meant to resolve this problem and at first looks promising. A widow is a female survivor, and while the concept of survivors has no inherently normative implications the legal standing of widows includes answerable questions about their rights and responsibilities. Similarly, one might argue that legally setting a punishment is meant to imply that it is not excessively painful, while leaving it open for the law to embed explicit standards beyond which punishment is deemed cruel. The authority of the state thereby stabilizes the extensions of "just" and "cruel" and secures unequivocal practical conclusions.

Institutionalizing ethical ascriptions in this way no doubt captures some complex legal and social truths, but the difficulty for the proposal is clear from the need for three interrelated qualifications. One is that in order to be effective the law must normally be sanctioned by custom. Legislation alone does not produce a sense of the law's validity, which requires the public understanding that leads to an affective and intellectual respect for political authority. This task can be as formidable as it is essential, since in order for the political specification of cruelty (and the like) to not appear arbitrary the state has to defer to the informed judgments of that ubiquitous character in legal judgment: the reasonable person. This is an important, but uncertain standard because reasonable people may differ, in which case the legal fiction cannot be employed where common sense is most needed to end an argument.

A second qualification recognizes that the "shapelessness" of ethical terms frustrates the capacity of laws to provide a constant meaning to them. The popular references of words like "cruel" are not normally unified under a descriptive concept that comprises the non-ethical features associated with the term (Kirchin 2010, 5). Even paradigm cases of cruelty for which there is no gap between popular applications of the word and its political specification are potentially subject to drifting responses, leaving it impossible to dependably identify the descriptive content of cruelty. The

concept has to be more descriptively complex than "painful," since it is easy to identify pains that are not widely regarded as cruel, but normative issues arise in seeking a more adequate representation. As suggested above, we may say that painful things are cruel unless there are factors warranting the pain, such as crimes whose punishment is kept within a certain level of severity; but no such property will unequivocally limit the descriptive sense of "cruel" to definite applications recognized by all. If, for example, unusually severe pain regularly resulted in useful learning or reformed behavior, this corrective influence would convince some that its infliction was appropriate after all. Any descriptive specification of undue pain can prove ethically defeasible, suggesting the permanent possibility of tensions between the laws and their popular acceptance.

A final qualification follows from the fact that efforts to explicate words for virtues and vices in terms of legal facts omit the evaluative dimension identified earlier. The belief that something is cruel consists in more than a reference to a pain of some kind with legal sanction or disapproval because that belief includes a view of the pain as excessive or unwarranted. "Cruel" does convey disapproval in assertive contexts, but it is reasoned disapproval rather than simple affective aversion. It can be backed up by examples, analogies, comparisons, and other reasons that justify sympathy for the sufferer and indignation in the observer. A punishment may thus be legally mandated, but seem unworthy of the crime.

The words for virtues and vices in general have this compound structure, conveying worthiness or unworthiness as well as painfulness or other fitting properties. Because our ascriptions of worthiness may differ, we encounter inconstancy of reference with respect to "cruel," but the evaluative claim gives our ethical language an element of the constancy that is typical of semantic cooperation. That is, we agree semantically that something is cruel when it causes excessive or undue pain even if our different emotional responses prevent agreement about when in fact this is the case.¹⁹ "Cruel" means "unduly painful," notwithstanding individual variation in ascriptions of such pains. Although ethical language has inconstant references, its terms have constant evaluative valences, making it a contradiction to say, "That is cruel but not unduly painful."²⁰

Now, it is possible to contest this semantic point by stressing a comparison of words for vices with other thick terms. For example, many ethical terms and pejoratives are alike in being objectionable to some people: Just as many people find ethnic slurs unacceptable an egoist might object to the ethically negative uses of "selfish" for suggesting that an expression of self-interest can be undue. The objection, like the

coherence of Ayn Rand's defiant title, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, implies that the word does not include an unfavourable evaluation within its meaning. However, it is not correct that a philosophical position such as egoism can cancel the entailment of "undue" by "selfish" in this way.

By proposing that "selfish" says nothing beyond "self-interested" the egoist is engaged in linguistic revisionism, stipulating a narrow, non-evaluative meaning for the word and thereby begging the question against the word's invariantly negative valence. Egoists are, in effect, removing themselves from a conversation. However, the cost of denying a stake in ethical judgments about permissible levels of self-interest and inflictions of pain is high. It amounts to insensitivity to the class of ethical terms that express the principles evident in their normative dimension. Thus, cruelty offends the principle of justice that calls for giving persons what they are due and selfishness conflicts with avoiding excessive self-interest. Similarly, courage is pride-worthy willingness to face evil for the sake of greater good. These principles are conceptual truths. Recognizing them as marks of emotion-worthiness is fully consistent with making conflicting assessments of the extensions of ethical terms, and that recognition is sufficient for understanding that they are semantic parts of the words for the virtues in question. Even if we diverge on the identification of the greater good we understand the ethical implication of the concept of courage.

To recapitulate, we have the following three necessary qualifications to political or institutional specifications of ethical words: (1) effective legislation requires the endorsement of custom, which is inherently challengeable and changeable; (2) the "shapelessness" of ethical words resists definitive statements of what describable properties count as virtues or vices; and (3) efforts to explicate words for virtues and vices in terms of institutional facts omit the evaluative dimension of their meaning. Taken all together, these points imply that although human beings are normally in semantic agreement we cannot be forced to ethical agreement by conventions that make a cluster of descriptive features count as a social fact. They thereby mirror Tomasello's qualifications to his cultural objectivism, and indicate that when reasonable persons diverge in their use of ethical terms, we should be cautious about what we mean when saying, "two thinkers who grasp the same sense can disagree about its correct extension" (Väyrynen 2013, 189-189).

The reason for caution about Väyrynen's statement is that if there is no philosophically "correct" position, then assigning different extensions to "cruel" or "just" does not amount to rational disagreement. This is the crucial point about epistemic faultlessness. When you and I dispute the cruelty and justice of a certain

punishment, we can often acknowledge that our opinions express our different assessments of the circumstances and recognize that our judgments are both informed. We can continue to argue and may succeed in moderating our differences by appreciating one another's perspectives. However, that shows that we are getting our emotional responses into more thoughtful alignment with one another, not that we are closer to getting things right. The constant evaluative valence of ethical words leaves differences about their signification or referents a continuing possibility.

This constant valence is part of the structure of linguistic community and public discourse. People have historically sought to determine what justice requires in the political recognition of men and women, for example. The answers given have changed, but this is not surprising because our emotional responses have become answerable to new sets of common sense comparisons. If citizens have political rights, then are women not sufficiently like citizens to have the same rights? Such issues are advanced by defensible analogies with previously settled cases that promote emotional realignment. However, everything is like everything else in some respect, leaving one person's comparisons logically open to another's charge of superficiality.

More and more people have begun to compare solitary confinement with already-outlawed forms of torture, but we continue to differ about whether all capital punishment is cruel. It is because there is no obviously factual way of settling such differences that ethical reasons do not satisfy the norms of theoretical reason that require factual determination and logical validity. Emotional alignment and misalignment do nonetheless occur within the space of reasons, enabling reasonable normative deliberation to occur. Such deliberation links semantic competence with a philosophically justifiable motivation to seek ethical norm-conformity in a way I will now try to establish.

THE DELIBERATIVE WEIGHT OF ETHICAL NORMS

The issue is when the existence of a social norm provides a personal reason for following it. Of course, the leviathan of orthodox society can conventionally discourage norm-offending behavior but could prevent norm-challenging opinion only by effectively determining the extensions of the words that express ethical judgments. In this case, we would agree on which painful actions are just and which are cruel. It is one thing, however, to accept the social rules governing the meanings of the words of our ethical language, as we do; it is another thing to accept the code of ethics determined by a standard set of established referents for "cruel," "just," and the like. There is a vital relationship between these linguistic and ethical norms, but it needs clarification in

order to show how the use of words for virtues and vices includes opportunities for communal deliberation that stands in cognitive contrast to unreasonably colliding individuals. The account should wrap together the relationship between semantic and ethical norms in a way that shows what it is to be bound by an ethical norm and why such norms can overrule one's personal objectives even when opportunities to obtain them beckon.

One view of the relationship between linguistic and ethical norms is that a linguistic community enables us to recognize that the meaning of "cruel" includes "excessively painful," but restricts tests of excessiveness to norms that hardly anyone contests. Tomasello's natural histories reflect this view, stressing the institutionalization of ethical language. They say that people are psychologically bound by the established norms of their culture, so that conventional society governs ethical thinking as well as ethical behavior. However, this picture of collective intentionality has little to say about how we can have good reasons to be rule-bound in the first place. Some recent philosophical treatments attempt to address this limitation.

Joseph Heath offers an account of linguistic and ethical norms as parts of a single rational system. In criticizing the instrumentalist individualism that explains social practices in terms of self-interested agency, he argues that "the motivational structures associated with norm-conformity" are not "merely conventional," but "transcendentally necessary" (Heath 2011, 216). We cannot coherently choose to abandon our psychological tendency to norm-conformity: a rational agent cannot subscribe to wholesale rejection of inconvenient social rules because that would violate the linguistic conditions of the possibility of thought. Hence we are motivated to accept ethical constraints. Without this disposition we could not participate in the practice of giving reasons at all.

Heath "does not mean that a person must actually endorse the prevailing set of social norms in order to use language" (Heath 2011, 221). He recognizes that people can rationally engage in acts of social deviance and is therefore only "assigning normative reasons for action considerable deliberative weight" (Heath 2011, 221). He does not explicate the concept of deliberative weight, but however it should be construed (I will return to this crucial matter) there is an obvious objection to his argument: in order to understand reasons-giving we need not respect all social norms, but only the network of linguistic rules that enmesh rational agents. To this objection he replies that language is woven into the fabric of all social actions, so that agents cannot adopt a disposition to respect only linguistic or cognitive norms (Heath 2003, 378-397, 393). Hence, by the time one has learned a language it is already too

late to abandon the moral disposition as well. However, this response neglects the difference between first- and second-level norms of cooperation distinguished in the first section above.

Even on the assumption that all deliberate social actions presuppose a developed capacity for language, that capacity includes reference back to our own interests—our desire to be understood—rather than following moral rules for their own sake. Individual intentionality seems intact beyond first-level linguistic community because we can distinguish between the semantic rules of communicative intention and ethical rules calling for sincere and truthful expression of one's thoughts. As a result, appeal to transcendental necessity does not well explain the weight accorded to ethical rules.

Paul Faulkner also supports the rationality of a general disposition towards norm-conformity, but he makes a "bootstrapping" rather than transcendental case for it. He suggests that choosing to trust others to comply with social norms itself creates reasons that justify this emotion: "[T]he act of trust is rationally self-supporting in that it is based on an attitude of trust, which through implying the presumption that the trusted is trustworthy, gives a reason for trusting" (Faulkner 2011, 151).²¹ Thus, friends naturally ascribe to one another reasons to act in the knowledge that they depend upon each other to be trustworthy. Trust exercises ethical constraint from the beginning, since the emotional bond overrules the personal interests of purely instrumental agents. However, it is not clear how the amicable connection extends to others whom one has not learned to trust. The argument does not clearly link this bond to generally binding norms, leaving problems for second-level trust in others when there are neither predictive nor affective grounds for trusting them to mean what they say they mean or intend. The rationalistic concern that self-interested persons may lack sufficient reason for honesty remains, along with the same concern for exercising other virtues.

Stephen Darwall offers one further defense of norm-conformity, stressing an idea much like Tomasello's "we-intentionality." Interpersonal relationships of this kind are present in emotions of gratitude, resentment, respect, esteem, and similarly "reactive attitudes." The persons who are the objects of such emotions exist in an ethical relationship with one another rather than constituting objects to be manipulated for one's own purely instrumental, self-interested purposes. Darwall addresses the limitations of friendly trust that we found in Faulkner by noting that some justifiable human attitudes extend ethical relationships to everyone. In contrast to honor, which belongs to "an essentially hierarchical social order" (Darwall 2013, 17), respect for

persons is not bestowed for certain culturally approved merits, but in recognition of the equal dignity of all moral agents without regard to personal merit. It is not clear why this egalitarian conviction should not itself be regarded as a cultural preference. Without a demonstration of the universality of human dignity we have no decisive grounds for favoring one ethos over another. We therefore seem philosophically limited to a view of moral relationships that is open to both hierarchical and egalitarian interpretations, leaving the obligation to be honest towards everyone an open question.

Although transcendental, bootstrapping, and second-personal arguments for ethical non-conformity all prove difficult to state convincingly, we have already established grounds for a better case that established moral rules should be respected if not necessarily accepted. Although first-level linguistic trustworthiness does not by itself justify trusting others to tell the truth or abide by other moral norms, it does include sensitivity to moral reasons and satisfies Heath's demand for normative claims to have "deliberative weight." This weight arises from our wish to be understood when using normative language, and hence from the mutual recognition of the evaluative dimension of the words we use.

We all know that in regarding a statement as not only false but also dishonest, or an action as not only painful, but also cruel, we take the statement or action to be worthy of disapproval. Of course, the merits of disapproval may come into dispute because conforming to semantic rules leaves ethical standards open to reasoned challenge. Nevertheless, mastering these semantic rules enable us to understand that in judging an assertion to be dishonest or a punishment to be cruel we are expressing a conception of honesty or cruelty that is open for discussion. We can compare the degree and circumstances of the falsehood or pain in question with those typical of generally acknowledged cases of dishonesty or cruelty, suggesting relevant similarities and differences that may evoke a sensitive response.

In short, a consequence of being norm-conforming with ethical language is that we are norm-seeking with respect to its applications to particular cases. Wanting to use ethical language correctly, we advance our conceptions of ethical worthiness and open them to comparison with those of others. Our semantic competence thus includes an at least rudimentary appreciation of moral reasons for judgment and action. This conclusion confirms and explicates the deliberative weight of established ethical norms by showing how established moral rules warrant consideration without rationally requiring that one subscribe to those rules. It thereby shows the possibility of questioning the canons of moral convention and the verities of common sense

in ways that challenge rationalistic aspirations to universal agreement. Reasonable ethical debates thus recognize the descriptive openness of ethical language and the alternative viewpoints it permits.

Normative inquiry resists complete factual determination and can therefore prove frustrating, but it also concerns matters that are open to continuing social discussion. The original meaning of ethical words—including their constant evaluative valence—keeps them subject to communal deliberation rather than expressing mere preferences or individual passions that are not answerable to any argument. Moral claims are thus not simply subjective. Because linguistic norm-conformity generates ethical norm-seeking it demands ethical reasons that tend to discourage defecting from practical agreements. It is no guarantee against defection, but it provides a reasonable basis for trust in others' good behavior. In so far as first-level linguistic trust already includes an ethical relationship in this way, one's desires are moderated by a disposition to tell the truth to one's interlocutors, for example. This disposition may easily be overridden by utilitarian calculation, but most individuals are not simple opportunists. They are clearly motivated in part by the kind of moral regard for others evident in trust, sympathy, respect, resentment, etc. As a result they are capable of the collective intentionality sought amongst those who are engaged in a common project.

Our capacity for trustworthy relationships is widely recognized, but it is philosophically dubious to model it upon instrumental rationalism rather than the motivations provided by moral emotions. It is equally dubious to expect it to result in moral consensus. This further result might seem to frustrate the common project by logically dissociating command of ethical language from moral common sense, but the inherent contestability of virtue-ascriptions does not entail unruly ethical differences. As in the case of words for institutional kinds, the references of words for virtues and vices are capable of pretty general consent.

There are norms of cruelty, justice, and the like established within a community, that is, wherever a measure of commonsense prevails. Disputes do occur when particular norms come to be challenged, as when novel circumstances raise questions whose answers are not clear to prevailing standards of reasonableness (think of issues in medical ethics emerging from the use of new technologies of gene-splicing). In these circumstances public debate may reshape individual intuitions in a resilient way that encourages political authority to sanction, accelerate, and help solidify those reshaped intuitions in newly legalized practices (think of mixed-race, then same-sex marriages). For the most part, individual persons and their societies change together,

making the common project easier than what narrowly rationalistic explanations of human practices might suggest.

To draw these points together, philosophical worries about the inconstant and equivocal nature of ethical language—the inconstant applications of words for virtues and vices—are well addressed through the relationship between linguistic norms and the reasonableness of moral emotions. This relationship supports the expectation that other persons are not unthinkingly rule-bound, but have considered opinions of vice and virtue, hence reasoned judgments of emotion-worthiness. Competently using a word like "cruel," "just," "honest," or "deceitful" includes recognizing that its evaluative reach includes the associated moral emotions.

The features of the world that actually justify these responses are open to debate, but the linguistic agreement can moderate conflicts of judgment by making the passions answerable to mutual deliberation. Admittedly, this aspiration is easily thwarted, so that hopes of sustaining a general sense of virtue are never likely to be fully realized. Nevertheless, there remains the definable project of developing and sustaining a body of common sense concerning the particulars of acting well. The accord will always be open to question, but this is actually a good thing, since we should want deliberation to modify agreement if circumstances warrant that.

As long as these matters remain under sincere discussion, they can be part of a viable community even without an ideal observer, infallible pope, or moral or political sovereign capable of determining the references of ethical concepts. To be sure, societies lacking stable ethical relationships may be ungovernable without political power that is not accountable to the people. However, intractable social divisions are contingencies that occur only in certain local circumstances. The important philosophical point is that the existence of some final authority is not a requirement of practical reason.

Some psychological contingencies bear upon the view of moral reasons advanced here, and the thesis that mastering ethical language includes capacities for moral emotions. People on the autism spectrum are norm-bound agents in so far as they can communicate with others by speaking the same language. At the same time, autism includes a preference for descriptive literalness and a tendency to avoid creative uses of language, such as comparison and analogy (Baron-Cohen 1995; 2009). The condition also includes lack of imaginative entry into other minds, puzzlement about responding to others' emotions, and low affective empathy (Baron-Cohen 1995; 2009).

These problems in understanding the social emotions suggest that first-level linguistic trustworthiness does not always include a full range of reasoned ethical relationships. Although autistic persons may be able to talk about natural and institutional kinds, they can be expected to do less well with the language of virtues and vices.²² This limitation hardly shows that inconstant names are not, for most people, useful instruments of ethical reasoning. Rather, speaking of a limitation is a way of recognizing that most human beings possess an emotional range that includes a tendency to accept ethical norms. If not narrowly rational, that tendency is nevertheless guided by a quest for good reasons.

These philosophical points are consistent with scientific observations that the primates most like us are self-interested rather than moral agents. Great apes lack the kind of collective intentionality that emerges only with the development of complex ethical connections coeval with the reasonableness that includes non-instrumental reasons to speak the truth, abide by one's undertakings, and accord a measure of authority to common sense morality. Such reasons are part of the moral competence that most human beings, even mutual strangers, enjoy as part of their ability to master ethical language. Commanding this vocabulary allows for engagement in constructive ethical deliberation through recognizing the fittingness of moral emotions and engaging in reasoned debate about their worthiness.

Notes

1. In discussing virtuous behavior, this study develops concepts that align most easily with one of three main categories of normative theory, namely virtue ethics in contrast to utilitarianism and deontological approaches. For a good statement of that contrast and references to associated literature read Rosalind Hursthouse (2008). For a systematic development and defense of virtue ethics read Julia Annas (2011).
2. Others agree that this is standard philosophical usage. Read, e.g., Scanlon: "[I]n recent years 'the (most) rational thing to do' has most commonly been taken to mean 'what most conduces to the fulfillment of the agent's aims'" (Scanlon 1998, 192). It is worth noting that this is not an egoistic conception of agency but a strategic or opportunistic one. Rational agents pursue their interests, but these may include others' good. In either case, rationality entails ignoring norms when that is advantageous. For a clear statement of such rational opportunism in spite of norms, read Heath 2014, 266-272.
3. Joint action and its normative commitments are subjects of careful analysis by a number of philosophers mentioned by Tomasello in support of his account of shared intentionality. The following works are recent and comprehensive: Bratman (2014); Gilbert (2014); Searle (2010); Tuomela (2007).
4. I am not questioning Tomasello's empirical findings but only observing that they raise questions that empirical science is not equipped to deal with.
5. Thomas Hobbes is an exemplar when he notes "[T]hat the mind of man . . . by the help of Speech . . . may be improved . . . to distinguish men from all other living Creatures" (Hobbes [1651]1991, 23). Even "Children . . . are not endued with Reason at all, till they have attained the use of speech . . . The Light of humane minds is Perspicuous Words" (Hobbes [1651] 1991, 36).
6. Cf. Huttegger 2011, 11-21. This is an evolutionary rather than rationalistic explanation. Stable signaling systems emerge when mutually beneficial regularities of behavior offer no player a unilateral incentive to deviate.
7. Heath 2011, 216-220. Later on, in explicating the relationship between language use and social emotions, I will resist extension of this point to norms generally.
8. Similar divisions between people are evident when circumstances call for coded messages that are not meant to be understood by everyone. In this case, strings of symbols may be unintelligible without a translation key, or grammatically meaningful

sentences may carry information unrelated to what the sentences explicitly say. When sentences obscure meaning in these ways their users are operating at the second level where trust may be undeserved, but at the first level language is unlike a code that must be cracked or translated.

9. Of course, if we are ascribing goodness to a particular functional item, then a description follows. Cf. Brandom 2009, 2.

10. The Frege-Geach problem confronts the first form of unravelling, which suggests that the non-descriptive element of ethical language simply expresses approval or disapproval. The problem is that no such attitudes are conveyed in negative, conditional, and other meaningful contexts. By identifying reasons for ethical responses, the second approach to unravelling should avoid this problem. Read the discussion in section 2 below about the normative sense of words for virtues and vices, which is not exhausted by approval and disapproval.

11. Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson also equate an emotion's being fitting with its being merited in their forthcoming book, *Rational Sentimentalism*.

12. This is an obvious conceptual point that is broadly represented in non-cognitivist emotivism of C. L. Stevenson's sort; but contemporary expressivist literature has become so convoluted that any brief citation would be misleading.

13. Simpson 2013.

14. The supposition can be challenged, of course, if the "loose, vague, and indeterminate" rules of beneficence and most other virtues stand in contrast to "[T]he rules of justice" which admit of no exceptions" (Smith [1759] 1985, 175).

15. To be sure, one may say with McMahon (2009), "Disagreement exists where people answer a given question differently" (70), but that is to lose a useful distinction between differences about the facts and different responses to the facts.

16. Haslanger 2012, 135. The context of her comment includes the remark that "Widows in many parts of the developing world are denied basic human rights" (Haslanger 2012, 124).

17. The example of "person" is Pettit's (2008, 56-57).

18. Cf. Wolin 2006, 232.

19. This last qualification to the project of institutionalizing or legalizing ethical ascriptions depends upon a semantic conception of ethical language to which Pekka Väyrynen (2013) has offered a pragmatic alternative. I do not engage that conception

here, but Brent G. Kyle (2013) responds by defending his own semantic conception. For a detailed exploration of the semantic/pragmatic interface consistent with my account, read Sullivan (2017 162-174).

20. It is worth stressing that the invariance captured by this verbal contradiction concerns words. Others discuss valence as a property of reasons, leading to issues peripheral to norm-conformity. Read, for example, Dancy (2004, 118-123).

21. Karen Jones (2012) makes the related point that trustworthiness includes regarding the fact that someone is counting upon you to be a compelling reason to act as being counted upon.

22. To be sure, autistic people can sometimes accommodate well to their condition. Compare what Noma Arpaly (2014) says of it.

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Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness and Recognition in Affective Experience

Rick Anthony Furtak

Department of Philosophy, Colorado College, Denver

Keywords: emotion, moods, perception, embodiment, truth

Axioms in philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses.

John Keats, Letter of 3 May 1818 to John Hamilton Reynolds

If you stare at the sun for a moment and then look away, you are likely to experience a phenomenon known as an after-image. The image does not even purport to show you what is the case. It is devoid of cognitive significance, and not at all oriented toward revealing the truth. Although I accept that emotions are best understood as corporeal phenomena, I do not think this entails that they are as meaningless as after-images. How, then, can we do adequate justice both to the embodied character of emotions and to their intentionality, or to what they can show us about the world? This is one way of stating the question which is the starting point of my book *Knowing Emotions*.¹ If the heart does indeed have reasons of its own, which are unknowable through merely dispassionate rationality,² then there must be something distinctive about emotions, or affective awareness in general, which enables this mode of experience to aspire toward truthful disclosure. So how is this possible?

In order for us to take our emotions seriously as potentially revealing significant truths, we need to address the claims of those who argue that we should not take them seriously. The main arguments used to cast doubt on the idea that emotions have epistemic import can be classified into two groups: those that appeal to empirical findings, and those that make use of conceptual thought experiments. I deal with these in that order.

Corresponding Author: Rick Anthony Furtak, Department of Philosophy, Colorado College, 14 East Cache La Poudre Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903; email: rfurtak@coloradocollege.edu.

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First, some philosophers have pointed toward neuroscientific findings as evidence that emotions arise prior to “higher” cognitive activity.³ This is based upon a widely publicized extrapolation from research by Joseph LeDoux on startled rats. In his more recent work, however, LeDoux has repudiated this interpretation and stated his agreement with what he calls “cognitive theories of emotion,” such as those espoused by other neuroscientists like Edmund Rolls (2014), Luiz Pessoa (2010), and Antonio Damasio (1994), among others.⁴ An emerging consensus, then, would seem to indicate that fear in fact cannot occur only in virtue of activity in the “lower,” non-cognitive areas of the brain. This realization, however, has yet to receive much notice in the philosophy of emotion. Thus, I intend to provide a corrective against a common misconception.

Turning to research from social psychology, including such classic studies as Stepper and Strack (1993) and Strack, Martin, and Stepper (1988) as well as more recent work such as Wagenmakers et al. (2016), I conclude that physiological agitation is a necessary, although not sufficient, condition of affective arousal. Typically, the feeling of being in a particular bodily state is a crucial aspect of our emotional experience: this includes the sense of one’s own facial expression, one’s proprioceptive condition, one’s pulse rate, whether or not one’s skin is flushed, and so forth. The role played by all of this in human emotion is not accidental by any means, but must be included in any complete account. Yet if the felt occurrence of somatic conditions such as these could single-handedly induce an emotional response—that is, if a “fear-like” pattern of bodily commotion were able without any sense of danger to make a person afraid—then once again we might have reason to disassociate fear from any kind of intelligent activity.⁵ I think this would be a mistake.

Taking on the sort of thought-experiments intended to show that an emotion such as fear can persist despite our full awareness that what frightens us is harmless, I defend the claim that a person’s feelings are seldom (if ever) entirely recalcitrant in the sense of simply not answering to reason. We should not assume that the person afflicted by phobic fear has exactly the same beliefs about the feared object as do those of us who feel totally unafraid of it. Rather, emotional upheavals can manifest our deepest beliefs about reality and value, allowing significant recognitions to register, to “hit home,” with us. Even when a particular emotion is not an accurate recognition but a misconstrual, it is nevertheless a potentially world-revealing phenomenon, which stakes a claim to being true. Through our emotions, things appear to be a certain way.

Once we reach the middle chapter of *Knowing Emotions*, I have drawn the conclusion that regarding non-value-neutral issues, intellectual activity without affective feeling is profoundly lacking in its ability to inform us about these significant matters of concern. Moreover, we should accept that our capacity for emotional apprehension is embodied in quite specific ways. The type of recognition that an emotion incorporates is inherent in its phenomenal character, in such a way that how it feels to get afraid or to grieve is inextricably entwined with what we are fearing or what we are grieving the loss of.

One sense in which the heart has its own form of intelligence is that what our emotions disclose would be otherwise inaccessible to us. I argue that we do not know what it means that danger is at hand, or that a loved one has died and is gone forever, if we are unmoved by this information. Our fear is either an emotional awareness of an actual threat or a false feeling that something is threatening when it is not. And our grief is not a disembodied thought of loss tacked onto a mere somatic agitation: instead, the recognition of the loss is internal to our felt state of emotion. Such recognitions of personally relevant meanings, via the affective experiences of grasping or cognizing those meanings, are potentially truthful perceptions. It is through our emotions that we have a sense of reality and an understanding of what life means: this is why they are an indispensable way of gaining insight about both self and world.

Episodes of emotion arise against a background in which significant features of our lives and our surroundings already matter to us. Once we care about something, we are liable to have a variety of different emotions about it, in reaction to events pertaining to whatever we care about. For instance, if you love a child, this renders you liable to experience relief (and perhaps gratitude) when he or she arrives home safely despite the icy roads. Your concern for the child is a long-standing disposition with a specific focus: before his or her safe arrival, you felt afraid and worried due to this concern.

I explain this by saying that your care disposes you to feel worry, fear, relief, and gratitude. Affective dispositions establish the realm of "things which count and exist" for us, to employ a phrase from Merleau-Ponty.⁶ Referring to these dispositions collectively as the emotional a priori, I try to clarify how it is that love, care, or concern is a condition of possibility for revealing axiologically salient features of the world. When a person loves or cares about someone or something, he or she becomes vulnerable to a whole range of emotions insofar as what he or she cares about is impacted, in various ways, for better or worse. To leave the emotional a priori out of

an account would be to render our affective experiences utterly mysterious.

The theoretical fiction of a flat world in which nothing commands our attention is one that could appear only to a person who was completely devoid of love or care. Unless we suffer from a severely disabling condition, what we meet with in experience are things and possibilities that seem real and significant: the emotional a priori allows us to perceive features of our surroundings that are not of our own making, but that are not manifestly evident apart from our affective receptivity either.

I compare our capacity for love, care, or concern to the aperture in a camera, since it opens our eyes to value and gives us access to what is beyond us. By taking an interest in elements of our environment, most emphatically the existence of anything we care about for its own sake, we ground a meaningful world of concern that is illuminated by final ends and contours of axiological valence.

Once I have taken an interest in the interests of another person, I now care about whatever she loves: this makes me affectively disposed to take notice of what might affect her emotionally. In the process, I broaden and expand my world, finding “a significance in things” which is not an illusory fabrication, but which could not become visible except through the structure of a passionately engaged subject.⁷ So a child who struggles with language might have creative or scientific gifts that only a loving and perceptive parent could discern and encourage. This must be distinguished from projecting false qualities onto a person. The world is not a value-neutral screen onto which we superimpose nonexistent properties; there are personally significant truths that we recognize in experiencing emotions, including when we are seeing with loving eyes.

We may have a grounding attunement to our friends, our pets, our hometown or the valley where we live, to traditions and ideals, and to goals such as social justice or the creation of beauty in a certain art form: in each case, what we are oriented toward is a concrete particular, something whose life (either literal or metaphorical) we wish to be thriving.⁸ And it is precisely the distinctive peculiarity of our emotional perspective that brings these aspects of the world into our view. In this manner, the realm of what has the power to move us emotionally rises up “like an island” out of the “sea of [indifferent] being,” in the words of Max Scheler.⁹ These islands are demarcated with highly individualized intricacy—yet in my final chapter, “Attunement and Perspectival Truth,” I suggest that we can acquire insight through our pervasive moods, our temperaments, and our idiosyncratic affective outlooks.

A depressive, languid, or apathetic mood is not just a private state, but is simultaneously a feeling that the world affords no opportunities to become

meaningfully engaged, that enticing possibilities are unavailable to us. Our default assumption should not be that a mood is "about nothing." Fortunately, there is increased appreciation (and a growing body of evidence to confirm) that indiscriminately maximizing good moods can actually impair cognition, and that even depressive states may be truthful or reasonable in that they capture important truths and accurately depict actual states of affairs in the world.¹⁰ Thus, I follow Heidegger in claiming that there could be a particular "truth or manifestness that lies in [every] attunement."¹¹

Even the outlook demanded by theoretical research is not the absence of mood, but one way of being tuned into the world. It is a pity to be trapped too exclusively in a depressive mood, because the way the world seems to us when we are depressed is not the only way it is. Due to the multifaceted and pluralistic realm of value that we inhabit, Nietzsche famously remarks that a "diversity of perspectives and affective interpretations" are "useful [for] knowledge."¹² At any instant, an episode of emotion can erupt into our awareness, altering our mood and making us aware of another side of the truth.

Right now, that to which we are attuned is part of a larger reality, glimpsed from a vantage point which itself is partial. There are more significant truths than could ever be known emotionally from one standpoint; when we speak about the realm of what is affectively recognized by any one specific person, what is at stake isn't just the world as it can be known by human beings universally, or as it appears to those within a particular society (for whom it will have culturally shared features). Instead, we must appreciate that the world apprehended by each of us in his or her distinct way is still recognizably the world, one in which we perceive from a specific angle and view things in a certain light. Each of us can know only so much of what is emotionally knowable, so a plurality of differing affective subjects is required in order to apprehend more facets of the many-sided world.

I employ the notion of temperament to signify a person's entire affective standpoint: her concerns and way of caring, her characteristic attunements, as well as her manner of responding emotionally to particular situations. Our temperament never becomes an object that we can observe because it is that through which we look: it is disclosed in the way that the significance of our existence shows up for us emotionally. I conclude the book by claiming that our patterns of affective cognitions must always be open to revision and change, thereby making emotional truthfulness or authenticity into a regulative ideal,¹³ one toward which we must continuously strive.

Notes

1. Furtak 2018. For an overt denial of the claim that emotions aim at truth, read Döring 2010, 293-294.
2. I allude to Pascal 2005, 216.
3. Read, e.g., Robinson 2005, 45-54, 58-59, and 62-63. She writes that emotions are "non-cognitive" in that "they do not involve any complex information processing." They are "non-cognitive appraisal[s] produced automatically and automatically resulting in physiological changes," which involve cognition only at a later stage of monitoring or regulation. Cf. Tappolet 2003, 109-110: emotions involve only a "low road" in the brain, "isolated from our higher-order cognitive processes."
4. LeDoux 2014, 319. On why it is that a subcortical route "is unlikely to be involved in most emotions," read Rolls 2014, 165-167. Cf. Pessoa and Adolphs 2010. On why emotions are not confined to "the brain's down-under," read Damasio 1994, 158-162. For another instance of what I term a "growing consensus," read also Yiend, Barnicot, and Koster 2013, 104.
5. For references, read Furtak 2018, chapter 3. As I noted above, this sort of Jamesian view is also often defended by appeal to an alleged "sub-cortical" neural pathway prior to any cognitive activity: read, e.g., Robinson 2018, 54-55. For evidence that speaks against this view, read Furtak 2018, chapter 2.
6. Merleau-Ponty 2002, 333.
7. Merleau-Ponty 2002, 507-510.
8. Cf. Frankfurt 1998, 165-166.
9. Scheler 1973, 111-112.
10. Read Hansen 2004, 37-38. For additional citations, read Furtak 2018, 168-169.
11. Heidegger 1995, 138-139.
12. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, § 12, in Nietzsche 2010, 102-103. Regarding the "perspectival character of existence," read also Nietzsche 1986, § 374.
13. Cf. Salmela 2014, 98-99.

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Emotional Knowledge and the Emotional A Priori: Comments on Rick A. Furtak's *Knowing Emotions*

Ronald de Sousa

Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto, Canada

Abstract: In the following comments, I will raise no major objection to Furtak's main line of argument. My questions are essentially requests for clarification. They focus on three key expressions: first, the "unified" character of emotional agitation and intentionality; second, the unique "mode of cognition" claimed for emotions; and third, the "emotional a priori."

Keywords: emotions, intentionality, unification, enactivism, knowledge

Furtak's book is an enjoyable read. For much of it I found myself nodding in agreement. We all know that emotions involve physiological processes, and somehow provide us with information both about ourselves and the world. But how? Furtak has set out to explain how those "somatic agitations we feel when we are affectively moved might actually contribute to the ways that the emotions inform us about how things are in a world of concern" (40). It is a worthy goal. In the following comments, I will raise no major objection to Furtak's main line of argument. My questions are essentially requests for clarification. They focus on three key expressions: first, the "unified" character of emotional agitation and intentionality; second, the unique "mode of cognition" claimed for emotions; and third, the "emotional a priori."

Corresponding Author: Ronald de Sousa, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto, JHB, 170 St. George Street, Toronto, ON, M5R2M8, Canada; email: sousa@chass.utoronto.edu.

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“UNIFIED”

Furtak repeatedly makes use of a word often favored by exponents of “enactivism.” The word is “unified.” It occurs first on pages 19-20: “The somatic and the cognitive are not two utterly discrete components of emotion that are mysteriously joined or correlated; rather, they are conceptually separable aspects of one unified response.” The thought recurs on page 47: “emotions are unified experiences and not combinations of bodily agitation plus intentionality”; on pages 54, 67, 73, 93; and, citing the enactivist activist Colombetti, on page 169. What “unified” means, however, is to be gleaned only from its contraries: “not two utterly discrete components”; “not . . . agitation plus intentionality”; “not as hybrids” (52). But what is the difference between being conceptually separable and utterly discrete?

In a single event, we may experience different properties: a farewell can be bittersweet. The bitterness and the sweetness are distinct and certainly conceptually separable. But perhaps not “utterly discrete”: not just bitterness plus sweetness. For in a unified experience of bitter- sweetness, each modifies the other, much as a patch of color looks different next to different hues. But bitterness and sweetness relate to different aspects of the event. The sweetness is about the tenderness experienced in the farewell; the bitterness is in the immediate prospect of separation. Are agitation and intentionality united like bitterness and sweetness?

Probably not. The agitation and the intentionality are not just properties of a single event that happened to be simultaneously experienced. Emotions typically involve a “felt sense of bodily agitation” (33), which agitation “is inherently related to what it is about” (21). So perhaps what unifies them is that they collaborate on a single process—the unfolding of the story that is the emotion: “What goes on in the brain of an emotional person . . . is just one part of a larger story” (37). It still seems true, however, that the “conceptually separable” aspects of the unified experience make distinctive contributions to the process as a whole, and deserve to be examined separately. So I’m still unclear about what the slogan “unified experience” excludes.

Here is one way the agitation and the intentionality might be linked. Perhaps fear, as an apprehension of danger, causes—or essentially consists in, on some views of emotion (Scarantino 2014)—an “action tendency” to flight or avoidance. That would bring out how a given emotion’s specific formal object both causally explains and justifies a given range of behavior, and suggests that the “unity” we seek derives from the functional coherence of an emotional process. But it would be no reason to think the unified experience must be falsified by being analyzed into its components.

EMOTIONAL KNOWING

A central doctrine of Furtak's book is announced early on and repeated passim: "It is because what we come to know through our emotions could not be adequately grasped by any other means that the emotions embody a distinctive mode of cognition" (103). First, the "because": is it meant to express a logical entailment or a causal relation? Either way, it's not clear why a single object couldn't be grasped by distinct modes of cognition. I may learn about some recent event by reading the paper or by hearing about it on the radio. I might come to know that a cello is being played before me either by sight or by ear. Are those not different "modes of knowing" in the relevant sense? Why not? What counts as a mode of knowledge? And how should we identify the class of objects each mode provides?

Although Furtak asserts that emotions are a "distinct mode of apprehension" (74) providing exclusive access to "otherwise inaccessible" (103) objects, he endorses the standard view of rational emotions as whose targets fit their formal object: fear is apt, for example, if the thing feared is actually dangerous (13). It follows that fear can be misplaced: an emotion can be "evaluated in terms of its truthfulness" (83). If so, there must be some non-emotional way of assessing whether something is dangerous or not. If not, what could count against the fear's "truthfulness"? If any other "mode of knowledge" could apprehend only different objects, they could neither confirm nor refute the "disclosure" achieved by the emotion.

That seems to cast doubt on the claim that fear affords any sort of exclusive knowledge of danger. But although unaware of any current agitation, I fear I may have missed Furtak's point. Let me try to make progress by looking at two models inspired by sensory faculties. First, sight and touch seem to exemplify distinct modes of cognition. They afford, respectively, knowledge of colors or of textures, inaccessible by any other means. But what is not otherwise disclosed by each sensory channel is merely what they feel like, not what they are. Many other objects are apprehended both by sight and touch: a bottle, say, or its position relative to a glass. On that model, a distinct mode of knowledge might define a class of subjectively experienced qualia tied to a specific sensory channel. It could not provide exclusive access to any interpersonally available facts. It's not obvious, moreover, that any single channel of information such as sight or touch could provide objective knowledge of any reality independent of our specific sensory capacities. An objective fact should, by definition, be accessible in several different ways: the consilience of different lines of evidence is widely viewed as a criterion of objective reality (Wilson 1998).

A second sensory analogy might be drawn with Frank Jackson's Mary, the color expert deprived from birth of color experience (Jackson 1986). Mary knows "everything there is to know" about color—physical, psychological, and neural. When first exposed to the experience of color, does she acquire new knowledge? Intuitions differ. One issue is whether what Mary discovers, if anything, is a further truth about the world, what yellow is, or merely a fact about herself: what it feels like to her when she sees that color, all objective properties of which she already knows. Now imagine Miriam, who has never felt fear, but who is well aware of the meaning of danger as a parameter computed on the basis of probability and extent of proximate harm. She also knows, without having experienced it, that fear is a normal way of gauging the value of that parameter in a single "unified experience." But since Miriam is perfectly capable of working out that value on the basis of facts about the world, her experience of fear doesn't constitute her only mode of knowing it. It merely constitutes one simple, non-inferential way of finding it out. The new knowledge she has just acquired is just a sense of what danger feels like to her. In both Mary's and Miriam's cases, the new knowledge, if any, is purely subjective: knowledge of that elusive philosophical quarry, a quale. In Miriam's case, what's new is merely how it feels to care about danger. It's about her, not about any objective fact in the world. The objective danger of which fear made her aware was there all along, and she could perfectly well have known it. The emotion is merely the attitude she takes towards it.

THE EMOTIONAL A PRIORI

Miriam's attitude depends, of course, on what she cares about. Furtak argues that what "grounds" every attitude specific to a situation can be conceptualized as an "emotional a priori." This is the topic of my third set of questions. I find the notion of an emotional a priori very intriguing. But the more I think about it, the less I understand it. Furtak asks: "what are the enabling conditions that make us capable of having emotions? Also, how do these conditions ground affective experience as a capacity that is potentially capable of revealing something true?" (103-4). His answer posits an "emotional a priori . . . the set of background affective dispositions such as love, care, and concern that grounds our whole emotional life" (108). The metaphor of grounding is complemented with notions of "basicness" and of "foundation": "when I refer to 'basic' affective dispositions, I mean that they have a foundational place in the emotional life of human beings" (108). But 'foundations' could be material, causal, logical or epistemic. So it's not immediately clear what is being claimed.

Furtak identifies the emotional a priori with "love, care and concern" (108). Let me focus for a moment on those three terms. The first seems to be in a different category from the other two. A notable feature of love is that almost any emotion can be a manifestation of it. This has led some philosophers to argue that love is not—contrary to what "almost everyone agrees" (107)—an emotion. Instead, it is a syndrome (de Sousa 2015; Pismenny and Prinz 2017). Furtak prefers to speak of it as a "grounding condition." But while other cares and concerns can also give rise to (or "ground") a potentially unlimited variety of emotional episodes, that does not stem from their specific character. It merely reflects the generality of those terms ("care" and "concern" are the most nearly synonymous terms, as well as the broadest in scope . . . what we love . . . is a subset of what we care about: the range of things I care about presumably just exactly coincides with the set of my 'concerns'" (113)).

Sure enough, I will not respond emotionally to what is completely irrelevant to anything in that set. But to assimilate "care and concern" to an "emotional a priori" is misleading. For the a priori is usually taken to be, by definition, independent of experience. And that is not true of our concerns. Experience teaches us to care about some things and cease to care about some others. So while it is certainly true—if not downright trivial—that our emotions respond only to what bears on our concerns, it remains obscure how the latter "grounds" the former.

In some cases, we come to care about one thing on the basis of caring about another. I may be quite indifferent to the state of traffic on Route 401 until the day a subway strike forces me to drive. In such cases my interest is instrumental: it is a means to serve an existing concern with getting to my office. In other cases, what is first valued instrumentally can come to be valued for itself. (Money, for example). We can also come to value something intrinsically because it has activated our reward system, despite not figuring in any deliberation about what might be instrumentally relevant. Could the emotional a priori be identified with the functionality of the brain's reward system which entrains new desires (Schroeder 2004)? That might fit in with the idea that the emotional a priori is supposed to "enable" emotions rather than to be identified with any specific emotion. But again, I don't think this is Furtak's kind of "grounding."

Another approach might focus on our capacity to respond to basic needs, such as the capacity to feel pleasure and pain, or the needs represented by the "four F's," or Panksepp's four primary emotional systems of coordinated physiological, hormonal, behavioral and phenomenological activity (Panksepp 2000). But those

sound too much like answers to a scientific question. Furtak seems concerned with a more metaphysical sort of "grounding."

Yet another approach might be inspired by the fact that when we attempt to justify or explain our emotions and desires, we construct chains that necessarily end in something we just want or just care about. Those are "basic" in a sense analogous to that of Danto's "basic actions" (Danto 1965). Just as not everything we do can be done by doing something else, so not everything we want can be wanted for the sake of or as a means to something else. That doesn't mean they are inexplicable: just that further explanations must appeal to a different layer of theory, such as the physiological or hormonal, that lacks the evaluative or normative import of emotional states. Though I would find this plausible, I again think it cannot be what Furtak has in mind. For he claims to "view it as inexact to claim that either desires or goals are grounding conditions of our emotional responses" (117). I remain unpersuaded of that inexactitude, however. It is certainly true that our emotions relate to our concerns. But what are our concerns, if not those things we have desires and emotions about?

In a trivial sense, anything we do or feel attests to the fact that we had a disposition so to act or feel. But I can't see what light is shed by positing an order of priority, logical, causal, or chronological, that places cares and concerns before any specific emotions and desires.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, I am unable to identify Furtak's emotional a priori with any of the interpretations of that phrase that I have been able to construct. Neither has he convinced me that emotions exclusively "reveal" or "disclose" facts about the world. To be sure, emotions can tip us off about the state of our environment, and often prepare us to act on what we know. But they don't bring us exclusive knowledge of anything objectively existing independently of our needs and desires. And while emotions do manifest attitudes, those attitudes need be neither prior nor posterior to the concerns to which they relate.

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Emotional Cognitivism without Representationalism

David Beisecker

Department of Philosophy, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Abstract: In *Knowing Emotions*, Rick Anthony Furtak seeks an account that does justice to both the cognitive and corporeal dimensions of our emotional lives. Concerning the latter dimension, he holds that emotions serve to represent axiological features of the world. Against such a representationalist picture, I shall suggest an alternative way to understand how our emotions gear in with the rest of our cognitive states.

Keywords: emotivism, expressivism, cognitivism, representationalism

For those of us living lives that are even remotely human, one hardly needs to turn to Proust to manufacture illustrations of the themes that animate Rick Anthony Furtak's *Knowing Emotions*. Here's one, which strikes a deeply personal note:

While I'm out with her on a walk, I pause to let my ole girl Siggy roll around in the grass. Seeing the obvious delight she takes in the activity, I too am filled with joy, and come to think about how important she has become to me, and also how I will grieve when she is no longer around.

Though perhaps a little sentimental, there should be nothing unfamiliar about the case of emotional knowing just described. It is one of those mundane, everyday moments that, nevertheless, make life itself worth living, at least for somebody like me. If you are unable to comprehend it—indeed, if you are unable to relate to it in any way whatsoever—then truly I weep for you. I would suspect that your humanity is

Corresponding Author: Dave Beisecker, Department of Philosophy, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89154, United States; email: beiseckd@unlv.nevada.edu.

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somewhat diminished. Whether due to physical or psychological trauma, an inability to synthesize just the right cocktail of neurotransmitters, or the bad luck to grow up in the wrong environment, your capacity to enjoy a fully human life has been compromised. You need help . . . and I imagine the primary focus of this symposium would agree.

But how are we best to understand the emotions such as those spoken of in the foregoing vignette? Clearly, emotions form an integral part of our cognitive being; any account of the emotions that drives a "Cartesian" (note the scare quotes) wedge between the emotional and the intellectual must be rejected. My perception of Siggy in the grass sparks my joy, which in turn leads to an awareness that she is a vital part of my being. Crucially, these connections are not just causal; they are justificatory as well. My joy is rationally permitted by witnessing hers, and that joy in turn justifies my belief that she is now significant to me. Indeed, without a substantial body of such affective engagement, I could not reasonably come to have such a thought at all. Thus, I find myself in broad agreement with one of Furtak's central claims: our emotions are a primary (though I wouldn't go so far as to say "exclusive") means by which we come to such thoughts.

At the same time, however, the joy I feel must be kept distinct from the otherwise dispassionate thoughts that it provokes and justifies, as well as the otherwise dispassionate thoughts that provoke and justify it. I might feel joy at Siggy rolling around in the grass—indeed, be consciously caught up in it—and yet fail to conclude that she is important to me. Somebody witnessing my rapture can come to that conclusion independently, and then be in position to tell me something important about myself. Though subjective, there's nothing essentially private about our thoughts and feelings; we manifest them in our reactions all the time. Moreover, somebody witnessing my joy could well use it to challenge any commitments I might have made not to cultivate such relations. "For someone who expresses such disdain for animals," a friend might chide, "you sure seem to show a whole lotta concern for that dog and its well-being!" If indeed I were steadfastly committed to renouncing the thought that Siggy could have any special significance to me, then I should perhaps take steps to suppress such joy. And it turns out that I can achieve such a turning of the heart, at least to a point. Just as our emotions rationally influence our intellectual conceptions, our intellectual commitments can exert some measure of rational control over our emotions. They (emotions) are not, as non-cognitivists would have it, mere "somatic agitations" or "disruptions arising from the body" that serve merely to intrude upon our consciousness (Furtak 2018, 11).¹ They are part of

its very fabric. The challenge, as William James so famously put it in "What Is an Emotion?" is to acknowledge and understand just "how much our mental life is knit up with our corporeal frame" (James 1884, 201; quoted by Furtak 2018, 17).

I don't think there is anything in these remarks so far to which Furtak would lodge any great objection. Indeed, these are just the sorts of observations that motivate the bulk of his broadly cognitivist account of the emotions, which stresses the degree to which our emotional and cognitive lives are "intertwined" or "inextricably related" to one another (82). If there are any significant further pieces that go missing in the short description of my emotional entanglement with Siggy, then I would like to hear them. For I worry that Furtak presents us with an account that overstates the connection between emotional states and the contents of the thoughts to which they are rationally connected.

Furtak's expressed aim is to find some sort of "middle ground" that acknowledges both the cognitive and corporeal dimensions of our emotional involvement. On the one hand, he wholly endorses the idea that emotional feeling is essentially somatic or corporeal. At the same time, however, he insists that the emotional bodily sensations are not merely agitations of the body. They also "point beyond themselves" (11) to carry significant information about our lived environment (55):

The somatic agitation we feel when we are trembling with fear, for example, is not a mere sensation but a felt apprehension of danger. And to feel pangs of guilt is to undergo what might be called a thoughtful bodily agitation. That is how emotions involve the living body in referring to persons, ideals, memories, possibilities, events, and so on. This demands an account of human emotions, not as hybrids of rational judgment somehow conjoined with irrational corporeal commotion, but as feelings through which we apprehend what is significant to us. (55)

It is this "crucial feature of affective experience" which Furtak stresses "has [unfortunately] been left out of most accounts" (45). Indeed, this insistence upon the intentionality of our emotions is particularly strident. As Furtak sees it, our emotions reveal to us aspects of reality that are wholly unavailable without emotional engagement: "[E]motions constitute a distinctive means of apprehension, in which something comes to be realized or perceived that could not have become known in any other way" (74). Specifically, only by means of emotional engagement do we perceive meaning in life; by them alone are we "capable of recognizing the value or significance of anything whatsoever" (3). Furtak, thus, characterizes emotions as

"perceptions of significance" (82, emphasis mine). "To become passionately agitated . . . is to have one's attention drawn to something that is experienced as axiologically prominent" (76).

It is at this stage that Furtak tells us that, "In order for us to acknowledge that human emotions are not irrational disturbances, but potentially truth-revealing phenomena, our account of cognition may need to be broadened" (74). I would agree with this assessment that the proper integration of the emotional and the dispassionately intellectual will force a revision in the traditional conception of cognition. However, I would question the manner in which Furtak pursues this strategy. Furtak's move is to expand the range of states that can be said to have intentional content to include somatic feelings, and also to expand the range of intentional contents that may so be felt. However, when speaking of such content, Furtak draws upon a tradition that insists upon understanding intentionality as "aiming" (like an arrow) toward the truth. Such an understanding leads him in turn to conceptual content in representational terms (that is, in terms of truth and reference). For Furtak, intentional states purport to be about items in the world, and they represent those items as being a certain way. Hence Furtak feels compelled to talk about the purported objects to which my emotions are directed, and the worldly conditions of those objects by which those emotions are to be deemed correct or incorrect, appropriate or inappropriate.

Consider again my joy at Siggy's rolling around in the grass. According to Furtak, the fact that this joy plugs-in so tightly with my otherwise dispassionate intellectual conceptions shows that it must have cognitive or conceptual content of its own. If you were to ask me what I'm joyful about, or what I'm taking joy in, my joy clearly centers around Siggy; the question then is what exactly does my emotional reaction "say" about her? How does it represent her? While my joy is prompted, and to a large degree justified, by my seeing her rolling about the grass, Furtak denies that that is the true intentional content of my emotion, for I could come to the knowledge and observation that Siggy is lolling about the grass without taking any such joy in it. Indeed, it could spark an altogether different emotion—a jolt of anger, annoyance, or fear, perhaps—depending upon other auxiliary states of mind. Instead, the "true" (or perhaps, "deep") content of the emotion—the content that it, and it alone, reveals to me—is that she is significant to me. My emotion thus reveals to me an antecedent reality that I could not be in touch with without any such emotional engagement.

Here, Furtak repeatedly speaks of our emotional engagement as if it were akin to more familiar perceptual processes:

"[T]he fact that love makes us aware of the significance of things does not necessarily entail that this significance is projected onto the world by our own minds. Our capacity for love, care, concern, or interest could function more like the aperture in a camera, opening for the eye of the beholder so that he or she has access to what is truly "out there" beyond us." (128)

Through emotions we perceive (or "apperceive," 74) a realm of subjective significance that is antecedent to our representation or cognition of that reality. Emotions "reveal meaningful truths" (123) by playing a "world-disclosing role . . . opening us up to an awareness of what is meaningful" (127). Furtak's commitment to an emotional representationalism modeled upon perception thus leads him to a rather strong form of axiological realism (132), according to which "our emotional responses are answerable to a world outside our mind" (145).

However, this axiological realism strikes me as less attractive than a simpler and more phenomenologically accurate alternative. It might well be true that if I didn't feel as I do toward Siggie, then I wouldn't (or shouldn't!) think of her as significant to me. But that is because those feelings serve in part to constitute such significance, rather than representing or indicating it. If I didn't feel as I do, then the significance wouldn't truly exist, and I shouldn't claim that it did. (In this connection, think of folk who falsely, perhaps even self-deceptively, profess their love of someone or something.) This suggests to me that the indispensability of the emotions for the proper recognition of significance does not, as Furtak would have it, show that the emotions represent such significance. Rather than emotions constituting the recognition of significance, it strikes me as more apt to say that our emotional reactions constitute the state of affairs that is subsequently recognized (in dispassionate thought). Furtak appears to dismiss this alternative as counter-intuitively "projectivist" (139). But it is aptly characterized as projectivist only if one insists that emotions have some representational content that gets projected out onto the world (94). There is no such content to project. Instead, the emotion should be viewed as a constituent feature of the fact about myself that comes to be recognized, and without which, there would be much less rational basis for such recognition. Again, it is Furtak's insistence upon representationalism that seems to get in the way of what strikes me as a more phenomenologically accurate "Jamesian" alternative.

It is reasonable to think that truth is a norm that runs beyond justification. For an attitude to be of a type that genuinely aims at the truth, then, one should be able to find instances of that attitude that are wholly justified, yet nevertheless fall short of revealing the truth. That, above anything else, is the challenge facing Furtak's

account. He draws such a tight connection between feelings of emotion and the emotional truths that they allegedly represent that it becomes very hard to see how one could have a fully justified emotion without it also being true. Rather than meeting this challenge head on, I would contend that the revision to our conception of cognition that the emotions demand is not one of expanding the range of states that can be said to have intentional content which aims at the truth. Rather, we need to expand our conception of cognition to encompass states that do not aim at truth, perhaps including some that don't have any representational function at all. Emotions are prime candidates to occupy this territory, which is generally occluded by traditional representationalism.

Here, it is worth pointing out that in recent philosophy of mind and language, there has been a renewed interest in accounts that suggest that various forms of indicative thought and discourse are nevertheless not really descriptive or aimed at truth. Vast swaths of our thought and talk generate what Huw Price (2013) calls "location problems": that of locating out in the non-discursive world facts or "truth-makers" to correspond to the correctness of such thought and talk. Hence, the recent proliferation of various kinds of "quasi-realist" or "expressivist" accounts that aim to make sense of our thought and talk about morality, causality, modality, probability, semantics, conditionals, and other logical statements, and so on—even our talk about phenomenal consciousness or "what it's like" to have conscious experience.² Key to these recent accounts is that they nevertheless allow non-descriptive thought and talk to plug into the inferential machinery that also governs what might pass for narrowly descriptive discourse. Thus, these are not the non-cognitivist "boo-hooray" accounts of yore—emotivisms that could easily be dismissed on Frege-Geach grounds. One characteristic of these newer accounts is that their notion of meaning (or content) is centered around inference, not reference and truth (which many of these accounts construe in a deflationary way anyway). To identify the cognitive significance of a candidate mental state is to locate its proper place in a "space of reasons"; to understand the meaning of a state is to know what justifies it and in turn what it justifies. My joy, for example, is justified by my seeing Siggy roll around in the grass, and it in turn justifies thoughts of how significant she is to me.

However, the account Furtak gives in *Knowing Emotions* bucks this trend. Encountering his own "location problem" for the alleged contents of our emotions, he casts about for the various "truth-makers" for an individual's joy, rage, and other emotional engagements, eventually concluding that "we must think about the human world as having properties that cannot be identified apart from our affective

responses" (94). However, I wonder why this recent work in expressivism wouldn't just go to show how we could responsibly avoid such an endeavor altogether. And so, I wonder why we shouldn't simply pursue an expressivist account of the emotions, treating them as cognitive events in their own right alongside other sorts of non-truth-aiming expressions amenable for such treatment. Indeed, it would seem to me that emotional states should serve as a prime example of experiential states that—while not themselves narrowly descriptive or truth-evaluable—nevertheless still belongs in our inferential economy. In this respect, emotions can emerge (alongside perceptual experience, perhaps) as a possible source of liberation from the ongoing tyranny of the Davidsonian dictum that "only a belief can justify a belief."

In short, then, much of the same considerations that drive Furtak's account lead me instead to recommend what could cheekily be called a "cognitivist emotivism" for the emotions. After all, what would be more natural as an account for the emotions than emotivism? While the moral emotivists of the early-to-mid 20th century had an insight when they likened (and even identified) moral expressions to emotional ones, in that both are at root non-descriptive, they underplayed the extent to which our emotional outbursts are (like our vocal outbursts) integrated into our inferential practices and are, thus, subject to rational control. They should have seen their way through to a non-descriptivism that is nevertheless cognitivist.

Let me close by calling attention to a curious example from a prominent early proponent of the sorts of expressivism I've been lauding, but who otherwise isn't known for much of any work on the emotions. In section II of "Language as Thought and as Communication," Wilfrid Sellars (1969) identifies what has always struck me as a very odd example of a rule to which he claims we are subject: "One ought to feel sympathy for the bereaved." Sellars' point is that insofar as it is weird to think of feeling sympathy as an action, there must be rules, which he calls "rules of conformity," that do not specify what one ought to do, but rather how one ought to be. When Siggy is gone, it is reasonable for me to expect those who claim to be close to me to feel sympathy, and not just exhibit forbearance. Sellars' ultimate aim is to show how rules for linguistic and intellectual activity come to us initially as rules of conformity and not action, and that it is primarily up to others in our rule-abiding communities to ensure our conformity to these rules. For our purposes, however, the thing that is so interesting about the example is what it reveals about our feelings, including the emotions. For Sellars clearly believes that our feelings are not just bodily eruptions that intrude upon our consciousness. Though to some degree primordial and involuntary, they nevertheless can and need to be brought under rational control

and "geared in" to the rest of our norm-governed social practices, including especially our cognitive activity. In that respect, Sellars is on the same page as Furtak. It's just that the Sellarsian doesn't think we thus need to see emotions as thereby aiming at accurately portraying any independent realm of axiological truth.

Notes

1. Hereafter, otherwise unattributed parenthetical references will be to the target of this essay (Furtak 2018).
2. *Read*, for instance, the accounts of various forms of discourse in Gibbard (1990), Blackburn (1984), Brandom (1994), Sellars (1956), and Beisecker (2010).

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What Are Emotions For? From Affective Epistemology to Affective Ethics

Francisco Gallegos

Department of Philosophy, Wake Forest University, North Carolina

Abstract: What would it mean for an emotion to successfully “recognize” something about an object toward which it is directed? Although the notion of “emotional recognition” is central to Rick Furtak’s *Knowing Emotions*, the text does not provide an account of this concept that enables us to assess the extent to which a given emotional response is recognitive. This article draws from the text to articulate a novel account of emotional recognition. According to this account, emotional recognition can be assessed not only in terms of the “accuracy” of an emotional construal in a strictly epistemological sense, but also in terms of the quasi-ethical ideal of responding emotionally to what we encounter in ways that are “specific,” “deep,” and “balanced.”

Keywords: emotion, recognition, evaluative property, construal, fittingness

In *Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness and Recognition in Affective Experiences*, Rick Furtak defends the bold thesis that emotions are indispensable to our capacity to recognize the importance of the things we encounter. Emotions, he says, “embody a kind of understanding that is accessible to us only by means of our affective experience. Specifically, it is only through the emotions that we are capable of recognizing the value or significance of anything whatsoever” (Furtak 2018, 3). Yet although the book presents a lively discussion of the recognitive capacity of emotions, it does not offer

Corresponding Author: Francisco Gallegos, Department of Philosophy, Wake Forest University, Tribble Hall B301, P.O. Box 7332, Winston-Salem, NC, 27109, United States; email: gallegft@wfu.edu.

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a clear explanation of what exactly it would mean for an emotional response to "get things right," as opposed to being mistaken or off-target, nor does it provide any criteria for adjudicating the fittingness of a given emotional response. The reader may thus be left to wonder: What does it mean for an emotion to successfully "recognize" something about a given situation? And how we ought to determine whether a given emotional response is fitting or recognitive?

In what follows, I present an exploratory interpretation of Furtak's project that fills this apparent gap in his account. I argue that while Furtak does not provide (and does not aim to provide) guidance for determining whether a given emotion is "accurate" with regard to how it construes its object, we can clarify and enrich the concept of emotional recognition in ways that are suggested by and compatible with Furtak's discussion of affective epistemology. According to the conception offered here, emotional recognition—i.e., the success of an emotion in recognizing real features of the world—can not only be evaluated with regard to the accuracy of the emotional response in question, but it can also be assessed along three dimensions that I call "specificity," "depth," and "balance." If this turns out to be a helpful way of thinking about emotional recognition, it suggests that emotions not only aim for the "truthful" recognition of reality in a strictly epistemological sense; in addition, emotions implicitly point us toward a quasi-ethical ideal of responding emotionally to what we encounter in ways that are specific, deep, and balanced. As we will see, however, this ideal of emotional responsiveness is fraught.

EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION AND ACCURACY

In *Knowing Emotions*, Furtak is determined to show that emotions can constitute a form of knowing. He hopes to rescue emotions from the all-too-common attitude that emotions are inherently misleading and distorting, and that genuine knowledge belongs to those with stoically "cool heads," and so he consistently defends emotions from claims that they are irrational and tend to lead us to construe situations in inaccurate ways. In this spirit, Furtak picks apart some of the stock examples of "so-called" recalcitrant emotions and phobias, such as being afraid of flying despite knowing that planes are safer than cars, arguing that such fears are, in fact, rationally responsive to real dangers—after all, planes can and do crash (Furtak 2018, 54ff). Likewise, in his discussion of the view that moods have no intentional object (i.e., that moods are not "about" anything), or are merely somatic, Furtak argues that in most cases moods are in fact attuned to real features of the situation, and he concludes that the "burden of proof" should be on the skeptic. "That a mood is 'about nothing'

should not be our default assumption," he says; instead, "we ought to assume" that moods are recognitive (Furtak 2018, 169).

In his enthusiasm for revealing the epistemic value of emotions, however, Furtak avoids addressing the ways that emotions can be misleading, and he uses words like "recognize" and "discover" without giving much consideration to the fact that they are success terms: you can only be said to have "recognized" Antonio Banderas in the crowd if the individual in question really is Antonio Banderas. Because the text has little interest in exploring the possibility of emotional error, readers are left to remind themselves that when Furtak writes sentences like, "emotions embody a kind of understanding," he must mean that emotions can sometimes embody a kind of understanding.

Nevertheless, I believe there are resources in the text for constructing a clearer and richer account of emotional recognition. Let us begin by considering the question of the "intentional object" of emotions. What are emotions directed toward, on Furtak's view? What is it, exactly, that emotions are supposed to be able to "recognize"? Although Furtak does not provide an explicit statement of his view of the intentional object of emotions, he argues that in experiencing an emotion, we "thereby become aware of how something is meaningful or significant to us" (i.e., we become aware of how that thing might be meaningful or significant to us, if our emotional response to it is fitting) (Furtak 2018, 82). In one passage, Furtak articulates his view this way:

In what we see, and in how it appears to us, features of the world are discovered [i.e., might be discovered] through our emotions. Every time we walk down the street, look at the news headlines, or enter the grocery store, our consciousness is drawn toward whatever seems to be significantly dangerous, calming, or wonderful: the stray dog approaching us, or a report of a political tension that has eased, or sunlight from behind a cloud that suddenly illuminates the contours of the canyon in which we are hiking. (Furtak 2018, 111f)

Such passages suggest that on Furtak's view, emotions are directed toward the evaluative properties of things (items, people, events, situations, etc.)—such as the dangerousness of the stray dog, the relieving quality of the news report, and wonderfulness of the breaking sunlight described in the passage above.

To explain, consider that things have both non-evaluative properties and evaluative properties. A "non-evaluative property" is an aspect or feature of an object that has no intrinsic relationship to a person's concerns. As Robert Roberts puts it,

the term “concern” refers to the broad class of “desires and aversions, along with the attachments and interests from which many of our desires and aversions derive” (Roberts 2004, 142). For example, an object’s mass or velocity can be described in abstract mathematical terms, without reference to a person’s concerns. In contrast, an “evaluative property” could be defined as a relationship of relevance that a thing and its properties have or could have with respect to a person’s concerns. For example, an approaching dog would have the evaluative property of dangerousness if the dog could attack and thereby become relevant to a person’s concern for safety.

If it is indeed Furtak’s view that emotions are directed toward such evaluative properties, then we can offer, on his behalf, a relatively straightforward account of the accuracy of an emotional response: an emotional response to something is accurate if the thing really does have the evaluative properties that the emotional response is purporting to recognize. For example, if the thing we are afraid of does not, in fact, pose any threat to our safety, then fear would constitute an inaccurate construal of the situation, and to this extent it would be an inappropriate emotional response in this case.

This account of the accuracy of an emotional response would still allow Furtak to defend the bold thesis at the heart of his text—that experiencing emotions is necessary for gaining knowledge about the “significance and value” of things. As Furtak points out, for example, although many of us would say we know what death is, there is a sense that we do not really know the significance of death until we have allowed ourselves (or have been forced by circumstances) to relate to it in an emotionally engaged way. Using the terms I am suggesting, we might say that this is because genuine knowledge of the evaluative properties of death—such as its tragic or frightening qualities—is partly constituted by emotional responses that are directed toward such evaluative properties, such as grief and angst, insofar as a non-emotional or merely intellectual way of grasping such evaluative properties does not rise to the level of genuine knowledge (Furtak 2018, 78ff). Without evaluating Furtak’s argument for this claim, the point here is that the account of emotional accuracy I have sketched would not rule out the idea that experiencing emotions is necessary for knowledge of evaluative properties; it merely clarifies that experiencing emotions is not sufficient for such knowledge.

The interpretation of Furtak’s view I have offered can also illuminate some other ways that emotions might generate knowledge. Namely, by focusing our attention on the things and properties that are relevant to our concerns, emotions establish

conditions that are practically conducive to gaining knowledge about a number of other things that we might otherwise have been oblivious to, including:

1. The existence of things (e.g., when on a hike, we might not have noticed the bear cub standing in nearby brush, if we had not been frightened by another bear approaching us on the trail, prompting us to scan our surroundings);
2. The non-evaluative properties of things (e.g., if we were not frightened in this way, we might not have noticed how a backpack's size and weight allow it to be used as a shield or weapon);
3. Features of ourselves (e.g., likewise, we might not have noticed that what we are willing and unwilling to do in order to protect ourselves, or how much we care about the person we are hiking with).

In theory, we could gain knowledge about these kinds of things without the aid of emotions; in contrast to knowledge of evaluative properties, these varieties of knowledge are (presumably) not inherently emotional in nature. But by prompting us to direct our attention in the relevant ways, emotions often establish conditions that are practically conducive to gaining such knowledge, and in these cases, emotions can be said to generate knowledge indirectly.

EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION AND SPECIFICITY

If my rearticulations of Furtak's views are on the right track, more would need to be said about how we might determine whether something actually has the evaluative properties that are attributed to it in a given emotional response. However, I will leave that issue to the side in order to explore three intriguing dimensions of emotional recognition, beyond accuracy, that are suggested by and compatible with Furtak's discussion of affective epistemology. First, success in the recognition of an evaluative property may be assessed in terms of the relative specificity of the recognition. Consider the following example: An actor experiencing stage fright perceives the waiting audience as being threatening and liable to become hostile and critical, while in fact the audience is content and generous and unlikely to react negatively to the performance.

Some might be tempted to view this example as a case in which the person is construing the situation in a way that is simply inaccurate, in the sense that the emotion in question fails to recognize any real features of reality. But in the spirit of Furtak's defense of the epistemic value of emotions, we might pause to consider the

possibility that the emotion is in fact responding to an evaluative property that is present in this situation in some form or to some degree.

But in the example above, what could this emotion be recognizing? Perhaps the actor with stage fright is recognizing the threatening nature of audiences in general. It is true, after all, that audiences can be brutally critical in ways that are painful and do lasting damage to a performer's vocation. If so, then when the actor fearfully construes the audience as being threatening, there is a sense in which this construal is accurate—not because there is anything particularly threatening about these specific audience members, but because in their more abstract role of "the audience," they do or could pose a real threat.

A better way of assessing the epistemic value of this emotion, then, may be to focus not on the question of accuracy but on the question of specificity: When a person is responding emotionally to something's evaluative properties, is this response direct toward the thing in an abstract way—merely construing it as a representative of a more general category or role—or is the emotion directed toward the concrete thing in its particularity, such that the emotion is responsive to what makes the thing unique?

It seems that success with regard to emotional recognition is greater to the extent that this recognition is more specific. For example, if you love me or hate me merely insofar as I am a representative of a general kind (e.g., a man or an academic), then your emotions are not as successful in recognizing me in my particularity. In this case, rather than criticizing your emotions as being mere projections, which implies that they are inaccurate and have no basis in reality—thereby dismissing in advance the possibility that your emotional responses are tracking real features of men or academics in general—it would be more helpful for us to criticize them for being directed toward mere abstractions.

EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION AND DEPTH

Another way that emotional recognition might be assessed is in terms of the "depth" of the recognition. As I define this concept, we can say that the recognition of an evaluative property is deep to extent that the recognition manifests itself in a relatively intense and coordinated manner along every dimension of our emotional agency, including cognition, language, perception, bodily feeling, motivation, and action. Typically emotions manifest themselves in all of these ways—when we are afraid, for example, we are disposed to think, speak, perceive, feel, be motivated, and act in ways that reflect our fear—but in many cases, emotions do not manifest themselves along all of these dimensions with equal intensity, and in some cases,

some of these dimension are absent altogether.¹ For example, we may cognitively and linguistically assent to a proposition such as "I am in danger" without feeling fear or being motivated to respond in the relevant way. Alternatively, we might experience a "free-floating" anxious feeling without being able to think or say what the object or cause of our fear might be.²

Thus, emotional recognition (e.g., of the dangerousness of what we are encountering) will be less successful to the extent that the recognition is "merely intellectual" or characterized by other discontinuities in the emotional experience, and it will be more successful if the emotional recognition in question resounds throughout one's entire being and reverberates to one's very core as a person. When we encounter the beauty of the night sky, the scariness of death, or the offensiveness of oppression, we can be said to fully and truly recognize the beauty, the frightfulness, and the offensiveness of these things to the extent that our emotional response resounds and reverberates to our core, and thus flows unobstructed and wholehearted from our deepest concerns through our cognition, language, perception, bodily feeling, motivation, and action.

One objection that might be raised to this suggestion is that such an intense emotional reaction would be overwrought and inappropriate (and so unfitting) in many cases. Consider the following examples:

Example 1. When at a restaurant, I am fairly hungry and find it annoying that I have had to wait for 10 minutes longer than expected to receive my order.

Example 2. When at a park, I sit on the grass to enjoy the sunny day, but the grass is damp, and I find it somewhat unpleasant for my pants to be wet.

What is required to fully and truly recognize the annoyingness of having to wait for food or the unpleasantness of wet pants? Given the fact that these evaluative properties do not seem very important, it seems that it would be inappropriate to give oneself over to a passionate emotional response to these aspects of the situation, for example, by yelling at the waiter or bawling about our pants being wet as a toddler might do.

In response to this objection, I would agree that there might be reasons not to act out in inappropriate ways in response to our recognition of the evaluative properties in question. Nonetheless, it does seem that in order to fully and truly recognize what is annoying or unpleasant about these things, we need to allow ourselves to respond emotionally to them in a wholehearted way. I have in mind here teachings about mindfulness in the Buddhist tradition, where we are encouraged to open ourselves up fully to our experiences even when they are unpleasant and to let go of our resistance

to what is showing up for us. If we were to attempt this kind of mindful contemplation of the annoyingness of waiting and the unpleasantness of wet pants, we may very well report that the exercise allowed us to know these qualities much better; we may even say that although we had experienced annoyance and unpleasantness in the past, we never really knew them before dwelling on them in this way.

Interestingly, certain features of a person's psychology might make it more difficult to experience deep emotional recognition as I have described it. In particular, if a person's concerns are incoherent and disconnected from one another, this might make it more likely for them to experience discontinuities in their emotional experience, and thus more likely to recognize the evaluative properties they encounter in a "merely intellectual" way, or in a similarly deficient mode. In comparison, we can imagine a person whose concerns are organized neatly into a coherent hierarchy, where all of their various interests and attachments directly reflect a small set of core concerns. Such a person would find that all of their emotional responses reflect their core concerns, and thus free from internal conflict with regard to what they care about, they will be wholehearted in their emotional responses. Such a person would be better poised to fully and truly recognize the evaluative properties of what they encounter.

One question we may have here, however, is whether this ideal of depth conflicts with the ideal of specificity described previously. In many cases, a deep and passionate emotional response to something arises when we construe that thing as being representative of a more general category that we care deeply about. After all, few of our core concerns have very specific content; instead, most of our core concerns are rather general in nature, such as our concern about being safe and secure. Is it possible to respond emotionally to something in a significantly deep way while also responding to it in its specificity? If so, how?

EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION AND BALANCE

Finally, emotional recognition might be assessed in terms of "balance." As I define this concept, the emotional recognition of something's evaluative properties is balanced when the recognition of a particular evaluative property is contextualized by the recognition of other evaluative properties the thing has. For example, in order to truly and fully know death, or to truly and fully know a person, one cannot simply know one or a small set of their evaluative properties, even if one's knowledge of these evaluative properties is specific and deep. Furtak addresses this issue when discussing the way that moods filter our evaluative perception, allowing us to perceive only the evaluative properties that fit with our mood. In response, Furtak says:

[W]hat would make this a flawed epistemic outlook would be if [the things that become salient while in the mood] were the only truths about the experience . . . that [the person in question] ever felt aware of—just as a sad person would be in a deplorable condition if her affective disposition prevented her from ever perceiving anything besides what further reinforced her prevailing sadness. (Furtak 2018, 171)

In several places in the text, Furtak celebrates the idea that to truly know something, we must experience it in a wide variety of moods and thereby come to recognize its many evaluative properties. By doing so, our emotional recognition of the object's significance would become more balanced, and in being more balanced, our recognition of the object would be improved.

As Furtak describes it, balance in our emotional recognition of an object's evaluative properties is something that is gained over time, diachronically, as we return to the thing in question in different moods or in moments when one or another of our concerns are prominent for us. But it seems that it would be even better if we could somehow recognize the many evaluative properties that a thing has synchronically, i.e., all at the same time. This kind of synchronic balance is made difficult, however, by obvious limitations of our psychological capacities. It is often exceedingly difficult to respond emotionally in an intense and coordinated way to opposite evaluative properties at the same time—for example, to fully and truly recognize the tragic and frightening qualities of death at the same moment that we also fully and truly recognize its beauty and its generosity. In this way, the ideal of balance seems to conflict with the ideal of depth.

Despite the ways that the three dimensions of emotional recognition that I have described—specificity, depth, and balance—may conflict with one another, taken together, they point toward a fascinating ideal of emotional agency. Imagine an emotional agent who responds emotionally to the things they encounter in deep and wholehearted ways, while at the same time responding to them in their specificity and in their full complexity. What would be required to develop our emotional agency to achieve this ideal? Or would this ideal only be realizable by some sort of sage who has transcended our ordinary human limitations?

Whatever we say about this question, it seems clear that insofar as a person's emotional responses can be criticized for lacking specificity, depth, or balance—that is, insofar as we can say that emotional responses lacking in any of these qualities will fail to fully and truly recognize their object—emotions do not merely seek to be "true" in a strictly epistemological sense. In addition, as emotional agents we are

implicitly called upon to live up to a quasi-ethical ideal of responding emotionally to the things we encounter in ways "does them justice" and "gives them their due," so to speak, by responding to them in ways that are specific, deep, and balanced.

Notes

1. Furtak addresses each of these aspects of emotional responsiveness at various points in the text. In each case—e.g., with regard to belief (Furtak 2018, 62ff) and motivation/action (Furtak 2018, 64)—he argues that emotional recognition is degraded when there is a discontinuity in our emotional response in the ways that I am describing.

2. As this example illustrates, the “depth” of an emotional response cannot be reduced to its intensity. The term “intensity” applies most naturally to the bodily feeling associated with an emotional response, whereas depth is a matter of continuity in the degree and kind of perturbations in our bodily feelings, cognition, perception, and action tendencies.

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Knowing Emotions:¹ Replies to de Sousa, Beisecker, and Gallegos

Rick Anthony Furtak

Department of Philosophy, Colorado College, Denver, United States

Abstract: Beginning with de Sousa's question about how my position is related to that of "enactive" theorists, I spell out my emphasis on the unity of affective experience, and say more about my conception of the emotional "a priori." In response to Beisecker, I elaborate by way of a literary example on how a significant fact can exist without yet having 'registered' in one's emotional awareness, and on the basis of this I reject the claim that emotions constitute significance. Finally, prompted by Gallegos, I elaborate on why, on my view, a valuable thing must have indeterminately many axiological qualities, and explain how a multifaceted world can ground a plurality of emotional standpoints.

Keywords: emotion, moods, perception, embodiment, truth

RESPONSE TO DE SOUSA

Ronald de Sousa, whose work I quote throughout *Knowing Emotions*, has called emotions "Janus-faced,"² because they face both inward and outward, revealing truths about oneself and about one's world of concern at the same time. I appreciate that he agrees for the most part with my major line of argument. And he gives me a chance to say more about a few things: first of all, why I don't identify my approach as an "enactive" one.³ Although I acknowledge that there is an affinity between enactivism and my emphasis on "unified" embodied experience (and upon what might be called "operative intentionality"), it seems to me that in order to accept this term one must do it quite religiously—that is, judging from the spirit in which others embrace it. de Sousa mentions, for instance, the "enactivist activist" Giovanna

Corresponding Author: Rick Anthony Furtak, Department of Philosophy, Colorado College, 14 East Cache La Poudre Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903; email: rfurtak@coloradocollege.edu.

Colombetti, who in her book *The Feeling Body* (Colombetti 2014) seems to preface nearly every claim with the phrase, "from an enactive standpoint."⁴

I do cite her (at least eight times), mostly in agreement, but I have some qualms about the scent of behaviorism that attaches to the enactivist stress on action, and the way that it stands opposed to what I think is a crucial feature of emotions, namely their passivity. For we are moved or affected when we become emotional. Passion is not an active or "enacted" mode of experience. As for its unity, I think it's important to be phenomenologically accurate: if I am describing my visual perception of a house, rather than artificially dividing this experience into two parts (by claiming that I see a flat surface and then infer that the building has other sides) I should instead capture how I view the house as having rooms that one could enter, or as having depth behind the front that faces me.⁵ And likewise with emotion: Marcel's feeling of grief just is his recognition of his grandmother's death in its full significance. He is not undergoing worldless commotion combined with a thought that arises after his bodily changes.

In *Knowing Emotions*, what I have to say about "action tendencies" is this: "It would be inconsistent not to feel motivated as if to get away from an apparent danger," since we are moved with an awareness that it threatens us "in apprehending it as fearsome. If we had ancestors who could dispassionately judge that they were facing something dangerous without feeling moved to avoid it, then they were afflicted by a kind of practical irrationality which probably rendered them unfit to survive" (KE, 64). And I add that "when we detect a potential threat in our environment, or a sign of danger, our body mobilizes its resources to respond. In some cases the best response is to turn and run away, but in other cases 'doing something' when frightened could mean pressing the brake pedal, or reaching for the phone to make an urgent call" (KE, 76).

This in fact is one main reason why I say that "what we come to know through our emotions could not be adequately grasped by any other means" (KE, 103), in a passage that de Sousa cites. Now, I do admit that "people with diminished amygdala function can sometimes learn to make intellectual inferences about nearby danger without feeling afraid," even if "this is a poor substitute for the affective capacity to respond that most of us depend upon" (KE, 75). Yet I note that there is much evidence which indicates that a deficiency of emotional feeling can be "severely incapacitating" (KE, 119). Marcel's awareness of what it means that his beloved grandmother is dead is born in the instant that he is powerfully moved with grief.

He may be akin to Frank Jackson's "Mary" (Jackson 1986) in that he now knows "what it's like" to grieve, but more importantly in this moment he knows that he has lost someone who was precious to him. What he feels is very much about the world: it is not a mere inner state.⁶ Nor did he know "perfectly well" beforehand the significance of her death: he only "sort of" knew it. Again, the intentional content of an affective experience cannot be disentangled from how it feels (read KE, 85). If you tell me a funny story, and I flatly reply that I find it amusing but am not amused, then my statement is undermined by what I do not feel (read KE, 93). Likewise, to find a work of art moving is nothing other than to feel moved by it.

Now, the portion of de Sousa's comments that I want to dwell upon the most is what he says and asks about my concept of the emotional a priori. For I am well aware that this is a notion that ought to be developed further. What do I mean in describing love, care, and concern (as well as interest) as affective dispositions that have a "foundational place" (KE, 108) in our emotional life? Mainly that they are in place prior to the experience of emotional episodes. As I say when I am introducing the notion of the emotional a priori in the fifth chapter of *Knowing Emotions*, "only if we already care about the life and well-being of a person—whether oneself or another—are we disposed to react with fear when that person is threatened" (KE, 112). Our care establishes the framework within which the potential threat has meaning and relevance: it is presupposed as a background in terms of which our fear arises and makes sense, and without which it would not be intelligible.

To shift the example, imagine that I become furious with anger upon seeing someone take out a multicolored cloth and begin applying paint to it. Incomprehensible, that would be, until you factor into the equation that I love my country, and that it is a U.S. flag on which a swastika is being painted. Otherwise someone deciding to paint his own rectangular bit of cloth would not have such power to affect me emotionally. In expanding upon the notion of love that is pertinent to the emotional a priori, I cite Ortega, who writes that when we love, our affective regard "flows in a warm affirmation of the beloved," adding: "Think what it is to love art or your country . . . it is like recognizing and confirming at every moment that they are worthy of existence" (KE, 126).⁷ It is, I note, taking an interest in their well-being, having a concern that their lives be going well: quoting Kierkegaard, I say that to love someone or something is "to will to exist" for that being (KE, 134).⁸

Of course, I can have a passing romantic desire for someone whom I find attractive when I'm out walking in the park, but this need not meet the criteria for love in the sense that I am talking about now and that I define in my book. Love, then, is an

intense form of caring (KE, 125), and the role it plays in demarcating and organizing our world of concern is presumably what de Sousa himself has in mind when, in a line of perfect iambic pentameter, he claims: "unless you care, your life will be a mess."⁹ I might add: an empty, disorienting, meaningless mess. The way we are disposed to respond with particular emotions in particular situations is a function of the cares and concerns that are always already there.

RESPONSE TO BEISECKER

David Beisecker volunteers an evidently more plain example of emotional knowing, so in comparison with that let's take a look at one of multiple examples from Proust that I use, indeed the one on which I rely the most. (I actually think this narrative and Beisecker's have a common thread, as I will explain in a moment.) Some time after his grandmother's death, the narrator of Proust's novel returns to a vacation spot where he had customarily stayed in a room next to hers. Making a familiar corporeal gesture, he leans forward and begins removing his boots: then, all of a sudden, he is inundated with emotion:

I was shaken with sobs, tears streamed from my eyes. . . . It was only at that moment—more than a year after her burial, because of the anachronism which so often prevents the calendar of facts from corresponding to the calendar of feelings—that I became conscious that she was dead.¹⁰

It is important that in a sense the narrator had already learned of his grandmother's death a while back. Here, a significant fact existed prior to being recognized through the character's emotion. Thus, the significance was not constituted by Marcel's emotion of grief. Marcel also claims that only in this moment of overwhelming emotion does he become conscious that his grandmother was gone. The embodied upheaval of his grief just is this recognition. This is also why we must reject any theoretical account of emotion which claims that Marcel already knew "perfectly well" of his grandmother's death, and that the experience just described is epistemically insignificant.

Likewise, when a mortal being whom we love is still with us, whether it be a friend, relative, or pet, we are sometimes moved to feel how much we would miss them if they were to pass away. In this respect, Beisecker's example is quite a bit like the one I borrow from Proust. Both are typical in that what we often become aware of in experiences of affective recognition are facts that are quite banal—that the summer is ending, that we miss a friend who is now distant from us, even that we're not as young as we used to be (which is trivially true). It's just that, prior to the emotion in which this fact truly sinks in—before it strikes a chord with us, and

resonates deeply—we knew it in such a way that we were not fully conscious of it. As I say in the book, if we never felt agitated emotionally by the awareness of mortality (our own, and that of our loved ones), then what we know about death and what it means to us would be less than what we do know after experiencing the relevant emotions, and what we are most intensely conscious of when we do feel so moved. The fact that all human beings are mortal, and what follows from this, were part of our stock of knowledge, but—to use an inelegant phrase that expresses the point well—we *were not knowing* these things an instant before we became emotionally affected (KE, 80-81).

But I disagree with Beisecker's suggestion that our emotions may constitute significance: the reason why he feels a sense of how important his dog is to him is because she indeed is. The emotion registers a certain state of affairs about the pet's importance to the person; it responds to this state of affairs, but does not create it. It's imprecise, on my account, to say that our lives are meaningful because of our emotions, or that emotions give meaning to life (*read* KE, 112). So I think Beisecker places too much stress on rational control of emotions. As Jon Elster has written, "It is precisely because people cannot 'decide to believe' that they cannot decide which emotions to have."¹¹ We can lie to ourselves, by misrepresenting the truth of the matter. In the words of a Freudian thinker whom I cite near the end of my book (KE, 195), "pretending that a slight or disappointment isn't genuinely painful [when it is], or denying that we love someone whom we do, may culminate in a complex of denials strung together," until "we no longer know how we feel or what we believe."¹² For reasons such as these, I do think that truthfulness is importantly at stake in our emotions.

RESPONSE TO GALLEGOS

In turning to the last set of comments, by Francisco Gallegos, I must remark that I am impressed by the implications he has teased out of my argument, along with the additions and enhancements he has made—which exceed anything that I myself articulate but which I am for the most part happy to affirm. Speaking about the recognition of what he names "evaluative" (and what I would prefer to call "axiological") properties, Gallegos invites me to agree that recognizing qualities that are valuable, significant, or meaningful is necessary and sufficient for emotion. And I think I'm willing to accept this, provided that we stress the embodied nature of that recognition, without which the revelation of value is not made.

As for the properties of things that move us, I accept that there may be indefinitely many valences in a single object, but I reject the notion that there are infinitely many, which would be required in order for every emotional response to track accurately some feature of the object. Take, for example, my anger at the ostensible car thief, when I mistakenly believe that my car has been stolen and there is no such thief (read KE, 8-9). I would not say that this emotion is at all in touch with the world. Yet I see Gallegos's point that any object must have indeterminately many—in his terms, "innumerable"—axiological properties. Let's say that there are hence a plurality of legitimate emotions to feel about a particular thing that moves us. How, then, can we justify any one affective way of responding?

I believe that Gallegos helps me to answer this question when he volunteers the criterion of specificity, of recognizing (for instance) a person in his or her distinctive concreteness. In the book, I do say that our emotions constitute "a mode of cognition which is discerning and highly specified" (KE, 88),¹³ and I repeatedly cite Iris Murdoch (read, e.g., KE 134, 139) to identify cases in which we fail to see the distinct individual because we are enclosed in a fantasy world of our own creation, as distinguished from the fair and charitable attunement to a person that allows us to see her as she truly is.¹⁴ The concrete particularity of an individual personality is precisely what we love about a person when we have a specific affective sense of who they irreplaceably are (read KE, 144).

What Gallegos's comments prompt me to add to what I've already said is that we rightly make similar distinctions when we talk about works of art. For instance: kitsch, or art that tends to evoke a sentimental, generic response, often traffics in abstractions, stereotypes, and two-dimensional characters, lacking complexity and tugging on our heartstrings in predictable ways.¹⁵ Our emotional life, and therefore our sense of reality, would be profoundly lacking if we were confined to such non-specific emotions—especially when we are dealing with actual people.

I also like Gallegos's suggestion that we understand full-blooded, wholehearted emotional responses in terms of "depth": Marcel, for instance, may indeed "fully and truly recognize" the sadness of his grandmother's death only when this "emotional recognition resounds throughout [his] entire being and reverberates to [his] very core." Only at this moment, as Proust's narrator explains, does he learn what it means that he has lost her forever, a year after her burial.¹⁶

Obviously, I do not think the embodied feeling of being literally, viscerally shaken is epistemically irrelevant, nor is it a gratuitous epiphenomenon—rather, it is a world-revealing mode of experience—and this is what Gallegos is describing when he

speaks of "deep emotional recognition." By the same token, he makes some brief yet intriguing proposals about why a person might encounter obstacles to undergoing this kind of experience. I would speculate that one barrier to profound affective upheaval is a semi-conscious terror of finding out what one deeply feels: call this a dread of one's own emotions,¹⁷ and of what they might reveal.

Finally, Gallegos points out that I continually put forward the idea that to know something truly, we must experience it in a variety of moods and from diverse affective standpoints, thereby coming to recognize all of its axiological facets. The multifaceted world of value in which we are emotionally involved—which is emphatically not a neutral realm from which we are passionlessly detached—seems to demand a multitude of emotional angles of approach. Yet he also brings up a problem with the ideal of recognizing many evaluative properties at the same time: it is not possible to respond with intense yet contrary emotions simultaneously, and this places a limit on the ideal of balance that Gallegos mentions.

I must admit that this is a matter about which I also have ambivalent, conflicting feelings. What I say in the last chapter of *Knowing Emotions* is that, because there are indefinitely many plausible affective interpretations of anything that moves us emotionally, we might wish to agree with Nietzsche that "the more affects we bring to expression," the "more eyes—different eyes" we "bring to bear on the same thing, the more complete will be our 'concept' of that thing."¹⁸ However, I nonetheless question whether this makes good sense for each of us, and recommend that it is more plausible when conceived as an ideal toward which we might strive collectively (KE, 185-186). Since every one of us can know only so much of what is emotionally knowable, a multiplicity of different affective subjects is needed in order to perceive more aspects of a multifaceted world. It is perhaps an unattainable goal for a finite being to try to view things from all sides. Attempting to see "from everywhere" might be dangerously similar to the absurd goal of attaining a view from nowhere. On the other hand, it seems that we do broaden ourselves in a (mostly) good way when we are able to see and feel another side of the truth. This is something that a close friend or other loved one can assist us in doing, when by degrees we manage to see and feel things from their vantage point.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to each of the four critics, for their careful and thoughtful attention to my work.

Notes

1. Rick Anthony Furtak, *Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness and Recognition in Affective Experience*. Abbreviated as KE in parenthetical page references.
2. de Sousa 2011, 69-70.
3. Most of those who adopt this label trace it to Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1991).
4. This is admittedly a hyperbolic statement, but readers of her book will know exactly what I (and de Sousa) mean. Read Colombetti 2014.
5. If I suspect that it may be a "false front" and not an actual building, it will from the same angle appear thin to me. Cf. Merleau-Ponty 2002, 436: when I am doubting the reality of what I see, "this doubt attaches to vision itself."
6. I think de Sousa simply—and uncharacteristically—gets this wrong when he asserts that "when the angry man, or the joyful bride, or the jealous husband attempt to describe the world, they succeed only in describing their own state of mind, or . . . body" de Sousa 2011, 29. On the contrary, as I observe, "when you ask someone to tell you more about his anger, he doesn't only describe his physiological sensations" such as "I'm boiling up!" and leave it at that, but rather "he talks mainly about the intentional content of his emotion, or about why he is angry" (KE, 72). Read also KE, 45: when we undergo an emotion, our somatic feelings carry significant information about our surroundings.
7. Citing Ortega y Gasset 1957, 16-17.
8. Quoting Kierkegaard 1995, 83-84.
9. de Sousa 2011, 33.
10. Proust 1982, 783. Read KE, 69-70.
11. Elster 1999, 308.
12. Thompson 1994, 130-132.
13. Read also KE, 61-62, on how an emotion can be "intricately nuanced and highly specific."
14. Read Murdoch 1997, 215-216 and 327-329. Cf. Murdoch 1997, 80-81, on "the texture of a [person's] being or the nature of his [or her] personal vision," as what it is that we apprehend when we direct a just and loving gaze at an individual existence.

15. For the idea that kitsch is characterized by its lack of specific defining characteristics, such that many of its properties can be altered without changing its effect, read Kulka 1996, 73 and 76-77. On flat, two-dimensional characters who lack depth, read Forster 1955, 73-74.

16. Proust 1982, 785-787.

17. On this phenomenon read, e.g., Isaacs 1984. Read also Isaacs 1990.

18. Nietzsche [1887] 2010, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, "Third Essay," sec. 12, translated by Taylor Carman in *On Truth and Untruth*, 103.

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