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Caring and the Apprehension of Value

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

CARING AND THE APPREHENSION OF VALUE

By

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To Dad and 'Dre, who taught me how to care

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ABSTRACT

An underexplored aspect of moral experience is apprehending (“seeing”) other people as mattering, grasping the significance of whether their interests are set back or enhanced. This dissertation contends that these ‘value-apprehensional’ (v-a) experiences play an important role of revealing values to us, both in our experiences of people in general and of those emotionally close to us. Caring emotions are plausibly involved in enabling, enriching, and enhancing these.

An initial contention (in Ch. 2) is that experiencing other people’s value is one way that we attain adequate systematic comprehension of morality. Evidence for this includes findings about psychopaths’ performance on the so-labeled moral-conventional task. Psychopaths tend to be impaired in comprehending that protecting welfare is the point behind rules prohibiting acts of harming. This suggests that they are impaired at apprehending the significance of others’ welfare, and this seems traceable to early emotional impairments.

I then turn to a positive account (in Ch. 3) of what capacities we should expect to facilitate value-apprehensional experiences. I suggest we should look to the capacity to *care emotionally* about others: roughly, to feel emotions congruent with someone else’s well-being, for her sake. I argue that this ‘emotional caring’ is better suited to explain value-apprehensional experience than other constructs, including empathy (which I understand as feeling what one takes another to be feeling). I argue (in Ch. 4) that to the extent that emotional caring enables and improves our value-apprehensional abilities, we should (all else being equal) consider skilled carers to have more reliable moral intuitions than others. I also suggest attention-refocusing strategies for mitigating the many biases that plague caring emotions. These are epitomized by what I call an *unaffiliated caring perspective*, one unaffiliated with a morally relevant situation’s protagonists, but informed through emotional caring about the (weight of) the interests of each.

Finally, I turn (in Ch. 5) to special value-apprehensional experiences that we have in intense, reciprocal relationships of caring with ‘special others’ such as friends and family. I argue that these special v-a experiences reveal even more certainly the moral significance of the parties in the relationship and of their participation in the relationship, for both their sakes. Accordingly, there seem to be moral reasons to devote caring attention to special others, even if we could otherwise do objectively more good (within reason). Emotional cares thus reveal not only values within everyone but reasons to devote ourselves to the individuals we care about.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CARING ABOUT OTHERS is an obviously important phenomenon in moral life. A number of morally important roles have been suggested for it. Various authors praise caring's role as a feminine approach to ethics and moral education (Noddings 1984), as a legitimate alternative to the 'justice perspective' of liberal human rights theory (Gilligan 1982, Held 2005), and as a premier virtue in moral life (Slote 2007). Likewise, various similar empathy constructs have been thought to have various important roles in moral cognition—as a core initiator of altruistic motivation (Batson 2011), as a pivotal component of our development of moral agency (Hoffman 2000), and as a core means of understanding other minds (Goldman 2011). And some recent projects have explored the positive and negative epistemic roles that emotions can play in our attempt to learn about the world (e.g., Doguoglu et al. 2012, Brady 2013). The present piece builds on many of those projects.

This dissertation suggests a further way that caring about others, emotionally, is vital to the moral life: epistemologically. The dissertation contends that one crucial aspect of a reliable moral reasoning strategy is the consultation of caring-driven moral intuitions: moral intuitions which are influenced by the human capacity to care emotionally about other creatures and which (where suitable) have been strategically regulated to mitigate biases. The epistemic importance of caring is that it plausibly enables, mediates, and improves our ability to have first-hand experiences of the moral significance of others and of how they fare, as well as of the importance of showing caring attention within special relationships.

The argument for this view takes various stages through the chapters that follow (to be previewed soon), but this introduction is the place to explain some of the key terms that will be used later. These include the notions of reliable reasoning strategies (§1); intuitions (§2); morality and moral truths (§3); and emotions, caring emotions, and their influence on our moral intuitions (§4). These are mere working assumptions about how moral epistemic life works; each of these concepts deserve volumes of treatment in their own rights.

1.1 Background and terminology

1.1.1 The reliability of reasoning strategies

We form beliefs through various belief-forming processes. A belief-forming process is *reliable* to the extent that tends to produce mostly true beliefs; it is unreliable otherwise; and reliability comes in degrees. We also can take up *reasoning strategies* about how to form beliefs. These can be understood as decisions to act on a plan to use some set of belief-forming processes. They are decisions, for example, about what sort of evidence to consider, and how to respond to that evidence under certain conditions.¹

Central to the epistemic quest—the quest to believe true things, not believe false things, and to attain understanding about important subject-matters—is the question of which reasoning strategies we *ought* to adopt. This ‘ought’ is often called an ‘epistemic’ ought; it is a norm that assumes the worthiness of the epistemic quest. (Other ‘oughts’ can conflict with epistemic ones in various ways; but we will bracket these concerns.)

1.1.2 Intuitions

Our direct access to the moral world is not through sense perception, and not through memory or introspection on our own mental states. If we ever gain direct knowledge about what is called morality, it is by reflecting on morally relevant cases and principles: consulting our intuitions about them. We can understand *intuitions* (following Huemer 2005) as non-inferential intellectual appearances. They are appearances, or seemings, in that they are states in which a proposition p seems to a person to be true. The seemings are intellectual they are not deliverances of the senses, of memory, or of introspection on one’s own mental states (beyond what propositions seem to be true to one). Intuitions are non-inferential in that the person cannot have actually inferred p from any other belief she has in order for this seeming to count as an intuition.

An intuitive belief is formed when a person takes an attitude of *endorsement* toward an intuition, i.e., attends to the appearance’s propositional content and either asserts it to oneself, or at least acts on the assumption that it is true. It will sometimes be useful to talk about a (moral)

¹ At the end of Ch. 4, it will come up that reliability is not necessarily the same as *reliance-worthiness*. That is, there are cases in which it is important to rely on some reasoning strategy or other, and the *most* reliable one is still by definition unreliable. Such a belief-forming process, we can say, is (all things considered) reliance-worthy despite being unreliable.

intuition being *endorsement-worthy*: an intuition enjoys this property to the extent that we ought epistemically to endorse it.²

Factors positively affecting the apparent endorsement-worthiness of an intuition seem to include its [i] clarity, including coherence in content and extent; [ii] precision; [iii] consistency with other propositions of a similar level of certainty; [iv] its being shared/affirmed by, or at least not denied by, other reasoners that seem no more likely to have made an error than oneself; [v] its having been produced by a process (and in an epistemic circumstance) that is reliable, or at least that does not seem unreliable; and [vi] its being consistently apparent across various circumstances of contemplation.³ Intuitions also seem to be more endorsement-worthy (*ceteris paribus*) to the extent that they are [vii] compelling: if not irresistible upon being contemplated (as are logical truths like ‘I cannot be here and not here’), then thoroughly obvious upon being contemplated (as, perhaps, ‘it is wrong to inflict suffering without justification’ or ‘like interests deserve equal consideration’). Since compellingness is only one of the virtues, we can readily grant that apparent obviousness can commonly block admission that an intuition has been defeated.

Even a highly endorsement-worthy intuitive belief can be *defeated* by various considerations, including the counterparts to the foregoing: for example, if an intuition turns out on reflection to be problematically unclear or imprecise, to fail to cohere with other propositions of a similar level of certainty, to not be shared by competent others, or to have been produced by a process or in an epistemic circumstance that is unreliable. Clever arguments for this last option are sometimes known as “debunking” arguments.

1.1.3 Morality

Moral intuitions are those with moral content. This dissertation will understand moral norms as public, informal rules which function to reduce harms and benefits in society, often by promoting trust between individuals. Sometimes this is called ‘the morality of what we owe to each other’ (Scanlon 1999).⁴

Some will be tempted to construe moral intuitions as those having some psychological profile characterized as ‘moral’. These are not the topic of the present work. (However, it may

² Hopefully this will be clearer than many vague traditional notions of the “justification” of beliefs.

³ [i]-[iv] are from Sidgwick (1907, Bk. III, Ch. 11). Thanks to Rob Shaver for the reference.

⁴ Elsewhere I have argued against the view that we should think other norms, such as norms of purity and group loyalty, are intrinsically moral norms (Quigley forthcoming).

help the reader to think of a different term for these, such as “moralistic”. For example, if someone has the (crazy) intuition that it is intrinsically wrong to eat sliced bread, but this intuition meets whatever psychological criterion—say, it seems to apply authoritatively to everyone’s conduct—this a moralistic but not a moral intuition.)

On moral realism. Should we believe that morality’s apparent demands are veridical? that there really are such things as moral reasons, requirements, and so on? How can this project accommodate those who are inclined to believe not?

Briefly, we can say that this dissertation will rarely be interested in ontological claims about morality. As an epistemological project aimed at improving (our understanding of) adequate moral reasoning, it could also be of interest to some moral anti-realists, at least if they are interested in how we come to seem-to-know about what seem to be real moral reasons but are not. It can be a story of how such fictions as valuable interests and reasons of partiality came to seem so real. Where this dissertation uses language of discovery and revelation, it could as easily use language of (internally consistent) invention and projection without affecting the claims advanced.

1.1.4 Emotions

We need to say some things about what emotions are, how they are intentional and are akin to perception, what caring and caring emotions are. Then it will be useful to say some things about some ways emotion episodes can influence our moral intuitions.

1.1.4.1 What emotions are

Emotion “episodes” are affective events occurring in an organism within a definite time interval. Examples include episodes of fear, anger, disgust, sadness, surprise, or happiness.⁵

Most emotion episodes have several components. Various theories consider various of these components to be essential to emotions. We need not take a stand on that issue here, but it will be helpful to list frequent emotion components or concomitants. For our purposes any conjunction of them (or, alternatively, no feature) might be essential to emotion episodes. Consider Table 1.1:

⁵ This list happens to be Paul Ekman’s original (1971) list of basic emotions. Basic emotions are usually understood either as a privileged set of emotions from which others are derived (Prinz 2004, p. 86), and/or as mutually distinct affect programs, each marked by distinctive universal facial and vocal signals, physiology, elicitors, subjective experience, etc. (Ekman & Cordaro 2011).

*Table 1.1: Theories that identify emotions with distinct components of an emotion episode.
Adapted from Prinz (2004, Table 1.1, p. 10).*

	Emotion episode component	Emotion theory
1	Changes in body, face, and/or brain	Somatic theories
2	Conscious experience	Feeling theories
3	Action tendencies	Behavioral theories
4	Modulations of cognitive processes	Processing mode theories
5	Thoughts	Cognitive theories

Hybrid theories combining more than one of the theories in the right-hand column are apparently more common in emotions literature, past and present, than pure theories (Prinz 2004, p. 10).⁶ Particularly relevant for future discussion will be the way that (many) emotions modulate attention (4) by focusing it in on a certain object and preparing the emoting organism for responsive action (3).

Consider Jamir’s anger at a customer who left no gratuity for his son, a restaurant server. (1) Jamir’s pulse quickens, his face flushes, his nostrils flare, his brows move down and in, blood flow to his hands increases, and his lateral orbitofrontal cortex activates. (2) These changes feel a certain way, and they (3) prepare him for approach motivation and aggression. (4) His attention is consistently drawn toward the eliciting state of affairs, in a way that gives rise to (5) thoughts containing not only emotive language but also normative judgments about the fact of the transgression and appropriate recompense.

Valence. Emotions’ qualitative feels are commonly thought to have either a negative or a positive aspect. Sadness, anger, fear, etc. are usually examples of negative emotions, and joy and amusement are usually examples of positive emotions. There may be complicated cases where valences depart from those trends, are mixed, indeterminate, etc.; but our main claim will be simply that a caring emotion involves feeling emotions with valences congruent with the well-being, existence, and proximity of another.

⁶ Eliminativists consider emotions to be too heterogeneous a class to have any essential properties at all. For example, Paul Griffiths (1997) maintains that whereas ‘emotions’ do not form a natural class, there is at least one naturalistically respectable subclass along the lines of the “affect programs” advocated by Paul Ekman, roughly identifiable with the structured physiological changes corresponding to row 1 in Table 1.1.

Narrative structure. Emotions tend to have a narrative structure; they are *processes* which play out in a certain order (de Sousa 2010, §6). Jamir’s anger begins with the initial stimulation of the lateral orbitofrontal cortex; it continues with the other bodily changes, and modulations of his attention; and only once he is physiologically stimulated does he become sufficiently motivated to confront the customer. Mental, physiological, behavioral states within an emotion episode process we can call *emotion states*.

Attitudinal emotions. Ordinary language includes a second way of talking about emotions, which Prinz (2004) labels *attitudinal emotions*. These are dispositions to undergo a certain type(s) of emotion episodes toward a certain entity when it is brought to consciousness. For example, Jamir is (disposed to be) *afraid* of spiders, and is *disgusted* by his grandmother’s teeth (when he sees or thinks of them). At least in adult humans the entity can be a fairly complicated state of affairs—e.g., ‘Jamir is angry that Obama was reelected’, ‘George is disgusted that Kanye is so ignorant’; this is why emotion phrases can take propositions as grammatical objects.

Sentiments. A more complex kind of emotional disposition Prinz labels *sentiments*. These are dispositions to undergo a coherent battery of emotions toward a particular object. For example: Jamir hates Christmastime, loves his wife, is attached to his old baseball glove, likes his boss on Fridays, cares about democracy, and cares for his son. His hatred of Christmastime might involve, for example, dispositions to sadness about the Christmas season’s approach, anger at early Christmas-decorators, disgust at Christmas music, and so on. The last case—caring for other creatures—interests us here.

Emotional caring is the disposition to feel emotions that are congruent with someone’s *well-being*. We will call this person the *focusee* of the emotional care. Emotional caring typically involves being disposed to feel [i] positive emotions toward the focusee’s positive welfare states, [ii] negative emotions toward her negative welfare states, [iii] positive emotions in the focusee’s presence, and [iv] negative emotions in the focusee’s absence. We need not take a stand on what set, if any, of these four aspects are essential to emotional caring. (More in Ch. 3.)

Note that we will not be discussing various more robust notions of caring. Some insist that truly caring about a person or thing involves *activities* or *traits of character*, not just

emotional reactions (Frankfurt 1982). That may be true. Even so, the hypotheses developed here need only make use of our notion of emotional caring.⁷

Caring emotions are the manifestations of emotional cares. They are distinct emotion episodes congruent with someone's welfare; e.g., elation at someone's success, sadness at their loss, delight in their presence, or anxiety in their absence.

1.1.4.2 Intentionality

Numerous competing theories of emotion tend to agree that emotions are about things. They are intentional. Canonical examples of emotions—joy, sadness, regret, and so on—nearly always take an object, in a few senses (de Sousa 2013, §3).⁸ Some target an actual *particular object* ('fear of the bear'). (As we suggested already, both emotion episodes and attitudinal emotions sometimes take states of affairs, even ones expressed as propositions in the mind, as their particular objects ('regret that *p*', 'fear that *q*').) The particular object is usually the same as the *elicitor* of the emotion episode, the apparently perceived object, state of affairs, or event which proximally triggers the emotion episode.

Furthermore, seemingly all emotions have a *formal object*. This is a property implicitly ascribed by the emotion to its particular object. For example, fear seems to ascribe danger; disgust, contamination; sadness, loss; etc. It is in this sense that emotions are sometimes said to *construe* the particular object in a certain way, to involve a 'construal' (Roberts 2003). It is often in virtue of an emotion object's formal object that it can count as rational or irrational; e.g., being afraid of something construes it as dangerous, but if I believe it is actually not dangerous, the emotion contradicts my belief, and is thereby irrational.

Relational themes. There is remarkable convergence among emotion researchers around the idea that emotions typically represent objects as being relevant to the emoter's welfare.⁹ For example, an angry Rottweiler's jaws, size, and state of arousal inspire fear because they are dangers from the perspective of the emoter (usually, dangers to the emoter). More generally, the

⁷ Likewise, as for purely emotional caring, there seems not to be a clear distinction between 'caring about' and 'caring for' someone; so we will not dwell on that oft-mentioned distinction.

⁸ On some views of emotion, intentionality is *essential* to emotions (e.g., Prinz 2004). On such a view, non-intentional affective states always count as some other sort of passion such as a mood or a felt bodily state (such as felt warmth, tenseness, or fatigue).

⁹ This convergence seems to come from researchers in psychology (e.g., 'appraisal theorists' as Lazarus (1991), and philosophers diversely emphasizing emotions' cognitive (Nussbaum 2001), somatosensory (Prinz 2004) or otherwise perceptual (Roberts 2003) aspects.

somatic, sensory, behavioral, attentional, and cognitive changes involved with emotion episodes are oriented toward alerting the emoting organism that the particular object has the property ascribed by the formal object. Generalizing further, we can say that emotions represent *concerns*, typically of the emoting agent.¹⁰

The psychologist Richard Lazarus (1991) appeals to a similar concept of “core relational themes”: relations that pertain to the well-being of the emoting organism. These are themes of a basic environmental situation that (at least the more basic) emotions evolved to highlight. The physiological and attentional adjustments and the action-tendencies that come with an emotion episode prepare the organism to respond to this information.

Table 1.2 Lazarus’s core relational themes. Abridged from Lazarus (1991, Table 3.4, p. 122).

Emotion	Core relational theme
Anger	A demeaning offense against me and mine
Anxiety	Facing uncertain, existential threat
Fright	Facing an immediate, concrete, and overwhelming physical danger
Guilt	Having transgressed a moral imperative
Shame	Having failed to live up to an ego-ideal
Sadness	Having experienced an irrevocable loss
Envy	Wanting what someone else has
Jealousy	Resenting a third party for loss or threat to another’s affection
Disgust	Taking in or being too close to an indigestible object or idea (metaphorically speaking)
Happiness	Making reasonable progress toward the realization of a goal
Pride	Enhancement of one’s ego-identity by taking credit for a valued object or achievement, either one’s own or that of some group with whom we identify

While some emotion elicitors are thought to be innate (e.g., snakes and spiders in the case of fear), emotions can be recalibrated to deploy toward any number of novel elicitors—e.g., even emails sent from a certain address are construed by 21st century fear mechanisms as threats or dangers to the emoter (or the one on whose behalf he is emoting).

We can now formally state the key claim on this topic:

¹⁰ Cf. Roberts (2003), Prinz (2004), and de Souza (2013).

Interest-Revelation Thesis: A large plurality of the emotions humans and animals feel—and an even larger plurality of their more intense emotions—are construals of organism-environment relations, having environmental features relevant to the interests of individuals (especially their more basic interests) as their formal objects.

What is special about caring emotions is that they are experienced on another's behalf (barring the case of one's caring for oneself). The interests revealed through the emotional experience are those of the focusee rather than those of the emoter. They are *other-focused*. How emotions come to be other-focused is not something we can comment much on, but we will notice an interesting parallel between this and our experience of others as mattering. (More in Ch. 3.)

1.1.4.3 Emotions and moral intuitions

Emotions, including caring emotions, doubtlessly influence moral intuitions in numerous ways. Evidence that they do helps justify optimism that it is morally and epistemically worthwhile to cultivate caring emotions and to endorse those intuitions which seem to have been driven by appropriate sorts of caring emotions (assuming the influence can be positive, as we will argue in Ch. 4).

Here are a few (but certainly not all the) ways emotions can causally influence, or “drive”, moral intuitions. [i] Emotions can influence which moral intuitions we have; e.g., disgust sensitivity predicts implicit disapproval of gay people (Inbar et al. 2009) and explicit disapproval of gay marriage (Inbar et al. 2008), and sympathetic engagement with a story about a member of a stigmatized groups led in one experiment to improved attitudes about (e.g.) how much help and sympathy those people deserve (Batson et al. 1997). [ii] Emotions can influence, even unconsciously, how intensely we experience moral intuitions, as well as how wrong we think certain actions are; e.g., some experiments have subtly induced disgust in subjects, resulting in more severe moral judgments than a control condition (Wheatley & Haidt 2005, Schnall et al. 2008). Perhaps we could expect similar influences from caring emotions. [iii] Emotions can also influence how likely we are to stick with our intuitions despite contrary evidence (Haidt 2001), [iv] how memorable intuitions are to us (Damasio 2005) and our cultures (Nichols 2004), and [v] how likely we are to act on our intuitions and intuitive beliefs. By thus

influencing moral intuitions' existence, content, intensity, recalcitrance, permanence, memorability, etc., emotions can be said to “drive” moral intuitions.

Some psychologists emphasize the role of automatic processes in moral cognition, suggesting that the use of ratiocination to try to override or discount one's moral intuitions is difficult if not quite futile. For example, Haidt's (2001) model relegates the role of moral reasoning to playing the role of a lawyer, mostly justifying automatically (usually affectively) generated intuitions. But there are at least a couple of reasons for optimism about the extent to which deliberative guidance of emotional attention, on the basis of controlled and rational reflection, can influence how we process our moral intuitions and connected emotions. First, Haidt's own model suggests that dialogue with others about their moral views is one way that people's automatic, affective moral intuitions can be challenged and recalibrated. There is room for optimism that people can be trained to consider alternative points of view, simulating such dialogue within one's own mind (or, we might say, carrying on an internal dialogue). Second, there is room for optimism that we can utilize prospective (“implementation”) intentions to consider certain kinds of evidence. Even Daniel Kahneman, one of the core proponents of the idea that much of human thought is produced by automatic, fast, effortless, often affective processes (AKA System 1 processes), emphasizes that slower, conscious, effortful, deliberative cognitive processes (AKA System 2 processes) can reprogram the automatic ones:

System 2 has some ability to change the way System 1 works, by programming the normally automatic functions of attention and memory. . . . You can set your memory to search for capital cities that start with *N* or for French existentialist novels. And when you rent a car at London's Heathrow Airport, the attendant will probably remind you that “we drive on the left side of the road over here.” In all these cases, you are asked to do something that does not come naturally, and you will find that the consistent maintenance of a set requires continuous exertion of at least some effort. (Kahneman 2011, p. 23)

By the same token, our hope is that we can also shape our moral emotions and the connected intuitions through deliberative decisions; for example, to form prospective (“implementation”) intentions to, when certain cues arise, attempt to identify and feel caring emotions for the interests of certain others; to routinely check for forms of discrimination or take into account

diverse interests; or to self-verbalize certain novel moral principles until one's compliance motivations cooperate.

These comments have been intended to clarify the thesis that one crucial aspect of a reliable moral reasoning strategy is the consultation of caring-driven moral intuitions. The following chapters further clarify it, show why it is plausible, and then apply it to the moral problem of partiality.

1.2 Summary of chapters

Chapter 2 presents an overview of key data on psychopaths, as well as an introduction to a notion of understanding which we will call apprehension. We will refer to the notion of apprehending someone's value, the value of her interests in not being harmed and in being benefitted, as moral apprehension. Some key data suggests that psychopaths lack moral apprehension, which leads to difficulties comprehending morality as a system.

Chapter 3 articulates and provisionally defends the *caring-apprehension hypothesis*: that regular deployment of the capacity to care emotionally about others enables, and probably mediates and improves, humans' ability to see other individuals as mattering, i.e., to apprehend their value. Suggestive evidence comes not only from various psychological findings, which we discuss, but also from the fact that experiences of apprehending others' value share a parallel conceptual structure to caring emotion events, whereas they do not share this with at least one other contender *explanans*, empathic emotion events. Other contenders to explain how we apprehend others' value are also shown to be lacking; these include concern, valuation, intuitive grammar, and rational intuition.

Chapter 4 addresses a key objection for almost any epistemology privileging an emotional process: the emotion process in question (in this case, caring emotions) is too biased to be worth relying on. The answer provided is, first, that many of the biases may well be mitigated by a strategy of emotion regulation that refocuses attention to a perspective that controls for known biases. This can be epitomized as the perspective of a person who is caring but neutral with respect to the parties in a given situation. It also suggests that rules endorseable from this perspective may be helpful moral heuristics. Finally, it suggests that even if using the input of caring emotions should turn out to be unreliable even with the use of such a strategy,

nevertheless (if the caring-apprehension hypothesis is true) paradoxically we ought to rely on it anyway.

Chapter 5 applies the foregoing views to the perennial question of whether it can be morally justified to give preferential treatment to *special others*, such as friends and family, even though everyone matters and no one matters more than anyone else. That is, it addresses whether there are *reasons of partiality*, i.e., considerations that permit, require, or make it sensible to extend special treatment to a certain special other(s). The chapter suggests we should consider a version of the caring-apprehension hypothesis that is parallel to the general case: that regular deployment of the capacity to care about *special others* enables, and probably mediates and improves, humans' ability to see *special others* as mattering. The chapter explains how this adds plausibility to a recently articulated view of reasons of partiality, that of Simon Keller (2013). The idea is that we have reasons of partiality simply because those to whom we are specially related (such as through friendships or families) are intrinsically and incommensurably valuable. Our being specially related to them simply enables their value to give us reasons to favor them in certain ways. The chapter's two major contributions are, first, to develop a "Caring Account" of the aspects involved in the apparent discovery of special others' value, which serves to explain our discovery of reasons of partiality and thus demystify it. Second, the chapter introduces a "Deontology of Caring Attention" according to which we owe reasonable caring attention to our special others. The latter view's modesty helps square the view that there are reasons of partiality with the idea that everyone matters equally.

CHAPTER TWO

PSYCHOPATHY AND MORAL UNDERSTANDING

In his book 'The Mask of Sanity' Cleckley (1976) observed that there is a discordance between the expressed and experienced values of emotions in individuals with psychopathy and used the term 'semantic dementia' to describe this observation. According to this term, individuals with psychopathy do represent the lexical meaning of emotions, but they do not experience their affective value; they "know the words but not the music" (Johns and Quay, 1962).

-- R.J.R. Blair and coauthors, "They Know the Words But Not The Music" (2006)

The psychopath does not seem to be able to see why the interests of others matter. This incapacity is especially crucial for morality, because ordinarily we expect that the interests of others must be important to a person self-evidently. To the question, "Why do the interests of others matter?", there seems to be no answer that would be convincing. One is inclined to give the same answer that Louis Armstrong gave when asked what makes good jazz: "Man, if you gotta ask, you'll never know."

-- Carl Elliott (1996, p. 80)

PSYCHOPATHS are no longer merely a muse for film, literature, and news media. Psychologists achieved significant strides in understanding psychopathy in the 20th century. This has put philosophers in an improved position to answer crucial philosophical questions about psychopaths, such as about their moral responsibility (cf. Litton 2010) and about whether to endorse neural modification to prevent or reverse psychopathy.

Here we focus on the implications of the psychopathic deficit for moral epistemology and moral theory. We will see that, although psychopaths have a profound emotional deficit and apparently some difficulty fully understanding morality, they tend to display competent knowledge of which sorts of acts are morally prohibited. To help explain how this could be, we will distinguish knowledge from understanding. The general thesis is that psychopaths seem to know what morality requires, but have impairments in seeing others as mattering (what we will call 'moral apprehension') as well as trouble understanding how some typical moral rules can be overridden by more stringent welfare concerns (we will call this a deficiency of 'moral system-comprehension').

In this chapter we first characterize psychopathy (§2.1), psychopaths' apparent deficits in moral understanding (§2.2), and some varieties of moral understanding thinkers can have (§2.3). This will enable us in the following chapter to provide a philosophically richer account of the characteristically psychopathic emotional deficit (as a deficit to 'emotional caring') and to

explain how this deficit could be relevant to the moral understanding, especially moral apprehension.

While our goal is to draw implications about how caring relates to moral understanding, we need an empirically accurate picture of psychopathy; so let us begin by considering empirical findings on psychopathy in some depth.

2.1 Psychopathy

2.1.1 Psychopathic emotional deficits

Psychologist and neuroscientist Kent Kiehl (2008) provides a typical overview of psychopathy:

Psychopathy is a personality disorder characterized by a profound lack of empathy and guilt or remorse, shallow affect, irresponsibility, and poor behavioral controls. The psychopath's behavioral repertoire has long led clinicians to suggest that they are "without conscience" (Hare, 1993). . . . On the one hand, the psychopath is capable of articulating socially constructive, even morally appropriate, responses to real-life situations. However, when left to his or her own devices, the psychopath's actions are frequently inconsistent with his or her verbal reports. It is as if the moment they leave the clinician's office, their moral compass goes awry and they fail seriously in most life situations. . . . I have yet to meet a psychopath who is incapable of telling right from wrong—at least verbally. (pp. 119-20)

Operational conceptions of the disorder were achieved first by Harvey Cleckley in the 1940s and then by Robert Hare's Psychopathy Checklist in 1980. This was updated into the Psychopathy Checklist–Revised (PCL-R) in 1991. The PCL-R consists of 20 behavioral items on which subjects are scored as follows:

The PCL-R is scored on the basis of an extensive file review and a semi-structured interview. . . . For each behavioral item, an individual can score between 0 and 2 points. The individual's total score can therefore vary from 0 to 40 points. Adults scoring 30 or

above on the PCL-R are generally considered psychopathic while those scoring less than 20 are considered non-psychopathic. (Blair et al. 2005, p. 7).

A sample of the PCL-R items is provided in Appendix A. A few competing factor models have been proposed to group together the PCL-R items as they statistically correlate. The oldest and best-tested one is a 2-factor model, (Factor 1: *Interpersonal/Affective* and Factor 2: *Social Deviance*) with one of the main competitors being a 4-factor model (1: *Interpersonal*, 2: *Affective*, 3: *Lifestyle*, and 4: *Antisocial*). (These two models are also reflected in Appendix A.) So some controversy remains regarding psychopathy's ultimate causes, as well as about whether or not certain symptoms on the PCL-R are intrinsic to psychopathy.

Yet there seems to be a broad consensus that the core deficits, at least in the highest-scoring psychopaths, are affective in nature, heritable, and very difficult to treat. Converging evidence suggests a pair of variants: *primary psychopathy* is “underpinned by an inherited affective deficit, whereas *secondary psychopathy* reflects an acquired affective disturbance” (Skeem et al. 2007, cf. Skeem et al. 2003). Thus, the most pervasively associated traits of psychopathy are those of the Affective Factor, those more readily associated with “primary” psychopaths, such as “low remorse or guilt”, “callous/lack of empathy”, and “shallow affect”.

Currently the leading theory on the psychopathic affective deficit is James Blair's integrated emotion systems (IES) model. According to this model, psychopathy is the product of a general impairment in emotional learning, that is, the processing of emotional information and the conditioning of emotional responses. Specifically noteworthy is Blair's finding that psychopaths and children with psychopathic tendencies have great difficulty interpreting expressions of sadness and fear (Blair et al. 2001, cf. Blair et al. 2005 pp. 53-6). This can be traced to a selective deficit of the amygdala in the brain (Blair et al. 2005). This explains why psychopaths demonstrate a diminished autonomic response to fearful or sad distress in others (Blair et al. 1997). It also explains why psychopaths are frequently characterized as exhibiting high proportions of *instrumental aggression* when compared to non-psychopathic criminal offenders—that is, aggression which is purposeful, goal-directed, and used instrumentally to achieve a specific desired goal (Blair et al. 2005, pp. 12-13). (By contrast, the aggression of non-psychopathic criminal offenders is most often *reactive*, that is, accompanied by anger and triggered by a frustrating or threatening event).

Whatever the full spectrum of psychopathic deficits includes, one chief psychopathic deficit is clearly an affective one. This is manifested even in psychopaths' language abilities: compared to healthy individuals, they have difficulties processing words with negative emotional valence (Kiehl et al. 1999). Even the IES model's main competitor agrees in appealing to specific emotional deficits: it proposes that diminished fear and startle responses and low anxiety levels inhibit psychopaths' aversion to punishment and thus their internalization of social rules (Fowles & Dindo 2005).¹¹

So much for an overview of psychopathy. Next chapter, via some general observations about the notion of caring, we will elaborate this discussion into one of the importance of caring for moral epistemology. But first we should take in account some of psychopaths' epistemic deficits with regard to morality.

2.1.2 Psychopaths and the moral/conventional distinction

A notorious finding in recent moral psychology concerns psychopaths' apparent impaired performance on the so-called moral/conventional distinction (Blair 1995). The evidence is limited and contentious (Schaich Borg & Sinnott-Armstrong MS), but reviewing it will set us up to better understand more about the nature of the psychopathic deficit *vis a vis* moral understanding.

Shoemaker (2011, pp. 100ff) presents an apt summary of the relevant research:

In 1995, James Blair published two landmark articles investigating the psychopath's response to the moral/conventional distinction [Blair 1995, Blair et al. 1995]. In doing so, he applied a test originally developed and deployed by Larry Nucci and Elliot Turiel in 1978. The original idea was to see if preschool children could track what was taken to be a crucial distinction between what Nucci and Turiel called "social

¹¹ In fact, Fowles and Dindo point out that there is a "possibility" that psychopaths do have a separate impairment directly related to "lovelessness or lack of regard for others" (p. 30). They suggest (following Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky) that there could be "a human trait of affiliation . . . that is elicited by various affiliative stimuli and promotes affiliative bonding. Such a dimension of temperament could constitute a third etiological factor that would interact with the low-fear and impulsivity factors . . ."

It is worth mentioning a so-called 'cognitive' interpretation of psychopathy due to J.P. Newman (cf. Blackburn 2006). On this view, psychopaths exhibit a deficit in response modulation, meaning that psychopaths fail to shift attention from goal-directed action, making them less likely to appreciate the consequences of their actions or to learn to modify their behavior. However, this is consistent with Blair's IES model if the impaired response modulation is interpreted as the major factor that inhibits psychopaths' attachment or affection toward others. And Blair has in fact offered such an interpretation of these results (Fisher & Blair 1998).

conventional” and “moral” events. . . . Because the original study was on children, the task’s 263 scenarios involved regulations with which children would be familiar, so examples of conventional transgressions included playing or working at the wrong time or in the wrong area of a classroom, failing to engage in an assigned group activity, or violating various other classroom rules (e.g., standing, rather than sitting, while eating a snack). Moral transgressions included hitting another child, stealing another child’s belongings, or refusing to share.

The task was eventually developed to elicit four sorts of judgments in response to a scenario describing a child’s transgression. First, was what the child did *permissible*? (Was it right or wrong for X to do Y?) Second, how *serious* was the transgression? (On a scale of one to ten, how [wrong] was it for X to do Y?) Third, what was the *justification* for the answer to the permissibility question? (Why was it right [or wrong] for X to do Y?) Fourth, if what X did was wrong, how *modifiable* were those first judgments upon the removal of authority from the equation? (“Would it be OK for X to Y if the teacher says X can?”) [Drawn from Blair 1995, p. 15.]

Regarding the first two judgments, the children took moral transgressions to be more serious than conventional transgressions roughly just as adults did, and while both sorts of transgression were generally judged impermissible, conventional transgressions were “more likely to be judged permissible than moral transgressions” [ibid., p. 6].

Regarding justifications, children (and adults) typically appealed to what are called “normative” reasons—“those are the rules” or “it is just not acceptable”—to justify the impermissibility of conventional transgressions, whereas they would most often refer to the welfare of others to ground their reasoning about the impermissibility of moral transgressions. Regarding modifiability, conventional transgressions were judged to be more authority-dependent than moral transgressions, that is, if the teacher said it was okay for the child to perform the act, conventional “transgressions” were thought then to be permissible, whereas moral transgressions were not. This moral/conventional distinction has been found worldwide in children from as early as thirty-nine months.

The research of Turiel, Nucci, Smetana, and other colleagues have tended to assume a single moral/conventional distinction due to the aforementioned correlations. (Logically, of course, the four questions involved in the moral/conventional task mark at least four different distinctions—permissible vs. impermissible; serious vs. not-very-serious; wrong-because-harmful vs. other justifications; independent of vs. dependent on authority judgment—which assumption in turn is subject to conceptual¹² and empirical¹³ challenges.) Here we should focus on those dimensions on which the psychopaths performed most idiosyncratically.

Shoemaker continues:

Blair's insightful advance was to study how psychopaths did on the task. He originally [1995] studied ten incarcerated psychopaths and ten incarcerated controls (nonpsychopaths), giving them the same task with stories [identical to those used in] early studies on children.

Blair (1995, p. 14) explains the vignettes used:

The stories used to measure the moral/conventional distinction were all taken from the literature. The four moral stories involved a child hitting another child, a child pulling the hair of another child and the victim cries, a child smashing a piano and a child breaking the swing in the playground. The four conventional stories involved a boy child wearing

¹² For the good of the order, here are some ways the distinctions might not overlap (here I borrow mostly from Shoemaker 2011).

- 1) Both moral and conventional transgressions range over degrees of seriousness, but the M/C model does not account for this. E.g., certain actions might be both a not-very-serious moral transgression yet also a very-serious conventional transgression.
- 2) Similarly, some right actions might be 'serious' but permissible (e.g., saving someone's life). And some morally impermissible actions might be not-very-serious (e.g., throwing a styrofoam lid in a campfire).
- 3) Multiple justifications might apply to a single moral transgression. E.g., putting feces on a classmate's brownie might be legitimately be deemed all of these things: [i] harmful, [ii] against rules both promulgated and implicit, [iii] both rude and disgusting, [iv] potentially disruptive to the class, [v] a violation of the child's right to manage his own brownie, and [vi] unfair in that only that child's brownie gets spoiled.
- 4) Welfare-based justifications may apply to relatively non-serious actions. And some seriously wrong actions may not be straightforwardly traceable to the welfare or rights of victims (e.g., cheating one's way through a calculus course).
- 5) The wrongness of certain harming activities might be authority-dependent (e.g., whether and what kind of corporal punishment is appropriate).

¹³ Kelly et al. (2007) found that for a few cases, including the last one (5) in the previous footnote, normal subjects considered harm-based transgressions to be merely authority-independent.

a skirt, two children talking in class, a child walking out of the classroom without permission and a child who stops paying attention to the lesson and turns his back on the teacher.

There were two important findings, the latter of which was rather surprising (Shoemaker 2011, my emphases added.) First, the psychopaths’

justifiability judgments for both types of transgression made reference far more often to “the rules” than to others’ welfare.

Second,

unlike both nonpsychopathic children and adults, psychopaths typically did not make the moral/conventional distinction with respect to the modifiability judgments.

Specifically,

while psychopaths evaluated moral and conventional transgressions under the authority modification as more or less on a par, *they “treated conventional transgressions like moral transgressions”* and so *viewed them both as authority-independent [and seriously impermissible]*. This result was taken [by Blair 1995] merely to have been a function of the inmates’ desire to prove they had reformed and learned the rules. [The thought is that, since the psychopaths were incarcerated, they gave answers they thought would improve their chances of achieving parole.]

Table 2.1: The means and standard deviations of moral (M) and conventional (C) judgments for each of Blair’s subject groups. Adapted from Blair (1995, Table 3, p. 16).

	Criterion judgements					
	[Im]Permissibility		Seriousness		Modifiability	
	M	C	M	C	M	C
Psychopaths	0.98 (0.08)	0.93 (0.17)	8.28 (1.66)	6.42 (3.04)	0.95 (0.16)	0.80 (0.33)
Non-psychopaths	1.00 (0.00)	0.75 (0.26)	8.04 (2.11)	4.72 (3.29)	1.00 (0.00)	0.38 (0.34)

These general findings were replicated in another study of incarcerated psychopaths [twenty subjects apiece in the experimental and control groups] [Blair et al. 1995], and it was also replicated in certain respects in children with psychopathic tendencies: when authority was removed from an act’s prohibition, while subjects did tend to note a distinction between the moral and conventional transgressions, it was far less marked than it was for controls [Blair 1997].

Blair’s research suggests that the psychopaths have some sort of impaired ability of moral understanding (in specific ways we will consider below). Again, they do not offer the usual harm/welfare-citing justifications for moral rules, and they appear to treat conventional rules as moral rules (as similarly impermissible, serious, and authority-independent). It is merely preliminary evidence—not above contention¹⁴—but evidence nonetheless.

¹⁴ Blair’s results on psychopaths’ performance on the moral/conventional distinction are contentious in a few ways.

First of all, a few studies have reported at least partial failures to replicate the result, most notably when it came to the difference in providing welfare-based justifications (Aharoni, Sinnott-Armstrong, and Kiehl 2012; also stated without reported results in Dolan & Fullam 2010). Secondly, Schaich Borg and Sinnott-Armstrong (MS) suggest an alternative hypothesis for Blair’s original results: that the psychopaths perhaps did understand a moral/conventional distinction but were merely inflating their answers on the ‘conventional’ side regarding seriousness and authority-independence, as well as giving rule-oriented rather than welfare-oriented answers, simply because they assumed that that is what would impress prison authorities into improving their release conditions.

Aharoni, Sinnott-Armstrong, and Kiehl (2012) tested this with a similar experiment wherein they informed the subjects that exactly eight of the sixteen vignettes they would present would contain ‘conventional’ transgressions, with the other eight containing ‘moral’ transgressions. They failed to find any impairment in psychopaths’ performance on the moral/conventional distinction. However, there are several limitations to this study. (i) The setup essentially primed the subjects to treat exactly half of the cases as moral.

It will be useful at this point to introduce the term *Blairian psychopaths* to denote psychopaths as Blair presents them, taking two of his views/results for granted. First, assume with Blair that psychopathy is the product of a general impairment in emotional learning, particularly with the detection of fearful and sad expressions, ultimately traceable to dysfunction in the amygdala. Second, let us assume Blair's results on the moral/conventional task will hold up: on such tasks, the Blairian psychopath provides rule- or convention-citing justifications for moral rules, and tends to report that all rules governing social behavior are authority-independent. From here on, references to psychopaths should be understood as references to Blairian psychopaths unless otherwise noted.

2.1.3 Is psychopaths' M/C performance flawed or just atypical?

One important objection is that psychopaths' judgments may demonstrate merely an atypical—not a flawed or impaired—understanding of moral rules. Heidi Maibom (2008) expresses the worry:

[An individual] may use a variety of justifications [for moral norms], and one would expect some variation across individuals. Whether her understanding is true is irrelevant. A mistaken justification for why it is wrong to harm others is just as good as a correct one (if there is one), as long as it gives “depth” to an individual's moral understanding. . . . If [divine-will- or human-rights-citing justifications] did not add depth to the understanding, we would have to excuse anyone from harming others if it turned out that they thought it was wrong “merely” because God forbade it, human rights demanded it, etc. And that seems absurd. (p. 175)

Certain cues in the cases used (e.g., the words ‘explosives’, ‘causing her to scream’) may well have biased the subjects to correctly identify the moral cases correctly. (ii) The modifiability dimension was different. These cases lacked a figure Turiel's cases had: an on-the-premises authority figure (a teacher) who permits a certain form of transgression. (iii) Only 6 of the 46 inmates were clinical psychopaths (PCL-R >30), with another 16 being merely high on psychopathic traits (PCL-R >25). (iv) Finally, the study proceeded problematically by asking subjects whether the cases were morally wrong, simply in the sense of being “acts that society would consider wrong even if there were no rules, customs, or laws against them”, then asked the subjects to rate each case “for the presence or absence of harm”. First, this definition of wrongness is incoherent or at least confusing, since (in one sense) there being no rules or customs against an action *entails* that society would not consider it wrong. Second, it asks about what society would judge rather than the psychopaths' own judgments. Third, for those of us interested in the justification dimension, it would have been preferable to proceed in a way that collected the subjects' own justifications for the wrongdoing before asking about the presence or absence of harm.

Similarly, it might be thought that if someone believes in a rule and strongly feels that violations of it are serious (and especially if she reckons that it applies authority-independently), she perfectly well understands the moral rule.

Not so fast. To begin, we can point out that the mere fact that psychopaths' convention-citing justifications are different from normal subjects' harm-citing justifications is interesting and warrants explanation. (Why *don't* the psychopaths attend to the welfare of victims for these cases?) Moreover, here are four reasons why we can construe psychopaths' convention-citing as a flaw or impairment. First, citing a plausible justification (whatever it be) for a rule is more explanatorily useful than citing none and thus taking the rule as basic. That's so especially if the rule's specifications cite very context-specific features of a situation. Second, the fact that the compromised welfare of victims is the ground for the (moral) rules in question is fairly obvious to most observers, apparently even most children, in many different cultures. The fact that the psychopaths didn't (all) pick up on something that most people find obvious is a reason to consider them impaired. Third, psychopaths notoriously behave immorally and are in that sense flawed/impaired. Should it turn out this behavior is driven by a failure to understand welfare-based justifications behind moral rules, that failure would count as a flaw/impairment. Fourth, some non-welfare-citing rule justifications are vague (e.g., 'that act is wrong because it cultivates the dark side of the force'), are thinly-veiled non-explanations (e.g., 'because it's against her rights, period'), or are inadequate explanations (e.g., 'because Poseidon forbids it', which meets familiar objections about the potential arbitrariness of Poseidon's condemnations). By contrast, harm and welfare considerations are plausibly always of at least *pro tanto* moral relevance.¹⁵ The psychopaths' failure to be attuned to such considerations marks their responses as flawed.

The best chance for defending psychopaths' justifications as atypical but not impaired would be the suggestion that their convention-citing justifications were a result merely of a contingent feature of the survey environment (such as that they were in a position to try for parole). Presently we can neither confirm nor deny this, although some additional anecdotal evidence further suggests that psychopaths are less likely than normal people to attend to the welfare of other creatures or to see its importance, as we will see below.

¹⁵ Cf. Quigley (forthcoming).

2.1.4 Why are psychopaths' moral judgments impaired?

The psychopath's impaired performance with the moral/conventional distinctions (hereafter 'M/C performance') deserves explanation. It would seem to be a bonus if our explanation were congruent with proposed explanations of psychopaths' antisocial behavior. It would be inaccurate to say psychopaths are deficient in *knowledge* about what morality requires or even that they are deficient in theoretical *reasoning* about which acts have status as morally permissible, impermissible, etc. For there is consensus that psychopaths are fairly familiar with *what* sorts of actions moral rules forbid and require. Even in Blair's experiments, psychopaths were successful at identifying which actions were norm violations. Recall, Kiehl's (2008, p. 120) representative testimony that he has "yet to meet a psychopath who is incapable of telling right from wrong—at least verbally."

A second hypothesis is that psychopaths' impaired M/C performance (and their antisocial behavior) stems from a *motivational* deficiency. The thought would be that psychopaths have normal moral knowledge and understanding; their deficiency is merely that they do not act on it. This approximates the view of Cima, Tonnaer, and Hauser (2010), who contend that psychopaths "know right from wrong" but simply aren't motivated to comply with the rules that they know and understand. This fits in Hauser's broader framework on which moral cognition proceeds from a preconscious, non-emotional, intuitive framework of rules (modeled on grammatical cognition), leaving emotions and other motivational states solely to mediate one's behavior in light of one's moral knowledge. (Cima et al. also contend this model is supported by their empirical results in which psychopaths drew a standard 'personal/impersonal distinction' in response to trolley dilemmas.) From this framework, psychopaths' normal performance in Blair's experiments on the *permissibility* and *seriousness* dimensions is predictable in light of their intact moral knowledge. Their abnormal performance on the *justification* and *authority-independence* dimensions could in turn be attributed to motivational deficits. Perhaps psychopaths perfectly well know about and apprehend the significance of harms to people, but they merely lack motivation (e.g., when prompted by a psychologist) to take the time to make fully thought-out judgments about authority independence or to reflectively consider what they already understand about the value of other people's well-being. Blair leaves it unclear the extent to which his subjects voluntarily participated on his M/C surveys; perhaps they were

unmotivated and solely for that reason cited mere social trends as justification without reflecting more deeply on the deeper reasons why rules against harming other people are in place.

A third hypothesis—one I expect is a favorable competitor to the one aforementioned—is that psychopaths’ impaired M/C performance stems from a deficit in *understanding*. This thought is that although psychopaths have normal knowledge of moral rules and of what sorts of acts they permit, there is a further range of cognitive feats which they cannot achieve. While authors habitually gesture at this point with metaphors like ‘they know the words but not the music’, or talk of “deep understanding” (Maibom 2008), extremely seldom are these metaphors explained in the way we shall now attempt.

To be sure, this view is certainly compatible with postulating affective and motivational deficiencies psychopaths, as well as deficits of self-control and practical reasoning ability. And as we shall argue next chapter, an affective deficit plausibly explains the deficit of understanding. But postulating a distinct understanding deficit seems warranted for at least two reasons. First, it makes sense of psychopaths’ flawed M/C performance. Second, as we have seen, various practitioner-researchers (Kiehl, Blair, and Elliott as quoted above, and especially Hare as reported below) all tend to arrive at the conclusion that, although psychopaths certainly lack motivation, their understanding of morality simply isn’t proficient, despite their knowledge of moral rules. Even if Cima and coauthors were right, however—even if the Blairian psychopath turned out to be a fiction in some respects—the it would be informative to explore the knowledge/understanding distinction by elucidating various conceptual components of moral understanding.

2.2 Moral understanding

2.2.1 Understanding vs. knowledge and acquaintance

Work on understanding in general epistemology is relatively sparse. Knowledge was the concept of focus in the late 20th century, but the likes of Linda Zagzebski and Jonathan Kvanvig have sought to resurrect understanding to its rightful place as the more valuable concept. Grimm (2012) explains the irony:

Looking back to the Greek, what epistemology is the study of is *episteme*, and in the view of several scholars *episteme* is best translated not as “knowledge” but rather as something

in the neighborhood of “understanding.” On this view, only our notion of understanding captures the intellectual good the Greeks were after: roughly, the good of being able to “grasp” or “see” how the various parts of the world were systematically related.

Understanding, notably, is not the same as knowledge or acquaintance. *Knowledge*, familiarly, is approximately justified true belief (where the justification is not accidentally connected to the belief’s truth). One mundane, English-language use of the phrase ‘*S* understands that *p*’ simply means ‘*S* knows that *p*’. But as for other uses of ‘understanding’, the concept differs greatly and importantly from that of knowledge. For example, my knowing that $e = mc^2$ (on the basis of reliable testimony, say) doesn’t imply that I understand it. I may not know, for example, [i] what makes this proposition the case or what counterfactual circumstances would make it false, [ii] what the variables mean, [iii] how someone could about proving it, or [iv] anything about how the equation is important or interesting.

Acquaintance or *familiarity* with a thing is, roughly, the ability to remember how a thing is (i.e., its properties) from the point of view of someone who has had experience of the thing. Often the concept connotes facility in such remembrances: remembering a thing’s properties habitually, effortlessly, quickly, or fluently. Understanding differs from acquaintance. Someone can understand a lot about (say) chemical engineering without having any acquaintance/familiarity or experience with (doing) chemical engineering. A traveling Polynesian could become acquainted with blizzards without understanding what they are or why they happen.

2.2.2 Understanding and three notions of ‘grasping’

We can understand numerous kinds of things in numerous senses. Common to perhaps all of these is an element of ‘*grasping*’ (Grimm 2013). Seemingly no matter what sort of thing one understands (be it a scientific model, a paragraph of Arabic, or a reason), this ‘grasping’ is a further element beyond merely having a true belief, even a plentifully justified one (say, a belief, based on expert testimony, that the Krebs cycle generates ATP, that the Arabic paragraph mocks King Abdullah, that there’s good reason to sacrifice your queen in this position). When we finally ‘get’ the things we understand, they ‘dawn on’ us; we say, ‘aha!’ It is often a pleasant and plausibly a valuable experience.

Here we examine approximately three notions of grasping which are relevant to understanding moral reasons, values, rules, or norms (with a continuation of these ideas in Appendix B).¹⁶ It will turn out that the second (*apprehension* of moral reasons) and third (*system-comprehension* of moral norms) are the most likely to be aspects of psychopathically impaired moral understanding. At least three further senses of understanding and ‘grasping’ may be morally important or impaired in psychopaths, but discussion of these is relegated to Appendix B.

(1) *Detection* and (2) *Apprehension*. The first sorts of grasping are best characterized as aspects of perception. Let us label them [i] *part-detection*, [ii] *item-apprehension*, and [iii] *item-detection*. Our topic is the understanding of normative domains, but face perception provides an ample illustration.

Prosopagnosia is a cluster of inabilities to perceive or recognize faces, although perception and recognition of other objects remain intact.¹⁷ The severest (and apparently rather rare) form of prosopagnosia would involve an inability to [i] *detect the parts* of a face (facial features). An example is someone unable to advert to a person’s nose, mouth, or eyes when looking at her.

Another form would involve an inability to *apprehend* a face *as* a face. This kind of prosopagnosiac has little or no trouble detecting facial features, but she fails to see them collectively as a facial unit—fails to ‘take it in’ as one percept. (Similarly, such people apparently have trouble with seeing two grapes and a banana arranged face-wise as a face.)¹⁸ Notably, it is probably possible for such a prosopagnosiac to learn what parts or patterns to look

¹⁶ The following involves discussion of understanding reasons, values, norms (rules), etc. For the curious, here is a working model of some of these phenomena’s interrelations. First, uncontroversially, all normative facts supervene on non-normative facts: necessarily, any two situations exactly alike in all non-normative respects are exactly alike in all normative respects. Second, we can assume that normatively relevant states of affairs involve two facts: a non-normative one (e.g., that this coconut will keep me alive) and a normative one (e.g., that this coconut’s nourishingness is a reason for me to eat it, and/or is valuable to me in virtue of its nourishingness) (cf. McNaughton and Rawling MS). Third, some reasons may be derivable from values, and/or *vice versa*. E.g., either the coconut’s nourishingness is a reason for me to eat it because it is valuable to me, or it is valuable to me because I have that reason. For ease, let’s assume that in at least some cases, the values are more basic. Fourth, basic norms (rules) are derivable from values. E.g., the (prudential) norm that (*ceteris paribus*) I should stay alive where possible is derivable from the value of conscious experience. Fifth, some norms are derivable from others. E.g., the (prudential) norm that I should eat this coconut is derivable from the norm that (*ceteris paribus*) I should stay alive where possible.

¹⁷ Most commonly, prosopagnosia apparently involves the inability to “*recognize*” a particular individual’s face as that particular individual’s face. That is an impairment in *acquaintance with a particular object*.

¹⁸ This is the ability for [i] *part-detection with impaired* [ii] *item-apprehension*.

for to find a face. But such part- or pattern-detection doesn't enable one to apprehend the face as a face all at once—let alone in the fluent (automatic and effortless) way most people can.¹⁹

Additionally, there is an ability to detect faces as items. Someone with a normal propensity to apprehend faces and detect their parts in easy conditions (say, if a face is one of the only things in one's visual field) could still be poor at detecting faces in a more crowded or complex visual field.^{20,21}

This is applies also to perception of normative entities. Clearly, normative entities supervene on non-normative entities. A normative fact (e.g., that there is a reason not to pull Felix's tail) always supervenes on a collection non-normative facts (e.g., that Felix writhes in pain when his tail is pulled). When it comes to normative perception, one can be impaired ways analogous to any of the three kinds of grasping discussed above. One can be more or less impaired at [i] *the detection of normatively relevant non-normative facts which contribute to normative factors*, e.g., situational factors which make certain events count as a harm, a slight, or an inconvenience; at [ii] *apprehending normatively relevant non-normative facts as normatively relevant*, e.g., at seeing (certain) harms, slights, or inconveniences as reason-providing; or at [iii] *detecting reasons or applicable norms when they apply*; e.g., at detecting situations where someone is harmed, slighted, or inconvenienced.

We can refer to [i] as *bit-detection* (for all the non-normative 'bits' that come together to make a normatively relevant consideration), [ii] generally as *normative-entity-apprehension* (and more specifically as *reason- or value-apprehension*), and [iii] as *normative-entity-detection*.

¹⁹ Of course, parts themselves have to be apprehended. Thus it makes sense to talk about *part-apprehension*. A part's parts have to be apprehended, and so on. This regress goes down all the way the basic elements of perception, regarding which presumably detection is apprehension.

²⁰ (This is the ability for [ii] *item-apprehension with impaired [iii] item-detection*.)

²¹ Interestingly, all three forms of perceptual grasping can be independent of each other. I've already mentioned part-detection without item-apprehension (e.g., seeing a face's parts without apprehending the face) and item-apprehension without item-detection. It is also possible to [ii] *apprehend an item with impaired [i] detection of its parts*—e.g., standing back from a painting we can make out a vase of flowers but barely detect the blobs of paint that compose them.

In strange yet possible cases one can [iii] *detect an item without [ii] apprehending the item and/or without [i] detecting its parts*. An example is someone who can somehow locate faces (e.g., by pointing or saying what they are near), but cannot see them as faces and/or cannot point to any of their parts. (If the person's means of item-detecting the faces is via his own perceptual or quasi-perceptual efforts—say, having unconscious visual perceptions, acute olfactory awareness, etc.—we may have to say that the person *is* apprehending the faces but not in the standard conscious, visual way. Alternatively, it could be that the person has some non-perceptual means of item-detecting the faces—say, inference or testimony about where the faces are.)

(3) *System-comprehension*. Excellent work has begun on the concept of understanding *patterns in the natural world*. Grimm (2013) contends this is largely a matter of holding appropriate beliefs about parts, wholes, and part-whole relations, plus ‘grasping’ the part-whole relations. This grasping has a modal sense: knowing how a sequence would have played out had events happened differently, or if the parts had been related differently. Grimm (2013) explains the metaphor:

[W]e speak of grasping a thing when we are able to manipulate or tinker with a thing
[I]f the system is simple enough . . . when one grasps or manipulates one part of the system one can then literally “see” the way in which the manipulation influences (or fails to influence) other parts of the system.

Call this sense of ‘grasping’ *system-comprehension*. The idea seems to be not only that one (typically) part-detects the system’s various parts, and apprehends the system as a whole. One has a further grasp of how the parts contribute to forming that whole, and how the whole depends on those parts.

As we have already noticed, non-normative considerations together systematically (yet complicatedly) come together to form normatively relevant considerations (e.g., reasons and values). System-comprehending this is grasping how these ‘bits’ are relevant to yielding this *normative* result, and how the normative result would have been different had the ‘bits’ been different. An example is where Jason, during Bioethics class, comes to understand how a patient’s consent makes a huge difference to whether it is permissible to operate on a patient. To grasp this, he thinks of parallel of cases where a patient is operated on in the presence, and alternatively in the absence, of her consent.

System-comprehension is also relevant in that norms can together form a system. E.g., Karen, pondering etiquette, comes to understand that a norm prohibiting open-mouthed chewing applies because a general norm against making others uncomfortable applies. As she reasons: if discomfort were irrelevant at dinner, and/or if open-mouthed chewing didn’t engender others’ discomfort, it would be permissible.

2.3 What kinds of moral understanding might psychopaths lack?

Let us use Blair's M/C results as our primary guide for determining to what extent psychopaths possess moral understanding. Recall: it appears they do not offer the standard welfare-citing justifications for moral rules, and they appear to treat conventional rules as moral rules (as similarly impermissible, serious, and authority-independent).

2.3.1 Detection deficits

Remember that in most experiments to date on moral judgment in psychopaths, including Blair 1995, psychopaths were largely successful at identifying which actions were norm violations. This suggests psychopaths are fairly competent at (1a) *bit-detecting* morally relevant considerations as well as (1b) *reason-detecting* moral reasons and instances of moral as well as conventional norm violations. Assuming that all eight of Blair's violations really were violations, the psychopaths (in Blair 1995) were in fact more accurate than control subjects with such detection on the *permissibility* dimension.

Obvious limitations, however, are the artificial setting and the limited number and kind of cases. It could turn out that Blairian psychopaths going about life—rather than being presented with a vignette and forced to make a permissibility judgment—are in fact impaired at detecting morally relevant 'bits' which are clues that a moral rule applies to the situation. Some initial research suggests as much: Psychopaths have been observed to exhibit significant impairment relative to control subjects in understanding conditionals detailing the condition of a social contract (e.g., 'If you borrow my motorcycle, then you have to wash it') (Ermer & Kiehl 2010). This suggests that they have difficulty even detecting moral reasons pertaining to cheating and promising. Further evidence—including research methodologies which examine psychopaths' moral judgments in more lifelike scenarios—will improve what is known about psychopaths' ability to detect morally relevant reasons and values and how this relates to what they know about moral norms in the abstract.

Knowledge of moral norms in the abstract is to be distinguished from both (1a) bit-detection and (1b) reasons-detection. For example, it is plausible that a typical psychopath knows that cheating is (considered) immoral—i.e., he believes this, truly, with non-accidental justification. This need not imply that this psychopath is adept at reason-detecting (e.g.) the fact that one promised to return a motorcycle washed is a reason to make good on the promise. Nor

that he is adept at bit-detecting the filthiness of the motorcycle, or the owner's disappointment, as morally relevant considerations.

2.3.2 Apprehension deficits

Another plausible suggestion is somewhat supported by available data, despite being difficult to test: that psychopaths are impaired at (2) *apprehending moral reasons*, at least and especially those which are directly supervenient on harms to sentient creatures. Two lines of evidence seem relevant.

First, consider three experimental findings. (1) Blair's psychopaths were less likely to give welfare-/harm-citing justifications for why moral violations were wrong. (2) Psychopaths have low autonomic responses to distress cues in other people, esp. fear and sadness behaviors. That these psychopaths are not reacting to others' harm-induced distress reactions in the typical autonomically sympathetic way suggests they are not apprehending the importance of those harms in the typical way. At any rate, if they apprehend any considerations as reasons not to hit people or destroy their possessions, they will be less likely than normal people to apprehend anyone's fear or sadness in particular as the relevant reasons. (3) The fact that psychopaths in Blair's experiments treated both the moral and the conventional violations as authority-independent suggests that neither judgment was driven by consideration of the welfare of victims. Rather, it seems they had a tendency to treat both sorts of norms (perhaps *all* social norms) as just the way things are (done), as 'fixed in stone'—or anyway to answer as though they believed this. This in turn suggests an impairment in apprehending the importance of others' welfare.

Second, experience-based reflections by clinicians as well as anecdotes they retell point to an impairment in apprehending the suffering or distress of others as morally relevant. Jeanette Kennett (2010) reports a few cases:

[1] Robert Hare reports that he 'was once dumbfounded by the logic of an inmate who described his murder victim as having benefited from the crime by learning "a hard lesson about life"' (Hare [1993], p. 41). [2] A psychopathic rapist interviewed by Hare also claimed his crimes had benefitted his victims, citing the fact that they got their names in the paper and that he was 'polite and considerate' to them as evidence of this (Hare, p. 43). . . . [3] Another of Hare's patients when asked how he had begun his career

in crime said: ‘It had to do with my mother, the most beautiful person in the world. I started stealing her jewelry when I was in 5th grade. You know, I never really knew the bitch, we went our separate ways’. (p. 247)

In consideration of similar cases and overall data, Carl Elliott (1996) remarks that “the most consistently described feature of the psychopath . . . is an inability to understand or appreciate moral concerns” (p. 74). Specifically, he speculates that “[t]he psychopath does not seem to be able to see why the interests of others matter” (p. 80). Congruent with what we have observed so far, Elliott gestures at the knowledge/apprehension distinction:

What [the psychopath] does know is what other people think is wrong. He knows what most people feel guilty about, which actions will be punished, which will be rewarded, when to lie and when to tell the truth. In fact, he often knows all these things well enough to be able to manipulate, flatter, and bamboozle people with something approaching genius. . . . On the other hand, the psychopath seems to lack any sort of deep engagement with morality. His knowledge seems limited to morality’s most shallow and superficial features. (p. 79)

2.3.3 System-comprehension deficits

Psychopaths’ M/C performance also seems to testify to deficits in system-comprehension of morality. Norms tend to come in hierarchies; e.g., opening with the rook pawn and abandoning your king are blunders because there is a general norm not to be checkmated. Complementarily, welfare considerations—norms not to harm others and/or to preserve their welfare—plausibly ground a great portion of moral norms, maybe even all of them. The psychopaths’ answers on the justification task are directly revelatory here: they were less likely than control subjects to see that norms against property-destruction, hitting, and hair-pulling were grounded by a more general norm not to negatively affect people’s welfare. We can refer to this form of impaired system-comprehension as impairment at (3a) *getting the point* of moral rules.

To get the point in this way, one considers counterfactual questions of the form: If ϕ -ing didn’t have effect e , would ϕ -ing still be impermissible? (E.g., if pulling Suzie’s hair didn’t cause

her pain or injury, would it still be wrong?) It seems that normal people do, but psychopaths do not, understand that many moral norms get their force from a general norm not to harm others. (Granted, even normal people may vary in their conceptions of welfare, their tendency to see norms as depending on general harm-prohibitions, and the sophistication of their grasp of the interconnections of various rules.)

Understanding of the authority-dependence or -independence of a set of norms, seems to represent another kind of system-comprehension. Here, one assesses counterfactual questions of the form: If party *P* took attitude *A* toward ϕ -ing, would ϕ -ing still be impermissible? When one has the correct answer to such a question, let us say that one (3b) *fathoms the purview* of the rule in question *with respect to the attitudes of a certain party*.

The purview of moral rules which most people fathom, but which psychopaths do not, is that virtually any authority figure's permission (or approval, caring, fondness, etc.) about someone's being harmed (or their property's being harmed) is (mostly?) irrelevant to whether intentional harming by one person to another is morally wrong. And in the case of conventional rules, they understand that authority figures' permission (etc.) can be relevant to setting norms of decorum, which in turn affects whether the violation of such norms of decorum is wrong.

Even normal folks may vary quite a bit in the extent to which they fathom the purview of various normative rules with respect to people's attitudes. E.g., some folks will have an answer, whereas others will not, as to whether God's approving of lending with interest makes a difference to whether it is morally permissible. Surely there are a variety of depths of purview-fathoming among normal folks with respect to the various norms they use and the various attitudes that various parties take toward those norms.²²

With these varieties of understanding introduced, we can say that psychopaths' impairments in moral system-comprehension plausibly owe to impairments in moral apprehension. Their failure to 'get the point' of rules against harming—the protection of others' welfare—is plausibly a result of their failure to see others' welfare as especially important in the

²² Regarding the conventional norms used by Blair 1995 (following Turiel), the ultimate need or justification for these rules was, plausibly, classroom decorum: there needs to be some set of rules or other regarding how many people in a public forum can talk at once, how disruptive they can be, and even how they dress. Ultimately, these are to be traced to certain authority-independent facts, such as: that children need education, that human children have certain constraints on their attention and on how many conversations they can consider at once, and how responsibly and non-disruptively and punctually they can enter and exit classrooms. It is likely that ordinary folk understand (fathom) all this to rather different degrees.

first place. Similarly, their failure to ‘fathom’ that conventional rules are, but moral rules are not, dependent on authority figures’ dictates plausibly also owes to their failure to see others’ welfare as especially important. The simple alternatives then are that the rules are all authority-dependent or are all authority-independent, and the latter is exactly what the typical psychopath answered in Blair’s experiments (probably because of their incentive to achieve parole), pointing to an impairment in moral apprehension.²³

2.4 Conclusion

We have seen that extant investigation of psychopaths’ moral reasoning suggests they are impaired in moral *apprehension*—seeing others as mattering—and at moral *system-comprehension*—understanding how rules depend on each other in a way relevant to whether the attitudes of authority figures can legitimately change whether a given rule is congruent with the underlying rule. It is also plausible, but less substantially evidenced, that they have some impairment in detecting the interests of others.

What could account for this? The next chapter suggests that an impairment in emotional caring—the ability to experience emotions congruent with others’ well-being—is a plausible hypothesis that is also instructive about how people in general use other-directed emotional processes to discover value in others.

²³ One study (Glenn et al. 2009) tested psychopaths’ cognition of five distinct moral conceptual motifs which Jonathan Haidt calls the “Moral Foundations”. The study that psychopathic tendencies correlated with sharply lower scores on the harm and fairness subscales of a measure of moral concern, but showed no relationship with authority, and very small relationships with ingroup and purity” (p. 384). This should lead us to expect psychopaths’ moral apprehension and system-comprehension (as well as fluency etc.) to be compromised with respect to those norms which more directly concern people’s interests.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EPISTEMIC ROLE OF EMOTIONAL CARING

As gin is not only a drink in itself but also a base for many mixed drinks, so Affection, besides being a love itself, can enter into the other loves and colour them all through and become the very medium in which from day to day they operate.

-- C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (1960)

A BASIC AND NEGLECTED aspect of moral perception is the ability to see people as mattering. Not just to detect (for example) that someone else has been harmed, and not just to apprehend (“see”) a harm as a harm, but to apprehend the *significance* of this harm, and (more broadly) the significance of whether the other person’s interests are set back or enhanced.²⁴ Last chapter we labeled this disposition to see others as mattering as ‘moral apprehension’. We reviewed evidence that psychopaths are impaired in moral apprehension, tending not to attend to the intrinsic importance of harms to victims. Our present question is, What explains people’s ability (and psychopaths’ impairment) of moral apprehension?

Here we will argue that *emotional caring* is a more plausible candidate than various competitors. The task is to articulate and provisionally defend the following *caring-apprehension hypothesis*. Two glosses can give the initial idea:

[gloss 1] *caring emotionally* about others allows, initially incites, and thereafter trains us to apprehend others’ value.

[gloss 2] *emotional caring* enables, mediates, and improves moral apprehension.

The full *caring-apprehension hypothesis* is the conjunction of three sub-hypotheses, each of which is made plausible by similar empirical and conceptual considerations.

Regular deployment of the capacity to *care emotionally about other creatures with interests* is intimately involved in neurotypical humans’ ability to apprehend the moral relevance of those creatures’ well-being, in three ways:

[i] ***enablement thesis***: regular deployment of the caring capacity is in humans developmentally necessary for causing the buildup of the moral apprehension capacity.

²⁴ I’ll think of *harms* as setbacks to interests, and *benefits* as, roughly, the meeting of certain needs, the fulfillment of certain desires, and/or the gaining of a pleasure or ability.

[ii] *mediation thesis*: token deployments of the caring capacity typically exert their causal influence in the buildup of the moral apprehensional capacity by altering one's experiences of the values of other individuals' interests, often by making them more clearly valenced, intense, vivid, detailed, longer-lasting, conscious, motivating, and/or accurate.

[iii] *skill maintenance thesis*: regular deployment of the caring capacity will be approximately directly correlated with skilled deployment, toward diverse others, of the caring capacity as well as of the moral apprehensional capacity (the tendency to deploy both capacities with ease, habitualness, accuracy, adroitness (competence across varied circumstances), proportionality, attention to subtlety, etc.).

The task is admittedly and unabashedly speculative. The value of this speculation is not only in interpretation of the (limited but promising) empirical evidence. Perhaps more important is careful articulation of each sub-hypothesis, as well as of the underexplored constructs of moral apprehension and emotional caring, hopefully bringing clarity for future philosophical and psychological research. Each claim will be further elucidated below as we consider evidence regarding them.

Many psychologists and philosophers think of empathy as the crucial affective ingredient which psychopaths lack but which spawns altruistic motives in normal humans (e.g., Slote 2010, Kauppinen 2010, Batson 2011). Alternative constructs are also sometimes proffered. Attention to the conceptual structure that moral apprehension shares with emotional caring is one line of evidence that caring is the construct that explains moral apprehension better than empathy does.

I begin (§1) with an account of the apprehensional experiences to be explained. I then present (§2) an account of caring and its conceptual structure. This informs (§3) positive hypothesizing about how caring might enable, mediate, and improve moral apprehension. This allows us (§4) to contrast caring with other candidates for the capacity which enables moral apprehension in neurotypical people but not in psychopaths—empathy, concern, and non-emotional processes including valuation.

3.1 What is a value-apprehensional experience?

Our initial task is to explain experiences of perceiving someone as mattering, that is, as a creature whose interests (or welfare) are significant. These I will call *moral value-apprehensional experiences* (v-a experiences, for short).²⁵ Last chapter (§2.3.2) we considered evidence that psychopaths are impaired in their ability to have v-a experiences, without dwelling on the nature of the latter.

Some examples of v-a experiences will give the idea. Sometimes I see others as mattering via an emotional response to a change in their fortune (e.g., fear at seeing an Olympic star injured after learning his back story; pride upon seeing my brother win an award). These others might be humans, other animals, plants, places, or objects.²⁶ Other times I see others as mattering simply by being present with them, especially, but not only, when they are familiar. E.g., some time into an interesting, sustained conversation with a fellow airline passenger, I get the feeling that his interests matter. Sometimes I consider such a person as mattering only after contact is over, when we have departed company for good, and a memory of our contact surfaces. V-a experiences can sometimes occur without much emotional feeling, such as when I hear briefly in the news that someone was murdered. Especially if I'm busy or distracted, I recognize a setback to the welfare of someone who matters, though it leaves my viscera untingled.

These experiences do not simply attribute interests to the other individual; this is more than realizing she can be harmed or benefitted. Interest-attribution seems merely a prerequisite to v-a experiences, or at least an aspect of them which is logically prior to other aspects of them. Of central importance here are the basic kinds of interests common to all animals: interests in bodily integrity, breath, food, water, sleep, etc. (Granted, we sometimes attribute interests to plants,

²⁵ So far as I can tell, this specific type of experience has not been widely discussed. Two marginal exceptions are Blum (1980) and Vetlesen (1994, Ch. 4).

Although the early modern British sentimentalists (e.g., Hutcheson, Hume, Adam Smith) often discussed how certain broadly emotional capacities (such as a “moral sense”, “sympathy”, and “benevolence”) enabled the detection and apprehension of *virtue* or moral *character*, they did not as often distinguish this from the apprehension merely of the value of things as patients. Cf. Hume (1739, §3.3.3) and Gill (2007).

²⁶ For example, consider witnessing the following things soaked with gasoline and ignited: a cat, the big tree near my yard, my childhood comfort object.

Rather than ‘apprehension’, this phenomenon may sometimes be mere projection, at least for cases like these. For example, when I watch a video clip of a big triangle chasing a small triangle—the well-known movie used by Heider & Simmel (1944) to study the attribution of intentions to geometrical shapes—I feel scared for the smaller triangle being picked on and chased and indignant toward the bully larger triangle (especially when I imagine him disrupting the smaller triangle’s bodily integrity). But there’s clearly nothing it’s like to be this shape. Ch. 4 will treat strategies for mitigating biases like these.

places, and objects, whether or not this is accurate.) Here we cannot develop a theory of interest-attribution, but we can say that fancy kinds of mindreading (i.e., discernment of another's particular mental states) do not seem required for interest-attribution at a time. It can be safely assumed, for example, that someone facing death or severe pain and no other benefits is facing harm—no matter what mental state she happens to be in.²⁷

Three properties are worth noting. V-a experiences seem to be *welfare-highlighting*, *welfare-congruent*, and *intrinsic-value-attributing*. First, they highlight the welfare of the other in that they draw the perceiver's attention to how the other is faring or might fare. Second, they are at least typically welfare-congruent in that they are construals of (prospective) benefits to the other as good, and of (prospective) harms to the other as bad. And, third, these values are usually attributed as intrinsic to the other, possessed in virtue of being a thing with interests (rather than, say, as a thing which matters to someone). (Contrast our experiences nice sets of golf clubs with our experiences of puppies: our emotions are congruent with and make salient to us the condition of both sets of entities, but the puppies we experience as creatures whose welfare matters to them for their own sakes.)²⁸

²⁷ A similar point and case is made by Nichols (2004, p. 45), who argues that only “minimal mindreading” need be involved in the mechanism that produces altruistic concern.

That said, mindreading may be a resource for adequately detecting various individual-relative interests stemming from another's goals or desires, especially if testimony about such is unavailable. Insofar as mindreading or simulation of another's mind would be necessary for the buildup of a theory of others' interests, it would probably be relevant to establishing some catalogue of basic aversions corresponding to basic interests. But it's not plausible that one needs to deploy mindreading or simulation at all times in order to discern facts relevant to someone else's interest.

²⁸ Value-apprehension conceived as this kind of quasi-perceptual experience has been little studied empirically. However, one young research tradition explores “dehumanization”, the denial of full “humanness” to others. On the leading theory, that of Nick Haslam (2006), there are two folk concepts of humanness: “human nature” (HN), a concept of vitality which distinguishes humans from machines, and the “uniquely human” (UH), a concept of culturedness which distinguishes humans from (nonhuman) animals. HN characteristics involve “cognitive flexibility, emotionality, vital agency, and warmth” (ibid., p. 257). Perhaps it could be coherently precisified as some combination of such notions as animateness, vitality, agency, sentience, etc. HN (for which a better term might be ‘human animal nature’) is supposed to be an essentialist concept in that the traits comprising it are “judged to be high [among humans] in prevalence, universality, and emotionality, and to emerge early in development” (ibid.). By contrast, lay-ascribed UH traits, at least in some cultures, are supposed to include “cognitive sophistication, culture, refinement, socialization, and internalized moral sensibility” (ibid. p. 256). UH traits, in extant studies, were “judged to be low in prevalence and universality, to appear late in development, and to be unrelated to emotionality” (ibid.).

When HN is denied to others, they “should be seen as lacking in emotionality, warmth, cognitive openness, individual agency . . . as inert and cold . . . [and] as interchangeable (fungible) and passive, their behavior caused rather than propelled by personal will”. By contrast, people denied of UH are likely to be seen as “coarse, uncultured, lacking in self-control, and unintelligent, [their behavior] more driven by motives, appetites, and instincts, [and thus as] childlike, immature, or backward” (ibid.).

3.2 The structure of emotional caring bonds

Emotional caring is understood in what follows as *the disposition to undergo emotions which are congruent with the well-being of another*, the one cared-for, where *these emotions are directed at the cared-for, and/or at potential threats or aids to the cared-for's well-being, for the cared-for's sake*. (Hereafter I'll call this 'caring' for short, and the emotions in which the disposition manifests, 'caring emotions'.) Senses of the term 'caring' abound, but elucidating this narrow sense should be revelatory. Its conceptual structure maps onto, and hence promises to explain, the conceptual structure of moral apprehension. Just like v-a experiences, caring emotions are welfare-highlighting, welfare-congruent, and non-instrumental. They are like standard emotions but are focused on others. For convenience, we will refer to a disposition to have caring emotions toward a specific person as a 'caring bond', and a situation where two individuals have caring bonds toward each other as a 'reciprocal caring bond'.

3.2.1 The structure of emotional caring bonds

Welfare-highlighting. In section 1.4 we observed the plausible

Interest-Revelation Thesis (IRT): A large plurality of the emotions humans and animals feel—and an even larger plurality of their more intense emotions—are construals of organism-environment relations, having environmental changes relevant to the interests of the organism (especially her more basic interests) as their formal objects.

Individuals' emotion systems are detectors of that individual's interests: fear represents danger; sadness, loss; disgust, contamination; etc. Our emotion systems are calibrated (either by heredity or experience or both, depending on the case) to represent certain kinds of stimuli as having that property. The fear system (when functioning properly) detects dangerous things and represents those things viscerally as dangerous so that the person apprehends the danger.

Two important ways that emotions plausibly accomplish this are through modulating attention and generating action-tendencies.²⁹ In an emotion event, attention is focused on the particular object of the emotion (often so as to make the object and/or experience memorable). This narrows down the alternatives to be considered. Accordingly, emotions also typically have certain action-tendencies, i.e., they make it more likely that the organism will become motivated

²⁹ For these points I am indebted to Prinz (2004, Chs. 1, 8).

to act in certain ways (e.g.: fear: flight; anger: fight; disgust: retraction and cleansing; sadness: retrieval of lost item; etc.).

With other-focused emotions, it would be unsurprising if this set of features were also present. E.g., in fearing for my friend's life, my attention is directed toward the danger he faces, implicitly focusing me on his welfare. Moreover, I'm motivated either to flee or to cause him to flee (or both). This could explain how particular caring emotion events give rise to v-a experiences, focusing one's attention and motivation on the other's array of interests, construing these as mattering.

Other-focus. In §1.4, we observed that a great variety of emotions have *particular objects* (e.g., the fearsome bear) and *formal objects*, which are the cluster of properties in terms of which the particular object is construed (danger or threat in the case of fear). We're now in the position to notice that fear on someone's behalf takes that person as a third relatum. We will call this the *focus* of an emotion.

Typically emotions deploy toward their particular and formal objects on behalf of the organism experiencing the emotion. That is, they are *focused* on the self in that particular objects (the bear, e.g.) are being construed as dangerous (e.g.) *to* or *vis-à-vis* the self, i.e., relative to the interests of the emoting organism. But emotions can sometimes be focused on the interests of other organisms (*other-focused*).³⁰

Some other-focused emotions are not manifestations of a full caring sentiment. Some are, for example, the manifestations of antipathy (the mirror opposite of a care) or of a partial care (say, a disposition only to positive response toward positive changes but not a negative response toward negative changes).

Welfare-congruence. An emotion is congruent with someone's welfare to the extent that the formal object of the emotion felt matches or corresponds to the overall condition of the person focused on. For example, if fear's formal object is danger, and H is in danger, then someone feeling a welfare-congruent emotion for H would feel fear.³¹ Plausibly, caring emotions

³⁰ An interesting distinction, relatively unimportant here, is between other-focused emotions [i] whose particular object is a feature of the other's environment, and those [ii] whose particular object is the other herself (perhaps in conjunction with features of her environment).

³¹ Interesting questions I cannot address here pertain to whether a given emotional reaction to someone's welfare condition counts as congruent if it matches only some aspects of the welfare condition, or is only partially accurate or precise, or is mixed with some emotions which are non-congruent or incongruent with the person's welfare.

are those which are congruent with *what one perceives as* the other’s welfare condition; but hereafter we will usually suppress this detail for simplicity.

The emotional caring disposition seems to manifest in emotions on at least four dimensions. Suppose that Sam cares emotionally for Harriet in the fullest way as is common. His care will then manifest in two ways involving positive emotional valence and two negative. The following table provides some examples:³²

Table 3.1: Four dimensions of caring emotions

a	b	c	d
positive emotions toward positive situations	presence-emotions	negative emotions toward negative situations	absence-emotions
joy and satisfaction when H is flourishing pride in H’s successes relief when H escapes danger unharmed	delight at being presented with H or at being in H’s presence	frustration over H’s misfortunes disappointment over H’s failures anger at agents who heedlessly bring H misfortune fear when the H is in danger concern when H is endangered or suffering	grief at the loss of H subsequent nostalgia

It is up for debate whether all four dimensions are essential to emotional caring. If Sam only experiences positive emotions toward Harriet’s successes ((a)), but doesn’t sympathize when Harriet is under duress ((c)), Sam at least cares about Harriet much less than the case where she is disposed to each of (a)-(d). We can leave the question open which, if any, of (a)-(d) are essential to emotional caring, merely emphasizing that (a)-(d) characterize the most thorough cares and also in a sense the most consistent cares. (Above I suggested ‘partial care’ for dispositions where only (a) or (c), but not both, are met, implying, plausibly, that at least the conjunction of (a) and (c) are necessary for full emotional caring about a thing.)³³

³² This list borrows many of its items from Jaworska (2007), p. 560.

³³ Are presence- and absence-emotions other-focused? Each category actually divides into two. One kind of presence-emotion is an other-focused joy that the other person exists; another kind is a self-focused joy that the other person is in proximity to oneself. Likewise, one kind of absence-emotion is an other-focused sadness that the other person is absent (it seems to the emotional self *as though she does not exist* at all); another kind is a self-

Attachment is a phenomenon characterized particularly by (b) and (d), even in infants for whom it is unclear to what extent they are capable of much in the way of (a) or (c). For humans and many other animals, attachment begins in infancy, where an infant's attachment to a caregiver/attachment figure involves the disposition [i] to seek proximity to the attachment figure (almost always its mother at first), who is a "safe haven" of protection and shelter and a "secure base" for exploration of one's environment; [ii] to experience fear, sadness, and similar forms of anxiety and distress in the attachment figure's absence (known as "separation anxiety"); and [iii] to engage in various "attachment behaviors" both in the figure's absence (e.g., crying, clinging, grasping, protest) and in her presence (e.g., cooing, cuddling, smiling, following) (Ainsworth et al. 1978, Howe 2011). Many theorists propose this is a precursor to human caring, both evolutionarily and developmentally (cf. Churchland 2011, Batson 2011 pp. 46ff).

Intrinsic value attribution. Even a robustly welfare-congruent sentiment (meeting conditions (a)-(d)) might not be a genuine care if the emotions are not regularly felt *for the other's sake*. To see this, consider a Pompous Golfer. Suppose the golfer is disposed to feel: joy for his caddy when the latter is feeling well-rested, disappointment for his caddy when the latter's knee is injured, and fear of yet another injury to the knee when it gets aggravated. But, suppose, in this case the golfer's emotional disposition is not directed toward these potential threats or aids to the caddy's well-being *as such*. Rather, they are so directed intrinsically at the events as potential threats or aids to the golfer's own well-being (specifically, to his success on the green) and only instrumentally at those of the caddy. That the golfer is disposed to have emotions entirely congruent with the caddy's well-being does not seem enough to qualify the disposition as a genuine care.

Other-focused, welfare-congruent emotional dispositions which are nevertheless instrumental might be called *pseudo-cares*. Such sentiments might fairly often lead to genuine caring, and for such cases we might be kinder to call these *proto-cares*. But in the golfer's case the caddy might as well be a mindless machine functioning well or poorly.³⁴ A genuine care would be felt at least partly for the caddy's own sake.

focused sadness that the other person is not in proximity to oneself. Since these pairs of emotions are rather hard to distinguish from each other for actual examples, it seemed appropriate to relegate these distinctions to this footnote.

³⁴ In rare cases, of course, people do care about totally mindless machines (e.g. automobiles) as though they were pets (or children or lovers) or creatures with lives or minds. It is possible, then, to have a full care toward a thing which arguably has no "sake"—if only because one anthropomorphizes the thing.

Perhaps the slippery concept of non-instrumentality can be elucidated with little more than synonyms. Perhaps the best way to put it is that what makes an emotion non-instrumentally or intrinsically other-focused and welfare-congruent is that it *takes her welfare seriously* in that it responds to potential setbacks and improvements to her welfare *as real* or *as really important*, i.e., in such a way that they *feel significant*.³⁵

Someone might worry that this trivializes the caring-apprehension hypothesis into the tautology that to be able to apprehend someone's welfare as significant, one must be able to apprehend someone's welfare as significant. But the claim is really more like this: in order to apprehend someone's welfare as significant, one must be able to *feel* someone's welfare as significant. The relevant ability, I suggest, is the disposition to experience emotions congruent with someone's welfare, emotions which have a certain other-focusedness and non-instrumentality, as well as a certain intensity. Any apparent circularity may owe to the elusiveness of substantive elucidations of the notion of a feeling's being felt 'for another's sake'.

Why and how do we come to care about people non-instrumentally? One good hypothesis is that it is a normal outgrowth of having emotions that are congruent with another individual's well-being. Typically, the deployment of an emotion, construing environmental features as having certain organism-relevant properties, [i] "*presupposes*" that the relevant organism's welfare matters. It "*presupposes*" this precisely in the way that it directs the emoting organism's attention and disposes it to certain action responses. In cases like the Pompous Golfer, it may be that the emotional "*presupposition*" of intrinsic value simply gets overridden by some other factors. It may also have to do with [ii] attributing to the other individual a perspective or a mind, as well as with [iii] the intensity that other-focused, welfare-congruent emotions can often take, especially but not only when we imagine having their perspectives, cares, or goals.

3.3 Caring's connections to moral apprehension

3.3.1 Direction of explanation

The parallel conceptual structure of caring and value-apprehension suggests a dependence relation between the two. But what is the relation between caring and moral

³⁵ Some other attempts to characterize non-instrumental caring are made by Darwall (1998, p. 274) and Helm (2010, Ch. 3).

apprehension: which is dependent on which—or might they both be produced by a further entity? Furthermore, is the relationship causal and/or constitutive? I will argue that we should suppose caring to be more basic than moral apprehension, and that the relation is often causal rather than constitutive, but perhaps in some instances is one of constitution. Arguing for this picture will involve explaining the enablement, mediation, and skill maintenance hypotheses.

Only interpreting v-a as dependent on caring emotion events seems to explain least two findings. First, even young toddlers have a capacity for other-directed, welfare-congruent emotional responses, and these apparently precede the development a self-other distinction (Hoffman 2000). At this stage, the child's emotions are construing distress in others as aversive even though they lack a concept of other individuals, and so, presumably, of others' interests. In other words, the distress itself is apparently an unconditioned stimulus which is aversive without training or much cognitive exercise. There seems no need to postulate a further value-apprehensional capacity emerging even earlier.

Second, psychopaths seem impaired in moral apprehension, and it is widely agreed that a consequential and early-developing aspect of their deficit is shallow affect, which is traceable to an impairment in emotional learning. Blair et al. (2005) argue that this shallow affect, along with concomitant difficulties forming attachments to family early in development, are symptoms of more basic deficiencies in emotional conditioning to negative stimuli as well as impaired apprehension of, and abnormally blunted autonomic responses to, fearful and sad facial expressions and vocal affect (cf. Ch. 2 above). These affective impairments are apparently congenital and present in the earliest stages of development. The simplest explanation seems to be that the congenital emotional impairment is what impairs moral apprehension, rather than postulating an independent value-apprehensional capacity emerging even earlier.

3.3.2 Causation and constitution

Given the aforementioned findings, the most plausible picture of the relation of caring and moral apprehension is that regular deployment of the caring capacity causes the buildup of the moral apprehensional capacity during the course of development (childhood, if not beyond). We should keep in mind, however, that caring and moral apprehension seem to be separable capacities: we can apprehend the value of individuals we do not care about, or even those we dislike. This 'kicking away the ladder' needs explaining as well.

If emotional caring causally sets up the moral apprehensional capacity as both develop, we should suppose that the causal work is not that of the emotional caring disposition itself (which is not an event), but of its *manifestations*, i.e., episodes of caring emotions. The apprehensional faculty's setup could be altered by various aspects of the caring emotions' components (or concomitants³⁶) as we run through the list of components of typical emotion episodes (see Table 1.1). [1] *Somatic changes*, perhaps especially when [2] *consciously felt*, might make one viscerally inclined to detect potential harms or benefits. [4] In an emotion episode, *attention gets directed* toward that which is frustrating, saddening, fearsome, etc., and plausibly this would become memorable over time, including when [5] *cognitive judgments* are involved. [3] Also, the emotional event typically makes one *disposed to certain actions* (relief of distress, fleeing danger, cleansing oneself of contaminants, etc.), and these action-tendencies would presumably be present in the case of other-focused emotions. Any or all of these could exert causal force on our perceptual dispositions.

Kicking away the ladder. Whatever the causal details, one plausible hypothesis is that construal of others' interests as significant becomes memorable over time. An association becomes conditioned between presentation of setbacks or improvements to others' welfare and the deployment of caring emotions toward such events, as well as between welfare-congruent presence-emotions and their construal of the cared-for as intrinsically valuable. Eventually this results in a patterned tendency to apprehend others as valuable whether they are in a positive, negative, or neutral welfare condition.³⁷

On this picture, people typically come to care about individual persons, then extrapolate this care to others, starting with those similar to the individuals they care about. In many cases, people further extrapolate their cares to most or all ingroup members or humans or persons, with the help of teaching and dialogue with others and of their own ratiocinative engagement regarding who 'counts' morally.³⁸ In these circumstances, people come to apprehend the

³⁶ Different views of the nature of emotion will construe the listed phenomena either as components or as concomitants of an emotion episode.

³⁷ This coheres well with Antonio Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis (Damasio 2005, Damasio et al. 1996), on which emotions are shortcuts for decision-making which mark various behaviors' outcomes with negative or positive valence.

³⁸ An apparently fairly common and effective sort of educational experience is what Hoffman (2000) calls "induction" where in disciplinarians prompt children to take up the other's perspective, especially when the other is distressed and when that distress was caused by the child's own action. Hoffman argues these experiences are

significance of the well-being of those whom they do *not* care about, or even of people whom they hate. It is in this respect, plausibly, that people can immediately apprehend the disvalue in (unjustified) harms to people unknown to them.

It may additionally be true that some v-a experiences are constituted by experiences of caring emotions (perhaps both in children and adults). After all, if emotions are ways of perceiving values of environmental entities to an organism, it would be unsurprising if seeing the organism as valuable were just an aspect of the emotional event. If so, we should think that the caring emotion is more ontologically basic (i.e., constitutes) the v-a experience. The reason is that the general account of emotions I've offered suggests that emotions routinely play a perceptual role, whether or not the self or some other creature is the one focused-on.

3.3.3 The enablement thesis

Recall the:

[i] *enablement thesis*: regular deployment of the caring capacity is in humans developmentally *necessary* for causing the buildup of the moral apprehensional capacity.

The evidence for the necessity claim is that it is considerably difficult to reform psychopaths to take the interests of others seriously—and so, we should think, to see them as mattering—even to the point that most researchers consider psychopathy to be a condition beyond correction (Blair et al. 2005). If so, this would seem to suggest that (emotional manifestations of) the caring capacity, or at least its affective rudiments, are indispensable to enabling humans to see others as mattering.³⁹

There is room to insist on even more rigid readings of the enablement thesis: a '*token-dispositional version*' on which a caring orientation toward certain particular persons is necessary for seeing those particular people as mattering; and a '*token occurrent version*' on

important for instilling both transgression guilt and empathic tendencies in children, which well-practiced children more thoroughly extend to other situations and parties.

³⁹ Robert Audi has pointed out to me that the 'enables' claim in my hypothesis could be understood as a sufficiency claim rather than as a necessity claim. On this reading, caring is *one of* a list of things only one or the other of which is necessary for the moral apprehensional capacity to emerge. (Compare: a certain engine might need either kerosene or gasoline; kerosene enables this engine to run insofar as it is sufficient for the engine to run.)

One reason to make the more ambitious, necessity claim (viz., caring is necessary for moral apprehension) is that psychopaths seem to have a hard time compensating for their emotional deficit. If the necessary condition for moral apprehension is disjunctive, psychopaths seem to lack every disjunct. The simplest explanation is that there is only one disjunct.

which a caring emotion event is necessary for the occurrences of certain particular v-a experiences. These are being mentioned mostly for contrast with the most well-evidenced version of the enablement thesis, although some considerations grant them some plausibility in their own rights.⁴⁰

3.3.4 The mediation thesis

Recall the:

[ii] *mediation thesis*: token deployments of the caring capacity typically exert their causal influence in the buildup of the moral apprehensional capacity by altering one's experiences of the values of other individuals' interests, often by making them more clearly valenced, intense, vivid, detailed, longer-lasting, conscious, motivating, and/or accurate.

Occurrent caring emotions plausibly *mediate* moral apprehensional experiences by affecting their felt intensity, duration, conscious experience, valence, and motivating qualities. Consider again the examples of apprehending the value of the fellow airline passenger. Contrast such cases with parallel situations where no special connection to or acquaintance with the interests of the person is present, such as hearing that twelve people died in an oil rig accident. The emotional character of an emotion-tinged value-apprehensional experience may be what gives it *valence*: it feels roughly negative or positive; what happens to the other feels 'uplifting'

⁴⁰ The *token-dispositional version* would hold that some (but plausibly not all) token experiences of apprehension of some particular person's welfare as mattering could not have occurred had the experiencer not cared for that particular person. The best cases to support this—ideally in some kind of controlled study—would be those in which subjects develop an unlikely care or attachment (say, through interaction over time) for a person or creature whose welfare they previously were set on viewing as utterly insignificant (e.g., Robinson Crusoe's gradual companionship with the character Friday on at least some versions of that story). The argument would be that their value-apprehension of the previously disregarded person could not have occurred without the emotional influence of care.

The even more tentative *token-occurrent version* would hold that certain (but plausibly not all) token experiences of apprehension of someone's welfare as mattering could not have occurred had the experiencer not experienced an occurrent caring emotion toward the person just before or during the apprehensional experience. Cases to support this might be ones where the cared-for is a person or creature very different from any other which the person had previously considered valuable. (There may be clinical evidence from VMPFC patients to support this. Some recent data (Thomas et al. 2011) shows that subjects with damage to the VMPFC (ventromedial prefrontal cortex, an area associated with emotion regulation), when presented with the option of harming kin to save a greater number of strangers, were more likely than control subjects to choose to save the strangers. It is plausible that they had less robust or compelling value-apprehensional experiences of their kin upon imagining their kin. This could turn out to support an interpretation on which they have this intuition because they fail to feel caring emotions for their kin.)

or ‘sinking’. This is very different from, say, the apprehensional experience of seeing Wittgenstein’s duck-rabbit as a duck, or merely recognizing that a child unknown to you is the winner of this year’s award. Emotion-tinged apprehensional experiences also seem *more intense*, and *longer lasting*, both initially and in memory, than their non-emotion-tinged counterparts; and we are *more consciously aware* of the fortunes of a passenger we care about than a stranger whom we do not. As a result, there is greater *motivation* resulting from (or coinciding with) the apprehensional experience. As a result of all these factors, it is reasonable to expect v-a experiences tinged by occurrent emotions to be more accurate: the intensity, consciousness, and duration of the experience, as well as the tendencies of these things to bring one’s attention to ever more subtle details of the other’s welfare condition, should *ceteris paribus* be expected to give one a sense of how much various outcomes matter to and for the person (as well, plausibly, as reinforcing one’s sense of what the other’s interests are).

While directly consulting the experiences themselves provides some evidence of the emotional influence, indirect evidence can come from systematic experimental surveys as well as behavioral and neurological evidence. In addition to first-person introspection on v-a experiences and the observation that emotions generally modulate attention and motivation with respect to their particular objects, there is fortunately a revelatory body of research. C. Daniel Batson (2011) aptly summarizes his large research program of over thirty studies in support of the thesis that “empathic concern produces altruistic motivation”. The many studies involve self-report and behavioral evidence that altruistic motivation to help others is enhanced when subjects are in various ways instructed to consider the point of view of certain people in need. The experiments were usually designed to rule out competing egoistic hypotheses; for example, in some studies care is taken to emphasize to subjects that they will not be rewarded for helping the needy other (Batson et al. 1988) or will not be given positive feedback that might be enjoyable (Batson et al. 1991). If Batson has succeeded in showing that “empathic concern” (“other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived [negative] welfare of someone in need”) produces altruistic motivation, it is reasonable to expect a value-apprehensional experience to be an aspect or concomitant of the altruistic motivational states produced by this kind of concern. A more in-depth literature survey might reveal whether extant experiments already suggest as much, but in any case careful controlled studies might survey subjects about how much they see others’ welfare as mattering when their caring emotions are variously manipulated.

Because these findings are merely suggestive, the mediation thesis needs to be advanced with some tentativeness; accordingly, it will only figure in Chapter 4's arguments in a limited and optional way.

3.3.5 The skill maintenance thesis

It seems highly plausible that practice with caring leads to more skilled caring as well as to more skilled value-apprehension. The platitude 'practice makes [more] perfect' seems to apply to almost any human cognitive ability, presumably including caring and value-apprehension. It would also be unsurprising if the platitude 'use it or lose it' applied to caring and value-apprehension as it does to so many other human skills. It is in both these senses that we interpret the skill maintenance thesis:

[iii] *skill maintenance thesis:* regular deployment of the caring capacity will be approximately directly correlated with skilled deployment, toward diverse others, both of the caring capacity and of the moral apprehensional capacity (the tendency to deploy both capacities with ease, habitualness, accuracy, adroitness (competence across varied circumstances), proportionality, attention to subtlety, etc.).

Interestingly, little extant psychological research speaks directly to the truth of either platitude, in part because v-a experience has seldom been recognized or studied by psychologists in separation from (e.g.) altruistic motivation or behavior. At any rate, it is still worth advancing the skill maintenance thesis in light of its plausibility, as well as in hopes that future researchers might become more directly interested in exploring skill maintenance over time for caring, value-apprehension, and other constructs such as empathy.

It is also worth recounting some suggestive findings regarding three precisifications of the platitudes just mentioned. First, the claim [i] that (proper) practice at the use of caring capacities enhances value-apprehensional skill beyond minimal competency seems supported by the few extant investigations on lovingkindness meditation. Such meditation involves focusing benevolent feelings first on the self, then on various others, then on all categories of beings. It has been found to improve feelings of social connection toward novel others (Hutcherson et al. 2008), as well as to help overcome "automatically activated, implicit attitudes toward stigmatized social groups" (Kang et al. 2014). Further anecdotal investigations of meditative

experts (e.g., Goleman 2008) seems to reveal parallel skills. It may be reasonable to assume these changes in attitude would involve a buildup in v-a skill. Second, the claim [ii] that lack of practice with caring emotions results in loss of value-apprehensional skill gains preliminary support from a related, suggestive finding: one experiment found that non-lonely individuals are more likely than lonely individuals to reflect spontaneously on the perspective of distressed others, as well as to experience greater activation in part of their neural reward system (ventral striatum) when presented with social stimuli (pictures of people) (Cacioppo et al. 2009). This reward system activation may be thought to correlate, at least in part, to an aspect of v-a experience (surveys could confirm as much), and one explanation of the finding might be that lonely individuals experience fewer caring emotions. Finally, it may be [iii] that externally imposed losses to the caring capacity can result in losses to value-apprehension. One source of evidence for this might be patients with lesions to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (VMPFC), which on one theory (Damasio 2005) stores affective associations between imagined or previously experienced stimuli and physiological affective states. It is plausible that some of these affective states are other-focused, and that losing the stored associations of these kinds would be tantamount to a loss of stored memories of how various outcomes matter to other people's well-being. This could figure in explaining why they appear to lack concern for other individuals (and in that sense their condition resembles psychopathy).

Again, because these findings are merely suggestive, and the skill maintenance thesis can only be tentatively advanced, it will only figure in Chapter 4's arguments in a limited and optional way.

It is plausible that diverse others should be targeted by caring sentiments so as to enrich one's familiarity with the variety of moral patients and interests to be found and how much different interests matter to and for diverse persons.

3.3.6 Development of cares and apprehension

Some further thoughts about the likely origins of emotional caring bonds will help motivate the picture (and will be useful in our later discussion of duties of special relationship). A full understanding would of course require a fuller understanding of that mechanism's physiology and neurology throughout development; but these speculations can show the caring-apprehension hypothesis to be coherent, viable, and potentially testable.

Maybe the easiest way for a reflective adult to become sensitive to someone's nature and projects, as well as to become emotionally sensitive to his experiences, is to *empathize* in the sense of either considering things from his point of view or feeling recapitulations of the emotions he feels. Empathic engagement is indeed an easy, common, and important—yet an over-celebrated—set of ways of coming to care about other people. Here's a small list of other ways that caring can begin besides (0) by empathizing—either in the sense of (0a) perspective-taking (AKA “cognitive empathy”) or of (0b) emotional mimicry (AKA “affective empathy”).

(1) Being *in close or regular proximity* to someone tends to engender caring bonds and relationships. This includes, but is not limited to, cases involving attachment or mutual attachment. Similarly, caring tends to be engendered by (2) *interaction with* a person and by (3) *becoming acquainted* with a person (even if, say, simply by following their life in the news). Cares can be established and intensified to the extent that one (4) *recognizes interesting properties of the other* such as her interests or situation or traits, especially insofar as one (5a) *recognizes that the other has these properties in common with oneself* or (5b) *identifies with the other* in virtue of those commonalities, in the sense of feeling close to or united with the other in virtue of those commonalities. Also, sometimes cares begin when we are (6) *enjoined to care* about another. (Plausibly, people come to care about saving the whales without considering or simulating a whale's mental or emotional states, so much as merely considering their beauty, their contribution to biodiversity, or the fact of their intelligent sentience.⁴¹) Similarly, one can (7) *reason one's way to* the conclusion that a creature has properties worth caring about, thereupon caring about the creature. Finally, (8) *imagining or experiencing the world in the absence of* a person or thing can sometimes lead one to care about that thing.

Summing up. Altogether, the caring-apprehension hypothesis—the notion that caring enables, mediates, and improves moral apprehension—is eminently plausible, is supported by limited but suggestive empirical evidence, and it makes sense of the parallel conceptual structure shared by caring emotions and value-apprehensional experiences. The more accurate and certain each sub-thesis of the caring-apprehension hypothesis is, the more greatly this would accentuate the role of caring emotions in enabling, mediating, and improving value-apprehensional

⁴¹ Many sermons, public service announcements, and other messages emphasizing that such-and-such persons are red-blooded people too, or that such-and-such animal species is facing a rapidly declining habitat, trade on the (probably correct) assumption that people will come to care about the interests of those groups simply in virtue of being presented with the fact that those interests exist and/or might be advanced or hindered.

experiences. If, in turn, these experiences are important to reliance-worthy moral reasoning strategies in general (as we will argue next chapter), this would speak in favor of consulting caring emotions as part of an overall reliance-worthy moral reasoning strategy.

3.4 Caring vs. other contenders

The following section consists of responses to competing claims from relevant literature according to which various candidate constructs other than caring are the linchpin that provides moral apprehension in neurotypical people but not in psychopathic people. The candidates include: empathy, concern, valuing, an intuitive moral grammar, and rational intuition.

3.4.1 Empathy

“Empathy” originates from the German *Einfühlung*, meaning ‘feeling into’ a person or a thing. Since its introduction into the English language in 1909, it has acquired a cluster of meanings.⁴² In recent psychology and philosophy literature, the term ‘empathy’ is used in at least eight different ways (Batson 2011, Ch. 1), but it is also too useful, and too common, to eliminate, so it is best to articulate a precise definition for use here.

I’ll understand empathy here as an affective phenomenon,⁴³ wherein one *feels what one takes another person to be feeling*.⁴⁴ A bit more rigorously, an *empathic affective or other emotional state* is affective state that is qualitatively a copy of what one seems to perceive as another’s affective state. It is a distinct token of the apparent affective state type. (The types in question should be demarcated fairly stringently.⁴⁵) E.g., necessarily, if I’m empathizing with

⁴² A good overview of the history of concepts of *Einfühlung* and empathy is Coplan (2011a). See also Steuber (2008).

⁴³ Many sources write about “cognitive empathy”, which I here label as *perspective-taking*, the topic of a subsection below and of a portion of Appendix C.

⁴⁴ I owe this conception to Prinz (2011). ‘Takes’ could either be a matter of unconscious perception (as with emotional contagion) or the result of a sustained imaginative engagement (as with perspective-taking). Compare Darwall (1998), Haidt (2003), and especially Eisenberg & Strayer (1987), who provide another nice overview of definitional issues pertaining to empathy.

⁴⁵ The most careful account will require the affect types of a veridical empathic state to be very much the same. For emotions, veridical empathy should be taken to involve experiencing the same basic emotions. E.g., suppose fear is a basic emotion. Then to veridically empathize with someone fearful of being poor next year, I must experience some sort of fear resulting from her fear. It would not be enough to merely experience certain other negative emotions resulting from her fear (even if it is toward her, or toward the next year, or toward her condition next year). Even so, we can allow that veridically empathic fear might be a different species of fear, be mixed with other emotions, be more or less intense than the original person’s fear, etc.

someone who seems sad to me, then I am sad as well.⁴⁶ *Empathizing* is the process of coming to and/or the having of an empathic state. ‘*Empathy*’ refers to either the process of empathizing or to the state of being in an empathic state.

Many theorists define ‘empathy’ so as to include multifarious cognitive, affective, and motor traits, not only inviting confusion, but sometimes conflating caring and empathy as a single process or aspects of one process. Using more precise definitions, it turns out that evidence they might adduce for an empathy-apprehension hypothesis often actually favors my caring-apprehension hypothesis. Granted, it is certainly plausible both that empathy engenders emotional caring and that emotional caring engenders empathy (this is one reason for their frequent conflation).

Against affective empathy accounts. An *empathy-apprehension hypothesis* would suggest that the ability to experience a qualitative copy of someone else’s apparent affect enables (and perhaps mediates or improves) moral apprehension. While few authors focus specifically on moral apprehension as I’m conceiving it, ‘empathy’ is such a buzzword in the literature that it would for many figure among the first constructs proposed as an *explanans*.⁴⁷ The picture would be plausible enough, not too different from what we’ve observed above: empathic experiences of someone else’s fear, sadness, or distress might allow one to construe the other’s interest as significant in a way parallel to how one’s own emotional experiences construe one’s own interests as significant. However, on closer inspection, it turns out empathy lacks important structural elements which stand a chance of explaining moral apprehension’s essential welfare-congruent and intrinsic-value-attributing aspects. There are at least four problems: empathy may not be non-instrumental or even other-focused, and instances of empathizing are neither sufficient nor necessary for instances of moral apprehension. Moreover, it is not clear what necessary or crucial role empathic capacity would play itself in setting up moral apprehension capacity.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ I suggest it is typical, but not strictly necessary, that veridical empathy involves an emotion with the same particular object: if someone feels fearful *of a bear*, then any possible empathizer with her will feel fear; most but not all possible empathizers with her will feel fear *of that bear*.

⁴⁷ For example, Blair (2007, p. 13) writes that he, and others, “consider the empathy dysfunction seen in individuals with psychopathy to be at the heart of the disorder”. See also, e.g., Hare (1993), Maibom (2005), McGeer (2008), and Shoemaker (2011).

⁴⁸ Related criticisms of empathy can be found in Prinz (2011a,b), Battaly (2011), Nichols (2004), Oxley (2012).

First, an empathic emotion may or may not be experienced for the other's sake. Second and relatedly, it may or may not even have the other as its focus. It is now common for psychologists to distinguish mere distress in reaction to another's distress (often called "personal distress") from distress *for* the other (sometimes called sympathetic distress).⁴⁹ The former is understood as self-focused, the latter other-focused; i.e., the former distress's focus is the self, the latter's, the other.⁵⁰ People feeling self-focused distress at the distress of others apparently are often more motivated to escape the situation than to help.⁵¹ This difference illustrates the importance of being able to experience emotions, even ones congruent with the other's well-being, [i] with her and/or someone in her situation as the emotional focus, [ii] for her sake.

Third, empathy is probably not sufficient for moral apprehension (in a particular instance). People can plausibly undergo affective empathic states toward another's suffering—even with full knowledge that they are suffering—without apprehending the disvalue of their suffering. Sadists are a prime example of this.⁵² At least on a non-sadistic layman's conception of sadism, a sadist's affective empathy with someone suffering is one of the very things that enables him to enjoy the pain and distress of the one suffering. Sadism has not yet received much empirical study, but a preliminary result confirms that sexual sadists have an unusually heightened affective processing of the pain of others (as well as connectivity between this and sexual response), as recently documented through fMRI (Harenski et al. 2012).

Fourth, it is fairly clear that empathy is not necessary for moral apprehension (in a particular instance). E.g., when a neurotypical parent sees her toddler horrifically cry from the pain of a small wood splinter piercing, she does not herself feel that kind of pain, or any physical

⁴⁹ For an overview, see Decety & Lamm (2009). Batson calls this "personal distress" (2011, p. 19).

⁵⁰ E.g., Hoffman (2000, pp. 67-71) highlights cases of children of about 7 to 12 months old who, lacking a fully developed distinction between self and other, respond to others' distress in the same way as they do to their own distress.

⁵¹ Cf. Haidt 2003, p. 862; Batson 2011, pp. 62ff. Hoffman (2000, Ch. 8) would attribute many of these instances to over-arousal in the empathizer (but cf. Batson (2011 pp. 64-5) for doubts about the over-arousal hypothesis). This is potentially related to the phenomenon known as "compassion fatigue" in the health professions.

Other explanations of why a particular adult's distress is self- rather than other-oriented might include: generally self-oriented motivational tendencies, being in a depressed mood, or lack of perceived commonality with the other (Decety & Lamm 2009).

⁵² Compare Darwall (1998, p. 261):

Empathy consists in feeling what one imagines [the other] feels, or perhaps should feel (fear, say), or in some imagined copy of these feelings, whether one comes thereby to be concerned for the [other] or not. Empathy can be consistent with the indifference of pure observation or even the cruelty of sadism. It all depends on why one is interested in the other's perspective.

pain at all, and she may not be sad or afraid. Yet in a typical case her attention is directed more toward the child's welfare than toward anything else, welfare the significance of which little else seems more salient. This is also true for cases where we see that someone is harmed but they do not experience any emotion (as where one is knocked unconscious from behind).⁵³

The more general lesson from these third and fourth points is that there are whole hosts of cases in which a person's emotional response does not match her welfare: the emotion is either incongruent with the person's own welfare (either by being of a non-matching emotion type or having a non-matching valence, intensity, duration, or particular object), or the emotion is absent (or suppressed, ambivalent, distorted, on-and-off, etc.).

Moreover, the very concept of welfare—even in psychopaths—probably gets developed through means at least partially independent of empathy or caring capacities. Apparently even psychopaths, who are notoriously impaired in their affective empathy, are able to recognize basic physiological needs in others such as bodily integrity, breathing, food, water, sleep, staying alive, etc.⁵⁴ For example, adult psychopaths tested on the moral/conventional distinction (Blair 1995) do seem to recognize that hitting, pulling hair, etc. are harms to people. If (affective) empathy is not needed for harm- or welfare-detection, this fact would further support the contention that empathic ability or engagement (again, conceived as mere recapitulation of apparent affective states) is not the necessary ingredient, even over the course of development, which in any sense enables apprehension of the significance of others' welfare.

Empathy's involvement. These remarks cast doubt on many, but not all, possible empathy-apprehension hypotheses (as one might vary either the notion(s) of empathy and/or its putative involvement). It's not terribly implausible that certain types of motor (or motor-cum-affective) mimicry are necessary either for [i] building up or reinforcing people's understanding of people's basic interests or (say) aversions to pain or discomfort, or for [ii] calibrating their other-focused emotions toward others' interests. Of course, this would all be a matter of explaining how empathy enables interest-attribution and/or the calibration of cares with interests.

⁵³ Cf. Nichols 2004, p. 45.

⁵⁴ Little evidence speaks directly to this, but it would be very surprising if psychopaths simply had no concept of (another's) welfare, or didn't realize that e.g. death is a harm. Even so, it's likely that the engagement of caring and/or empathic capacities toward distress in others helps one identify certain idiosyncratic harms as harms; e.g., a report that "Jones has lost his house" might be readily identified only by empathic people, but not by psychopaths, as a harm (either because the former can readily simulate negative emotions, or are conditioned to conceive of such losses as negative, or both).

It would thus be consistent with the caring-apprehension hypothesis, which says that setup (and/or constitution) of the crucial apprehensional capacities is done by caring emotions, with caring emotions at least sometimes doing the crucial perceptual work.

It wouldn't be surprising if empathy were a component of the package of affective abilities which are necessary for developing moral apprehensional capacity, or that that package were to frequently utilize empathic abilities. First, empathy probably exerts causal influence in both the buildup and in the manifestation of caring dispositions (call this the *caring-empathy hypothesis*). A disposition to feel emotions congruent with someone's well-being will often happen to manifest in the very same emotion which that person is herself experiencing. And, plausibly, occurrent caring emotions often get reinforced by empathic mechanisms of emotional, facial, and motor mimicry as well as perspective-taking. Second, it would certainly be unsurprising if recapitulating someone's emotion (whether as a result of contagion, simulation-derived emotion, or of perspective-taking) would help create a caring disposition in one (i.e., it is plausible that empathy engenders caring: the *empathy-caring hypothesis*). Being around someone sad and resentful can engender a mimicked, parallel disappointed indignation, for example.

Empathy (along with perspective-taking, mind-reading, and related processes) are undoubtedly important tools for understanding others and weighing various interests from various points of view. Morally speaking, these tools are best employed from a caring mindset.

Against perspective-taking accounts: explaining non-instrumentality. “Cognitive empathy” is a name sometimes given to the process of imagining oneself in another's situation—more clearly labeled as ‘perspective-taking’ (constructs ##4-6 in Appendix C). This set of constructs faces the same shortcomings for explaining moral apprehension as did affective empathy above: empathic emotions derived from perspective-taking are [i] not always non-instrumental or even [ii] other-focused, and instances of perspective-taking are neither [iii] sufficient nor [iv] necessary for instances of moral apprehension, as illustrated by sadists and by someone encountering another in an affective state that mis-matches her own welfare condition in valence or intensity.

But a further worry might be pressed by advocates of perspective-taking. It might be thought that emotional dispositions, even if other-focused and welfare-congruent, can only become *non-instrumental* once someone has an empathic emotional engagement with the subjective perspective of the other by (0a) actively taking her perspective and perhaps also by

then (0b) mimicking or otherwise simulating her emotions. Perhaps children's attachment to their own mothers only develops into a genuine care once they can view her as the seat of her own subjective experiences and are capable of taking her perspective.

I resist with two points. First, a highly hostile person might, via imaginative simulation, come to an other-focused, non-instrumental, welfare-*incongruent* antipathy: a hatred for another for her own sake. Second, the rival picture is plausible: that interest-attribution (independent of a particular perspective-taking effort) plus a caring emotional experience or disposition could result in an apprehension of someone as intrinsically valuable. Consider: knowing that someone has been harmed or slighted, my emotions can be congruent with her welfare [i] regardless of whether her emotions are congruent with her own welfare and [ii] even if I'm not sure what she is feeling.⁵⁵ In many such cases, we end up caring about people regardless of their own emotional states.

The most that would seem required for the non-instrumental aspect of moral apprehension would be mind-attribution as opposed to mere interest-attribution. It may well be that empathic imaginative simulation of others' experiences is a common, efficient, or typical way of attaining fully non-instrumental cares. But it is plausibly the resulting state, emotional caring, which itself enables moral apprehension. Factors other than empathic engagement—such as healthy attachments, sustained interaction, and identification with the other—would help explain why others qua seats of subjective experiences get cared for and viewed as intrinsically valuable friends rather than intrinsically disvaluable rivals.⁵⁶

It wouldn't do for an empathy advocate to insist on an expanded or hierarchical conception of empathy, where genuine instances of empathy are essentially other-focused,

⁵⁵ E.g., suppose something went unexpectedly wrong during my friend's culturally unique ritual, the details of which are fairly unfamiliar to me. I can still generally recognize how her interests were altered by the event and come to feel welfare-congruent emotions for her (sadness or worry or indignation, etc., for this case), so far as I discern these are emotional responses broadly congruent with her welfare.

⁵⁶ Incidentally, these observations also help explain why autistic people do seem to have moral apprehension despite lacking (cognitive) empathy skills: they come to care emotionally about other people by using non-empathic means (such as the eight I listed above). Plausibly, they can mind- and interest-attribute, even though they are impaired at mindreading (cf McGeer 2008). Furthermore, high-functioning autistic children develop attachments at a similar rate to neurotypical children. That ability of autistic persons to achieve cares for others, and an apprehension of how their welfare matters, is an important reason not to classify either capacity as 'empathy' (*pace* Baron-Cohen 2012). At its worst, treating the various mechanisms and aspects of as a single package can lead to conflation of the very distinct impairments which affect autistic and psychopathic persons, respectively.

welfare-tracking, and intrinsic-value-attributing.⁵⁷ To insist on all three of these conditions is tantamount to referring to emotional caring under the umbrella of the term ‘empathy’. Even some theorists want to try that trick, they have to decide, in cases where someone’s affective state mis-matches her own welfare condition, whether to count a welfare-congruent emotional response to her condition as empathic (threatening to render ‘empathy’ tantamount to what I mean by ‘emotional caring’), or whether to count it as non-empathic (in accordance with my definition of empathy as experiencing an emotion-copy), opening it up to the complaints against empathy-apprehension hypotheses that I have raised above.

3.4.2 Concern accounts

Recently, some prominent psychologists and philosophers have championed *concern* as the name of a crucial emotion process in moral cognition. They understand concern as a negative emotion, specifically, fear or worry, focused on someone else’s perceived need. C. Daniel Batson’s important *Altruism in Humans* (2011) thoroughly and convincingly argues that concern toward people in distress produces altruistic motivation (he misleadingly calls this “empathic concern”).⁵⁸ (Partially following Batson, this can be labeled the *concern-altruism hypothesis*.⁵⁹) It is reasonable to suppose that moral apprehension is part of the causal process connecting concern to altruistic motivation—whether as a link in the causal chain or as an epiphenomenon. Call this the *concern-apprehension hypothesis*.

The caring-apprehension hypothesis is a plausible extension of the concern-apprehension hypothesis. On the former, value-apprehensional experiences occur via caring emotions aimed

⁵⁷ E.g., Amy Coplan (2011b) insists that only true empathy involves “affective matching”, “other-oriented perspective taking”, and “self-other differentiation”.

⁵⁸ Cf. Shaun Nichols’s (2004) account of a Concern Mechanism, which suggests that concern is produced as a result of the attribution of a negative affective state to a victim, which in turn motivates the observer to relieve the victim’s distress. Nichols relies on some of the same research as Batson. He explicitly argues that psychopaths lack the Concern Mechanism.

Nichols suggests that ‘concern’ could turn out to be either “sympathy”, “second-order contagious distress”, or both. Sympathy, according to Nichols, would be a *sui generis* emotion which (very roughly) involves feeling worried for the other and an increased tendency to help the other person. (The latter seems better picked out by the term ‘concern’.) Second-order contagious distress is a form of emotional contagion—an automatic response wherein one ‘catches’ or ‘mimics’ the affect of another individual—but it is second-order in that instead of ‘catching’ the other’s distress via perception (which would be first-order contagious distress), one ‘catches’ the distress via a mental representation which is not as easily averted by leaving the situation or distracting oneself.

Cf. also Jesse Prinz’s (2011b) advocacy of concern in moral reasoning.

⁵⁹ Batson labels as the “empathy-altruism hypothesis” the thesis that “empathic concern” produces altruistic motivation. Empathic concern is conceived tendentiously as “other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need”. I submit it is best primarily understood as sympathetic or caring concern, i.e., other-focused, welfare-congruent fear, sadness, distress, or worry toward someone suffering or in need.

not only at others' negative welfare conditions, but also at their neutral and positive welfare conditions. At least three provisional considerations support extending the hypothesis.

First, phenomenological reasons. The attribution of needy states to others (the precursor of concern on concern accounts) is parasitic on the ability to attribute interests to others. But we can attribute interests even to individuals who are in neutral and positive welfare conditions—when we experience someone's needs being met (or their enjoying such), simply observing someone going about their daily routine (observing their quirks, etc.), even in simply remembering their countenance. Second, the emotional capacity for concern is plausibly part of a broader emotional capacity, viz., the tendency toward parental nurturance specifically and parent-child affectional bonding generally.⁶⁰ This package of emotional connections is sensitive to neutral and positive welfare conditions as well as the presence or absence of the cared-for. Third, a minimal disposition to care about a particular other, or at least not to feel antipathy toward that other, is a precondition for sympathetic concern toward that individual. Otherwise, the other's suffering can be met with *schadenfreude* (joy at another's suffering), whether sadistic or vengeful, or with indifference or a failure to emote for the victim. Batson recognizes this, arguing that concern produces altruistic motivation only to the extent that one 'values the welfare' of the distressed other (pp. 33ff).

Batson explicates valuing very loosely, as something which "occurs when we like, love, or feel protective toward" a person and are apt to think about and imagine how this person is, will be, and could be affected, both positively and negatively, by various events, in a way that inclines one to take that person's perspective. This is virtually tantamount to the notion of emotional caring as understood above. (If it is very different, he faces objections covered next section.) Batson's emphasis is on the consequences of concern for the distressed, but the hypotheses are certainly viable that both positive and neutral welfare-congruent emotions have roles in establishing particular caring bonds and in developing individuals' caring propensities over time.

3.4.3 Valuing (as cold evaluation)

It is important that the caring capacity be understood as a *hot*, emotional kind of welfare-tracking and intrinsic-value-attribution, rather than as merely the capacity to coldly "evaluate" or

⁶⁰ See Batson (2011, pp. 46-55) for an overview of the case for this; he in turn cites researchers like Darwin (1871), de Waal (1996) and Sober & Wilson (1998). See also Churchland (2011, Ch. 2).

assess the value of the person's welfare. An emotionless, robotic actuary could report the economic dollar value of a person's life. It could also report the person's value *to* itself, conceived as the person's dollar value as a means to the robot's own ends. So could a human actuary operating in a way detached from her own emotion processes. But this valuing (evaluating) capacity in the actuarial sense seems not to be the main source of our novel values. Let me list some phenomenological observations in the first-person plural, before launching a further defense in the next section.

First, emotional experience seems to be the typical means by which we typically acquire novel values: new aesthetic favorites, pastimes, friends, etc. (Granted, realizing that someone toward whom one is indifferent could be a worthy ally might at least engender a form of pseudo-caring (an other-focused, welfare-congruent, instrumental emotional disposition).) Second, reflection on what we emotionally care about most strongly—and what we don't—also helps us prioritize our ends.⁶¹ Third, the emotional nature of such valuing motivates us to act on our values. Fourth, we can sometimes care about those who are otherwise contrary to our ends in a way that makes their value salient to us, sometimes extremely so. (As when Romeo's love for a member of a rival clan leads him to give up on all his previous ends.) This is in part a function of the way that emotional experiences redirect our attention more generally. The valuing in question consists not entirely in cold actuarial assessments, but importantly in hot, emotional experiences that shift our attention and motivate us toward new actions. It is plausibly through these experiences that we often apprehend the values of the welfare of creatures with interests, especially when they are creatures whose value we did not formerly appreciate.

Contingent in application. The caring-apprehension hypothesis applies contingently to actual humans. In nearby possible worlds creatures very much like humans might attain moral apprehension via cold valuing. Even some actual humans, autistic persons, may well rely on cold evaluation and/or inference from learned principles, at least often, as a means to their own moral apprehension experiences (McGeer 2008). Notwithstanding, autistic persons are often thought (including by some autistic persons themselves (McGeer 2008)) to have some impairment, if not in moral apprehension, in various applications thereof. For these reasons, the caring-apprehension hypothesis extends to neurotypical humans only (roughly, those who possess intact interest-attribution abilities).

⁶¹ Again, this is consistent with the overall picture of Damasio's (1996, 2005) somatic marker hypothesis.

3.4.4 Non-emotional accounts

Some may be tempted to resist the picture being offered, insisting on explaining value-apprehensional experiences by means of a non-emotional process. Genuinely distinct alternatives to caring would present the most serious objections; supplementary or easily hybridized suggestions will be less threatening, especially since the caring-apprehension hypothesis can be readily supplemented and/or hybridized, for example, with potential theories of the mechanisms and psychological byproducts of interest-attribution.

Recall that we are interested in explaining *particular* value-apprehensional experiences. That they need some explanation, in terms of a mental faculty or ability, is as clear as that perception (or projection) of any other higher-order property does (e.g., apprehension of faces, of language, etc.). To suppose v-a experiences are basic would be too defeatist a move. Nor is there evidence of a dedicated (i.e., psychologically or neurologically autonomous) faculty for moral apprehension.

A wide variety of non-emotional processes could be proffered, but I'll need to respond to a representative selection. Let's focus on parties we can label Grammarians and Rationalists, indicating how responses to these parties could be extended to other objectors.

'Grammarians' (call them) include Marc Hauser (2006) and John Mikhail (2011), who marshal impressive empirical support for a theory of intuitive moral grammar. The analogy is to the innate "universal [linguistic] grammar" postulated by Noam Chomsky in linguistics. Mikhail conceives of moral grammar as

a complex and largely unconscious system of moral rules, concepts, and principles
Among other things, this system enables individuals to determine the deontic status of a potentially infinite number and variety of acts and omissions. . . . [I]t seems reasonable to assume that this moral grammar is acquired through the unfolding of a specific genetic program, under the relatively modest triggering and shaping effects of the environment.
(p. 16)

A 'Rationalist' alternative would be to understand v-a experiences on analogy to apprehensions of instances of mathematical or logical truths (say, that this door cannot be open if it is closed, or that the shortest path between two these particular dots is a straight line). These don't exhaust the

possibilities, of course; it might be that v-a experiences are afforded by faculties analogous to those by which we apprehend any number of other kinds of entity—be it faces, relations between musical pitches, ducks or rabbits, or applications of laws of intuitive physics.⁶²

Consider that the non-emotional process proffered might either *directly* (non-inferentially) enable particular v-a experiences, or would enable them *indirectly* via an inference, perhaps unconscious, from some more general rule or proposition.

The direct picture would have it that particular v-a experiences occur upon the deployment of a non-emotional faculty which affords us non-inferential apprehensions, with the emotions attendant on v-a experiences being explained as epiphenomena. Again, although I know of no clear evidence for a dedicated value-apprehensional mechanism, the Grammarians are perhaps the closest to offering one. The unconscious system of rules they will say we have internalized (whether or not they are right to consider it innate) might specify which sorts of beings' welfare matters, such that we are inclined to see them as mattering when presented with them.

The Grammar theory applied straightforwardly to moral apprehension faces a number of worries, and seems to need supplementation by the caring-apprehension hypothesis. First, welfare seems to enjoy a kind of normative basicity in that it serves as the basis of many intuitive moral rules (e.g., against theft) and is among the best of justification for violations of such rules (e.g., if deception is ever justifiable, it is to prevent significant harms to someone).⁶³ That caring emotions tend to correlate with the apprehension of others' changes in welfare explains well why welfare enjoys this normative privilege in our network of intuitive moral rules. In fact, it is puzzling what else would explain this. Second, the emotional connection between welfare and caring emotions would have historical import regarding the cultural evolution of rules prohibiting harms and promoting benefits. As Shaun Nichols (2004, Ch. 6) persuasively argues, social norms the content of which is independently likely to elicit strong

⁶² For good measure, consider that emotions are plausibly part of mechanisms of other sorts of apprehension (or at least, reliable projection). For example, certain aspects of aesthetic experiences, such as the sadness of a song or painting, or the emotions in others' faces.

⁶³ Mikhail's (2011) own discussion proceeds with this observation:

Any normative system seeking to achieve descriptive adequacy [*vis a vis* any shared intuitive moral system of actual humans] must presumably include a set of basic legal prohibitions. In particular, it must include or otherwise account for a small number of absolute or near-absolute prohibitions against various forms of trespass, such as battery, assault, rape, murder, fraud, deceit, and so on. (p. 133)

affect are more likely to be retained and transmitted to the next generation. This point is important independent of whether caring enables moral understanding, for even if caring emotions were active merely as causal offshoots of some independent value-apprehensional process, they still would plausibly play a role in aiding the long-term retention of the contents of those experiences. Third, it appears that the kinds of creatures the killing or battery of whom seem particularly alarming tend to be those whose features make them seem cute or cuddly to us (Haslam 2006). Fourth, the conjunction of the foregoing makes it plausible that emotions, not least caring emotions, are aspects of the “shaping or triggering effects of the environment” that facilitate our understandings of how moral rules fit together.

The indirect picture would have it that v-a experiences are inferences, by and large unconscious, from more general known propositions to the effect that welfare is valuable. The picture could be filled in with ‘Rationalist’ accounts of the general propositions, to the effect that welfare or some aspect thereof is valuable (or to be respected, maximized, etc.). It could also be filled in with Gramscian-style or other accounts; most of the following objections will follow all the same.

The first and largest problem is that young children seem fairly clearly capable of moral apprehensional experiences, but it is not clear that they are capable of intuiting generalized propositions. Psychological literature provides many clear examples of helping behaviors in response to the distress in others as young as 12 months (Zahn-Waxler et al. 1992; cf. Nichols 2004, pp. 44-5). But linguistic and logical reasoning abilities at this stage are relatively underdeveloped. Second, even for cases where adults have v-a experiences, the indirect, inferential model is often at odds with the phenomenology. When I begin, during conversation, to view my fellow airline passenger as a person who matters, I feel no strain to discern or infer whether this particular creature meets the criteria which would be specified in a general principle specifying, even roughly, who has moral status. Upon attending to his needs and wishes, it immediately strikes me that (say) the fact that he’ll probably enjoy himself in his upcoming visit to the English Lake District, though he remains dubious of this, is a fact about a potentially valuable state of affairs.⁶⁴ This differs greatly from the inferential experiences involved with

⁶⁴ Of course, we should expect variability in people’s tendencies to apprehend others’ value, from the highly caring to the utterly narcissistic, but this is irrelevant to whether v-a experiences are non-inferential when they do occur.

other social rules, e.g., of discerning whether a particular birthday party is one to which the rule ‘bring a present for the birthday boy/girl’ applies.⁶⁵

Summing up. All in all, the problems are that empathy lacks the conceptual structure parallel to v-a experience; concern accounts do not account for the role that positive, presence- and absence-emotions plausibly have in contributing to v-a experience; cold valuation accounts cannot account for the attention-shifting, motivating aspects of novel v-a experiences; and other intellectualist accounts are unable to explain the special normative role of harms and benefits, as well as being potentially at odds with developmental as well as phenomenological evidence.

3.5 Takeaway lessons

If this chapter has succeeded in articulating and provisionally defending the caring-apprehension hypothesis, I hope it imparts at least the following lessons, both for philosophers and empirical researchers.

Increased attention to emotional caring in all its aspects. Whereas Batson and Nichols focus primarily on sympathetic emotional responses to negative distress, future research (conceptual and empirical) might focus on the incidence and effects of positive, presence-, and absence- caring emotions, as well as on how highly they correlate.

Other relevant questions include:

- What are the best ways to measure emotional caring conceived as a holistic emotional disposition?
- How common are partial caring, pseudo-caring, and caring about others only within a limited domain?
- How relatively common are the varieties of ways that we come to care emotionally about others?
- How does other-focused, welfare-congruent emotion become non-instrumental?
- How might we exercise control over our caring dispositions?

⁶⁵ Granted, we do sometimes make inferences about others’ moral status (e.g., S shares features X-Z with beings that have moral status, therefore S has moral status too; pigs feel pain not much the same as you or I, so don’t make excuses to smother your visceral reactions to seeing the pig slaughtered). But this often proceeds from acknowledgement that some beings clearly have moral status, a premise which we typically assume as an uninferred premise. Roughly speaking, we can expect that inferences regarding someone’s full moral status, at least in ordinary intercourse between human beings, is needed only where there’s some independent psychological tendency to dehumanize the other (say, in the case of inequitable ethnic/racial or gender relations).

- How do children come to interest-attribute?

Increased attention to moral apprehension. Philosophical literature on moral perception has tended to focus on apprehensional experiences of the overall deontic status of acts (i.e., whether certain acts are or would be permissible, all things considered), or on apprehension of character traits. This chapter's approach—considering how moral apprehension as an *aspect of* situation-specific moral intuitions is produced—may be more fruitful, e.g., for the purposes of determining which moral intuitions to trust for the purposes of moral theory-building, and for determining how we should weigh up competing interests in complex situations. On the empirical end, moreover, value-apprehensional experiences have scarcely been recognized or explored. Many questions remain regarding how it might be measured and what its effects might be *vis a vis* people's motivation, character traits, worldviews, etc.

CHAPTER FOUR

OVERCOMING BIASES TO CARING

SUPPOSE the caring-apprehension hypothesis is correct: we cannot see others as mattering without the capacity to care about others. This chapter operates under that assumption, exploring the implications of the plausible hypothesis. Below we will argue (in §1) that caring about others looks to be an ineliminable aspect of the moral reasoning strategies that should be recommended. And it should be a *major* aspect to extent that it enhances our adeptness at apprehending, comprehending, and/or detecting others' interests.

One challenge to this account (§2) complains about the large variety of biases to our caring emotions. In response (§3), I draw from Adam Smith (1759) and Antti Kauppinen (2014) to suggest that caring emotions' biases can be counteracted by regulating them by reference to the perspective of an unaffiliated carer, as well as to the guidelines for action which emerge from that perspective.⁶⁶ Additionally (§4), I explain why appealing to an unaffiliated carer's perspective—rather than simply going with a more actuarial, consequentialist strategy—is both feasible and important. Finally, I argue that even if certain biases to caring are problematically ineliminable, practical demands often require us to rely on caring and caring-driven guidelines anyway. Paradoxically, even if caring is an unreliable belief-forming process, still we ought to rely on caring-driven intuitions.

4.1 Recommending caring

The caring-apprehension hypothesis figures in a straightforward argument:

Caring as Indispensable

- 1) [*v-a experience helps*] All else being equal, a moral intuition that is (competently) informed by a v-a experience is more endorsement-worthy than a parallel moral intuition unconnected to a v-a experience (assuming that the v-a capacity is either reliable or is a reliable guide to a fiction that is at least mostly coherent).

⁶⁶ In Ch. 5, however, I will depart from Kauppinen (but only in a way from Smith) in suggesting that this perspective need not be one of impartiality, but simply one of being unaffiliated with a given party.

- 2) [*enablement thesis*] Neurotypical humans can have v-a experiences only after they develop the capacity to care about others.
- 3) [*carers are more reliable*] Therefore, all else being equal, a moral intuition will be more endorsement-worthy if it occurs in someone who has developed the capacity to care about others.

Ch. 3 expounded and defended premise (2), the ‘enablement thesis’, the first conjunct of the caring-apprehension hypothesis. Recall, it hypothesized that regular deployment of caring emotions, especially during our development, is necessary for setting up a capacity to apprehend the value of other creatures’ welfare.

The plausibility of premise (1) can be understood when we consider how the concurrence of a moral intuition with a v-a experience lends credibility to the intuition, both from the perspective of any observer as well as from that of the reasoner herself. Both the reasoner herself and a third-party observer should be reassured that the concurrent v-a experience is evidence that interests have been aptly detected, apprehended, and weighed. (To say that an intuition or belief is *apt* means that it is *accurate* and that it is accurate *because* the it has been formed via a *competent* belief-forming process.⁶⁷ Here we are concerned with evidence *that* the intuition or belief is apt.) To the reasoner herself, the experience of another as mattering is introspectively accessible information about the nature, import, weight, and perhaps also some of the details of the other’s welfare condition, usually formed on the basis of some detection of the other’s interests, and often roughly weighable against other interests, or at least felt with a certain intensity that can in principle be compared. To a third-party observer, the detail that the reasoner had a v-a experience is also evidence that interests have been aptly detected, apprehended, and weighed, to the extent that the value-apprehensional capacity is a competent one.

One worry that premise (1) faces is that all else is almost never equal: that moral intuitions informed by v-a experiences will in fact almost never be as well-adjusted to welfare-relevant information as will moral intuitions not informed by v-a experiences. These might be for any of three reasons relating to the emotionality of the caring emotions that might subserve v-a experiences. First, the attention-directing aspect of the emotion might cause one to miss morally relevant information by focusing on just a few salient aspects of a morally relevant scenario.

⁶⁷ This terminology is partly from Sosa 2007.

Second, the action-tendency concomitant with the emotion might encourage one to jump to a conclusion favoring the emotion's focus's welfare at the expense of the welfare of other individuals. Third, the speed (and automaticity) with which emotion events occur might make one likely to jump to a conclusion without considering the perspective from enough angles (as it were).

In response, first, it is not clear that these criticisms will apply to all v-a experiences, since some v-a experiences may not be subserved by occurrent caring emotions. Second, completely independent of the first point, the attention-directing and motivating/action-preparing aspects of caring emotions also might bring epistemic advantages in their own rights. The attention-directing aspect of the emotion may well cause one to *pick up on* morally relevant information by focusing in on, and properly weighing up the significance of, salient aspects of a morally relevant scenario, even ones which might not be obvious initially. Likewise, the concomitant action-tendency can help register the significance of aspects of a situation relevant to the other's welfare, whereas a colder assessment of morally relevant features might register none of them as important, and as a result would do less in the way of helping one weigh up particular interests. Finally, even though biasing effects of caring emotions underlying v-a experiences indeed merit concern, there is promise (to be discussed below) that various techniques and incentives can eliminate these biases while still accentuating the positive epistemic role played by caring emotions and the value-apprehensional experiences which they subserve.

(A further reason to think v-a experiences desirable is their apparent moral importance. Consider the following variation on a case presented by Michael Stocker (1976): you are hospitalized and visited by someone who tells you he has visited you numerous times just in order to comply with what he takes to be his duty, or just to produce the greatest happiness he can—not out of care, concern, appreciation, or respect for *you*. The hospital visitor promotes welfare (or does his putative duty) for its own sake rather than promoting welfare for the sake of the person whose welfare it is.⁶⁸ (He behaves as though life were a video game with the objective of attaining the highest score of welfare-promotion or duty-compliance.) It seems preferable that he be acting for your sake, and this requires the ability to see another as valuable—if not undergoing a full-scale appreciation of how the unfoldings of her life plans matter, then at least

⁶⁸ For this distinction see Darwall (1998).

some more limited experience of how bits of it matter to her, or at least memories of how it did for similar people just like her.)

It is also worth advancing here an additional, if more tentative, argument that would support a further, more robust role for caring, not only as a minimal prerequisite of ‘training wheels’ but as part of the ‘engine’ of mature moral epistemic functioning:

Caring as Helpful

- 1) [*v-a experience helps*] All else being equal, a moral intuition that is (competently) informed by a v-a experience is more endorsement-worthy than a parallel moral intuition that is not (assuming that the v-a capacity is either reliable or is a reliable guide to a fiction that is at least mostly coherent).
- 2) [*skill maintenance thesis*] We tend to have v-a experiences in a more skilled way to the extent that we continue to regularly employ caring emotions throughout our lives toward diverse others.
- 3) [*caring enhances reliability*] Therefore, all else being equal, moral intuitions will be more endorsement-worthy if they occur in someone whose caring emotions regularly deploy toward diverse others.

This argument bears on what moral reasoning strategies we should recommend. We should also attempt to enhance our moral competence throughout our lives by cultivating caring sentiments toward diverse others, in hopes that this will enhance our epistemic success. This standard can also help us evaluate particular moral intuitions: not only should we try to ensure that our moral intuitions are shared by not only by *competently* but by *skillfully* caring individuals. If an intuition is accompanied by a particularly salient value-apprehensional experience in someone who exhibits skillful emotional caring about diverse others regularly as well as in this instance, that is more reason to think we should endorse the intuition in question.

4.2 Is caring too biased?

Caring emotions are problematically biased. So much of our caring about others is influenced by how familiar, similar, near, or otherwise salient they are to us. These biases seem pervasive, and they may be difficult or impossible to eliminate. So perhaps we should (all but)

dispense with reliance on our caring emotions, instead adopting a calculative approach to moral reasoning that all but eliminates emotional influence. So goes the worry.

Three classes of apparent biases to caring emotions are worth sampling.⁶⁹ First, *salience/conspicuousness effects* of at least five different kinds.

- [i] People are less likely to sympathize with a victim when that victim is *one of many* individuals with similar needs (Batson 2011, p. 194).⁷⁰
- [ii] People tend to feel a greater duty help someone whose life is at stake when they see or hear the harm (and/or negative affect) *directly* than when it is mediated by a video, and a much lesser duty to help when the information is merely conveyed by writing.⁷¹
- [iii] Some such biases may be explicable solely in terms of the perceived physical or temporal *distance*.⁷²
- [iv] Sympathy seems to be more pronounced in response to *others' expressions* of emotion.⁷³
- [v] There are even cuteness (and possibly attractiveness) effects: Batson et al. (2005) found that college students were more likely to feel concern for children, dogs, and puppies than for their own peers.⁷⁴

Second, there are *similarity and familiarity effects*.

- [i] Studies suggest that subjects experience greater “empathy” for people *similar to themselves* in terms of race, gender (at least in children), and similar personality traits.⁷⁵
- [ii] *Familiarity* with others may bias us toward them.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ These lists are mostly inspired by lists in Prinz (2011a) and Hoffman (2000, Ch. 8); similar worries are expressed by Sinnott-Armstrong (2006, Ch. 9).

⁷⁰ In words attributed to Josef Stalin: “A single death is a tragedy; a million deaths is a statistic.” Cf. Slovic 2007.

⁷¹ As suggested by Unger (1996). One experimental confirmation is Nagel & Waldmann (2012).

⁷² On temporal distance, see Eyal et al. 2008. Against the claim that lay judgments are influenced purely by distance, see Nagel & Waldmann (2012).

⁷³ According to Prinz (2011a), “Tsoudis (2002) found that in mock trials, a jury’s recommendation for sentencing could be influenced by whether or not victims and defendants expressed emotions.”

⁷⁴ Cited in Prinz 2011a.

⁷⁵ Hoffman (2000, pp. 208-9). However, Batson et al. (2005) argue that similarity’s putative effects on what Hoffman calls empathy may well be confounded with factors including: degree of personal contact, personal relevance of the other’s need, interdependence with the other, and anticipated future interaction with the other.

⁷⁶ Hoffman (2000, pp. 208-9).

[iii] People are more likely to depersonalize others if they *dislike* them.⁷⁷

Third, humans are prone, in various circumstances, to what we can call *status-attribution flux*: tendencies downplay or exaggerate others' morally relevant qualities, especially (distinctively human kinds of) agency. [i] *Dehumanization* refers to the tendency to think of certain others as less human or as less important (Haslam 2006). People are particularly prone to dehumanize their enemies, foreigners, those toward whom they harbor negative attitudes, or those whom their social environment tends to categorize as of lesser moral worth. This extends to animals: e.g., Westerners are more inclined to spare dogs and cats than pigs although they presumably share virtually all morally relevant features on reflection. [ii] By contrast, we also *anthropomorphize* non-human entities with human-like features. For example, robots exhibiting agent-type movements, face-like features, or which mimic human language have been seen to elicit more sympathy in humans than a control group of robots without those features.⁷⁸

4.3 Bias mitigation via unaffiliated caring

Three responses to these biases seem available, the last of which we'll pursue here. First, one can argue that the putative bias is not such a problem as initially thought (*rebutting* the allegation of bias); this requires more discussion of empirical niceties than I wish to do here. Second, one might maintain that the bias is not really a bias after all (*biting the bullet*); I'll save this for Ch. 5's discussion of partiality. The third kind of response is to suggest *mitigation* strategies: actionable processes that correct for the systematic distortion information. A comment how this generally works will foreshadow how it can work for caring emotions.

4.3.1 Overcoming biases

A belief-forming process is *biased* to the extent that it is systematically off-track, missing the truth in predictable ways; for example, confirmation bias involves favoring confirmatory over disconfirmatory information. Daniel Kahneman & Amos Tversky's influential model of heuristics & biases suggests that a wide array of systematic reasoning errors are due to the deployment of 'System 1' processes—ones which operate “automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control” (Kahneman 2011, p. 20). Generally, these automatic processes facilitate speedy decision-making by pairing up stimuli with responses in a

⁷⁷ Batson (2011, p. 194).

⁷⁸ In the experiments of Christoph Bartneck (cf. Spiegel 2014).

way that bypasses demands on our attention. This is an advantage for routine reasoning in familiar situations, or in cases where occasional errors are forgivable; but for reasoning about novel or important issues, or where errors are grave, it is important to be able to offset our automatic responses so as to avoid the errors to which we may be prone.

Successful bias mitigation will generally involve inculcating bias-counteracting habits via reflective awareness on the bias's nature. One is to refocus one's attention away from the cues or stimuli responsible for the distortion of information. For example, someone aiming to avoid confirmation bias ought to 'consider-the-opposite': attend to disconfirming information and resist the urge to attend only to confirming information (Bishop & Trout 2005). One seeks a more objective perspective, widening attention to normally-overlooked alternatives, outcomes, and details. It also helps to reduce confidence in initial appearances, scrutinizing their origin, and to assume that judgments will have to be justified to someone else.⁷⁹ Similarly, much emotion regulation involves reflective executive decisions to alter one's perspective: to divert attention from the emotion's particular object (e.g., thinking about baseball and cold showers), to avoid an eliciting situation altogether (e.g., avoiding passing by my ex's house), or to reframe one's interpretation of a situation (e.g., imagining my audience is naked).

Similar strategies could help overcome biases to caring emotions. Just as with other biases, the strategy would be to: [i] reduce confidence in initial appearances and subject them to scrutiny, [ii] deliberately refocus attention to approximate a perspective that controls for your biases, thus considering alternatives you are inclined to overlook, perhaps by reinterpreting/reframing the situation presented, and [iii] imagine you'll have to justify your judgments to others who have a different perspective.

4.3.2 The unaffiliated caring perspective

One way of digestibly encapsulating this advice is to advocate assuming a certain perspective, which I will call the *unaffiliated caring perspective*. One taking this perspective is *unaffiliated* in overlooking common interests, relationships, and social identifications with any protagonist of a situation. Furthermore, she will ignore any special emotional connections toward any protagonist, overriding any appeal of contingent features such as cuteness, emotionality, proximity, or direct accessibility. This perspective is a *caring* one in that it involves, not a passive or superficial consideration of each protagonist's interests, but deeply feeling or

⁷⁹ See, e.g., Bishop & Trout (2005), Kahneman et al. (2011).

simulating caring emotions for every protagonist (or at least every class of protagonists), by, for example, imagining the feelings and desires for a protagonist of those who love him. (The unaffiliated carer does not always or exclusively rely on empathy: imaginatively simulating a protagonist's emotions is but one strategy for identifying his interests (cf. §3.3.6).) The unaffiliated carer also has accurate knowledge about the situation to the extent that the protagonists themselves do.⁸⁰

For example, suppose parties A-C are disputing resource rights: A takes for an art project what B was expecting to use for a science experiment, while C desires that the resource remain unappropriated. The unaffiliated carer focuses attention on what it's like to be someone who cares about each party A-C, forgetting in that mental act about the ideals, relationships, interests, etc. she might in fact share with A-C. Empathically imagining the perspective of each will be one, but not the only, aspect of this act.

This move promises to mitigate the various biases: salience/conspicuousness effects are reduced to the extent that an unaffiliated carer successfully ignores special emotional predilections toward protagonists, thus considering the interests of every (kind of) protagonist, whether emotionally expressed or not, beautifully or otherwise. Status-attribution flux disappears to the extent this carer cares about others only in virtue of their intrinsic qualities. Similarity and familiarity biases have been ruled out *ex hypothesi*.

⁸⁰ This account owes a great deal to Antti Kauppinen's (2014) stimulating paper, which itself owes much to David Hume and Adam Smith. Kauppinen suggests we should consult empathic responses, especially with the reactive attitudes of protagonists, but regulate them by reference to an "idealized" empathizer. He suggests that "we reappraise the situation while abstracting away from our particular interests, relationships, and expectations[, looking] at it from the perspective of an [*empathetic*] *impartial spectator* (p. 11, AK's emphases).

My characterization differs, first, in that I hold that caring perspectives are often better than empathic ones for detecting and apprehending the value of others' interests (see Ch. 3 above). Secondly, in my view the idealized perspective is one which abstracts away from special ties and similarities *with a scenario's protagonists*; but it is not necessarily impartial toward everyone (so inaptly named an 'impartial' spectator), nor necessarily 'ideal' in the sense of possessing hyper-rationality, omniscience, or any other super-powers. My view emphasizes that since as a caring perspective, it allows one to comprehend the moral significance of protagonists' emotional cares, thus detecting reasons of partiality (Ch. 5 below).

Little about my unaffiliated caring perspective clashes with Smith (1759), but he has a slightly different project than I. Smith's impartial spectator is one which has adequate understanding of people's situations, sentiments, and motives, and has no personal stake in a situation. It is wedded to a plausible and sophisticated account of how we simulate protagonists' motives, emotions, and reactive attitudes. I can imagine him being sympathetic with the defense of reasons of partiality I will give in Ch. 5, insofar as he embraces impartial spectators despite their having certain 'irregularities' of sentiment including sensitivity to moral luck, but I do not find him saying much explicitly about partiality in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

4.3.3 Internalized moral guidelines

Someone might worry that this model is excessively demanding on our time and cognitive resources. To partially allay this worry, we can appeal to *internalized moral guidelines* that can be set up and reinforced by unaffiliated caring. As a matter of psychological fact, humans in most cultures regularly rely on moral rules or guidelines for behavior.⁸¹ Common examples include rules against treating people harmfully, unfairly, disrespectfully, or in ways by which they would be disgusted. Rules are internalized sometimes with the help of empathic and caring emotions (Hoffman 2000, Batson 2011), as well as other affective states such as disgust (Nichols 2004). For example, one study interviewed a 14-year-old Southern white boy who, after spending several weeks helping bully a black boy trying to integrate into his school, eventually (in his words) “began to see a kid, not a n*****—a guy who knew how to smile when it was rough going . . . and was polite”. After breaking up some bullying of the black boy in one incident, he befriended him and eventually began advocating “an end to the whole lousy business of segregation” (qtd. in Hoffman 2000, pp. 107-8). Hoffman hypothesizes this is an example of “hot” empathic (what I would call sympathetic) distress becoming associated in the boy’s mind with a principle of justice he had previously stored in memory (p. 239).

My suggestion is that unaffiliated caring *ought* to help internalize (generate, reinforce, and recalibrate) the moral guidelines that have social currency.⁸² The guidelines can serve as heuristics for acting in ways that we would reflectively endorse from the unaffiliated caring perspective, thus insulating us from biases to caring emotions.

Appealing to principles may also help us prevent our caring emotions from inclining us toward irrational or rash behavior (e.g., overblown revenge). In Martin Hoffman’s (2000) words:

When a principle charged with empathic affect is activated, this has the stabilizing effect of heightening or lowering the intensity of the observer’s empathic affect. The empathic response is thus less dependent on variations in intensity and salience of distress cues from victims, and empathic over-arousal (or under-arousal) is less likely. (p. 239)

⁸¹ Research suggesting as much includes Nichols (2004: 142) and Bicchieri (2006).

⁸² Normative research making similar suggestions include Hoffman (2000), Hooker (2000), Gert (2005), and Kauppinen (2014).

Some of the most important available guidelines here can be classed as follows. Some will be *directly welfare-relevant guidelines* ('do not harm others', 'prevent others from harm when you can easily do so', 'benefit others under certain circumstances', etc.) and *indirectly welfare-relevant guidelines* (e.g., 'do not lie to others', 'do not cheat others', 'make reparations for your past harms and slights to people', perhaps 'develop your talents'), and *justice- or fairness-relevant rules* (e.g., 'give others what they have earned or what they need', 'reward others for their productivity or compensate them for their skills').⁸³

Appeal to the caring-driven nature of such Ross-style rules helps explain why they are intuitive at all. Stereotypical violations of these rules affect us by involving victims (including merely potential victims). (Even for the indirect rules: the worst kinds of betrayed trusts, broken promises, etc. are those whose painfulness garners our pity and indignation. Which they do, as surely as meaningful, stable relationships of trust attract our appreciation, praise, and envy.) The guidelines are caring-driven, then, insofar as concrete examples of people's violating or upholding them elicit our caring emotions.⁸⁴

This is not to suggest that there is no room for the 'motive of duty', only that that motive is more obviously tied to a morally relevant foundation when people can understand why their duties are what they are. Duties not to free-ride can be supported, for instance, by encouraging people to picture a world in which everyone felt free to free-ride, paying particular attention to the *victims of* such an outcome.

Given all this, it seems to make sense to appeal to caring-driven guidelines both for individual reasoning about particular scenarios where there is little time to fully approximate the

⁸³ These lists are informed by lists from Ross (1932), Audi (2004, Ch. 5) and Gert (2005). Most of these caring-driven guidelines are worded as requirements, but some may be better interpreted as expressions of behaviors encouraged or discouraged from the moral point of view. E.g., at least in some cases breaking the rules 'benefit others' and 'develop some of your talents' may count as morally discouraged but not wrong.

⁸⁴ I'm suggesting that the appeal to an unaffiliated caring perspective underlies and explains commonsense moral rules for the same reasons Sidgwick (1907) held that the utilitarian principle does (and I quote):

- we require some further principle for systematising [the] exceptions and qualifications [to commonsense, Intuitive moral rules]; [and]
- the fundamental notion [of many such rules] is vague and needs further determination, as in the case of Justice; and . . .
- the different rules are liable to conflict with each other, and . . . we require some higher principle to decide the issue thus raised; and again,
- the rules are differently formulated by different persons, and . . . these differences admit of no Intuitional solution, while they show the vagueness and ambiguity of the common moral notions to which the Intuitionist appeals. (Bk. 4 Ch. 2)

unaffiliated caring perspective; and to inculcate caring-driven guidelines in others (youths, and society at large) in such a way that it trains up their caring dispositions.

4.4 Is unaffiliated caring feasible?

There is room to worry. It may seem the unaffiliated caring perspective is unfeasible or over-idealized. Perhaps it is too difficult for a human being even to approximate idealized caring in a lifetime, let alone in the timeframe involved in arriving at a particular-case judgment. And perhaps the percentage of rules which can be internalized and regulated by unbiased caring sentiment is so low that the ideal is too lofty. After all, it seems many people internalize their moral dictates via uncaring, non-empathic, unfettered anger/spite, contempt, and disgust, via simple biased distress reactions, and via cultural indoctrination reinforced by guilt, shame or the sense of pure duty.

One response is that unaffiliated caring need only be expected of agents at their most reflective, in the most contested or high-stakes situations. It is primarily a tactic for the public armchair, for occasions when we deliberate together about principles of justice, law, and other social norms. The guidelines and policies there decided upon are suitable for quicker decision-making to the extent that unaffiliated caring regulates (generates, reinforces, and recalibrates) them.

Secondly, there is a non-moral, prudential incentive for us to regulate our intuitions and policies using at-least-somewhat-impartialized empathic and caring sentiments (rather than other emotions or no emotions). Namely, taking such perspectives tends to reduce hostile attitudes toward outgroups, facilitating truce-making.⁸⁵ Another non-moral incentive is that the mere discovery of and sympathy with another's point of view is often satisfying in ways that other moral emotions—guilt, indignation, resentment, disgust, etc.—are not. It feels pleasant. These points suggest the unaffiliated caring perspective is not as unrealistic as it might seem.

Thirdly, the unaffiliated caring perspective is not the most souped-up sort of ideal observer we can think of, and this restricts the cognitive demands on those approximating it (her).⁸⁶ The unaffiliated carer is not omniscient and does not have special deep knowledge that

⁸⁵ This point is from Kauppinen (2014), who, in turn, draws from Hume (1739).

⁸⁶ Sayre-McCord (2010) makes a similar point about Adam Smith's impartial spectator. The contrast is with highly abstract or God-like idealized agents conceived by thinkers like Firth (1952), Brandt (1955), and Michael Smith (1994).

protagonists lack about (say) the long-term consequences of actions. And the extent to which she is caring falls in the middle of a continuum between apathy and omnibenevolence. As a carer, she is not apathetic, and does not minimally care just that people's basic needs or rights be provided for: rather, she is emotionally invested in the robust flourishing of all of a scenario's protagonists (or at least protagonist-types), feeling the value of their robust autonomy, successes, relationships, etc. But, on the other hand, she does not approach omnibenevolence: her cognitive and affective resources are as limited, and her sympathies as nuanced, as any human's; here are four examples. [i] She has limits to the *number* of (kinds of) persons whom she can reasonably consider caringly before she has to offload the cognitive-affective burden somehow (perhaps taking notes, using cognitive shortcuts, etc.). [ii] She is limited in the extent to which she can *make sense of the complex interests* even of a single person. For example, suppose someone's preference rankings are not all transitive (this is often the case with real people); there is no guarantee an unaffiliated carer, even conscientious and fully informed, could compellingly resolve the tensions in preference ranking. [iii] The unaffiliated carer's sympathy may be nuanced in being sensitive to *moral luck*, i.e., to [un]lucky consequences bearing on whether praise [or blame] is appropriate.⁸⁷ And [iv] she may well be sensitive to how *special relationships* can generate permissions or requirements not to increase welfare impartially (more next chapter).

4.4.1 Why get all emotional?

Why should we bother with this glorified apparatus for regulating our caring emotions? The arguments laid out in §1 suggested that moral intuitions will be more endorsement-worthy to the extent that they are produced by competent and skilled carers. Objections can still be raised here, however, especially from what might be called a *front-heavy actuarial perspective* on moral reasoning. This perspective advocates an approach to moral reasoning that attempts to balance competing concerns by assigning prior weights to various values (whether in terms of dollars, hedons, 'utils', etc.) and weighing them against each other in cases where creatures have competing concerns. The strategy's chief advantage is its practical relevance: the method

⁸⁷ This point in particular comes directly from Adam Smith (1759).

forces one to quantify, then engage in cost-benefit analysis, even where difficult or seemingly sacrilegious.⁸⁸

This perspective would suggest we should dispense with emotional input to reasoning at least after initial appraisals, since the introduction of emotional reactions might foul up the decision procedure, especially strong occurrent emotions experienced near the time of a verdict. As Joshua Greene (2008) emphasizes, simple “alarm-like” emotions issue simple commands (‘Don’t do it!’ or ‘Must do it!’), being “designed to dominate the decision rather than merely influence it” (pp. 64-5). Consistent with this view, emotions are almost entirely insensitive to the probabilities of outcomes (Baumeister et al. 2007); we are likely to be just as happy, sad, or scared of an outcome if it is 60% likely as if it is 90% likely. Also, occurrent emotions tend to lead to hasty decision-making (ibid.). A final motivation might contrast the unreliability of emotionality with the reliability of ratiocinative engagement. Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek and Peter Singer (2012) argue that the only kind of moral principles that survive evolutionary debunking arguments are ‘truths of reason’ along the lines of Sidgwick’s maxim of ‘rational benevolence’:

[everyone] is morally bound to regard the good of any other individual as much as his own, except in so far as he judges it to be less, when impartially viewed, or less certainly knowable or attainable by him.

They suggest the faculties which deliver commonsense moral rules (even ‘do not kill your brothers’) cannot be reliable guides to moral truth because they are the dictates of faculties which would have been selected merely to enhance reproductive success. So we should apply such axioms logically and check our bleeding hearts at the door.⁸⁹

One preliminary response is this. If the caring-apprehension hypothesis is granted, then even the front-heavy actuarial perspective must admit that caring is needed at the start of inquiry, to help the inquirer conduct the initial valuations. Even if I can clearly intuit Sidgwick’s maxim, it does me no good without a conception of what things are good for others (or myself). (I’ve no

⁸⁸ This is one interpretation of Joshua Greene’s (2008) view, although it’s not entirely clear that his self-styled “actuarial” consequentialism would be entirely front-heavy.

⁸⁹ Two other expressions of similar views are Singer (2005) and Huemer (2008).

means to dispute, for instance, the contention that people's good consists solely in petting parrots' pygostyles.) Moreover, the dualism of practical reason still looms large: we need to be able to see why the impartial 'view of the universe' would at all be worth taking, rather than the views of (say) pure self-interest, parsnips, or drunken Vikings. Caring enables us to apprehend and (surely to some extent) comprehend and weigh up others' interests.

My main response is this. Caring must not simply occur directly at the beginning of inquiry on some question for at least four reasons. First, the estimation of outcomes would simply be too crude if caring and empathic engagement were not involved at many steps. In order to estimate how the outcomes of various decisions might affect various protagonists' interests, I plausibly must consider these outcomes in some detail, on pain of inaccuracy. But this surely requires caringly and empathically considering how creatures' desires and emotions are affected. If it did not, we would plausibly need some very large, yet still very crude, Manual of Life's Values to reference regarding how bad it is for someone to (say) lose a limb, contract malaria, or lose a loved one; even then, it would seem that such a Manual would only at best *track* the contextualized estimations of someone actually living (or having lived) the scenario. Secondly, in the meantime toward constructing such a Manual, we would need to rely on caring emotions to recall the would-be contents, as well as to decide on the values of outcomes not yet considered for the still-to-be-written Manual. Thirdly, youths' acquisition of values is nothing like this front-heavy approach. It is continually shaped by emotional experiences, and their internal "manuals" are continually updated and always incomplete—radically so in novel situations. Fourth, because individuals may consider the very same outcome to have different values, value estimation must be dialogical; and such dialogue requires continual engagement of empathic and caring emotions.

So valuation should not be 'front-heavy'. Perhaps it should also not be 'actuarial', if that would rule out there being organic unities of value (Moore 1903).

Note that I am defending the involvement of caring emotions in moral reasoning and inquiry, not (in this passage) arguing against consequentialism, even though the authors I have cited (Greene and Lazari-Radek/Singer) use the front-heavy actuarial perspective to defend

consequentialist views. Consequentialist views could accommodate, even welcome, the need to continually update one's understanding of the values in a situation via emotional input.⁹⁰

4.4.2 Caring and Reliability

Surely the unaffiliated caring perspective is no magic bullet for eliminating all biases to our caring emotions. Perhaps it is too inconceivable or unattainable, or human attention or willpower is too weak. These facts, suppose, render appeals to caring emotions (regulation and all) a generally unreliable reasoning process.

If this chapter has been on target, we ought to rely on caring anyway. The air of paradox in this claim can be eased by considering an analogy.

Suppose practical demands require me to venture into the desert after dusk, looking for treasure buried beneath a lone cactus, within an hour timeframe. For this mission I'm stuck with some very glitchy night-vision goggles. They regularly distort my view, skewing my depth perception, even rendering me susceptible to mirages, and I only have meager practice at learning to control and correct for these tendencies. Less than half the cactuses I see, suppose, are real, and half of the rest are distorted. But (suppose) there is no way to add to the faint moonlight; using this instrument is my only way of punctually detecting any cactuses at all: either this, or I stumble around in the dark. Clearly this is the method I must use, regardless of whether I'll end up succeeding, if only because no other method is available.

Are we stuck with the unreliable method of attempting to regulate our biased caring emotions, on pain of stumbling around in ethical darkness? Well, that suppose mitigation strategies do not turn out to work, that I have succeeded in rejecting front-heavy approaches, and that there are no alternative means of attaining value-apprehension capacity (as I argued at the end of Ch. 3): in that case, the answer would appear to be yes.

Are there practical constraints which force us to go about searching for others' values, rather than staying home (settling for skepticism) or deciding there is nothing to search for (moral nihilism)? Yes, we must go looking for values as long as there are disputes about what is best for the parties involved in various scenarios in our world—even in the most deflationary senses of 'best'. Practical problems about what to do regarding, e.g., animals, future persons, putative environmental values, etc., do not wait for us to solve every riddle of moral ontology.

⁹⁰ My only objections to consequentialism will come in Ch. 5, where I defend special permissions and obligations on the grounds that the value of special others is incommensurable with that of strangers.

CHAPTER FIVE

CARING AND PARTIALITY

[A] micro-moment of love . . . literally changes your mind. It expands your awareness of your surroundings, even your sense of self. The boundaries between you and not-you—what lies beyond your skin—relax and become more permeable. While infused with love you see fewer distinctions between you and others. Indeed, your ability to see others—really see them, wholeheartedly—springs open. Love can even give you a palpable sense of oneness and connection, a transcendence that makes you feel part of something far larger than yourself.

-- Barbara Fredrickson, *Love 2.0* (2013)

OUR CARING SENTIMENT consistently privileges family, friends, and others. Probably most people find this desirable as a matter of common sense. But an equally commonsensical, powerful ethical truth is that everyone matters, and no one matters more than anyone else. Reconciling these partial and impartial perspectives is the *problem of partiality*. The acutest conflict of these perspectives comes in dilemmas pitting the welfare of a friend or friendly member against the welfare of strangers. We face similar quandaries when, in deciding how to allocate time, energy, and financial resources, we must choose to favor either our special others or strangers. For a moral epistemology privileging caring, addressing this asymmetry is an important task.

This chapter focuses on Simon Keller's recent (2013) position on reasons of partiality, which he calls the "Individuals View", criticizing that view but then supplementing it. We will start by situating Keller's view among its rivals and examining his arguments for it (§1). We will then argue that, although Keller's view as presented is unconvincing, the foregoing chapters' account of how caring enables moral apprehension can demystify and support his view. What we can call the Caring Account of our discovery of reasons of partiality applies the caring-apprehension hypothesis to special relationships to explain why and how we might perceive reasons of partiality (§2). From this there emerges (§3) an informative, unified, plausible account of which reasons of partiality we do and do not have. Finally (§4), we will answer some key objections.

5.1 Views on partiality

Intuitively, friends and family deserve our dedicated time, energy, finances, and assistance. That is, there seem to be ‘reasons of partiality’: considerations that count in favor of favoring/privileging certain special others. These come in at least three kinds. First, *permissions* to favor special others—e.g., it is permissible for me to skip a meeting I am required to attend in order to help *my* moderately sick child, but not just any sick child. Second, *requirements* to favor them—e.g., morality seems to require me to visit my parents just after they have faced a serious house fire, if this would not involve large sacrifices for me. Third, *what it makes sense to do*—e.g., it ‘makes sense’ to invite my friend to stay with me while his house is undergoing construction, because he is my friend rather than a stranger, although I am plausibly not morally required to do so.⁹¹

‘Special others’ are those toward whom we (apparently) have reasons of partiality. (I give this definition in normative terms since it is contentious and difficult to specify just who counts as a ‘special other’ and why.) Special others include friends, family, and perhaps (e.g.) colleagues, fellow countrypersons, and those to whom we have made promises.

Reasons of partiality are puzzling. But objections are best raised only after we have an accurate, thorough account of the would-be nature and justification of reasons of partiality.⁹² So we will begin by comparing three positive accounts.

5.1.1 Three Views of Reasons of Partiality

Attempts to account for the shape and nature of reasons of partiality can be preliminarily grouped into three categories (Keller 2013). (These are logical options; various authors’ views often contain elements of each.) First, the *Projects View* holds that reasons of partiality arise from facts about an agent’s “ground projects”, or commitments that help constitute a person’s identity.⁹³ On this view, reasons of partiality are derivable from reasons to honor commitments to favor special others. Second, the *Relationships View* holds that reasons of partiality arise from the brute fact that our relationships hold a certain kind of value.⁹⁴ Finally, against these Keller offers the *Individuals View*, according to which reasons of partiality arise from facts about the

⁹¹ These distinctions and examples are all from Keller (2013), Ch.1.

⁹² This matches Keller’s methodology (2013, p. 7).

⁹³ Views at least loosely affiliated with this logical option include Williams (1981), Wolf (1992), and Stroud (2010).

⁹⁴ Views at least loosely affiliated with this logical option include Scheffler (1997, 2001, 2004, 2010), Kolodny (2003), and Jeske (2008).

ethical significance of the individuals with whom we share our special relationships. (All) persons have a special value that permits, demands, and/or makes appropriate a response from those who are specially related to them.

Keller's most compelling objections confront the Projects and Relationships views together. First, both kinds of view have trouble accommodating the agent-relativity of reasons of partiality: they cannot provide affirmative, informative answers these questions, respectively:

- Should I promote my own projects rather than other people's projects? If so, why?
- Should I promote my own relationships rather than other people's relationships? If so, why?

It looks like (on the Projects View) I should create or promulgate special projects for their own sakes, even at the expense of my own projects, or (on the Relationships View) I should create or promulgate special relationships for their own sakes, even at the expense of my own special relationships. This should strike us as absurd. My own special relationships, many think, cannot be traded off in such a way. The fact that a relationship is mine gives me reason to respond to the pertinent reasons of partiality; promoting other special relationships does not (normally, anyway) compensate for ignoring my own. At any rate, this apparent fact about reasons of partiality deserves an explanation that the Projects and Relationships views seem unable to give.

A second problem is that on the Projects and Relationships views, projects and relationships compete with individuals for the purposes of prioritization or resource allocation. Projects or relationships should be promoted in their own rights even if no individual is benefitted by their promotion. This also seems absurd. It is at least curious what reason there really could be for continuing, e.g., an irreparably failed friendship that is bad for both of its members.

Third, the Projects and Relationships views must advise people to promote projects or relationships for their own sakes, rather than for the sakes of the individuals whose projects or relationships they are. But this is exactly the reverse of how reasons of partiality present themselves. For example, when I learn my special other's welfare is threatened—say, my spouse is about to drown—I fear for, and feel I have reason to rescue, not my marriage, not my personal

project of having a healthy marriage, but my spouse herself. My mind's alarm says not 'my wife!' or 'my wife!' but 'Jordan!' (assuming my wife's name is Jordan).

Fourth and finally, both the Projects and Relationships views cannot explain how reasons of partiality might have a *requiring* strength, rather than merely permissions not to act impartially. Nothing seems to *require* us to finish our projects; at best, our having projects seems to *permit* us to ignore the impersonal good in favor of our special relationship-projects. Likewise, the Relationships view seems forced to simply announce that relationships themselves demand something of us. But such primitivism is at best unsatisfying and at worst question-begging. Can Keller do any better?

5.1.2 Keller's Individuals View

The Individuals View says that the source of reasons of partiality is simply the value of the individuals with whom we share our special relationships. Initially, this may seem unable to surmount the problem of partiality: other individuals with whom I am not specially related are just as valuable as those with whom I am; so why should I treat my special others any differently from strangers? But Keller's point is subtle: my special other's value is the source of the reason; my being specially related to them *enables* his or her value to give me a reason. For example, any individual's value would permit or require special treatment by a sibling; Eric's value permits or requires special treatment by me simply because I am his brother. Keller's official statement—in the jargon of Jonathan Dancy (2004)—is that the fact that my friend or family member has value is a *favoring* reason (or favorer), while the fact that I am in a special relationship with that person is an *enabling consideration* (or enabler). Let's call this point the *enabler thesis*.

Notice how the view avoids the implausible implications we noticed with the Projects and Relationships Views. First, since I am in a reasons-enabling position with respect to certain particular special others, I have reasons to promote my own relationships rather than others' relationships. Second, since the view doesn't require us to attribute intrinsic value to projects or relationships (but only to individuals), it doesn't recommend that we promote failed projects or relationships when it won't do anyone any good. Third, it matches the phenomenology of partiality: we favor our special others for their sakes. Fourth, it can explain relationship-related requirements in terms of what we owe to individuals, getting at least one step beyond the Relationships View's primitivism. So the view avoids the vices; but what are its virtues?

The Individuals View still suffers from an unsatisfying ‘just so’ story unless Keller can explain the enabler thesis. It’s not enough to merely claim that special relationships enable individuals’ value to give reasons; we need reasons to think this claim is true—preferably in the form of an explanation of how or why the enabling works. Fortunately, Keller attempts an account of the enabling relation; it has three (disjointed) aspects which are vaguely Kantian, consequentialist, and primitivist.

The vaguely Kantian point we can call a *non-compensation thesis*: from the point of view of someone in a special relationship, benefits to strangers do not compensate for harms to loved ones, even if the amount of good done for the strangers is, from an unaffiliated point of view, many times weightier. For example, if my child dies, it will be no compensation to me even if I could save the lives of several strangers. Keller says that in this sense the good of the loved one is *incommensurable* with that of the stranger’s, even though the respective utilities of each are clearly *comparable* from an unaffiliated point of view. Our being specially related to the other person involves gradually coming to have this perspective on the other permanently, viewing her as having “a dignity, not a price”. The relationship enables this lover’s perspective to be my own.

The vaguely consequentialist point we can call a *contextuality thesis*: facts about our social setting, as well as about human nature, make special relationships more relevant than they would be otherwise. For example, had our societies developed communal strategies for child-rearing, we would have fewer familial obligations to our children. And had we evolved without any dispositions to care about special others, we might have no reasons of partiality at all. But given our actual natures and practices, flouting our special duties to our children usually is harmful to those children and simply seems inappropriate. Our conventions and social contexts render special treatment of our special others socially appropriate. Our natures as beings with needs for affection make it so that, often, only we can fill certain of our special others’ needs.

Keller’s primitivist point is that the fact that special relationships enable individuals’ values to give rise to reasons is not derivable from other facts (even those mentioned in the previous two paragraphs). Suppose, for example, that a father could either spend significant money on his daughter’s very expensive, life-saving asthma treatments or instead could fund deworming treatments for needy children overseas (greatly helping them for cheap). The partialist answer says that the father has a reason—is permitted, perhaps even required—to favor his daughter here. The primitivist claim is that this is a brute fact. It does not derive from the fact

that, as her father, he has a special view of her dignity. It does not derive from the fact that he fits into a social role wherein he can care for her well or is expected to care for her. Rather, he simply does have a reason to privilege her, and to see this, he simply needs to concentrate more intently on his daughter's incommensurable value. "At some point", Keller writes, "we need to say that certain moral standards of partiality simply do exist, and simply do have a certain structure and content, and that the only way to see them is to look more closely" (p. 151).

5.1.3 Objections

Keller's view faces at least four *prima facie* glaring problems. I think all of them can be answered; we have room here for answering the first three. To sum up the first three problems: first, the view is still saddled with a primitivist claim that relationships 'just do' enable special others' values to give rise to permissions and requirements. This is at best unsatisfying and at worst question-begging. Second, the view fails to notice the significance of the fact that we "see ourselves" as invested in our special others—see our interests as intertwined with theirs (more below in §5.2). Third, Keller's three explanations of the enabler thesis are unsatisfyingly disunified.

My answer to these worries will be called the Caring Account of our discovery of reasons of partiality. This is an extension of the Individuals View. In sum, the Caring Account suggests that we discover reasons of partiality by engaging our capacities for caring about our special others (in the typically intense, robust way that humans tend to). We "just do" see our special others' values as making demands on our caring attention because caring in general is a way of discovering values and their practical imports. (That much should increase our satisfaction with Keller's primitivism.) Caring emotional experiences attribute incommensurable value to the beloved, just as many emotional experiences attribute intrinsic value to the focus of the emotion. But this only becomes noticeably robust enough to make a difference to our life plans once the special other becomes a locus of attachment for us and/or a part of our personal life projects. (In other words, our special others are incommensurably significant to us because we see them as *ours*.) But of course, it is contingent that we would possess caring capacities of this particular sort, as well as that we would apply them within the contingent social structures that organize our societies.

One problem I can only answer briefly is that reasons of partiality are vulnerable to evolutionary debunking arguments. These arguments contend that we should not take apparent

reasons of partiality to be veridical, since our evolutionary heritage would have biased our minds in favor of accepting them, and trusting those deliverances is a generally unreliable belief-forming process. I'll suggest (in §5.4.1) that successful full responses should question why an utterly impartial perspective on morality should be privileged in the way that this objection assumes.

5.2 How relationships are relevant

On Keller's view, being in a special relationship with someone "enables" his or her value to give me reasons to be partial. Why? Keller says that this is just a fact; to see that we 'just do' have reasons when in those relationships, we simply have to look more closely. But this leaves it unclear how he would convince a skeptic that real reasons are being overlooked.

A response might explain *how* 'looking more closely' works. Explaining how we come to see something can make it seem less odd that we see it. My account will suggest we come to apprehend reasons of partiality in much the same way as we apprehend the importance of any stranger. It will involve giving an account of "special" value-apprehensional experiences, arguing that these are at least as well-evidenced (phenomenologically and psychologically) as general value-apprehensional experiences, and showing how this unifies explanations of our discovery of primitive reasons of partiality and of their natures.

5.2.1 Special value-apprehensional experiences

This dissertation's central *caring-apprehension (c-a) hypothesis* is, roughly, that caring emotionally about others enables us to see them as mattering (to have "value-apprehensional (v-a) experiences"). The hypothesis can easily be extended to the thesis that caring emotionally about *special* others enables us to see them as mattering—to have *special v-a experiences*. And these seem good candidates to include our apprehension of reasons of partiality.

Recall that seeing another as mattering involves seeing both the person's value and some general (*pro tanto*) reasons to promote that value. For example, that my fellow airline passenger will be enrolling in his first semester of college may give me reason to offer motivation, advice, or helpful information. This should make it less surprising that special v-a experiences also involve seeing reasons of partiality in the case of special others.

Special v-a experiences involve seeing both my welfare and my special other's welfare, as well as our future interactions, as both mattering for each of us and mattering *simpliciter*. Let's spell it out a bit more.

Special value-apprehensional experiences seem to have at least five layers (as I'll now explain and then summarize in Figure 1). The first is seeing damages or enhancements to a thing as mattering *for* someone. Typically, these also matter *to* that person. Second, what we've called (general) value-apprehensional experiences involve seeing it as mattering (*period*) whether a creature is damaged or enhanced—construing creatures as mattering for their own sakes.

Third, a further step combines the first two steps: I might see someone both as mattering (for her own sake) and as mattering-for-someone. If someone is in some sense “mine” (perhaps he is the jockey riding my racehorse), I might see him as mattering for his own sake and as mattering-for-me (and, in most cases, -to-me). Fourth, a further layer comes when I myself need or want to maintain some stable set of long-term interactions with the person (i.e., a relationship—perhaps he is my butler or secretary). Versions of these involving relatively intense wants or needs may start to count as ‘special’. And perhaps relatively intensely felt wants and needs for interaction with the other person are near necessary for a relationship to count as special.

A fifth layer is seeing it as mattering that these wants and needs for sustained interactions be *reciprocated*. Typically, the reciprocation is seen as mattering both mattering-for-me and -for-the-other, often in a way that is ineliminable to each of our welfares. In a relationship that we might call “moderately” special, learning of harms and benefits to the other is pleasing and emotionally engaging. Interacting with the other is particularly enjoyable, while parting ways or learning you will be unable to interact may be saddening.

In “full blown” or “intense” special relationships, a greater degree of attachment comes to convert these moderate interests into intense needs. Harms or benefits to the beloved count as harms or benefits to oneself, with bliss or despair a consequence, sometimes much more than if one is benefitted or harmed oneself. Each member needs to interact with the other, on pain of withdrawal and longing. This is summed up in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Layers of value-apprehensional experience toward the special other in reciprocal, intense special relationships

“Layer”		Typical Example	What is apprehended?	Prerequisites: one must be able to attribute ⁱ :
1	experience of <i>S</i> as mattering-to-someone	Seeing my sleek new bicycle’s bodily integrity as mattering-to-me	apprehend disvalue-for- <i>S</i> ’ of damages to <i>S</i> and/or value-for- <i>S</i> ’ of enhancements to <i>S</i>	1) concepts of damageability or enhanceability to <i>S</i> 2) the concept of changes in <i>S</i> mattering for someone <i>S</i> ’
2	v-a experience of <i>S</i>	Seeing a stranger’s bodily integrity as mattering	apprehend value of benefits to <i>S</i> and/or disvalue of harms to <i>S</i>	1-2) the two above concepts 3) interests to <i>S</i> (the concept of damages and enhancements to <i>S</i> mattering both <i>simpliciter</i> and for <i>S</i>)
3		Seeing my taxi driver’s bodily integrity as mattering <i>simpliciter</i> ⁱⁱ + mattering-to-me.	apprehend value of benefits to <i>S</i> and/or disvalue of harms to <i>S</i> , partly in virtue of own need for <i>S</i> to fare well	1-3) The three above concepts (where <i>S</i> ’ is oneself) 4) to oneself the need for <i>S</i> to fare well
4		Seeing my butler’s bodily integrity as mattering ⁱⁱ + mattering-to-me.	apprehend value of benefits to <i>S</i> and/or disvalue of harms to <i>S</i> , partly in virtue of: [i] own need for <i>S</i> to fare well [ii] own need to interact with <i>S</i> in the future	1-3) from above 4) to oneself the need for <i>S</i> to fare well 5) to oneself the need to interact with <i>S</i> in the future
5	special v-a experience of <i>S</i> (within a reciprocal relationship)	Seeing my best friend’s bodily integrity as mattering + mattering-to-me + mattering-for-us. ⁱⁱⁱ	apprehend value of benefits to <i>S</i> and/or disvalue of harms to <i>S</i> , in virtue of: [i] own & <i>S</i> ’s mutual needs for each other to fare well [ii] own & <i>S</i> ’s mutual needs to interact with each other on a regular basis	1-3) from above 4, 6) to oneself & to <i>S</i> the need that the other fare well 5, 7) to oneself & to <i>S</i> the need to interact with the other

- i These attributions may or may not be made consciously.
- ii If someone’s interest matters, this entails that it matters-for-him. But it does not entail that it matters-to-him. Likewise, if something matters matters-*for*- some set of people who are in a special relationship, this need not entail that it matters-*to*-all or any of the people in that relationship.
- iii That my friend’s bodily integrity matters-for-us means that his being intact matters-for-me and -for-him and that our future interactions may depend on it.

5.2.2 The unity of caring

It is very reasonable to think that the same caring capacity which (plausibly) enables, mediates, and improves general value-apprehension does the same for special value-apprehension. Preliminary evidence for this comes from the similar, “warm” phenomenology attendant to both kinds of value-apprehension: for example, the combined feeling of cuteness and gladness felt at a preschool graduation, and the despair at seeing a preschooler die, are similar but more intense the more connected that child is to one’s own life. At least, given that general v-a is enabled, mediated, and improved by caring (as we suggested in Ch. 3), it seems plausible on phenomenological grounds that special v-a is enabled, mediated, and improved by our intense, localized cares. But in case phenomenology should prove insufficient, several scientific findings suggest that caring about or for strangers is, both developmentally and evolutionarily, an extension of caring for offspring, mates, and other close relatives. These would make it even less surprising that caring would enable, mediate, and improve special v-a.

First and most importantly, the general and special aspects of caring are (to my knowledge) never fully dissociated. That is, psychopathy is never observed to be restricted to (say) impaired caring and empathy toward strangers but perfectly normal caring and empathy toward special others, or *vice versa*. Second, the evolutionary origins of human fellow-feeling are on almost every account thought to trace back to the attachment bonds between kin—on many accounts, parent-child attachment.⁹⁵ What we do know is that mammals (perhaps along with some social birds⁹⁶) exhibit behavioral tendencies, not found in other animals,⁹⁷ of pronounced attachment and caregiving to offspring, as well as conspecifics other than their helpless offspring.⁹⁸ These differences are subserved by unique neural architecture within which

⁹⁵ Darwin 1871, De Waal 1996, Sober & Wilson 1998, Batson 2011, pp.46ff, Churchland 2011.

⁹⁶ Churchland 2011, p. 209, note 1.

⁹⁷ To be sure, there are numerous examples of complex *sociality* among non-mammals, most notably the complex social organization among numerous varieties of ants, bees, termites, and wasps. The point here is only that the neural architecture subserving *attachment* and *caring* seems particularly mammalian (and in some cases, avian). The story behind the sociality of the hymenoptera is a more complicated one involving sterile sisters who share 75% of each other’s DNA.

⁹⁸ Carter et al. 2009, Carter 2009, Churchland 2011, pp. 13-14. Compare De Waal (1996, p. 43):

[W]ith the evolution of parental care in birds and mammals came feeding, warming, cleaning, alleviation of distress, and grooming of the young, which in turn led to the development of infantile appeals to trigger these activities. Once tender exchanges between parent and offspring had evolved—with the one asking for and the other providing care—they could be extended to all sorts of other relationships, including those among unrelated adults. (De Waal 1996, p. 43)

oxytocin in the case of mammals (or mesotocin in the case of social birds⁹⁹) functions as a vehicle for “maternalizing” the brain, giving rise to attachments and the ‘tender emotion’ felt when nestling or cuddling loved ones (Batson 2011, pp. 50-3, Churchland 2011 pp. 31-2, Zak 2012). Third, all this matches the suggestion that something about the tendency to form attachment relationships—whether the caregiver’s tenderness for the child, the child’s attachment to its caregiver, or both—gets generalized over the course of development into empathy (Batson 2011) and caring (Churchland 2011) for strangers. For instance, healthy childhood attachment styles correlate with a tendency to be empathic toward peers during¹⁰⁰ and after¹⁰¹ childhood.¹⁰² Fourth, a similar finding is that momentary face-to-face and voice-to-voice interactions between people tend to increase caring both toward that other person and also toward strangers.¹⁰³ With the person with whom we share this “face time”, we come in those moments to share synchronous affect, biochemistry, and behaviors; this also tends to motivate both parties to invest in each other’s well-being (Fredrickson 2013).

5.2.3 Value-apprehensions *par excellence*

Even if the same mechanism produces the two kinds of value-apprehension, it needs to be shown that one or both varieties is not a deficient application. After all, mirages and veridical visual perceptions are products of the same visual capacity. An adequate response will run parallel to answers to objections about other kinds of appearances. When justifying a visual appearance, for example, [i] we check for consistency with other appearances delivered by the visual and other faculties, as perceived in different contexts and moments and from different angles; [ii] we examine the reliability and precision of the faculty which delivered the appearance; and [iii] we examine the clarity, distinctness, and other compellingness of what is presented.

Special v-a experiences seem to do well on these fronts. Consider the example of gazing at your own beautiful kindergartener onstage giving his first violin performance, after you

⁹⁹ Churchland 2011, p. 209, note 1.

¹⁰⁰ Toddlers: Panfile & Laible 2012; preschoolers: Kestenbaum et al. 1989; middle schoolers: Nickerson et al. 2008.

¹⁰¹ Joireman et al. 2002.

¹⁰² This is all the more unsurprising given that reciprocal, intimate caring in human adults bears many of the same markings as attachment in infants (Feeney & Noller 1996)—separation anxiety, a strong drive to maintain proximity, and use of the attachment figure as a safe haven from threats and as a secure base between bouts of exploration (Ainsworth et al. 1978).

¹⁰³ Fredrickson 2013, p. 67; cf. Isen & Levin 1972, Dunn & Schweitzer 2005, Hutcherson et al. 2008, Griskevicius et al. 2010.

yourself taught him the basics, thereby bonding with him. Probably most parents in this situation would sense that this moment matters if anything does ([iii]); this is cradled within a cunning admixture of joy, fear, amusement, nostalgia, and pride. These emotional effects perdure ([i]) when viewed retrospectively and even prospectively. The sense of enormity strikes us through multiple cognitive modalities—our attention is taken over, inwardly we sense our motivations higher than ever, we feel and see affect taking over our faces, bodies, voices, and body language, and propositions enter our consciousness ('I am *so* fortunate to be here, seeing this, right now'). This sense of our relationships' importance also perdures when viewed from different "angles"; notably, even when we consider the enormity of the evil and suffering in the universe, or how easily we could have prevented some of it by donating money, we still have no doubt that these shining, peak moments in our special relationships are counted among those, perhaps above any others, which make our own lives worth living. It would be extremely difficult to decontextualize and disembodiment ourselves in such a way as to forget and transcend our special ties, especially the moments of their highest expression.

The caring disposition which produces these appearances seems reliable enough that the building and fading of loves and cares and concomitant value-apprehensions is seldom erratic ([ii]). It is accurate, at least to the extent that those we know matter the most for us tend to matter the most to us—or when they do not, we usually come to regret and feel guilty about it. It is precise enough that we seldom have no idea whom we really care about; and usually we can say whom we really care most about and in virtue of what.

Special v-a experiences, and the intense cares that subserve them, seem to be apprehensions *par excellence* of what is truly valuable. What we care about tells us, in general, a great deal about whom we value in a way that makes them irreplaceable to our welfare. Our cares seem morally important for this reason; but even if they were morally irrelevant they would plausibly bear greatly on how we (prudentially) ought to live. If general v-a experiences inform us about morally relevant values, we should expect special ones to do least as much.

5.2.4 Incommensurability

Why does it seem that harms and benefits to our special others cannot be compensated for by harms and benefits to strangers? The answer is that it is from the position of being in a special relationship that we apprehend the force and significance of the demands their special value makes on us. This is made possible by the way that we thoroughly experience our interests

as intertwined with our special others' interests, experiencing them as ours and ourselves as theirs.

In elaborating the caring-apprehension hypothesis (in Ch. 3), we noticed that v-a experiences draw attention to how the other is faring (are welfare-highlighting), construe it as bad that the person suffer harm and good that they be benefitted (are welfare-congruent), and attribute intrinsic value to the other (are intrinsic-value-attributing). To explain these features, we appealed to the fact that caring emotions are (by definition) "other-focused" in the sense that they are framed toward the welfare of someone other than the emoter. We also said that they "presuppose" the intrinsic importance of the well-being of the person on whom they focus, insofar as emotions direct the emoter's attention to events relevant to the focusee's welfare and prepare the emoter for actions that promote the focusee's welfare. We concluded that this can help explain why the other is experienced as intrinsically valuable.

The "presupposition" is also part of the explanation of why special others are experienced as incommensurably valuable. The sense is often that the emotion's focusee is valuable not just intrinsically, but *unsurpassably*: his or her value is beyond any price. (Very similarly to cases where we feel an emotion—say, fear or gratitude—for our own lives.) We may feel it worth investing infinite amounts of resources into securing the focusee's well-being, or at least that that would be worth doing if other unsurpassably important people did not also need the resources. When seeking life-saving medications, for example, we would love to be able to say price is no object; in principle, protection of the patient's interests is worth any cost. The fact that trade-offs are a ubiquitous feature of life—that resources must always be budgeted—is no reason to doubt that this experience is veridical.¹⁰⁴ Our emotions reveal that even strangers have unsurpassable value.

Why, then, would my special others' unsurpassable values make demands on me that strangers' do not? The answer is that our special apprehensional experiences of their value are

¹⁰⁴ Kant and others (e.g. Helm 2010) also point to the *irreplaceability* (non-fungibility) of the one cared-for to the lover. Even someone assuming the same role as one's special other could not replace her in an important sense. I think this is less important and is more a product of attachment than of our experience of the other's value (even artifacts we are attached to seem irreplaceable to us, but they are clearly not moral patients). The better leading idea is that individuals' values cannot adequately be compensated for by changes in the welfare of others because each individual is a locus of unsurpassable or incommensurable value: it that cannot be outweighed in principle (even if hard decisions must often be made in practice).

considerably more robust; not only do we see their unsurpassable value, but we see it as making demands specifically of us.

Intertwining of interests. The robustness of special v-a experiences owes not only to their intensity, but also to the fact that our interests intertwine: the interests most important to our special others' lives become our own, and ours, theirs. In many cases, the special other's physical well-being or goal-accomplishment is *more* important to us than our own. In most cases, this probably owes to at least one of three common aspects of special relationships: attachment, other-orientation, and identification.

[1] *Attachment* marks our closest, familial relationships: we undergo disproportionately profound feelings of delight, bonding, and union while in the presence of our attachment figures, and profound anxiety, despondency, and sadness when meaningfully separated from them. Similarly, we become [2] *oriented* toward the special other in the sense that we come to [i] attend habitually to the person's well-being and [ii] include them in our life-plans.¹⁰⁵ Relatedly, we tend to [iii] adopt projects with our special others, sometimes forming joint projects as partners and other times adopting each other's projects either as fans or cheerleaders. We do these things in part because [iv] we care so intensely for them: our attention sticks long to their weal and woe, presence, and absence; and we are motivated to pursue their presence and well-being, sometimes at great expense relative to other pursuits. As a result, we often [3] *identify* with the other in the sense that we shift our self-concepts and self-labels toward the other (thinking of ourselves as 'a mother', 'a husband', 'a Cherokee', etc.). And of course all of these phenomena are nourished when and because both parties know that the attachment, orientation, and identification are *mutual*.

So whereas other-directed emotions "presuppose" the intrinsic value of strangers, we might say other-directed emotions are tokens of our "robust experience" of special others' value. Given our attachment, orientation, and identification with our special others, we know and feel their value more deeply than perhaps anything else we know or feel.

The full phenomenology. These points help us improve the account of the phenomenology of partiality presented by Keller. He is right that the focus of caring (and the locus of reasons) in a special relationship is the individual beloved, not the relationship itself or

¹⁰⁵ It helps that once a friendship has developed significantly, we become so much more *familiar* with their interests' nuances, and come to comprehend deeply and fully how their preferences, desires, and goals fit together.

our project of committing to it. But what he misses is that we see that individual's value as presenting us with a reason in virtue of our special connection with the person. For example, when someone realizes her husband, Jordan, is drowning, she will worry for him ('*Jordan!*'), not for her investment in the project of loving him ('*my husband!*') or the relationship category he falls in ('*my husband!*'). But the special significance this holds for her cannot be captured in the same way for someone who had just met Jordan. The more adequate phrase is '*my dear Jordan!*' (or '*my pookie!*' or whatever other pet-name). And, of course, the dearness is cultivated through the projects and habits that constitute the relationship.¹⁰⁶ And that is mostly because those, in turn, cultivate the attachment, other-orientation, and co-identification that allow us to see our dear ones' value as demanding actions of us.

Not (necessarily) reducing. This explanation does not (necessarily) reduce the basis of reasons of partiality to mere commitment—let alone to anyone's expectations, or to contingencies about who is well-placed to help whom. It seems at least as probable that our having reasons of partiality is a brute fact enabled by our special relationship. Our attachment, orientation, and other-identification are factors which explain how we see individuals' welfares as making demands on us as special others.

Our account of special v-a experiences makes this primitivism more satisfying. We need not stop at saying we simply intuit reasons of partiality or simply perceive people's incommensurable value. The demystifying story says these intuitions are emotional phenomena; attributing incommensurable value is something emotions do; and making demands on those with intertwined interests is just what incommensurable values do, at least among human persons. Our deep cares for special others provide a "window" from which to view how important they are and how much they deserve.

5.2.5 Unifying Keller's account

Just as the Caring Account demystifies both Keller's primitivism and his Kantian point (about incommensurable values), it can also explain his vaguely consequentialist point (about the context-sensitivity of reasons of partiality). It is a contingent fact about human nature that we would have these special cares and v-a experiences at all, let alone toward these specific folks, in these specific ways. E.g., we are inclined to have special v-a experiences of mates and offspring owes to because we are affectionate, high-male-parental-investment mammals in cultures

¹⁰⁶ In this way, the Projects and Relationships views get the phenomenology more right than Keller lets on.

featuring minimal alloparenting. (To extend the metaphor, the contingencies affect, as it were, the clarity, color, lighting, and viewing angle of our “windows” into our special others’ worlds through which we view our special others.) Whom we view specially does depend partly on conventions, which partly depend on whose needs are best fulfilled by whom; but the relevance is that the contingencies frame the characters of our special v-a experiences.

5.2.6 Epistemological vs. ontological claims

A couple of clarifications are in order about the epistemological and metaphysical claims being made. Here is the first issue. It is important not to conflate a few claims. This chapter’s main thesis is an epistemological claim: we (often) see that we have particular reasons of partiality by having special v-a experiences. The details of these perceptions were sketched above by the Caring Account.

Understand what ontological claims are and are not being made. We are *not* saying that we have reasons of partiality simply because we have special v-a experiences. Special v-a experiences *reveal* the demands made by special others’ welfare; they do not generate or constitute reasons of partiality. (The latter, ambitious sort of reduction has some plausibility, and might be defended elsewhere; but not here.) A second set of ontological claims that we *are* entertaining is Keller’s view: (all) individuals’ inherent value makes demands on those specially related to them, giving rise to reasons of partiality, and the fact that someone is specially related to the person enables the person’s inherent value to give rise to such reasons.

I say we are “entertaining” Keller’s view because this chapter’s main epistemological claim, the Caring Account, could fit reasonably well with *some* other views of the ontology of reasons of partiality (as long as they make some attempt to account for reasons of partiality. For example, a view that ultimately reduced reasons of partiality to reasons to uphold commitments might appeal to special v-a experiences as ways in which we apprehend the relative importance of upholding certain commitments to others; for another example, a view that ultimately reduced (certain) permissions of partiality to permissions to act in self-interest might make much of how special v-a experiences involve seeing the other’s interests as (intertwined with) one’s own. On the other hand, eliminativist views of reasons of partiality—claims that there are no reasons of partiality after all—will not fit with the Caring Account. Such views do not take special v-a experiences to be (successfully) revelatory, whereas we have argued that special v-a experiences,

as value-apprehensions *par excellence*, are at least as likely to be revelatory of value as any other general v-a experience.

Here is the second issue. Because I am not postulating an ontological dependence of reasons of partiality on our special v-a experiences, the question arises, How reliable are our special v-a experiences at detecting what reasons of partiality there are? I.e., how well do special v-a experiences correlate with actual reasons of partiality? That would require much writing, but here we can say it is reasonable to expect at least the core, most intense special v-a experiences to be fairly certainly revelatory. For, as we argued (in §5.2.3), special v-a experiences are [i] consistent across times and circumstances, [ii] usually coherent in their onset and precise in their extent, and [iii] compelling and clear in their personal importance, even to the extent that they [iv] shape our whole lives by intertwining our interests with those of our special others. Some special v-a experiences may lack some of these features, however. E.g., learning of, rooting for, and then meeting an Olympic swimmer (whose hometown I once visited!) might make me temporarily awed to the point that I feel obligated to buy him a meal (etc.), but these feelings are erratic in their consistency, timing, intensity, and importance to me, so it is less clear that I have any such obligation, or even that it makes sense for me to extend such a gratuitous reward.

5.3 Toward reconciling partiality and impartiality

We have sketched an informative account of our apprehension of reasons of partiality, but we have not yet shown how to reconcile these reasons with the impartial perspective which testifies that no one matters more than anyone else. This section explains what kinds of reasons of partiality fit well with the Caring Account, and it explains in what sense they can be reconciled with an impartial perspective. This will involve introducing a view we can call a Deontology of Caring Attention.

5.3.1 The Clash of Standpoints

Little is more obvious than that everyone suffers equally. Other parents, for example, sympathize with their children just as I do with mine. A way of formalizing this insight is the following paraphrase of Sidgwick (1907, Bk. III, Ch. 13, §3):

- SI The good of any one individual is of no more importance, from the point of view of the universe (so to speak), than the good of any other, unless there are special

grounds for believing that more good is likely to be realized in the one case than in the other.

Call this the Sidgwickian Intuition. This viewpoint is especially relevant when we realize that resources which we might share with our special others could often be as easily spent on others whose need is much greater. The question then becomes whether and how we could justify refusing to devote these resources to those who need them most.

There is probably no pithy, straightforward way of specifying our duties to special others, but the following claim seems to capture an important aspect of them:

PI We have a *pro tanto* duty to our special others to pay them our caring attention (at intervals regular enough to be more than minimally satisfying to them¹⁰⁷).

Call this the Partiality Intuition. It seems to be a self-evident truth about the very most general kind of duty we have toward special others, as such. This intuition is central to and distinctive of the Deontology of Caring Attention.

Caring attention is, roughly, attention to another person that expresses one's welfare-congruent, presence-seeking emotional attitudes for the other. We commonly express such emotions by engaging in relationship-characterizing and -furthering activities, such as mutual pastimes, conversation centered on one another's experiences and personal narrative, and the offering of emotional support. These activities help increase bonds of affection. The resources devoted to caring interactions we will call *resources of person*.

PI fits well with the Caring Account in two ways—not only because it is highly intuitive (though it is). First, the Caring Account most straightforwardly supports the Individuals View, on which reasons of partiality derive from the needs and interests of individuals. Caring attention, of the sort only special others can provide, is a core human need. So it would make sense that this would be one of the most important things we owe to our special others. Second, expressing and acting on caring emotions is a natural outpouring of a caring-laden v-a experience. Whereas the

¹⁰⁷ PI specifies an imperfect duty in that one may permissibly act at various times in ways that are not means of complying with the duty, yet one is required to comply with it as a general trend throughout one's life. Explicating Kant, Marcia Baron (2013) construes imperfect duties as those which [i] "admit of exceptions in favor of inclination" yet [ii] are never fully dischargeable; rather than meeting some quota, the duty is "always with one".

Caring Account posits an epistemic function for caring (revealing interests and their importance), the Deontology of Caring Attention basically says that the natural expression of caring emotions is fitting.

SI and PI both seem intuitive enough to be worth trying to reconcile them rather than reject one outright (however, we will worry about this in §4 below).

5.3.2 Reasons in a Moderate Deontology

SI is a claim about *goodness*—similar goods are similarly good, no matter whose they are—whereas PI is a claim about a set of requirements (and so, *reasons*, on the terminology introduced in §5.1 above). So they combine straightforwardly into a deontological theory on which duties to pay caring attention to special others are at least one kind of constraint on what sorts of impartial goods we are permitted or required to promote.

Tests for whether a theory incorporating reasons of partiality is deontological include the following kinds of partial-impartial quandaries; the deontological response will postulate some kind of constraint against impartial good-maximization. First, *quandaries of caring attention* pit caring attention against other pursuits, including the promotion of strangers' welfare. E.g., perhaps my daughter's wedding conflicts with the date of a mission I was going to take to perform numerous blindness-preventing surgeries in the developing world. Second, what we can call *double sacrifice quandaries* pit a large, irreversible change in a special other's well-being against the like for a stranger's well-being. (E.g., death, serious injury, or the accomplishment of a major life goal.) E.g., I have to choose between saving my drowning child and saving two drowning stranger children.

Third, *quandaries of resource allocation* involve the challenge of how to allocate resources to special others as opposed to non-special others. The relevant resources are not only *financial* (wealth, income, consumable goods, and productivity-related time), but also encompass resources of *person* (conversational attention, emotional support and comfort, relationship-characterizing pastimes) and *mind* (information, advice, instruction, engagement).

How does the Deontology of Caring Attention answer these quandaries? As for quandaries of caring attention: since the crucial duty postulated by PI is the duty to devote caring attention, there is a crucial constraint against failing to devote caring attention to special others. We should suppose we owe our special others caring attention even if otherwise we could achieve a fairly impressively greater good. This is not the place to resolve the question of the

limits to this constraint—whether I’m permitted or required ignore giving my wife caring attention in order to prevent 10 million wife-ignorings, or 100, or 10.

As for double sacrifice quandaries: the Deontology of Caring Attention posits constraints against allowing harm to befall a special other to prevent an impartially greater good, at least insofar as allowing such harm would conflict with the kind of caring attention owed. Again, this is not the place to weigh in on the constraint’s limits—whether I’m permitted or required to kill my wife in order to prevent 10 million killings, or 100, or 10.¹⁰⁸ But the notion that what we owe is caring attention suggests that the constraint will be weak, or cancellable, if there are ways of sacrificing the special other while still showing her caring attention. Notably, PI explains that, and why, it is relevant that obtaining the consent of the special other to be sacrificed affects the moral status of sacrificing him: the caring thing to do is to consider the interests put in place by his volitions.

With quandaries of resource allocation, the relevant constraint will be quite modest. The only required expenditures of non-personal resources on my special others are those necessary for expressing a reasonable degree of caring attention. (Of course, people owe their children various resources ranging from food to education, but these can actually be justified on the simple impartialist ground that otherwise the child would be highly disadvantaged.) This point is related to two virtuous upshots of the view.

5.3.3 Two Appealing Implications

Two appealing consequences are worth noting.¹⁰⁹ First, the Deontology of Caring Attention need not include generic deontological constraints. This kind of constraint limits what actions I can permissibly do toward anyone even if they result in outcomes better than otherwise. The familiar example is that I should not kill one person myself, even if by doing so I could prevent two killings. If this intuition is somewhat appealing, it is anyway quite difficult to justify. (Why would refraining from using my own agency be so important that the body count should double?) With the Caring Account, we can (if we like) avoid generic deontology but still countenance a particular kind of (overridable) constraint against failing to devote caring attention

¹⁰⁸ In any case, one available response, at least to some quandaries in these categories, is that they are veritable moral dilemmas, where either decision is a wrongdoing.

¹⁰⁹ Or perhaps I should say two *more*, since it seems appealing [1] that our deontology’s constraints are reasonably weak and [2] that the Caring Account, as a species of the Individuals View, says all reasons seem to derive from the welfares of individuals. Relationships themselves are morally important only to the extent that they conduce to the welfare of the individuals involved in them.

to special others. And we avoid mere foot-stamping since we have built up an explanation of how and why we should think our perception of these reasons is reliable.

The second appealing consequence is that the Deontology of Caring Attention gets us out of the *distributive objection* to reasons of partiality.¹¹⁰ The problem is one of distributive injustice: if people on the “inner circle” of a special relationship are united by permissions and requirements to favor one another, those outside this circle are at a relative disadvantage. The consequences might be egregious on a large scale, since it would seem that we have every reason to exclude those lacking such ties. The widowed and orphaned, for example, are threatened by such exclusionary mischiefs as preferential hiring or the passing down of ever-accumulating inheritance money through a privileged bloodline.

On the Deontology of Caring Attention, the resources owed to special others are far more minimal than to lead to such unequal outcomes. We owe a reasonable degree of caring attention to our special others. But only relatively small amounts of financial resources seem necessary to facilitate or convey caring attention. The distributive objection pertains to the unequal opportunities that arise from unequal distribution of financial resources, educational resources, and other privileges that grant advantages to the “inner circle”. However, it is relatively easy to pay caring attention to a special other while also investing financial and educational resources—and even resources of person—into combating unequal opportunity in the world. For example, posthumous caring attention to my children may involve passing on certain minimal financial goods or family heirlooms, but doing so is compatible with embracing a considerably demanding duty to combat social injustice. Moreover, engaging in effective altruistic or social justice-oriented projects can itself be a fantastically healthy relationship-characterizing or -furthering activity.

5.3.4 Universalization and the Unaffiliated Carer

We still may wonder how even this modest deontology can be reconciled with the impartial perspective. Here I suggest that it can be reconciled with an *unaffiliated caring* perspective.

It may be thought that the Deontology of Caring Attention, while putatively modest, still justifies ignoring the plight of the least advantaged in a world with a truly obscene amount of suffering. (Every year, hundreds of millions of people suffer from easily treatable, poverty-

¹¹⁰ So labeled in Scheffler (2001).

related illnesses and deaths, and billions of animals are killed for their flesh after brief torturous existences in factory farms. Etc.) Every last penny, hour, or ounce of advice spent on our special others might have done orders of magnitude more good put toward promoting or implementing cheap, easy, suffering-reducing solutions. From this viewpoint, adhering to PI—even (say) to buy minimal gifts for loved ones—seems to fail some of the following criteria for universal acceptability. From the point of view of those in need, perhaps PI could be (say) reasonably rejected, ruled out from the original position, or could not be willed as a universal law (not, anyway, consistently with desire that my life-jeopardizing infections be treated as more important than, say, someone’s Christmas gift).¹¹¹

Surely the appropriate perspective from which to run universalization tests is a perspective from which key, life-completing human goods are appreciated. Special relationships are life-completing in the sense that they are among the key needs of the human experience; extremely few lives seem meaningful or fulfilling without them. As such, they are incommensurable with other similarly completing aspects of our lives (e.g., health, physical and psychological; pursuit of projects or goals; achievements.) All this would be crucial knowledge for parties deliberating on rules to govern interpersonal conduct of humans. And (as for Kant’s system) the desire to obtain some sort of special connection with other humans will be part of the motivational base of most any rational human.

As argued above, it is plausible we apprehend the value of these relational goods, as well as the generic goods of human welfare, by use of our caring sentiments.¹¹² This is so crucial to universalization that it should be characterized as the adoption of a *caring* perspective. (I call it an *unaffiliated* caring perspective because asking whether PI can be universalized can be construed as asking whether we would endorse the adherence to PI of people with whom we have no affiliation.) The unaffiliated caring perspective recognizes not just incommensurable partial goods, but *reasons* to act in ways that show caring affection. It is familiar, for example, with the feeling of owing a loved one attendance and support in a time of crisis—the greater good be damned (within limits).

¹¹¹ These tests owe, of course, to Scanlon (1999), Rawls (1971), and Kant (1785).

¹¹² Specifically, through the deployment or simulated deployment of caring emotions toward special relationships, whether in the particular or the somewhat-abstract.

From the unaffiliated caring perspective we can appreciate how other people's affiliations are incommensurably, perhaps even incomparably valuable when compared with others' welfare, and how they give rise to corresponding reasons. The caring and affiliation that engender special relationships must be tokened by individual acts. And these individual acts involve some kind of economic or temporal trade-off in a world of limited resources (whether we like it or not). So although one \$55 Christmas gift is plausibly not worth the aggregate year of healthy life that could be produced by deworming 55 children for the same amount, the maintenance and furtherance of a life-completing special relationship may be incommensurable with the hookworm-free health of a 10-year-old child—even from a completely impartial standpoint. (Consider a case where the \$55 gift *could* prevent a tragic divorce. It's not clear that the group of hookworm-infested children could reasonably demand the sacrifice.) At any rate, we should think we are at least permitted to occasionally commemorate our special others' importance to us, even if it is at some cost to the greater good.¹¹³

5.3.5 Consequentialism?

Any modest deontology will seem to border on consequentialism in virtue of its modesty. The view just expressed may remind some readers of 'sophisticated' forms of consequentialism which are 'psychologically indirect' in recommending that people develop the disposition to respond to apparent reasons of partiality because such a disposition turns out to conduce to the greater good (cf. Railton 1984). In contrast to such views, I can emphasize that the Deontology of Caring Attention does not recommend certain motives for the sake of promoting the general welfare; rather, it posits constraints against impartial good maximization: we owe our special others caring attention even if we could otherwise contribute to several other people showing parallel caring attention to their special others, and even if paying them caring attention prevents us from achieving a fairly impressively greater good. In order to make the view part of a sophisticated consequentialism, the (questionable) premise would have to be supplied that becoming disposed to respond to apparent reasons of partiality will be conducive to the greater

¹¹³ One crucial question I do not have room here to address is what reasons we have [not] to *come to* have special others. Having (e.g.) a spouse or a child can impede production of impartial good. There may be room for a somewhat parallel argument—*coming to* have a special relationship is a life-completing good incommensurable with the healths of the people I could help by ignoring chances at such relationships, and which thus would be universally endorsed from an unaffiliated caring perspective. But this would also seem to depend on the success of arguments that it is permissible to pursue (some) intrinsically life-enhancing personal projects over impartial needs. For such an argument, see Cullity (2006).

good. Because it is not clear whether that claim is true, I leave it open (despite my doubts) that responding to reasons of partiality might be compatible with a sophisticated, thoroughly consequentialist moral commitment solely to maximizing the good impartially construed. In any case, it should be clear that the modesty of the Deontology of Caring Attention makes it compatible with the view that we are required to *substantially* (though not always) further the impartial good.

Another tempting position might be that special v-a experiences are not discoveries of *reasons* of partiality but of extreme *values* that special relationships hold (thus, ‘value-apprehensional’ would turn out *not* to be a misleading label!). That is, one could insist on “consequentializing” the Deontology, i.e., insisting the posited deontological considerations are relevant to determining a proper ranking of outcomes (Portmore 2007). (Applied to the previous example, the thought would be that a group of 55 hookworm-infested children could not reasonably demand that someone sacrifice their ordinary marriage because the marriage truly is more *valuable* than 1100 collective years of hookworm infestation.) Perhaps that project could work; but it would seem difficult to successfully translate the value of special relationships and their aspects onto a single-scale outcome ranking, to accommodate the agent-relativity of the demands our special cares discover, and to justify the claim in particular cases (it seems more plausible that the marriage is less important than 1100 years of hookworm infestation, but even so my spouse’s welfare makes certain moral demands on my attentions because she is mine and I am hers). In any case, perhaps any deontology could be consequentialized, and this particular brand does not seem more threatened by it than any other.

5.4 Objections

5.4.1 Evolutionary Debunking

Evolutionary debunking arguments represent one important objection to the Deontology of Caring Attention. They run as follows. We are inclined to have certain moral beliefs—such as PI—simply because being disposed to believe such things made our ancestors more likely to pass on their genes. But it would be a highly unlikely coincidence, the argument continues, for this disposition to also conduce to the detection of objective moral truths. So PI is probably not an objective moral truth.

This argument is most often run against all putative moral truths (Joyce 2006, Street 2006), and in that application would debunk SI as well as PI. Here we cannot consider responses to the global evolutionary debunking arguments (although I think good responses are available¹¹⁴). However (as we noted in a different context last chapter), some authors have contended that, while PI is a paradigmatic case of a debunkable intuition, abstract intuitions such as SI escape the debunking arguments unscathed.¹¹⁵ Being inclined to favor special others such as kin or allies was plausibly a selective trait. By contrast, the ability to grasp so general a truth as SI may be due to the capacity to reason. And some think the capacity to reason *would* tend to increase our reproductive success, since, after all, it involves “the ability to recognize and reject capricious or arbitrary grounds for drawing distinctions and to understand self-evident moral truths” (Singer & Lazari-Radek 2012, p. 16).

Unfortunately, it is just not clear that SI is a truth entirely discovered by the kind of ratiocinative reflection that is impervious to the debunking argument—any more than that PI is. It’s not clear why the following couldn’t be true:

SI* from the point view of the universe (so to speak), the fact that someone is (called) the king simply makes it true that his good is more important than everyone else’s.

This truth’s possibility shows that SI is not only not a necessary truth, but also that we should look for an explanation of why we tend to affirm SI rather than SI* (or any other competitor).

It’s puzzling what would explain SI’s appeal if *not* our awareness of our tendency to apprehend people’s value in virtue of certain qualities (sentience, planning agency, etc.). This tendency, we’ve argued, is mediated by caring sentiments. In turn, our having these has an evolutionary explanation, which might then factor into a debunking argument for SI. Whether or not the debunking argument succeeds, caring seems to play an important role in our apprehension even of a rule as abstract as SI.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Some apt responses to Joyce include Finlay (2008, 2011) and Tresan (2010).

¹¹⁵ Singer 2005, Huemer 2008, Singer & Lazari-Radek 2012.

¹¹⁶ It is also plausible that our capacity to care about others might be responsible for our very understanding that others have goods at all, or that something like ‘the point of view of the universe’ is more relevant to morality than any other arbitrary perspective—say, ‘the point of view of my buddies and I when we’re drinking whiskey’.

Our apprehension of PI seems to involve a similar admixture of ratiocination and sentimentality. Caring sentiments surely guide us in interpreting which special others are owed what when, but it takes a great deal of extrapolative reflection to recognize that, in general, we owe special others the caring attention for which they have a deep-seated human need, and that this amounts to a general duty. (Never mind that it has been passed down to many of us through lay moral codes; so, too, has the insight that no one matters more than anyone else.)

So it looks like PI stands and falls with SI in response to debunking arguments. If reasons of partiality get debunked, then so do impartial reasons. Much more can be said, but the foregoing comments should offer the seeds for a fuller discussion.

5.4.2 Partiality versus Biases

Ch. 4 began with the admission that caring sentiments admit of numerous problematic biases which distort the moral dimensions of the world. Yet in this chapter I have defended v-a experiences colored by partiality as v-a experiences *par excellence*. How can I justify such a slanted attitude?

In short, partiality is essential to human caring, whereas the other biases—shifts in moral judgment due to conspicuousness, similarity, familiarity, and flux in attribution of moral status—are far from it. We argued above (§5.2.3) that the cares for special others which generate special v-a experiences are [i] consistent across times and circumstances, [ii] usually coherent in their onset and precise in their extent, and [iii] compelling and clear in their personal importance, even to the extent that they [iv] shape our whole lives by intertwining our interests with those of our special others.

By contrast, the Ch. 4 biases have very few of these features. Consider the tendency for distance to bias intuitions about the duty to help. This intuitive pattern does not hold up ([i]) when we consider enough pairs of cases between which the only relevant variable is physical distance; the boundaries of initially intuitively relevant distance are imprecise ([ii]) and incoherent ([iii]), and aren't revelatory of value in any context ([iv]). Similarly, the tendency of our empathy and momentary sympathy with people to be influenced by personal dislike or status as enemy or foreigner breaks down when we consider the simple scenario in which we are not opposed to them. And while similarity and familiarity are often contributors to special relationships, they are a long way off. We must not conflate similarity or familiarity with the robust intertwining of interests—where we attach to and orient toward and identify with the

other—that characterizes a special relationship and allows us to see reasons of partiality some of which stem from peculiar needs.

5.5 Conclusion

The Individuals View of reasons of partiality says that the basis for reasons of partiality is our individual special others themselves. Reasons and values of partiality are not derivable from anything and are normative entities which we must simply ‘see’. Our Caring Account has helped make sense of this, suggesting that our apprehension of these reasons and values, via caring sentiments, is no more peculiar than our apprehension of more generic welfare-related values or reasons. In both cases, caring emotions alert us to how the other is faring in a way that makes vivid to us their intrinsic value. In special v-a experiences, one comes to realize how much we ourselves matter to and for the special other, just as he or she matters to and for oneself. It is through special relationships that we get a far more intense glimpse into the incommensurable value that everyone possesses. By attending to this value, we see that it makes demands of us: demands for a responsive, fitting attitude of expressed caring attention.

Thus the Caring Account straightforwardly implies a deontological constraint according to which we are *pro tanto* required to pay caring attention to our special others. This constraint is modest in that it can be reconciled with stringent duties to promote the welfare of anyone who most needs welfare promoted. The viewpoint from which this deontology is thus reconciled is best understood as the perspective of an unaffiliated carer: someone who is unaffiliated with any of a situation’s protagonists, but who does in general apprehend and comprehend the reasons and values that all carers ‘just see’.

The arguments of this dissertation have sought to establish that value-apprehension experiences are revelatory of value both in the general case of our experiences of anyone, and in the special case in which we have a reciprocal or intense bond of mutual care or interaction. The key move was to embrace the important and apparently essential epistemic role caring emotions play in enabling, mediating, and improving our experience of the value of other individuals. Given this framework, it is reasonable to conclude that consultation of caring-driven moral intuitions is a crucial aspect of any reliable moral reasoning strategy.

APPENDIX A

TWO- AND FOUR-FACTOR MODELS OF PSYCHOPATHY

Table A.1: Two- and four-factor models of psychopathy. Adapted from Hare and Neumann (2005, Figure 4.2, p. 77).

Item	Original Two-factor model	Hare's (2003) Four-factor model
1 Glibness/superficial charm	1: Interpersonal/Affective	1: Interpersonal
2 Grandiose sense of self-worth	1	1
3 Need for stimulation	2: Social Deviance	3: Lifestyle
4 Pathological lying	1	1
5 Conning/manipulative	1	1
6 Lack of remorse or guilt	1	2: Affective
7 Shallow affect	1	2
8 Callous/lack of empathy	1	2
9 Parasitic lifestyle	2	3
10 Poor behavioral controls	2	4: Antisocial
11 Promiscuous sexual behavior	–	–
12 Early behavioral problems	2	4
13 Lack of realistic, long-term goals	2	3
14 Impulsivity	2	3
15 Irresponsibility	2	3
16 Failure to accept responsibility	1	2
17 Many marital relationships	–	–
18 Juvenile delinquency	2	4
19 Revocation of conditional release	2	4
20 Criminal versatility	–	4

Two-factor model: Factor 1: Interpersonal/Affective; Factor 2: Social Deviance

Four-factor model: Factor 1: Interpersonal; Factor 2: Affective; Factor 3: Lifestyle; Factor 4: Antisocial

APPENDIX B

THREE MORE NOTIONS OF MORAL UNDERSTANDING

In the main text, we discussed the notion (1) of *detection* of values, reasons, norms, and their subvening ‘bits’, as well as (2) *apprehension* of the significance of those considerations and (3) *system-comprehension* of how normative entities fit together. For readers interested in further notions of moral understanding, here is an exposition of three.

(4) *Fluency*. Another sense of ‘understanding’ applies to how we understand *meanings* and *concepts*. Certainly important here is system-comprehension of symbols, mutual relations among symbols and the expressions they together form, and the symbols’ and expressions’ relations to what they represent. But there is another sense of ‘grasping’ which we typically refer to as *fluency*. (Hence the sense of ‘Spence understands French’.) Roughly, fluency with language input (i.e., listening and reading) seems to be a matter of how efficiently one can detect, apprehend, and system-comprehend the relations among linguistic symbols, expressions, and the content they represent. Correspondingly, fluency with language output (i.e., speech and writing) seems to be a matter of how efficiently one can produce symbols and expressions in a way that displays linguistic system-comprehension, as well as particular apprehensions and detections of where expressions fit. The efficiency involved in fluency can be measured in various dimensions, both for output and input. The dimensions include: speed, accuracy, smoothness or unbrokenness, and comprehensiveness (i.e., facility with more or less of a lexicon).

Certainly people can have fluency with normative concepts as well. Consider moral fluency, following the analogy to linguistic fluency as just characterized. One is fluent with moral input (AKA ‘moral perception’) to the extent that one can efficiently detect, apprehend, and system-comprehend the relations among moral norms, values, reasons, etc. One is fluent with moral output (AKA ‘moral judgment’) to the extent that one can efficiently cite moral norms, values, reasons in a way that displays system-comprehension of morality, as well as particular apprehensions and detections of where citing such considerations is appropriate when giving a moral argument. Again, efficiency can be measured along several dimensions, including: speed, accuracy, smoothness or unbrokenness in moral perception and judgment, and comprehensiveness (i.e., facility with more or less of the subject-matter(s) of morality).

There seems to be little experimental evidence testifying about psychopaths' moral fluency, since it is a complicated and underexplored construct. But it would be unsurprising if psychopaths' moral fluency should turn out to be impaired.

(5) *Appreciation*. Also interesting is the complex phenomenon of understanding or 'getting' certain *products of human activity* such as jokes, works of art, or songs. One aspect of this is the rather emotional one of finding (or competently failing to find) the piece amusing or entertaining or beautiful. This sense of 'grasping' could be labeled appreciation. Of course, there are other levels to aesthetic understanding, and these plausibly enhance our appreciation. One way is to attain a system-comprehension of the factors that make a joke funny, painting beautiful, or song moving—how the parts contribute to the effect, and how the effect would have been altered by an alternative organization. It also helps one's appreciation to become more fluent at both experiencing and making pieces in the medium in question. Indeed, practice will enhance one's fluency with clearly & distinctly detecting and apprehending the very parts that comprise the piece. And coming to sympathetically understand relevant others—the artist, audience, the artist's acquaintances, or people the piece is about—will help enhance appreciation as well.

This seems roughly analogous to the "appreciation of moral beauty" which people exhibit when they come to learn about someone's virtue (Jonathan Haidt (2003) calls this "moral elevation"). Perhaps this is merely a form of apprehension. That is, appreciation might be a matter of apprehending properties that are response-dependent in the sense that perceiving them cannot be merely a matter of perceiving spatiotemporal relations between entities, but rather is a matter of perceiving features which make certain attitudinal responses appropriate and/or expected from observers. This would be analogous to seeing a face as beautiful (construed as warranting some sort of admiration), but disanalogous to seeing a face as frowning (which it turns out is reducible to certain spatiotemporal patterns).

(6) *Mind-grasping*. When we understand the *motives* or *motivating reasons* behind people's actions (and other similar attitudes), this seems largely to be a matter of approving their decision or inclination, agreeing that those attitudes are appropriate or 'understandable' (and in this minimal sense identifying with them). Minimally, it seems one would need an ability to form representations of another's mental states—'mindreading'. After forming such a representation, one then 'grasps' or the other's mental state deems it appropriate (or finds that it would be

appropriate given certain assumptions, or alternatively finds the attitude inexplicable and not understandable). The best term for this sort of ‘grasping’ might be sympathetic (mind-)grasping. Through mindreading capacities there can emerge a fluent system-comprehension of organismic behavior and motivations, with respect to both particular organisms and typical organisms of a certain type. Particular individuals’ actions and attitudes can be assessed accordingly: e.g., it’s understandable for E.T. to be homesick so far from home. Additionally, for adults with accomplished abilities at taking another’s perspective, they can thoroughly simulate the other’s motives and inclinations and thus understand and assess the other’s actions and attitudes on a more vivid and intimate level. This we can call (mind-)grasping by perspective-taking. Psychopaths’ theory of mind along these dimensions is usually thought to be unimpaired.

APPENDIX C

EMPATHY AND RELATED CONCEPTS

Table B.1 : Empathy and related concepts

Batson (2011)	Coplan (2011)	fitting names for each	construct #
<i>Non-affective feats</i>			
		mind attribution: (usu. quick, automatic) assessment of the sort of mental capacities a thing or creature has, sometimes accompanied by an initial assessment of the value of that mind.	#0
1) Knowing another person's internal state, including his or her thoughts and feelings.	(F) Making inferences about another's mental states	mindreading [may have affective upshots, especially where the mindreading leads to imitation, but is not necessarily affective]	#1
2) [i] Adopting the posture or matching the [ii] neural responses of an observed other.		[i]: motor mimicry [ii]: neural mimicry [may have affective upshots, but is not necessarily affective]	#2
<i>Motor-cum-affective feats</i>			
		motor-affective scene-simulation: imagining the outcome of a certain scenario and reacting with a motor-cum-affective reflex. (E.g., cringing fearfully when seeing a spider dropped on the belly of a spider lover.)	#3

Table B.1, continued

Batson (2011)	Coplan (2011)	fitting names for each	construct #
<i>Cognitive-cum-affective feats (“Cognitive Empathy”)</i>			
4) Imaginatively projecting oneself into another’s situation. [imagining what it’s like to experience what the other is experiencing]	≈ (E) Imagining being another in that other’s situation	imagining what it’s like	#4
5) Imagining how another is thinking and feeling.		“imagine-other” perspective-taking	#5
6) Imagining how one would think and feel in the other’s place.	(D) Imagining oneself in another’s situation	“imagine-self” perspective-taking	#6
	(C) Being emotionally affected by someone else’s emotions and experiences, though not necessarily experiencing the same emotions	[fits many of the above descriptions]	
		identification with another: something like combining one of (#4)-(#6) with [i] the belief or observation that one shares certain important properties with the other, and/or [ii] feeling affection for or attachment to the other.	#7

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jay Quigley was raised in Tennessee and Iowa. He earned a B.A. in philosophy and religion from Truman State University in 2007 and an M.A. in philosophy in 2009 from Florida State University. While at FSU he pursued his interests in ethics, epistemology, and the philosophy of emotions, especially through his doctoral dissertation, and published a paper on moral psychology in the journal *Utilitas*. During his time at FSU he also pursued his interests in practical ethics by teaching three courses in ethics and political philosophy, coaching the undergraduate Ethics Bowl team for three seasons, co-founding Students for Ending Poverty (STEP) in 2013, and initiating an outreach wing of the FSU Ethical Food Association in 2014. He frequently presents in community forums on ethical issues pertaining to global poverty and animal welfare.