

# Introduction

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The place of emotions in morality is the subject of widespread and divisive philosophical controversies. This is hardly a peculiarity of present debates; as the history of moral philosophy shows, the relation between morality and the emotions has always been problematic. On the one hand, emotions are more often names of vices rather than virtues, as in the case of envy, or jealousy. When they are not regarded as vices in themselves, emotions are taken to represent a pervasive and persistent source of obstacles to morality, as in the case of self-love. Some virtues, such as prudence, temperance, and fortitude require or simply consist in the capacity to counteract the disruptive effect of emotions. The basic worry is that emotions interfere with the deliverances of reason, and often provide motives that are in competition with morality. A more radical worry is that emotions undermine our status of rational agents insofar as we are not in control of them, but we are possessed by them. Emotions undermine autonomy, which is a requirement for rational agency.

On the other hand, venerable traditions of thought place emotions such as respect, love, and compassion at the very heart of morality. Many ethical theories take emotions to ground general duties toward humanity as well as special obligations that arise out of personal relations such as friendship, cultural kinship, or family ties. Emotions such as love and compassion are perceptions of the value of others. More generally emotions seem to play a distinctive role in practical reasoning, by supplying motives and reasons for action. Emotions such as blame, guilt, and shame speak the voice of moral conscience. Such emotions are recognizably central to the functioning of morality as a general normative practice. They serve as sanctions against moral transgression and provide incentives to abide by moral norms. These emotions constitute the very 'stuff of moral life', and are intrinsically connected to our identity and character. To discount them would be to ignore important aspects of how morality relates to our humanity.

It seems that a plausible account of the place of emotions in morality should start by recognizing their diversity. Arguably, this is to be expected, since the term 'emotions'

may not indicate a homogeneous category of states but group disparate phenomena.<sup>1</sup> To be fruitful, the exploration of the diversity of emotions should proceed from two complementary perspectives. First, it should be considered from the point of view of theories about what emotions are and what place they hold in the topography of the mind. Second, it should be investigated from the point of view of ethical theories, which propose the normative standards for moral assessment and specify the conditions under which emotions contribute to morality.

This volume is born out of the conviction that philosophy provides a distinctive approach to the cluster of problems about the emotions and their relation to morality. The task of this Introduction is to motivate this conviction by highlighting some aspects of the novelties and peculiarities that characterize current debates.

## 1. The Retrieval of Emotions in Moral Philosophy

### 1.1 *Bernard Williams' diagnosis of the neglect of emotions*

In his seminal essay 'Morality and the Emotions', Bernard Williams complains that contemporary moral philosophy does not make room for emotions 'except perhaps for recognizing them in one of their traditional roles as possible motives to backsliding, and thus as potentially destructive of moral rationality and consistency' (Williams (1966/1973): 207). At the time Williams writes, there are already some important albeit isolated attempts to investigate 'emotions' as an autonomous category, distinct from 'desires' and 'beliefs'. For instance, Edward Bedford (1957) and Anthony Kenny (1963) recognize the role of emotions in the explanation of action, and consider their relation to the will and to reason. But Williams is right that, by and large, post-war analytic moral philosophers discount the role of emotions in moral life and deny that they could be sources of moral knowledge. According to Williams, the neglect of emotions depends on three main factors: a simplistic view of emotions as blind causes for action, a legalistic conception of moral rationality associated with Kantian ethics, and a correspondingly simplified view of moral language as prescriptive or expressive.

In the last three decades, the emotions have become one of the main *foci* of philosophical attention, and it is useful to reconsider Williams' assessment. Is this resurgence of interest in the emotions a sign that the causes that Williams identified as the reasons for neglect have been removed? Or was Williams' diagnosis partial, or mistaken?

An interesting aspect of Williams' diagnosis is that it considers the relation of the emotions to morality from a double perspective, which combines a view about the ontology of emotions and their place and role in the topography of the mind, with a

<sup>1</sup> The claim that emotions are a homogeneous category may seem to commit to the stronger claim that they represent a natural kind, cf. Griffith (1997), Panksepp (2000). However, supporters of the unity of emotions do not generally defend emotions as a natural kind.

view about morality, its language, scope, and function. Williams' own work has contributed in a large measure to making room for emotions in practical reasoning and restoring them to their central place in morality. However, several other factors lie behind the dramatic changes in the philosophical attitude toward emotions that we are witnessing. The purpose of section 1 is to account for the circumstances of such changes and highlight their philosophical implications.

### *1.2 One step back: Iris Murdoch and the demand for moral psychology*

Williams' dissatisfaction with a style of ethical theorizing that ignores moral psychology becomes widely shared in the 1980s. His words echo those of isolated but prominent figures of post-war analytic philosophy. The first astounding thesis of G.E.M. Anscombe's article 'Modern Moral Philosophy' is that moral philosophy should be set aside, because it is not profitable to do it without an adequate philosophy of psychology (Anscombe (1958); cf. Thompson (2008): 5–7). Starting from a similar analysis, Iris Murdoch makes the 'inner moral life', and particularly the emotions, the center of her moral philosophy (Murdoch (1956, 1957, 1970)). It is mainly thanks to her efforts that moral psychology becomes a firm point in the agenda of analytic philosophy.

In her early essays, Murdoch argues that this narrow view of the scope of ethics has very specific roots. She identifies logical positivism as the main cause of the disinterest in the 'life of the mind' that characterizes post-war analytic ethical theory. Logical positivism considered the mind elusive and favored an ethical theory that dispenses with any hypotheses about human nature and the mind (Murdoch (1956): 34; cf. also (1957, 1970)). For fear of metaphysics, analytic moral philosophy discarded both metaphysical concepts and psychological concepts alike, so that the idea of 'action' was reduced to outward performance, 'without any transcendent background' (Murdoch (1957): 105).

These critical remarks about analytic ethics are condensed in her more famous *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), which argues in favor of moral psychology and attempts to refocus the philosophical debates on the exploration of moral life. The negative part of her argument targets the existentialist and behaviorist approaches to ethics, which account for action as an outward performance. Following this model, moral philosophers set out to treat morality independently of any moral psychology or philosophy of mind, and they see their philosophical mission as that of providing norms for the performance of rational actions. Kantian ethics is elected as the best candidate for carrying out this alleged task of moral philosophy. Murdoch's critique of Kantian ethics must sound uncharitable to the reader familiar with existentialism, and with current Kantian action theory, for reasons that I will present in section 1.5 (Moran (2002, 2011)). However, Murdoch's actual polemical targets are Richard M. Hare and Stuart Hampshire as the representatives of Kantian ethics. She pairs their (allegedly Kantian) conception of rational agency as performance with a view of moral language as emotive, prescriptive, or persuasive (Murdoch (1957): 102–5). This view of moral language is appealing because of its simplicity. Murdoch's objection is that simplicity is

the trade-off for a depleted moral vocabulary that lacks crucial moral-psychological concepts such as virtue, will, and the emotions. Without these concepts moral philosophy misses the philosophical resources for exploring our moral experience. It becomes incapable of recognizing the nuances and varieties of moral life, and thus it becomes impractical (Antonaccio (2001), Lear (2004), Moran (2011), Bagnoli (2011)).

Murdoch's polemic against the limitations and 'philosophical blindness' of this account of concepts has inspired more sophisticated views of moral language and concepts (Putnam (2004): 144 n. 6, Williams (1985, 1995), McDowell (1985), Diamond (1988)).<sup>2</sup> But for present purposes we should focus on her positive argument for moral psychology. The call for moral psychology is presented as a demand on moral philosophers. Moral philosophy should account for how moral consciousness can be 'oriented toward the good', and it is in this context that emotions become a matter of interest for moral philosophy. Emotions are recognized as modes of moral awareness (Antonaccio (2001), Bagnoli (2011)). The point I am pressing is that the call for a new moral psychology is what explains the resurgence of interests in the emotions within moral theory. When we consider the poverty of the analytic models of morality, the contrast with ancient philosophy is obviously striking. Not surprisingly, then, philosophers turn to Plato and Aristotle to overcome the problem that Murdoch identifies. The development of moral philosophy in the 1980s is marked by the attempt to respond to this quest for moral psychology by revisiting traditions of thought that have a place for emotions.

### *1.3 Aristotelian themes: emotions and practical reason*

Murdoch's view inspires the pioneering works in moral psychology of the 1980s and 1990s, such as those by Amélie O. Rorty (1980a), Martha C. Nussbaum (1986, 1990, 2001), Lawrence Blum (1980, 1986, 1991), and Owen Flanagan (1991). Thanks to the seminal work of Rorty (Rorty 1980b) and of Nussbaum (1986), the retrieval of the emotions has partly coincided with a revival of Aristotelian ethics, which has had the extraordinary effect of refocusing debates in moral philosophy on the role of emotions in rational deliberation, character, and moral consciousness.

The merits and promise of Aristotelian ethics should be apparent from two perspectives concerning practical reason and the nature of emotions respectively. First, Aristotle's ethics centers on practical reason and conceives of the excellences of character as chiefly contributing to the flourishing life.<sup>3</sup> The Aristotelian approach to emotions supports

<sup>2</sup> Murdoch's legacy expands through feminism, communitarianism, and particularism, as critiques of rationalist and liberal ethical theory; see Antonaccio (2001), Blum (1991): 3; cf. Ruddick (1980).

<sup>3</sup> It is often argued that the concerns about emotional responsiveness and moral consciousness are best vindicated by 'virtue ethics'. The category itself is dubious, since it incorrectly suggests that the concept of virtue does not have a place in Utilitarian and Kantian ethics; see Nussbaum (1999). However, its presence in the contemporary taxonomy of ethical theory shows that moral philosophy has made at least some progress toward vindicating Murdoch's main concerns for moral life. I would venture to suggest that the category of virtue ethics has little unity, and perhaps it has lost taxonomical utility, exactly because the concept of virtue has become so widely recognized as vital to any account of morality.

the claim that moral cognitions result from the appropriate habituation of the emotions, which is the primary task of moral education. Moral education consists in shaping and orienting the emotions toward goals and ends that are choice-worthy. This coincides with the development of a second nature (McDowell (1995), Stark (2001, 2004), Korsgaard (2009): 19).<sup>4</sup>

Second, and as a consequence, the Aristotelian approach made the controversy about the criteria for assessing the rationality and appropriateness of emotions central to the debates in moral psychology. Since it aims at building a character in which emotions are aligned with reason, this ethical view takes it that the emotions can be habituated because they are responsive to judgment. The distinctive appeal of the Aristotelian approach to the emotions best emerges in the contrast with the ‘simple view of emotions’, which takes them as ‘blind causes’, belonging to the category of feelings or sensations, explained by physiological conditions and subjectively experienced as having distinctive qualities (de Sousa (2010b): §2). This rival view of emotions is a major obstacle to recognizing a place for emotions in morality, since it denies that they are educable according to the standards of reason and apt for rational assessment. In its crudest form, which reduces them to sensations, this view treats emotions as involuntary states, before which we are helpless, and hence as a threat to moral and rational agency.

It is no surprise that in order to restore emotions to a central position in morality, philosophers have typically focused on their cognitive cores. Thus the revival of emotions as a topic of philosophical inquiry in the 1980s took the form of a defense of cognitivism. The thesis that emotions are intentional, and importantly linked to the will and practical reason, is already present, although not prominent, in post-war analytic philosophy (Bedford (1957), Kenny (1963)). The canonical objection to the simple view is that it does not account for the differences among emotions, since not all of them can be reduced to sensations or identified by their associated bodily changes.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the phenomenology of deliberation shows that we are not completely helpless in the face of emotions. Some arguments appeal to traditions of thought that judge agents by the sort of emotional responses that they exhibit. If emotions were mere sensations, we would not be able to explain the widespread moral practices of praising and blaming people for their emotions.

The renewed interest in Aristotle’s ethics generates a radical form of cognitivism, which takes emotions as equivalent to judgments. On this view, emotions have cognitive cores and intentional contents, and therefore function as affective appraisals (Solomon (1980, 1984, 2003), Nussbaum (1990, 2001)). For some philosophers, this

<sup>4</sup> On this view, moral education amounts to the development of a ‘second nature’. This is to say that the sort of ‘naturalism’ that is peculiar of Aristotelian ethics importantly differs from empiricist sorts of naturalism; see McDowell (1995), Foot (2001), Annas (2005), and Thompson (2008).

<sup>5</sup> These obvious defects are mitigated in more sophisticated versions of this view, which take emotions to be somatic markers; see Damasio (1994). However, critics object that even in the most sophisticated versions, the view is still too simple to account for the complexity and subtlety of our emotional moral life.

cognitive core is the basis for assessing their relation to the will and to reason (Wallace (1994)). A more moderate cognitivist thesis proposes that emotions are non-cognitive appraisals—rough-and-ready automatic assessments of salient features of the environment (Robinson (2005): chs 1–3).<sup>6</sup> The preoccupation with making the emotional life intelligible has led philosophers such as Amélie Rorty to identify the target, focus, or propositional objects of emotions as the key way to recognize their varieties (Rorty (1980a, 1987, 1998a, 1998b)). Rorty's efforts to rehabilitate emotions are in many important respects connected to Murdoch's and Williams' polemics about the pretenses of ethical theory (Rorty (1988)). Her view is that emotions play an important epistemic role: they allow agents to frame and understand the deliberative situation by highlighting the aspects of salience. They are, in this sense, modes of valuing and of perceiving something as relevant by directing the agent's attention toward specific aspects of the situation. According to Rorty, emotions have a narrative structure and are crucial for the development and exercise of critical thinking. The narrative structure of our moral sensibility is socially formed. This means that the categories pertaining to practical rationality are psychological as well as moral and political (Rorty (1988): 295–7, Rorty (1998a, 1998b)). As a consequence, the intelligibility of emotions has both political and moral dimensions (Rorty (1998a, 1998b), Solomon (2003): ch. 9).<sup>7</sup>

In more recent debates, cognitivism has been criticized as implying an over-intellectualized view of emotions (Greenspan (1981), Deigh (1994), Pugmire (1998), Pugmire (2005): 14, Goldie (2001): 3). Some express reservations about the cognitivist view that emotions are fully or necessarily intentional; others doubt that the cognitivist view conforms to common sense (Carr (2009)), or they simply deny that emotions involve judgments (Peacocke (2004): 252–65). The critique of cognitivism is not always directed at objecting that emotions deserve a place within morality. Rather, the point of critics is often that the evaluative and moral importance of emotions depends on their affectivity, that is, on their being feelings (Greenspan (1981, 1988, 1995), Deigh (1994), Stocker (1996): 54–5). Thus, the standards of emotional rationality should not be reduced to the standards of rationality for beliefs and desires (de Sousa (1987), Ben-Ze'v (2000), Goldie (2001), Helm (2001)).

Finally, a distinct and promising approach, which originates in these debates, denies that we can distinguish between conative and cognitive cores. It proposes that we treat emotions as states that affectively perceive their intentional objects as falling under 'thick affective concepts' which cannot be analyzed into separate affective and cognitive independent components (Zagzebski (2003); cf. Goldie (2001, 2004)). This view importantly resonates with Murdoch's and Williams' arguments against the non-cognitivist semantic analysis of moral concepts, which mechanically separates descrip-

<sup>6</sup> Some use the term 'cognitive core' in a broader sense, to refer to any state that has representational content.

<sup>7</sup> Similarly, de Sousa construes the intelligibility of emotions in terms of paradigm scenarios, where biological and cultural criteria dictate their criteria of rationality and appropriateness; see de Sousa (1987).

tive and expressive semantic components (Murdoch (1970), Williams (1966), Wiggins (1987a, 1987b), McDowell (1985)).

In order to accommodate the claim that moral emotions are perceptions of value or modes of moral discernment, philosophers face two tasks. On the one hand, there is pressure to offer an account of the ontological status of moral properties that emotions are supposed to discern. On the other hand, we need to make sense of the claim that emotions are conative and drive agents to action. Sensibility theories are designed to respond to each of these concerns. They suggest that moral properties are perceptions of properties whose ontological status depends on our own emotional response. The recognition of the evaluative role of the emotions is traditionally cast in terms of the perceptual model. On this model, emotional experiences are taken to represent evaluative properties, in much the same way as perceptual experiences represent non-evaluative properties. For instance, in analogy with colors, John McDowell argues that values are response-dependent concepts and insists that our sensibility responds to genuine properties in the world (McDowell (1985); cf. Helm (2001)).

While it remains highly controversial whether the criteria of appropriateness of moral emotions should focus on the cognitive or conative and affective cores, the Aristotelian approach represents a prominent option in this debate. It centers on the interplay between reason and the emotions, and thus proposes a distinctive conception of ‘practical reason’. To this extent, the Aristotelian view of emotions is also opposed to some other sentimentalist views that take reason to be inert and separate from our affective and emotional life. I now turn to such views.

#### *1.4 Humean themes: emotions and motivation*

Williams’ critique of Kantian ethics has brought back to life another tradition of thought that makes morality the province of the emotions, which dates back to eighteenth-century moral sentimentalists. Broadly speaking, sentimentalism is the view that moral evaluation should be understood in terms of human emotional response. Lord Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and Adam Smith all make the claim that sentiments are the source of moral judgment and the drive for moral conduct. Some admit a special ‘moral sense’, in analogy with the five senses (Slote (2006): 219–26). Contemporary sentimentalism appeals to this venerable tradition and often deploys the analogies between values and colors, even though it makes no use of the obscure claim about a special moral sense (Baier (1985), Mackie (1977), Blackburn (1985); cf. Skorupski (2010a)).

The retrieval of Hume’s theory points toward a way of investigating the role of emotions in morality, which turns out to be a significant alternative to the Aristotelian approach (Baier (1985, 1991, 2010b)). The interest of Humean theorists in the emotions lies especially in the investigation of moral motivation. Humean theories deny that reason directly motivates us, and thus deny that there is anything like ‘practical reason’. In respect to the capacity to motivate, emotions are more similar to desires than to beliefs. Humean accounts of emotions thus tend to insist on the conative cores of

emotions, directed to objects or states of affairs (Zemach (2001)). This feature puts the Humean view in radical contrast to the Aristotelian view of emotions as modes of moral discernment, and to the cognitivist view of emotions, which insists on their cognitive cores.

Unlike rationalist value theories and straightforward cognitivist accounts of emotions, neo-sentimentalists argue that ‘something akin to the aesthetic is a central part of the ethical life of a rational animal. The affective disclosure of value is the beginning of our ethical life’ (Johnston (2001): 183). But neo-sentimentalism comes in different versions. Some appeal to the Humean picture of the emotions as elaborations of affective desire in the light of the subjects’ beliefs about their relation to the appealing and the repellent (Wollheim (1999), Johnston (2001), Abramson (2010)).<sup>8</sup>

Critics of post-war analytic moral philosophy pointed out that a simplistic view of emotions is paired with an impoverished account of moral language. We should then expect that the changes in the account of emotions documented in sections 1.3–1.4 should have a correlate in meta-ethics. Simon Blackburn provides the paradigmatic example. He recognizes the challenge of adequately dealing with moral phenomenology (1985, 1988, 1998). In contrast to McDowell, he deploys the analogy with perception to argue that values are projected onto the world, rather than being original parts of its fabric. In contrast to Mackie, Blackburn insists that projectivism does not entail that we are systematically mistaken about the nature of value, because ‘the way in which we gild or stain the world with the colors borrowed from internal sentiment gives our creation its own life, and its own dependence on facts’ (Blackburn (1984): 219). Projectivism supports a quasi-realist view of moral judgments: it shows the mechanism by which moral discourse acquires its right to truth without admitting a moral ontology. The surface grammar of our ordinary moral discourse appears to be realist, but moral properties are mere projections onto the fabric of the world, like colors.

Along Blackburn’s line, Allan Gibbard develops a sentimental theory where moral judgments are explicated as expressions of norms for governing the appropriateness of guilt and anger, which are taken to be natural emotions (Gibbard (1990)). Gibbard elaborates a systematic account of the logical relations among norms, and explains morality as a cooperative enterprise grounded on emotions. It might be objected that expressivist sentimentalism lacks the sort of depth and richness that Murdoch would hope and expect from an adequate meta-ethics, since it does not deal with the moral life as it is felt. But it is beyond question that its supporters made significant progress in

<sup>8</sup> By contrast, other neo-sentimentalists invoke hybrid theories that are designed to account for moral judgments as having both cognitive and conative cores; see Wiggins (1987a, 1987b), McDowell (1985): section 1.3. A variant of this position, dispositionalism, holds that the judgment that something is good is true if and only if subjects in the relevant conditions would approve of it. A third form of sentimentalism develops the model of ‘tertiary properties’, which are genuine properties but dependent on the observer. However, several other distinct traditions of thought deny that moral distinctions are grounded in reason, and propose that emotions be considered sources of moral judgments and modes of moral appraisal; cf. Brentano (1889/1969), Husserl (1988), Scheler (1913–1916), Meinong (1917).

this direction since Williams' complaint about the poverty of the meta-ethics. In particular, Gibbard produces a detailed account of the phenomena of normative governance, such as the attitudes and motives associated with being guided by a norm. This research is firmly grounded on evolutionary psychology and is mainly interested in explaining the emotional mechanisms that allow cooperative interactions to prove successful. Gibbard offers the most sustained defense of normative psychology to date.

### 1.5 *The Kantian approach to moral psychology*

To be sure, the least controversial claim in Williams' diagnosis of the neglect of the emotions in analytic moral philosophy is that Kantian rationalism is importantly responsible for it. There is a large agreement that the narrow conception of action as outward performance has roots in Kant's 'legalism'. The debate about the moral significance of emotions often takes for granted that an adequate moral psychology starts with a farewell to Kant (Rorty (1988), Oakley (1992)). As for the first claim about the neglect of emotions in the machinery of action, Kant is certainly an easy and appropriate target, because of his infamous remarks about the 'deadly sensibility' from which the moral agent ought to tear herself away (Kant (1785): 398). However, in the light of recent developments in Kantian scholarship, it is worth reconsidering the grounds of this accusation.

What matters, Kant writes, is the 'inner principles of actions that one does not see' (Kant (1785): 407/61). It is, indeed, curious that an ethics centered on the concept of intention, such as Kant's, is taken to support an ethics that reduces action to outward performance, divorced from the moral life. Murdoch might have a more plausible case against post-war Kantian ethics, but her attack on Kant seems to rest on a misunderstanding of Kant's account of rational choice and agency (Reath (1980), Bagnoli (2003, 2009), Wuerth (2011)). For Kant, the outward performance of an act does not even qualify as the object of judgments of attributability, responsibility, or moral assessment. What is indicative of the moral worth of an action is the intention that motivates the agent in choosing it. The agent takes responsibility for her action by considering whether its subjective principle conforms to the requirements of practical reason. The primary (and perhaps sole) purpose of Kant's method of the categorical imperative is to test the inner moral worth of subjective maxims, not to determine dutiful actions (O'Neill (1985): 164, 182). In this respect, then, Murdoch's complaints against Kant's action theory seem misplaced.

Secondly, Kant's conception of the emotions and moral sensibility is more complex than the references to the deadly influence of inclinations suggest (Kant (1785): §1, p. 398). On the basis of some exegetical evidence (Kant (1785): §1; cf. Kant (1797b): 211–12), scholars typically attribute to Kant the simple view of emotions as 'mere feelings', which do not perceive anything external but express a relation to the subject (Sabini & Silver (1987), Korsgaard (2009): 18–19). Insofar as they are pre-cognitive, physiological reactions, emotions are involuntary phenomena that cannot play any role in Kant's account of moral value. However, Kant's later writings show a complex

taxonomy of the categories of sensibility and moral sensibility, which does not fit with this simple view of emotions (Wood (1999); Louden (2000); Borges (2004)). For instance, emotions such as sympathy and gratitude cannot be explained according to this model, because they are not completely involuntary and passive. Kant holds that they can and should be cultivated, even if there cannot be any duty to have them (Kant (1797a): 401–2, (1797b): 236). Some scholars take this to prove that for Kant we are not passive regarding such emotions, and that they play a crucial role in moral agency as well as in building moral character (Sherman (1990), Baron (1995): 197, Cagle (2005), Anderson (2007)).

Kant recognizes four fundamental ethical concepts that are grounded in our affective sensibility, namely, respect, conscience, moral feeling, and love of humanity. He places such moral feelings ‘at the ground of morality’, insofar as they make us responsive and receptive to moral duty (Kant (1797a): 399). These feelings make us feel pleasure or displeasure from the consciousness that our actions conform to moral duty (*ibid.*). Without these sensibility-based concepts, we would be ‘morally dead’, as Kant famously remarks. In particular, the moral feeling of respect is identified as the mark of rational agency, as well as the normative ground of duties to ourselves and to others (Reath (1980), Bagnoli (2003)). Scholars are divided about the status and role of these moral feelings. For some, Kant would agree with those contemporary theorists who think of emotions as subjective, non-cognitive, perceptions of unspecified bodily states, or states of the sympathetic nervous system, hence disconnected from value, character, and reason (Sabini & Silver (1987)). For others, Kant would instead accept a broader view of emotions, some of which are intentional states with propositional contents as well as feelings (Borges (2004)). In either case, it is an open question whether the Kantian account of moral sensibility has distinctive merits *vis-à-vis* other theories of emotions. But the point here is that there *is* a role for emotions to play in Kant’s ethics and action theory.

In fact, Kantian scholars identify several roles for emotions to play in Kantian ethics. Character in all its aspects, including dispositions and emotions, is inseparable from the very idea of practical reason (Sherman (1990)). Moral emotions, such as love and compassion, enable us to fulfill our moral duties (Baron (1995), Cagle (2005)). Perhaps more importantly, emotions themselves are ‘moral responses’ that determine what is morally relevant and, in some cases, what is required (Sherman (1990): 2). Emotions also play a significant role in the practice of moral judgment. To acknowledge this role, it is important to revisit the fundamental Kantian requirement that moral agents act on principles. To figure out what to do, we must adopt a method of rational deliberation that requires us to form an intention that all rational beings could endorse. An important problem for this model of rational deliberation is that moral principles do not always determine exactly and precisely what to do. One of our deliberative tasks consists in trying to figure out which principles are applicable and how. Emotions help us achieve this task by perceiving salient traits and specifying the domain of application and relevance of moral principles (Herman (1993)).

Current debates show that Kantian philosophers address and sympathetically engage with concerns about the emotions similar to those raised by Murdoch and Williams (Velleman (1999, 2006), Darwall (2006), Herman (1993, 2007), Korsgaard (2009): 16–20, 112–14). Recent reassessment of Kant’s moral psychology and action theory requires a corresponding reassessment of Kant’s legacy in current debates on emotions. What do we gain in introducing Kantian moral psychology?

To begin with, attention to new work in Kantian scholarship might cast some doubt on the widely shared assumption that sentimentalism is the only or the most hospitable theory for emotions. But the most important advantage in introducing Kantian moral psychology in the debate about emotions is that we acquire a distinctive theoretical apparatus for revisiting the dichotomy between reason and sensibility. In this respect, the Kantian conception of moral sensibility is best appreciated as a mode for specifying the domain and function of practical reason, rather than in contrast to sentimentalism. Both Aristotelians and Kantians propose that we see reason as an activity or process, and as efficacious rather than inert. Moral sensibility is directly relevant to characterizing the practical use of reason. The basic claim of these theories is that a proper understanding of moral evaluation and practical reason should include the emotions. Different conceptions of practical reason provide competing accounts of which emotions should be included and of their role (Helm (2001, 2002, 2009), Jones (2004), Velleman (2006), Korsgaard (2009): 174–230). But these conceptions share the view that questions about motivation and questions about reasons for action are inextricably woven together.

Theories that accept a sharp division between reason and sensibility, such as Humean theories, regard reason as inert and represent emotions as drives to action. But if reason is taken to have a direct, practical function, emotions should be acknowledged as playing a different and more pervasive role. In theories of practical reason, by contrast, emotions intervene in the explanation of rational action, as they supply moral motives. Moral sensibility represents the subjective conditions of receptiveness to moral duties. The contribution of emotions must be sought at the normative level of the ‘incentives’ of practical reason, the grounds for action, rather than at the motivational level of immediate drives. This suggests that we take the task of characterizing moral motivation as part of the larger project of elucidating the subjective and psychological grounds of our responsiveness to normative requirements.

To the extent that Kant’s theory of practical reason requires a specific form of moral sensibility, it responds to Murdoch’s call for moral psychology and her demand that moral theory must have a philosophical vocabulary to address the role and import of emotions. Kantian and Aristotelian traditions share not only a marked concern for practical reason, but also the conviction that an adequate treatment of moral motivation does not belong to empirical psychology because it involves a priori concepts, which belong to a ‘pure psychology’ (Nagel (1970), Thompson (2008)). Thus, in reviving those traditions of practical thought, we face the question of whether the call for moral psychology leads to the retrieval of metaphysics. This claim raises large methodological issues, which are at the heart of the controversy over the status of moral psychology.

## 2. The Emergence of the Cognitive Sciences: Some Methodological Issues

Many philosophers of the emotions share Williams' view that the little consideration ethics accords to the emotions partly depends on a simplified and unrealistic view of our psychology (Williams (1973): 235, 222–3). Such advocates of moral psychology may have thought that moral philosophy had only to gain from the encounter with an adequate empirical psychology. The invitation to leave the philosopher's armchair and meet the psychologist's team in the lab has become particularly pressing with the development of the cognitive sciences. The rise of the cognitive sciences is probably the most significant factor in the philosophy of emotions, and we should expect this factor to have an immediate impact on moral philosophy as well. However, it is not at all obvious that the cognitive sciences have helped moral philosophy to advance in the direction that Anscombe, Murdoch, or Williams had hoped. These philosophers, call for moral psychology was a demand addressed primarily to moral philosophers.

A striking fact is that the cognitive sciences have largely changed the general character of the debates about the relation of emotions to morality. As noted in the previous sections, moral philosophers have engaged in animated controversies about how to redesign the agenda of moral philosophy. By contrast, the debates that arise with the emergence of the cognitive sciences are neither confined to moral theory, nor engaged only or primarily with moral philosophy. At the center of these new debates lies a question about whether philosophy can legitimately claim the study of the mind with distinctive methods of inquiry.

### *2.1 The status of moral psychology: some methodological issues*

How to assess the philosophical relevance of the results of the cognitive sciences for the study of the emotions is a large and difficult question, which raises a host of important methodological issues. Ultimately, these methodological issues depend on how philosophy understands its own activity. Is philosophy an empirical or humanistic discipline? What are its driving concerns, criteria, and methods? With some simplification, we may identify two views on the matter.

On the one hand, there are empirically minded scholars who understand their philosophical activity as mimicking science, and treat moral psychology as part of the empirical sciences (Doris & Stich (2005, 2006), Levy (2006)). This view bears important methodological implications, since its core claim is that philosophy needs to borrow empirical methods from science, if it is to stand a chance to be fruitful as a form of inquiry. The cognitive sciences do not simply provide new grounds for philosophical argumentations; nor do they simply represent a model to which philosophy should aspire. More radically, their task is to replace philosophy as a humanistic discipline with a thoroughly empirical approach. Understood as a humanistic endeavor, philosophy is thus an obsolete enterprise, whose only achievement is to 'anticipate what the presumed scientific solutions to all metaphysical problems will eventually

look like', as Hilary Putnam puts it in the course of his polemics against scientism (Putnam (1992): X).

In contrast to this empirical approach to philosophy and psychology, others argue that both disciplines are autonomous with respect to the cognitive sciences (Williams (2000), Wallace (2005)). Of course, empirical findings may be indirectly relevant to philosophical arguments. Some kinds of philosophical argument use empirical evidence, and in such cases philosophy makes progress by taking into account evidence that was previously unavailable. For instance, empirical research may provide new evidence that undermines some philosophical arguments about the moral significance of emotions, and bolsters others. Even if they recognize that a dialogue with the empirical sciences is inevitable and rewarding, these philosophers argue that it is misleading to think of the activity of philosophy as modeled on the empirical sciences. At issue, then, is not science, but 'scientism', or the philosophical view that assimilates philosophy to science and borrows its methods (Williams (2000): 182).

Those who defend the first view, and consider the emotions and moral behavior as the objects of empirical research, typically aim at discovering the influences to which we are subject, and at identifying patterns into which our behavior falls. On this approach, there is hardly any way to distinguish moral motivation from non-moral motivation. However, some prominent traditions of practical thought, such as the Aristotelian, the Scholastic, and the Kantian traditions, define 'moral motivation' in contrast to natural influences and patterns. The contrast between 'moral' and 'natural' should not be overstated, though. Aristotelians do not deny that there is some interesting continuity between natural emotional dispositions and the excellences of character; but they also argue that in order to become good we have to shape and develop our emotional dispositions according to reason. This is the task of moral education, which produces a 'second nature'. Likewise, Kantians focus on the distinctiveness of moral motivation as opposed to non-moral motivation; but they capture such distinctiveness in terms of the requirements of practical reason. In both cases, however, morality is rooted in the distinctively human capacity for self-reflection, which introduces a significant difference in motivation, and sets us apart from other animals. As Thomas Nagel observes, 'the suggestion that there must be motivational requirements on which to base ethical requirements seems to demand a priori reasoning in motivation theory' (Nagel (1970): 5). This appeal to a priori concepts is what makes moral psychology problematic, and raises issues about the appropriate methodology for it.

More recently, Michael Thompson has pointed out that any action theory and moral psychology that take seriously Anscombe's (and Murdoch's) critique of analytic ethics (section 1.1 above) have to come to terms with the Kantian critique of empiricism (Thompson (2008): 5–9). To be sure, there are significant differences between the Kantian and the neo-Aristotelian approaches to moral psychology (Korsgaard (2009): 174–206). Aristotelianism attributes special importance to the concrete concept of human (Foot (2001), Hursthouse (1999)), as opposed to the Kantian preference for the more abstract concept of person as rational being. However,

both the Aristotelian and the Kantian approaches consider ethical concepts, such as ‘action’, ‘virtue’, and ‘social practice’, significantly different from concepts such as ‘sea’, ‘cypress’, or ‘horse’, whose content we learn by a sort of direct association with experience (Thompson (2008): 6). Ethical concepts have a status akin to a priori concepts, and this indicates that they cannot be appropriately treated and articulated from within an empiricist framework. Kant did not acknowledge the relevant similarity of his program to the Aristotelian approach, because he mistakenly thought that the concept of human life, which is central to the Aristotelian ethics, was a biological or empirical concept. But neo-Kantians do not have to agree with Kant on this point, and many have insisted on a profound similarity between the two philosophical agendas (Sherman (1990), Korsgaard (1996, 2008, 2009), Engstrom & Whiting (1997), Engstrom (2009)). In fact, some scholars have also argued that Kant’s own ethics and moral psychology show a profound appropriation of Aristotelian themes, despite his rejection of Aristotle’s ethics (Thompson (2008): 12, Engstrom (2009)). Interestingly, these recent attempts to reconcile Aristotelians and Kantians take a complex route through some major voices in analytic philosophy, such as Wittgenstein, who provides important integrations for the definition of ‘practice’ and ‘life-form’ (Williams (1981), McDowell (1995), Korsgaard (1996): 137–9, 208, Thompson (2008)). The ‘pure’ approach to moral psychology is thus alive and well.

## 2.2 *The question of the normative relevance*

Philosophers who advocate the experimental method in moral psychology have important epistemological tasks. Their presumption is that empirical research has a direct impact on normative ethics. For instance, Knobe and Nichols hold that empirical investigation identifies what leads us to have the intuitions we do; ‘the ultimate hope is that we can use this information to help determine whether the psychological sources of the beliefs undercut the warrant for the beliefs’ (Knobe & Nichols (2008a): 7). According to these philosophers, the use of experiments has revolutionary effects both at the normative and epistemological levels, since it leads to questioning the grounds on which our individual moral convictions and traditional moral theories rest.

To reach this important conclusion, experimental philosophers draw from four kinds of empirical research. First, they point at anthropological and sociological sources that document cultural variations in moral convictions (Prinz (2007): 223–9, 280–5). Second, they use surveys of people’s responses to verify the scope of moral convergence and agreement and track divergences and disagreements. Typically, these surveys concern responses in controlled circumstances to questions about moral dilemmas, such as ‘trolley cases’ dilemmas (Thomson (1976, 2008), Copp (2011)). These tests are designed to examine our intuitions about the distinction between killing and letting one die, as well as how sensitive we are to considerations about consequences versus deontological constraints. In particular, there are functional magnetic resonance imaging studies of brain activity conducted on subjects while they are answering questions about moral dilemmas (Greene et al. (2001), Cohen (2001)). A third source of data is

thus neurological research about the brain activity associated with moral deliberation and responses to moral dilemmas such as the trolley problem. General cognitive psychology provides a fourth source of empirical data.

These empirical results are supposed to have direct relevance in moral epistemology. For instance, Doris and Stich point to the general conclusion that the responses to thought experiments ‘may be strongly influenced by ethically irrelevant characteristics of example and audience’ (Doris & Stich (2005): 139, 140, Haidt et al. (1993)). For Sinnott-Armstrong, the empirical evidence shows ‘ways in which our moral intuitions do not reliably track the truth’ (Sinnott-Armstrong (2008a): 62); and that ‘no moral intuitions are justified non-inferentially’ (Sinnott-Armstrong (2008a): 74). More specific conclusions concern the ontological and epistemological status of moral convictions and claims that ground traditional ethical theories. These conclusions are not only revisionary of our current practices and intuitions, but also have an impact on our ethical theories, insofar as their methodology appeals to such practices and intuitions. In particular, several psychologists and empirical philosophers have devised functional magnetic resonance imaging experiments to show that our deontological intuitions are not well grounded and should be disregarded or discounted. That is, empirical research is used to counter (or reinforce) some target ethical theory, such as deontology or consequentialism.

Many are skeptical about the power of these experimental arguments, and question their validity by taking issue with their methodology. For instance, Joshua Greene’s argument starts with a hypothesis that there are two subsystems underlying our moral intuitions (Greene et al. (2001)). He speculates that the first makes use of more direct emotional neural processes, which generate moral judgments typically associated with deontological ethics; while the second makes use of more reflective cognitive neural processes and generates the sorts of judgments typically associated with consequentialism. From this speculation, further normative conclusions are derived about the sort of moral judgments we *should* make. Critics of this approach point out that the alleged experimental arguments make crucial use of normative assumptions. In this case, for instance, there is a complex conjecture about the brain at work, but the experiment also uses normatively laden terms, such as ‘consequentialism’ and ‘deontology’; and it appeals to intuitions about what counts as ‘morally irrelevant’ (Copp (2011)). Critics hold that when the arguments of this kind are closely scrutinized, the facts about brains are found to play a little role, or no role at all (Berker (2011)). This sort of critique leads to a more general problem about what counts as an ‘experimental argument’ (Jones (2006), Kennett & Fine (2009)).

Those unconvinced about the validity of the experiments do not exclude that empirical research may be indirectly useful for ethical theory, or that neuroscience in particular plays a role in shaping our normative positions. For instance, Selim Berker agrees that neuroscience may provide ‘clues for where to look when attempting to characterize the features to which distinctively deontological and distinctively consequentialist judgments respond’ (Berker (2010): §7). This is a significant role to play, but

again it rests on the assumption that our moral judgments respond to ‘some moral facts’ in the world. This is a problematic assumption in moral epistemology, and many would argue that standard moral and political methodology can be vindicated without answering certain kinds of skeptical epistemological worry, or taking positions about the ontological and metaphysical disputes about moral truths (Copp (2011)).

This fervent debate about the status and method of moral psychology is particularly relevant for our study of the emotions and their role in morality. On the basis of evidence about brain activity associated with responses to moral dilemmas, these studies are supposed to show that differences in emotional responses explain people’s differing judgments about the cases (Greene (2001), Cohen (2001)). One key hypothesis is that ‘personal dilemmas’ tend to be associated with greater emotional engagement than ‘impersonal dilemmas’, and that these differences in emotional engagement affect people’s moral judgments. Other researchers have found that inducing emotions in their subjects can affect their moral judgments (Wheatley & Haidt (2005), Prinz (2007): 28). Finally, several experimental philosophers, such as Prinz and Nichols, argue that empirical findings point toward sentimentalism as the most adequate meta-ethical account of moral judgment (Prinz (2006, 2007), Nichols (2004)). This is not surprising, since the claim about the relevance of emotions in our life is traditionally used to counter rationalism. However, the wealth of new empirical data about the pervasiveness of emotions present novel challenges not only against rationalism, but also and more generally against the very possibility of normative ethics.

### *2.3 New challenges to the place of emotions in morality*

There is an emerging consensus that emotions are so pervasively present in the activity of reasoning that it makes little sense to think of reason as a cold and dry faculty, totally disengaged from sensibility. New challenges for the philosophical model of the ‘detached intellect’ come from studies based on neurobiological evidences (Churchland (1996), Damasio (1994), Gallagher (2005): 151, Lacewing (2005)). In one respect, these empirical findings have less disturbing effects than it may appear at first, since several philosophers have already questioned the dichotomy between passivity and activity, on the basis of distinctively philosophical arguments (Thalberg (1978), Ben-Ze’ev (2000), de Sousa (1987), Frank (1988), Greenspan (1988), Oakley (1992), Raz (1997), Elster (1999), Solomon (2003): ch. 4). Indeed, some argue that the very idea of ‘practical reason’ is an attempt to overcome this distinction, by indicating that emotions represent the conditions of our receptivity to rational and moral considerations (Helm (2001, 2002, 2009), Bagnoli (2009)).

However, there is another sense in which these empirical findings are indeed rather upsetting. Empirical research seems to indicate that reasoning includes automatic, non-deliberative, unintended, and unconscious mental processes. Likewise, intentional actions seem to involve substantive, automatic elements of this sort. Even in the case of what we typically regard as voluntary actions, the ‘readiness potential’ takes place

before the subject forms an intention or makes a decision (Libet (1987)).<sup>9</sup> Other empirical studies conclude that emotion always precedes cognition (Zajonc (1980), Damasio (1999), LeDoux (1996)). These studies seem to establish that emotions intervene more substantially and diffusely in the mechanics of action than normative ethics assumes. From a philosophical point of view, however, what we derive from these empirical studies is not so much a positive assessment of the role of emotions in reasoning. Rather, these studies tend to emphasize that this pervasive interconnection between reasoning and emotions blurs the philosophical distinction between activity and passivity. The implication is that we are, in fact, more passive than the rationalist assumes—which indicates that moral theory assumes standards of agency that are simply beyond our reach. This line of argument has obvious consequences concerning the alleged standards for rational agency and responsibility, but it also supports some skepticism about the very status and authority of normative ethics, as a practical and theoretical enterprise. If emotions drive us independently of cognitions and decisions, what is the purpose of norms for holding people responsible for their emotions? It is noteworthy that skeptical conclusions about the legitimacy of normative ethics can be drawn only by adding a specific assumption about the emotions, namely, that we are indeed passive toward them. As shown in section 1, this simple view of emotions is under attack in the debates of the 1980s and 1990s, by arguments that vindicate the cognitive cores of emotions (Nussbaum (1990)), defend independent standards to assess their appropriateness (Greenspan (1988)), highlight steady emotional patterns (Frijda (1986)), or invoke the idea that emotions are complex and compound states, which are activated by paradigm scenarios (Rorty (1980a, 1998a, 1998b), de Sousa (1987)). Interestingly, then, the simple view of emotions resurfaces in the most recent debates about the empirical approach to psychology. For instance, if emotions are taken to be ‘neurological affect programs’, then questions of choice and responsibility that arise seem inappropriate. Paradoxically, this assessment of the pervasive role of emotions in reasoning agrees with the standard rationalist approach that emotions are passive and make us passive.

The question of responsibility remains open for our contemporaries. To some, an important aspect in determining an answer to this question is whether emotions are educable and malleable. If so, then we would have some grounds for praising the jolly benevolent person and for judging that the grumpy and melancholic introvert has some responsibility for his state. Other scholars, on the other hand, think that the evidence that the emotions are malleable and adaptive is of no reassurance. Emotions have arisen through biological and social evolution, and it is precisely their contingent nature that

<sup>9</sup> The difficulty in assessing the precise philosophical relevance of these findings is partly due to the difficulty of translating empirical concepts into ways useful for philosophical debates. For instance, in the case above, it is ambiguous whether such ‘readiness potential’ indicates a motive, or a disposition to select something as a reason.

casts doubts on their reliability as sources of moral knowledge (Crisp (2006): 24; cf. Prinz (2007, 2009); Greenspan (1988): Part ii).

Likewise, it remains unsettled whether emotions should determine the normative standards for attributing moral agency. Answers to this question partly depend on the normative standards for rational agency and autonomy, as argued in section 1. For instance, one may claim that we can take an evaluative stance toward our natural endowments regardless of whether they are under our direct control (Solomon (2003): chs 1, 4, 12, Smith (2005)). Some may still want to argue that we are responsible for emotions even when they are not voluntary, but it would be inappropriate to punish or be punished for them (Sankowski (1977), Gordon (1987), Solomon (1980, 2003)). In any case, the question of responsibility for emotions cannot be solved solely by appealing to considerations about what an emotion is, but also by proposing a normative model of responsibility.

The new empirical paradigm endorses an even less optimistic view than standard rationalist, as it points out that emotions drive us independently of our conscious deliberations. Taken to the extreme, the view that emotions precede cognition and decision invites skepticism about agential and cognitive autonomy, and undermines the very purpose of offering normative standards of justification and deliberation. Is ethical theory equipped to address these challenges?

Empirical research documents and explains what we all have experienced: emotions *interfere* with our reasoning and sometimes defeat our decisions. Imagine, for instance, that you are planning your vacation to an exotic place to visit your friend, but fear of flying takes over. Although you really want to visit your friend, the fear impedes the realization of your plan. Suppose your friend asks that you reconsider your decision and shows that flying is actually statistically less dangerous than driving. You take her point and feel persuaded by her argument. So you are resolved to buy the ticket first thing in the morning; and yet, when you wake up you cannot bring yourself to do it. You know that you do not have any good reason to fear flying, but your fear is stronger than your evaluative judgment about the risk of flying. Cases like this one about ‘recalcitrant emotions’ seem to show that they work independently of the activity of reason (cf. Stocker (1996); D’Arms & Jacobson (2003); Tappolet (2003)). The normative question is whether, and on what grounds, we should attribute any authority to them.

It is worth noticing that in the example above the emotion of fear interferes at several stages of your reasoning, and in different ways. First, fear makes the risk of flying very vivid, and thus sets the background of your reasoning by selecting the options available on the basis of their salience. The role of emotion here is evaluative: fear highlights options, and marks something as fearsome and undesirable. It thus provides considerations that may potentially be in competition with morality, e.g. your duties of friendship. Second, fear intervenes in the ordering of your priorities, by proposing that it is more important for you not to run the risk of flying than to see your friend. That is, it provides a motive and a *pro tanto* reason to disregard your original intention to visit a friend. Third, after you have reasoned through the options,

and considered other sources of evidence, fear still persists and defeats your decision to visit your friend. This defeat does not directly prove reason to be inert or emotions to be irrational. But it shows that emotions are independent sources of motives and reasons. This is a threatening discovery for morality. Insofar as emotions are independent sources of reasons, they can intervene in moral reasoning by countering the moral reasons.

However, it is doubtful that all emotions interfere with practical reasoning in this way, by providing motives that directly defeat moral reasons, and the question partly relates to whether at least more complex emotions, such as respect, guilt, blame, and compassion, can be modified by reasoning. There is a general agreement that emotions can be managed and regulated, and that management and regulation are a sign of emotional intelligence (Zhu & Thagard (2002)). Emotion-regulation does not assure sensitivity to judgment, and it is possible even when emotions cannot be shaped according to some standards of correctness or habituated on the basis of patterns. However, emotion-regulation suffices to show that we are not completely passive in the face of emotions, and therefore we can be held responsible for them or for their education. A stronger claim is that emotions contribute to morality not only by concurring with its dictates, but also by directly driving and participating in moral reasoning. The acknowledgement of this more significant role of emotions is a central claim of many theories of practical reason.

### 3. Morality and the Emotions: New Assessments

The call for moral psychology has led to important and surprising developments, such as the retrieval and elaboration of a variety of theories of practical reason that account for the relation that emotions bear to moral ontology and normative psychology. In this section, I show how the essays of this volume respond to the quest for an adequate moral psychology and contribute to current debates about the emotions. We can identify three main clusters of problems. The first concerns the place of emotions in practical rationality, and their role in the explanation of autonomous action and, more generally, of our capacity for rational normative guidance (3.1). The second concerns the relation of emotions to value and the expressive, normative, and epistemological roles that emotions play in morality (3.2). And the third concerns the standards of the assessment and accountability of emotions, and their relation to moral identity (3.3).

#### *3.1 Emotions, practical reason, and moral agency*

The history of philosophy shows that the main source of hostility against the moral relevance of emotions comes from rationalist theories of morality. The basic rationalist claim is that emotions are not sensitive to reason, and this raises a cluster of issues about the basis and point of their moral assessment, their role in practical reasoning and in the account of autonomous and rational action. The rationalist's reluctance to find a place for emotions in morality springs from two claims about the nature of emotions as unresponsive to reason, and the picture of reason as detached. Both of these claims have

been under attack in recent debates. We have seen in section 2.2 that the development of the cognitive sciences has given new impetus to the critique of the model of the detached intellect. This critique finds enthusiastic supporters among moral philosophers, especially those interested in working out a proper understanding of ‘practical reason’. There are a wide variety of theories of practical reason and of its relation to the emotions. Some admit that certain emotions or the capacity for them play an important epistemic enabling role, while denying that they qualify as a reliable source of moral knowledge (Crisp (2006): 23). Others argue for a more substantive and pervasive contribution on the part of emotions by construing practical reason as motivationally engaged (Helm (2001, 2002); cf. Deigh (1996), Korsgaard (2009): 18–19). To this extent, theories of practical reason identify a role for emotions in the formation of moral cognition. They recognize that emotions have the power to intrude in reasoning and upset or undermine its conclusions. But they take this evidence as the starting point for normative accounts of practical reasoning and norms that govern the appropriateness of emotions.

The essays of Part I of the volume address directly these issues. In Chapter 1, Patricia Greenspan offers a novel account of the normative relevance of emotions and their role in practical reasoning. Greenspan holds a distinctive position, in that she seeks to find a significant place for emotions in deontological ethics. Traditional rationalist accounts doubt that emotions can be modified according to reason, and thus take morality to be in charge of silencing them. Others hold these emotional tendencies to be modifiable and take morality to be in charge of shaping, pruning, and managing them so that they become useful and conducive to some good. For instance, some hold that emotions are helpful in the process of decision-making because they are characteristically quick in detecting the morally salient features of the situation. By relying on emotions we gain in speed and efficiency, and exclude some options as immediately irrelevant (Nussbaum (2001); cf. Zhu & Thagard (2002): 27). Greenspan’s recent work shows that emotions participate in many more ways in practical reasoning. One important contribution of emotions is that they provide motivational support for our reasoning (Greenspan (1995)). In addition, they also explain the binding force of moral reasons (Greenspan (2005, 2007, 2010)). In Chapter 1, Greenspan further specifies the normative role of emotions, arguing that they reinforce moral reasons and work against their postponement. Greenspan frames the discussion in deontological terms, in contrast to the consequentialist understanding of moral requirements as a function of our weightiest reasons. Her account also importantly departs from the widespread assumption that privileges a Humean understanding of the role of emotion in ethics, and offers a more complex account of the processes of moral motivation, where there is a normative interplay of moral and non-moral considerations.

One important area of the relation between practical rationality and rational agency concerns whether emotions express or undermine agential authority. We often refer to emotions in explaining our actions or in the attempt to make them intelligible. You cried because you received sad news. She smiled because she was glad to see you. He

shouted because he was angry. Since emotions play a role in acting, one may expect them to play a significant role also in moral agency. The rationalist does not dispute that most emotions dispose to act, and thus admits that they can explain action insofar as they participate in the generation and execution of action. However, the rationalist contends that emotions do not serve as moral motives for action. This argument appeals to autonomy as the mark of rational agency (Tappolet (2006)). The standard rationalist claim is that we passively experience the emotions, so we do not freely authorize actions driven by our emotions. This charge of passivity is a major obstacle to the recognition of the role of emotions in moral agency, and raises issues about our responsibility for them, as well as about their impact on our agential authority.

In Chapter 2, Carla Bagnoli considers a related specific aspect of the normative relevance of emotions, which concerns the authority of moral reasons that yield requirements. Her contention is that moral reasons have categorical authority insofar as they are subjectively experienced in the guise of respect. Bagnoli argues for this claim by elaborating a Kantian account of practical reason, which takes respect as the emotional attitude constitutive of rational agency. This view of respect as the emotional aspect of practical reason avoids the dilemma between a rationalist view of the unconditional demands of morality, which has no grip on us, and a sentimentalist view of moral reasons that denies their categorical authority. She argues that both these views mischaracterize and misunderstand the relation between morality and the emotions. They mistakenly assume that emotions are separable from or only contingently related to practical reason. By contrast, the Kantian model takes this relation as structural: to undertake the practical standpoint requires us not only to act and think on principles that have the form of a law, but also to express a moral sensibility marked by respect. These requirements are constitutive of the practical standpoint, that is, they represent what is necessary for us to think and act as rational agents, together with other finite and interdependent rational agents.

In Chapter 3, Edward Harcourt also argues for a constitutive relation between the emotions and practical reason. He starts with an investigation of the contrast between rationalist conceptions of integrity and the psychoanalytic approach, and he attempts to reconcile the two (cf. Deigh (1996), Lear (1998)). According to the rationalist view of the relation between emotions and practical reason, a central part of what it is for a human moral psychology to be properly formed consists in our being practically rational. By contrast, psychoanalysis addresses this very question by giving the notion of love a more prominent place. Harcourt intends to show that these conceptions are complementary, by focusing on ideals of psychological organization such as ‘autonomy’ and ‘individuation’ centered on self-love. He argues that there is a constitutive connection between love and practical rationality, thereby reconciling the two approaches.

Focus on love makes us appreciate a distinctive feature of emotions, namely, their perspectival nature. Emotions originate in the special perspective of a subject, express his specific concerns or attitudes, target a specific object, and focus on some salient traits. When emotions function correctly, they draw attention selectively, highlighting

the salient aspects of the situation. Love is the paradigmatic example: it is an emotion grounded on exclusion; it sets apart the object of love from everything else. Medea's love for Jason is unique and uniquely powerful: it overrides any other attachment she has. A mother's love for her child is distinctively partial and exclusive. This partiality and exclusiveness clashes with morality's request for impartiality, and with the claim that we should be concerned for others in virtue of what they are, rather than in virtue of the fact that they stand in a special relation to us. To resolve this contrast, moral philosophers have introduced a distinction in love. Love is the paradigmatic moral emotion when understood as *agape* and directed toward impersonal humanity (Badhwar (2003): 58, Helm (2009)); but not when it is informed by *eros*, as in romantic love. Romantic or erotic love is pathological and unreliable, while agapic love is steady and stable. This distinction between pathological and moral emotions may be of some help in highlighting the complexity of our motivational drives, but it underestimates the problem (Deigh (1991, 1995), Blum (1980, 1991), Frankfurt (2004)). The partiality of emotions cannot be neutralized by adding some conceptual distinctions (de Sousa (1987), Rorty (1980a, 1988), Helm (1994), Nussbaum (1990)). When one is in love, one sees the object as lovable under the description of love. Love blinds us, but not in the sense that it makes us irrational. Rather, it functions by silencing other aspects of the object of love, which become irrelevant to the subject. Insofar as they are perspectival, emotions shape our deliberative and normative horizon in ways that undermine the claims of impersonal morality.

This thought has been developed in a variety of ways. Some argue that this perspectival feature of emotions is exactly what makes them morally relevant, since they convey moral knowledge and moral awareness of what is valuable (Blum (1980, 1986, 1991), Nussbaum (1990), Greenspan (1995)). That emotions are partial and perspectival does not necessarily show that they cannot be sources of categorical reasons, as Kantians hold. For instance, Harry Frankfurt regards love as an activity that bestows value onto its objects (Frankfurt (1999)). While personal, love commands as categorically as reason does (Frankfurt (1999, 2004)). By contrast, others argue that love is itself a moral emotion, which represents no threat to impartial morality (Velleman (1999)).

In Chapter 4, Aaron Ben-Ze'ev offers a distinctive approach to romantic love. He addresses the normative dimension of romantic love and examines the nature and role of compromises in romantic loving relationships. In its traditional, literary, and idealized version, romantic love refuses any type of compromise. By contrast, Ben-Ze'ev argues for the importance of compromises, which acknowledge the existence of conflicts and represent one important way in which we attempt to cope with them. By analyzing the activity of complementing and compromising, Ben-Ze'ev provides an innovative normative model for romantic love relationships.

### 3.2 *Emotions as modes of valuing*

In the last thirty years, moral philosophers have presented powerful arguments for treating emotions as highly discriminating responses to values. These arguments point

toward heuristic, epistemic, and expressive roles that emotions play in morality. For instance, Martha Nussbaum's seminal work points out that emotions are intelligently informative, that is, they offer information as needed. Emotions are affective devices for detecting salient properties of the world. In some cases, the role of emotions is heuristic. In social contexts characterized by inequality and competitiveness, emotions such as envy, anger, resentment, and hatred may arise from a moral concern for fairness (Stocker (1996): ch. 10, La Caze (2001); cf. Ben-Ze'ev (2002)). While in itself envy can hardly be a positive trait, it might nonetheless be indicative of relations poisoned by unfairness and arbitrariness. To this extent, envy senses injustice. To argue that these emotions are diagnostic devices is not simply to say that they serve to highlight what goes wrong in social reality. Rather, these emotions present moral problems and demand solutions. That is, they are not only evaluative markers, but also sources of moral claims (Stocker (1996): 291). Suppressing them without addressing the problem they are signaling would be as dangerous as treating the hungry with hunger suppressants rather than feeding them.

To accord emotions this heuristic role inevitably raises issues about the epistemological account of emotions as 'perceptions of values', and also about the status of values. As we saw in section 1.4, one prominent view about these issues is neo-sentimentalism, the view that to judge that something has an evaluative property is to judge that some affective or emotional attitude is appropriate, or fitting, with respect to it. Chapters 5 and 6, in Part II of this volume, directly contribute to the debate about the viability of perceptual sentimental models of emotions. Supporters of the perceptual model of emotions hold that emotional experiences can be reasons for evaluative judgments—in much the same way that sensory perceptual experiences can be reasons for our judgments about the non-evaluative world. In Chapter 5, Christine Tappolet defends a 'descriptive' version of the neo-sentimentalist account, which holds that appropriateness in emotions is a matter of correspondence to evaluative facts. This is a very specific sense in which emotions are said to be perceptions of values, in analogy with sensory perception. The plausibility of neo-sentimentalism is due to the fact that values and emotional responses, or at least their concepts, are closely related. Tappolet accounts for several varieties of neo-sentimentalism and argues that one has to distinguish between a normative and a descriptive version. She considers the main argument that can be given in favor of the normative version and shows that the descriptive version is far from excluded by this argument. Then, she offers two arguments in favor of the descriptive version, and defends it from the accusation of vicious circularity.

By contrast, Michael Brady argues in Chapter 6 that there are significant differences between emotions and perceptions at the epistemic level. Emotions, unlike perceptions, often motivate the search for reasons that bear on their own accuracy, and hence on the correctness of the associated judgment. When emotions are reliable trackers of value, emotional experience, unlike perceptual experience, is at best a proxy for genuine justifying reasons. Since the point of the perceptual model is to provide an

adequate epistemology for our knowledge of value, then the fact that emotional experience doesn't by itself provide reasons or evidence for evaluative judgment or belief would appear to be damaging. Perhaps these differences do not ultimately undermine the perceptual model, but defenders of the perceptual model owe us an explanation as to why they do not. In contrast to the perceptual model, Brady argues that emotional experiences play an important epistemic role, but they are not reasons for evaluative judgments.

Chapters 7 and 8 represent two distinct approaches for evaluating the epistemological role and importance of emotions. Because of their methodological assumptions, these chapters take a stand about some of the methodological issues raised in section 2.2. In Chapter 7 Paul Thagard and Tracy Finn argue that emotions are both cognitive appraisals and somatic perceptions. In contrast to other authors, they invoke a distinct methodology, as they use a neural theory of emotional consciousness. Their aim is to develop a novel account of conscience and moral intuition. On their view, emotions are cognitive appraisals and somatic perceptions performed simultaneously by interacting brain areas. According to Thagard and Finn, conscience is a kind of moral intuition, which is a neural process that generates emotional intuitions that combine bodily reactions with cognitive appraisal concerning a special subset of goals. This account purports to explain how moral intuitions can be both cognitive and emotional, and why both moral agreement and disagreement are common phenomena. Thagard and Finn's theory of conscience is descriptive and normative, and it offers important resources for evaluating the ethical and epistemological validity of intuitions.

By contrast, in Chapter 8 Lawrence Blum argues that the normative, expressive, cognitive, and evaluative aspects of emotions are best understood from within a humanistic model of moral psychology. Blum takes issue with Shaun Nichols, a leading figure in empirical moral psychology within moral philosophy. Blum's broader target, however, is the empiricist version of neo-sentimentalism. According to Blum, this form of neo-sentimentalism uses an impoverished view of moral emotions, especially of empathy and altruistic emotions, such as love and compassion. In contrast to neo-sentimentalism, Blum defends a richer account of altruistic emotions. On his view, emotions are intentional (rather than mere copies of feeling states of the other), and perceptual (involving ways of seeing the world). Secondly, emotions are cognitive insofar as they are ways of understanding others. Finally, emotions are motivational and expressive. Blum argues that although philosophy benefits from attention to empirical psychology, there are significant risks in abandoning the rich tradition of philosophical moral psychology, which can be carried out only with the distinctive humanistic methods of philosophy. Insofar as it focuses on altruistic emotions, Blum's essay also represents a distinctive view in the debate over the partial and perspectival nature of emotions presented above. Blum's past work has been crucial in proposing emotions as modes of moral discernment that call into question the requirements of impartiality.

### 3.3 *Emotions, responsibility, and moral identity*

A strong argument for the moral relevance of emotions is that they are indispensable to morality understood as a system of norms, and to moral identity understood as a form of self-governance. Friedrich Nietzsche famously connects resentment and guilt to the very idea of what we owe to others, i.e. as the root moral obligation (Nietzsche (1968): 21ff. Foot (1994)). Williams calls morality ‘the blame system’ (Williams (1985): 177). Blame, respect, and resentment are the ‘deontic emotions’ typically associated with moral obligations (de Sousa (2006): 31, Skorupski (2010b)). The effect of linking moral obligation to such negative and reactive emotions is not necessarily that of debunking morality or exposing its all too human origins. On the contrary, for instance, P.F. Strawson’s essay on ‘Freedom and Resentment’ (1962) shows that reactive attitudes determine the conditions for the attribution of moral responsibility and are thus functional to our moral and normative practices. Strawson’s essay is a milestone in the literature on deontic emotions. Following Strawson’s lead, many argue that reactive attitudes, such as resentment and blame, implicitly address demands to somebody, hence presume the accountability of others. These attitudes figure prominently in current philosophical accounts of moral authority. They express moral claims and presuppose the normative expectation that such claims be recognized and also that we have the authority to expect and demand that they be recognized (Darwall (2006): 265).

Two of the essays in Part III play Strawsonian themes. In Chapter 9 John Deigh reconsiders the grounds of Strawson’s account of the reactive attitudes. According to Deigh, Strawson endorses a non-cognitivist account of reactive attitudes, and this aspect plays a crucial role in Strawson’s argument that determinism posits no threat to moral responsibility. This reading is offered in contrast to recent proposals, such as those of Jay Wallace and Stephen Darwall, which pursue a cognitivist reading of reactive attitudes. One important consequence of Deigh’s argument is that Wallace’s and Darwall’s accounts of moral responsibility are only superficially similar to Strawson’s. Therefore they cannot avail themselves of Strawson’s solution to the problem of how we can hold agents accountable for their actions if determinism is true. Deigh’s argument directly contributes not only to current debates about the nature of moral responsibility, but also to debates concerning how to account for the emotional aspect of reactive attitudes. More importantly, the argument shows that these debates influence each other, and cannot be pulled apart. In Chapter 10, Bennett W. Helm also engages in the dispute about the nature of reactive attitudes and their relation to freedom and responsibility. Helm argues that we can best understand reactive attitudes by seeing them as individually presupposing and jointly constituting both our respect for persons and the dignity to which respect is responsive. Consequently, being both a proper subject and object of reactive attitudes is to be a member of the normative community of fellow persons within which one both takes responsibility and is held responsible for what one does. Helm’s position is thus in accord with neo-Kantian accounts of moral agency that

are centered on respect as recognition of the valid claims of others (Darwall (1977, 2006), Dillon (1992, 1997, 2010), Bagnoli (2003, 2007, 2009)).

In Chapter 11, Angela Smith considers whether one is justified in feeling guilty for unexpressed attitudes. In these cases, the feeling of guilt attaches to the mere having these thoughts and attitudes, even when they remain private. This is paradoxical since these do not seem to be cases of moral transgression. Smith argues that a contractualist theory of morality is capable of accounting for such attitudinal wrongs. According to contractualism, to genuinely stand in appropriate relations to others, we must have certain attitudes toward them. Feelings of guilt over unexpressed attitudes reflect a judgment that we have failed to accord to others the basic respect and recognition they are due as fellow members of the moral community. Therefore, guilty feelings for unexpressed attitudes express our aspiration to live with others on mutually acceptable terms.

It is often argued that one acts uncharacteristically when driven by emotions. Such cases are adduced to show not that emotions easily lead us astray, but that they undermine our integrity and character. In contrast to these cases, philosophers have noted that emotions play a significant role in self-government and in the development of individual moral integrity. Gabriele Taylor's (1985) seminal work on pride, shame, and guilt shows that these emotions are modes of self-assessment, which signal status and directly contribute to building our moral integrity. Chapters 12 and 13 represent important contributions to some strands of this debate. In Chapter 12, Jacqueline Taylor investigates the sources of moral identity, and argues that pride and praise ground moral competence. Taylor's argument starts with a critique of the current readings of sentimentalism, which focus solely on negative emotions that signal failure and transgression. She claims that this is an important difference in accounting for the character-building effect of emotions, and their capacity to nourish moral resilience. Her argument analyzes the relation between moral self-esteem and an active agency, which includes not only acting well, but also resisting evil. Taylor is right that the literature on emotions and moral responsibility centers on negative deontic emotions, such as blame or resentment.<sup>10</sup> This is because this debate is focused on moral accountability, and arises from the view that emotions ensure normative conformity and signal defection. By shifting to other sorts of emotions, Taylor helps us appreciate other normative roles for emotions to play.

For instance, emotions as diverse as compassion, indignation, anger, or resentment play a distinctive role, which is that of counteracting the perfunctory aspect of received morality. To insist on the varieties of contributions that emotions make to morality is particularly important in cases where there is a conflict between a code of norms recognized by the community and individual judgment. Some philosophers hold that in these cases, emotions are to be trusted as apprehensions of real moral values (Bennett

<sup>10</sup> This is an area of inquiry that profited much from sociobiology and evolutionary psychology; see Plutchik (1980), Frank (1988), Gibbard (1990), Goldie (2001): ch. 4, Cosmides & Tooby (2000), Evans (2001), Prinz (2007): chs 2 and 7.

(1974), Starkey (2008)). Agents may not be able to coherently argue that their community is misguided, nor that its norms should not apply to this particular case, and yet feel that the norms to which the community appeals are deeply wrong. However, there are also cases where emotions complement and integrate positive norms. For instance, mercy makes norms more determinate and thus relevant to the individual case (Nussbaum (1999)). Compassion may mitigate the normative effects of moral norms or supply some normative guidance where there is none.

In view of these cases, it is thus plausible to argue that the relevance of emotions is both moral and political (Rorty (1998a, 1998b), Dillon (1997)). The cases of disobedience informed by emotions indicate that emotions are key ways to express one's personality in contrast to customary morality. As Amélie Rorty has shown, moral integrity and emotional coherence are psychological and political achievements, and their failures should be investigated from each of these perspectives, psychological and political. Talbot Brewer shows a similar concern and approach in Chapter 13. He presents a case where self-development is impaired by some processes of alienation from one's own emotions. Brewer's argument builds on sociological studies about the external pressure to alienate ourselves from our emotions, which depends on the widespread model of agency as performance and commodity. Emotions can give expression to the self's pre-reflective evaluative posture towards the world. The aim of this essay is to examine different aspects of the phenomenon of alienation from emotions and to cast light on the conflict that can arise between the work of self-elaboration and the sort of 'emotional labor' required in the service economy.

This critical overview is far from being a complete and exhaustive account of the complex relations that the emotions bear to morality, but it should provide the reader with a broad context in which to situate the essays of this volume. This volume has been conceived to reclaim emotions as a subject of investigation for moral philosophy. The suggestion is not that the philosophical investigation of emotions should be insulated from empirical research. On the contrary, our conviction is that philosophy should participate in the investigation of emotions alongside empirical research, in the spirit of fruitful dialogue where the distinctive value and contribution of all parties are recognized.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> I am grateful to Selim Berker, Larry Blum, Ian Carter, David Copp, Luca Malatesti, Elijah Millgram, Patrizia Pedrini, Christine Tappolet, and Jackie Taylor for their helpful remarks on previous drafts of this Introduction. Special thanks to Richard Moran, who first got me interested in this subject.

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## 2

# Emotions and the Categorical Authority of Moral Reason

*Carla Bagnoli*

Few deny that emotions can be motivating. Many recognize that emotions may account for the motivational appeal of moral reasons, and some argue that emotions provide moral reasons for action. In this chapter, I consider a specific aspect of the normative relevance of emotions, which concerns the authority of moral reasons that yield requirements. This is a question that arises at the meta-normative level of ethical theory, an area of inquiry that investigates the nature of moral normativity. Answers to this question have important consequences about the content of moral reasons, but my primary task is to examine the role of emotions in explaining that and how moral reasons are authoritative.

On a standard rationalist model, moral reasons apply to all rational agents as such, and bind us with categorical authority because they are intrinsically normative facts, whose authority does not depend on anything contingent, such as our conventions, beliefs, and emotions (Clarke (1705); Prichard (1912); Falk (1986)). By contrast, the standard sentimentalist model holds that moral reasons spring from emotions, and denies that they exhibit the sort of categoricity that rationalism attaches to them (Hume (1740); Wiggins (1987a); Blackburn (1998); McDowell (1985); D'Arms & Jacobson (2000); Johnston (2001)). Both views face serious difficulties. The rationalist model makes mysterious or fails to account for how moral reasons command with genuine authority in the presence of competing concerns and interests. The sentimentalist model clashes with the common view that moral reasons have special authority and importance, in contrast to reasons that spring from our idiosyncratic preferences, individual interests, and personal plans.

My argument is that an adequate explanation of moral authority requires a different philosophical treatment of the role of emotions, and of their relation to practical reason. The problem with these standard views is that they take emotions to be either completely separable from or only contingently related to reason. By contrast, I argue that the experience of moral emotions is constitutive of the exercise of practical reason. The categorical authority of moral reasons does not depend upon, but constitutively implies, moral emotions. I argue for this claim by drawing from a Kantian account of practical

reason, which takes respect as the emotional attitude constitutive of rational agency. My contention is that moral reasons have categorical authority insofar as they are subjectively experienced in the guise of respect.

## 2.1 The Problem of the Categorical Authority of Moral Reasons

Morality is *normative* in that it provides reasons for action. If it is morally wrong to deceive others to further one's interests, then there is a normative reason for Amadeus not to deceive Boris in order to become chapel master. According to rationalism, moral reasons provide normative reasons for action that apply to all rational beings in all relevantly similar situations. If it is morally wrong to deceive others, then in any situation where an agent morally ought not to deceive others, there will be a normative reason for her not to do so. This requirement of *universality* indicates that to act on moral reasons is to act on principles. In deliberation, moral reasons are taken to provide normative reasons that are conclusive, that is, such that they override any other sorts of considerations that are surveyed in deliberation; I shall call this feature of moral reasons *overridingness*.

This latter feature of moral reasons is problematic, since in rational deliberation we are required to take into account all sorts of considerations, including particular desires, interests, and projects that are in competition with morality. How can moral reasons drive us when we have competing concerns and motives that make legitimate claims on us? This is the question of *subjective authority*. Bernard Williams argues that moral reasons cannot be shown to be rationally overriding, hence they lack authority (Williams (1981): 20–40, 114–32; Williams (1985): chs 4 and 10). For instance, it is hard to explain why and how (the fictional) Paul Gauguin would be rationally driven by moral reasons to take care of his family when such reasons undercut the project that grounds and gives meaning to his life, that of becoming a painter (Williams (1981): 23).<sup>1</sup>

Williams argues that the (Kantian) rationalist view attributes to morality a sovereignty that morality does not actually possess. For Williams we have in fact deep and persistent reason to be grateful that morality does not have the features that Kantians attribute to it (Williams (1981): 23). To attach overridingness to moral reasons is to say that they govern other projects, subtract or attribute authority to them, prioritize, subordinate, and ground other reasons. Gauguin's case shows that when moral reasons conflict with other projects that give meaning to his life, it does not make sense for the agent to take moral claims as overriding, even on the assumption that the claims of

<sup>1</sup> Williams uses Gauguin's example to draw a number of important claims about the nature of morality, its susceptibility to luck, and the retrospective nature of its justification; see Williams (1981): 20–39. My discussion here is limited to his claim that moral reasons debunk all other concerns one has, and that this view of moral reasons makes the rationalist account of moral motivation unreasonably demanding, hence inadequate as a model of practical rationality and practical identity (see also Wolf (1986, 1997)). I focus on Gauguin's example as supporting Williams' conviction that morality should not be given the sort of overridingness that it has in the Kantian model.

others have a hold on him. Unlike the amoralist who is indifferent to moral claims, Gauguin is ‘concerned about these claims and what is involved in their being neglected’ (Williams (1981): 23; see also p. 38). The point is that, despite his moral qualms and pangs of conscience, Gauguin cannot be rationally required and expected to take care of his family, if this means that he must renounce painting—the only project that makes his life worth living. The upshot of Williams’ argument is that moral reasons are not unconditionally authoritative, as the rationalist claims.

The canonical problem with the rationalist account, as the case above illustrates, is that it fails to explain how agents are driven by moral reasons.<sup>2</sup> The sentimentalist may seem to have a ready answer to this problem since sentimentalism holds that moral reasons originate in emotions, which have direct motivating power. For instance, Amadeus has a reason not to deceive Boris, insofar as he loves him as a friend. Amadeus’ love for Boris provides a motive to refrain from deceiving him, even if deception would further Amadeus’ interest. But love also explains how Amadeus is driven by the consideration that one should not deceive others, even if one is interested in becoming a chapel master.<sup>3</sup> The question is whether this counts as an explanation of the authority of moral reasons. The sentimentalist explains the motivational force of moral reasons by making them arise from the emotions. Is he thereby providing an account of their normative authority?

This is, recognizably, a rationalist rejoinder. The rationalist wants the normative force of moral reasons to be intrinsic to those reasons, hence not reducible to their motivational force. When normative authority is reduced to motivational power, it looks arbitrary and spurious.

## 2.2 Reactive Emotions and the Internalization Hypothesis

One way to deflate the question about the alleged distinction between the motivational force and the normative force of moral reasons is to deny that moral reasons have a distinctive status. J.S. Mill famously takes this route in contrast to the rationalist claim that moral obligations are ‘intrinsically binding’.<sup>4</sup> According to Mill, the apparent

<sup>2</sup> Rationalism can, of course, explain why agents abide by morality by adding a further premise, a desire for being rational, but this is not a solution to the issue I am highlighting, as it emerges in section 2.8 below.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that love directly provides a general or universal reason not to deceive others. In the case described, love for a particular person makes the agent responsive to considerations against deception. Reasons of love are sufficient to qualify the authority of his interest in becoming a chapel master, even though they may be insufficient to undermine the force of this interest. Love for a particular individual may also have a role to play in making the agent realize that there is a universal reason for not deceiving others; but it may not be enough to motivate the agent to act on the basis of the universal reason against deception. This is not a worrisome result, though, because reasons against deception do not spring from love, but from respect. In the example, the reasons of love undermine the authority of the agent’s interest, and thus work only indirectly against deception.

<sup>4</sup> Mill (1861): 73, and more generally, see chapter 3. Mill’s internalization hypothesis is grounded on his associationism, that is, the view that moral responses are acquired through processes of association; see Wilson (1998): 216–17, and Skorupski (1989): 263. However, the internalization hypothesis can be defended independently of psychological associationism; see footnote 10.

compelling nature of moral requirements can be fully accounted for by referring to the education of our sensibility. Through social conditioning and education, our minds become accustomed to associate some types of actions with some emotional reactions. Actions externally sanctioned by society become internally sanctioned thanks to the work of reactive emotions, such as guilt, self-reproach, and shame.<sup>5</sup> I shall call this the internalization hypothesis. This hypothesis is supposed to supply the ultimate explanation of the halo or mystic character of moral obligation. Its authority is nothing but ‘a subjective feeling in our mind, attendant on violation of duty, a pain more or less intense, which in properly cultivated minds rises, in the more serious cases, into shrinking from it as an impossibility’ (Mill (1861): 74).

It is important to remark that the argument based on the internalization hypothesis is not designed to debunk morality. While Mill denies that moral reasons exhibit categorical authority, he does not deny that morality provides us with normative reasons for action. Rather, he purports to anchor moral obligations on firmer grounds by showing that moral reasons acquire their binding force via social and psychological processes, hence dissipating the mystery of their authority.<sup>6</sup>

Current moral psychology heavily concurs with J.S. Mill that reactive emotions, such as guilt and blame, are the basis of our conformity to moral norms.<sup>7</sup> Many also agree that this explanation shows that morality does not have special authority and importance (Foot (1978a); Blackburn (1998); Crisp (2006): 20–36). Reactive emotions are required in order to make moral norms *efficacious*, by providing them with motivational support. For instance, Allan Gibbard argues that moral emotions have an immediate motivating power; they serve as incentives to comply or deter future defection. By and large they are ‘reactions against threats to one’s place in cooperative schemes’.<sup>8</sup> This is because ‘norms for guilt can attach a bad feeling to things bad feelings can move us to avoid’ (Gibbard (1990): 297).<sup>9</sup> In a similar vein, Bernard Williams remarks that ‘remorse or self-reproach is the characteristic first-person reaction within that [moral] system, and if an

<sup>5</sup> These emotions are also called ‘deontic norms’; see de Sousa (2006): 31.

<sup>6</sup> For this reason, Mill stresses the importance of a system of education whose ‘main and incessant ingredient is restraining discipline’ (Mill (1963–1991): 133), Mill holds that impulses such as vengeance that propose themselves as immediate sources of moral concern should not be trusted as moral guides on their own. They need to be scrutinized, disciplined, and educated (Wilson (1998): 218).

<sup>7</sup> Allan Gibbard openly appeals to Mill; see Gibbard (1990): 41–2, 67–8; Blackburn (1998): 17. Railton argues that the peculiar nature of moral normativity can be captured by focusing on ‘a distinctive set of emotions, such as guilt, pride, shame and reproach’ that attend the violation of moral norms (Railton (2005): 13). In a broader sense, the internalization hypothesis also underlies philosophical projects that appeal to psychodynamic approaches that reduce the issue of authority to complex processes of idealization and internalization; cf. Deigh (1996); Velleman (2006): 110–29, 129–56. As Williams notices, the internalized gaze that these moral emotions convey ‘is not just a screen for one’s own ethical ideas but is the locus of some genuine social expectation’ (1993: 98, 103).

<sup>8</sup> ‘Emotions, in evolutionary terms, cash out in action: in the action to which they lead and in the actions they elicit from others’ (Gibbard (1990): 139).

<sup>9</sup> The category of reactive deontic emotions is quite heterogeneous and admits of a complex phenomenology. For instance, Gibbard argues that bad motivations elicit anger while other inadequacies elicit disdain; they each sanction different failures and call for different remedies (1990: 139).

agent never felt such sentiments, he would not belong to the morality system or be a full moral agent in its terms' (1985: 177). Likewise, Simon Blackburn emphasizes the punitive character of morality and notices that 'moral judgment is indeed used to coerce, and cajole, and to judge: when it is internalized, its victims may walk around under the burden of guilt and anguish' (1998: 3; Gibbard (1990): 297).

### 2.3 Residual Emotions and the Enforcement of Moral Norms

The internalization hypothesis purports to explain how moral reasons acquire motivational force without invoking any dubious metaphysics.<sup>10</sup> This is an advantage over the standard rationalist proposal, insofar as the rationalist's claim about the categorical authority of moral reasons is associated with a special kind of practical necessity, which differs from causal and logical necessity. For some, the Kantian category of practical necessity cannot claim any place in the scientific conception of the world, and thus it commits ethical theory to a peculiar metaphysics.

But this argument in favor of the internalization hypothesis does not secure the soundness of sentimentalism. In fact, several Kantians focus on reactive emotions, even though they regard moral reasons as categorical (Nagel (1970): 80; Korsgaard (1996): 151–6; O'Neill (1997): 92–3; Scanlon (2008); Darwall (2011)). For instance, Christine Korsgaard thinks that we experience emotions of this kind precisely because moral reasons have independent and categorical authority. Emotions are backward-looking responses to reasons: 'A person's own mind does indeed impose sanctions on her: that when we don't do what we should do, we punish ourselves, by guilt and regret and repentance and remorse' (1996: 151). These reactive emotions are *residual*, in that they sanction reasons that have been disregarded.<sup>11</sup> By feeling them, 'we pay the price of unmet demands' (1996: 151 n. 25).

Rationalists and sentimentalists agree that the role of residual emotions is mainly auxiliary and corrective.<sup>12</sup> Such emotions assist us because of the shortcomings of

<sup>10</sup> J.L. Mackie moves the objection of queerness to the intuitionist claim that there are intrinsically normative entities (1977: 39ff.). But Mill can be interpreted as formulating a similar objection against Kant's view that moral obligations are intrinsically binding; see section 2.2.

<sup>11</sup> The claim that reactive emotions are residual—insofar as they stand for moral claims that have been disregarded in deliberation—is prominent in the literature on moral dilemmas. Philosophers disagree as to the deontic valence that we should attach to these emotions. For instance, Williams argues that agent-regret signals a remainder, which is an 'item not acted upon' (1963: 173–4, 183). If the item is an 'ought' or a 'moral claim', this sort of regret indicates that conflicts of obligations are possible. By contrast, Hare argues that the residual emotions such as guilt or regret do not stand for obligations, but are associated to *prima facie* duties, which are coherent with the denial of conflicting obligations (Hare (1980); cf. Bagnoli (2000, 2007b)). Some argue that the deontic valence and significance of residual emotions differ according to whether we are talking of regret, remorse, or guilt; see Barcan Marcus (1980); Greenspan (1995).

<sup>12</sup> Crisp (2006): 23. However, neo-Kantians try to make room for a more complex interplay with sensibility, for example adopting a more Aristotelian view of moral psychology, or simply rejecting the claim that emotions are mere feelings or tastes (Sherman (1990); Baron (1995); Herman (1993, 1997); Korsgaard (2009): 19). I am developing an independent argument in this direction.

reason. Emotions either rule when, or because, reason is incapable of guiding us. The two philosophical proposals differ in their respective diagnosis of this failure: for the sentimentalist, reason fails to guide us because it is inert; for the rationalist, reason provides us with standards that we are unable to put into practice. In both cases, however, the role of residual emotions is reparative and disciplinary, if not utterly castigatory.<sup>13</sup> These are important normative roles of emotions in deontic contexts, which the sentimentalist takes as the proof that reason is motivationally inert. Because of this diagnosis, sentimentalists seem to have a significant advantage over the rationalist. It is open to sentimentalists to argue that emotions play a more significant role, by broadening the category of moral emotions so as to include ‘positive’ emotions that push us toward the endorsement of moral norms.<sup>14</sup> This integration shows that the normative relevance of emotions is not simply corrective, but also reparative and motivating. Is not this kind of integration all we need to account for the authority of moral reasons?

## 2.4 Emotions as Auxiliary Motives and Contributory Reasons

Section 2.3 ended with the question of whether proving the motivational appeal of moral reasons by grounding them on emotions amounts to proving their authority. It may not be obvious that we need an account of the subjective authority of moral reasons if we have a plausible account of their motivational force. An example may help clarify why we need to distinguish the issue of motivation from the issue of authority. Suppose Bessy judges that it is best not to voice her concern about salary compression, but then she decides, instead, to pursue the issue publicly, out of resentment, anger, or indignation. I think we can offer two readings of the role of these emotions in accounting for Bessy’s action.

On the first reading, anger simply tips the balance in favor of something that is not supported by rational deliberation. In this case, the role of the emotion is psychological: anger does not provide any new normative reason, but it makes Bessy act on some considerations that she already had surveyed in deliberation, and discounted. Moreover, she does not regard such considerations more important than she previously found them to be, hence she does not accord to them a different normative status. She acts on those considerations not because she thinks that she ought to, but because she is angry. That is,

<sup>13</sup> Following Melanie Klein, Williams distinguishes sharply between unproductive and uncreative guilt, which has simply punitive or persecutory functions, and reparative guilt; see Williams (1973): 222. Williams responds to a utilitarian variation of the argument. His strategy proves successful against either of these variations of the argument. Interestingly, Williams imputes the ‘comparative neglect of this basic moral phenomenon’ to the utilitarian reaction against the destructive emphasis placed on coercive education, and the ‘uncreative aspects of guilt’.

<sup>14</sup> Taylor argues for this strategy in Chapter 12, in this volume. A broader list of positive emotions includes benevolence and respect; see Gibbard (1990): 255–73. Virtually *any* emotion may provide a source for motivation and all emotions contribute to valuing in complex ways; see de Sousa (2001): 109–26.

anger provides a ‘driving motive’ and makes such considerations motivating, but it does not make them right, and thus it does not qualify them as reasons.

On the second reading, Bessy’s anger provides her with a *new* reason that adds to the considerations she already had, and prompts a new deliberation, which leads to a change of mind about what she ought to do in the situation. As a consequence of feeling anger, her previous considered judgment is reversed: she now thinks that she ought to speak up about salary compression. It is not that she ought to do so because she is angry. Rather, her anger makes her appreciate some aspects of the situation that she had not noticed before. For instance, through anger she vividly realizes that salary compression not only affects her family but it also poisons the relations with her colleagues. On the basis of these further elements, she concludes that the matter should be addressed publicly. In this scenario, anger alerts the agent to morally relevant considerations, which were ignored or inadequately attended and factored in previous deliberation.

On both readings, anger has an impact on Bessy’s practical reasoning, but only on the second reading does it provide a *contributory reason* for action, as I shall call it. On the first reading, anger changes the relative motivational force of the conflicting motives at stake, but it does not change the normative status of the reasons the agent had. To make sense of the role of anger in these two scenarios, it is necessary to distinguish the normative and the motivational dimension of the emotions’ impact on practical reasoning. This distinction is useful in locating the disagreement between the rationalist and the sentimentalist proposals, and it helps us to identify their respective strengths and weaknesses.

Whether one endorses sentimentalism or rationalism, it is hard to deny that emotions play a significant role in rational deliberation by affecting our motivational set. It is exactly because emotions have an impact on our motivation that their relation to morality is problematic. Emotions posit a threat to morality insofar as they are likely to produce motives that compete with moral reasons. In fact, rationalists do not deny that emotions supply us with motives that add or reinforce the psychological force of moral reasons, as in the first reading of Bessy’s case. Some rationalists also accord emotions an enabling role. For instance, they may agree that feelings of anger and resentment enable us to appropriately react against social injustice, that love disposes us favorably to others and encourages us to enter cooperative schemes, and that compassion fosters social stability by sensitizing us toward the needs of others. However, the rationalist would not cite these examples of auxiliary motives as cases where emotions make a *normative* contribution. The sentimentalist discounts the rationalist position by pointing out that it postulates intrinsically normative entities. But the rationalist’s resistance to taking emotions as sources of contributory reasons does not require her to invoke intrinsically normative entities, distinct and disconnected from our sensibility. In the next section, I introduce Kant’s argument in support of the distinction between the auxiliary and the normative role of emotions. My point will be that this distinction introduces another and, to my mind, more adequate characterization of the normative relevance of emotions, as constitutive of the exercise of practical reason.

## 2.5 Emotions and the Efficacy of Moral Reasons: Kant's Argument against External Motives

Kant acknowledges that emotions are key auxiliaries to moral motives (Kant (1788): 152ff.; Kant (1797b): 402, 456–8). For instance, he lists parental love, compassion, and sense of honor as emotions that concur with moral duty. Kant is also aware that the appeal to natural emotions is quite pervasive in the practice of morality and thus agrees with the sentimentalist to an important extent. In stark contrast to the sentimentalist, however, Kant regards these natural emotions as mere 'surrogates for the motive of duty'. First, he denies that the emotions that concur with moral duty have the status of 'moral emotions' simply because they favor moral action; by contrast, he takes them as 'merely analogous to moral feelings'.<sup>15</sup> Second, even though Kant recognizes that such emotions play a motivational role in driving agents to conform to duty, he denies that these are genuine moral motives that account for the efficacy of moral reasons ((1788): 152). Third, and as a consequence, he denies that emotions provide direct normative support for morality when they are represented as surrogates for moral motives. Auxiliary incentives cannot forestall immoral motives or reinforce moral ones. In fact, emotions that work vicariously as auxiliary motives *detract* from morality, insofar as they undermine its genuine authority (Kant (1784a), (1788): 152ff.).

While this position seems inimical to the recognition of the moral relevance of emotions, I hope to show that it follows from a conception of practical reason that requires moral sensibility. Famously, Kant proposed such a conception of practical reason as 'entirely new' (1788: 153) and 'more necessary than ever' (1788: 157) to overcome the impracticality of moral philosophy. What makes Kant's conception distinctive and novel is that it aims at representing our responsiveness to moral reasons as part of their objectivity. His task is 'to provide the moral law with influence on the human heart' (1788: 156).

One difficulty in elucidating Kant's account of the interplay between practical reason and the emotions is that he does not use a single term to refer to emotions. In fact, he allows for a complex taxonomy of the modes of our sensibility, which covers quite disparate phenomena of the mind: affects, moral feelings, inclinations, and passions.<sup>16</sup> The relevant issue for Kant is how these phenomena relate to rational agency; and his suggestion is that different affective states bear different relations to rational agency depending on whether they belong to the faculty of desire, or they are simply modifications of the feelings of pleasure and pain.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> On the *analogia instinctorum moralium*, see Kant (1762–1763): 77, 200/449. I owe this reference to Bacin (2006): 19.

<sup>16</sup> Inclinations (*Neigungen*), moral feelings (*moralische Geföhlen*), affects (*Affekten*), passions (*Leidenschaften*). See Kant (1797a): 211–14, (1797b): 7.

<sup>17</sup> Some affects, such as anger, are like urges, not under our control and contribute nothing to moral agency. We are passive in respect to them, and they are obstacles to morality insofar as they undermine reflection and rational deliberation (Kant (1797b): 408; (1797a): 252–3). Passions, such as love, relate to the

In their assessment of Kant's treatment of the emotions, most scholars focus on the argument of the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* §1, which is directed against inclinations as original and blind sensations. Kant's point seems to be that emotions are pre-cognitive feelings that do not convey any moral insight, and thus should not be taken as inarticulate perceptions of moral reasons.<sup>18</sup> Given the random, unruly, incorrigible, and unstable nature of emotional states, Kant argues that they have no moral value, even when they conform to duty (1785: 398).

This argument seemingly fails to do justice to the complexity of emotions and the pervasive role they play in moral life. In order to acknowledge such a role it may seem necessary to discard the simple conception of emotions as unresponsive to judgment, and opt for the cognitivist conception of emotions, which takes emotions to be cognitive modes of discerning values.<sup>19</sup> However, this move eliminates the distinction between Kant's peculiar form of rationalism and the Moral Sense School along with the contemporary sensibility theories typically associated with it.<sup>20</sup> For Kant it is important that moral feelings remain 'subjective relations', because in his view they neither afford moral knowledge nor play any foundational role as the ground of moral obligations ((1788): 22–5, 76–9, (1797b): 399). Therefore, they are not perceptions of moral value in the way some contemporary sensibility theories hold. Their role is not epistemological in the sense of conveying knowledge of some normative properties.<sup>21</sup>

faculty of desire, and are directed to objects and reveal a more complex relation to rationality. They can upset our capacity to reason (1797a: 265), but they can also make us more clever and apt to identify the adequate means, hence improving our instrumental rationality (1797b: 625). Vengeance as a passion manifests some sort of reason (1797a: 270).

<sup>18</sup> See also Kant (1797b): 211–12; Korsgaard (2009): 18–19. Some scholars attribute to Kant a very simple conception of emotions as passive bodily sensations (Sabini & Silver (1987)). The simple model of emotions as sensations does not even explain the emotions animals have, because some of their states are *reactive* and not purely subjective: they react against a threat of some sort (e.g. against life and integrity) (Korsgaard (1996): 150–6; Borges (2004): 147).

<sup>19</sup> Recent attempts to rehabilitate Kant's ethics highlight the complexity of emotions, and show that moral emotions, such as love and compassion, enable us to fulfill our moral duties (Baron (1995); Cagle (2005)). Some Kantians take emotions themselves as 'moral responses' that determine what is morally relevant and, in some cases, what is required (Sherman (1990): 2). In contrast to these views, the proposal I defend in sections 2.6–2.8 does not focus on emotions as sources of reasons or direct modes of moral discernment, but on their pervasive normative role in accounting for the 'susceptibility' (*Empfänglichkeit*) to reason.

<sup>20</sup> Francis Hutcheson had a significant influence on Kant's early conception of moral thinking; see Wood (1996): xiv–xv. In some early writings, Kant admits a universal and uniform capacity for moral feeling, distinct from reason, which contains the foundations of practical principles. But he subsequently distanced himself from this theory: first he questioned the uniformity of feelings; then, he argued that, independently of their uniformity, sentiments cannot provide morality with an objective justification; see Kant (1762–1763): 116, 117, 120, 149; (1785): 408; (1788): 26.

<sup>21</sup> Korsgaard notices that a way out of this problem is to deny that only a standard form of realism can vindicate the claim that emotions are perceptions of value; see Korsgaard (2009): 19. Korsgaard thinks that it is in the nature of *every* animal to have 'normative perceptions', that is, to see the world under the relevant descriptions dictated by their interests and concerns, or their values (2009: 19). My argument goes in the direction of making sensibility constitutive of practical rationality, hence intrinsic to our understanding of moral reasons. However, I find the talk of perception and the claim that emotions are 'perceptive of values'

Nonetheless, emotions do play a significant normative role, which I hope to elucidate by reviewing a different argument that Kant puts forward at various times. The thrust of this argument is that if moral reasons are motivating only in virtue of concurrent emotions, they do not command with genuine authority ((1762–1763): 77, (1788): 72, 83, 85, 152–3, 156–7ff.) To make moral reasons obligating *via* something external to the obligation itself is self-defeating (*contradictio in adjecto*), because it undercuts the very concept of obligation.<sup>22</sup> This argument bears some resemblance to the rationalist argument reviewed above, that if we reduce authority to motivation, we fail to account for the idea of the authority of moral obligations. The standard rationalist argument is that to vindicate the nature of obligations, they should be acknowledged as intrinsically normative entities (Clarke (1705): 193–4). Kant also thinks that obligations are intrinsically normative, but the explanation he offers importantly differs from the standard rationalist one, exactly because of the role he ascribes to moral sensibility.

Contrary to the understanding of Kant's view of emotions based on the usual reading of the first section of the *Grounding*, Kant's concern in this argument is not the blind nature of emotions, but their normative role as surrogates and external aids. The problem is that when taken as auxiliary motives, emotions show that the agent's will is caused externally; hence, it is not a fully autonomous will. It is noteworthy that the same argument can be used for any external surrogates, such as the application of sanctions and rewards (Kant (1784b): 1326).<sup>23</sup> This extension is significant, since it points out that what is objectionable in the sentimentalist approach is not that they appeal to emotions, but that they appeal to emotions that are external to practical reason. That is, the disagreement with sentimentalism and sensibility theories does not stem from Kant's account of emotions as subjective feelings. Instead, it is a disagreement that concerns the role of emotions as external aids to reason (cf. Kant (1785): 441). The same argument works, *mutatis mutandis*, for obligations that derive their normative force from uncritical reliance on beliefs, conventions, and ideologies (Kant (1784a): 36–7). This shows that what Kant finds problematic in the sentimentalist account is neither that emotions lack cognitive cores, nor that they are episodic and adventitious, but that they are taken as uncritical surrogates of reason, which undermine the agent's autonomy.

misleading. In sections 2.6–2.8, I hope to show that emotions are morally relevant by another route, which emphasizes the emotional aspect of practical reason.

<sup>22</sup> 'The maxim must not get its legal character from anything outside of itself. For, if there were an outside source of legal character, then that source, rather than the legal character itself, would be what makes the action right. Instead, the maxim's legal character must be intrinsic' (Korsgaard (1996): 61).

<sup>23</sup> Kant's target is narrowed to the *obligatio per poenas*; but the argument holds for any case where the authority of obligations rests on an external normative expectation, were it a punishment or a reward. As Wood observes: 'From a Kantian standpoint, any use whatever of social coercion in any form to *enforce* ethical duties (whether through private blame, or public opinion, or associations of moral education to shape people's feelings) must be regarded as a wrongful violation of individual freedom by corrupt social customs' (1997: 9).

This argument bears three important consequences. First, both external sanctions and auxiliary motives undermine the very idea of obligation. Second, and as a consequence, the integration of positive moral emotions undermines the genuine authority of moral reasons. This strategy, which had seemed to be an advantage of sentimentalism, is no advantage at all, because it is vulnerable to the objection to externality. Third, moral reasons are genuinely authoritative only if their authority can be explained solely in terms of the motivational states that are alleged to constitute them. This is the most important upshot of Kant's argument. The key question is, then, whether there is an emotion that can figure as the appropriate moral motivational state of rational agents. That emotion is respect.

## 2.6 Normative Authority and Subjective Authority

To place respect at the core of Kant's account of authority requires some argument. His attack against external sanctions and auxiliary incentives is one step in the larger argument meant to show that moral obligations are rationally binding: their contents are requirements of practical reason (Kant (1788): 42, 72, 83, 85–6); and they apply to all rational beings as such. Gauguin's case posits a challenge that any rationalist account of moral reasons must meet to prove its practical relevance. Kant in fact agrees with Williams that moral theory needs to be 'put into practice'.<sup>24</sup>

Kant's claim is that moral reasons command with genuine authority only if they are self-legislated ((1785): 431–2, 438, (1788): 25–40, 33). Any attempt to ground their authority on external foundations is self-defeating (1785: 441–5). Kant appeals to self-legislation to specify the basic requirements of practical reason. As a specification of the demands of practical reasoning, the claim about self-legislation grounds the categorical imperative. It tells us that to reason correctly amounts to conforming to universal principles. However, the appeal to self-legislation is also supposed to show how the requirements of reason are binding. That is, the argument directly addresses the issue of normative authority.

The Kantian argument locates the source of subjective authority in the very deliberative process that leads to the determination of moral reasons. How is it that moral reasons are compelling? The Kantian answer is that moral reasons are chosen among considerations that the agent already finds motivating. The 'good will' works as the basic normative standard for action. The motive that drives the person of good will is the motive of duty. The justifying reason for action is a maxim (a subjective principle of action) with legal character, that is, which has the form of a law. For the maxim to

<sup>24</sup> This is the general purpose of the *Doctrine of Method*, which aims to prove that (i) the laws of pure practical reason have access to the human mind and influence on the maxims (Kant (1788): 151); (ii) one can make objective practical reason subjectively practical as well (ibid.: 151, 153, and 157); and (iii) it is possible to produce not only mere conformity to moral duty (legality of actions), but also genuine 'morality of dispositions' (ibid.: 151). See Bagnoli (2009a); Bacin (2010).

have genuine normative authority its legal character must not derive from anything outside itself; that is, the maxim must be self-legislated.

But how does this account of normative authority explain the compelling character of moral reasons? It seems that there is still a gap between finding moral reasons authoritative (insofar as they are self-legislated) and taking them as conclusive and compelling. Kant's claim that moral reasons are authoritative insofar as they are self-legislated concerns the appeal that such reasons have on rational beings *as such*. This leaves open a more specific question concerning the subjective appeal of these reasons. In other words, the claim about self-legislation offers only a partial answer to the question of authority. It answers the question of normative authority when we consider the matter objectively, that is, from the mere standpoint of pure practical reason. From this standpoint the question of normative authority is straightforward, since purely rational agents are determined by practical reason. There is, however, a further aspect of the same question, which concerns 'animals endowed with reason', such as human beings. For human beings, the issue of moral authority is complicated by the fact that they are also animals driven by a variety of interests and concerns.

To show that moral reasons are objective, Kant thinks that we have to show that they are authoritative for people like Gauguin, that is, for any one of us. This is the aspect of the authority of moral reasons that Kant calls 'subjective' (1788: 42; cf. 151–3, 156–7).<sup>25</sup> His distinctive proposal is that there must be a subjective ground for moral reasons, or they would not guide us. On the basis of the argument reviewed in section 2.6, such a subjective ground cannot be external to morality, an incentive to morality, 'but morality itself, subjectively considered as an incentive' (Kant (1788): 76).<sup>26</sup> This subjective aspect is named respect. Respect is the subjective experience of autonomy, and shows our capacity for practical reason.<sup>27</sup> It accounts for how we are actually driven by the thought that something is right. Kant thought this to be part of our common experience, and a proof of our general propensity to reason, and therefore to morality (1788: 76, 154).

The point is established via a thought experiment. In the face of a tragic choice between rendering false testimony and facing death, the moral agent feels that telling the truth is compelling even though, eventually, he may not take it as an operative reason when faced with the real prospect of losing life (Kant (1788): 30). Supposedly, the agent feels a natural attachment to life; thus, love of life figures prominently among the motives that he reviews in deliberation. In addition, let us assume that the man in question thinks very highly of himself, and he considers his own life worthier than the

<sup>25</sup> The term 'subjective' stands for the dimension of finite subjects; see Kant (1788): 38, 72–5, 81, 88, 117.

<sup>26</sup> 'Respect for the law is not the incentive to morality; instead it is morality itself subjectively considered as an incentive inasmuch as pure practical reason, by rejecting all the claims of self-love in opposition with its own, supplies authority to the moral law, which now alone has influence' (1788: 76).

<sup>27</sup> See Kant (1788), part II; Beck (1960): 233–6.

life of the innocent man against whom he is asked to render false testimony. Yet, he enters rational deliberation about what to do.

The case is meant to show that respect, which is the name for our ‘receptivity to pure moral interest’, becomes ‘the most powerful incentive to moral good’ (Kant (1788): 152). That is to say that respect serves as a constraint on deliberation. This normative role is captured by linking reverence for the law to respect for others as independent sources of legitimate claims.<sup>28</sup> In this case, for instance, respect outranks the agent’s natural attachment to life, and limits the false pretenses of self-love. This natural attachment to life is still present as a maxim of rational self-love, but it occupies a lower position in the final ranking of the incentives. One other effect of respect understood as the recognition of the equal standing of others is that it cancels the arrogant thought that the agent’s life is worthier than the life of others; this maxim does not have any place in the final ranking of incentives. In short, respect undercuts the pretenses of natural self-love and annuls the false claims of self-conceit.

Insofar as respect works as a deliberative constraint, its phenomenology is partly similar to that of sanctions, as it involves painful feelings of frustration. This similarity explains the widespread attention to reactive and residual emotions. But there are some important differences between the effects of constraining one’s maxims by respecting others and the effects of applying sanctions. First, the pain of respect does not derive from punishment or mere frustration. Rather, respect involves a painful feeling of having some of your claims discounted because they were advanced as merely yours. It exposes our limitations and vulnerability in many more ways than frustrating our desires; it is, more basically, ‘the feeling of an incapacity to attain to an idea that is a law for us’ (Kant (1788): 57).

Second, like sanctions, respect works as a deliberative constraint, but unlike sanctions the outcome of deliberation constrained by respect is a form of self-control and self-discipline, which are specific forms of reflective self-government. In other words, respect is an expression of our freedom. These resulting forms of self-government do not aim at curbing natural tendencies, although they may also have such an effect. Their defining task is to provide genuine moral motives, that is, motives that are grounded on mutual respect and recognition. Unlike sanctions, then, respect does not point to any ulterior reason for acting morally. Rather, respect *is* the motive to act morally (Kant (1788): 76).

This second aspect of respect accounts for a third, which concerns its expressive role and distinctive phenomenology. The experience of respect is also the positive and

<sup>28</sup> To justify the derivation of duties of respect, Kant supplies an argument for the equivalence between reverence for the law and respect for others. I do not need to address this argument here, since my task is not to investigate the normative determination of respect. My main focus is the recognitional aspect of reverence for the law. The recognitional aspect of respect has a cognitive core, but this is not to say that it has a specific object. It is directed to the idea of self-legislation, and indirectly to others insofar as they are constitutively implied in the practice of self-legislation. As I have argued elsewhere, Kant’s self-legislation constitutively entails reference to others because the sort of reflexivity that pertains to it is dialogical; see Bagnoli (2007a, 2009b).

elevating experience of being capable of understanding and acting on moral reasons. This experience fosters self-esteem (Kant (1788): 78–9).<sup>29</sup> As for Gauguin and the agent who faces the choice between losing his life or rendering false testimony against an innocent man, to attend to our moral duty might prove just too demanding. But the point is that even when the stakes are high, these agents nonetheless feel the pull of moral duty, and if they end up acting against such duty, they know they have done wrong. This shows that moral reasons have a compelling force, which they do not derive from natural inclinations or external sanctions. Respect is the subjective mode in which moral reasons are felt compelling. These examples elicit ‘respect for ourselves’ (Kant (1788): 161), and reinforce our consciousness of moral life. That we find moral reasons authoritative thus confirms their objectivity.

## 2.7 Respect as the Constitutive Attitude of Rational Agency

Respect is not merely one incentive among the many that rational agents happen to have. The question of moral authority is not simply how this moral incentive outranks others, as Williams suggests in casting his case against the unconditional authority of morality. The normative significance of respect is more basic and pervasive, insofar as it is *the emotional attitude that is constitutive of rational agency*. It sets the standard of moral competence and reciprocity. That is, it is constitutive of the stance of practical reflection. It thus turns out that in the most paradigmatic rationalist model, the mark of rational agency is an emotional capacity.<sup>30</sup>

Since moral agency amounts to rational agency, the normative role of respect is pervasive: the whole practice of rational justification is based on respect. It is in virtue of respect that we are not only susceptible to reasons, but, more fundamentally, capable of forming reasons at all. Respect governs not only the exchange of reasons in the practice of justification of our action to others, but also the very formation of reasons. In determining the reasons that we have to do something, we represent ourselves as members of an ideal community of agents having equal standing.<sup>31</sup> In judging morally, we constitute ourselves as representatives of such an ideal community, and we judge according to the standards of mutual respect and recognition that identify the moral community (Bagnoli (2007a)).

<sup>29</sup> ‘Those who think of Kant’s moral doctrine as one of law and guilt badly misunderstand him. Kant’s main aim is to deepen and to justify Rousseau’s idea that liberty is acting in accordance with a law that we give to ourselves. And this leads not to a morality of austere command but to an ethic of mutual respect and self-esteem’ (Rawls (1971): 256).

<sup>30</sup> In contrast to other prominent accounts, I take respect to be more fundamental than other emotions such as blame, and resentment; cf. Strawson (1962); Skorupski (1998, 2010); Scanlon (2008); Darwall (2006, 2011). Respect is more fundamental in the sense that it is a structural principle of morality and accounts for the conditions upon which blame or resentment can be appropriately expressed. It serves the purpose of governing blame and other excluding or redeeming attitudes; see Bagnoli (2007a).

<sup>31</sup> That is, it requires universality in both form and scope; see O’Neill (2004); Korsgaard (1996): 98, 135–7.

However, the pervasiveness of respect in the practice of rational justification should be sought at the structural level of practical reasoning. Respect works as a limiting condition for something to count as a reason for action, but it does not fully determine the content of reasons for action, nor does it command uniformity. To clarify this point, it is useful to look at the relation between respect and the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative accounts for the legal character of reasons, so that what counts as a reason is something that all rational agents, concerned with organizing their thoughts and actions publicly, could choose. The categorical imperative defines the practical standpoint, objectively considered. It specifies what considerations stand out as rationally valid and thus qualify as reasons for action. Respect defines the practical standpoint, subjectively considered, that is, from the specific perspective of finite, separate, but interdependent individuals, concerned with organizing their thinking and doing publicly. It is this emotional capacity that explains how individual agents *are bound* by principles that they find rationally valid. This emotional capacity does not add anything to the rational validity of moral reasons. Instead, it explains why we cannot ignore their authority (Korsgaard (1996): 151). Respect is not the normative source of moral reasons, but it explains how moral reasons drive us to action. It does so not by adding to the many incentives that rational agents review in deliberation, but by constraining and ranking such incentives (Kant (1788): 76).

On the Kantian view, respect as reverence for the law amounts to respect for others. This equivalence is problematic, and its normative consequences are debatable. But these questions lie outside the scope of this essay. The focus of my argument is narrowed to the normative role that respect plays as *the* moral incentive. To elucidate this role, it is not necessary to consider how it grounds duties we have toward humanity; this is part of normative ethics. Instead, the meta-ethical question addressed here concerns the role of emotions in explicating the categorical authority of moral reasons. My argument has been that on the Kantian view, respect defines the standpoint of practical reflection, where agents take responsibility for what they do. At the structural level of practical rationality, respect does play a normative role, but it does not determine or qualify the many specific relations that we entertain toward others. For this same reason, the normative role of respect is not limited to actions that are directed toward or affect others, such as cases of wrongdoing or benefiting someone.<sup>32</sup> Rather, its role as the moral incentive is to establish the subjective authority of any moral reason. As the moral incentive, it affords the (subjective) conditions of the possibility of mutual intelligibility and coordination among mutually affecting agents.

<sup>32</sup> Kant's self-legislation constitutively entails reference to others because the sort of reflexivity that pertains to it is impersonal; see O'Neill (2004); Bagnoli (2007a). However, to insist on the constitutive role of others does not imply that this notion of respect as reverence is *directed to or addressed to* others: this is a further normative determination of respect that I am not considering here. I believe that this latter distinction accounts for the difference between the dialogical model I am proposing and Darwall's second-personal model, and better explains why respect does not govern only reasons for action that yield bipolar obligations; cf. Darwall (2011).

It is the subjective counterpart of our need for principles, and that is the reason why it is best understood as the psychological specification of the claim about self-legislation.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.8 Respect as the Emotional Aspect of Practical Reason

This account of respect as the attitude constitutive of rational agency gives us important resources for rethinking the relation between emotions and practical reason. The problem of normative authority is that of understanding how reasons compel us to act. My argument has been that Kant approaches this question from two complementary standpoints. From the point of view of pure practical reason, moral reasons are binding for all rational beings insofar as they are rational. This account of moral authority fails to adequately account for Gauguin's case, and many follow Williams in thinking that this failure shows that moral reasons lack distinctive authority. This conclusion is too hasty, though, since the Kantian model of moral reasons does not rest solely on the objective standards of pure practical reason. On the contrary, it is precisely designed to address cases such as Gauguin's. As the man in the example of the false testimony, Gauguin *feels* the authority of the moral demands, even if he does not properly attend to such demands. His moral failure is both normative and motivational, since he fails to be guided by his own reasons.<sup>34</sup> Gauguin's failure to act on reasons does not show that his reasons lack authority; it only shows that reasons do not have irresistible power (Korsgaard (1996): 104).

To explain the phenomena of the authority of moral reasons, Kant attributes to 'pure practical reason' an emotional or subjective aspect. It is in virtue of this subjective and emotional aspect that we are capable of normative guidance. I take this to be the core of Kant's distinctive form of rationalism. On the standard rationalist account, the question arises about how to close the gap between reasons and motives (Kant (1788): 391). Some hold that the gap is closed by a causal mechanism that disposes us to act on moral reasons. But this implies that moral reasons are not normative reasons, and that they drive action only if there is a concomitant emotion, desire, or interest that activates a disposition to act. By contrast, the Kantian view is that there is no extra factor required to close the gap between reason and action. Or, more accurately, on

<sup>33</sup> In my previous works, I have defended a dialogical view of respect as mutual recognition, which takes the reference to others as constitutive of respect (Bagnoli (2007a, 2009b)). The dialogical view of respect is both psychological and modal. It is modal, insofar as it accounts for self-legislation as the requirement that we justify our actions on the basis of reasons that all rational agents could coherently adopt. It is psychological, insofar as it identifies respect as the subjective condition of our receptivity or responsiveness to practical reasoning. I owe this characterization to Onora O'Neill.

<sup>34</sup> I have argued elsewhere that these are failures of agency, but they are not reducible to incoherence; see Bagnoli (2009b). In contrast to the incoherence account (Korsgaard (1996): chs 3–4), I argue that immoralists do not fully enjoy autonomous agency because they are not capable of engaging in the proper form of practical reflection, which requires relating to others as having equal standing. The dialogical account I propose has the distinctive merit of identifying the internal costs of disregarding moral reasons, and of showing that immoralists may *become* susceptible to practical reason.

this view there is no gap between moral reasons and motives. Respect as the constitutive emotional aspect of rational activity warrants a conceptual connection between morality and normative reasons. Contrary to the standard rationalist and sentimentalist models that take the relation between practical reason and sensibility to be contingent, the Kantian view makes it structural. To be a rational agent, one must have the motive to comply with moral reasons, and this motive is respect. Practical reason is thus not merely procedural or computational, but also an emotional capacity.<sup>35</sup>

## 2.9 Conclusion

This view of respect as the emotional aspect of practical reason avoids the dilemma between the rationalist view of the objective demands of morality that have no grip on us, and a sentimentalist view of moral reasons that denies their categorical authority. Both these views mischaracterize and misunderstand the relation between morality and the emotions. They mistakenly assume that emotions are separable from or only contingently related to practical reason. By contrast, the Kantian model takes this relation as constitutive and structural: to undertake the practical standpoint requires us not only to act and think on principles that have the form of a law, but also to display a moral sensibility marked by respect. These requirements are constitutive of the practical standpoint, that is, they represent what is necessary for us to think and act as rational agents, together with other finite and interdependent rational agents.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> This shows that 'emotions must play an essential role in moral life even on the most rationalistic theory' (Korsgaard (1996): 151 n. 26). In support of a deep convergence between the Aristotelian and Kantian on this point, see Korsgaard's remarks that 'The implication for rational beings is that the development of rationality requires the acquisition of a second nature—a set of emotional responses and an accompanying normative view of the world that conforms to the demands of reason. The acquisition of virtue, a condition of the receptive faculties that makes us sensitive to the demands of reason, is therefore essential to the perfection of our moral nature, and to the integrity that makes agency possible' (2009: 19).

<sup>36</sup> A distant ancestor of this essay was presented at the International Conference on Emotions at the Universities of Neuchâtel and Berne in 2005, and then delivered as the *E.J. and Rosa Lee Audi Memorial Lecture in Ethics* at Colgate University in 2007. I should like to thank these audiences, and especially Scott Anderson, Maudemarie Clark, Josep Corbi, Stefaan Cuypers, Ronald de Sousa, and Christine Tappolet. I am also grateful to Stefano Bacin, Ian Carter, Bennett Helm, Oliver Sensen, and Steven Winkelman for comments on more recent drafts of this chapter.

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