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Feeling values: a phenomenological case for moral realism

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FEELING VALUES:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE FOR MORAL REALISM

by

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“Love is the extremely difficult realization that something other than oneself is real. Love, and so art and morals, is the discovery of reality.”

- Iris Murdoch, *The Sublime and the Good*

DEDICATION

For Donald Burke Hammond

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ABSTRACT

The present work is an attempt to vindicate the notion that feelings are a source of justification for our ordinary moral and evaluative beliefs. On the account I defend, certain intentionally directed emotional experiences constitute *perceptions* of the evaluative features of objects and states of affairs in the world. The unique properties presented through such emotional experiences are what we ordinarily call *values,* and these irreducibly evaluative properties are the truthmakers of our evaluative and moral judgments. In sum, feelings are an avenue for arriving at moral and evaluative knowledge, because feelings are our access to those special features of the world that determine what the moral and evaluative facts are.

My case proceeds in three parts. In Part I, I draw upon conceptual resources taken from Alexius Meinong and Franz Brentano in order defeat to recent efforts to reduce value concepts and properties to other non-evaluative terms. In Part II, I advance an affect-based version of substantive value realism—*Affective Value Perceptualism*—according to which values are *sui generis* properties given through intentional acts of emotional experience. On the broadly Husserlian account I defend, evaluative perceptions are emotionally-mediated *presentations*—that is, intentional experiences in which we are immediately aware of the

evaluative features of some intentional object, and this by way of non-conceptual mental content. In Part III, I attempt to show how such an affect-based realism can furnish action-guiding norms and *a priori* moral principles. After tracing the historical aversion to the latter idea to a specious intellectualist prejudice in our understanding of the *a priori*, I develop an appropriation of Max Scheler's *material a priori* account of values. According to the latter, law-like constraints on correct evaluative judgments and actions are grounded in the *material essences* of emotional phenomena, which constitute a unique domain of *a priori* experiential facts alongside those governing all other experiential modalities (e.g. color, tone, space, etc.). After motivating the material *a priori* through an analysis of color incompatibility knowledge, I argue that the phenomenological analysis of paradigmatically evaluative emotions reveals *a priori* facts grounded in the nature of evaluative experience itself.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Husserl's Works

APS 2001. *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis.* A. J. Steinbock, trans. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers. *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis. Aus Vorlesungs und Forschungsmanuskripten, 1918–1926. Husserliana* vol. xi. M. Fleischer, ed. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966.

EJ 1973. *Experience and Judgment.* L. Landgrebe, ed. J. S. Churchill and K. Ameriks, trans. Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press.

FTL 1969. *Formal and Transcendental Logic.* D. Cairns, trans. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. *Formale und transzendentale Logik. Husserliana* vol. xvii. P. Janssen, ed. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974.

Ideas I 2014 *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company

Ideas II 1989. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. Second Book. Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution. R. Rojcewicz and Schuwer, trans. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution. Husserliana* vol. iv. M. Biemel, ed. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952.

LI 1970a. *Logical Investigations*, 2 vols. J. N. Findlay, trans. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. *Logische Untersuchungen. Erster Teil. Prolegomena zur reinen Logik. Text der 1. und der 2. Auflage. Husserliana* vol. xviii. E. Holenstein, ed. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975. *Logische Untersuchungen. Zweiter Band: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis. Husserliana* vol. xix. U. Panzer, ed. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984.

Scheler's Works

FE 1978. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism* (5th rev. ed.), trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger 1. Funk.. *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die matierale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus.* Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press.

R 1961 *Ressentiment*, trans. Lewis B. Coser and William W. Holdheim Marquette University

INTRODUCTION:
BECAUSE IT FEELS THAT WAY: EMOTION, VALUES, AND PERCEPTION

"Because it *feels* that way." This is almost always where the buck stops when my undergraduate students are asked to justify their beliefs that certain things are morally good or bad, right or wrong. Take the example of deliberately inflicting pain and suffering for no other purpose. A majority of students will acknowledge believing that the latter is morally wrong, and even the most skeptically inclined students will admit that it at least *seems* to be true to say that such an action is morally wrong. When asked to explain this putative fact, justification will typically begin with a series of rational inferences to other propositions assumed to be true—e.g. "Causing pain could only be justified if there were some other end to be realized." But when the inferential chain reaches certain foundational claims—say, that "Pleasure is *ceteris paribus* better than pain" or that "Suffering for its own sake is bad"—the justification invariably bottoms out with a flat-footed appeal to some state of "feeling that it's true." By comparison, when asked to explain how they know certain truths in non-moral domains—say for example, that two plus two equals four—the response is almost never that it "*feels* that way." In such cases, other epistemic locutions are used, such as "seeing logically" or "just knowing." And yet, just as in the latter cases, something's "*feeling*" a certain way at least purports to be an avenue for *knowing* about some way things are, evaluatively speaking.

The present work is an attempt to vindicate the notion that feelings are a source of justification for our ordinary evaluative beliefs. On the account I defend, certain intentionally directed emotional experiences constitute *perceptions* of the evaluative features of objects and

states of affairs in the world. The properties and features presented through such emotional experiences are what we ordinarily call *values,* and these irreducibly evaluative properties are the truthmakers of our evaluative and moral judgments. Drawing upon insights from the phenomenological tradition, I make the case that emotional presentations disclose the evaluative profile of the world by way of non-conceptual and irreducibly affective mental contents. In contrast to existing accounts, evaluative perceptions are not intellectual appearances or true-seeming thoughts that are merely accompanied by some affective content. Rather, an evaluative perception is an emotionally-mediated *presentation*—that is, an intentional experience in which we are immediately aware of some way the world is evaluatively speaking. On this picture, propositionally formulated and inferentially generated evaluative judgments are derivative forms of moral cognition, which are founded upon and justified by the perception of those evaluative states of affairs that serve as their truthmakers. In sum, feelings are an avenue for arriving at knowledge of evaluative truths, because feelings are our access to those special features of the world that determine what those evaluative truths are.

To be sure, one can maintain the belief that emotions are explanatory of our evaluative and moral knowledge without endorsing such a perceptualist framework. Indeed, the perceptualist account is only one species of a broader category of so-called *Sentimentalist* views. Often traced back to early 18th Century moral sense theorists,[1] sentimentalism is given

[1] Sentimentalism's early roots can be found in Clarke (1706); Shaftesbury (1711); Hutcheson (1725); Hume (1740); Brentano (1889); Husserl (1988); Scheler (1913–1916). Contemporary versions can be found in Ewing (1947, 1959); Wiggins (1976, 1987); Chisholm (1981, 1986); Falk (1986); McDowell (1985); Blackburn (1984, 1998); Gibbard (1990); Lemos (1994); Tappolet (1995, 2000); Anderson (1993); Mulligan (1998); Sainsbury (1998); Skorupski (2000); D'Arms and Jacobson (2000a; 2000b); Zimmerman (2001); Helm (2001); Oddie (2005); Danielsson and Olson (2007)

its most ecumenical and succinct definition by John Skorupski (2010), who defines it as "the view that value concepts, moral concepts, practical reasons - some or all of these - can be analyzed in terms of feeling."[2] While sentimentalists agree that emotions are fundamental to our evaluative and moral lives, they diverge radically in how they understand the relevant analysis. As such, there are seemingly as many sentimentalisms as there are sentimentalists. Before I turn to build my case for the perceptualist thesis, I will first situate my account in opposition to an especially prominent form of sentimentalism, according to which evaluative concepts and properties do not ultimately refer to substantive features of the world, but are rather reducible to normative relations that hold between emotional attitudes and some other non-evaluative terms. On this rival account, feelings are not presentations of values. Rather, values are themselves defined in terms of emotional attitudes that would be reasonable, fitting, or otherwise appropriate for one to have.

Sentimentalism and Evaluative Objectivity: Recessive Sentimentalism Versus Substantive Sentimentalism

While sentimentalism is neither a new nor an uncommon metaethical view, empirical research into folk moral attitudes conducted over the past thirty years has motivated renewed interest in sentimentalism, as there is a growing consensus among psychologists that ordinary moral and evaluative judgment and deliberation is, at bottom, an emotional affair. One of the most influential endeavors to draw this body of research together into a

[2] Skorupski (2010) p. 125

complete model of moral psychology comes from Joshua Greene and Jonathan Haidt (2002). Central to their analysis is the dual-process model of decision-making (Chaiken and Trope 1999), according to which human beings make judgments and solve problems through the cooperation of two different cognitive processing systems: (i) The "hot" or "intuitive" system, which is fast, automatic, noninferential, cognitively encapsulated, and affect-laden; (ii) The "cool" or "rational" system, which is slow, inferential, cognitively corrigible, and consciously controlled. The principle claim of Greene and Haidt's analysis is that paradigmatic evaluative judgments are typically generated through noninferential "intuition-like" affective states associated with hot processes, and that cool processes of inferential reasoning only serve an ancillary role in rendering moral judgments:

> [M]oral judgment is much like aesthetic judgment: we see an action or hear a story and we have an instant feeling of approval or disapproval. These feelings are best thought of as affect-laden intuitions, as they appear suddenly and effortlessly in consciousness, with an affective valence (good or bad), but without any feeling of having gone through steps of searching, weighing evidence, or inferring a conclusion.[3]

Significant evidence for this model is drawn from functional neuroimaging studies from Jorge Moll and colleagues (2001), which demonstrated that brain states associated with hot processes exhibit increased activity when subjects were presented with claims with moral content (e.g. 'The state hung an innocent person') as opposed to claims devoid of moral content (e.g. 'Stones are made of water'). Other studies suggest that while cool processes can and do interact with hot processes in the deliberative sequence, their involvement usually

[3] Greene and Haidt (2002*)* p. 517. See also Haidt (2001).

takes the form of *post hoc* rationalizations of initial evaluative judgments arrived at through automatic affective responses (Kuhn 1991; Kunda 1990; Nisbett and Wilson 1977; and Perkins, Farady, and Bushey 1991). In stark contrast to the rationalist psychological paradigm (Kohlberg 1969; Piaget 1932/1965; Turiel 1983), according to which moral judgments are rendered through rule-governed rational deliberation, Haidt (2001) claims that these trends in research suggest that evaluative judgments are made through a "feels right ethic," whereby "We use conscious reflection to mull over a problem until one side *feels right*. Then we stop."[4] On this account, while inferential reasoning can sometimes help us to narrow in on the morally salient details of a given deliberative scenario, this step comes only after the moral import of these details has been decided through some prior noninferential affective process. In this way, evaluative reasoning is guided by affective intuitions. Or as Haidt puts the Humean point, in our evaluative lives, the "emotional dog" wags the "rational tail."[5]

If we take the recent convergence in empirical moral psychology to be any indication, it is plausible to impose the following broad sentimentalist constraint on our best metaethical theories:

> ***Affectivity*:** Paradigmatic evaluative judgments are either *constituted by* or *explained by reference to* emotional states

While the endorsement of some form of *Affectivity* has become increasingly popular among metaethicists, radically different implications have been drawn from it. One way in

[4] Haidt (2001) p. 829
[5] ibid. 830

which affect-based models of evaluative judgment diverge is with respect to the objectivity of evaluative discourse. While many sentimentalists endorse the primacy of emotion in our evaluative lives, the idea that *Affectivity* is compatible with some form of objectivism is far from obvious. Moreover, for as much as folk evaluative discourse might suggest that something's "feeling right" purports to be a legitimate basis for drawing putatively objective moral judgments, emotions are just as often thought to be paradigmatically subjective and non-truth tracking states, as evidenced by the connotation of epistemic deficiency when we say that something is "*just a feeling*." Indeed, the idea that the primacy of emotion in evaluative judgment should pose a challenge to objectivism is an old one, often traced back to David Hume (though not without exegetical controversy[6]), who claims that "there is nothing in itself valuable or despicable, desirable or hateful, beautiful or deformed" insofar as "these attributes arise from the particular constitution and fabric of human sentiment and affection."[7] According to a lineage of arguments that Shaun Nichols (2004) classifies as the "Humean Sentimentalist" tradition, the fact that our moral judgments are grounded in our emotional states suggests that the truth or falsity of our judgments is an arbitrary matter of our possessing a certain emotional repertoire. Nichols summarizes the "Humean challenge" to moral objectivism as follows:

1. Rational Creatures who lack certain emotions would not make the moral judgments that we do.

[6] See Blackburn 1993; Mackie 1980; Norton 1982; Sturgeon 2001. As Nichols (2004) notes, Hume himself may not have been a Humean Sentimentalist, though many of the arguments in this strain of thought are grounded in Humean considerations.
[7] David Hume. 1742 (1987), 162

2. There is no principled basis for maintaining that these certain emotions (on which our moral judgments depend) are the *right* emotions.[8]

Of course, the extent to which accepting *Affectivity* is either in tension or in harmony with *Evaluative Objectivity* will depend upon how we are to understand the kind of emotional states that are thought to constitute or explain our evaluative judgments, including in particular whether they are taken to be intentionally directed states or something closer to syndrome-like reactions. But just as fundamentally, the extent to which *Affectivity* is amenable to objectivism will also depend upon what, exactly, it means for evaluative judgment to be an "objective" affair. Perhaps the most ecumenical definition of objectivism comes from Christine Korsgaard, who claims that to believe that there are objective moral truths is to believe "that there are answers to moral questions" and that "when we ask practical questions like 'What must I do?' or 'What is best in this case?' or 'How should I live?'[9] there are correct and incorrect things to say." In contrast to "skepticism, relativism, subjectivism, and all the various ways of thinking that the subject [of ethics] is hopeless,"[10] Korsgaard claims that for the objectivist—or in her terminology, the "procedural realist"—our correct answers to moral questions are subject to constraints that are judgment-independent: "[T]here are answers to moral questions," she claims, "because there are correct procedures for arriving at them."[11] Of course, as Korsgaard acknowledges, objectivists radically diverge

[8] Shaun Nichols (2004) p. 185
[9] Korsgaard (1992) p. 36
[10] Korsgaard (1992) p. 36
[11] ibid. 38

in what they take these constraints to be. Nevertheless, as a baseline, we can formulate this minimal conception of evaluative objectivity as follows:

> ***Evaluative Objectivity*:** Some evaluative judgments are correct, and their correctness conditions make reference to judgment-independent normative criteria

The challenge for someone who endorses both *Evaluative Objectivity* and *Affectivity* is to show how there can be correct answers to our moral questions while explaining how our grasp of these answers should essentially involve emotional states. To this end, we can distinguish two major families of sentimentalist views that endorse *Evaluative Objectivity*—what I will be calling ***Recessive Sentimentalism*** and ***Substantive Sentimentalism***, respectively. These opposing families differ over two fundamental questions. The first concerns the ontological status of normative truths, including in particular whether evaluative predicates like "good" or "valuable" make reference to substantive evaluative properties. The second concerns the relationship between affective states and normative truths.

The first way to distinguish sentimentalists who endorse *Evaluative Objectivity* is over their affirmation or rejection of what Christine Korsgaard has referred to as *Substantive Realism*. Take for example the following evaluative judgments: "Suffering for its own sake is bad"; "Happiness is good"; "The sky is beautiful." According to a substantive realist account of such judgments, to say that some object is "good" or "bad" or "beautiful" or otherwise valuable is to posit object-side properties that are *irreducibly evaluative*; the fact that the object possesses these substantive features is what makes our evaluative judgments

correct. Whatever else an irreducibly evaluative property is on this account, what sets it apart from any other property is that it is thought to underwrite its own normative force: If something's being valuable is a reason to promote it or respond to it in certain ways, this is because it simply belongs to the intrinsic nature of that property that it calls for that response. In this way, Korsgaard claims, for the substantive realist, the answer to a moral question is ultimately a *metaphysical* one:

> We can keep asking why: "Why must I do what is right?"-"Because it is commanded by God"- "But why must I do what is commanded by God?" - and so on, in a way that apparently can go on forever. This is what Kant called a search for the unconditioned - in this case, for something that will bring the question "Why must I?" to an end. The unconditional answer must be one that makes it impossible, unnecessary, or incoherent to ask why again. The [substantive] realist move is to bring this regress to an end by fiat: he declares that some things are *intrinsically* normative.[12]

The idea that evaluative objectivity turns upon such intrinsically normative value properties has been thought by many to count in favor of some form of moral nihilism. J.L. Mackie famously objects to the notion of moral objectivity precisely insofar as he takes it to entail properties with "intrinsic prescriptivity," and thus would commit us to positing queer entities unlike anything else in the world:

> The assertion that there are objective values or intrinsically prescriptive entities or features of some kind, which ordinary moral judgments presuppose, is, I hold, not meaningless but false...An objective good would be sought by anyone who was acquainted with it, not because of any contingent fact that this person, or every person, is so constituted that he desires this end, but just because the end has to-be-pursuedness somehow built into it.[13]

[12] Korsgaard (1992) 34
[13] Mackie (1977) p. 38/40

By Mackie's lights, to endorse the idea of an objective good or a non-hypothetical end is to establish a metaphysical link between a substantive property *P* and a normative fact about the responses we should have toward something on account of *P*, such that the intrinsic properties of an object or a state of affairs constitute non-derivative normative criteria for those responses. When applied to objective values, for example, we would have to say that it simply belongs to the intrinsic nature of certain entities that they call for a given evaluative response; an "admirable" object, for example, would be an object that possesses intrinsic "to-be-admiredness," a "lovable" object would possess intrinsic "to-be-lovedness," etc. In the case of actions, an objectively "right" action would somehow have "to-be-done-ness" built in. On Mackie's account, positing such properties would require us to radically alter our picture of the world: "If there were objective values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe."[14] Insofar as we can provide alternative, anti-realist explanations of our evaluative practices that better cohere with our naturalistic paradigm, the ontological profligacy and queerness of value properties is thought to count against moral objectivism.

Of course, not all proponents of evaluative objectivity endorse the substantive realist picture. While Korsgaard accepts that there are correct answers to our moral questions, she denies that "there are answers to moral questions because there are metaphysical entities and facts that those questions ask about."[15] On Korsgaard's account, evaluative judgment is to be

[14] Mackie (1977) p. 31
[15] Korsgaard (1992) p. 36

understood not as an epistemic matter of discovering "knowledge of the normative part of the world," but as an irreducibly practical affair of deciding what there is reason to do: "Normative concepts exist because human beings have normative problems. And we have normative problems because we are self-conscious rational animals, capable of reflection about what we ought to believe and to do."[16] T.M. Scanlon endorses a similar non-substantive view of evaluative objectivity. For Scanlon, normativity is grounded not in *entities* but *relations,* relations that can be thought to obtain only from within the standpoint of our normative practices themselves. That is, *reason-giving relations*:

> [C]ontrary to what is sometimes said, belief in irreducibly normative truths does not involve commitment to any special *entities*. The essential element in normative statements is not a term referring to an entity, but a *relation*: the relation R(p, c, a), that holds between a proposition, a set of conditions, and an action or attitude when *p* is a reason for a person in situation *c* to do or hold *a*...Normative truths do not require strange metaphysical truth-makers. Such truths are determined by the standards of the normative domain itself.[17]

Scanlon claims further that, since countenancing such reason-giving relations is something we do only from the domain of normative discourse, holding that there are normative truths does not commit us to claiming that they are part of the furniture of the world that science aims to describe:

> If by "the world" one means the natural world of physical objects and causal relations, which science aims to describe, then there is no disagreement [with Mackie]. Those of us who believe in irreducibly normative truths would not claim that the normative relation R itself is part of the (natural) world—that to claim that it holds is to make a claim about natural facts. Indeed, we explicitly deny this.

[16] ibid. 47
[17] Scanlon (2009) p. 19

> Normative facts about reasons, as we understand them are "part of the world" only in the broader sense in which "the world" is simply the reflection of all true sentences.[18]

Now, while objectivists like Scanlon will reject intrinsically normative substantive value properties, this is not thought to entail the elimination of meaningful discourse about evaluative properties.[19] Indeed, the most prominent example of a non-substantive account of evaluative properties can be found in Scanlon's own *Buck Passing Analysis of Value* (BPA). According to the BPA, X's being "good" or otherwise valuable is not itself a substantive property, but the merely formal property of having lower-order non-evaluative properties that provide reasons to have a favorable attitude towards X.[20] The BPA is a close cousin of the *Fitting Attitude Analysis* of value (FA), according to which an object is called good insofar as it would be fitting or appropriate to have a pro-attitude towards it. Contemporary BPA and FA theories alike are often traced back to Franz Brentano, who maintained that to call something good or valuable is just to say that it is "fitting" or "correct" [*richtig*] to love it.[21] As Brentano claims:

> If we call [*nennen*] an object good … we do not thereby want to add a further determination [*Bestimmung*] to the determinations of the thing in question … If we call certain objects good, and others bad, we say no more than that whoever loves this, hates that, is correct to do so [*verhalte sich richtig*].[22]

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[18] ibid. 17
[19] Crisp (2009) provides a compelling argument for thinking at the traditional BPA does lead to eliminativism about value concepts
[20] Scanlon (1998)
[21] Brentano (1902)
[22] Brentano (1952) p. 144

While Brentano's non-substantive account analyses value in terms of emotional attitudes like love and hate, contemporary buck-passing and fitting attitude accounts diverge over the nature of the relevant pro-attitudes in the analysans of value. For some, the pro-attitudes in question are to be understood as cognitive states like beliefs or other belief-like evaluative attitudes (Scanlon 1998; Stratton-Lake 2005; Suikkanen 2005); for others these pro-attitudes are to be understood as desires, intentions, or other motivational attitudes (Gibbard 1998; Parfit 2011; Schroeder 2010). Accordingly, given the range of possible interpretations of the relevant pro-attitudes, neither the BPA nor the FA entail the endorsement of some form of *Affectivity.* Nevertheless, both views are readily amenable to such an endorsement, and some of the most prominent contemporary buck-passing and fitting attitude accounts follow Brentano in maintaining that the relevant pro-attitudes in question are *emotional* in nature (D'arms and Jacobson 2000a, 2000b; Danielsson and Olson 2007; Mulligan 1998; Oddie 2005; Skorupski 2010; Zimmerman 2001; Wiggins 1987). These emotion-based variants of BPA and FA are often categorized under what D'arms and Jacobson have called *Neo-Sentimentalism,* which turns upon the claim that "to think that X has some evaluative property F is to think it appropriate [or fitting, merited, rational, etc.] to feel F in response to X."[23]

When considered as a catch-all category for emotion-based forms of non-substantive objectivism, neo-sentimentalism comes close to fitting the bill. However, this characterization is significantly complicated by the fact that some versions of neo-sentimentalism are compatible with substantive value properties, as the concept of emotional

[23] Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson (2000a) pp. 722–48. See also D'Arms and Jacobson (2000b) pp. 65–90.

appropriateness is sometimes analyzed in terms of the emotion's correspondence to the object's evaluative features. Christine Tappolet (2011) and Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen (2004) have suggested that D'arms and Jacobson's own neo-sentimentalist account comes close to such a view at times. As D'arms and Jacobson claim, "[e]motions present things to us as having certain evaluative features," and thus "when we ask whether an emotion is fitting...we are asking about the correctness of these presentations."[24] In this way, they claim, "fittingness of an emotion is like the truth of a belief,"[25] which, in Tappolet's estimation, suggests that a correct emotional presentation is one that is adequate to some way things are evaluatively speaking. [26] For her own part, Tappolet herself advances a form of Neo-Sentimentalism that is explicitly friendly to substantive value properties—what she calls *Epistemic* or *Descriptive Neo-Sentimentalism*—according which value-making emotional attitudes are fitting or appropriate to their objects just insofar as they adequately present their object's evaluative features. As Tappolet claims: "An emotion of admiration with respect to a friend will be correct just in case the friend is really admirable...It simply amounts to saying that such an emotion is one that corresponds to how things are evaluatively speaking."[27] Unlike the non-substantive variants of BPA and FA, Tappolet's descriptive neo-sentimentalism "has no eliminative or reductive ambitions," and "is compatible with robust values realism" as well as response-dependent value realism

[24] D'arms and Jacobson (2000b) p. 72
[25] ibid.
[26] Tappolet (2011) pp. 120n/127n. Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen (2004) raise the same interpretative question about D'arms and Jacobson's account. "Unless we are mistaken," they claim, "fittingness on this view is supposed to consist in some relation of adequacy between the emotion and the value of its object," and thus, "it is fitting to feel F in response to X, where F is an emotion that represents X as having F, if the evaluative representation F contains is correct, i.e., insofar as X does have the evaluative property F" (2004; 423n).
[27] Tappolet (2011) p. 120

alike.[28] Tappolet traces the roots of descriptive neo-sentimentalism back to Francis Hutcheson, Alexius Meinong, and Max Scheler, and identifies a range of contemporary views that fall under the definition (Brady 2014; Cowan 2015; Cuneo 2006; Deonna and Teroni 2012; Döring 2003; Johnston 2001; Milona 2016; Oddie 2005; Pelser 2014; Roberts 2013; Tolhurst 1991; Wedgwood 2007).

As the foregoing considerations show, while buck-passing, fitting attitude, and neo-Sentimentalist accounts all bear important connections, none of these categories can serve as a proper class of emotion-based alternatives to substantive realism. In order to accurately demarcate the class of emotion-based variants of non-substantive realism, I submit that the latter can be more helpfully categorized as members of a larger family of what I call, following terminology taken from Alexius Meinong, *Recessive Sentimentalism*.[29] In Meinong's framework, an evaluative property is called "recessive" iff it is reducible, without residue, to relational facts obtaining between some non-evaluative property X and certain emotional attitudes directed towards X.[30] Call this analysis of value *Recessive Sentimentalism*. On a recessive sentimentalist analysis of the value of beauty, for example, to say that the sky is beautiful is not to posit some substantive property of the sky to which the term 'beauty' corresponds; Rather, to say that the sky is beautiful is only to make a claim about certain emotional attitudes directed towards the sky—e.g. that such attitudes are *fitting*, *rational,*

[28] Tappolet (2011) p.131
[29] Meinong (1923). In Meinong's framework, a "recessive" property of some object X is a property that is reducible, without residue, to relational facts obtaining between X and certain psychological states. See Mulligan (2017) for a helpful overview of Meinong's transition from a recessive analysis to a substantive realist view.
[30] Meinong (1923). See Mulligan (2017) for a helpful overview of Meinong's transition from a recessive analysis to a substantive realist view.

required etc. Recently, there has been a proliferation of recessive sentimentalist analyses offered under different banners, some styled as emotion-based variants of BPA (Danielsson and Olson 2007; Skorupski 2010) while others as emotion-based variants of FA (D'arms and Jacobson 2000; Mulligan 1998; Zimmerman 2001). What unites recessive sentimentalist analyses is the claim that value properties are exhaustively analyzable in terms of an emotional attitude and its relation to some other normative concept that is thought to be foundational to morality—e.g. ought, reasons, fittingness, rightness, etc. Recessive sentimentalist analyses are often thought to be an attractive option insofar as they promise to preserve the fundamental connection between our emotional life and evaluative truths while avoiding the explanatory profligacy and queerness of positing irreducibly evaluative and intrinsically normative entities.

Of course, the attractions of the recessive sentimentalist analysis come at a price. The first issue is that they are not readily amenable to the phenomenology of ordinary evaluative experience. On a recessive sentimentalist analysis, what makes some X good or bad is that there are relational facts that provide some normative reason to have certain emotional attitudes towards X. But in most ordinary cases of evaluative judgment, in taking something to be good or bad, we do not find ourselves directed towards our emotional attitudes and their status as *relata* in reason-giving relations, and only thereupon deem something to be valuable. Rather, we are directed towards some value-laden way the world already shows up for us. Consider the following example from Gilbert Harman (1977): "If you round a corner and see a group of young hoodlums pour gasoline on a cat and ignite it, you do not need to *conclude* that what they are doing is wrong; you do not need to figure anything out; you can *see*

that it is wrong."[31] Indeed, our ordinary lives are replete with scenarios in which we seem to survey the value of something before we consider the reasons for having certain attitudes. In fact, it is often the case our reasons for having certain attitudes seem to consist precisely in the value that things appear to have. As Roger Crisp (2005) argues, when one is viewing Piero della Francesca's *Madonna*, one might regard it as beautiful or as something to be admired. However, Crisp argues, I don't encounter it in the first place as an object with natural properties that provide me with reasons to have a favorable attitude towards it. Rather, I have a favorable attitude towards it insofar as I see it as valuable:

> When I look at Piero della Francesca's *Madonna*, I see it as a good or beautiful painting. I recognize that it has certain natural, non-evaluative properties, and that its beauty depends on its having those properties. And, of course, I see it as an artefact to be admired. But the reason for admiration lies not in the natural properties - these could be understood by someone with no aesthetic sense - but in the beauty.[32]

From beautiful works of art to horrifying scenes of cruelty and human depravity, the world shows up for us as having evaluative features. The recessive sentimentalist is thus saddled with the problem of explaining why our ordinary evaluative experience should so poorly reflect the actual nature of evaluative and moral truth. This problem is not only an epistemic concern. For the ontological purport of our ordinary evaluative experience is also reflected in the nature of our value concepts themselves. Indeed, some reasons to have certain evaluative attitudes seem to be grounded solely in *what things are*, independent of their

[31] Harman (1974) p. 4. Emphasis original.
[32] Crisp (2005) p. 82

standing in certain extrinsic reason-giving relations. For example, it is extremely plausible to say that pain is disvaluable not only in virtue of standing in certain reason-giving relations—e.g. insofar as pain distracts me from my other aims, etc.—but because the unpleasant phenomenal character of pain is *immanently* disvaluable. *Prima facie*, the value of pain is grounded in the intrinsic nature of *what pain is,* and not its status as a relatum in a reason-giving relation that makes reference to considerations besides pain. The same point extends to a range of evaluative categories. Take "pleasantness." Typically, I don't decide that some scene or sojourn is "pleasant" insofar as I believe it would be fitting or maximally rational to have a positive attitude towards it. Rather, I have a positive or pleasant attitude towards it *just insofar as* I see it as possessing qualities that are thought to be positive or pleasant in themselves. As R.J. Wallace (2002) argues:

> To say that a resort is "pleasant," for instance, is a way of adverting to the distinctively positive qualities of experience that are enjoyed by a visitor to the resort. It is not merely an evaluatively neutral description of the natural properties of the resort or of the experiences induced by the resort in its visitors, and this is what makes it appropriate to think of pleasure itself as a concrete category of evaluation.[33]

Prima facie, our ordinary evaluative experience and evaluative discourse suggest that evaluative judgments can be true because things have the evaluative features that our experiences and judgments present them as having. That is to say, our evaluative experiences suggest that there are correct answers to at least some of our moral questions precisely insofar as there are unique properties that those questions are about—namely, *substantive*

[33] Wallace (2002) p. 448

values. The challenge for the substantive value realist who endorses sentimentalism is to explain how substantive values, emotions, and evaluative judgment can all cohere in a unified metaethical framework. Call such a picture *Substantive Sentimentalism.*

The present work attempts to make some headway in providing such an account. In particular, I will attempt to show that the recessive sentimentalist analysis fails by its own lights, and to motivate a version of substantive sentimentalism according to which emotions are perceptions of the evaluative features of the world—what I will call *Affective Value Perceptualism*. My case will proceed in three parts.

Abstract of Part I

Values without Values: Recessive Sentimentalism and Why It Fails

In Part I, I draw upon conceptual resources taken from Alexius Meinong and Franz Brentano in order to diagnose a recent spate of emotion-based variants of buck-passing and fitting attitude analyses of value. According to the latter analyses—which I submit are helpfully categorized as belonging to a broader family of what I call, following Meinong's framework, *Recessive Sentimentalism*—evaluative concepts do not make reference to substantive properties, but are merely formal or "syncategorematic" properties that are exhaustively analyzable in terms of a relation between an emotional attitude and some other normative concept (e.g. reasons to respond in certain ways, fittingness relations, obligations, etc.). The most adaptable of these contemporary accounts marries the conceptual resources from the BPA and neo-sentimentalism into a single emotion-based analysis—what I'll call the *recessive sentimentalist BPA*. According to the latter, value-making reasons to favor some object are to be understood as lower-order properties of an object that make a positive

emotion towards it "fitting" or "correct." As we will see, the appeal to attitudinal fittingness is often offered as a strategy for saving the traditional buck-passing analysis from the so-called "wrong kind of reason" problem (WKR), which is thought to charge the BPA with collapsing our evaluative discourse into a kind of normatively vacuous psychologism.[34] In order to properly assess the prospects of emotional fittingness for saving the recessive sentimentalist BPA from the WKR, I distinguish and clarify three different and often conflated ways in which this notion can be understood: (i) *Adequation;* (ii) *Deontic Satisfaction*; (iii) *Unanalyzability*. I argue that *Adequation* and *Deontic Satisfaction* will not help the recessive sentimentalist BPA escape the WKR problem without positing intrinsically normative object-side value properties, and that *Unanalyzability* turns upon theoretical posits that incur the same charges of explanatory profligacy and queerness levelled against value-based axiologies, thereby forfeiting one of the principle motivations in favor of recessive sentimentalism.

Abstract of Part II

Seeing, Feeling, and Values: A Phenomenological Case for Value Perceptualism

Having undercut the idea that recessive analyses hold a clear abductive advantage over value-based axiologies, I then turn in Part II to develop a *Substantive Sentimentalist* account of the relationship between values and emotions. Here I advance and defend an

[34] A classic problem facing the BPA—namely the Wrong Kind of Reason Problem—is that the presence of reasons to favor x appears insufficient to determine the goodness (or other evaluative status) of x, as there are cases in which we have reasons for a pro-attitude toward an object despite the fact that the object is clearly devoid of value—in which case, the reasons to favor x are of the "wrong kind" to ground the goodness of x. The most well-known articulation of this problem appeals to a scenario in which an evil demon will inflict severe pain on me (or impose some other disastrous consequence) unless I have a pro-attitude towards a saucer of mud. Insofar as my having the attitude will shield me from pain, it appears I have a reason to favor the saucer of mud, and thus we are lead the unpalatable conclusion that the saucer of mud is good.

affect-based version of perceptualist intuitionism – what I call *Affect Value Perceptualism* - according to which values are *sui generis* substantive properties given through intentional acts of emotional experience. I begin by examining a recent form of perceptualist intuitionism made popular by Michael Huemer, which attempts to account for the reason giving force of foundational mental states strictly in terms of true-seeming conceptual contents. In foreclosing the world-disclosive intentionality and epistemic relevance of non-conceptual content, I argue that such theories leave us with no resources to account for the distinction between the merely conceptual act of thinking that some proposition is true and a direct awareness of the very conditions in virtue of which the proposition is true. Drawing upon the conceptual resources of Husserlian phenomenology, I attempt to show how a more fruitful model of noninferential evaluative justification can be found through the phenomenological notion of "originary intuition" and the attendant theory of "fulfillment."

On the broadly Husserlian account I defend, propositionally formulated moral judgments are merely empty acts of thought which, on their own, provide no justification whatsoever for believing their contents. In order to yield a reason for belief, such acts must be aided by intuitive acts of *intentional feeling*, which disclose the evaluative matter in question by way of irreducibly affective, non-conceptual mental contents. On this view, the ethical intuition properly speaking consists not in the propositionally articulated thought that p, nor in the corresponding justified belief that p, but rather in the *felt givenness* of the evaluative matter itself—that is, in an *evaluative perception,* which can include both the simple perception of concrete particulars as well as the grasping of abstract universal facts. As sources of noninferential evaluative knowledge, evaluative perceptions are not intellectual appearances or true-seeming thoughts, but affectively-conditioned *presentations*—that is, intentional

experiences in which we are immediately aware of the evaluative features of some intentional object.[35] Building upon Husserl's account of noninferential justification, I argue that it is in the joint recognition that things are immediately given in feeling as they are propositionally meant—namely, in acts of *evaluative fulfillment*—that we enjoy noninferential justification for our evaluative beliefs. We can formulate the thesis of Part II as follows:

> **Affective Value Perceptualism:** Some foundational evaluative beliefs are noninferentially justified in virtue of their propositional content being *epistemically fulfilled* through *evaluative perceptions*, which are irreducibly affective yet intentionally directed acts of feeling that constitute immediate epistemic access to the objective correlates of some first order evaluative claims, and this by way of non-conceptual yet intrinsically intentional affective contents. The objective correlates of evaluative perceptions are *value properties*.

Abstract of Part III

Emotion, Axiology, and Formalism: A Schelerian Case for the Affective *A Priori*

Finally, in Part III, I attempt to show how an affect-based realism can furnish universal action-guiding norms and *a priori* moral principles. After tracing the historical aversion to the latter idea to a prevailing intellectualist prejudice in our understanding of the *a priori*, I develop an appropriation of Max Scheler's *material a priori* account of values. According to the latter, law-like constraints on evaluative judgments are grounded in the *a priori* essences of emotional phenomena, which constitute a unique domain of *a priori* experiential facts

[35] I will follow the current if not unproblematic trend of reserving the term "presentation" for Husserl's *Gegenwärtigung* and "representation" for *Vergegenwärtigung,* and this as to set off Husserl's account of intuition from the representationalist theory of perception in anglophone philosophy. For an important discussion of the indelicacies of the presentation/representation parsing, see Uwe Meixner (2014). Since my aim will be to address Husserlian considerations to contemporary analytic metaethical debates, in which the term "presentational" carries a meaning approximating Husserl's account, "presentation" will be contrasted against "representation."

alongside those governing all other experiential modalities (e.g. color, tone, space, etc.). In an effort to vindicate a broadly Schelerian model of the *material a priori*, I provide an analysis of color incompatibility knowledge as a paradigm case, arguing that traditional formalist analyses given by Wittgenstein and Schlick fail to adequately explain the *a priority* of color incompatibility claims without appealing to our capacity to imagine experiential contents. After developing a corrective intuitionist model of *a priori* color knowledge based on Scheler's account of the material *a priori*, I argue that the phenomenological analysis of paradigmatically evaluative emotions also reveals *a priori* facts grounded in the nature of evaluative experience itself—for instance, the fact that value kinds are positively or negatively valenced, and thus normatively ordered by nature, which is self-evidently given through the experience of value preference. I then provide an account of how action-guiding deontic concepts of "correctness" and "oughtness" can be analyzed in terms of actions that aim at realizing higher as opposed to lower values. I conclude Part III by addressing a forceful genealogical debunking argument against moral intuitionism, and sketching the unique prospects of affect-based intuitionism for resolving these concerns.

PART ONE

VALUES WITHOUT VALUES: RECESSIVE SENTIMENTALISM AND WHY IT FAILS

Introduction: The Recessive Analysis of Value

The two most prominent rivals to substantive realism that endorse *Evaluative Objectivity* are the Fitting Attitude Analysis and the so-called Buck-Passing Analysis:

> **Fitting-Attitude Analysis of Value (FA):** X is "good" (or otherwise valuable) just insofar as it would be fitting to have a pro-attitude towards X

> **Traditional Buck-Passing Analysis of Value (BPA):** X's being "good" (or otherwise valuable) is a merely formal property of having other lower-order non-evaluative properties that give us reasons to have a pro-attitude towards X

The buck-passing analysis is sometimes characterized as a contemporary species of the fitting-attitude analysis, while other times both views are treated as being roughly equivalent. However, both of these characterizations are complicated by (i) the question of whether "fittingness" is to be analyzed in terms of other familiar deontic notions or is rather an unanalyzable primitive, as well as (ii) the question of how "reasons" are to be analyzed. Furthermore, as we will see, there are ways to pass the reason-giving buck from certain higher-order evaluative concepts like "goodness" which do not entail the wholesale reducibility of all value properties to other normative terms, thereby complicating the use of "buck passing" as an adequate description for emotion-based accounts of value that reject substantive realism.

A more helpful way to categorize these rivals to value-based axiologies, following terminology drawn from Meinong, is to classify the BPA and FA as members of a larger

family of what can be called *recessive analyses of value*. In Meinong's framework, a "recessive" property of some object X is a property that is reducible, without residue, to relational facts obtaining between X and certain psychological states directed towards it.[36] On a recessive analysis of the value of beauty, for example, to say that the sky is beautiful is not to posit some substantive property of the sky to which the term 'beauty' corresponds; Rather, to say that the sky is beautiful is to make a claim about certain psychological attitudes directed towards the sky—e.g. that certain affective states directed towards the sky are *fitting*, *rational, required* etc. As John Laird (1929) writes in summarizing Meinong's terminological framing, such views are aptly called recessive, "because, after analysis, the nominal subject of which beauty (or some other value) is ostensibly a predicate *recedes* altogether."[37] Moreover, the notion of *receding*, as opposed to *eliminating* values, also speaks to the fact that value predicates remain informative: what prevents recessive analyses of value from becoming eliminative accounts of evaluative discourse is that they make essential reference to a characteristic relation between emotional attitudes and the objects we call valuable.

Now, recessive analyses of values diverge over the question of what exactly this relation is supposed to be. However, as discussed in the introduction, what unites recessive analyses of *sentimentalist* stripes is the attempt to make values exhaustively analyzable in terms of a relation between an *emotional* attitude and some other normative concept thought to be foundational to morality, such as ought, reasons, fittingness, rightness, etc. In recent metaethical debate, such recessive sentimentalist analyses of evaluative objectivity have

[36] Meinong (1923). In Meinong's framework, a "recessive" property of some object X is a property that is reducible, without residue, to relational facts obtaining between X and certain psychological states. See Mulligan (2017) for a helpful overview of Meinong's transition from a recessive analysis to a substantive realist view.
[37] Laird (1929) p. 236

proliferated, and their proponents often take them to have an abductive advantage over value-based axiologies due to concerns about the explanatory profligacy and queerness of substantive value terms. The most adaptable of these recessive sentimentalist accounts marries the conceptual resources from BPA and the FA into a single sentimentalist analysis—what I'll call the 'recessive sentimentalist BPA.' As we'll see, the recessive sentimentalist BPA can take on a number of forms, depending upon how we are to understand the relevant normative concepts that populate the analysans of values. In the following, I examine the prospects of the recessive sentimentalist BPA in each of its principle variations. In showing why the recessive sentimentalist BPA fails on each of these accounts, we will reveal theoretical constraints that any recessive analysis must meet. To the extent that these theoretical constraints incur the very same explanatory challenges levelled against substantive value properties, these problems will motivate a return to some of the more intuitive attractions of value-based axiologies.

1. Buck Passing, Fitting Attitudes, and the Recessive Sentimentalist Analysis: Why Recessive Sentimentalism Fails

A mark of the enduring influence of the buck passing analysis of value is that it continues to constrain even the ways in which it is rejected. Originally understood as a program for preserving evaluative discourse while eliminating substantive value properties from our explanatory framework, today so-called "buck passing" accounts can be found in both value-based and non-value-based varieties. According to what is sometimes called the "traditional" or "reductive" buck-passing analysis of value (henceforth BPA), value predicates are reducible to non-evaluative natural facts that give us reasons to respond in certain ways. On

this decisively recessive account, X's being "good" or otherwise valuable is not itself a substantive, reason-giving property, but is the merely formal property of having lower-order non-evaluative properties that provide reasons to have a favorable attitude towards X.

A classic challenge facing the BPA—namely the Wrong Kind of Reason Problem (WKR)—is that the presence of reasons to favor something appears insufficient to determine the goodness (or other evaluative status) of that thing, as there are cases in which we have reasons for a pro-attitude toward an object despite the fact that the object is clearly not good—in which case the reasons are of the *wrong kind*. The most well-known articulation of this problem appeals to a scenario in which an evil demon will impose some disastrous consequence unless I have a pro-attitude towards him. Insofar as my having the attitude will prevent catastrophe, it appears that I have a reason to favor the demon, and thus it seems that the BPA leads us to the unpalatable conclusion that the demon is *good*. Objections of this kind are varied and can be applied to a range of different evaluative concepts, but they all turn upon the basic idea that the BPA suffers from a problem of *definitional promiscuity*, as it leads to the result that the definition of some evaluative concept could extend to objects that contradict our platitudes about which things should have this value and why.

Responses to the WKR problem in defense of the BPA typically involve some attempt to furnish constraints on good-making or "right kind" reasons for having a favorable attitude, such that we can explain why the reasons that appear in putative examples of definitional promiscuity are not of the right kind to ground goodness. To this end, several recent attempts to rescue the BPA from the WKR problem have tried to marry it to the notion of a *fitting* or *correct* attitude (See Danielsson and Olson 2007; McHugh and Way 2016; Zimmerman 2001). On these accounts, right-kind reasons for an attitude towards an object

are to be understood as properties of an object that make a pro-attitude towards it *correct* or *fitting*. In response to the "evil demon" articulation of the WKR problem, the fit-based buck passer will argue that while it may be true that we have *some* reason to have a pro-attitude towards the evil demon insofar as doing so will shield us from pain, it also seems clear that this attitude is not fitting with respect to its object, and thus we can avoid the problematic result that the demon is "good" without positing substantive value properties. Call this the fit-based BPA. While fit-based accounts vary in whether they allow fittingness and reasons to be two self-standing categories (Danielsson and Olson 2007) or whether reasons are to be analyzed in terms of fittingness (McHugh and Way 2016), they are united in holding that goodmaking reasons to favor something are facts that make it fitting to favor that thing. When we combine the fit-based BPA with the claim that the relevant fitting attitude in the analysans of value is an *emotional* attitude, we arrive at the *recessive sentimentalist BPA*.

In what follows, I'll show that the putative appeal of the recessive sentimentalist BPA rests upon the equivocal use of an unclarified notion of emotional 'fittingness' or 'correctness' (Because the term "fittingness" carries connotations in common parlance that do not always comport with the way this concept is employed by fit-based buck passers, I'll use the term emotional "correctness" wherever possible as a more theory-neutral surrogate). In order to assess the prospects of emotional fittingness for saving the BPA, I distinguish and clarify three different and often conflated ways in which this notion can be understood:

> ***Adequation*:** Emotional attitudes are "fitting," or "correct," in virtue of a relation of adequacy between some essential feature(s) of a given emotion and some correlate feature(s) of the object of that emotion. Loosely put, a correct emotion is one that "gets its object right."

> ***Deontic Satisfaction*:** Emotional attitudes are "fitting, or "correct," just insofar as they are required or permitted by some normative schema that sets deontic constraints on what ought to be or what one is obligated to do. On this account, a correct emotion is just a species of all states of affairs that are required according to this general normative schema. A good object would then be analyzed as the object of an attitude that ought to be according to these norms.
>
> ***Unanalyzability*:** "Fittingness," or "correctness," is a primitive, unanalyzable feature of emotional attitudes. The fact that an object is "correctly" favored, and thus good, tells us nothing more than the fact that an attitude of favoring this object possesses the property of being correct, *sans phrase*. Correctness is thereby a *normatively self-imposing* feature of emotional attitudes.

While each account has certain attractions, I argue that all of them fail to save a properly recessive analysis of value. More specifically, I argue that *Adequation* and *Deontic Satisfaction* will not help the BPA escape the WKR problem without appealing to unreduced value terms, and furthermore that the commitments needed to defeat these challenges will pressure the fit-based buck passer to appeal to *Unanalyzability*. However, I argue that *Unanalyzability* turns upon theoretical posits that incur the same charges of explanatory profligacy and queerness leveled against value-based axiologies, thereby forfeiting one of the principle motivations in favor of the recessive sentimentalist analysis.

1.1 Preliminaries: Values, Buck Passing, and the Terms of the Dispute

Before I turn to examine each of these accounts of emotional correctness, I should first say what I am taking to be necessary success conditions for any properly recessive analysis. Here there are at least three:

I. **Must be Genuinely Reductive:** The first success condition is that the account must actually reduce evaluative terms into non-evaluative terms. In other words, there can be no unreduced value properties in the analysans of the value concept in question.

II. **Must Avoid Definitional Promiscuity:** The second success condition is that the fit-based analysis must avoid problems of definitional promiscuity similar to the WKR problem. In general, the account must preserve the integrity of evaluative concepts: that is, a given evaluative concept must refer only to things that actually possess this value, and must do so in virtue of properties that are relevant to the value in question.

III. **Must Fulfill Purported Explanatory Advantages:** The third success condition is that the account must make good on the purported theoretical advantages that are thought to motivate an abductive case in favor of the BPA over value-based axiologies. Here there are two claims in particular:

   (i) Avoids the Problem of Redundancy: The BPA is taken by its proponents to avoid an apparent reason-giving redundancy in appealing to substantive value terms in practical deliberation

   (ii) Avoids Explanatory Profligacy and Queerness: The second is that the BPA avoids or at least mitigates Mackie-style concerns over the explanatory profligacy and "queerness" of substantive value terms. In general, the BPA is thought to present a more economical framework than its value-based rivals.

Now, in order to assess whether each account of emotional correctness can meet all of the foregoing success conditions, it will be necessary to first take inventory on the two aforementioned explanatory advantages, and this so that we can clarify the real force of the challenge that the recessive sentimentalist BPA faces. First, as we'll see, the problem of redundancy does not pose a special problem for value-based accounts, and so cannot be taken to motivate an abductive case in favor of a recessive sentimentalist BPA (§ 1.2). This leaves the appeal to explanatory parsimony. In unpacking just why it is that value-based

axiologies are thought to be so objectionable on this score, we will be able to draw out additional constraints that any successful version of the recessive sentimentalist BPA must meet (§ 1.3).

1.2 Preliminaries: Values and the Problem of Redundancy

The clearest articulation of a buck passing analysis motivated by the so-called "problem of redundancy" can be found in Scanlon's *What We Owe Each Other*. Here Scanlon disputes the view, often attributed to G.E. Moore, that in addition to the reason-giving properties in virtue of which something is taken to be good, the "goodness" itself provides a reason to favor or desire it. If we take this property to constitute a distinct reason, it is easy to see how we run into redundancy problems. Suppose a friend were to ask you why a particular beach would make for a good travel destination. If we suppose the beach is a good destination in virtue of some finite set of properties, it would seem oddly redundant if, after listing all of these reasons, you were to add: "And if *those* reasons weren't enough, I should add that it's a *good* beach." Scanlon claims that reflection upon such ordinary cases of practical deliberation suggests that "[i]t is not clear what further work could be done by special reason-providing properties of goodness and value, and even less clear how these properties could provide reasons." In an effort to avoid such a problem of deliberative redundancy, Scanlon outlines an account of axiological concepts that has since become the locus classicus of non-substantive analyses of value: "A being good, or valuable, is not a property that itself provides a reason to respond to a thing in certain ways. Rather, to be good or valuable is to

have other properties that constitute such reasons."[38] On this view, the normative or reason-giving buck is passed from the merely formal property of goodness to the non-evaluative, natural properties of a thing; it is these natural properties that can give us reasons to respond in certain ways, and this by virtue of standing in certain reason-giving relations. When a natural property of X gives us reason to have a positive evaluative attitude towards X, we call that X 'good.'

That a given theory avoids the problem of redundancy certainly counts in its favor. The problem of redundancy can be resolved, however, without reducing all value terms to other non-evaluative terms. For even if we accept the buck-passer's claim that a higher-order value term like "goodness" is not itself a reason-giving property, this alone does nothing to preclude the possibility that the lower-order reason-giving properties in virtue of which something is considered "good" are themselves irreducibly evaluative. For instance, Wallace (2002) argues that we might call a beach "good" because it has certain lower-order yet nonetheless irreducibly evaluative properties that give us reasons to favor it—e.g. "pleasantness."[39] Roger Crisp (2005) makes a similar case that a work of art can have the higher-order property of being "beautiful" insofar as it has lower-order evaluative properties of "sublimity, delicacy, profundity, boldness, imagination, vitality, grace."[40] Now, whether these specific evaluative properties, or any for that matter, really are irreducible to non-evaluative terms is besides the issue. The point is rather that positing such irreducible lower-order value properties would be sufficient to resolve the problem of redundancy without

[38] Scanlon (1997) p. 97
[39] Wallace (2002) p. 429
[40] Crisp (2005) p. 82

endorsing a reductive analysis of value. All else being equal, then, the problem of redundancy does not pose a special challenge for value-based reasons in particular, but rather applies to any account in which the merely formal or summative property P_f of having some set of substantive reason-giving properties—ex. $P_f = \{P_1...P_n\}$—is counted as a calculatively distinct member of its own set: e.g. $P_f = \{P_1...P_n, P_f = (P_1...P_n)\}$. Notice that this problem can arise regardless of whether we understand the reason-giving properties to be evaluative or non-evaluative. There are at least three possibilities that avoid reason-giving redundancy which do not entail a reductive analysis of value:

> I) Goodness is not itself a reason-giving property, but the merely formal property of having lower-order reason-giving properties, some of which are irreducibly evaluative

> 2) Goodness is not itself a reason-giving property, but is nonetheless a substantive property that supervenes on irreducibly evaluative properties which are reason-giving. (Cf. Crisp's "Revised Buck-Passing Analysis" proposal)

> 3) Goodness *is* a reason-giving property, but its reason-giving force or "weight" is indistinct from that of the set of lower-order reason-giving properties that make an object good, some of which are irreducibly evaluative (see Crisp 2005; Schroeder 2006). In other words, the fact that something is good can be considered a summative reason-giving property, which is definitionally specified by the set of lower-order reason-giving properties that make the object good; some these lower-order properties may be irreducibly evaluative.

All three options are sufficient to resolve the problem of redundancy without resorting to a reductive analysis of value, and the first does so while granting the buck passers claim that goodness is a merely formal property. In this case, the normative buck is passed from the higher-order property of "goodness," however the buck stops again with further lower-order

evaluative properties. Thus, insofar as we can avoid deliberative redundancy without eliminating substantive value properties, one of the principle motivations for the buck-passing analysis can actually be accommodated by a value-based axiology. Along these lines, Crisp (2008) argues that we can distinguish between two distinct buck-passing theses in the traditional account, each of which is in principle separable from the other:

> **Negative Buck-Passing Thesis or BPA(-) :** Being good is not itself a reason-providing property
>
> **Positive Buck-Passing Thesis or BPA (+) :** Being good is merely the higher-order property of having lower-order non-evaluative properties that provide reasons to respond in particular ways.[41]

A redutive buck-passing analysis requires a commitment to both BPA(-) and BPA (+). However, the problem of redundancy can be avoided by merely accepting BPA(-) alone: one can deny that goodness is reason-giving without claiming that the lower-order reason-giving properties in virtue of which something is good are themselves strictly non-evaluative. Since accepting BPA(-) is sufficient to resolve the problem of redundancy, and since BPA(-) is compatible with value-based reasons, the concern about deliberative redundancy does nothing on its own to motivate a reductive buck passing analysis. The BPA will have to appeal to further considerations in order to make an abductive case in its favor. On this score, it is worth noting that in response to problems of this kind, Scanlon (2002) has since come to distance himself from the positive buck-passing thesis and the reductive analysis it entails: "My thesis was that goodness is not itself a property that provides reasons, not that

[41] Crisp (2008) p. 263

the underlying properties that do this are always natural (non-evaluative) properties, and I should not have written in a way that suggested this [...] more specific evaluative properties often play this role."[42] For Scanlon, as for many other reformed buck passers, passing the deliberative buck from higher-order terms like "goodness" to lower-order reason-giving properties is no longer presumed to entail a reductive analysis of value.

1.3 Preliminaries, Continued: Values, Explanatory Profligacy, and Queerness

Of course, despite Scanlon's apparent disavowal, reductive versions of the BPA continue to enjoy wide support (See Danielsson and Olson 2007; Lang 2008; McHugh and Way 2016; Stratton-Lake 2016; Suikkanen 2005; Zimmerman 2001), and are often taken by their proponents to have the explanatory edge over value-based axiologies due to Mackie-style concerns over the putative explanatory profligacy and queerness of substantive value properties. Whatever else a substantive value property is, it is often thought to be objectionable insofar as it must possess what Mackie calls "objective, intrinsic prescriptivity." To revisit Mackie's claim cited in the introduction:

> The assertion that there are objective values or intrinsically prescriptive entities or features of some kind, which ordinary moral judgments presuppose, is, I hold, not meaningless but false...An objective good would be sought by anyone who was acquainted with it, not because of any contingent fact that this person, or every person, is so constituted that he desires this end, but just because the end has to-be-pursuedness somehow built into it.[43]

[42] Scanlon (2002) p. 513
[43] Mackie (1977) p. 38/40

By Mackie's lights, to endorse the idea of an objective good or a non-hypothetical end is to establish a metaphysical link between a substantive property *P* and a normative fact about the responses we should have toward something on account of *P*, such that the intrinsic properties of an object or a state of affairs constitute non-derivative normative criteria for those responses. When applied to objective values, for example, we would have to say that it simply belongs to the intrinsic nature of certain entities that they call for a given evaluative response: e.g. an "admirable" object would be an object that possesses intrinsic "to-be-admiredness," a "lovable" object would possess intrinsic "to-be-lovedness," etc. In the case of actions, an objectively good action or end would somehow have "ought-to-be-ness" built in. On Mackie's account, positing such properties would require us to radically alter our picture of the world: "If there were objective values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe."[44]

In sum, substantive value properties are thought to be queer precisely insofar as they must underwrite their own reason-giving force. We can contrast this picture with the kind of reason-giving property that the traditional buck passer has in mind. Recall that on the traditional version of the BPA, objects are called good just insofar as they possess natural properties that give us reasons to have favorable attitudes towards them. Now, ordinary parlance permits us to refer to properties that "*give us reasons*" as also "*being reasons*" for certain responses—e.g. the fact that there will be dancing at the party can be said to *give* me a reason to go, and can also be said to *be* a reason to go. In this way, when understood as *being reasons*

[44] ibid. 38

for certain responses, the reason-giving natural properties appealed to by the BPA might sound like intrinsically normative properties as well. However, that is not the picture that the BPA is meant to provide. Rather, on the buck passing picture, the substantive properties of objects are thought to consist of strictly *non*-normative natural properties, properties which derive their normative significance only by standing in certain reason-giving relations. For example, the fact that there will be dancing at the party is by itself a non-normative natural property of the party. However, in relation to a reason-giving schema according to which, say, one always has reason to have a favorable attitude towards what one desires, together with the additional fact that one desires to dance, then this fact can be said to *give us a reason* insofar as its obtaining makes it the case that there is a reason to have a favorable attitude towards the party. Strictly speaking, it is not the natural properties of the object which underwrite their own reason-giving force, as is the case with intrinsically "to-be-favored" evaluative properties. Rather, the reason-giving force of those natural properties we call 'reasons' is derived from a set of reason-giving relations distinct from these properties themselves. Properly speaking, it is the reason-giving relations that are thought to be the ground of normativity, not the worldly entities and properties that stand in these relations.

The alleged advantage of the foregoing picture is that it allows us to "demystify" value concepts by reducing them to ordinary terms with which we are already familiar, namely reasons and the ordinary natural properties of objects that give them. Of course, the extent to which this picture is truly demystifying will depend upon the ontological status of the normativity of reasons. According to some accounts, reasons can be analyzed in purely non-normative naturalistic terms, such as desire-satisfaction (See Schroeder). In this case, the BPA will be straightforwardly consonant with a naturalistic framework. On other accounts,

reasons are taken to be irreducibly normative, and so in a certain sense *non-natural* insofar as they cannot be reduced to natural properties, and yet positing them is not thought to saddle our ontology with any queer entities. Scanlon defends this view of normative reasons, which is sometimes interpreted as a kind of metaphysical *quietism* about reasons. For Scanlon, reasons "are not reducible to or identifiable with non-normative truths, such as truths about the natural world of physical objects, causes and effects," and in this limited sense Scanlon's view counts as kind of non-naturalism. However, Scanlon claims:

> [C]ontrary to what is sometimes said, belief in irreducibly normative truths does not involve commitment to any special *entities*. The essential element in normative statements is not a term referring to an entity, but a *relation*: the relation R(p, c, a), that holds between a proposition, a set of conditions, and an action or attitude when *p* is a reason for a person in situation *c* to do or hold *a*…Normative truths do not require strange metaphysical truth-makers. Such truths are *determined* by the standards of the normative domain itself.[45]

For Scanlon, reasons are not *entities* but *relations*, relations that can be thought to obtain only from within the standpoint of normative reasoning itself. Since countenancing such relations is thereby something we do only from the domain of normative discourse, then holding that there are irreducibly normative truths does not commit us to claiming that they are part of the furniture of the world that science aims to describe:

> If by "the world" one means the natural world of physical objects and causal relations, which science aims to describe, then there is no disagreement [with Mackie]. Those of us who believe in irreducibly normative truths would not claim that the normative relation R itself is part of the (natural) world—that to claim that it holds is to make a claim about natural facts. Indeed, we explicitly deny this. Normative facts about reasons, as we understand them are "part of the world" only

[45] Scanlon (2009) p. 19

> in the broader sense in which "the world" is simply the reflection of all true sentences.[46]

Now, whether we tie the BPA to a naturalistic account of reasons or Scanlon's quietistic non-naturalism, either version of the BPA is thought by its proponents to avoid the explanatory burdens of substantive value realism. Furthermore, even if reasons cannot be reduced to non-normative terms, and even if, pace Scanlon, reasons remain in some sense ontologically queer, a remaining attraction of the BPA is that it can nevertheless still provide a more parsimonious explanatory framework than the value-based picture, insofar as we can make *fewer* appeals to irreducibly normative posits. Whereas the buck passer can claim that his account is subject to only one kind of irreducibly normative category—e.g. reasons—the value-based account is committed to two kinds of irreducibly normative posits—e.g. reasons *and* values. On this score, Jonas Olson notes that "[BPA] is economical insofar as it attempts to analyse axiological concepts (such as 'value' or 'goodness') in terms of deontic concepts (such as 'reasons' or 'ought'), so that what were formerly taken to be two separate normative categories are *reduced* to only one."[47] As such, even if we accept that reason-giving relations are ontologically queer, the BPA might still be thought to retain the explanatory advantage of *minimizing* queerness, not to mention reducing the overall quantity of theoretical posits.

Whatever explanatory advantages are gained by eschewing substantive value properties from our explanatory framework, the cost is that we lose the most straightforward way to account for the difference between right-kind and wrong-kind reasons to favor something. On a value-based account, right-kind or "goodmaking" reasons to have a

[46] ibid. 17
[47] Olson (2004) p. 2945

favorable attitude towards some object will be those substantive properties of the object that have intrinsic to-be-favoredness somehow built into these properties themselves. This explanation, of course, is not available to the BPA. For it is precisely by severing the metaphysical link between the concrete properties of an object and their normative significance that the BPA is able to avoid positing what are thought to be mysterious, intrinsically normative entities. And yet it is also precisely by creating daylight between the substantive properties of an object and its normative significance that the WKR problem is able to loom into view. For if the reason-giving significance of an object is determined by its relation to considerations that are extrinsic to it, then in principle, for any given object with some finite set of properties, it appears that all it takes is the right set of external considerations to obtain—e.g. that an evil demon demands that I admire a saucer of mud—in order to make it the case that we have a reason to favor this object, and thus that the thing in question is "good."

In order to avoid such cases of definitional promiscuity, the buck passer must find some way to establish a necessary connection between the genuine properties of an object and our reasons to have a favorable attitude towards it, and this without saddling the object with intrinsically normative, *sui generis* value properties. And it is here that the notion of emotional fit is thought to save the day: while it may be true that we have *some* reason to have a pro-emotion towards the evil demon insofar as doing so will shield us from pain, it also seems intuitive to say that this attitude would not be not *fitting* with respect to its object. If goodmaking reasons are thought to be fit-making reasons to favor, and fit-making reasons to favor are grounded in the natural properties of an object, we can avoid the problematic result that the demon is "good" without positing substantive value properties: Goodmaking

features of an object will just be those features of an object that are able to stand in a *fitting relation* to the attitude in question. This is why the appeal to fittingness is such an attractive dialectical move for the BPA. For here the recessive buck passer appeals not to a new kind of *entity*, but a special kind of *relation*—the relation of being *fitting*. Now, the challenge for the *sentimentalist* fit-based buck passer is to explain the special normative connection between a fitting emotional attitude and the natural properties of its object without either (i) appealing to explanatory posits that make essential reference to unreduced evaluative terms, or (ii) appealing to explanatory posits that incur equivalent theoretical problems to those attending substantive evaluative properties. As we'll see, on the three principle notions of emotional correctness that inform the fit-based analysis—*Adequation*, *Deontic Satisfaction,* and *Unanalyzability*— the recessive sentimentalist BPA runs afoul of these constraints.

2.1 Why Adequation Fails to Save the Recessive Sentimentalist BPA

One way to understand emotional correctness is in terms of a relation of *adequacy* between an attitude and some corresponding feature of its object. Loosely put, a favorable attitude would be correct insofar as it *gets its object right*. The most intuitively straightforward way to account for such adequation is to posit a correlate feature of the object that simply mirrors the essential character of the attitude in question: for instance, a favorable attitude would be correct insofar as we find some correlate property of "favorableness" on the object-side of the attitude. This understanding of adequation, however, analyzes value-making reasons by appeal to further evaluative terms, and so will not do for the recessive analysis of value the recessive sentimentalist BPA is meant to provide. Nonetheless, we might wonder whether a

properly recessive account of emotional adequation can be given strictly in terms of the non-evaluative properties of objects. The problem with this prospect, I'll argue, is that even upon the most minimalist conception of a positive emotional attitude, we cannot make sense of attitude-to-object adequacy without positing evaluatively-laden object-side properties.

2.2 Valence and Adequation:

At a minimum, positive and negative emotional attitudes towards some object must involve at least two components:

(i) Cognitive Base: Some representation of the non-evaluative properties of an object

(ii) Valence: Some content or feature of the emotion in virtue of which it is a "positive" or "negative" attitude.

The first thing to recognize is that the accuracy of an attitude's cognitive base underdetermines emotional correctness: one may accurately judge that p as part of an attitude of favoring it, while another may accurately judge the same as part of an attitude of disfavoring it. Accordingly, in order to explain how one attitude can be correct while the other incorrect, the valence of the attitude must also be subject to accuracy conditions. For to the extent that attitudes of favoring or disfavoring are individuated from each other at least in part by their valence, then for at least some correct pro-attitude, it must be the case that an otherwise identical attitude with a negative valence, a pro-attitude, would have been *incorrect* (otherwise everything would be both correctly favored and correctly disfavored, and thus at once good and bad, in virtue of same properties). Take for instance, a correct attitude

of disfavoring the fact that an act of recreational killing has taken place. If this con-attitude is correct, then surely it must be the case that an otherwise identical attitude with a positive valence would be incorrect. As such, the positive valence of a favorable attitude towards recreational killing must, in some way, fail to get its object right. Thus, if emotional attitudes are adequate to their objects, the adequacy relation must apply to the valence of an emotional attitude.

Now, if the positive or negative valence of an attitude must be adequate to its object, we can understand this relation of adequacy in one of two ways: either (i) as a *thetic* or *descriptive* relation in which an emotional attitude accurately represents or presents its object, or else (ii) as a *non-descriptive* and *irreducibly normative* relation in which an attitude is somehow "called for" or demanded by its object. I'll treat each of these in turn.

2.3 Valence and Descriptive Adequation

On a descriptive reading of emotional adequation, a correct emotion would be one that presents or represents some way that its object actually is. Here the analogue of a correct emotional attitude would be a true belief or a veridical sensory perception. As Christine Tappolet describes this understanding of emotional correctness when applied to the case of disgust: "The claim is that something is disgusting just if feeling disgust towards this thing were correct from an epistemic point of view – it would represent the thing as it is, evaluatively speaking."[48] Applied to the valence of an emotional attitude, we would say that

[48] Tappolet (2011) p. 120

the positive or negative valence of an attitude is adequate to its object insofar as it serves as epistemic content that represents or presents some corresponding feature of the object. This, however, would entail a flagrant violation of any recessive analysis. For in order for a positively valenced attitude to be correct, we must posit some "positive" feature on the object side of the favorable attitude, either as a mind-independent or a mind-dependent property, which would serve as the representational correlate of the attitude's valence. Simply put, if a positive valenced attitude is adequate to its object, this means that the object must possess substantive properties that are positive by essential definition. But if correctly favored (i.e. "good") objects are analyzed as those that have object-side features that are essentially positive, then our analysans of good will contain unreduced evaluative terms: positive attitudes would be correct insofar as they accurately represent the positive properties of their objects. If positively valenced attitudes are to be understood as correct insofar as they are adequate to their objects, then unless we are to forfeit a recessive analysis, this cannot be in virtue of representing or presenting some correlate feature of the object.

2.3 Valence and Object-Oriented Normative Adequation

In order to avoid the problems associated with a descriptive reading of adequacy, we might appeal to an irreducibly normative relation of adequacy in which an attitude is somehow "called for" or prescribed by its object without thereby representing it. Here I'll take a certain construal of "meriting" to count as a paradigmatic example. For instance, a standing ovation, as an expression of praise, might be merited by a pianist's performance without it being the case that there is a descriptive relation between the expression of praise and the

performance. In general, it seems we can say that something merits or calls for a given response without thereby thinking that the response somehow represents this object. In such cases, it nonetheless seems natural enough to say that the praise is "adequate" to its object to the extent that the object can be said to call for this response. On this reading of attitude-to-object adequacy, the fit-based buck passer might say that an object would be correctly favored, and thus good, if and only if it has intrinsic properties that merit, deserve, or otherwise "call for" a favorable attitude. Thus, if the evil demon demands praise for his travesty of a take at a Rachmaninoff piece, we may have reason to give it praise, but this would not make the performance good, as this favorable response would not be *merited* by the performance itself.

In order to assess the prospects of this account of adequation for the recessive sentimentalist BPA, we must take care to clarify the normative criteria that determines how the relation of meriting or "calling for" obtains. Here we can distinguish between an *object-oriented merit schema* and a *norm-oriented merit schema*. An object-oriented merit schema would be one in which the normative criteria that demand a given attitude towards some object consist only in the intrinsic features of the object in question: in short, on this account it is the *object itself* that calls for a given response. By contrast, a norm-oriented merit schema is one in which an object's status of meriting a response would be a relational property determined by and derivative upon the satisfaction of some further normative consideration. For example, we might say that a dutiful action merits praise insofar as such a response will be conducive to further dutiful behavior: in this case, what makes it the case that the object merits praise is the relational property of being such that favoring it will satisfy some further normative criteria, such as promoting dutiful action.

Now, whatever prospects it might have for the recessive sentimentalist BPA, the norm-oriented meriting relation would no longer constitute a relation of attitude-to-object adequacy. For here we would not be getting the *object* right, so much as satisfying a set of norms to which the object is somehow related. Take as an analogy the normative schema of a game of "Tag," in which a player is designated "It" until they tag another participant. When I am "It," certain responses are called for or prescribed according to the rules of the game: e.g. the other participants are to evade being tagged by me. Now, in one sense, we might think it accurate to say that evasion is "called for" by the object of this response (in this case me) in virtue of my being "It." However, what determines the fact that these responses are called for is not the object itself in virtue of its intrinsic properties. Rather, it is the rules of the game, together with my standing in relation to them by playing the game, which determine that the correct response to me is evasion. Likewise, in the case of norm-oriented emotional adequation, it is not the object's intrinsic properties that call for the attitude, but rather a set of norms that prescribing' certain responses to the object in question. Properly speaking, it is the norms that call for a response to a given object, not the object itself.

Now, I will examine the latter understanding of correctness in section 3, when I look at an attempt to analyze emotional correctness as the satisfaction of a general normative requirement. However, for our present purposes, if the meriting relation is to count as a kind of attitude-to-object adequation, then this type of meriting will not fit the bill. Only a merit schema based upon object-given merit could provide an account of attitude-to-object adequation. Insofar as this adequation relation is not a descriptive relation, but an irreducibly normative one, call this 'object-oriented normative adequation.'

The problem with genuine cases of object-oriented meriting, however, is that they saddle the object with intrinsically normative properties that incur the exact same theoretical problems as substantive value properties. Take the example of disfavoring an act of recreational killing. If the normative criteria that determine this response are grounded in the intrinsic properties of the object, then it must belong to the nature of these properties that they call for a disfavorable response. That is to say, in Mackie-style terms, the intrinsic properties of an act of recreational killing would somehow have "to-be-disfavoredness" built into these properties themselves. When applied to the relation between an object and the valence of a corresponding emotional attitude, we must say that X has the property of *meriting attitudes with a positive or negative valence*. In general, for any positively or negatively valenced attitude E of favoring some object x, if we say that E has the property of being called for by X's intrinsic properties, then we also say that X's intrinsic properties include *the property of calling for E*. The result is that correctly favored objects would possess intrinsically normative properties that make essential reference to valenced responses: in Mackie-esque terms, it would belong to correctly admired objects that they possess intrinsic "to-be-admiredness" as a substantive property.

This result, of course, is unacceptable for a recessive sentimentalist BPA. For on a properly recessive buck passing picture, the substantive properties of objects we call good are supposed to consist of strictly non-normative natural properties, properties which derive their normative significance only by standing in certain reason-giving relations. It is the reason-giving relations that are thought to constitute irreducibly normative facts, not the worldly objects, properties, or states of affairs that stand in the reason-giving roles. However, on the present version of adequation, the intrinsic properties of an object are

made to constitute non-derivative normative criteria for evaluative responses: it simply belongs to the intrinsic nature of these properties that they merit or call for a given evaluative response. A good object, qua correctly favored object, would then be defined as an object that possesses intrinsically normative properties that make essential reference to evaluative categories: e.g. an "admirable" object would be an object that possesses intrinsic "to-be-admiredness," a "lovable" object would possess intrinsic "to-be-lovedness," etc. The recessive sentimentalist BPA would then not only fail to be a genuinely reductive analysis of evaluative concepts insofar as the analysans would include unreduced evaluative terms, but it would also appeal to precisely the kind of queer, intrinsically normative properties that the BPA was meant to avoid. If the recessive sentimentalist BPA is going to remain a recessive analysis, then, it cannot be through an appeal to emotional correctness understand as *adequation*.

3.1 Why Deontic Satisfaction Fails to Save the Recessive Sentimentalist BPA

In order to avoid appealing to object-side value properties in accounting for emotional correctness, we might try to analyze a correct emotion in terms of all things considered deontic notion, like "ought" or "requirement" (or else "permissibility," understood as the absence of a countervailing ought or requirement). On this view, favorable attitudes would be "correct" just insofar as they are *required* or *permitted* by some normative schema that sets deontic constraints on what ought to be (whether the latter is understood in agential deontic

terms—e.g. "Mary ought to help Tom"—or non-agential deontic terms—e.g. "It ought to be the case that Mary helps Tom"). Whatever normative criteria are thought to ground these deontic constraints—e.g. universalizability, promotion of pleasure, divine commands, etc.—correct favorable attitudes could then be understood as a species of all phenomena required by these general norms. A "good" object, in turn, would be analyzable as the object of a favorable attitude that ought to be insofar as it satisfies these norms.

On a first pass, the problem with analyzing a correct pro-attitude as one that satisfies some general deontic condition or constraint is that it appears to make correctness an essentially instrumental property of favorable attitudes, leading to cases where we ought to have pro-attitudes towards objects that we would not thereby consider good on this basis. In general, if having a favorable attitude towards X is conducive to some other object or state of affairs that ought to be, then insofar as we have a reason to realize this end, it seems we also have a reason to have this attitude, regardless of the evaluative status of X itself. For example, suppose that the evil demon threatens to destroy the planet unless we admire him. Assuming for now that we *could* admire the demon in this capacity, it seems plausible, *ceteris paribus,* to conclude that we ought to. The evil demon would thereby constitute the object of an attitude that "ought to be." Applying a buck-passing analysis of value, we are led once again to the definitionally promiscuous result that the evil demon is *good*.

Now, in order to block cases like this, we might stipulate that goodmaking favorable attitudes cannot redound to considerations that are external to the object in question. That is, we might say that the object of a required favorable attitude can only be called good if it is to be favored on account of its intrinsic properties. Michael J. Zimmerman has put forth an account of this kind. On Zimmerman's account, to say that an object is correctly favored,

and thus good, is to say that there is a requirement to favor it. However, in order for a required favoring to be goodmaking, "we must also understand the pertinent favor or disfavor to be directed on to the state *for its own sake*, that is, for its being what it is . . . and not for the sake of its relation to some other valuable state."[49] We can formulate this account of correctness as follows:

Favoring X is correct iff there is a requirement to favor X for its own sake

In order to assess whether this modification is sufficient to avoid cases of definitional promiscuity, we must first clarify a fundamental ambiguity in claiming that the pertinent favoring must be directed on to the object "for its own sake." For it is unclear whether this is only a claim about what properties can serve as the intentional object of the required attitude, or whether it is also a claim about *why* an attitude directed at these properties is required. To this end, it will help to first draw a distinction between the *required-favoring* and the *favoring-requirement*: The *required-favoring* would be the actual attitude that is required by the deontic schema; the *favoring-requirement* would be the rationale that specifies why the required-favoring is required. The question, then, is whether the restriction that we favor some X "for the sake of" its intrinsic properties is only meant as a restriction on the object of the required-favoring, or whether it is also meant as a restriction on the criteria that determine the favoring-requirement. I'll address each of these candidate strategies in turn.

[49] Zimmerman (2001) p. 91

3.2 Required-Favoring and Intrinsic Properties

The first possible solution to the threat of definitional promiscuity is to stipulate that the *required-favoring* cannot be directed at properties or states of affairs that are external to the object in question: only a required-favoring or disfavoring directed at a given object's intrinsic properties can be said to make that object good or bad. This appears to be at least part of the solution that Zimmerman has in mind. As an illustration of his claim that goodmaking favorable attitudes must be directed onto something for its own sake, Zimmerman discusses the example of having reason to disfavor some otherwise intrinsically good state of affairs "because I'm aware that it will have terrible consequences."[50] In this case, he suggests, our attitude of disfavoring cannot make it the case that the state of affairs is intrinsically bad, as this attitude is not directed to the state's intrinsic properties, but only to some further consideration external to that state; it is these consequences that are the proper object of our disfavor. In sum, only a favoring or disfavoring directed at an object's intrinsic properties can make that object itself good or bad.

While this stipulation may be a necessary condition for any fit-based account of goodmaking favorable attitudes, it is insufficient to ward off the problem of definitional promiscuity, as there are obvious cases in which we can be required to favor an object's intrinsic properties without the object thereby being good for that reason. For example, suppose that the demon makes the demand that we favor him specifically on account of his intrinsic property of being disposed to cruelty, or else he will destroy the planet. The result

[50] Zimmerman (2001) p. 91

would be that we are obligated or required to favor the demon on account of his intrinsic properties, and this in order to satisfy the ethical requirement that we should avoid catastrophe in such circumstances. The evil demon would then be the proper object of a favorable attitude that ought to be, and would thus be "good." If one will object that in this case our attitude of favoring is not really directed towards the demon for his own sake, since the requirement for having this attitude is based in some further criteria extrinsic to the demon, this objection will not hold. For the fact that I am required to favor the demon in order to satisfy some further criteria, like avoiding catastrophe, does not make it the case that the *required-favoring* is itself directed at this criteria. We can draw this point into relief by schematizing the difference between required-favorings and favoring-requirements as follows:

> **Required-Favoring:** F = {*Favor some object X on account of X's intrinsic property set P*}
>
> **Favoring-Requirement:** "S is required to F in order to satisfy some criteria C"

As the foregoing shows, the object of the attitude I am required to have is logically distinguishable from the criteria that require me to have it. The fact that I am required to hold some attitude F for the sake of satisfying some criteria C does not make it the case that the attitude F that I am required to have is itself directed towards this criteria. For example, applying this schematic to the evil demon scenario, the required-favoring would be F_d = {*Favor the demon on account of the demon's intrinsic properties*}, and the favoring-requirement would be "S is required to F_d in order to avoid a disastrous outcome." In this case, the reference to further valuable states is a feature not of the required-favoring itself, but rather belongs to

the deontic criteria that make it the case that this attitude is an ethical requirement. That is to say, the reference to extrinsic criteria is a feature of the *favoring-requirement* and not of the *required-favoring*. Indeed, favoring the demon for his own sake, full stop, is precisely the attitude that will avert disaster, and is thereby precisely the attitude I am required to have. Unless we can furnish some further constraint on goodmaking favoring-requirements, we are led to the result that the evil demon can be correctly favored for his own sake, and would thereby be good. Appealing to constraints on required-favorings is thus insufficient to avoid definitional promiscuity.

3.3 Favoring-Requirements and Intrinsic Properties

The second possible deontic solution to definitional promiscuity is to claim that for any object deemed good, the relevant *favoring-requirement* cannot refer to considerations that are external to the intrinsic properties of that object. In other words, in addition to stipulating that the required-favoring must be directed at an object's intrinsic properties, we would stipulate that the normative criteria that determine our ethical requirement to favor some X for its own sake must also consist only of X's intrinsic properties. In this case, we could say that our requirement to favor the demon for his own sake in order to avert disaster is not a goodmaking requirement, as the criteria that determine this requirement consist of considerations that are external to the demon's intrinsic properties. We can formulate this account as follows:

Favoring X is correct *iff* (i) there is a requirement to favor X for its intrinsic properties, and (ii) this requirement is explained by no other consideration than the fact that X's intrinsic properties are such that they require that we favor X for these intrinsic properties

While the present account appears to succeed in avoiding cases of definitional promiscuity, it only does so at the cost of forfeiting both a reductive analysis of value as well as the explanatory advantage of avoiding ontological queerness. For on the present account, an attitude of favoring some X on account of property *p* would be correct just insofar as it belongs to the intrinsic nature of *p* that it ought to be favored. This would be to establish a conceptual link between a substantive property P and a normative fact about the responses we should have toward something on account of P, such that the property has intrinsic "ought-to-be-favoredness," "ought-to-be-lovedness," "ought-to-be-hatedness," etc. built into P itself. The result is that correctly favored objects would possess intrinsically normative properties that make essential reference to evaluative terms: for example, it would belong to correctly admired objects that they possess intrinsic "ought-to-be-admiredness" as a substantive property. But as we saw in the case of object-oriented adequation, this result is unacceptable for the recessive sentimentalist BPA. For on a properly recessive buck passing picture, the substantive properties of objects we call good are supposed to consist only of non-normative natural properties, properties which derive their normative significance only by standing in certain reason-giving relations. For example, a resort's being pleasant is understood on the BPA to be a non-normative natural property of the resort in the same way that the fact that there will be dancing at the party is a non-normative property of the party. Each of these properties can give us reason to pursue or favor objects possessing these properties when the right reason-giving relations obtain: for instance, when we assume

that one has a reason to do what one likes and that one likes dancing. It is the reason-giving relations that are thought to constitute irreducibly normative facts, not the properties or states of affairs that stand in the reason-giving roles. However, on the present account of deontic goodmaking, the intrinsic properties of an object are made to constitute non-derivative requirements for evaluative responses: it simply belongs to the intrinsic nature of these properties that they require me to take up a given evaluative response towards them. A good object, qua correctly favored object, would then be defined as an object that possesses intrinsically normative properties that make essential reference to evaluative categories: e.g. an "admirable" object would be an object that possesses intrinsic "ought-to-be-admiredness," a "lovable" object would possess intrinsic "ought-to-be-lovedness," etc. Here again, the recessive sentimentalist BPA would fail to be a genuinely reductive analysis of evaluative concepts insofar as the analysans would include unreduced evaluative terms, and would appeal to the kind of queer, intrinsically normative properties that the BPA was meant to avoid.

4.1 Why Unanalyzability Fails to Save the Recessive Sentimentalist BPA

The foregoing problems lead us to the suggestion that correctness is a primitive, unanalyzable feature of emotional attitudes. On this view, an object is called good just insofar as an attitude of favoring it bears the feature of being correct, where this feature permits of no further analysis. To borrow deontic language, we can say that correct attitudes are such that when directed at certain objects, they are directed as they *ought to be*, except that the criteria that determines how the attitude ought to be directed is self-imposed by the

nature of the attitude itself, and not by the satisfaction of any extra-attitudinal norms or adequational correspondence to object-side properties. A classic account explicitly motivated by this notion of emotional correctness can be found in Franz Brentano's *The Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong.* As Brentano claims:

> If we call [*nennen*] an object good … we do not thereby want to add a further determination [*Bestimmung*] to the determinations of the thing in question … If we call certain objects good, and others bad, we say no more than that whoever loves this, hates that, is correct to do so [*verhalte sich richtig*].[51]

In construing emotional correctness as an unanalyzable property of emotional attitudes, the idea is that it is a constitutive feature of some emotional attitudes that they are directed as they ought to be when formed in response to certain properties, and directed as they ought to not to be when formed in response to others. For example, on this account, we would say that it belongs to the nature of favorable attitudes that they are correct when directed at generosity and incorrect when directed at cowardice. While the properties of an object thereby function as constraints on the attitudes it would be correct to have towards it, and in this sense can be said to give us reasons to favor or disfavor it, this is not to say that an emotional attitude is correct insofar as it is adequate to or required by any intrinsically to-be-favored properties of its object. As McHugh and Way put the point, "the fittingness of a response is a matter of the satisfaction of a certain standard, *internal to that response*." As McHugh and Way go on to elaborate:

[51] Brentano (1952) p. 144

> Take a specific attitude, like admiration. This attitude sets a standard for objects. The standard specifies certain features, having enough (or an appropriate weighted sum) of which makes an object fit to admire—that is, admirable. For example, features like humility and concern for others may be on the list for admiration. The demon is notably lacking in these sorts of features. Thus, it is not fitting to admire him.[52]

On this account, the evil demon is not the kind of thing that can be correctly admired, because admiration is not the kind of attitude that can be correctly directed at an object having the finite property set possessed by the demon. In this way, correctness is a normatively self-imposing feature of an emotional attitude: it is the attitude, and not the object, that specifies its own conditions of correctness. The upshot is that we can avoid cases of definitional promiscuity without appealing to evaluatively-laden object-side properties or extra-attitudinal deontic requirements that are susceptible to WKR problems. For on this picture, emotional correctness is taken to be explanatory bedrock: it is simply a fact about certain emotional attitudes that they are as they ought to be when directed at objects with certain properties, and incorrect otherwise. As A.C. Ewing (1947) sums up this point: "Certain characteristics are such that the fitting response to what possesses them is a pro-attitude, *and that is all there is to it*."[53]

4.2 Unanalyzability and Ontological Parsimony

Now, whatever the independent merits of such a view might be, it runs afoul of the explanatory advantages that reductive buck passing analyses purport to have over value-

[52] McHugh and Way (2016) p. 12
[53] Ewing (1947) p. 172; cf. 157-58

based axiologies. First, if the recessive sentimentalist BPA is motivated in part by ontological concerns over the explanatory profligacy and "queerness" of substantive value properties, then appealing to an unanalyzable primitive feature of mental states will incur the same problems. On the present account, the evil demon would be "bad" not just because he possesses certain natural properties—say for example the property of being disposed towards recreational killing—but also insofar as the attitude of disfavoring him on account of these natural properties bears a numerically distinct property, the primitive property of *correctness*. We thereby avoid adding a substantive property to *objects* we call good only at the expense of adding one elsewhere—specifically, to the *emotional attitude itself* now considered as a psychological entity and an object of inner perception. The result is just as ontologically profligate as that of value-based axiologies: in addition to the natural properties that are thought to give us reasons to respond in certain ways, a new class of irreducibly normative properties is posited as part of the furniture of the universe such that we can explain why some reasons are good-making and not others. Thus, while "goodness" or "badness" may remain a merely formal term on the present account, "correctness" must now be given its own ontological purchase. Furthermore, if we accept the parsimonious brand of naturalism that often motivates reductive buck-passing analyses, then the properties we are adding to our ontology look to be just as ontologically queer as substantive value properties are accused of being. For on the present account, objects are called good insofar as favorable attitudes directed towards them are directed as they *should be*, where the latter "should" is an irreducibly normative and unanalyzable feature that is self-imposed by the attitude itself. But if the problem with positing substantive value properties is that we posit properties with intrinsically prescriptive features unlike the familiar entities of our present scientific

paradigm, then positing an unanalyzable property of correctness on our mental states incurs the same problem. In Mackie-style terms, making correctness an unanalyzable and primitive feature of emotional attitudes would entail that a correct emotion somehow has the intrinsically normative features of "to-be-ness" or "ought-ness" built into the attitude itself. When compared to its value-based competitors, then, the question of how value predicates are metaphysically grounded on this version of the fit-based analysis remains just as explanatorily profligate and just as ontologically queer.

4.3 Unanalyzability and Epistemic Worries

Second, and in tandem with these ontological concerns, construing emotional correctness as an unanalyzable primitive also incurs epistemological problems parallel to the kind often levelled against value-based axiologies. For unless we are to forfeit our claim to moral knowledge, emotional correctness is a feature of which we must be aware in order for the object of the emotion to be judged good. Upon the present account, however, the correctness of an attitude can be given neither by the awareness of some object-side correlate property, nor by the awareness that some extra-attitudinal normative criteria are satisfied. Rather, correctness on this account is supposed to be an unanalyzable and irreducibly normative property of the attitude itself, which raises the question of how exactly we are supposed to have epistemic access to it. How do we know, for example, that admiration is correct when directed at the kind of properties that McHugh and Way suppose? The fact that correctness is presumed to be a feature of psychological states that are accessible in inner perception does not settle this issue. Just because a given thing is

perceptible in virtue of some of its properties, it does not follow that *all* of its features or properties are thereby known on that basis. Thus, just because the feature of correctness is thought to characterize an object that we can access in inner perception—namely, an emotional attitude—this does not resolve the question of how it is that we have epistemic access to *this* feature in particular—that is, to the *correctness* of the attitude. The apparent difficulty in explaining our epistemic access to the correctness of an attitude, however, is that correctness, qua unanalyzable and irreducibly normative, does not seem to be of the same ontological kind as our ordinary empirically perceptible psychological contents. In his review of Brentano's 1902 *Origin*, G.E. Moore raises concerns about precisely this issue:

> Obviously the conception of 'good,' as Brentano defines it, cannot be derived merely from the experience of *loving*, but only from that of *'right* loving' – from the perception of the *rightness* [or correctness] of a love: its *origin* cannot be merely the perception of a love which *is* right but in which this quality is not perceived, it can only be a perception in which this quality is itself *contained*. But…[t]he quality of "rightness" is *not* a psychical content and the perception of it is *not* an impression in the ordinary sense of these words. A single mark is sufficient to distinguish it: by a "psychical content" we always mean at least an existent, and by "impression" the cognition of an existent, and "rightness" is *not an existent*.[54]

As Moore's remarks indicate, upon the presumption of a fit-based analysis of value like Brentano's, the possibility of our knowledge of the good would require that the distinction between a correct emotion and an emotion in general must be surveyable, which means that the property of correctness must be an epistemically accessible feature of the emotional attitude itself. As the awareness of an unanalyzable primitive that sets normative constraints on good-making reasons for having favorable attitudes, the awareness of the correctness of

[54] Moore (1903b) p. 117; italics original.

an attitude would amount to something like the perception of an irreducibly normative property. The idea that normative properties are perceptible, however, leads to one of two possibilities depending upon how we understand the nature of this kind of perception, each of which is problematic for a buck passing analysis.

In the first option—one alluded to by Moore as a non-starter due to his own non-naturalist commitments—we must suppose that correctness is perceptible in the same manner as all objects of descriptive empirical psychology: that is, as an object of inner perception and a real constituent of occurrent psychological states (what Moore, following Brentano, refers to as a "psychical content"), thereby rendering correctness an empirically contingent fact (or "existent" in Moore's language). On this account, the primitive property of correctness would not merely supervene on the empirical properties of our psychological states, but would itself *be* an empirical property—we can call this the *correctness-property*. The evaluative status of an object would thus be determined by and explanatorily reducible to empirically contingent facts about occurrent psychological states: namely, whether they include the correctness-property as a real constituent.

Now, *pace* Moore, the problem with this picture is not necessarily that it leads to a kind of naturalism, but rather that it does so in a way that makes evaluative status perniciously arbitrary. Recall that on the present account, attitudes towards some object are correct just insofar as they bear the property of correctness as a primitive feature, where this has no further explanatory basis in adequation to object-side correlates or satisfaction of extra-attitudinal deontic norms. If we then make the further assumption that this primitive feature is an empirical property of occurrent psychological states, then whether any given x is good or bad depends only upon the empirically contingent matter of whether a given pro-

attitude or con-attitude towards x happens to exhibit this discrete property. For example, recreational killing would be "bad" only to the extent that a con-attitude towards recreational killing happens to bear the correctness-property among its empirically surveyable features. The problem is that without extra-attitudinal normative constraints, nothing in principle rules out the possibility that a complete description of the natural world could include an instance where the attitude of *favoring* recreational killing also bears this empirical property. In such a case, we would be committed to holding that recreational killing is "good." If we try to rule out this possibility by claiming that the properties of recreational killing are somehow disfavorable by nature, such that they could never be correctly favored, then we slide back into an account of correctness as adequation: in order to explain why some things are correctly favored and others correctly disfavored, we must posit evaluatively-laden object-side properties, either as essentially favorable or disfavorable monadic properties or else as relational properties of meriting favorable or disfavorable attitudes. In either case, positing such properties would forfeit a genuinely reductive analysis: the analysans of concepts like good and bad would make reference to unreduced value terms. Without such properties, however, the possibility that recreational killing can be correctly favored always looms. The best we can hope for is an inductive generalization that this will never happen based upon prior experience. But insofar as such a case is even conceptually possible, evaluative status on this account looks to be normatively arbitrary in a way that few will accept.

In the second option, we avoid the foregoing problems by accepting a difference in kind between empirical properties and the property of emotional correctness, but then face the challenge of explaining how our perception of the latter is possible if not by positing a

special epistemic faculty capable of tracking the irreducibly normative features of our mental states. On this score, the fit-based analysis once again loses any presumed advantage of explanatory parsimony over value-based theories: If value-based axiologies were objectionable on the grounds that they face the challenge of explaining our knowledge of the good without positing "queer" faculties of the mind utterly unlike our ordinary ways of accessing the world, the present version of the fit-based analysis faces the same challenge. Whether this challenge can be met, of course, is beside the point. That is to say, perhaps we *can* explain how a normative property like emotional correctness is perceptible in a way that is continuous with our ordinary epistemic faculties. Terrance Cuneo (2003), for example, argues that we can come to indirectly perceive the higher-order moral properties of states of affairs through our direct perception of the non-moral empirical properties upon which these moral properties supervene. For instance, it is through my empirical perception of the non-moral properties that underlie a group of teens causing pain to a cat for fun—e.g. bodily movements indicative of pain, smiling faces indicative of pleasure taken in the pain, etc.—together with my conceptual understanding of the moral wrongness of any states of affairs bearing these property types, that I come to apprehend the moral status of this particular state of affairs. Assuming such a strategy were defensible, it would then be open to the fit-based analysis to adapt this model to the perception of emotional correctness: e.g. one might argue that it is through the inner perception of certain lower-order empirical properties of our mental states that we come to indirectly perceive the higher-order property of correctness. The problem, of course, is that taking the latter strategy on behalf of the recessive sentimentalist BPA would thereby grant its viability for a value-based account as well; indeed, accounts like Cuneo's are meant to extend to the perception of *sui generis*

evaluative properties. On the issue of whether we can access irreducibly normative properties without positing queer epistemic faculties, then, the primitive-fit-based analysis and value-based axiologies are either happy bedfellows or partners in crime. In either case, the recessive sentimentalist BPA fails to demonstrate an explanatory advantage over its value-based rivals.

Conclusion: Why Recessive Sentimentalism Fails

Each account of emotional correctness we've considered fails to meet at least one of the success conditions for a properly recessive analysis of value. First, as we just saw, appealing to an unanalyzable notion of correctness inherits all of the explanatory burdens of value-based axiologies that the recessive sentimentalist analysis was meant to overcome. Second, making emotional correctness parasitic upon the satisfaction of normative requirements either (i) allows object-independent normative criteria and thus leads to cases of definitional promiscuity, or else (ii) restricts the normative criteria to the intrinsic properties of an object but thereby forces us to saddle objects with instrinsically normative substantive properties—e.g. intrinsic to-be-favoredness. And finally, appealing to a relation of adequacy between an emotion either (i) entails positive unreduced object-side value properties on a descriptive account of adequation, or else (ii), on an irreducibly normative account of adequation, entails positing intrinsically normative substantive properties no different from those thought objectionable on the value-based picture. Having undercut the idea that recessive analyses hold an abductive advantage over value-based axiologies on two principle claims, I now turn

to develop a substantive realist sentimentalist account of the relationship between values and emotions. On this view, emotional states are *perceptions* of values.

PART TWO

SEEING, FEELING, AND VALUES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE FOR VALUE PERCEPUALISM

Introduction: Intuitionism, Perceptualism, and Value

After nearly a century out of the limelight, moral intuitionism is currently undergoing a revival. According to the moral intuitionist broadly construed, there are at least some moral beliefs which are noninferentially justified on the basis of certain foundational mental states with unique epistemic properties—namely, *intuitions*—and this in such a way that is adequate for genuine moral knowledge. Once the preeminent metaethical theory, moral intuitionism's wane in appeal throughout the mid twentieth-century largely tracks with the rise of logical empiricism and scientistic naturalism. Under the latter paradigms, not only moral intuitions, but the very notion of intuition in general was under attack. As Gary Gutting sums up this historical shift: "Analytic philosophy had begun with the rejection of special intellectual insights into the nature of reality."[55] In the moral domain, the classical intuitionist's appeal to non-empirical knowledge of moral truths was deemed either meaningless or demonstrably false, thereby sparking a proliferation of non-cognitivist and error theoretic analyses of moral discourse. The rigid empiricism and naturalism that buoyed these metaethical theories, however, began to fall out of favor the more it became clear that

[55] Gutting (1993) p. 5-6

such frameworks posed as much of a threat to the kinds of fundamental knowledge needed to make these very same theories intelligible—including, in particular, logical and mathematical knowledge. Towards the close of the century, a growing backlash of anti-scientism created fertile conditions for a return of moral intuitionism. Explaining the "renewed interest in intuitionism," Robert Audi (2004) writes that

> [A] half century's response to W.V. Quine's attack on the *a priori*, and indeed on the power of reason to reveal significant truths, have restored in many philosophers a certain sense of epistemological freedom...We have also recovered from the attack on the possibility of non-inferential knowledge, something that intuitionism in any major form...is committed to positing for certain moral propositions.[56]

Recent cases for moral intuitionism have attempted to motivate the plausibility of noninferential moral knowledge by arguing that its prospects rise and fall with the plausibility of our ordinary ways of knowing anything whatsoever. These accounts often proceed by trying to show an affinity between moral intuitions and our principle avenue for noninferential justification—namely, *perceptions*. Michael Huemer (2005) has famously advanced one such so-called "perceptualist" account of moral intuitionism, arguing that moral intuitions and ordinary sensory perception alike draw from the same justificatory source from which *all* noninferential justification is ultimately drawn—namely, from what Huemer calls *seemings*:

> I take statements of the form "it seems to S that P" or "it appears to S that P" to describe a kind of propositional attitude, different from belief, of which sensory

[56] Audi (2004) p. 2

> experience, apparent memory, intuition, and apparent introspective awareness are species. This type of mental state may be termed an "appearance."[57]

For Huemer, what distinguishes seemings from other propositional attitudes is the fact that they present their propositional contents with a "feeling of assertiveness" or "forcefulness"—a positing character that *recommends* belief but is not identical with belief. In the absence of defeating considerations, Huemer argues, a seeming that p is a sufficient condition for a reason to believe that p. This is the Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism:

> If it seems to S that p, then, in the absence of defeaters, S thereby has at least some degree of justification for believing that p.[58]

According to Huemer, while the reason giving force of all mental states ultimately consists in true seeming propositional content, propositional seemings can be drawn from a diverse range of etiologies. Some propositional seemings, namely, perceptions proper, consist in sensory appearances; others, namely what Huemer terms "intellectual appearances," or "*intuitions*," are obtained on the basis of thought alone:

> An initial, intellectual appearance is an 'intuition'. That is, an intuition that p is a state of its seeming to one that p that is not dependent on inference from other beliefs and that results from *thinking* about p, as opposed to perceiving, remembering, or introspecting.[59]

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[57] Huemer (2007) p. 30
[58] ibid.
[59] Huemer (2005) p. 102

For Huemer, intuition is a non-empirical species of propositional seeming marked by its independence from inferential reasoning. Simply put, intuition is a matter of *thinking thoughts that seem true*. Like all other propositional seemings, an intuition that p is a *prima facie* reason for a belief that p. Upon this account, what makes an intuition an *ethical* intuition is not some proprietary content over and above propositional content, but simply that the proposition that serves as its content is one with evaluative significance: "An ethical intuition is an intuition whose content is an *evaluative* proposition."[60] To the extent that we are capable of thinking propositions with evaluative significance, and to the extent that such thoughts are also capable of *seeming true*—Huemer gives the example "Pleasure is *ceteris paribus* better than pain"—then we are capable of having noninferentially justified ethical beliefs on the basis of intuition alone.

Ethical intuitionists like Huemer are right to argue that the notion of moral intuition does not presuppose some queer, mystical faculty of moral knowledge, and indeed that moral knowledge can be derived in some of the same ways as our ordinary ways of knowing anything at all. The problem, however, is that Phenomenal Conservatism rests upon a fundamentally inadequate understanding of the ordinary ways in which we acquire noninferential knowledge. According to the Phenomenal Conservative, the ultimate source of noninferential justification consists in no other factor than the true seeming propositional content of mental states. As we will see, however, by reducing the reason giving force of all mental states to such a criterion, the Phenomenal Conservative struggles to explain the privileged epistemic access that certain mental states appear to have to their objects over and

60 ibid.

against other mental states: namely, that of making their objects directly *present* to the subject. This problem is not unique to Phenomenal Conservatism, but is part and parcel of any intellectualist theory of noninferential justification that attempts to account for the reason giving force of foundational mental states strictly in terms of propositional and/or conceptual contents and their ancillary features. In foreclosing the epistemic relevance of extra-conceptual content—including sensory-perceptual and affective content alike—such theories leave us with no resources to account for the distinction between the merely conceptual act of thinking that some proposition is true and that of enjoying some kind of direct experiential awareness of the very conditions in virtue of which the proposition is true. When applied to the domain of moral epistemology, such theories of noninferential justification thereby foreclose the possibility most in keeping with the evidence drawn from folk moral judgments—namely, that ethical intuitions are not primarily *thought* but *felt,* and that what is felt is some way the world is, evaluatively speaking. In other words, that evaluative truth is immediately given by way of irreducibly *affective* mental content.

Such a presumption against an affective model of moral intuitionism can be traced to two prevailing intellectualist prejudices. The first concerns a pervasive assumption about what constitutes the *intentionality* of a mental state—in particular, what constitutes the kind of intentionality that gives a mental state a "cognitive" or "mind-to-world" direction of fit. Indeed, upon an objectivist account, whatever moral intuitions are, they turn upon a directedness to some way things actually are. When I attend to the wrongness of a deed or the goodness of a person, this involves my awareness of a range of objects and states of affairs. According to two standard views of emotions, however, feelings, qua affective contents, are not up to the task of presenting the world as it is. On the first view, any

awareness enabled by the affective contents of feelings would be confined to the merely subjective interiority of sensory experience (See James 1884; Lange 1885; Prinz 2004). On this picture, feelings are either reducible to representationally inert sense data, or else reducible to an awareness of such sensations. On the second prevailing view, certain emotional states are judgments, and thus possess world-directed intentionality, but they do so only in virtue of propositional contents (See Greenspan 1988; Nussbaum 2001; Roberts 2003; Solomon 1976). Upon either view, when considered in virtue of their affective contents, feelings by themselves do not purport to open out onto the world to represent how things are outside of sensory experience itself. Thus, when considered as a source of noninferential justification for our ethical beliefs, feelings cannot be disclosive of objective moral truths, it is assumed, because feelings do not possess world-directed intentionality.

The second major prejudice concerns the possibility of *a priori* moral truths. As many moral objectivists will agree, if ethics is to remain an objective and robustly action-guiding matter, it must make essential reference to at least some unconditional truths, facts, principles, or procedures that are not subject to the vicissitudes of empirical contingency. According to what we might refer to as the Formalist Prejudice, however, the realm of *a priori* knowledge is exhaustively conterminous with that of formal reason, with all else being relegated to *a posteriori* contingency. Upon this view, even if we were to grant intentionality to the affective contents of mental acts, the epistemic relevance of such contents would be limited to disclosing those features of the world owing to its contingent natural constitution. Accordingly, any *a priori* ethical truth disclosed by an act of moral intuition must redound only to propositional or conceptual content that can be derived from the application of

formal reason. Feelings cannot constitute our primary access to moral truth, then, unless we are to forfeit the *a priori* foundations of ethics.

My aim in Parts II and III is to make some headway in developing an alternative metaethical framework that overcomes each of these intellectualist prejudices. Drawing upon the phenomenological frameworks of Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler, Part II provides an affective model of noninferential ethical knowledge, according to which our emotional experiences constitute *evaluative perceptions* of the world. On the broadly Husserlian account I defend, propositionally formulated moral judgments are merely empty acts of thought which, on their own, provide no justification whatsoever for believing their contents. In order to yield a reason for belief, such acts must be aided by intuitive acts of *intentional feeling*, which disclose the evaluative matter in question by way of irreducibly affective, non-conceptual mental contents. On this view, the ethical intuition properly speaking consists not in the propositionally articulated thought that p, nor in the corresponding justified belief that p, but rather in the *felt givenness* of the evaluative matter itself—that is, in an *evaluative perception,* which can include both the simple perception of concrete particulars as well as the grasping of abstract universal facts. As sources of noninferential evaluative knowledge, evaluative perceptions are not intellectual appearances or true-seeming thoughts, but affectively-conditioned *presentations*—that is, intentional states of awareness in which we are immediately aware of the evaluative features of some intentional object.[61] Building upon

[61] I will follow the current if not unproblematic trend of reserving the term "presentation" for Husserl's *Gegenwärtigung* and "representation" for *Vergegenwärtigung,* and this as to set off Husserl's account of intuition from the representationalist theory of perception in anglophone philosophy. For an important discussion of the indelicacies of the presentation/representation parsing, see Uwe Meixner (2014). Since my aim will be to address Husserlian considerations to contemporary analytic metaethical debates, in which the term "presentational" carries a meaning approximating Husserl's account, "presentation" will be contrasted against "representation."

Husserl's account of noninferential justification, I argue that it is in the joint recognition that things are immediately given in feeling as they are propositionally meant—namely, in acts of *evaluative fulfillment*—that we enjoy noninferential justification for our evaluative beliefs. We can formulate the thesis of Part II as follows:

> **Affective Value Perceptualism:** Some foundational evaluative beliefs are noninferentially justified in virtue of their propositional content being *epistemically fulfilled* through *evaluative perceptions*, which are irreducibly affective yet intentionally directed acts of feeling that constitute immediate epistemic access to the objective correlates of some first order evaluative claims, and this by way of non-conceptual yet intrinsically intentional affective contents. The objective correlates of evaluative perceptions are *value properties*.

Part II will focus on the emotional perception of values without explicit consideration of their *moral* status, and in that sense can be taken as an argument in favor of *value realism* without providing an attendant theory of normative reasons needed for a robustly action-guiding account of ethical objectivity. However, the perceptualist case for value realism Part I lays the groundwork for a value-based moral realist framework complete with action-guiding normative reasons and *a priori* moral principles—something I turn to argue for in Part III.

1. Intuitions, Propositional Contents, and Seemings: A Failed Case for Perceptualism

Moral intuitionists like Huemer are right to argue that moral intuition does not presuppose some mystical faculty of moral knowledge, and indeed that moral knowledge can be derived in some of the same ways as our ordinary ways of knowing anything at all. The problem, however, is that Phenomenal Conservatism rests upon a fundamentally inadequate understanding of the ordinary ways in which we acquire noninferential knowledge. According to the Phenomenal Conservative, the ultimate source of noninferential justification consists in no other factor than the true seeming propositional content of mental states. What this leaves out is some account of the privileged epistemic access that certain mental states appear to have to their objects over and against other mental states: namely, that of making their objects directly present to the subject. The result is that Phenomenal Conservatism cannot explain the obvious evidential disparity between, on the one hand, a subject who merely entertains a true seeming proposition about some remote state of affairs, and, on the other, a subject who enjoys the unique evidential position of being directly presented with the state of affairs itself.

Compare, for instance, a subject who believes it is snowing outside on the basis of trustworthy secondhand testimony, and a subject who believes it is snowing outside because he goes outside and sees falling snow. According to Huemer's account, in the absence of defeating considerations, both subjects are *prima facie* justified in believing that it is snowing outside for what is ultimately the exact same reason: though the etiologies are different, they each undergo a mental state with propositional content that seems true. In the first case, the

seeming that P accrues from the trustworthiness of the testimony that P; in the second case, the seeming that P consists in the visual appearance that P.

Now, to be sure, Huemer would undoubtedly agree that the two subjects have drastically different degrees of justification, and his explanation for this is simply that "Some appearances are *stronger* than others—as we say, some things are '*more obvious*' than others."[62] In the foregoing case, then, Huemer thinks we can readily see that the perceptual subject's evidence "naturally" presents a stronger *degree* of seeming than that of the testimonial subject. Assuming the latter is true, however, the question is *why* the perceptual case should have a stronger degree of seeming and thus confer greater justification than certain other kinds of seemings, and it is this question that the Phenomenal Conservative appears unable answer. For according to the Phenomenal Conservative, sensory perceptions are essentially defined as a species of propositional seemings: *all it means* for a mental state to be a sensory perception is that it has true seeming propositional content that is implicated with sensory experience. While sensory perceptions are differentiated from other propositional seemings on the basis of their ancillary sensory features, none of those features are taken to be relevant to its epistemic value: all of the epistemic heavy lifting is being done on this account by no other feature than the seeming true of propositional content. What this suggests is that there is nothing unique about perceptions *qua* perceptions which gives them the reason-giving force they have over and against other mental states. It therefore remains a total accident that a sensory perceptual seeming that it is snowing outside should present a stronger degree of seeming and confer greater evidential support than a seeming on the basis

[62] Huemer (2005) p. 100

of testimony, or any other comparatively weaker species of seeming for that matter. Huemer's explanation thus amounts to the bald claim that sensory perceptions *just so happen* to present a greater degree of seeming than certain other kinds of seemings. Such a position is not only unsatisfying; it completely overlooks the unique epistemic connection that perceptions that p have to the truthmakers of beliefs that p: namely, that of positing their objects as being *present* before the subject. By reducing noninferential justification to propositional seemings, Huemer has no resources to account for the connection between a perceptual seeming that p and its actually being the case that p, and thus we are left with the view that perceptions that p *just so happen* to confer the degree of justification they do for beliefs that p.

When we apply these considerations to the Phenomenal Conservative's model of evaluative intuitions and evaluative beliefs, we run into an analogue of the very same problem. For example, consider a child who comes to believe that inflicting pain on the family cat is morally wrong, and this solely on the basis of the fact that his parents tell him so. Suppose that while the child has a minimal grasp of basic moral facts and deontic predicates such as "right" and "wrong," he is not yet able to make the associations needed to see the moral import of this particular situation for himself. Nevertheless, given that his parents have proven to be reliable sources with respect to a range of other propositions, the moral proposition in question seems true to him, and so on this basis he believes, with some degree of justification, that torturing the family cat is in fact wrong. Now compare this child to the mature adult who believes that torturing the family cat is morally wrong not on the basis of secondhand testimony, but because she herself is aware of the moral facts that make

such an action wrong, and this insofar as she is, say, aware of the fact that actions causing pain for its own sake are, *ceteris paribus,* not to be pursued.

Here again, the Phenomenal Conservative would hold that the mature adult and the child alike are each justified in their moral belief for exactly the same reason: they both entertain evaluative propositional content that seems true. Granting that both the child and the mature adult are indeed justified in their respective beliefs, the question is whether they enjoy significantly different degrees of justification, and it seems obvious that they do. The problem, as before, is that the Phenomenal Conservative does not have the resources to explain *why* the mature subject is more justified than the child, and *why* an intuition that P should constitute comparatively greater evidence than a seeming based upon secondhand testimony that P. For the Phenomenal Conservative, intuition is just another species of propositional seeming: *all it means* for a mental state to be an intuition or a perception is that it has true seeming propositional content that is generated "intellectually"—that is, generated on the basis of "initial" thinking that is neither empirically, introspectively, nor inferentially informed. But as with the case of perception, none of the proprietary features that distinguish intuition *as* intuition are thought to account for its reason giving force; the sole epistemic weight of such mental states, it is assumed, consists in no other feature than its true seeming propositional content.[63] Now, to be sure, Phenomenal Conservatives like Huemer would no doubt agree that the subject of the moral intuition is drastically more justified than the subject of the secondhand moral testimony, and this inasmuch as the former enjoys a "stronger degree of seeming" than the latter. And yet insofar as the

[63] As Huemer claims: "An ethical intuition is an intuition whose content is an evaluative proposition." (2005) p. 102

Phenomenal Conservative appeals to no other sources of justification than true seeming propositional content, it is left as a mystery *why* the propositional content of the moral intuition should more clearly seem true than that of the secondhand testimony, or any other less true seeming propositional attitude for that matter. The only explanation that can be given is that intuitions *just so happen* to bear a greater degree of seeming and thus *just so happen* to confer a greater degree of justification than certain other non-intuitive mental states.

As with the case of perception, the Phenomenal Conservative's account of intuition severely understates their reason-giving force. For what characterizes paradigmatic cases of intuition is not that they merely seem true, but that their content somehow provides direct access to their truthmakers. Consider intuitions with the following propositional contents: "The same patch cannot be simultaneously red and green" or "There is no color without extension." Surely there is a sense in which these propositions "seem true." However, to rest their justification on this fact would be to grossly underestimate their epistemic status. For I'm not justified in believing that these proposition are true on the basis of entertaining propositional content that only incidentally seems true. I'm justified, for instance, because I can vividly imagine red, then vividly imagine green, and then, on the basis of those joint experiences, I can *see* that redness and greenness cannot properly coincide. Likewise for the proposition "No color is without extension." The proposition doesn't merely *seem* true, but rather, to the extent that I can recognize that reducing an instance of a color to absolute zero extension would preclude the instantiation of that color, I can see that the proposition *must* be true, and indeed that its negation must be false. In each case, what justifies the belief that p is not that the proposition *seems* true, but rather that I can see that it *is* true, and this insofar as an intuition that p somehow enables direct access to the facts in virtue of which the

proposition is made true: in this case, essential facts about the nature of color. That and how intuitions afford such access is completely overlooked on the Phenomenal Conservative's picture.

If evaluative intuitions afford any privileged epistemic access to their truthmakers over and above certain non-intuitive evaluative states, then, no explanation of this affordance is given on Huemer's Phenomenal Conservative brand of moral intuitionism. On the latter view, some evaluative propositional contents just so happen to seem true, and thus just so happen to confer justification. As a consequence, however, the Phenomenal Conservative cannot explain why some propositional attitudes should qualify for candidacy as intuitions but not others, and thus virtually any so-called "initial intellectual" state with evaluative propositional content, no matter how capricious the proposition, could theoretically qualify as a bona fide moral intuition provided that it happens to seem true. For example, consider a range of mental states with the following evaluative propositional contents: "It is sometimes permissible to sit"; "It is sometimes permissible to lie"; "*Pain* is *ceteris paribus* better than *pleasure*." All of these mental states involve tokening evaluative propositional content that is "intellectually" generated: that is, generated in virtue of simply *thinking* that p. Yet, clearly some propositions are *prima facie* more justified than others, and indeed it is arguable that propositional contents like "Pain is *ceteris paribus* better than pleasure" are simply *incapable* of conferring any *prima facie* justification at all. What explains this fact?

Huemer thinks he can explain this by once again pointing to variations in degrees of seeming: "Not all intuitions are equal—some are more credible than others…[O]ne reason

for this is that some intuitions are *simply stronger*, or *more clearly seem true,* than others."[64] Indeed, one may very well be right to claim that it more clearly seems true that "It is sometimes permissible to sit" than it does that "It is sometimes permissible to lie." Moreover, I would even venture to assume that it has *never* seemed true to anyone that "Pain is *ceteris paribus* better than pleasure." Such a proposition simply looks to be *incapable* of seeming true. Surely, then, it is true that the contents of some propositional attitudes are more true seeming than others, and true that some propositional contents are not capable of seeming true at all. However, none of this touches upon *why* it is that some propositional contents should "more clearly seem true" and not others, and thus there is no explanation of why an intellectual seeming that p should count in favor of a belief that p, nor why the fact that "Pain is *ceteris paribus* better than pleasure" *never* seems true should count against its possibly being true nonetheless. Without any account of the connection between its intuitively seeming that P and its actually being the case that P, it is left as a matter of pure accident that some intellectual mental states should confer a greater degree of justification than any other, and moreover a pure accident that some propositional attitudes should be excluded from candidacy as intuitions altogether.

Such a result flies in the face of ordinary discourse, however. We don't think it just accidental that "2+2=4" is true seeming and accidental that "Pain is *ceteris paribus* better than pleasure" is not true seeming. Rather, we generally think the forcefulness of such intuitions is imposed by our awareness of the things themselves. By reducing the noninferential justification of moral beliefs to the seeming true of propositional contents, however, the

[64] Huemer (2005) p. 100

Phemonenal Conservative cannot appeal to any connection between an intuition that p and its being the case that p, and thus lacks the resources to explain how we can ever move beyond the way things merely *seem* in order to see how things really *are*, morally speaking. That is to say, the Phenomenal Conservative has no account of *moral insight*.

From Seeming to *Seeing*:
Perception, Fulfillment, and The Principle of All Principles

The shortcomings of the foregoing account of moral intuitionism are not unique to Phenomenal Conservatism, but are part and parcel of any theory of noninferential justification that attempts to account for the reason giving force of foundational mental states strictly in terms of propositional contents and their ancillary features. In the domain of moral epistemology, the latter tendency can be traced to a predominant intellectualist strain of intuitionism represented by Henry Sidgwick, for whom moral intuitions are reducible to "propositions of real clearness and certainty."[65] On this view, intuition and justified belief are essentially conflated, as the immediate justification of epistemically basic moral propositions is a function of simply entertaining such propositions themselves, not of any direct awareness of the conditions in virtue of which the propositions are true. As Dallas Willard (2002) observes, in "his failure to clarify the distinctions between proof, self-evidence, and intuition," Sidgwick and his intellectualist scions neglected to consider whether "intuition might be a matter of perception-like insight into the subject matter which the proposition deals with, not of reflection on the proposition itself."[66]

Such an intellectualist tendency in moral epistemology runs parallel to a broader conceptualist prejudice about the reason giving status of mental contents in general. According to this prejudice, only mental contents that present how things are in the world can provide justification for beliefs about the world, and conceptual contents alone afford

[65] Sidgwick Methods Chapter XIII, Book III p. 373
[66] Willard (2002) p. 83

such world-disclosive intentionality.[67] As we saw in the case of Phenomenal Conservatism, however, the problem with such views is that they leave us with no resources to account for the distinction between merely thinking that p is the case and actually enjoying some kind of direct, privileged contact with its being the case that p. Unless we are to accept that simply thinking some proposition is true should give us reason to believe that it is true, the conceptualist is charged with explaining how reason-giving experiential states differ from a propositional attitude of mere thought, where the apparent difficulty in providing such an explanation is that the conceptualist has already forsworn the epistemic relevance of all extra-conceptual mental content. Pending such an explanation, it would appear that conceptual content underdetermines the reason-giving force of foundational experiential states. Of course, even if we grant that propositional contents are indeed insufficient sources of noninferential justification, the question remains: how *do* our experiential states provide reasons for belief, if not in virtue of conceptual content that can be inferentially linked to the belief in question?

A fruitful answer can be found in Husserl's notion of originary intuition and his attendant account of fulfillment. On Husserl's theory, noninferential justification turns upon the contribution of a distinctive type of mental content afforded by acts of "intuition" [*Anschauung*]. In sharp contrast with Huemer's account, intuitive contents do not yield mere seemings or appearances of objects, but are those contents in virtue of which an object is immediately *given* to me. As Jaakko Hintikka (2003) summarizes this aspect of Husserl's

[67] See McDowell 1994 and Brewer 2001 for classic conceptualist accounts. It is worth noting here that both McDowell and Brewer have since come to change their views significantly. For a recent account, see Bengson, Grube, and Korman 2011.

thought, intuitions "are the *interface* of consciousness and of the object of consciousness" and thus "What is given in intuition for Husserl are components of reality, not our impressions of them...It is the medium in which reality *impinges* on my consciousness."[68] In other words, in intuition, I don't *represent* an object, as through some mediating sign or mental image; rather, in intuition, the object itself is *immediately present* to me. In this way, upon a Husserlian framework, the ultimate source of noninferential justification is not to be understood in the idiom of *seemings that p*, but rather in that of *seeings that p*:

> Immediately "seeing"—*not merely sensuous, experiential seeing, but seeing in general, i.e. any kind of consciousness that affords [something] in an originary fashion*—is the ultimate source of legitimacy of all rational claims.[69]

To be sure, not all intuitions are "seeings" in the sense required for immediate justification. For example, intuitive acts of *imagining that p* also give their objects, but do not posit them as concretely existing. Certain intuitions, however, not only posit their objects as existing, but posit them as being actually present before the subject—namely, *originary intuitions*. As we'll see, upon Husserl's theory, originary intuitions are not restricted to the simple perception of physical objects, but include the immediate presentation of ideal objects of knowledge. In proportion to the degree of adequacy in which the object is given, an originary intuition that p is a source of *prima facie* justification for believing that p. This is Husserl's Principle of all Principles:

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[68] Hintikka (2003) p. 57-79

[69] *Ideas I* sec. 19. Emphasis in the original.

> [T]he Principle of all Principles: that each intuition affording [something] in an originary way is a legitimate source of knowledge, that whatever presents itself to us in "Intuition" in an originary way (so to speak, in its actuality in person) is to be taken simply as what it affords itself as, but only within the limitations in which it affords itself there.[70]

Now, while originary intuition is a necessary condition for noninferential justification, it is *not* a sufficient condition. In order to see how originary intuition serves as a noninferential justifier, we can now turn to examine how it operates within Husserl's model of *fulfillment*.

***Epistemic Fulfillment*:** Suppose I am told that it is snowing outside. Under normal circumstances, in order to determine whether it is in fact snowing outside, I would simply go outside and look. Say that upon doing so, I have a perceptual experience of falling snow. Absent any defeating considerations, I now have a significantly greater degree of justification for believing that it is snowing outside than I did before I had the perception.

On a Husserlian account, the foregoing sequence of noninferential justification consists of three distinguishable intentional acts. First is the purely conceptual act of *empty signification*, which is exemplified in this case by the mere thought that it is snowing outside unattended by any perception of this state of affairs. A signifying act is marked by the fact that it intends its object *in absentia* through the use of signs: that is to say, the object is meant, but not given, through the propositional content signified by "It is snowing outside." As an act of meaning, a signifying act not only determines an objective reference, but also provides the referent with a distinctive "interpretive sense" that specifies both the object and "the

[70] ibid. 43/51

precise way in which it is meant"—what Husserl terms the *intentional matter* of an act.[71] For instance, while the thought that "It is snowing outside" and the thought that "It is precipitating outside" both refer to the same objective referent, they do so under distinct senses, and thus mean different things in virtue of their distinct intentional matters. Finally, in addition to specifying an intentional matter, the signifying act can also intend this matter under one of a number of differing act characters—what Husserl dubs an act's respective "quality"—which determine *how* the intentional matter is being considered—including positing characters like that of believing that it is snowing outside and non-positing characters such as wondering whether it is snowing outside.

The act of signification is an epistemically critical moment in the justificatory sequence, as a signifying act that p keys the subject's awareness to the conditions that would make a belief that p true: the empty intention, so to speak, queues the target at which knowledge aims. What such a signifying act *cannot* do, however, is *present* those very truthmaking conditions themselves. On its own, then, the signifying act possesses no positive epistemic value, which is reflected in the ordinary commonplace that simply *thinking* that something is the case does not by itself give us any reason to *believe* that it is so. As Husserl claims, in an empty intention "an act of meaning is performed...but nothing is thereby known, recognized."[72]

In order to yield a noninferential reason for belief, the empty intention needs the contribution of a second intentional moment: namely, the act of intuition. In the foregoing case, the intuitive act is exemplified when I go outside and enjoy a sensory perception of

[71] *LI* 5, 20, 589
[72] *LI* 6, 8, 694

falling snow. Unlike the signitive act, which represents its object only indirectly through the mediation of signs, the intuitive act gives the object itself, and this in virtue of having different content over and above the merely conceptual act of thinking. In this way, the intuitive act "fills" the empty intention: it exhibits (whether adequately or partially) what the empty intention only signifies. To the extent that empty acts of thought have different act qualities, the intuitive fullness provided by the intuitive act can also have different qualities, including both positing and non-positing characters. Only a positing intuition that gives its object *originarily*, however, provides evidence for the empty thought it fulfills. Merely visualizing that it is snowing outside, for instance, is not the same as *perceiving* that it is. As a species of originary intuition, "Perception is that mode of consciousness that sees and has its object itself *in the flesh*."[73] That is to say, perception, like all originary intuition, is a source of noninferential justification.

Now, while an originary intuition is a source of evidence for belief, it alone is not sufficient for justification. For example, suppose I go outside to see whether it is snowing, and in the course of doing so, I perceive a state of affairs that would fulfill the proposition that there is a blizzard outside. If I have no concept of a "blizzard" as a distinct species of the class of cases in which it is snowing outside, however, this presentation in and of itself gives me no justification for a belief that there is a blizzard outside. On their own, then, neither the empty intention that p nor the intuition that p enjoys reason giving status: an empty intention by itself lacks evidence; an originary intuition by itself amounts to *unrecognized* evidence. In order to furnish a reason for belief, there must be a third intentional

[73] *APS* 96; 2001, p 140

act—namely, the higher order act of *fulfillment*—in which an intuition that p and an empty act of meaning that same p are brought together in a synthesized recognition of the evidence *as* evidence. In fulfillment, Husserl claims, we "experience how the same objective item which was 'merely thought of' in symbol is now presented in intuition, and that it is now intuited as being precisely the determinate so-and-so that it was at first merely thought or meant to be."[74] In other words, fulfillment occurs when we are jointly aware of the fact that we find things in intuition to be exactly as they are intended in mere thought:

> What the intention means, but presents only in more or less inauthentic and inadequate manner, the fulfillment—the act attaching itself to an intention, and offering it 'fullness' in the synthesis of fulfillment—sets directly before us...In fulfillment our experience is represented by the words: '*This is the thing itself*.'[75]

On the foregoing model of fulfillment, it is no accident that the perceptual subject is drastically more justified than a non-perceptual subject in believing that it is snowing outside. For whereas the non-perceptual subject only intends the object emptily, the perceptual subject acquires the object of her intention "in its actuality" and "in person." Furthermore, the foregoing account not only accounts for the noninferential justification afforded by straightforward perception of empirical contingencies, but also has a story to tell about how we come to have *a priori* knowledge of universal facts and essential necessities—what Huemer would classify as knowledge from intuition *qua* "initial thinking." This form of intuition—what Husserl terms *eidetic intuition* [*Wesensschau*]—begins from the simple intuition of particular objects and ascends to an intuitive awareness of the essential structures that

[74] *LI* 6, 8, 694
[75] ibid. 6, 16, 720

govern the entire class of objects in question—specifically, through a process of *imaginative variation*.

Take, for example, the proposition "No color is without extension." Here, we begin with an intuition of some color, whether imagined or perceived, and then through a series of imagined variations in its extension, we reach the point of zero, at which point there is no longer any color content to be found in intuition. At this moment, the intention "No color is without extension" finds intuitive fulfillment: I *see* that this proposition is true because in every attempted variation, I can *see* that there is no color at the point of zero extension. In the process of varying the imagined content, the invariable features of a phenomenon are sifted out from its merely contingent permutations, at which point we gain intuitive access to the essential laws governing the phenomenon in question—e.g. the essential law that color requires extension. As Richard Tieszen (2005) describes the process: "in the midst of all of our free variations we will come up against certain constraints, as though we have a swirling sea of changes around some islands of permanence."[76] It is these constants that circumscribe the essence of the phenomena in question.

Now, while the process of variation may involve multiple acts of meaning, each act of variation depends upon fulfillment in a content of intuition. Once again, contra Phenomenal Conservatism, it is no accident that propositions like "No color is without extension" seem true—for we can see that they *are* true, and any seeming is mere epiphenomenon of the fact that we have direct awareness of the essential facts in virtue of

[76] Tieszen (2005) p. 72. Or as Hintikka (2003) puts the point: "Once the essence is separated and made into an object, the intuition that grasps it is more like seeing than imagining" p. 34.

they are true. In this way, Husserl claims, eidetic intuition, like simple perception, is a form of seeing an object, albeit one that involves the help of multiple intentional acts:

> *The essence (Eidos) is a new sort of object. Just as the datum of individual or experiencing intuition is an individual object, so the datum of eidetic intuition is pure essence*. Not a merely external analogy, but a radical community is present here. *Seeing an essence is also precisely an intuition*, just as an eidetic object is precisely an object.[77]

For straightforward perception and eidetic intuition alike, then, the decisive moment of noninferential justification lies in the evidentiary contribution of intuitive content. Now, exactly *how* intuitive content makes this contribution in Husserl's account—and, in particular, whether or not it does so in virtue of being *intrinsically* intentional—is matter of some complication. According to Husserl's early position in the *Logical Investigations*, the phenomenal or intuitive contents of perceptual acts (such as color sensations) are intrinsically non-intentional sense data—or "hyletic data"—that only serve a representational function insofar as they are intentionally animated through the operation of conceptual capacities.[78] However, the later Husserl suggests that the conceptual apprehension of objects already depends upon their prior givenness in virtue of pre-conceptual sensuous unities, and that such sensory contents stand in informationally rich associative relationships which

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[77] *Ideas I* 9.11

[78] See Hopp (2008) p. 223: "[B]ecause the intentional direction of an act is entirely determined by its matter, and because acts that differ in their intuitive content can have exactly the same matter, it follows that the intuitive content of an act contributes nothing to the intentional direction of an act. If we characterize conceptual content as the kind of content that (a) could serve as the meaning of a linguistic expression and (b) could be the content of acts that differ from one another in their intuitive content, then according to Husserl's theory of intentionality, at least at this stage of its development, conceptual content is the only kind of intrinsically intentional content. Husserl is not, of course, alone in endorsing this sort of conceptualism—summed up by the famous slogan 'intuitions without concepts are blind' —but joins the company of thinkers as diverse as Kant, C.I. Lewis, Wilfrid Sellars, and, more recently and with some important modifications, Bill Brewer and John McDowell."

adumbrate the layout of an environment that exceeds their individual nature: The painful sensation in my foot feels *down there,* in my lower body; The sound of the gunshot has felt location in relation to a kinesthetic center of field: it really sounds *behind me,* and it really sounds *proximate* as opposed to *distant*; The sound of the approaching train, first experienced as remote and then as increasing in proximity, is not experienced as a perforated series of independent aural events—each of which must be inferentially linked together through a separate act of judgment in order to enable the perception of an oncoming object—but is rather experienced as a continuous unity of a single movement across a spatial field. In keeping with a non-conceptualist account of perceptual intentionality, the later Husserl tells us that: "Perception has its own intentionality that as yet does not harbor anything of the active ego and of its constitutive accomplishment. For the intentionality of perception is rather presupposed in order for the ego to have something for which or against which it can decide."[79]

Upon either understanding of the way in which intuitive content contributes to fulfillment, what explains the reason-giving force of intuitive acts is the fact that they have different content over and above the purely conceptual content of empty intentions. In the case of straightforward perceptual intuition (and the eidetic intuition it founds), this intuitive content is provided through the sensory modalities. Returning to the epistemological foundations of moral intuitionism, if *evaluative* significations can be fulfilled by intuitions affording an originary givenness of their objects, then it must also be in virtue of exhibiting content above and beyond that of conceptual thought.

[79] *APS* (2001), p. 54

Values, however, are not the kinds of things that we ordinarily take to be delivered by way of sensory perception. As Sayre-McCord (1996) puts the issue: "We don't seem to see, taste hear smell, or touch moral properties, nor do we seem to rely on common methods of empirical investigation and confirmation to discover them."[80] How *do* we come to perceive values, then, if not through conceptual or sensory contents?

If experimental moral psychology is any indication, the first person phenomenology of evaluation would suggest that values are given by way of *feelings*. Empirical studies suggest that the process by which lay subjects make moral judgments turns upon "feeling" or "gut intuition" (see Haidt 2001; Greene and Haidt 2002). When these subjects are pushed to explain how it is that they know that there are basic moral facts and that certain moral propositions are true, lay explanations generally terminate with the philosophically naive commonplace that it "It *feels* that way"—where feeling appears to be playing an epistemic role analogous to that of something's *looking* a certain way. As Jonathan Haidt summarizes these findings, the moral epistemology suggested by ordinary folk psychology is a "*feels right* ethics," whereby "We use conscious reflection to mull over a problem until one side *feels right*. Then we stop."[81]

Now, if we were to take the putative deliverances of ordinary moral experience at face value, then it might appear that feeling affords a mode of intuition akin to sensory perception, one which purports to give us veridical epistemic access to basic evaluative properties and facts. That is to say, feelings would constitute immediate presentations of

[80] Sayre-McCord (1996) p.139
[81] Haidt (2001) p. 829

evaluative phenomena. According to Max Scheler, this is precisely the case. Feeling, in Scheler's view,

> is a type of experiencing whose "objects" are completely inaccessible to reason; reason is as blind to them as ears and hearing are blind to colors. It is a kind of experience that leads us to *genuinely* objective objects and the eternal order among them, i.e., to *values* and the order of ranks among them [...] This feeling therefore has the same relation to its value-correlate as "representing" has to its "object," namely, an intentional relation. Feeling *originally* intends its *own* kind of objects, namely, *"values."*[82]

For Scheler, feeling is a *sui generis* mode of intuition that affords proprietary access to evaluative properties and facts. If Scheler is right that affective contents are capable of giving intentional correlates, and if those correlates are truthmakers for our evaluative significations, then I submit that a suitably modified Husserlian model of epistemic fulfillment tells us how some evaluative beliefs are noninferentially justified. In what follows, I briefly lay out the epistemological mechanics of a phenomenological model of *Evaluative Fulfillment*, assuming for now what I turn to argue for in section 3: namely, that feelings do indeed possess their own intentionality independent from that of conceptual consciousness.

Evaluative Fulfillment: Suppose I am told, for some particular state of affairs S, that "S is bad"—say, for example, a state of affairs in which an act of cruelty takes place for its own sake. On its own, my entertaining this proposition amounts to an empty act of evaluative signification. If I wanted to know for myself whether the proposition I am entertaining is true, I would do the same thing I would do in the case of propositions about

[82] *FE* p. 258

whether it is snowing outside or propositions about whether the same patch can be both red and green: *I would turn to the things themselves.* In order to accomplish this in the case of propositions about the value of a case of cruelty, I must turn to consider cruelty itself, whether by beholding an actual occurrence of cruelty, or by imagining some possible instantiation of it. A salient example can be found in the recollections of Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov:

> People talk sometimes of bestial cruelty, but that's a great injustice and insult to the beasts; a beast can never be so cruel as a man, so artistically cruel. The tiger only tears and gnaws, that's all he can do [...] These Turks took a pleasure in torturing children [...] cutting the unborn child from the mother's womb, and tossing babies up in the air and catching them on the points of their bayonets before their mothers' eyes. Doing it before the mothers' eyes was what gave zest to the amusement. Here is another scene that I thought very interesting. Imagine a trembling mother with her baby in her arms, a circle of invading Turks around her. They've planned a diversion: they pet the baby, laugh to make it laugh. They succeed, the baby laughs. At that moment a Turk points a pistol four inches from the baby's face. The baby laughs with glee, holds out its little hands to the pistol, and he pulls the trigger in the baby's face and blows out its brains.[83]

How does one come to see that the depicted act of cruelty is bad? First we must clarify that in virtue of which the intentional matter of "cruelty" is thought to obtain in Ivan's depiction, abstracting away from the ancillary details of the situation. To this end, we can locate a set of descriptive conditions that make a given state of affairs an instance of cruelty for its own sake: e.g. the intentional infliction of physical and psychological pain *for its own sake*; *amusement* or *satisfaction* taken in the infliction of pain, etc. These descriptive conditions make up part of the intentional matter of the original meaning intention "Cruelty for its own sake is bad." But there is another component of the intentional matter not

[83] The Brothers Karamazov p. 250

reducible to the descriptive features of the situation, a component that determines the precise way in which the object is meant: namely, its *value*. While the value of cruelty may supervene on certain descriptive conditions, it is not identical with these facts: when I intend the badness of an act of cruelty, I don't just intend the bad-making features of cruelty. Rather, I intend the value itself as a distinct aspect of the presentation as a whole. The value of cruelty is given by way of a *felt* disclosure of a distinctive negative quality that registers on the object side of the intention, as a correlated *feature* of the conditions constituting an act of cruelty: that is to say, the act of cruelty *shows up* for me as something of disvalue. I *feel* the negative value of cruelty, not as a mere effect on my sensible condition, but as a correlated *aspect* of the object of feeling. It is this felt aspect that provides the intuitive fullness necessary to satisfy the thought that the depicted instance of cruelty is bad. To put it in the lay language of folk attitudes, I am able to know that the act of cruelty is bad because it *feels that way*.

Now, to be sure, a simple perception of the badness of the act of cruelty depicted in Ivan's story only gives me the value of *this* particular instance of cruelty, and thus by itself can only fulfill the proposition that *this* act of cruelty is bad. In order to fulfill the universalizing intention that cruelty *tout court* is bad, I must disentangle the contingent information of a particular instance of cruelty and attend to the *essence* of cruelty as such. To this end, I must first isolate the necessary conditions that must obtain in order for cruelty to be instantiated. It is these essential conditions that then become the proper object to be evaluated. Here again, it is by virtue of a felt awareness of these essential conditions that the value of cruelty as such is given. By running these essential conditions through a process of imaginative variation, I can see that any of the stipulative variations needed to endow an

instance of cruelty with a positive affective valence would require adding some consideration or end beyond that of cruelty for its own sake that would *violate* the constraint imposed by the original meaning intention. For instance, I might imagine that torturing an innocent person could be the only way to appease an evil despot who is holding an entire population hostage; or, returning to the context of Ivan and Alyosha's conversation, I might imagine some divine providence that necessitates such sacrifices. In such cases, however, the production of a felt positive valence involves the explosion of the intentional matter of "*cruelty for its own sake."* For with the stipulation of maximizing considerations in one's motives, the act of torture ceases to be a genuine instance of *cruelty*; and with the stipulation of a higher end, the cruelty in question ceases to be "for its own sake."

Insofar as the value cannot be varied positively without a change to the essence of cruelty, I can see that any imagined object that satisfies the essence of cruelty will necessarily enjoin a negative affective valence. While the process of imaginative variation may involve a number of distinct intentional acts, each fulfillment of an act of variation must make essential reference to an aspect of the intentional matter that can only be given through consultation with feeling. In the same way that imaginative variation permits me to *see* that color without extension is impossible, I can *see* that cruelty for its own sake cannot be good in itself, and that cruelty for its own sake is bad.

On the foregoing phenomenological model of evaluative fulfillment, propositionally articulated moral judgments—e.g. "Cruelty for its own sake is bad;" "Pleasure is *ceteris paribus* better than pain" etc.—are purely signitive, empty acts of thought which, on their own, provide no justification whatsoever for believing their contents. In order to yield a reason for belief, such signitive acts must be aided by intuitive acts of *feeling*, which present the

evaluative matter itself by way of irreducibly affective contents. On this view, the evaluative perception, properly speaking, consists not in the propositionally articulated thought that p, nor in the corresponding justified belief that p, but rather in the felt givenness of the evaluative state of affairs that p represents. In considering the class of acts of cruelty, for instance, the badness of such acts is *given* to me, and this insofar as the essential features underlying cruelty show up under a distinctive negative valence that satisfies my intention that cruelty as such is bad: such a felt aspect is what I aim at when I emptily intend the badness of cruelty.

Of course, this is not to suggest that *all* evaluative judgments can be directly justified on the basis of evaluative perception. Some propositions—such as "The 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq was wrong"—cannot be immediately justified on the basis of simple perception alone, as their justification is conditional upon a network of inferentially linked propositions that must also be justified, including, for example such propositions as "The invasion was unnecessary if there were no weapons of mass destruction;" "There were no weapons of mass destruction;" "Unnecessary killing and suffering is wrong." Nevertheless, even inferentially implicated evaluative propositions must ultimately make essential reference to an epistemically basic evaluative belief—for instance, "Unnecessary killing and suffering is wrong"—and thus their justificatory chain must trace to a simple intuition of a foundational evaluative fact. In this way, all propositional evaluative knowledge ultimately refers back to the givenness afforded by evaluative perceptions.

Having an evaluative perception that p is, to be sure, only a necessary condition for having a reason to believe that p, *not* a sufficient condition. The animal or the pre-discursive toddler subject to torture and abuse may be perfectly capable of seeing the negative value of

her condition, and thus of having an evaluative perception, yet may not necessarily have the conceptual framework required to be justified in forming a predicative belief *that* it is bad, let alone a belief in the universalizing claims that "Cruelty for its own sake is bad" or "Pain in itself is bad." Thus, we must be careful to distinguish the givenness of an object in a way that would satisfy some empty intention—i.e. the *evidence*—from the higher-order awareness *that* the object is being given as such—i.e. the *awareness of the evidence as evidence*. Accordingly, the evaluative perception becomes a legitimizing source of noninferential justification only when it is taken together with the empty intention in a co-ordinated act of *evaluative fulfillment*: i.e. the joint awareness that the evaluative matter I am thinking is also being given in feeling precisely as it is meant. Without the signifying act, the evaluative intuition thus amounts to unrecognized evidence. But by the same token, without the evaluative perception, the evaluative signification amounts to a mere thought without any reason giving force. It is only through the concerted effort of evaluative signification and evaluative perception in a higher order act of evaluative fulfillment that we have the kind of noninferential justification needed for evaluative knowledge. We can formulate this account of noninferential evaluative justification as follows:

> **Affective Value Perceptualism:** Some foundational evaluative beliefs are noninferentially justified in virtue of their propositional content being epistemically fulfilled through *evaluative perceptions*, which are irreducibly affective yet intentionally directed acts of feeling that constitute "originary" epistemic access to the truthmaking conditions of some first order evaluative claims, and this by way of non-conceptual yet intrinsically intentional affective contents. The objective correlates of evaluative perceptions are value properties.

Unlike a purely propositional account of justification such as Phenomenal Conservatism, upon a phenomenological model of evaluative perceptualism, we have the resources to explain why some evaluative mental states with true seeming content confer more justification than others—to explain why, for example, the mature adult has a greater degree of justification for his belief that torturing the family cat is wrong than the merely deferential child does. For whereas the child only emptily intends the wrongness of the act, the evaluative perception of the mature adult presents the wrongness itself in its *actuality*: in fulfilling the propositional content "Cruelty for its own sake is wrong," the value of the class of cruel acts is not just emptily meant, but is *given*, and this in virtue of a felt disclosure of the essential disvalue of cruelty (or, what is the same, in the explosion of the essence of cruelty with any stipulative variations in the intentional matter that would otherwise yield a felt disclosure of a positive value).

Furthermore, unlike the Phenomenal Conservative, we also have the resources to explain why some propositional contents are *incapable* of *prima facie* justification on the basis of intuition—and so to explain why, for instance, propositions like "Pain for its own sake is good" are incapable of seeming true. For on a phenomenological model of evaluative fulfillment, evaluative perceptions are not the consciousness of appearances of reality, but are rather the interface between consciousness and reality itself. Accordingly, an evaluative perception must be able to *give* what it is about. Insofar as the realm of well-formed empty intentions exceeds the realm of what can be exhibited as existing—e.g. absurd propositions referring to round-squares, etc.—then it follows from this that there are some propositions that cannot serve as the contents of *prima facie* justified beliefs inasmuch as their objects are not among "the total realm of possible fulfillment." Just in the same way that impossible

objects like "round-square" and "completely red and completely green patch" can be emptily intended but never receive a fulfilling sense, propositional contents like "Pain is good for its own sake" would be incapable of *prima facie* justification and seeming true insofar as there is no possible object or state of affairs that could be its corresponding truthmaker, and thus no possible exhibiting content that could fulfill such intentions. Thus, evaluatively absurd propositions like "Pain is good for its own sake" cannot serve as the signifying contents of noninferentially justified beliefs not because it *just so happens* that they do not seem true, but rather because such intentions are incapable of receiving a fulfilling sense in virtue of a constraint imposed by the way things are. On this view, it is no accident that "Cruelty for its own sake is wrong" seems true and "Pain is good for its own sake" does not seem true: such states of seeming are necessitated by the facts themselves, insofar as such evaluative matters are among the purview of originary intuition.

By shifting the epistemic heavy lifting from propositional content to the givenness afforded by affective-intuitive content, the foregoing model of evaluative fulfillment provides a superior framework for moral intuitionism insofar as it is able to account for the reason giving connection between a belief that p, an intuition that p, and its actually being the case that p. All of this, of course, hinges on our ability to legitimately hold affective content up to the task of disclosing objective value-correlates. According to a prevailing prejudice on both sides of the metaethical debate, however, affectivity *qua* irreducibly phenomenal *feeling* is not typically taken to be the kind of thing that is disclosive of objective values, and this because feeling as such is not typically understood as the kind of thing that can be disclosive of *any* objective matters whatsoever.

Such a presumption against a feeling-based model of objective moral evaluation can be traced back to intellectualist prejudices about what constitutes the kind of intentionality that gives a mental state a "cognitive" or "mind-to-world" direction of fit. Indeed, upon a moral objectivist account, whatever moral judgments are, they seem to turn upon a directedness to some way things actually are in the world. When I attend to the wrongness of a deed or the goodness of a person, I am always directed towards some way things are taken to be, where this involves my awareness of a range of certain objects, events, and states of affairs. But according to the intellectualist picture, such matters are the sole province of propositional and/or conceptual content. By contrast, when considered strictly in virtue of their affective-phenomenal nature, any awareness enabled by emotions *qua* feelings would appear to be confined to the merely subjective interiority of sensory experience. On this picture, feelings are either reducible to representationally inert sense data, or else reducible to an awareness of such sensations. In either case, when considered in virtue of their strictly phenomenal characters, feelings by themselves do not purport to open out onto the world to represent how things are outside of sensory experience itself. Feelings cannot be disclosive of objective values, it is assumed, because feelings do not possess cognitive, world-directed intentionality.

In the next section I aim to make some headway in overcoming this intellectualist prejudice. By drawing upon the phenomenological frameworks of Husserl and Scheler, I attempt to outline and cultivate the prospects for a *sui generis* account of affective intentionality. Though what follows will focus on values in general—as opposed to *moral* values—the account of affective intentionality it advances will pave the way for a feeling-based model of moral realism.

3.1 Affective Intentionality: Feeling Sensations, Feeling Acts, and Objects-as-Felt

Throughout his works, Husserl affirms that certain feelings are intentionally directed experiences, though he evolves in defining the nature and role of affective contents in the act structure of these feelings. Central to Husserl's early account in the *Logical Investigations* is the distinction between a *feeling-sensation* [*Gefühlsempfindung*] and a *feeling-act* [*Gefühlsakt*]. Feeling-sensations—e.g. sensations constitutive of pleasure and pain—are generally construed along the lines of hyletic data: i.e. as intrinsically non-intentional, immanent (*reell*) contents of consciousness that can be representationally animated by virtue of being taken up into intentional acts and directed to an object. Feeling-acts, by contrast, are evaluative experiences of objects that have already been given through founding presentations, and are precisely those intentional acts in which feeling-sensations are taken up and referred to intentional objects: e.g. joy, sadness, hate, love, etc. In general, for the early Husserl, feeling-sensations are to feeling-acts as sensory data are to sensory perceptual acts.

By the time of *Ideas II,* however, Husserl provides a significantly more nuanced picture. Here Husserl suggests that there is a class of non-objectifying sensations that are already consciously manifest—what Husserl refers to as belonging to a "primal sphere of

intentionality."[84] The interoceptive experience of feeling a toothache is one such example, as we can distinguish the consciousness involved in the simple painful toothache-sensation from the consciousness involved in our being intentionally directed towards this sensation in a complex feeling-act—e.g. turning towards this experience, say, as having a bodily location, or as the site of further feelings of discomfort or frustration. Now, while Husserl refers to such experiences as feeling-sensations, interpreting the simple experience of pain in terms of yet-to-be-animated hyletic data is problematic within the classical Husserlian framework, insofar as pain is something that is already manifest in awareness such that we can turn towards it in a complex feeling act. As Daniel O. Dahlstrom (2016) claims: "Hyletic data are not directly perceived at all...and, as components of sensory perceptual experiences, they are different from the properties of what is perceived...By contrast, we can be acutely aware of the pain or thirst making up an interoception."[85] And yet pain cannot be accurately rendered as a feeling-act either, insofar as it does not intend an object besides itself. Reconstructing Husserl's often underdeveloped discussions of interoceptions, Dahlstrom proposes instead that "Husserl differentiates a simple, pre-intentional from a complex, intentional experience of pain."[86] Converging with this reading, Geniusas argues that for Husserl "[t]he intentionality of pain is founded upon pain's pre-intentional givenness."[87]

Now, across these varyingly nuanced accounts of feeling, Husserl maintains that certain affective experiences are intentionally directed. The question, then, as in the case of sensory perception, is whether the affective-phenomenal dimensions of a feeling-act owe

[84] Ideas II 335
[85] Dahlstrom (2016) p. 150
[86] ibid. 153
[87] Geniusas (2014) p. 13

their intentional directedness solely to conceptual capacities, or whether the latter might turn upon essentially affective intentional content.

Husserl makes claims that seem to support both positions. One the one hand, Husserl sometimes suggests that feeling acts are merely representationally inert "intentional characters" that attach to the otherwise affect-free intentional matters of the underlying presentation, and are therefore "plainly not to be regarded as *complete* and *independent acts*: they cannot be conceived apart from the act of objectifying presentation, on which they are accordingly based [...] They all 'owe' their intentional relation to certain underlying presentations."[88] On one way of reading this claim, feelings would contribute nothing to the representational content of an intentional act: my sadness at an event and my joy at an event would be only two manners of approaching one and the same represented state of affairs. On the other hand, Husserl also claims that the feeling-act discloses a distinct "*object as felt"* which presents the object as having certain value properties—e.g. a sad event, a beautiful sky etc.—and that while feeling acts are founded on underlying presentations, and in some sense owe the original constitution of their intentional objects to the latter, they also appear to acquire an intentionality and an intentional object of their own: "it is part of what we mean by such 'owing' that [feeling-acts] themselves really now *have* what they owe to something else."[89] To this end, Husserl suggests that the affective dimension of an act of feeling accounts for part of its intentional directedness:

> Joy, e.g., concerning some happy event, is certainly an act. But this act [...] does not merely hold in its unity an idea of the happy event and an act-character of liking

[88] *LI* 5, 15, 225
[89] *LI* 5, 15, 225

> which relates to it: a sensation of pleasure attaches to the idea, a sensation at once seen and located as an emotional excitement in the psycho-physical feeling-subject, and also as an objective property – the event seems as if bathed in a rosy gleam. The event thus pleasingly painted now serves as the first foundation for the joyful approach.[90]

Here we have the suggestion that the properly affective contribution of a feeling act does not merely consist in one's taking a sensation-laden attitude towards what is an otherwise evaluatively-neutral intentional matter. In other words, the difference between *judging that a state of affairs is the case* and *feeling joy that a state of affairs is the case* is not simply a matter of two different ways of being directed towards one and the same intended state of affairs—i.e. one with feeling, the other without. Rather, in the case of joy concerning a happy event, the pleasurable phenomenal character also shows up as a correlated feature on the *object* side of the feeling act, as an evaluative *property* of that object, and this in such a way that the intentional structure of the act of joy now includes the "event thus pleasingly painted" as a component—that is to say, the feeling act now includes an essential relation to the *object as felt*. Indeed, it is only in this way that we can explain Husserl's claim that the *object as felt* is the "first foundation" for the subjective side of the feeling in question. I do not come to have a positive attitude towards an otherwise evaluatively-neutral object and only thereupon cause the object to have its evaluative aspect. Instead, it appears that for Husserl, the presence of the *object as felt* is the condition of the possibility of my taking a positive attitude towards the intentional object in the first place. Husserl corroborates this idea elsewhere when he claims that "pleasure without anything pleasant is unthinkable. And it is unthinkable, not because we are here dealing with correlative expressions, as when we say,

[90] ibid. 227

e.g., that a cause without an effect, or a father without a child, is unthinkable, but because *the specific essence of pleasure demands a relation to something pleasing.*"[91] In other words, to like something does not *cause* it to be likable, and something's being likeable is not merely a formal property reducible to our liking it; rather, something's showing up for us as having a substantive positive property of some kind—e.g. likeable, pleasing, etc.—is just part of what it is to have a positive attitude towards it.

Now, insofar as it is through affective experience that the object now shows up under its felt aspect, then it seems that affective content must play a crucial presentational role in the perception of values. And yet the question once again is *how* the affective features of a feeling act participate in the constitution of its intended value-object. And here it might be objected that while affective content may be put to use in the presentation of the evaluative aspect of an object, this content is not itself a proper part of the intentional matter of the act. In other words, it might be objected that the value property intended through the presence of the *object as felt* is ultimately adumbrated through the contribution of conceptual consciousness alone, and thus could just as well be intended through a non-affective act of empty signification. But if the latter were to hold, the presence of affective-phenomenal content would ultimately be inessential to the intentionality of a feeling act, as the precise manner in which an object is meant could just as well be captured by an affectively empty act with conceptual content—such as merely *thinking* that something is a joyful occasion. Intentional matters of feeling acts would thus be individuated by conceptual content alone.

[91] *LI* 5, 15, 225

The problem with the latter account of the intentionality of feeling acts, however, is that conceptual content appears to *underdetermine* the intentional matter of emotional appraisal. For if it is possible for two feeling acts to bear identical conceptual content and yet also intend their objects in entirely different manners, then it cannot also be the case that conceptual content is sufficient to determine the intentional matter of an emotional appraisal. Some other condition besides the tokening of conceptual content would have to be factored in to explain why one emotional appraisal should obtain as opposed to another, and I submit that careful attention to ordinary emotional experience suggests that this condition is supplied by the affective-phenomenal features of a given act of feeling.

For example, say I have a colleague who is much more successful than myself. Suppose further that (i) I believe that my colleague is deserving of her success, that (ii) I believe it desirable for me to also possess all of the features that my colleague possesses, and finally that (iii) my recognition of her successes occasions a recognition of my comparative lack of success. All of these states of affairs appear to be surveyable through descriptive judgments, and none of them appear to make essential reference to any phenomenally basic content. And yet for all of the specificity of the foregoing conceptual content, it seems that the same complex of judgments could equally well underlie an appraisal of "Admiration" as it could of "Envy." Indeed, it seems to be an essential feature of envy no less than admiration that I regard the other as enjoying some quality or state of being that I genuinely regard as desirable—indeed, there would be nothing to be *envious of* otherwise. Furthermore, in the case of admiration, I may equally well recognize the superior state of the other, and thus the disparity between myself and the other, and yet this does not necessitate that I also see her as enviable. Even knowing that my own lot would improve were I to acquire all of

the features of my colleague, I may simply see her as a model to look up to rather than someone to envy. Indeed, when we survey the objective references of paradigmatic cases of envy and admiration, it seems that the posited facts underlying both the enviable object and the admirable object are often easily interchangeable. And yet, while admiration and envy are certainly capable of relating to the same intentional object—e.g. my colleague, her success etc.—each feeling act intends that object in drastically different manners

Whatever distinguishes these distinct evaluative appraisals, then, it does not appear in the first place to be a matter of differing conceptual content: the latter can often be imaginatively varied interchangeably across both evaluations without violating the essence of the evaluative act in question. Rather, what seems to distinguish the cases of admiration and envy are different distributions of "positive" and "negative" feelings overlaying what are otherwise the very same set of underlying posited facts, feelings which thereby serve to constitute distinct *objects as felt*. In other words, it is a matter of experiencing differently *valenced* state of affairs. In particular, whereas admiration involves an overall positive valence on some aspect of the admirable object, in the case of envy, there is a distinctive negative feeling that attends the recognition of the differences between myself and the object of my envy—more specifically, it seems that the positively valenced features of my colleague are enjoined to and overridden by an even more salient negative valence on my own self-esteem, a displeasing feeling which in turn reflects upon the way my enviable colleague shows up for me as a felt object.

Here the conceptualist will likely object that the difference between the two acts of evaluation can be explained without recourse to affective content, and this by expanding the scope of relevant information to include background beliefs and conceptually articulated

desires that may be implicitly operating as individuating criteria. For instance, all else being equal, the fact that I hold a background belief that "Anyone who surpasses me is a threat to my well-being" might be thought to determine my evaluative appraisal of my colleague as envy over and against admiration. Indeed, whatever the particular beliefs might be, so this argument goes, once we provide a full accounting of the relevant conceptual background information, it is possible that purely conceptual acts can ultimately shore up the difference between admiration and envy.

There are two problems with this line of response. First, it seems that any sufficiently individuating background propositions must themselves make essential reference to yet another evaluative term. For example, if the conceptually surveyable facts underlying both the enviable and admirable state of affairs are only made into object of envy insofar as I hold the background belief that "Anyone who surpasses me is a threat to my well-being," then it is *this* act which carries the evaluative content that is transferred to the object of envy, and this in virtue of the evaluatively loaded concepts of "threat" and "well-being." In such cases, however, the intentional content of these implicitly operative evaluative terms would themselves have to be explained without recourse to affective contents, and thus appealing to background beliefs only defers the challenge of conceptual underdetermination to these same beliefs.

Second, if we suppose that the background information individuating envy from admiration were to consist of evaluatively neutral, purely descriptive propositions, it seems that any body of such propositions would be compatible with an attitude of *indifference*, in which case the evaluative appraisal would still be underdetermined. Indeed, it appears that no matter how we imaginatively vary some set of purely descriptive facts, it is always an

open question whether a subject will respond with an attitude of indifference as opposed to any other evaluative appraisal. Failing to respond with sadness at a sad event may be indicative of a failure to grasp some feature of the situation. However, it is not necessarily an indication that one does not properly understand the descriptively surveyable facts. It seems that the only propositions that would preclude a valence of indifference must be those that make essential reference to an evaluative term, in which case we run into our initial problem of accounting for the evaluative appraisal without recourse to some affective-phenomenal content.

With the introduction of such "positive" and "negative" valences, it appears that affectivity has penetrated into the intentional content of a feeling act, as the individuation of the intentional matter of an evaluative appraisal now looks to depend upon some affective-phenomenal character of the evaluative appraisal in question. To the extent that acts with identical conceptual contents can consistently underlie a variety of distinct evaluations—e.g. "Admiration" and "Envy" (not to mention an attitude of complete *indifference*)— it seems that such contents are *not* sufficient to individuate the intentional matter of an evaluative appraisal. What appears to be a determining factor is some affectively charged phenomenal feature of the feeling act in question—e.g. "positive" and "negative" feelings—which suggests that the intentional matter of an evaluative act must essentially include affective content.

3.2 Affectivity and the Prepredicative Experience of Value

Of course, even if we grant the foregoing and accept that the intentional matters of feeling-acts *must* include essentially affective content, none of this touches upon *how* it is that affective contents carry out their presentational capacities in contradistinction to conceptual contents. The apparent difficulty in providing such an explanation within Husserl's framework is that feeling acts, while not responsible for the constitution of their underlying value bearing objects, nonetheless present their correlate value aspects as inhering *in* such objects, as features *of* such objects. The pleasantness of the sky, for instance, is experienced as being *in* the sky; the loss of a loved one is experienced as *being* a sad state of affairs. In this way, *objects as felt* appear to us under a relational unity that holds between their evaluative features and their objective foundations. But here we run up against the challenge of explaining how affective contents can present their correlate value properties as inhering in value bearing objects, where this seems to turn upon the paradigmatically propositional capacity of *predication*.

Or so it would seem. However, in the same way that we can distinguish one's *seeing a red square* from one's explicitly intending *that* the square is red, I submit that we can also distinguish one's *seeing the value of an object* from one's intending *that* the object has such a value. While the latter may very well turn upon an intellectual judgment that involves the conceptualization of a given value and the attribution of that value concept to a given state of affairs, it is not clear that the former must involve anything more than an immediate grasping of the valuable object itself. For example, in the simple case where I perceive a red square, the square shows up to me *as* red, and thus I experience a state of affairs that fulfills the judgment *that* there is a red square before me, however this experience is not necessarily itself *of* or *about* the *fact of its being-red*. That is to say, experiencing the unity of an object and

its property of being red does not entail that this unity itself becomes a thematic object for me. Extending this result to the case of affectivity would entail an ability to see the value of objects without the attending to the two-place predicative relation between an object and its value aspects—that is, it would entail the ability to see the pleasant sky without expressly judging *that* the sky is pleasant. But can I intend an object under its value aspects before I come to actively thematize the predicative unity between the value property and the value bearing object? In other words, could there be a pre-predicative experience of value? And if so, can this experience be given through affective consciousness?

The later Husserl seemed to think so. In *Experience and Judgment,* Husserl claims that if we can draw a distinction between "passive pregivenness" and "the active orientation of the ego" in the case of sensory perceptual experience, then:

> it is necessary to emphasize at the same time that such differences are *not* limited to the sphere of perception or even in general to the sphere of doxic lived experiences, but that these structures are to be found in all the other spheres of consciousness. Therefore, there is an original passivity not only of sensuous givens, of "sense data," *but also of feeling* [...] In these cases, too, there are analogues of self-evidence, and therefore, of perception as well, in the original giving of *values*.[92]

Here we have the suggestion that in pre-predicative experience, objects do not merely show up to us in virtue of their pre-thematic sensuous nature, but also in virtue of their affectively appreciable value aspects. Husserl says precious little about how this happens, however, and his insistence upon all acts of feeling being founded upon objectifying acts appears to be in tension with such a possibility. Nevertheless, a more

[92] *EJ* 75

hospitable framework for the notion of pre-predicative value experience can be found in Max Scheler's alternative account of feeling intentionality.

Although he scarcely mentions Husserl by name, Scheler presents his account in clear conversation with Husserl's. Following Husserl, Scheler holds that the class of affective experiences can be divided into non-intentional feeling sensations and intentionally directed acts—or in Scheler's language, between "*feeling-states*" and "*feeling-functions*." Departing from Husserl's ambivalence with respect to the originality of affective intentionality, however, Scheler is unequivocal in claiming that "it is *not* necessary for these feeling-functions to be connected with the objective sphere through the mediation of so-called objectifying acts of representation, judgment, etc."[93] Rather, for Scheler: "feeling *originally* intends its *own* kind of objects...During the process of intentional feeling, the world of objects 'comes to the fore' by itself, but only in terms of its *value*-aspect."[94] To this latter end, Scheler points to cases of ordinary experience wherein the evaluative significance of an object can present itself prior to our thematic apprehension of the objective foundations of this value aspect. For example, Scheler claims, "a man can be distressing and repugnant, agreeable, or sympathetic to us without our being able to apprehend *how* this comes about [...] A landscape or a room in a house can appear 'friendly' or 'distressing,' and the same holds for a sojourn in a room, without our knowing the *bearers* of such values."[95]

The virtue of Scheler's account lies in his recognition of the possibility of experiencing the affectively appreciable value aspects of things without having a prior

[93] ibid. 259
[94] *FE* p. 258
[95] ibid. 17

thematic awareness of the objective features that underlie them. In fact, Scheler goes beyond this recognition when he goes on to claim that the value aspects of objects can be given without *any* experience whatsoever of the objects in which they inhere. To this end, Scheler even goes so far as to *reverse* Husserl's subordination of feeling acts to objectifying acts, suggesting that things must be encountered in their value aspects before they can be given as objects. In its strongest form, then, Scheler's response to the problem of value aspect-value bearer unity is to simply deny that value features of objects must show up as inhering in objects at all. As Scheler claims, "Goods have no foundation in things such that in order for them to be *goods* they must first be *things*" and thus "we know of a stage in the grasping of values wherein the *value* of an object is already very clearly and evidentially given *apart from* the givenness of the *bearer* of the value."[96]

While the latter is worthy of consideration in its own right, it's worth noting that it lends itself to a stronger claim than is necessary. For in order to establish the original intentionality of affective consciousness, we need not claim that value aspects must be perceptible apart from and prior to any other kind of givenness of an object whatsoever. Rather, we only need the claim that the encounter with value-bearing objects in acts of value apprehension need not be of a predicative nature, and that value-aspects and the value-bearing objects to which they belong can be *co-given* in a state of prepredicative unity. In fact, Scheler himself comes closest to this more moderate position when he claims that "real objects are 'at first' *neither* pure things *nor* pure goods, but *"complexes,"* with the latter being "a thinglike unity" of both objective and evaluative features. Upon this account, prior to the

[96] *FE* p. 17-19

active intervention of thematic judgment, value-features and their objective bearers are already encountered in a blended state of agreement, and "from this intermediate field, as it were, the spectrum moving toward pure things (with deliberate *setting aside* of all values) and toward pure goods (with deliberate setting aside of all thingness) begins."[97] Seen this way, Scheler claims, "Goods and things have the *same originality* of givenness […] The world is *originaliter* as much a '*good*' as a '*thing*.'"[98]

In any case, whether we adopt the strong or moderate affective-perceptualist position, I submit that reflection upon ordinary experience supports the shared idea that the evaluative properties of things in the world can show up for us before we form a higher-order conceptual awareness of these evaluative properties *as properties*. For example, when I cast my gaze around an empty room and my attention is suddenly lured by the pleasantness of the sky enframed though one of the windows, the felt phenomenal content constituting this pleasing-aspect already associatively links itself to the enframed sky as opposed to the blank walls surrounding the window. It is the sensuous unity constituting the *sky* and not that of the *walls* that suddenly enjoys the "rosy gleam" of agreeableness. But here, in attending to the pleasant sky, the associative connection between the felt value content—e.g. the pleasantness—and the objective bearer of this value—e.g. the sky—is *not* something that obtains only *after* I come to actively predicate the positive valence of my feeling to the idea of the sky, or only *after* I form the judgment *that* the sky is beautiful. Rather, the prior association between the sky and the feeling of agreeableness is what conditions my turning towards the pleasant sky as a thematic value object in the first place. Were this not the case

[97] ibid. p.22
[98] ibid.

then there would be no reason in principle why the agreeable feeling content provoked by the sky should not be attributed to the blank walls—or any other object—instead.

The latter result is precluded by the fact that the feeling content already presents itself in associative attachment to certain regions of the phenomenal field. When I shift my attention from the sky to the window frame and the blank wall surrounding it, the positive feeling diminishes in vivacity; when look back to the sky, it increases in vivacity. Now, if I were to stub my toe, the feeling content associated with the pleasing sky may certainly fall out of view. But this is only insofar as a competing affective salience has entered the phenomenal field, one that possess its own associative relationships. When I stub my toe, the otherwise pleasing sky doesn't suddenly take on a disagreeable valence. Rather, the negative valence of the experience is immanent to and inextricable from the sensation of stubbing my toe itself.

Such associative relationships suggest that sensory and affective data exist in a kind of blended state of prepredicative unity, one which pre-thematically guides the way in which they are to be taken up as thematic objects. For example, it is only on the back of a prior agreement between the sensory-perceptual fields constituting the sky and the sensory-affective fields constituting the pleasing-aspect that one can erect the judgment *that* the sky is pleasant—and indeed, it is back to this blend of contents that we must return in the epistemic fulfillment of the thought that the sky is pleasant. In this way, there is an immanent, prepredicative thetic content that is built into the phenomenal character of the affective field itself, one that structures and organizes the experiential manifold such that it can be taken up by thematic consciousness in one way as opposed to another. In other words, affective content presents us with an intentionally structured phenomenal field

wherein matters of evaluative importance show up under their value aspects and are assigned differing degrees of phenomenal salience. To the extent that this dimension of the world cannot be given through merely theoretical consciousness alone, the disclosure of value must be seen as an achievement of affective consciousness, and an achievement carried out in virtue of non-conceptual affective contents that are intrinsically intentional.

CONCLUSION:

In the foregoing, I have attempted to motivate an account of *sui generis* affective intentionality using the resources of Husserlian and post-Husserlian phenomenological frameworks. I take these considerations to provide a necessary step in the direction of a feeling-based model of evaluative perceptualism. To be certain, however, securing the intrinsic intentionality of affective-phenomenal content would not in and of itself show that such a feeling-based model of moral intuitionism is possible. For if affectively grounded moral judgments are to be understood as falling under criteria of legitimacy and thus as assessable for correctness—as the robust moral objectivist would claim moral judgments must be—then there would have to be something like an analogue of logic in the affective domain, an *affective a priori* that determines law-like constraints and conditions of satisfaction for genuine cognitions of value—an idea intimated by the later Husserl and argued for extensively by Scheler in *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*. Whether affective consciousness can meet this latter condition is the subject of Part III.

PART THREE

EMOTION, AXIOLOGY, AND THE FORMALIST PREJUDICE: A SCHELERIAN CASE FOR THE AFFECTIVE *A PRIORI*

Introduction: Emotion, Formalism, and the *A Priori*

The heart has its reasons, of which reason knows nothing.

- Blaise Pascal (*Thoughts*; IV: 277)

The second major prejudice against an affective model of moral intuitionism concerns its compatibility with the *a priority* of moral truth. As most moral objectivists will agree, if ethics is to remain an objective affair, it must make essential reference to at least some unconditional truths, facts, principles, or procedures that are not subject to the vicissitudes of empirical contingency. According to a prevailing prejudice, however, the realm of the unconditional *a priori* is exhausted by the realm of formal reason. Indeed, the fact that certain moral propositions appear to constitute *a priori* knowledge is often taken for granted as evidence in favor of some form of moral rationalism. In Scheler's estimation, such a formalist prejudice in ethics extends to the ancient antithesis between form and matter and finds its apotheosis in Kant, for whom all knowledge derived from the material givens of experience was relegated to *a posteriori* contingency. Upon this view, even if we were to grant world-disclosive intentionality to the affective contents of mental acts, the epistemic relevance of such contents would be limited to disclosing those features of reality owing to its contingent natural arrangement. Accordingly, any *a priori* ethical truth disclosed by an act of moral evaluation must redound only to those propositional and conceptual

contents that can be derived from the application of purely formal reason. Feelings cannot ground our principle access to moral truth, it is assumed, unless we are to lose the *a priori* foundations of ethics.

The lurking assumption of the formalist prejudice is that *a priori* judgments must be knowable not only independent of experience *qua* empirical observation of contingent states of affairs, but independent of *any* experiential content whatsoever. Accordingly, the unconditional necessity of all *a priori* knowledge must ultimately redound to those purely formal rules of thought (including pure forms of intuition) that justify propositions irrespective of the material givens of experience. The problem with this view, however, is that it fails to account for so-called "phenomenological propositions": i.e. those putatively *a priori* propositions whose validation nonetheless appears to turn upon consultation with experiential content. If we can provide grounds for rejecting the formalist prejudice with respect to the domain of phenomenological propositions in general, we will pave the way for extending the realm of *a priori* moral truth to affectively given value phenomena.

1. Phenomenological Propositions and the Formalist Prejudice: A Case Study in Achromatopsia

Consider the following proposition:

> *"The same patch cannot both be red and green at the same time."*

While the judgment makes reference to experiential contents, it seems clear that the incompatibility is not known on the basis of an inductive generalization of *a posteriori*

empirical observations. I certainly have never seen a red-green patch, but neither this fact nor the attendant improbability that I therefore ever will observe one is what grounds my knowledge that such a patch *cannot* exist. Indeed, if the claim were an empirically contingent *a posteriori* judgment, then in principle its negation would not constitute a contradiction, and thus the color incompatibility *could* have been otherwise: there could be some possible world in which the same patch *can* be both red and green at the same time. But anyone who understands what is meant by the proposition in question knows that the incompatibility could not have been otherwise.

If the proposition is not an *a posteriori* judgment, then according to the formalist prejudice, it must be knowable on the basis of formal reason alone. But is this proposition known on the basis of a logical necessity? If we follow the Tractarian understanding of logical necessity strictly in terms of formal tautologousness, then in order to be logically necessary, the negation of the incompatibility—e.g. "The same patch *can* be both red and green"—must be a logical contradiction of the form "S is p and S is ~p." However, the proposition that something is green does not, on the basis of formal rules alone, logically contain that it is not red, thus in saying that something is both red and green (i.e. S is r and S is g), I am not violating the rules of formal consistency. If the color incompatibility is not a standard tautology, then in what other sense can the proposition be derivable from formal reason?

Here we might expand our understanding of logical necessity to include the semantic valuation of the conceptual terms in a proposition. On this account, the color incompatibility can be seen as a logical consequence of a consistently constructed system of concepts. Moritz Schlick (1949) advances one such view:

> Red and green are incompatible...because the *sentence* 'This is spot is both red and green' is a meaningless combination of words. The logical rules which underlie our employment of colour words forbid such usage...*The meaning of a word is solely determined by the rules which hold for its use. Whatever follows from these rules, follows from the mere meaning of the word, and is therefore purely analytic, tautological, formal.*[99]

On Schlick's view, it is the linguistic conventions governing our use of color terms that prevent us from meaningfully saying that there can be a red-green patch: a red patch cannot be green, simply because it belongs to the full conceptual specification of the word "red" within a consistent system of signs that it cannot signify a patch that is "green." However, this gets the order of things backwards. The reason *why* it is a linguistic convention that a patch's being a given color excludes it from being another color at the same time is determined by material nature of such color predicates themselves, not by an arbitrarily constructed system of signs. That is to say, the rules for the legitimate use of the terms red and green can only be determined in consultation with the color phenomena that these terms signify. Otherwise, any violation of arbitrarily constructed rules of meaning would be merely nominal. Indeed, nothing prevents me from meaningfully signifying materially inconsistent objects like redgreen patches: though no such objects can possibly be exhibited in experience, I know what conditions an object *would* have to satisfy in order to be a redgreen patch. Contra Schlick, then, the proposition "This is patch is both red and green" is not a meaningless heap of words; indeed, it is morphologically well-formed. What determines the necessary falsehood of such a well formed proposition is rather the fact that it cannot possibly find fulfillment in intuition, and this impossibility is one that can only be

[99] Schlick (1949) p. 284-285

determined in consultation with experiential contents in question. Of course, once the incompatibility is known on the basis of intuition, it can be translated into purely conceptual rules; rules that someone who has never even experienced color could learn to correctly apply. However, in order for the propositions generated by the rules to constitute genuine knowledge about the world, such concepts must ultimately be founded upon and refer back to intuitions of the phenomena that they signify.

To draw this latter point into relief, consider the case of *congenital achromatopsia*. Recent studies suggest that some individuals are afflicted by a congenital condition of absolute or total color blindness. If these studies are any indication, the achromat not only lacks the ability to have perceptual experiences of color phenomena, but also the imaginative faculties needed to have *any* intuition of color whatsoever; in fact, subjects who have an acquired form of the condition—namely, *cerebral* achromatopsia—purport to be unable to even imagine color despite being able to remember having color experiences in the past (see Sacks 1995; Carota and Calabrese 2013).

Now, if all *a priori*, non-contingent judgments are derivable from formal reason alone, and if the color judgment in question is genuinely *a priori* justified, then assuming that each of their logical faculties are unimpaired, the color-capable subject and achromat alike should theoretically have access to the same evidence and degree of justification for believing the proposition "The same patch cannot be both red and green." And yet, it appears that a congenital achromat would not even be in a position to acquire the abstract concept of color, let alone the individual color concepts of red and green, were it not for the experiences of a color-capable subject. More importantly, even once the achromat acquires the abstract concept of color and learns the relevant linguistic conventions that govern color

predication, the epistemic status of propositions generated by such rules would be parasitic on the fulfilling experiences of color-capable subjects. For example, consider the following intentionally distinct propositions:

"The same patch cannot both be *red and green*"

"The same patch cannot both be *red and blue*."

While these two propositions can be generated in virtue of applying one and the same linguistic convention, they are ultimately *about* two distinct states of affairs: one being the incompatibility between *red and green*, the other being the incompatibility between *red and blue*. Now, upon acquiring the relevant linguistic conventions, the congenital achromat would be able to derive each of these propositions on her own and without any experience of the color phenomena concerned. And yet, despite such rule generated knowledge, the distinctness of the color relationship specified by each proposition is simply unavailable to her. There appears to be a gap in her knowledge.

To demonstrate this, let's suppose that the achromat were suddenly endowed with the faculty of color experience, and then presented with a palette of color swatches. Now suppose that she is asked to pair each proposition with the corresponding swatches. Clearly her discriminatory capacities would be different from the color capable subject: without a prior association of each color word with the corresponding color, she would be unable to connect the color judgments to the appropriate color contents to which they apply.

But the difference in discriminatory capacities raises the question of whether the achromat and the color capable subject really occupy the same epistemic position with respect to the color incompatibility claim. To be sure, this is not necessarily to deny that the achromat really knows the propositions learned from the color-capable subject. We might grant that subjects with achromatopsia can come to know a great deal of color propositions—indeed, even enough to be competent color scientists. However, in order for these justified propositions to constitute *knowledge about colors* —as opposed to mere knowledge about the relationship between empty signs—the conceptual schema acquired by the achromat must bear a suitable inferential relationship to the experience of subjects with the sensory and imaginative faculties needed to acquire the relevant color concepts in the first place. And it is precisely on these grounds that the color capable subject's knowledge of the incompatibility claim seems to be more adequate or complete than that of the achromat's: that is, the color-capable subject sees what the achromat can only derivatively know in virtue of applying a rule given to her by color-capable subjects. That is to say, what makes the achromat's color beliefs qualify as knowledge about colors is the fact that her judgments can be verified by some experiencing subject. As such, her knowledge appears to be parasitic upon color experiencing subjects who do have the experiential capacities. If we grant that the achromat has *a priori* knowledge that the same patch cannot be both red and green, then, she doesn't appear to know this on the basis of reason alone.

2. Experience, Essence, and Emotion: The Material *A Priori* and the Affective *A Priori*

The difficulties in accounting for phenomenological propositions within a purely formal account of *a priori* justification led Wittgenstein to flirt with "the temptation to believe in a *phenomenology,* something midway between science and logic."[100] It is in this middle region that the coherence of an affective model of *a priori* moral objectivity lies. But *is* there something besides formal reason and empirical contingency? Can there be an *a priori* realm of experiential content?

An effort to answer these questions can be found in Scheler's theory of the non-formal [*material*] *a priori.* Central to Scheler's account is his repudiation of what can be summarily termed the "Kantian error": namely, the identification of the *a priori* with the formal understanding and the relegation of the non-formal to *a posteriori* empirical contingency.[101] For Scheler, the distinction between *a posteriori* knowledge and *a priori* knowledge is not one between experience *tout court* and the mere formal conditions of the possibility experience, but is rather a distinction between two different *kinds* of experience: (i) the experience of empirically observable facts, and (ii) the experience of "phenomenological facts." Empirical facts—e.g. The fact that Mars is red—are those inadequately given phenomena whose experience depends upon specific observational connections between particular positing subjects and particular posited objects. Phenomenological facts, by contrast, are those adequately given phenomena whose experience can obtain independent of any particular connections between positing subjects and posited objects. For instance, when I attend to the "redness" that unifies the class of

[100] Wittgenstein (1977) p. 15
[101] As Scheler claims: "The identification of the "a priori" with the "formal" is a fundamental error of Kant's doctrine." *FE* p. 54

red things, I don't need to presuppose the existence of any particular red objects to which one must stand in more or less optimal conditions of observation. In this way, phenomenological facts are those "immediate intuitive contents" that, despite being essentially intuitive, nonetheless function as "ideal units of meaning" insofar as they are in principle capable of being experienced independent of any specific arrangement of real objects in the world and by any subject with the appropriate faculties. In other words, phenomenological facts are *essences* and their *essential interconnections* conceived as self-posing *contents* of intuition. While such phenomenological facts can therefore only be known through "immediate intuitive experience," the propositions they justify they are no less unconditional for that reason:

> Whenever we have such essences and such interconnections among them...which can be of different kinds, e.g., reciprocal, unilateral, conflicting...the *truth* of propositions that find their fulfillment in such essences is *totally* independent of the entire sphere of observation and description, as well as of what is established in inductive experience. This truth is also independent, quite obviously, of all that enters into causal explanation. It can neither be verified nor refuted by this kind of "experience."[102]

According to Scheler, the proper realm of the unconditional *a priori* consists first and foremost in essences conceived as phenomenological facts. Propositions—including purely logical principles—are only *a priori* in the derivative sense that they find intuitive fulfillment in such facts: "it is in the *content* of intuition, which fills these kinds of propositions, that their apriority has its *roots*."[103] Insofar as such facts are disclosed by way of "an immediate

[102] FE p. 49
[103] ibid. 53

intuitive content," then, the *a priori* is not to be understood as an empty form or forming activity of the understanding, but as a *given* of experience:

> [T]he *a priori* is first a "given" of an intuition, and...the propositions which are "thought" in judg-ments can be called *a priori* only insofar as they find their ful-fillment in the facts of phenomenological experience…Hence the *a priori* is *not* dependent on *propositions* (or even on acts of judgment corresponding to them). It is not dependent, for example, on the *form* of such propositions and acts (i.e., on "forms of judgments," from which Kant developed his "categories" as "functional laws" of "thinking"). On the contrary, the *a priori* belongs wholly to the *"given"* and the sphere of *facts.* A proposition is only *a priori* true (or false) insofar as it finds its fulfillment in such "facts."[104]

Whereas Husserl is sometimes read as equivocating on the pre-conceptual nature of essences,[105] Scheler is explicit in insisting that the concept of an essence and the essence itself are two distinct things: "the concept 'thing' and the intuited 'thingness,' the concept equality and the intuited equality, or the being-equal (as distinguished from the being-similar), etc., must be clearly distinguished."[106] In this way, Scheler's account of the non-formal *a priori* marries Husserl's notion of eidetic intuition with an explicitly *sui generis* account of the intentionality of intuitive content. On this account, *a priori* essential facts are not disclosed with the mere "help" of representationally animated intuitive content. Rather, as Scheler claims: "the *a priori* given *is* an intuitive content, not something "predesigned" or "constructed," etc., through thinking."[107] Such self-posing intuitive contents afford the

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[104] ibid. 49
[105] See *Ideas I* 41/41: "Certainly essences are 'concepts' — if by concepts one understands, in so far as that ambiguous word allows, precisely essences. Only let one make clear to himself that *then* it is nonsense to talk about them as psychical products and likewise as concept-*formations*, provided the latter is to be understood strictly and properly." See Paul Livingston (2002) for a helpful discussion of conceptualist readings of this passage. For one, Van der Pitte (1984) has argued that *Wesenschau* can be construed as a kind of conceptual analysis.
[106] *FE* p. 49
[107] ibid. 52

originary givenness of not only those essences pertaining to all beings—i.e. those essences grounding a formal ontology of objects in general—but also of the "material" essences pertaining to a specified region of being: e.g. color, sound, space etc.[108] It is to such regionally specific intuitive contents that we turn when we fulfill phenomenological propositions about the necessary impossibility of red-green patches, roundsquare shapes, and all other formally consistent yet materially impossible objects. On this view, I know that red and green cannot properly coincide insofar as the material essences that govern every possible color phenomena (and their essential interconnections) are immediately given to me in intuition: that is to say, the proposition "The same patch cannot both be red and green" is *a priori* justified insofar as it finds intuitive fulfillment in a set of phenomenological facts. Contrary to the formalist prejudice, then, to the extent that we are aware of a vast range of both material consistencies and inconsistencies, we are thereby familiar with an equally vast range of *a priori* justified propositions that turn upon the material givens of experience.

2.1 Essence and Emotional Experience: The Affective A Priori

Now, to the extent that the phenomenological facts given in intuition can include *feelable* correlates, then the non-formal *a priori* must be seen to include a regional ontology of affective phenomena. Accordingly, once we have set aside the "groundless dualism" between formal reason and empirical contingency, the *a priori* lawfulness of affective phenomena is opened up as a possibility, and we can thereby see that:

[108] *FE* 54

> An "emotive ethics," as distinct from a "rational ethics," is not at all necessarily an "empiricism" that attempts to derive moral values from observation and induction. Feeling, preferring and rejecting, loving and hating…possess their *own a priori* contents independent of inductive experience and pure laws of thought. Here, as with thought, *there is* the *intuiting of essences* [*Wesensschau*] of acts and their correlates, their foundations, and their interconnections. In both cases there is "evidence" and maximum exactness of phenomeno-logical findings.[109]

According to Scheler, just as we can we have material *a priori* insight into the spectral order of colors and the essential laws that govern their interrelations (e.g. that adding white to a color diminishes its coloredness; the impossibility of a red-green patch etc.), we can also have *a priori* insight into values and the essential laws that set constraints on the acts of valuing in which they are intended. As with the case of color knowledge, such phenomenological insight can be given only in consultation with the experiential contents of our intuitions themselves: "The actual seat of the entire value *a priori* (including the moral *a priori*) is the *value-cognition* or *value-intuition* [*Wert-Erschauung*] that comes to the fore in feeling, basically in *love* and *hate*...These functions and acts supply the only possible *access to* the world of values."[110] It is in phenomenological reflection on acts of feeling that we encounter value essences as a realm of conceptually unanalyzable yet lawfully organized material essences.

The first essential law available to phenomenological insight is that all values are either *positive* or *negative*. This axiom extends across all value modalities, including both non-moral values (e.g. a*greeable* and *disagreeable*, *beautiful* and *ugly*, *pleasurable* and *painful* etc.) and moral values (e.g. *good* and *evil*) alike. According to Scheler, this bi-polarity of all value

[109] *FE* p. 64. Emphasis in original.
[110] ibid. 68

phenomena is a reflection of the fact that all acts of valuing are ultimately grounded in *love* and *hate* as the "primordial affective comportments" through which we encounter the world. Falling under this essential fact are the axioms of value originally formulated by Franz Brentano which circumscribe the *a priori* interrelations that hold between values and existence conditions:

B1. The existence of a positive value is itself a positive value.
B2. The existence of a negative value is itself a negative value.
B3. The non-existence of a positive value is itself a negative value.
B4. The non-existence of a negative value is itself a positive value.

Taken together, such axioms ground the basic "principle of valuation": i.e. that "the same value cannot be both positive *and* negative," and thus that acts of love and hate can never be directed at the same value.[111] Of course, as the familiar phenomena of "love-hate relationships" attests, we certainly can and often do hold simultaneous positive and negative evaluations of the same value bearing object: e.g. the same person can simultaneously be the object of *admiration* and *disdain*. But in such cases, the opposing valuations are bound to wholly distinct ways of considering the same referential object, and thus correspond to entirely different intentional matters. As Scheler puts this point: "One can 'value' the same things positively and negatively, but only because of different complexes of values intended in the same thing."[112] Thus, I may admire a person for her work ethic and yet also have disdain for this person's selfishness, but I cannot at once admire *and* disdain her work ethic or her selfishness unless the value-making objective features I am considering are different

[111] *FE* p. 82
[112] *FE* p. 84

for each act of feeling. For instance, I may admire someone's work ethic *qua* their commitment to their goals, and disdain their work ethic to the extent that this commitment involves neglecting their relationship with me. However, in each case, the underlying properties to which I am directing my positive or negative feeling are different. In this way, Scheler concludes: "the same complex of values can never be of both positive and negative value...If this seems to happen, there are different value-complexes hidden behind the supposedly identical intention of valuation."[113]

Now, according to Scheler, the foregoing axioms governing the essential laws of values and acts of valuing are just as *a priori* necessary and self-evident as the axioms of mathematics. But contrary to the formalist prejudice, such axioms of value are not validated by virtue of merely imposing an empty logical necessity on propositions that only incidentally concern some material value content. Rather, they are intuitively evident facts grounded in the very essence of values as such. As Scheler claims: "Axioms of values are *wholly independent* of logical axioms and are *not* mere 'applications" of the latter to values...for here it is not a question of relations between *propositions* at their founda-tions, but one of *essential interconnections*."[114] Insofar as these essential interconnections are grounded in phenomenological facts, axioms of values thereby represent an autonomous domain of *a priori* laws irreducible to that of formal logic.

At this point, one might object that such "essential interconnections" of values are themselves only the products of formal laws of thought which are always operative in all cognitions, no matter the content, as conditions of the possibility of any objectifying act

[113] ibid.
[114] ibid. 64/84

whatsoever. On this view, the fact that a positive value cannot at the same time be a negative value does not reveal an autonomous regional ontology of values, but is rather only an artefact of certain laws of formal apophantics governing all cognitions of objects, including in particular the principle of non-contradiction. The so-called principle of valuation would then be nothing more than the manifestation of the principle of non-contradiction within the realm of value cognition: that is, the fact that the same value cannot be both positive and negative would only be a permutation of the fact that "A is B and not-B" must necessarily be false for *all* objects of cognition.

The problem with this line of objection, however, is that the determination of positive values and negative values as mutually exclusive properties cannot be established by the form of contradiction alone. As we have seen in the case of color incompatibility, whether a given pair of property attributions falls under the form of contradiction can only be determined by a prior disagreement that holds between the essences of these properties themselves. For instance, the fact that "loud" and "high pitched" are *not* incompatible property pairs for a given object, while "completely red" and "completely green" *are* incompatible, is determined by the essential interconnection that obtains between these material contents as hypothetical properties of the same object. Whereas the being of a loud tone does not entail the non-being of a high-pitched tone, we know that the being of a positive value entails the non-being of a negative value. But here, we know that this mutual exclusivity either obtains or does not obtain only insofar as we are acquainted with the material content of each phenomenon in question. Accordingly, the mutual exclusivity of positive values and negative values cannot be seen as a mere *application* of the principle of non-contradiction, but rather as its material *exemplification*. In this way, on a Schelerian

framework, material consistency is ontologically prior to formal consistency. As Scheler argues this point: "The principle of non-contradiction is valid for being, not because it is valid for the 'thinking of being'; rather, it pertains to the thinking of being because the essential interconnection fulfilling it is fulfilled in all being."[115] In other words, the legitimate "thinking of being" is constrained by the nature of being, not the other way around. Indeed, this is borne out by the fact that the domain of well-formed propositions exceeds the domain of propositions that can be authentically fulfilled. For instance, despite the fact that no such objects could possibly exist, I can nonetheless meaningfully intend impossible objects like roundsquares that would otherwise violate the laws of material consistency. What I cannot do, however, is fulfill such intentions, and this insofar as such fulfillment is precluded by the essential nature of the things themselves: "the propositions "A is B" and "A is not B" cannot (*salva veritate*) agree with each other *a priori,* because *being* excludes this possibility."[116] Likewise, if the same value cannot both be positive and negative, this is only insofar as the essence of values excludes this possibility.

Now, if it appears as though the principle of valuation is merely the product of a formal principle that holds for all cognitions, this is only because the axioms that govern the regional ontology of values must also coincide with the laws of formal ontology governing all objects of experience. But here the relationship between regional and formal ontology is not a "top down" *imposition* of empty form onto unorganized matter, but a "bottom up" *constitution* of pre-ordered material regions (color, space, matter, value etc.) whose coinciding laws together compose the formal laws governing objects in general. In this way, formal

[115] *FE* p. 83
[116] ibid. 84

ontological principles are built up out of, or supervene upon, the organizational laws that all regions of being share in common. Properly speaking, then, the principle of non-contradiction is not validated first and foremost by way of an "empty" logical necessity, but rather by way of an intuition of a universally manifesting *fact*:

> [T]he proposition that one of the two propositions, *"A* is *B"* and "*A* is not *B,"* is a false proposition is true only on the basis of the phenomenological insight into the *fact* [*Sacheinsicht] that* the being and the non-being of some thing are irreconcilable (in intuition). Taken in this sense, this proposition has a *content of intuition* for its basis, and the content is not diminished as content because it applies to *any* object. This proposition is "formal" only for the entirely different reason that *any* object can stand for A and *B;* it is formal with respect to two of any such objects. Likewise, 2 x 2 = 4 is "formal" for plums and pears alike.[117]

On this view, the "formal" nature of the principle of contradiction—or any purely logical principle for that matter—consists not in its independence from being, but in the fact that each autonomous region of being shares an essential interconnection that fulfills it.

3. The Order of Values and the Ought: A Value-First Account of Moral Objectivity

Now, to the extent that constraints on acts of valuing are determined by material value essences, then we have secured the kind of minimal non-formal *a priori* conditions necessary for an affective model of *a priori* evaluative objectivity. Acts of valuing have conditions of correctness that are determined by the essential laws of values themselves, not by formal reason or the contingencies of empirical experience. For example, one cannot

[117] *FE* 53-54

correctly judge that the same thing under the same aspect bears both a positive and a negative value. This fact is grounded not in an empty formal necessity, but in the material nature of the experiential contents in question. That is to say, it is the *essence* of value that determines this law, and not formal reason. To the extent that affective phenomena exhibit their own *a priori* interconnections, we can see that the formalist prejudice in ethics wears no clothes. As Scheler claims:

> Logic and a pure doctrine of values [*reine Wertlehre*] stand side by side ... The phenomenology of values and the phenomenology of emotive life are completely independent of logic, having an autonomous area of objects and research…For it is our *whole* spiritual life— and not simply objective thinking in the sense of cognition of being— that possesses "pure" acts and laws of acts which are, according to their nature and contents, *independent* of the human organization. The *emotive* elements of spirit, such as feeling, preferring, loving, hating, and *willing,* also possess original a priori contents which are not borrowed from "thinking," and which ethics must show to be independent of logic. There is an a priori *ordre du coeur,* or *logique du coeur,* as Blaise Pascal aptly calls it.[118]

To be sure, however, while such material constraints on evaluation are certainly *necessary* for moral objectivism, they are hardly *sufficient*, least of all for the kind of robust moral objectivity capable of grounding an action guiding ethics. Indeed, the latter would not merely require law-like constraints on apprehending values, but would also furnish normative criteria that would enable practical agents to adjudicate between values and the actions that realize them. This would not only give us law-like constraints on objective experiences of, say, beauty or admiration, but would also give us the resources to explain why someone who deliberately chooses to concern himself with enjoying the view of the

[118] ibid. 63

pleasing sky instead of saving his drowning child would be *morally wrong*. In this way, value realism *sans phrase* does not necessarily yield *moral* realism. In order to secure the latter, we need some way of explaining why some values are to be pursued over others, what makes a given motivational profile "good" or "bad," as well as some explanation of how values yield deontic constraints that determine which actions are "right" and "wrong." In other words, we need some account of how values determine reasons for agential activity without falling back to an empty formalist principle, where the apparent difficulty of the latter is to explain why the realization of one material value should be more or less morally significant than any other. Scheler himself fully recognizes this point:

> Kant is certainly correct in stating that the realization of a certain non-formal value is itself never good or evil. One would have to adhere to Kant's position [of formalism] if there were no order of ranks among non-moral values, no order that lies in the essence of such values.[119]

In other words, if the realm of values were not normatively ordered into a hierarchy of higher priority values and lower priority values, then it would seem that an action-guiding ethical theory could scarcely be derived from a material axiology: there would be no reason to prioritize the realization of one value over any other. And yet Scheler is quick to retort:

> But *there is* such an order of value ranks. If it exists, it is perfectly clear what relation "good" and "evil" have to other values. The value "good"—in an absolute sense—is the value that appears, by way of essential necessity, on the act aimed at realizing the value which (with respect to the measure of cognition of that being which realizes it) is the highest. The value "evil"— in an absolute sense— is the value that appears on the act aimed at realizing the lowest value. The value that appears on the act which is aimed

[119] *FE* p. 25

> toward realizing a higher or lower value, as viewed form the initial-value-experience in every case, is relatively good or evil.[120]

On this account—what we can refer to as a *material value ethics*—the moral concepts of *good* and *evil* are thought to refer to actions insofar as they intentionally aim at realizing higher or lower substantive values, respectively.[121] Now, whether we can motivate the idea of a material hierarchy of values is something we will turn to address. But assuming for now that such an order of values *does* exist—that is, that values are already ranked by nature into normatively stratified relations of being "higher" or "lower"—we would have the minimal conceptual resources needed to generate deontic constraints on actions: Morally "good" and thus "right" actions would be those actions that intentionally aim at realizing higher values over lower values; Morally "evil" and thus "wrong" actions would be those actions that intentionally aim at realizing lower values over higher values. On a material value ethics, then, deontic constraints on actions are parasitic on values. As Scheler claims: "[A]ll oughtness must have its foundation in values— i.e., only values ought or ought not to be."[64]

Now, these are crude strokes that will need to be refined. For one, Scheler is not as careful as he should be in clarifying the proper domain of morally relevant actions: Do good and thus right actions always aim at the absolute highest values *conceivable*? The highest values practically attainable in a given situation? Or only at *some* higher values above a certain threshold? Nevertheless, we can readily amend Scheler's formulation as follows: Given a range of practically attainable values that a subject is consciously presented with, an action is morally good or morally bad in *proportion* to the extent that it aims at higher as opposed to

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[120] *FE* p. 25
[121] ibid. 81-82

lower attainable values. This echoes the imperative given by Brentano and Husserl: "Do the best that is *attainable*!"[122] Scheler comes closest to this formulation himself when he claims that "(t)he value that appears on the act which is aimed toward realizing a higher or lower value, *as viewed from the initial value-experience in every case,* is relatively good or evil."[123]

In emphasizing the "initial value experience," Scheler appears to restrict the goodmaking criteria of a moral action to only those values perceivable from the evaluative standpoint of the subject. This captures the platitude that someone who was simply "blind" or unaware of a better possibility in acting as they did is less blameworthy than someone who was fully aware of the better possibility but intentionally chose otherwise. On the other hand, in restricting the province of moral action to only those values with which the subject is acquainted, we should be careful not to conclude that one cannot be held morally accountable for one's blindness to higher values. Here we can draw a distinction between, on the one hand, the datable perceptually-guided intention behind a particular action, and, on the other, the etiology of one's perceptual-evaluative field. One may lead a selfish life, and as a result they may have habituated a stultified set of evaluative discriminatory capacities. If this character were to have a moral conversion experience, it may be possible for them to genuinely aspire towards realizing the highest values in every case, yet fail to aim at the optimal values insofar as they have a habituated blindness to higher values. For a given datable action at T2, insofar as an agent was acting with an optimizing intention at T2, such that they *would have* aimed to realize the higher value set if they were not blind to it, then we

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[122] See Husserl (Hua 28, 221). Here Husserl is following Brentano. As Brentano claims, '[e]thics must first determine which ends are rightly to be striven for as the highest ones (1973b:79), and '[o]nly the end that exceeds all others in value can be the correct ultimate end, i.e. it must be the best, but only insofar as it is attainable' (1973b: 122).

[123] FE p. 25

can say that their action was synchronously good. At the same time, however, insofar as (i) the action failed to aim at the higher values that were attainable for a veridically and adequately perceiving subject, and insofar as (ii) one's blindness to the higher values is a result of an action at T1 in which one intentionally aimed at lower values, then we can say that action is also the indirect expression of a morally "evil" motivational profile.

In this way, it is possible for a single action to express two different, diachronously related motivational profiles. Nevertheless, what makes a given action morally right or wrong under each mode of consideration is the extent to which it issues from the perception of values and their interrelationships. Morally good action, on this account, is perceptually-guided action aligned towards higher material values. The moral import of actions can be given a number of different articulations depending upon (i) how we are to understand the ontological and conceptual status of the moral values of actions, and (ii) how we are to understand the normative status of values. I'll treat each of these in turn.

Maximalist Substantive Value Realism: On one picture, the moral "goodness" of an action is a numerically distinct substantive value property, one that supervenes on an action's property of aiming at some set of higher as opposed to lower substantive values as ends. For example, when I aim at some set of higher substantive values—say, the values associated with friendship—over some set of relatively lower substantive values —e.g. fleeting gustatory pleasures—this act generates a new substantive value property—i.e. the value of being *morally good*—one that contributes to the set of all substantive values that obtain in the world. This account allows for the possibility that the propagation of moral agents and moral actions—say through investing in civics programs and moral education—can be a non-

derivative end, insofar as we could be increasing the amount of higher substantive values in the world. Here, we do not merely aim to foster moral agency because it will lead to the increase of non-moral substantive values in the world; rather, moral actions are thought to possess their own substantive positive values. Likewise, morally bad actions also generate negative values distinct from those they may succeed in realizing. For example, turning back to the disvalue of the cruelty of the Turkish soldiers depicted in *The Brothers Karamazov*, on the present account, we would say that the disvalue of this state of affairs is not only constituted by the disvalue of the pain and suffering inflicted on the mother and her child, but also includes the disvalue of the moral wrongness and evil of this act. The latter constitutes a unique substantive value of the scenario that can be perceived along with the other negative values, even if this moral value must also supervene upon the lower order values that the act of cruelty succeeds in realizing.

"Buck Passing" Substantive Value Realism: On a more parsimonious substantive realist picture, moral values are merely formal or syncategorematic properties of actions, which are exhaustively analyzable in terms of an action's property of aiming at higher or lower values which alone are substantive and *sui generis*. On this account, to call an action morally good is not to attribute to it a new substantive value property, but is just to specify a relation that the action bears to the substantive values at which it aims as ends. Thus, to the extent that values provide reasons for actions, the moral goodness of an action cannot constitute a numerically distinct reason for that action. Nevertheless, while moral values are thereby rendered as merely syncategorematic terms, this account is still a form of substantive value realism, insofar as the moral status of an action is determined by the extent to which it aims at higher

or lower *sui generis* value properties. According to this "buck passing" version of substantive realism, the disvalue of the cruelty perpetrated by the Turkish soldiers is exhausted by the negative values that serve as the objects aimed at or realized through the action of cruelty. One potential difficulty of this account is that it appears unable to countenance the idea that something of negative value obtains even when a malicious intention is unsuccessful. In any case, on this account, moral goodness is conceptually reducible to the alignment of an action towards higher over lower values.

Now, on either maximalist or buck passing versions, the value-based account of moral objectivity can also vary according to the account of normativity at play. On a material value ethics, deontic terms are parasitic on values. As Scheler claims: "all oughtness must have its foundation in values— i.e., only values ought or ought not to be."[124] The precise nature of the connection between values and normativity, however, is unclear in Scheler's own account. Here there are at least two possibilities:

Intrinsic Irreducible Normativity: On one account, normative constraints are grounded in the intrinsic nature of values, but values and normative terms remain two distinct ontological kinds. Thus, to say that some state of affairs ought to obtain is to say that it possesses an optimal set of values, but this is *precisely because* higher values possess the further property of being such that they ought to obtain. In other words, for a given range of attainable value

[124] *FE* p. 82

sets, the relatively higher (or optimal) value set possesses an intrinsic and irreducibly normative feature of ought-to-be-ness. This version of material value ethics is committed to an ontologically extravagant "layer-cake conception" of value-based normativity articulated by Dancy: "[O]ur normative reasons are based on values…At bottom there are the [natural] features that generate value; above that there is the value so generated, and above that are the reasons and requirements that are laid on us by the prospect of value; and only by that." While the layer-cake conception isn't a charming picture for the ontologically parsimonious of heart, it retains the advantage of keeping all normative concepts at our disposal in accounting for the spectrum of ethical life.

Value Fundamentalism: According to a more ontologically parsimonious alternative, ethical normativity is *reducible* to facts about values. To say that some possible state of affairs ought to obtain, for instance, means nothing more than the fact that realizing it would yield an ideal or optimal value set relative to the range of attainable possibilities. On this account, deontic constraints on moral actions are ontological constraints: to say that it ought to be the case that I Φ is just to make a claim about what must in fact be the case if I am to satisfy the condition of aiming at the realization of an optimal value set. The same reduction can be applied to agential deontic terms like obligation: to say that I am morally obligated to Φ is to make an ontological claim about what I must intend in order to satisfy the condition of aiming at the realization of an optimal value set. Now, one might object that by reducing normativity to values we *eliminate* normativity altogether, such that we can ask why we ought to care about values at all. Here, however, the proponent of a material value ethics can take the constitutivist strategy, and argue that normativity is constitutively grounded in the nature

of what it is to be value-responsive agent—that is, a *caring* agent. To give a brief care-based sketch of how a material axiology can provide a constitutivist account of agency-based normativity: (i) Unlike merely rational, imperativistic forms of agency, caring is an irreducibly value-laden intentional act: To care is always to take something as a site of positive or negative value. (ii) Caring is a non-optional feature of what it is to be an ethical agent, and is prior to all other forms of personal agency. (iii) Caring has a constitutive aim—to be responsive to values —and is thus subject to constitutive constraints: by virtue of taking anything as a positive or negative value, one, so to speak, enters the "space of values," and is thereby subject to the hierarchy of values on pain of violating what is to care, and *ipso facto*, what it is to be an ethical agent. On this account, morally right action *just is* action guided by the adequate perception of and appropriate responsiveness to the order of values.

3.2 Material Value Ethics and the Order of Preference

Upon either version of a material value ethics, a moral property, whether substantive or formal, is first and foremost a property of actions *qua* goal-oriented intentional acts, not of actions *qua* executed goals: that is to say, moral properties attach to actions insofar as they *aim* at the realization of a relatively higher substantive value, not insofar as they attain this end. Accordingly, the moral status of a deed is distinct from the value it aims to realize. Nevertheless, the respective moral value of an act is determined only insofar as it aims at higher or lower substantive values. Pace Kantian duty-based ethics, then, morally good actions are never those done for the sake of being good itself: "The value 'good' appears *on* the act of willing. It is for this reason that it can never be the content of an act of willing. It

is located, so to speak, on the *back* of this act."[125] In other words, a moral value, whether understood as a substantive or a formal term, is a *property* of an action, not its object.

This supervenience of moral values on actions aiming at non-moral values enables a material value ethics to chart a middle course between consequentialist and deontological accounts of moral action, as it allows us to acknowledge the significance of both the value of the ends to be realized by the execution of a deed—for example, the saved life of a drowning child—as well as the motivational tenor that undertakes the action—e.g. saving the child *because* the value of the child's life is perceived to be higher than the values that would be otherwise be realized by not intervening. Contrary to the utilitarian consequentialist, then, the moral status of an action cannot be reduced to or identified with the concrete ends that it realizes—e.g. pleasures, pains, happiness etc.—as if the motivational tenor behind actions were irrelevant. But contrary to the Kantian deontologist, the moral status of a deed cannot obtain without a non-moral material value as its content and thus a concretely appreciable change in the material circumstances of the world as its end. As Scheler claims:

> [H]e who does not want to do good to his fellow man in such a way that he becomes concerned about the realization of his fellow man's well-being but who merely seizes the opportunity "to be good" or "to do good" in this act, neither *is* good nor *does* "good"; he is truly an example of a pharisee, who wishes only to *appear* "good" to himself…[I]nsofar as [Kant] seeks to identify "good" with the concept of duty and what is in conformity with duty, and insofar as he also claims that one must do what is "good" for its own sake in order to be good, and, consequently, that one must do one's duty "out of duty," he falls victim to this pharisaism.[126]

[125] ibid. 27
[126] *FE* p. 27

If deontic constraints on action can indeed be grounded in an *a priori* order of values, a Schelerian material value ethics can avoid both the empty formalism of Kantian deontology and the "agglomerative indifference" of utilitarian consequentialism. The question, then, is whether there really *is* such an order of value ranks. And at this point one might object that the foregoing account sounds like a "just so" story: It just so happens that there is an order of value ranks that conveniently explains how a material axiology can generate deontic constraints on actions. On this objection, any putative *a priori* order of value ranks is just as likely an ad hoc construction designed to legitimatize certain evaluative conventions.

The problem with this line of thinking, however, is that the intelligibility of a just-so objection against a given theory requires the intelligibility of things being otherwise than what that theory posits. And that is precisely what is at stake in Scheler's account. For Scheler, in the same way that it is unthinkable that 2+2 should not equal 4, or unthinkable that a red patch should also be simultaneously green, so too is it unthinkable that some values—e.g. beauty, wisdom, humor, honor etc.—should not be of a higher order of rank than others—e.g. pleasant sensations. And like all essential necessities, to determine this we can turn to the things themselves—that is, the particular non-formal values and the essential interrelations that hold between them. To this end, Scheler claims that an *a priori* order of value ranks is made evident in the experience of *preference*: the self-evident fact that certain "higher" values are necessarily preferable to "lower" ones, and that among all value modalities, the positive value is objectively preferable to the negative value. Scheler claims:

> In the totality of the realm of values there exists a singular order, an 'order of ranks' that all values possess among themselves. It is because of this that a value is 'higher' or 'lower' than another one. This order lies in the essence of values themselves, as does the difference between "positive" and "negative" values. It does not belong simply to "values known" by us. The fact that one value is "higher" than another is apprehended in a special act of value-cognition: the act of *preferring*.[127]

In the experience of preferring one value over another, values are given to me as higher or lower. By "preference" Scheler is careful to make clear that he does not mean a subjective "choice." Preference for Scheler is a *cognitive* act, not a *volitional* act, which is made manifest in ordinary discourse when we talk about preferring even when we are not confronted with a decision: e.g. "we can say, "I *prefer* roses to carnations," without thinking of a *choice*."[128] In preference, we simply register our awareness of a value's higher status: We may or may not *choose* things on the basis of what we prefer, but for Scheler the laws governing preference are already determined by an *a priori* order of rank that holds among all values. For instance, I cannot prefer what is disagreeable over what is agreeable; Nor can I prefer what is painful over what is pleasurable (ceteris paribus). Of course, we can and often do make judgments that would appear to violate these laws of preference. When this happens, according to Scheler, this is only because we are not properly acquainted with the higher value in question.

Now, while Scheler holds that preference and volition are two entirely different acts, he maintains that our volitional choices are also determined by the adequate presentation of values:

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[127] *FE* p. 87
[128] ibid.

> A value (or its position) can be given in feeling and preferring in various degrees of adequation up to its *"self-givenness"* (with which "absolute evidence" coincides). If a value is self-given, however, willing (or choosing in the special sense of preferring) becomes necessary in its *being*...Hence whenever we choose an end founded in a lower value, there must exist a *deception of preferring*."[129]

On this view, I choose the pleasure of a vice only because I am not in full view of the higher value to be had in abstaining, which I undoubtedly prefer. Here Scheler presents us with a materialization of the Socratic dictum that moral vice is a matter of *ignorance*: in value-based terms, when we are properly acquainted with a given range of possible values to be realized, we *cannot* err in moral judgment, and thus moral violations, whether of assessment or action, are failures of cognition and not of willing. Contra Socratic Intellectualism, however, this failure of cognition is one based not upon errors in the theoretical judgments of propositional knowledge, but in certain shortcomings of intuition not unlike visual distortions: "Not (intellectual) error, but on deception in feeling itself...Only where a valuation takes place can evil willing also rest on "aberration" [*Verirrung*], which is distinct from, and not a type of, theoretical "error."[130] Imminently realizable values like the pleasure of a cigarette, for example, can appear higher than they actually are in relation to deferred values like health and well-being. Nevertheless, on Scheler's account, if I were able to set both value kinds in full view—e.g. if I were able to compare the anticipated pleasure of the cigarette against an adequate intuition of the value of staying healthy for the sake of my family's well-being—I would undoubtedly choose the higher value, which I necessarily prefer.

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[129] *FE* p. 88
[130] ibid. 69n.

Now, Scheler's adoption of a "materialized" Socratic position is a regrettable turn, as it flies in the face of ample evidence to the contrary. Human beings often exhibit immoral conduct even in those cases where we grant full awareness of the values at stake. Nevertheless, we can reject Scheler's claim that immoral choice is always borne of deception or blindness to values without also needing to reject the claim that preference, as a strictly *cognitive* act of recognizing the order of values, is necessarily determined by an adequate perception the values at hand. Indeed, some cases of immoral conduct depend upon our full awareness of the objective preferability of higher values over lower values. Take for instance Scheler's own example of the character of *ressentiment*, who seeks to subvert some evaluative order insofar as she cannot enjoy in its higher values—e.g. the disgruntled college dropout who feels spurned by the academia, and so sets about through bad faith to convince herself and others that the examined life is really *not* worth living. In such cases, it is precisely insofar as one actually *prefers* some set of values that they are anguished by their inability to satisfy their desire to realize these preferred values. To the extant that the frustration of conative desires in beings like us correlates with a feeling of displeasure, this makes us liable to desire the obliteration of our preferred value as a means of relieving ourselves form the pain. As Scheler observes: "We have a tendency to overcome any strong tension of desire and impotence by depreciating and denying the value of the desired object."[131] However, the initial condition of the possibility of such a desire to negate what one prefers is the recognition of a preference that one cannot satisfy. In this way, the ham-fisted translation of *ressentiment* as "re-feeling" bears a certain fittingness: we begin with the authentic veridical

[131] *R* p. 2

perception of some disvalue in being unable to realize our preference, but then through illegitimate rationalizing, we redirect that negative feeling to an undeserved target.

The upshot of this account of moral failure is that any time a subject is adequately acquainted with a set of values at hand, they cannot fail to register their *cognitive preference* of the higher value, and this is true even if they do not, and indeed cannot, *choose* on the basis of what they ideally prefer. Preference should thus be seen as a perceptual recognition of phenomenological facts, no different in kind from grasping a mathematical axiom. As such, just as there could be no subject for whom 2+2 does not equal 4 under the assumption that these terms are properly understood, we can know *a priori* that there can be no subjects who are contingently constituted such that they disprefer a properly represented higher value:

> The proposition that the agreeable is preferable to the disagreeable (*ceteris paribus*) is not based on observation and induction. The preference lies in the essential contents of these values as well as in the nature of sensory feelings. If a traveler or a historian or a zoologist were to tell us that this preference is reversed in a certain kind of animal, we would "a priori" disbelieve his story. We would say that this is impossible unless it is only things different from ours that this animal feels are disagreeable and agreeable.[132]

While the preferability of a value is grounded in the essence of that value, its "height" is not a substantive feature to be given in the same manner as the value itself is given, but is rather a relational property of *being higher than*: I only see the higher status of a value in relation to and in juxtaposition with other values. Preferring a value does not *make* it higher than another, either. Rather, "the being-higher of a value with respect to other ones is *given* in the act of 'preferring.'"[133] Accordingly, Scheler claims, "if the height of a value is

[132] *FE* p. 105
[133] ibid. 25

given "in" preferring, this height is nevertheless a relation in the essence of the values concerned."[134] Furthermore, preferring a value is not a matter of seeing some separate set of non-evaluative explanatory facts that makes it higher than another value. In the same way that G.E. Moore argued that "good" is an unanalyzable simple that cannot be derived from or reduced to non-evaluative facts, Scheler claims that the order of value ranks that determines moral values is likewise unanalyzable: "[T]he order of the ranks of values can never be *deduced* or *derived*. Which value is 'higher' can be comprehended only through the acts of preferring and placing after. There exists here an intuitive 'evidence of preference' that cannot be replaced by logical deduction."[135] Accordingly, there are no further explanatory facts in virtue of which this order of rank obtains: any explanation of the "being-higher" of a positive value over a negative value, or the "being-higher" of wisdom over, say, physical pleasure, will always invoke the very order of ranks it intends to explain. As Scheler claims:

> In correctly determining a value or its position, it never suffices to attempt to derive it from characteristics and properties which do not belong to the sphere of value-phenomena. The value itself always must be *intuitively given* or must refer back to that kind of givenness. Just as it is senseless to ask for the common properties of all blue or red things, since they have nothing in common except their blueness or redness, so is it senseless to ask for the common properties of good or evil deeds.[136]

In order to delineate the actual hierarchy of value ranks, then, we can only look in the direction of the values themselves. Now, as it happens, Scheler's own proposed

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[134] ibid. 88
[135] ibid. 90/110
[136] *FE* p. 15

hierarchical taxonomy of value ranks is both vast in scope and far from intuitive, inviting the criticism that any putatively self-evident relations among values should be immune to considered disagreement. Nevertheless, departing from Scheler's own analysis, if there are grounds to establish at least *one* self-evident order of rank between value kinds, then we will have the groundwork needed to motivate an affective intuitionist model of robust action guiding moral objectivity.

3.3 A Schelerian Analysis of Mill's Competent Judge: A Case for Value Hierarchy from Self-Evidence

To this end, a canonical case for the *a priori* order of value ranks can be found in J.S. Mill's famous "competent judge" rebuttal to the doctrine of swine argument. Of course, Mill fancies himself a reductive hedonist, and thus, on a first pass, his framework is not amenable to countenancing values as *sui generis* intentional correlates distinct from the immanent sense data found in psychological states—the latter being what Scheler would call "Feeling states" in opposition to "Feeling acts." Nevertheless, in countenancing a *qualitative* hierarchy between different kinds of pleasure contents, Mill at times treads close to countenancing values distinct from that of pleasure. As T.H. Green claims, "Mill is unaware that in holding some kinds of pleasure to be intrinsically more desirable than others he gives up the first principle of Hedonism...For if pleasure alone is the ultimate good or desirable, on what ground can some pleasures be described as in their quality better than others?"[137] On

[137] Green *Prolegomena* XX

Green's reading, unless the distinction amounts to merely quantitative differences, the very notion of a genuinely *qualitative* distinction between pleasures suggests that the so-called higher pleasures must be desirable for some reason other than their algedonic aspect. In any case, setting aside these interpretive issues, while Mill's doctrine of swine rebuttal is arguably a problematic argument for hedonism, I think it presents the outline of a rather good phenomenological argument in favor of affective value *a priorism*.

Consider the following passage, wherein Mill sets forth his argument for the qualitative difference between so-called lower, base pleasures and higher, intellectual pleasures—or, following Green's reading, what we might refer to as the values of pleasure *simpliciter* and the values of dignity:

> If I am asked what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they *prefer* it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the *preferred* enjoyment a superiority in quality so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account.[138]

The foregoing looks very much like a phenomenological argument from perceptual intuition. Here, the fact that the values of dignity are of a higher value than the value of the base pleasures is given by the fact that, once competently acquainted with both value kinds, one is simply preferred to the other. Such acquaintance is given through first-hand experience with the values in question, which suggests that the preferability of one kind of

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138 Mill *Utilitarianism* II.5

value over another is something that is surveyable in consultation with the values themselves. On this account, the value of wisdom is objectively preferable to that of pleasure not in virtue of some further explanatory facts or principles, but because in comparing the respective values, one is given to me as being higher than the other. In keeping with Scheler's account, preference is here presented not as an arbitrary choice, but as a kind of cognitive responsiveness to facts. As such, preference only reveals the being higher of values of dignity, it does not make it the case that they are higher. Accordingly, provided that one is properly acquainted with both value kinds, it is simply not possible for one to prefer base pleasures to values of dignity. As Mill claims:

> It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.[139]

Here the suggestion is that a subject who is properly acquainted with both values of dignity and values of pleasure *cannot* fail to prefer the former over the latter. The only explanation for one falling under an opinion to the contrary—what Scheler would count as a value deception—is that one either has not been or is not able to be competently or adequately acquainted with the higher value to be compared. As with the case of color incompatibility judgments, while the justification of the competent judge's assessment turns upon experiential content, the judgment in question is not matter of *a posteriori* contingency: Mill makes no indications that would leave room for the possibility that empirical

[139] Mill Utilitarianism II

observation could eventually discover a base pleasure so quantitatively perfected that it could be preferred to the value of dignity.

In fact, hypothesizing the quantitative limits of pleasure, Mill even appears to explicitly rule out such a discovery when he claims that the competent judge "would not resign [higher pleasures] for *any* quantity of the other pleasure *of which their nature is capable*."[140] Indeed, in order for the competent judge's preference to hold any definitive weight, it cannot be subject to unanticipated magnitudes of lower pleasures. Such contingency must be unthinkable, which explains why Mill goes so far as to say that "it is an *unquestionable* fact that those who are equally acquainted with, and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying, both [pleasures], do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties."[141] The "unquestionability" that Mill attributes to this preference suggests that its correctness is not a matter of inductive generalization, but one of unconditional *necessity*. And yet, to the extent that this preference can only be established under first hand acquaintance with the values in question, the competent judge's preference is an essentially experiential judgment. That is to say, whether Mill himself would accept the terminology or not, the preference of the competent judge looks for all the world like a material *a priori* judgment from the experience of phenomenological facts. To apply a Schelerian analysis to the foregoing: Just as one has material *a priori* insight into the fact that the same patch cannot be red and green at the same time, the "competent judge" is able to see on the basis of non-formal *a priori* intuition that the value of pleasure *cannot* be preferred

[140] *Mill* Utilitarianism *II*
[141] ibid.

over the values of dignity, and *ipso facto* that the values of dignity are higher than the value of pleasure.

Now, the upshot of all of this is not that either Mill or Scheler were finally right about which values were higher than any others. Perhaps neither were adequately acquainted with the values in question. Rather, the main insight here is that the phenomenon of preference is ineluctable in evaluative experience. Values can and do present themselves to us as being higher or lower, which means that our experiences provide a meaningful sense to the idea of a value hierarchy to which our datable preferences correspond. And what seems right about the Schelerian reading of Mill's competent judge is that whether our determinations of value rankings are accurate or inaccurate, these determinations are made *phenomenologically*, by acquaintance with the value experiences themselves.

For this reason, little else can be done to confirm or deny the competent judge's verdict than to direct our adequate and competent attention to the phenomenological facts. As Scheler puts the point: "as is the case with all basic value-phenomena...all that can be requested is that one attend to seeing precisely what is immediately experienced." However, provided that we are adequately acquainted with the values in question, our experience of value preference cannot be mistaken, anymore than we can be mistaken about the impossibility of a redgreen patch upon granting our adequate acquaintance with each color type. On this score, the evaluative intuitionist can find common cause with the appeal to self-evidence in mathematics. In the latter case, we do often do not take our inability to provide a non-circular argument for elementary mathematical propositions to count as an objection. As Justin Clarke-Doane (2002) claims, "It is hard to see how one might argue, on epistemological grounds, for moral antirealism while maintaining commitment to

mathematical realism [...] mathematical propositions do not seem to be "provable" or "self-evident" in any interesting sense in which moral propositions do not."[142] If we accept the appeal to self-evidence in one domain of inquiry, we should have a principled reason to deny it in any other.

One important line of objection against the analogy with self-evident mathematical intuition can be raised on the basis of disagreement. As Leiter (2009) claims: "[P]ersistent disagreement on foundational questions, of course, distinguishes moral theory from inquiry in the sciences and mathematics, not, perhaps, in kind, but certainly in degree."[143] It would be one thing, so this line of thinking goes, if our putatively self-evident moral judgments exhibited the same degree of cross-cultural and progressive convergence as mathematical judgments. But the fact that moral inquiry doesn't enjoy anywhere near this level of consensus undermines the analogy.

In response to objections of this kind, the perceptualist intuitionist has the resources to deflate the apparent severity of disagreement in moral inquiry on two fronts. First, there is reason to expect a context-sensitivity that is operative in the case of moral judgments that would not apply to the objects of mathematical knowledge, thereby complicating straightforward comparative assessments of consensus across fields of inquiry. Along these lines, it is possible that many ostensible disagreements in moral judgment can be explained away by virtue of contextually variable yet equally legitimate applications of more basic moral intuitions over which there is clear widespread agreement—in which case the disagreement would be merely apparent. Second, even in cases where there is a genuine disagreement, this

[142] Clarke-Doane (2002) p. 238-255
[143] Leiter (2009) p. 132

could be the result of illegitimate inferential or deliberative applications of more epistemically basic moral intuitions over which there is nevertheless convergence. On either count, investigating the sources of divergence in moral judgments may actually reveal widespread agreement over more foundational moral intuitions.

To give an example that could potentially be in keeping with either explanation, the Inuit practice of engaging in infanticide, however controversial, might actually demonstrate cross-cultural agreement in the self-evident value of human life. In such cases, divergence in beliefs about the moral permissibility of infanticide can either be a product of (a) contextual variation in legitimate applications of more basic moral intuitions over which there is a general consensus, in which case the disagreement is only apparent, or (b) in cases where the disagreement is genuine, the illegitimate application of more epistemically basic moral intuitions over which there is indeed a consensus. With respect to the latter point, Clarke-Doane argues that when we draw a distinction in the domain of mathematical inquiry between more basic intuitions (e.g. "1+1=2") and far reaching theoretical applications (e.g. Axiom of Choice; Successor Axiom etc.), there is significant evidence that a similar degree of disagreement is present in the case of mathematics. Putting Clarke-Doane's point in another way, I submit that the apparent difference in consensus between mathematical and ethical inquiry is deflated when we compare unsurprising mathematical claims (e.g. "1+1=2") with commensurately unsurprising moral claims—for example, "It is sometimes permissible to breathe"; "Pleasure is *ceteris paribus* better than pain," etc. When we move from such trivial claims to more inferentially complex moral theorems, such as the doctrines of double effect or negative responsibility, as well as their denials, we can expect that disagreement will correlate with inferential complexity, just as it does in the domain of mathematical inquiry.

To this last point, when compared to the intellectualist intuitionist, the affective perceptualist is uniquely well-suited to reconcile disagreement in moral discourse with an intuitionist model of self-evidence. Only values and value-relations are intuitively given facts on this model, not the concepts, propositions, or general principles that may be founded upon them. Values, as Scheler claims, "are not simple conceptual terms [...] In correctly determining a value, it never suffices to attempt to derive it from characteristics and properties which do not belong to the sphere of value-phenomena. The value itself always must be intuitively given or must refer back to that kind of givenness."[144] It follows from this that discursively generated moral propositions are derivative forms of moral cognition whose fulfillment and justification are always inferred from and refer back to the self-evidence of values. Unlike purely logical inferences, then, which mediate through homogenous contents, moral inferences from intuitively given value facts to propositional moral knowledge must move across distinct modalities of representation. In this way, error in moral beliefs can be seen as a natural by-product of conceptualizing and discursive operations. For one, inferential generalizations from concretely given facts (e.g. pain is a negative value; other persons have value, etc.) to derived theoretical hypotheses depend upon a joint-carving conceptual layout of the world, and are thereby liable to imprecise determinations of non-moral categories and facts (e.g. whether animals experience pain; whether a fetus is a person, etc.). Moreover, the inferential process linking a foundational proposition to other propositions is liable to a number of illegitimate influences, such as uncritically adopted background beliefs and bad faith rationalizations born of *ressentiment*.

[144] *FE* 14

Of course, even if we find points of cross-cultural agreement, this consensus in moral belief does not entail that these beliefs are true. To this point, as both Scheler and Mill acknowledge, it is certainly possible for one to be deceived in their evaluative judgments insofar as they are not adequately or competently acquainted with the higher values in question. But if this is possible, one might ask, how can we distinguish a genuine intuition of values and their rank of order from a value deception? To this end, how can we be sure that the putatively objective order of preference is not actually a fictive construct generated by practically advantageous conventions or adaptive evolutionary mechanisms? In response to these questions, I turn now to consider genealogical debunking arguments against intuitions, as well as the failure of an existing attempt to defeat them. I close by sketching the unique prospects for defeating debunking arguments on a phenomenological model of intuitionism.

4. Intuition, Debunking, and Dispensability: From Rational Indispensability to Phenomenological Indispensability

Evolutionary debunking arguments against intuitionism generally take their cue from a "causal sensitivity" variation on Mackie's classic argument from epistemological queerness. If our ordinary perceptions and beliefs are generally thought to be sensitive to causal influences, and if moral intuitions make reference to causally inefficacious objects or properties, then, as Mackie claims, "If we were aware of [objective values], it would have to be by some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else." Given that we can furnish alternative explanations of our having the beliefs we do that don't require the postulation of queer faculties, then it might be thought that we ought to prefer those explanations that comport

better with our natural scientific worldview. Among others, Sharon Street has argued that anti-objectivist accounts can better accommodate the influence of non-truth tracking causal forces of adaptive selection on our moral beliefs. As Street claims:

> [A]s a purely conceptual matter...normative truths might be anything....Noting this sense in which the normative truth might be anything, and noting the role of...[adaptive] forces in shaping the content of our basic normative tendencies, we may wonder whether...these forces would have led us to...the...normative truth...Unfortunately for the realist...to explain why human beings tend to make the normative judgments that we do, we do not need to suppose that these judgments are true. Rather, all we need to suppose is that making these normative judgments (or rather "proto" versions of them) got us to act in ways that tended to promote reproductive success.[145]

According to Street, if adaptive forces would ensure that we would have had the same basic moral beliefs even if they were false, then the truth of our moral beliefs would not only be unnecessary, but uncanny: "[T]he realist must hold that an astonishing [inexplicable] coincidence took place—claiming that as a matter of sheer luck...[causal] pressures affected our evaluative attitudes in such a way that they just happened to land on or near the true normative views among all the conceptually possible ones."[146] Now, Street's account is directed toward moral beliefs, not experiences, and at first glance might not appear to pose a challenge for a perceptualist account of moral intuitions according to which evaluative facts and properties are presented to us in experience. However, insofar as it is plausible that every successful evaluative perception has a phenomenally indiscriminable counterpart—e.g. a hallucination—the debunker could claim that we don't need to suppose

[145] Street (2008) p. 209
[146] Street (2006) p. 208-209

that there really are such evaluative facts in order to explain why we have the evaluative experiences we do.

Applying Street's debunking argument to evaluative experience, we get the following: (i) It may be the case that we have the evaluative experiences we do—say, as if some object in the world possesses some value property—insofar as organisms disposed to having these experiences are more successful at reproducing than organisms that did not have these experiences. (ii) However, even if the moral facts had been altogether different, so this argument would claim, then to the extent that the same adaptive-selective mechanisms would be in place, our evaluative experiences would have likewise remained the same: e.g. evaluative experiences of the world could be merely advantageous *hallucinations*. (iii) Since we cannot rule out the influence of non-truth-tracking adaptive forces on our evaluative experiences, then even if our experiences *were* veridical, their reason-giving force is undermined. In that case, it would have to be by some uncanny coincidence that our evaluative phenomenology really was veridical.

Debunking arguments are especially attractive to the parsimonious and naturalistically inclined. One vulnerability of debunking arguments, however, is that they would apply equally well to a form of realism that is often assumed to be exempt from debunking worries, and indeed one to which the debunker herself is arguably committed—namely, mathematical realism. On a realist interpretation, mathematical inquiry also relies on self-evident intuitions about causally inert objects and properties, and a classic problem in the philosophy of mathematics—namely, Benacerraf's challenge—is the apparent difficulty of explaining the reliability of such intuitions: Hartry Field gives the clearest expression of this challenge:

> We start out by assuming the existence of mathematical entities that obey the standard mathematical theories; we grant also that there may be positive reasons for believing in those entities [...] Benacerraf's challenge [...] is to [...] explain how our beliefs about these remote entities can so well reflect the facts about them [...] [I]f it appears in principle impossible to explain this, then that tends to undermine the belief in mathematical entities, despite whatever reason we might have for believing in them.[147]

Mackie's epistemological queerness objection against intuitionism looks for all the world like a direct application of Benacerraf's challenge to ethical inquiry. But if reliability worries on the basis of queerness should hold against the notion of self-evident intuition in moral inquiry, then mathematical intuition should suffer from the same vulnerability to debunking. However, this is often not taken to be the case. As Hillary Putnam (2004) observes: "[A]rguments for "antirealism" in ethics are virtually identical with arguments for antirealism in the philosophy of mathematics; yet philosophers who resist those arguments in the latter case often capitulate in the former."[148]

To be sure, pointing to the complicity of mathematical inquiry does nothing in itself to resolve the initial epistemological concerns raised against ethical intuitionism. While there may be similar degrees of agreement across domains of inquiry, this does nothing to show that these agreed upon intuitions are safe from debunking worries. However, if there are grounds to think that mathematical intuitions share similar justificatory burdens as moral intuitions, then there are grounds to think that moral objectivism might also benefit from analogous strategies used to defend mathematical realism. To give one example: The

[147] Field (1989) p. 26
[148] Putnam (2004) p. 1

indispensability of the contents of our mathematical beliefs for any explanation of our having such beliefs is often taken to exempt mathematical realism from the foregoing genealogical defeaters—otherwise known as the Quine-Putnam Indispensibility thesis. Consider Putnam (1971):

> [Q]uantification over mathematical entities is indispensable for [empirical] science...therefore we should accept such quantification; but this commits us to accepting the existence of the mathematical entities [that satisfy our theories, realistically construed]. This type of argument stems, of course, from Quine, who has for years stressed...the intellectual dishonesty of denying the existence of what one daily presupposes.[149]

Following this strategy, recent attempts have been made to show that *moral* facts exhibit a similar kind of rational indispensability, thereby warranting the moral realist a similar exemption from such skeptical defeaters. For instance, David Enoch has argued that the stipulation of robust normative facts is indispensable to the rationally non-optional activity of deliberation. Enoch formulates his argument as follows:

(1) If something is instrumentally indispensable to an intrinsically indispensable (rationally non-optional) project, then we are (epistemically) justified (for that very reason) in believing that that thing exists.

(2) The deliberative project is intrinsically indispensable (rationally non-optional)

(3) Irreducibly normative truths are instrumentally indispensable to the deliberative project.

(4) Therefore, we are epistemically justified in believing that there are irreducibly normative truths.[150]

[149] Putnam (1971) p. 347
[150] Enoch (2011) p. 83

One the face of it, Enoch's argument promises to convert the ubiquity and inescapability of evaluative deliberation in our daily lives into a knock-down argument for moral realism. If some rationally non-optional activity requires the stipulation of moral facts, then, by appeal to reflective equilibrium, we are rationally justified in believing that such facts exist. However, Enoch's argument for (1) and (3) actually turns out to be an argument for the indispensability of *belief* in irreducibly normative facts, not the indispensability of the actual *existence* of such facts. Call this the indispensability of belief version of the indispensability argument—or IAB—which is to be distinguished from an argument in which the actual existence or obtaining of some normative or evaluative *fact* is taken to be indispensable to some rationally non-optional activity—or IAF.

While a suitably articulated version of IAF may indeed block against evolutionary debunking, the IAB is vulnerable to evolutionary debunking *even if* it is successful in showing that *belief* in robust normative facts is rationally non-optional. For the rational indispensability of belief in normative facts is logically consistent with an anti-realist genealogy of our coming to have those beliefs. Adaptive forces could have selected for organisms who are constitutionally predisposed to practical deliberation, insofar as the latter involves a codification of advantageous attitudes into action-guiding policies. Such organisms would be inescapably prone to deliberation. If we grant that belief in irreducibly normative facts is indispensable to the rationally non-optional activity of deliberation, then the reflective equilibrium of such deliberatively predisposed organisms may force them to hold a belief in the existence of normative facts, and this even if no such facts exist. In such cases, skeptical debunking arguments can accommodate the rationally non-optional status of *belief* in normative facts, while maintaining the advantage of ontological and explanatory

parsimony over realist accounts by withholding assent to the existence of *truthmakers* for such beliefs. Reflective equilibrium may rationally require that we hold a belief even if that belief is not true.

Now, notably, this type of response to Enoch-style indispensability arguments would permit a particularly striking consequence. In the event that deliberation is rationally non-optional, the debunker who rejects moral facts is forced to accept that she *cannot believe* her own theory. As Leng (2016) notes, the error theorist who concedes the rational non-optionality of deliberation appears to be claiming, "'Well yes, I do believe that there are such truths, but I don't *believe* them,'" which, Leng claims, "is simply contradictory." However, in response to worries of this kind, Streumer (2013) has argued that while it may be the case that error theory can't be believed, this does nothing to show that it is *false*. As Streumer (2013) claims:

> It is clearly not a problem for a theory if we do not believe it. So why should it be a problem for a theory if we *cannot* believe it? Just as a theory can be true if we do not believe it, a theory can also be true if we cannot believe it. Of course, if we cannot believe a theory, we cannot sincerely say that this theory is true. But our inability to sincerely say that a theory is true does nothing to show that it is false.[151]

Building on Streumer's account, if we allow that deliberation may be inescapable only with respect to certain circumstances within a human life—something Enoch himself acknowledges as possible—the debunker can argue that there might be a contextual scope on believability that mitigates some disadvantages on this front. For example, error theory might only be unbelievable when we are actively engaged in rationally non-optional moral

[151] Streumer (2013) p. 194-212

deliberation. Likewise, moral realism might only be rationally non-optional when we are so engaged. In any case, the debunker need not actually accept the rational non-optionality of deliberation. The point is rather that the conjunction of rationally non-optional moral belief and error theory constitutes logical space, and that IAB therefore cannot serve as a blockade against evolutionary debunking worries. Furthermore, even if successful in establishing justification for belief, rational indispensability arguments do not resolve the challenge of explaining how our intuitions themselves are non-accidentally veridical. If we have moral knowledge on the basis of intuition, then the argument from rational indispensability does not explain this fact.

While Enoch's case misses the mark, it does get us in the ballpark of a better strategy. Consider the version of the indispensability argument that Enoch's argument comes close to advancing but doesn't quite reach, namely, the argument that it is not just the *belief in* but the actual *existence of* some evaluative fact that is indispensable to some ineluctable aspect of our ethical life. To this end I contend that genealogical debunking could be blocked if there were reason to think that the existence of some evaluative facts were in some way indispensable to any explanation of our having the evaluative experiences we do. Call this the argument from phenomenological indispensability. The challenge for any argument from phenomenological indispensability is also its winning strategy: that is, to explain how our experiences can guarantee the existence of evaluative facts even if they are subject to non-truth tracking causation, such as adaptive forces that select for evolutionarily advantageous hallucinations.

Consider, once again, our achromatic subject. Now imagine that an evil demon grants the achromat the gift of color experience, only to deliver her to a series of

hallucinations of colored objects. During her chromatic hallucinations, our newly color-capable subject has experiences *as if of* colored objects, and these experiences are phenomenally indiscriminable from the experiences had by a veridically perceiving subject. Yet nothing in the world with those color properties is instantiated. Can our former achromat come to know anything about color through these hallucinations? It seems plausible to say that she can. After all, if released from her hallucinations and set free to enjoy the colored objects of the actual world, she would possess a new set of discriminatory capacities. She would encounter, in the actual world, objects with properties she would be able to recognize from her hallucinatory experiences. But if something is known about color, then this entails that there is a truth or fact known. And yet how can this be the case if all of her experiences are hallucinatory? John Bengson (2015) attempts to address this problem through the analogous case of "Trip":

> Trip has never before encountered the colors red, orange, or blue. Nor has he ever encountered any elliptical, circular, or hexagonal shapes. Then, one evening, Trip has an experience with the phenomenal character of the experience had when viewing a red ellipse labeled 'I,' an orange circle labeled 'II,' and a blue hexagon labeled 'III'...As it happens, Trip is not actually viewing these things: rather, he is unwittingly the subject of a spontaneous, vivid, hallucinatory experience.[152]

Bengson claims that upon undergoing the experience, Trip would be able to possess knowledge of the following facts:

> [α] The color of I resembles the color of II more than the color of III.

[152] Bengson (2015) p. 13

[β] The shape of I resembles the shape of II more than the shape of III.

In order to explain how Trip's hallucination can be a source of knowledge of α and β, Bengson advances a form of naïve realism, according to which our experiences can serve as sources of knowledge about objects insofar as they are *constituted* by those objects: "[An] experience as if p is non-accidentally correct, hence able to serve as a source of knowledge that p, *because it is partly constituted by the fact that p.*[153]" On this account, Trip can know α and β insofar as objects possessing those properties are, quite literally, a proper part of the experience. As Bengson claims: "Trip's hallucinatory experience is non-accidentally correct, hence able to serve as a source of knowledge about the relevant colors and shapes, because it is partly constituted by those colors and shapes...[P]art of *what it is* for Trip's hallucinatory experience to exist is for those very colors and shapes...to exist."[154]

Now, what makes Trip's experience a hallucination on Bengson's account is the fact that I, II, and III are taken to be denizens of the actual world when in fact they are not—in other words, the experience is not constituted by the actual world objects that it presumed to be about. Thus, even if we were to suppose that there happened to be objects in the actual world *the successful veridical perception of which is indiscriminable from Trip's experience*, his experience could not provide knowledge about these objects: "A veridical sensory hallucination that p is unable to serve as a source of knowledge that p *because it is not constituted by the fact that p.*"[155] And yet insofar as I, II, and III, as non-actual world objects possessing the color and shape

[153] Bengson (2015) p. 24
[154] ibid. 21
[155] ibid. 27

properties in question, are indeed a proper part of the experience, then Trip's experience enables him to know things about the properties of these objects and their resemblance relations.

If successful, Bengson's proposal would provide a model of phenomenological indispensability that we could put to use in the evaluative domain. On this account, the existence of certain facts about some domain *D* are indispensable to our having the *D*-experiences we do, and this insofar as certain *D*-facts are *proper constituents* of *D*-experiences themselves. On the face of it, there is something attractive about this picture. It seems extremely plausible to say that Trip at least knows *something* about the colors and shapes in question. Moreover, insofar as Trip's experience fails to make contact with objects in the actual world, it seems plausible that this knowledge must have something to do with the nature of the experience itself.

The problem with Bengson's naïve realist account, however, is that it entails that an experience can only provide knowledge about some fact p when it is both (i) *as if of p,* and also (ii) constituted by the fact that p. However, when both (i) and (ii) are satisfied, the experience in question is no longer a hallucination, but a case of *successful veridical perception*. For example, if the objects I, II, and III specified in α and β are understood as actual world objects, then Trip's experience *as if of* α and β cannot be a source of knowledge of α and β, as it is not constituted by the facts specified in α and β. On the other hand, if the objects I, II, and III specified in α and β are just the non-actual world objects as they are tokened in Trip's experience, then Trip's experience *as if of* α and β is no longer a hallucination of actual world objects and facts about their resemblance relations, but a successful veridical perception of *different objects and different facts*—namely, the merely apparently actual objects

that populate Trip's experience, and facts about *their* resemblance relations. However, in seeing I, II, or III *as a non-actual or merely apparently actual object,* the experience would no longer qualify as a hallucination. Walter Hopp (2011) makes this point in the course of mounting a series of forceful objections against relational and naïve realist views of perception:

> If the intentional object of a hallucinatory experience were a mere appearance, then the hallucination would be a perfectly veridical perception of a mere appearance. And in taking things to be as they appear, one would take an appearance to be as it appears, and be right...To be aware of something that exists as that thing is the very furthest thing from error.[156]

By the naïve realist's own lights, if a hallucination can put one in a position to know some fact p, this cannot be explained by supposing that the experience is *as if* p and also constituted by the fact p: for in that case, it would not be a hallucination. At the same time, however, if we remove either constraint (i) or (ii) on a given experience with respect to some fact p, then by the naïve realists own lights, we are not in a position to know anything about p through that experience. For a given experience *E as if p,* if the experience presents itself *as if of* actual world object *O*, but *E* is instead constituted by phenomenally indiscriminable non-actual world object *O'*, then this experience *E as if of actual world object O* is not correct, and thus, on Bengson's account, cannot be a source of knowledge that p. If, however, the experience *E as if p* presents itself as if of non-actual object *O'* and *E* is indeed constituted by *O'*, then the experience *E as if of non-actual world object O'* is non-accidentally correct, and thus not a hallucination. If a hallucination*, qua hallucination,* can put us in a position to know

[156] Hopp (2011) p. 155

something, an adequate explanation for this cannot consist in its being partly constituted by some fact.

Furthermore, even if we understand Trip's experience of non-actual objects as a successful veridical perception, Bengon's naïve realist account fails to take adequate inventory of what Trip is in a position to know from this experience. For according to Bengon's account, an experience cannot put one in a position to know some fact unless it is partly constituted by that fact. But this entails that what Trip knows through his experience are only facts about the resemblance relations between I, II, and III. But that would grossly understate the knowledge that Trip is in a position to have through his experience. If Trip is in a position to know the resemblance relations for non-actual objects I, II, and III, then it seems he is also in a position to know the resemblance relations for *all* propertied objects sufficiently similar to I, II, and III, whether or not those objects populate Trip's experience. As Hopp puts the point:

> If I have a hallucination that is indistinguishable from a perception of my new couch fitting through my doorway, then I am in a position to know that my couch will fit through my doorway. Nothing, however, instantiates the properties that are made manifest to me in such an experience. There isn't a little mental couch somewhere fitting through a little mental doorway....nor is there another immaterial couch out there fitting through an immaterial doorway. I have a veridical experience of uninstantiated sense-perceptible properties. What makes my experience an error, a hallucination, is that, unlike an imagination, it presents those properties as though they are instantiated in some particular objects – *those* particular objects, in fact – and there are no such objects.[157]

[157] Hopp (2011) p. 188

Following Husserl, on Hopp's account, experiences can be sources of knowledge insofar as they have intuitive contents that present things as being a certain way. These intuitive contents not only present a certain distribution of objects, but also possible ways these objects can be—in other words, they can present *properties* of these objects. As Hopp points out in the passage above, these properties and facts about them can be made evident irrespective of their actual instantiation in the objects in which they are presented as inhering. For example, in having the veridical hallucination as if of his couch fitting through the door, Hopp is in a position to know facts about the properties of his couch and his doorway that he might not have otherwise known; in having a hallucination of a flute playing centaur, I can see the properties that would have to be instantiated for my experience to be veridical. In this way, *pace* Bengson, what makes my hallucination a source of knowledge is precisely *not* that it is composed of some instantiated propertied object, but indeed that it makes me aware of *something that does not depend for its givenness upon its being instantiated in any object at all*, whether in the actual world or as some kind of non-actual mental or immaterial object. For in turning towards some object presented as having some property, even in a hallucination, I am now in a position to see the *property itself*. This not only enables me to know things about that property insofar as it inheres in objects similar to those presented in my experience, but also insofar as it is in principle multiply realizable in a number of other possible objects, and indeed insofar as it is in principle detachable from *any* object. That is to say, a hallucination, as in perception and imagination alike, enables me to grasp the *essence* of a property.

Suppose right now I am enjoying the experience *as if of* a spot of green paint on my desk. While enjoying this experience, I begin to attend to the unique color of the paint spot,

and I decide I should like to create a paint color matching it. I begin mixing my paints with this green color in sight. Yet through some mistake I end up with a color altogether different than this green color I have in sight— I end up with something looking more like *red*. I know that this botched paint color is wrong, because I know what my new paint would have to look like if it were like the color I see before me. After all, I *see* the property that my new paint would have to possess. Now suppose this experience *as if of* a green spot of paint on my desk is a hallucination. Or on second thought, don't. Suppose it is a veridical perception. Or, suppose it is alternately a hallucination and a veridical perception. None of this alters my ability to know that the paint I have produced is wrong. Regardless of whether the green paint exists as presented, whether it is presented as an actual world object or as a non-actual world object, or whether it is a proper part of my experience in each case, through all of these variations in constitution and correctness, there is something which I am undoubtedly in a position to grasp. Namely, the unique green color at hand, not just as a property of the putative paint spot on my desk, but also as a multiply realizable property, a property that I am aiming to approximate in creating a new paint, and indeed a property that could in principle belong to a number of color-bearing objects. That is to say, I am able to grasp the *essence* of the unique green color in question. The fact that I am hallucinating does nothing to undermine my ability to grasp this color essence through this experience. For what it is to be that green color is immediately given just in virtue of having the experience. As Husserl claims in a 1907 lecture: "It is senseless to question and to doubt what the essence of red is...provided that, while one is seeing red and grasping in terms of its specific kind, one means by the word "red" exactly what is grasped and seen....We grasp it – there it is; there is

what we mean, the species red. Could a divine being, an infinite intellect, to grasp the essence of red than to see it as a universal?"[158]

No failure of my experience to refer to some instantiated object can make it the case that I am mistaken about what it is for something to possess the color in question. Even if there is nothing in the actual world that possesses these properties, I cannot be mistaken about what it would mean for the world to comport with my experience as if of red and green objects: for this is available to me simply in virtue of having the experience. In this way, epistemically speaking, a hallucination provides the material for the grasping of essences in the same way that the tokening of intuitive content in imagination does. When I imagine the color properties of red and green by tokening some imagistic content, my ability to see that these properties cannot be co-extensive does not depend upon the existence of any objects in which I might imagine them inhering. Likewise, when I hallucinate a set of red objects, upon reflective attention, the phenomenal property of 'being red' uniting the class of red objects manifested in hallucination is also self-posing. Upon reflection, when I compare my hallucination of a green shape and my hallucination of a red shape, I can attend to the way each is manifested in experience. In doing so, I find phenomenal properties presented as inhering in some object, properties that can be grasped as multiply instantiable apart from the existence of the object in which they are presented as inhering. For example, while I may have hallucinated a red star and green circle, I can imaginatively vary these properties, and imagine a red circle and green star. Furthermore, I can also grasp the modal

[158] Husserl *The Idea of Phenomenology* Lecture IV

relationships between these properties, and see that for all possible worlds, the same thing cannot be both green and red at the same time.

The upshot of this is that I can come to know essential truths about colors and their necessary interrelationships and incompatibilities even if every prior experience of colored objects I have ever had was a hallucination. While I can be mistaken about whether anything possessing those properties is instantiated in the actual world, I cannot be mistaken that something shows up for me *as red,* and thus what it is for *any other thing* to be that color is made immediately evident to me in virtue of having the experience. Thus, while we may be systematically deceived about whether there are objects in the world that possess the phenomenal properties that our experiences present them as having, we cannot be mistaken about our grasping the essence of these properties themselves as they are afforded in experience. No error in experience can make it the case that there is nothing it is for something to be green, nor can an error make it the case that something can be presented to me as red and green. As such, this knowledge is immune to debunking considerations about the causal genesis of our experiences, as my adequate intuition of my experience *as if of* red or green objects doesn't depend upon the instantiation of objects possessing those properties. To have the experience as if of green or red objects in the world already necessitates that the color properties of being red and being green are ideal possibilities for some possible objects of consciousness, and, moreover, that the essence of what it is to be green precludes the possibility that the same thing can be given as both red and green at once. In this way, essential facts about color properties and their interrelationships are indispensable to our experiences having the phenomenology they do. That is, they are *phenomenologically indispensable.*

With this model of phenomenological indispensability in hand, I'd like to close by sketching a strategy that the intuitionist can take in order to argue for the indispensability of moral facts to any explanation of our having the evaluative experiences we do.

Imagine a subject incapable of tokening affective content, and thus incapable of having evaluative experiences, whether these be simple perceptions of concrete states of affairs in the world or imaginative evaluative intuitions of possible states of affairs. Now suppose that an evil demon endows our heretofore feeling-blind subject with the capacity for evaluative experience, yet at the same time delivers this subject to a series of hallucinations spanning the affective spectrum, from experiences of being tortured and vistas of wanton killing, to experiences of ecstatic joy, natural beauty, and parental love. These experiences are indiscriminable from veridical evaluative perceptions of these states of affairs. Yet nothing in the world possessing these evaluative properties is instantiated.

Does the newly feeling-capable subject come to know anything about values? If the question is interpreted as a question about how things are, evaluatively speaking, in the actual world, then it seems we must remain skeptical. For the experiences in question present certain evaluative properties as inhering in certain objects in the world, and what makes these experiences an *error* is precisely the fact that the objects and properties are *not* instantiated as presented. However, if the question is whether those hallucinatory experiences enable the subject to know necessary evaluative and moral truths that must hold for all possible worlds, then the answer is that they do.

Consider experiences of pain and suffering. Imagine that after submitting our feeling-capable subject to the hallucination *as if of* her arm being severed with a blunt implement, complete with all of the painful interoceptive sensations and feelings of fear and

panic this involves, the demon then subjects her to a hallucination *as if of* a world in which affectless automata inflict the same torture on young children. While none of the evaluative properties are instantiated as presented, our subject is in a position to know evaluative truths. For in attending to the world as it is given in experience, she can attend to the disvalue of pain and suffering itself, and consider these properties in abstraction from the objects in which they are presented as inhering. In doing so, she can see that, for any possible state of affairs, pain and suffering for its own sake is immanently disvaluable, such that to token an instance of pain is *ipso facto* to token something of negative value. Thus, while there may be no children in pain, she would be in a position to know that a certain set of evaluative properties *would* obtain in the world if her experience were veridical. Furthermore, in attending to the essences of certain negative values, she can also consider these value essences in relation to other value kinds. All else being equal, if we were to compare the experience of wanton torture to the range of experiences afforded by the demon's phantasmagoria, we would *a priori* disbelieve anyone who claimed that pain and suffering for its own sake was not objectively dispreferable to at least some possible world in which there are other values besides. Thus, in having the experiences in question, the subject would not only be in a position to know hypothetical truths about the world as presented, but truths that must obtain for all possible worlds. For instance, she would be able to see that, ceteris paribus, a world consisting of pain and suffering for its own sake is dispreferable to a world in which pain and suffering finds its end in happiness and joy.

As in the case of my intuition of color essences and their interrelations, none of these evaluative insights are subject to defeat by debunking worries about the etiology and veridicality of our experiences, as none of them depend upon the instantiation of objects

possessing the evaluative properties in question. By virtue of the fact that our experiences present objects *as if* they possessed evaluative features, we can grasp these evaluative properties and their necessary interrelations apart from any object. Thus, whether I hallucinate the disvalue of pain and suffering or only imagine it, in either case I can see what something would have to be in order to instantiate the evaluative property as presented, in the same way that I can see what property something would have to possess in order to instantiate the hallucinated color of the spot on my desk. Furthermore, my experience as if some value not only puts me in a position to grasp the essence of particular values, but also the modal relationships that hold between them. In the same way that one can come to know through a hallucination that the same thing cannot be simultaneously red and green, I can see that for all possible worlds and all possible value-bearing states of affairs, pleasure is *ceteris paribus* better than pain. These eidetic intuitions hold for all possible value-bearing objects, whether objects given only as imaginary, or objects presented as being instantiated in the world, and they hold even if nothing of value has ever been instantiated.

For all the reasons noted, debunking concerns about the causal etiology and veridicality of our experiences cannot pose doubt for this kind of intuition. Once I have the relevant experiences, I cannot be mistaken about the disvalue of pain and suffering, nor that pleasure is *ceteris paribus* better than pain and suffering, nor that *if* my experience as if of a world of ceaseless wanton torture were veridical, then something disvaluable would be instantiated in the world. For I could not have these experiences were it not for the fact that there is a unique class of ideal properties, namely values, and that these properties stand in necessary relations to each other such that some are objectively lower than others. These are

necessary evaluative truths that are indispensable to our having the evaluative phenomenology we do.

In closing, it will likely be objected that granting phenomenological indispensability would commit us to a metaphysically queer picture, as we must posit the existence of an ontological realm distinct from the actual world in which such essential facts subsist. For if I can come to know the *a priori* nature of values apart from my ever coming into contact with some way the world actually is, then, one might ask, in what sense does this truth obtain?

One possible response is to absorb the charge of queerness altogether. If our best theories, and indeed our only intelligible theories, require us to expand our ontology in order to accommodate indispensable theoretical posits, then explanatory parsimony should not come at the cost of theoretical coherence, nor at the erasure and obliteration of the phenomena that we are attempting to understand. Queerness, we might say, can only be an objection if nothing in the world were ever queer. On the other hand, we might resist the idea that the stipulation of value essences commits us to positing an ontological realm distinct from the evaluative experiences with which were already familiar, or we might at least deflate the metaphysical commitments involved in drawing an ontological distinction between value essences and their instances. Finally, on a so-called "mysterian" reading, it may be claimed that neither explanation will succeed, and that the metaphysical grounding of value essences remains a necessarily insoluble problem due to the impossibility of explaining what conscious experience is, let alone how there can be ideal essences pertaining to it. On this front, however, the mysterian predicament cannot be thought to pose a special problem for evaluative phenomena, as it redounds to our capacity to be intentionally directed to *any* possible propertied object of experience, whether a concrete individual like a red house or

abstracta like numbers and ideal shapes. In this way, the mystery of our knowledge of values is just the mystery of our knowledge of essences, and the mystery of our knowledge of essences is just the mystery of our knowledge of the world.

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