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Empathy for education: a naturalist utilitarian argument

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Abstract

In this work I argue that opportunities exist to develop frameworks for moral or empathy education (hereafter EfE) more consistent with emerging understandings of the way we arrive at moral judgments. I argue that a rapidly evolving construal of moral judgment is more accurate than (still influential) rationalist accounts. The essence of this shifting perspective is a construal of moral judgment as characterised by (1) "primacy of affect" and (2) heightened emphasis on the socially embedded nature of moral judgments. While variously compatible with long established traditions in moral philosophy (particularly the moral sense theories of, *inter alia*, David Hume or Adam Smith) this distinct view of human moral nature is emerging across a range of empirical disciplines with renewed vigour and enhanced empirical support. Moral psychology and neuroscience play leading, but not exclusive, roles in this emphatically interdisciplinary process. Shifting paradigms in economics, anthropology, and moral psychology are converging on strikingly similar construals of human moral nature. I will argue that the potential of these insights to explain and justify particular approaches to teaching and learning have yet to be fully exploited in contemporary moral education discourse. It will be argued that encouraging the development of dispositional empathy in learners is a choice-worthy and attainable goal of EfE. EfE approaches used to elicit affective/empathic responses and social reflection, such as moral life narrative and other storytelling techniques, comport with emerging views of moral experience and judgment. It is argued that these approaches are, therefore, potentially more effective than rationality-centred systems given a goal of increased dispositional empathy.

1.1. The core argument

This thesis makes an interdisciplinary argument for empathy as a core normative foundation for moral education. Specifically, I argue that there is now sufficient evidence for educators to reconsider approaches to the teaching of morality and character; this evidence supports a deeply social and affect-led view of moral cognition. My research suggests that the dominant discourse and practice in contemporary moral education, issuing from an essentially rationalist construal of our moral nature and tending to focus on various moral virtues, is both conceptually vague and based on an increasingly outmoded understanding of the manner in which moral decisions are actually made.

A central goal of this work is to explain why empathy is so important and why I believe educators can and should make greater use of rapidly emerging understandings of the way empathy develops, with a view to better understanding the possibility of amplifying empathic awareness and concern for others. Part of my argument builds on research suggesting that it is possible to increase dispositional empathy systematically. I accompany these general points on empathy development with a sustained argument that there is a compelling basis to explore the narrative based empathy for education (hereafter, EfE) approach I affirm in this thesis. It is not a goal of this work to present a comprehensive plan or developed curriculum for EfE. Rather, my goal is to suggest a foundation or justification for such a future endeavour.

This thesis is premised on a belief that moral education is both necessary and possible; I will deal with these two points separately. First of all, the frequency of media debate centred on values in education in the United Kingdom, for example, suggest that considerable public interest exists in some form of collective moral inquiry or formation. In Section 1.5 I describe the perceived "crisis" in moral education which, as Wringe (2006) and Purpel (1989) note, has been a persistent theme in moral education discourse.[1] The very notion of "crisis" in moral education is premised on the assumption that such education is worthwhile - however difficult it may be to achieve consensus on its specific goals and content.[2] The realist normative moral

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[1] The observation by Berkowitz and Oser (1985) that research in moral education is growing rapidly might also suggest that a significant component of the academic community are committed to at least increasing the prominence of moral education research within wider education discourse.

[2] Though it is beyond the scope of this work to engage with these arguments in a sustained fashion, recent research suggesting that empathy is in generational decline (de Souza, 2014; Konrath *et al.*, 2011) has been given considerable media attention and further stimulated discussion in this area.

foundation I defend in this work endorses the argument that some moral goals are normatively better than others. My argument that increasing empathy has utilitarian value entails that an educational programme which succeeds in increasing empathy may be considered more effective (all else equal) than one which fails in doing so.

Arguing that increasing empathy/utility is a worthwhile educational goal, and that this goal can actually be achieved, require different justifications. In this thesis I argue for both of these things; I will suggest that empathy/utility is a desirable educational goal and that it is indeed possible to make some progress in this respect. My arguments regarding the achievability of empathy education are primarily centred on my Chapter 6 discussion of affective primacy in moral cognition. Batson's 2011 Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (Section 6.12) is especially important in this regard. My experience in Cambodia suggested to me that it might be possible to develop empathy through moral life narrative engagement. The arguments of, *inter alia*, Batson (2011), Haidt (2012, 2011, 2007) and Greene (2013), which I discuss in Chapter 6, go some distance in providing what I feel is a credible, if partial, explanation of participant responses during the Phnom Penh workshop.

Even if one accepts that (empathy-centred) moral education is both necessary and possible, it is not immediately apparent that such a project must take place in schools. I work in a secondary school and spend most of my time thinking about how different experiences and practices can be integrated into that context. The workshop I describe (Section 1.3.2.) did not take place in a school context in either a curricular or physical respect; the idea for the workshop was the result of an independent student initiative and the workshop took place in a local community centre. However, although the type of education I describe need not necessarily happen in schools, it is certainly possible within a school context. It is likely that moral life narrative engagements could be integrated into established curricula time. Such engagements might, for example, take place in pastoral time set aside for social or citizenship education. Perhaps workshops could be established as extracurricular or after school sessions. There might be scope for moral life narrative engagement in history curricula. In any case, the specific context of these engagements is perhaps not their most important aspect. If there is sufficient justification to explore moral life narrative education further, then we would be well advised to explore its application in a variety of different learning contexts, both within and outside of schools.

I will now lay out the arguments of this thesis on a chapter-by-chapter basis and work to explain how they cohere into an argument about empathy and its potential in moral education. I will also establish the problem I work to address. Specifically, I suggest that there is some justification to claims of a "crisis" in moral education. I suggest that an important part of this alleged crisis is a tension between persistent public demand for some kind of moral education in schools, and a pervasive disagreement as to what form such education should assume. The connection between this discussion of "crisis" and my central concern with empathy and moral education is found in my argument that, while no normative value is uncontroversial, empathy may well be among the most workable of possible moral education foundations or central values.

I argue that the social and affective forces that apparently drive and describe much of our day-to-day moral decision-making can, to a degree, be harnessed and redirected through systematic engagement with narrative modes of education. I argue that a utilitarian normative foundation is more coherent and defensible than any particular inventory of moral virtues. I also argue that, among normative ethical theories, utilitarianism is the most consistent with the methods and findings of empirical moral psychology and associated disciplines.

This interest in the application of research from moral psychology to moral education (hereafter, ME) is not novel; I do not claim that relevant empirical research is absent from ME discourse;[3] I am, however, convinced that this engagement can be taken further. The discourses of ME continue to be more insular than they would be if we were making the most of the promising (and interdisciplinary) possibilities suggested by this newly reinforced view of our shared moral nature and the critical role empathy plays within it. The implication of my arguments is that a more dynamic dialogue between the discourses of moral education and moral psychology would be mutually beneficial and might suggest promising new directions for ME.

A relatively early priority in this thesis is to defend an ontological/epistemological foundation for the diverse lines of inquiry that follow; in Chapter 2 I articulate a pluralist naturalist framework amenable to both empirical and non-empirical accounts of empathy. In Chapter 3 I

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[3] Michael Slote (2010, 2007), in particular, has a nuanced appreciation of emerging empirical understandings in moral psychology and their relation to sentimentalist philosophical traditions.

argue for a form of moral realism which comports with this naturalist base and I consider the challenge of creating, "... a more satisfactory linkage of the empirical to the normative" (Railton, 1986: 163). In Chapters 4–5, I defend a normative utilitarian perspective, and then argue that through its power to stir altruistic motivation, empathy has normative value from a utilitarian point of view. In Chapter 6 I engage with empirical arguments from leading moral psychologists that collectively suggest that moral cognition is affect-led. Of central importance among these arguments is research by Batson (2011, 1997) and Batson *et al.* (2003) suggesting a positive correlation between affective empathy, exposure to evocative life narratives and altruistic motivation. In Chapter 7, I assess the argument that narrative has a particular power to nurture empathic understanding and concern through the development of what Nussbaum (2006) terms the "narrative imagination". Chapter 8 surveys divergent approaches to moral education and returns to the challenge of a perceived crisis in moral education. I suggest that such a crisis exists and argue that at its core is a confrontation of moral realist and relativist visions. In the same chapter, I suggest, from a realist point of view, that empathy is likely to be a relatively translatable ME value. In Chapter 9, I consider non-affective aspects of moral narrative and reflect on the use of narrative based abstraction and innuendo in facilitating learner construction and meaning.

Empathy, then, is the common thread running through each chapter. I work to provide a naturalist foundation for an account of empathy that endorses empirical research suggesting that empathy can be increased. I progress to a utilitarian normative justification of what I argue is the importance or value of empathy. I later explore (Section 6.12.) research suggesting that affect-led narrative is a primary catalyst of empathy. I argue that empathy, through its potential as a central value around which ME could converge, represents at least part of the answer to the perceived crisis in moral education I describe in this chapter.

I will not assess emerging arguments that empathy is positively correlated with, for example, academic success (Goleman and Senge, 2014); I construe empathy as valuable independent of any such (obviously welcome) correlates with academic success or other personal benefits. Indispensible to this work is the argument that empathy has innate, rather than merely instrumental, value. I do argue that moral narratives have a unique power to develop empathy, that there is a positive correlation between feelings of empathy and altruistic action (as argued by Batson, 2011, 1997; Batson *et al.*, 2003), and that altruistic action is consistent with the utilitarian normative ethical theory I defend.

Though I argue the innate value of empathy, I do not suggest that unlimited empathy is desirable at either individual or social levels. Though I will not explore the phenomenon in depth, I acknowledge that empathy is, to an extent, a "risky strength" (Tone and Tully, 2014) which, when excessive or unregulated, can in exceptional cases, lead to professional "burnout" (Tei *et al.*, 2014). Though empathy is generally construed as an affective force, research suggests that "Dark" personalities sometimes employ a high level of cognitive empathy to manipulate others emotionally without any such affective component (Nagler *et al.*, 2014).[4] I make the case that moderately increased empathy (both cognitive and affective) would indeed be generally beneficial at both individual and social levels. Aside from arguments that empathy can be excessive and that abundant empathy can be misdirected, I argue that a shortage of empathy, rather than its excess, is the more evident and pressing problem.

Though perhaps part of the motivation behind some of the current wave of empathy research, I will not engage with emerging research suggesting that dispositional empathy is undergoing generational decline (de Souza, 2014; Konrath, O'Brian and Hsing, 2011; Krahé and Möller, 2010; Twenge, 2006).[5] Though these arguments are intriguing, my overall focus is a positive argument for the possibility of systematically increasing empathy through moral narrative.

Yet even if moderate increases in empathy are both desirable and possible, refining the term is fraught with conceptual challenges. Baldner and McGinley (2014: 727) note that, "Empathy is a concept whose history has been marred by conceptual inconsistencies". What is more, if consensus on a baseline definition of empathy is challenging (see variation in: Engelen and Röttger-Rössler, 2012; Reniers *et al.*, 2011; Batson, 2011; Zhou *et al.* (2002); Hoffman, 2013), measurement of dispositional empathy is even more problematic (Kohlberg, 1981; Tindle, 2014). I will suggest that our current empathy discourse is sufficiently developed to deal with challenges of both conceptualisation and quantification. I propose what I feel is an adequately uncontroversial definition of empathy and sufficiently

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[4] "Dark" personalities are typically characterised as possessing the "Dark Triad" traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy. Such personalities may posses high levels of cognitive empathy, or understanding of other persons, without an accompanying affective empathy, or concern for others (Nagler *et al.,* 2014). In this thesis I construe empathy as having both affective and cognitive components. The former implies emotional investment or concern for others, while the latter concerns understanding of other minds without the requirement for any affective engagement. It seems likely that there is generally some positive correlation between these affective and cognitive components in most persons, however, as research on "Dark" personalities suggest, this is not the case universally.

valid approach to the measurement of (at least self-reported) empathic feelings. When I speak of empathy, I am referring to both a cognitive skill (in terms of interpersonal understanding or theory of mind) and an emotional or affective connection or concern for other persons. Setting these challenges aside for the moment, it is well to say something more at the outset in relation to the positive case for empathy itself.

Rather than a subsidiary or competing value, my research suggests that empathy is very much a fundamental or primal driver of what I construe as normatively valuable motivation and action. I spend a considerable amount of time developing this argument at its philosophical root. This philosophical investigation begins with a particular type of normative utilitarian framework. I will contend that the same wave of interdisciplinary research that concentrates attention on social and affective construals of moral judgment/motivation/action both shores up empathy as an essential moral value or driver and reinforces a particular construal of utilitarianism. This intertwining of the warrant or justification for a construal of utilitarianism along with empathy reveals the historical and conceptual depth of utility-empathy as a robust and enduring normative tradition.

Claiming utility-empathy (hereafter simply "empathy") as a fundamental ethical value assumes certain underlying commitments. Though it is not feasible to deal with this in great depth here, there is a need to say something about the metaethical basis of what follows. It might be assumed that a work advocating this, or any, approach to "moral" education will take for granted some irreducible core value(s) and that the worth and meaning of the task is typically assumed to lie in the implementation of some normative foundational base. Most arguments for a particular moral education value rest on a confidence that some underlying value is "real". I believe that a fully formed criticism of relativistic ME models ought to issue from a systematic engagement with the (realist) possibility of objective and relatively universalisable moral standards. Consequently, I will outline a *prima facie* rejection of moral anti- or irrealism.

1.2. Overview of the scope and sequence of this work: Three EfE accounts

Overall, this work can be divided into "Should", "Can" and "How" accounts of/concerning empathy. I argue that these accounts are interdependent and ultimately coherent. My belief in the importance of a comprehensive philosophical foundation is such that these

theoretical/normative ("should") questions constitute the single largest part of this work. In short, these philosophical/normative Chapters (2-5) address why I believe educators should focus on empathy. Assuming that one "should" only argue for that which is ontologically "real" and practically possible, I place my explicitly normative "should" arguments within a pluralistic naturalism and realist metaethical framework in which I argue the reality of a limited domain of moral facts. In making these arguments, I do not assert that unlimited empathy is desirable or that empathy ought to supplant other moral values such as justice. Rather, I seek to support my argument that empathy might be the single best foundational value for moral education, and that, as a consequence, we ought to nurture it when given a realistic opportunity to do so.

1.2.1. Philosophical/normative ("should") accounts (Chapters 2 – 5)

Chapter 2 (*A Pluralist Philosophical Naturalism*) lays a general foundation for the arguments that follow. I critically consider the comparative ontological status of the entities typically the object of the physical sciences, with (or against) the objects of traditionally "philosophical" enquiry and, critically, the extent to which these categories overlap. I assess an epistemological naturalism that privileges the methods characteristic of the physical sciences. In outlining my own perspective, I address the strengths and limitations of Deweyan (1927) "half-hearted" or "pluralistic" naturalism. The pluralistic naturalism I ultimately embrace plays a load-bearing discursive role throughout the work.

Along with John Dewey (1929), I am sceptical that the physical sciences alone will (or could) ever achieve a full description or understanding of the breadth of our aesthetic or moral nature or experience. I nevertheless adopt an unambiguously naturalist stance, and endorse the view that empirical research legitimately supports the idea that affect-led learning engagements are best suited to reach the "deep machinery" or primal sources of empathy and moral cognition. A pluralist naturalist orientation does not necessarily entail that empathy or moral cognition can be strictly reducible to the terms and entities characteristic of the physical sciences.[6] As my later use of narrative modes of understanding or relating to the world will illustrate, my affirmation of alternative epistemologies (the pluralistic aspect of my naturalism) is not an

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[6] In Section 6.9. I acknowledge the challenge presented by, for example, Jesse Prinz's (2007) cultural construals of morality and Roger Scruton's (1987, 2012, 2014) accounts of realms of ineffable experience — experience permanently inaccessible to the methods and insights of the physical sciences.

incidental point. The role of Chapter 2, then, is to establish an essential part of the philosophical foundation for both the empirical account of empathy I introduce in Chapter 6, as well as the non-empirical account of narrative I introduce in Chapter 7 and return to in my final chapter. Aside from establishing this ontological/epistemological foundation, a second explicitly philosophical task in this first section is to argue for a specific normative and metaethical perspective. I defend a utilitarian normative ethical position in Chapters 4-5, but first lay what I argue is an essential metaethical foundation for them in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 (*Empathy and Moral Realism*) builds upon the general naturalist realism of the previous chapter to consider the extent to which the realm of facts or objective knowledge can extend to arguments for facts in a specifically ethical domain. I explore Peter Railton's (1986, 1989, 2011) Ethical Naturalism as part of my investigation of the challenges encountered as we move from consideration of naturalism in general to reflection of what it means to be naturalist about facts in an ethical context. Chapter 3's discussion of moral "facts" forms a bridge between Chapter 2's arguments about the status of facts about the natural world to Chapter 4's defence of prescriptive moral "facts" or arguments associated with a specific type of normative moral theory.

In Chapter 4 (*A Classical Utilitarian Normative Ethical Theory*), I devote a considerable amount of time to first describing how Classical (specifically Benthamic) Utilitarianism is likely to prove the ethical theory most consistent with emerging empirical construals of empathy/moral judgment. I also devote some time to a comparison of Bentham's utilitarianism (1780/1988, 1834/2005) with the contemporary utilitarianism of Peter Singer. I do this because, as arguably the world's most renowned and influential utilitarian thinker, most people now more closely associate utilitarianism with Singer than with Bentham. I explain why I think that this belief is mistaken. I suggest that the earlier account of utilitarianism is more defensible, especially in light of emerging empirical understandings of moral cognition. On this account, Bentham's ethical theories, with their acknowledgement of the social interdependence of affections and recognition of legitimate social obligations, better comport with emerging empirical construals of moral cognition than Singer's more atomised and rationalist construals. In that very fundamental sense, Singer appears somewhat out of step with contemporary moral psychology. My discussion (in Section 6.6.) of the extent to which new disciplines have developed to take into account new insights from the cognitive sciences

would seem to support a Benthamic, rather than Singerian, view on the comparative importance of affect and systematic deliberation in normative decision-making.

Having differentiated classical and contemporary approaches, Chapter 5 (*Objections to Utilitarianism*) explores what I argue are common misconceptions about the doctrine. Criticisms of utilitarianism as both a cynical and self-serving belief system and as unrealistically morally demanding continue to appear in the arguments of its critics. The same is true of arguments claiming utilitarianism does, or could, endorse persecution of minorities and a "tyranny of the majority". The fact that these objections continue to appear in the work of major contemporary philosophical critics of utilitarianism suggests to me that any work drawing on utilitarian justifications still carries the burden of responding to these enduring concerns.

1.2.2. Empirical ("can") accounts (Chapter 6)

The arguments of Chapter 6 (*Convergent Construals of Moral Cognition*) are premised on the belief that empirical psychology does indeed describe something real (and at least partially stable) when describing self or personality and its attributes.[7] Chapter 6 is also premised on the proposition that empirical investigation may progressively reveal nontrivial psychological truths and that these descriptions conform to enduring aspects of our external world. Similarly, my account of empathy requires at least conditional endorsement of the validity and reliability of accepted empathy measurement tools. In any case, deploying these empirical arguments, as I do in Chapter 6, assumes a baseline confidence in the efficacy and legitimacy of the special sciences in general and of empirical moral psychology in particular. In Chapter 2, I sought to establish a naturalist foundation for these kinds of empirical points.

From this philosophical/normative foundation, I next offer an empirical account of the nature of moral cognition and empathy in this chapter. I describe this as a series of "can" questions to mark a transition from examination of whether one ought to nurture empathy to the issue of the extent to which this is feasible. In the same chapter, I speculate on what broad reason or affect-led mechanisms could be subject to modification or otherwise within reach of educational programmes or strategies. This chapter mirrors, in briefer form, the structure of

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[7] I argue (in Section 2.8.1.) that the reality of a "narrative self" is sufficient to sustain an adequate account of moral identity for this work.

my philosophical foundation chapters.[8] Specifically, my "can" moral psychology chapter moves from description of the "affective revolution" construal of moral cognition to a recommendation that educators *should* work to access empathy's deep, affective drivers through systematic use of specific moral life narrative approaches to learning and teaching.

In this chapter I describe the perceived "affective revolution" and single out Jonathan Haidt (2012, 2011, 2007), Joshua Greene (2013) and Daniel Batson (2011, 1997) as representative and influential proponents of its affect-led account of morality. Though each thinker contributes something different to the debate: Haidt, Greene and Batson all construe moral cognition as primarily affect-led and deeply embedded in social context; all reject reason-led psychological/philosophical models.[9] Of course, the contrast between reason-led and affect-led approaches to morality speaks to a long tradition in philosophical, as well as explicitly psychological, discourse.[10] I will suggest that the emerging affective revolution arguments serve to reinforce a sentimentalist tradition and arguably undermine reason-led traditions.

If moral judgment is indeed largely affect-led, does this entail that it is not accessible to "ameliorative" educational programmes or strategies?[11] My arguments require confidence both that affect-led models are convincing descriptively, and that these affective processes can be constructively influenced. Though he does not directly concern himself with education, Daniel Batson's (2011, 1997; Batson *et al.*, 2003) research on moral narrative (as well as explicitly educational programmes such as the *Roots of Empathy*) suggests that it is possible to evoke at least short-term surges in empathy and that these feelings tend to be positively correlated with altruistic action.[12] I do not wish to extend findings beyond what is currently warranted; I argue only that the empirical evidence is now sufficient to merit at least

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[8] Again, before moving on to arguments *for* (and against) a particular normative ethical perspective, the philosophical chapters first introduce descriptive (naturalist, realist) analysis of the possibility of any (scientific) "facts".

[9] Of which Kant (1785/2003) arguably provides the archetype.

[10] David Hume (1748/2004) and Immanuel Kant (1785/2003) might respectively be considered the archetypal defenders of sentimentalist or affect-led, as opposed to reason-led, construals of moral cognition.

[11] As the rational development aspect of education is typically emphasised over its affective aspects in most moral education (ME) models, it is perhaps unsurprising that those approaches which privilege rational over affective development remain dominant in moral education. Part of the explanation for this may be an implicit (and arguably somewhat self-serving) assumption that moral development *must be* primarily rational development to be at all subject to ME's influence. I further explore this point in Chapter 7.

[12] These finding relate to both self-reported empathy (Batson, 1997; Batson *et al.,* 2003) and externally observed empathic behaviours (See Santos *et al.*, 2011, and Berkowitz and Bier,. 2005, on the *Roots of Empathy* programme)

exploration of how certain types of systematic and sustained learning engagements might nurture enduring (empathic) predispositions and behaviours.

In Chapter 6, I work to explain what I feel is the coherence of my philosophical narrative with emerging empirical construals of moral judgment. The reason for describing how converging construals of empathy/moral judgement are emerging across domains as diverse as *inter alia* psychology and economics is that this diversity of sources is arguably an indication of epistemological strength. In this chapter, I focus on Joshua Greene's moral synthesis (see 2013; Paxton, Lingar and Greene, 2012), with particular emphasis on his "dual-process" (rational/intuitive) model of moral cognition. Greene's argument that, empirically speaking, most of our moral judgments are based on fast, intuitive "point and shoot" processes is essentially consistent with Haidt's (2001) Social Intuitionist Model. Critically, the chapter concludes with Batson's (2011) Empathy-Altruism Model. For the purposes of this work, Batson's most important contributions are his findings on the intriguing role narrative (or its absence) plays in the way subjects relate to the "facts" presented in moral scenarios and the feelings or sympathies evoked by them in terms of both (cognitive) understanding and (affective) concern.

1.2.3. Narrative or "how" accounts (Chapters 7-9)

In Chapter 7 (*Life as Narrative*), my account progresses to narrative. Without suggesting any homogeneity of construals amongst them, and with the help of one forceful critic of life construed in this fashion, I primarily explore the arguments of Hardy (1968), Bruner (1987) Nussbaum (1989, 2011) and MacIntyre (1981), regarding the various ways in which life itself might be construed as an on-going process of world and self-making narrative. I argue, with Hardy (1968: 5), that narrative is a "primary act of mind". This chapter fits into the overall work in two ways. First, its arguments emerge from my position (Section 6.12.) that moral opinion formation is most frequently an affect-led and socially embedded process (Batson, 1997; Batson *et al.*, 2003). In terms of social context, narratives typically involve relationships between persons; one might go so far as to suggest that the idea of narrative is not even coherent independent of social dynamics and context. In terms of affect, the previous chapter's exploration of Batson's (2011) research is especially relevant and illustrates how explicit or implicit reference to subjects' emotions, as opposed to plain or simply factual representations, can make significant and positive contributions to altruism/empathy development. A second

goal of this chapter is to set the stage for an exploration of moral narrative possibilities specific to a classroom/curricular context in Chapters 8-9.

In Chapter 8, I continue to narrow my focus towards a more education specific context; this is more explicitly the classroom "how" account I describe at the opening of this section. I engage with Tappan and Brown's (1989) work on (narrative) authorship as a source of moral development. This brief section forms an important bridge between speculation on narrative generally and its classroom potential.

The first part of Chapter 9 (*Realism, Rationalism and Contemporary Moral Education*) begins with a survey of the opposing boundaries of moral education, from authoritarian "character education" to relativistic "values clarification". I include John Gibbs' (2014) critique of Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model here (rather than in Chapter 6) as I feel that the most important aspect of Gibbs' analysis is his disapproval of what he sees as Haidt's "moral relativism". As already stated, an explicit or implicit determinant of one's ME position is the point one occupies on a realist/relativist moral spectrum. Consequently, when a prominent thinker such as Gibbs directly asserts that Haidt's model fails (notably for Gibbs as a prescriptive rather than descriptive guide to moral judgment), then it is advisable to assess the accuracy and coherence of such criticism.

Chapter 10 (*Stories for Thinking*) explores "storification" beyond the strictly moral or normative domains. This brief interlude into the work of Egan (1993) and Fisher and Williams (2013) is intended to enrich the argument that dialogic or narrative learning in general serves as a solid foundation for sophisticated understandings. One particular focus is Egan and Fisher's work on the superiority of abstraction and innuendo, as opposed to literal clarity, for autonomous learning. This appears to deepen the case for narrative as a medium of meaningful and enduring learning.

In summary, my confidence in what is seen as the complementary insights revealed by empirical moral psychology and the less easily described realm of narrative-led ethical/aesthetic experience is derived from the pluralist naturalist perspective I initially outline. Whether or not empathy is actually in decline as has been recently argued (de Souza, 2014; Konrath *et al.,* 2011), I am convinced of its objective moral value and of the real possibility of nurturing it through systematic engagement with moral life narrative resources

and approaches. I attempt to make a broad philosophical/empirical case, ignoring (as I think it essential to do so) disciplinary boundaries.

As stated at the outset, my survey of ME policy and literature has reinforced an initial impression that there is a tension between a collective desire for ME programmes and a (at least in liberal, secular democracies) reticence about instantiating them with clear and confidant moral content. Any articulation of, or argument for, explicit moral goals in education is inevitably greeted with derision in some quarters. However, the inevitability of such criticism is not, to my mind, sufficient to justify disengagement with these issues or a resort to safely vague but empty pronouncements about moral principle and virtue in moral education. My experience in Cambodia (see Section 1.4.) suggests that there may be something unique and tangible to be gained from exposure to moral narratives. These stories include the cautionary tales of bystanders as well as inspiring accounts of sacrifice and defiance. My intention in the chapters that follow is to explore whether this particular empathy story is more fact than fiction.

1.3. A moral life narrative experience in Cambodia

My interest in moral education stems from my experience working as a teacher in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 2008 until 2011. In addition to private workshop design and delivery, my professional commitments during this period were divided between international school and post-secondary teaching roles. Two distinct experiences were especially important in developing a curiosity about moral education and motivating me to explore the extent to which (if at all) insights I had gained might contribute to a wider conversation in this domain. A first experience was of teaching applied ethics to local adults as the instructor for a mandatory component in a postgraduate qualification in accountancy. A second, very different, experience was of developing and delivering a weekend workshop on the Cambodian genocide for a mixed group of secondary and post-secondary students. I had yet to engage with a wider academic discourse at this time and had not considered whether there might be any connection between making moral stories more intelligible or meaningful and empathic or prosocial behaviour. On the contrary, both of these tasks were narrowly instrumental. My opinions about how best to communicate with my Cambodian students about ethical questions were borne of the practical necessity of helping them to form and express their ideas. In the case of my accountancy students, the goal was effective performance on

professional examinations. Whatever their original objectives, however, both tasks were formative in reinforcing two main lessons to me.

Firstly, I was struck by the profound difficulty of developing a common ethical vocabulary or currency across cultures. I had a sense that the difficulty I encountered in translating ethical concepts was not exclusively linguistic and wondered if there might be some most essential core value for moral education. Secondly, both experiences cultivated a suspicion of approaches to moral education based on strictly intellectual engagement with exclusively fact-based content. I wondered how I might increase the accessibility of this content with more vivid and engaging resources than the relatively prosaic materials that had been made available to me.

I spent two years (2008–2010) teaching business ethics to adult Cambodians on a part-time basis. The course, *Governance, Risk and Ethics* (GRE), was a required component in the students' Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) professional qualification. The GRE course, with its required engagement with ethical theory, was generally considered by students to be one of the most challenging aspects of their professional qualification. Without wishing to conflate individual differences between students or oversimplify their ideas, I did become aware of what appeared to be profound and arguably consistent differences between my perspective on ethical issues and that of my students. While I expected variable interpretations in the assessment of particular actors in our case studies, I was struck by what seemed to be a more fundamental student difficulty in actually identifying whether a fictional scenario had a moral component at all. I wondered what, if any, role Cambodia's lamentable contemporary history played in my students' moral formation and whether any wider arguments could be drawn from this.

I was to have the opportunity to explore the relationship between Cambodia's recent history and Khmer moral perspectives when I was asked to develop a two-day workshop on the Cambodian genocide in 2010. The development and delivery of this workshop prompted my first reflections on life narrative as a means of moral education. The workshop itself was delivered at the request of a local student group at the University of Cambodia and was largely intended as an ameliorative response to students' perception of an educational deficit in

relation to the 1975–1979 genocide.[13] A brief discussion of the persistent educational deficits in Cambodia is useful in order to appreciate the scope of the challenge facing educators in that country.

1.3.1. History education in Cambodia

It has been argued that Cambodia's history of conflict and the on-going challenges of corruption and poverty have taken a heavy toll on educational outcomes. Historical or genocide education is not the only area of severe deficit though, for various reasons, provision is particularly limited in this regard. Ben Keirnan laments a half millennium of, "intermittent civil conflict, foreign invasions, and even genocide" (2004: 76), which, "not only devastated Cambodia, but also prevented the Khmer people from weighing their experiences in historical perspective." David Chandler suggests that before the 1930s the French colonial government "spent almost nothing on education in Cambodia" (2000:156), while Clayton (2005) argues that the French were reluctant to enhance education, believing that this might produce a problematically empowered population. Dy suggests, "It is estimated that between 75 and 80 per cent of Cambodia's teachers and higher education students fled or died between 1975-9" (2007: 5).

As David Ayres put it, "The continuity of the crisis is such that in the 1990s, education in Cambodia is in an arguably more parlous state that it was in the 1960s" (2000: 4). Kiernan highlights the absence of content relating to the Khmer Rouge era, suggesting that, "even after Hanoi's forces left Cambodia in 1989, few students gained access to primary documents or secondary accounts of the country's recent past" (2004: 82). As Dy notes, the situation has not improved. "Cambodian schoolteachers still have to skirt the Khmer Rouge genocide. In 2001 the Education Ministry published new history texts, which finally included sections on DK, but recalled them in 2003 after a semester of use", suggesting that the genocide, "remains largely absent from school curriculums in Cambodia" (2007:1).

The genocide period has, of course, prompted a host of scholarly analyses. However, having reviewed many of these works and worked with local students, it is clear that Dy is justified in

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[13] The students' concerns were well founded. With a median age of 24.5, Cambodia is a young country (Source: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html [Accessed 2014]. Though it strains credibility, knowledge of the genocide is somewhat limited in Cambodia; this deficit is especially apparent amongst younger Cambodians.

claiming that these studies, "contain theoretical analyses, which are difficult for Cambodian high school or university students to grasp. Some of these books have been translated into Khmer, but they consist of hundreds of pages, which make them unlikely to be good sources since Cambodian students do not have the habit of reading" (Dy, 2007:5). My experience confirms both the general ignorance of this period and local attitudes to reading and "non-practical" scholarship in general. The current secondary school history text approved for national use includes less than a paragraph relating to the period; the genocide itself is summarised in less than a sentence.[14]

1.3.2. The Workshop: Narrative and Empathy

With these challenges in mind, I spent a number of weeks with colleagues in local secondary schools to better understand baseline student historical knowledge. I spent a good deal of time speaking with students both within and outside their school setting. A student trip to S21 was organised in order to get a better sense of how students might respond to the planned workshop. S21, or *Tuol Sleng*, is a former school building, now converted into a museum; it is the most infamous Khmer Rouge (KR) extermination centre used during the 1975-1979 period. It was during this student trip that the specific idea of empathy first occurred to me as an area of potential study.

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[14] "From April 25 to April 27, 1975, the Khmer Rouge leaders held a special general assembly in order to form a new Constitution and renamed the country 'Democratic Kampuchea'. A new government of the DK, led by Pol Pot, came into existence, *following which the massacre of Khmer citizens began.*" (Emphasis added) (Current nationally approved 9th grade history text, Lesson 12, page 169, Edition 2000).

I took these photographs during our group visit to S21 one week prior to the life narrative workshop sessions. The photograph (*above left*) is of child murdered in S21; it hangs in the holding area (*above*).

I was struck by the different ways my students and others responded to the museum. The sign (*left*) is displayed in several locations within the building, including in the room pictured above. The sign requests that visitors not laugh at the exhibits while touring S21. The museum experience helped motivate my initial reflections on life narrative and empathy.

The structure of the workshops was finalised as two separate four-hour sessions split between two days. The ten participants included two European students and eight Cambodians, ranging in age from fifteen to twenty-two years old. Given the limited student familiarity with the facts of the genocide that my earlier conversations had confirmed, I decided it was necessary to provide a general factual outline of this period and spent about one hour doing so on the first day. Following the introductory talk, two Cambodian guest speakers joined us to relate their own stories of the genocide period. Bopha (not her real name), the much-loved nanny of my infant daughter since 2008, was our first guest. With measured tone and restrained dignity, Bopha spent about an hour recounting her family's experience of deprivation and hardship in the late 1970s. She described a father's decision to save every fragment of food that her future husband, then an infant, might survive. The man who would later have been her father-in-law himself succumbed to starvation during this time.

My personal language tutor, Bunroeun (not his real name), also spent an hour with the students. While Bopha's account centred on family suffering and sacrifice, Bunroeun focused on his regrets as a bystander of political violence in his village. Bunroeun described aspects of

the redemption he found in his subsequent decades as a Buddhist monk. The student discussion that followed, now enriched with these personal accounts, was intense, challenging and appeared to be deeply affecting for all present. Students who had previously appeared somewhat detached were now visibly moved and actively engaged. I had not had to go beyond my own immediate social circles to find these witnesses. I wondered what other moral narratives might be readily available and whether what I (believed I had) witnessed was an aberration or suggested something important about moral life narrative and moral education. Neither Bopha nor Bunroeun joined us on the second workshop day. The tone, however, appeared to have shifted decisively, and our second day exchanges were no less insightful and affecting.

In the build-up to the workshop, I focused on finding what I thought might be the kind of vivid and visual narrative resources that I felt best suited my Cambodian students. One especially effective resource used in second day sessions was *L'Eau et la Terre* (Phoussera, 2005). This graphic novel primarily depicts the life of fourteen-year-old Sah Samaht during the genocide. *L'Eau et la Terre* is not available in English and students required my translation of the brief and simple French language text. It became apparent that this initial absence of textual understanding could be made use of. Students examined images of, for example, victim to perpetrator dialogues, and were tasked to create their own dialogue. The range of interpretations of the images provided a basis for spirited discussion and engaging enquiry. Over the course of the story, Sah Samaht and other characters are faced with a range of moral decisions. A young girl is advised that survival requires her to be blind, deaf and mute to the suffering of others (2005: 31). A husband and wife must decide whether to take in an orphaned child or to save their scarce resources for themselves alone (2005: 40). After joining the Khmer Rouge, Sah Samaht is repeatedly counselled to disregard all former community or family bonds.

We related Sah Samaht's story to the accounts of Bopha and Bunroeun and experimented with a variety of different perspective-taking activities based on the decisions and experiences of various characters in the novel. I would note at this stage that the word "empathy" was never used during the workshop. Whether or not empathy was indeed developed or expressed, it appeared to be a student, rather than teacher, led process. As students progressively questioned our witnesses, their understanding of motivations or key decisions seemed to increase rapidly. As students interacted with witnesses, a heightened concern for others, both living and dead,

was manifest in their expressions and comments. Several of the students were moved to tears while listening to the accounts of our witnesses. Again, I had and have no way of measuring this systematically. I can only say at this stage that the experience had a considerable impact on me and that it prompted later reflections on a possible link between moral narrative and cognitive and affective empathy.

Though it was suggested that students create their own dialogues as creative extensions of the narrative, participants in the narrative/empathy workshop were never explicitly directed to identify with either our guest speakers or with any particular character in the graphic novel we used as a stimulus material. Rather, I witnessed what appeared to be a more organic process in which students chose to identify with different characters at different stages of the experience. Students continually used phrases such as, "if I were in this situation", or "imagine if you were faced with this kind of decision" without any prompting. My impression during the workshop was that the kind spontaneous perspective-taking demonstrated by participants followed naturally from the narrative context or framing of our discussions. I also had the impression that this unprompted perspective-taking assisted students in reaching more informed positions on the motivations and actions of the perpetrators/bystanders/rescuers in question. These reflections were not to assume any further structure until I encountered the work of Batson (2011, 1997), Greene (2013), Haidt (2012, 2011, 2007) and others engaged in thinking about the perceived affective revolution and related work on empathy and moral narrative.

1.3.3. Moral autonomy and helplessness

This thesis follows a model of moral education which is primarily about individuals and is premised on a positive notion of individual moral agency. This question of moral agency can be addressed in relation to both the specific context of the Cambodian narrative/empathy workshop I have described and also in a more general moral education context. I will first return to the specifics of the workshop experience.

During the workshop, we discussed the suggestion that culturally embedded notions of helplessness and unquestioning deference to authority were valid and, if this is so, to what degree this could be overcome. Renwick (2008) has argued that, "a critical difference between rescuers versus bystanders and supporters of genocide", is, "an internal locus of control over their fate (rescuers) and an external locus (bystanders and perpetrators)" (p. 716). It has been

argued that a submissive worldview and individual "helplessness" in relation to authority are distinctive aspects of Khmer culture (Chandler, 1979; Ayres, 2000). Ayres has argued that, "Cambodia's traditional education system had always reinforced the concept of helplessness, the idea that a person was unable to determine their position in society" (2000: 9). Chandler (1979) argues a strong and consistent undercurrent of fatalism in Cambodian society. He attributes this fatalism to traditions of absolutist controls and external domination. Chandler also suggests that the history of Cambodia (even before the 1970's) was "tragic" due to an unfortunate combination of domineering rulers and a submissive worldview, and that, "powerlessness encouraged further exploitation, which was seen as 'correct' or 'inevitable'" (Chandler, 1979: 416). Renwick has contrasted the worldview of bystanders with rescuers, "whose efficacy resembles the traditional Western liberal concept of individuals who control their destiny" (2008: 721).

Workshop participants considered whether an external locus of control was more characteristic of Asian, and especially Cambodian, society. We considered whether such a broad cultural generalisation could be valid and, if so, whether it implied that rescuer behaviour would be less likely to occur in a Cambodian context.[15] These cultural questions prompted sustained and animated discussion amongst participants. Though, of course, too small a sample to draw any definitive conclusions, there was a clear consensus amongst this group of relatively well-educated Phnom Penh residents that the traditional deference to authority, still very apparent outside of Phnom Penh, played a significant role in suppressing resistance to the perceived legitimacy and authority of the Khmer Rouge regime. Despite this acknowledgment of cultural influence, however, workshop participants consistently expressed their belief that individual psychology was an even more important factor than culture in shaping perpetrator/bystander/rescuer behaviour. Unfortunately we did not have time to further explore these important questions of cultural determinism and individual agency.

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[15] In his study of "evil actions", Staub (1999) comments on the consequences of unquestioning respect for, and obedience to, authority. He argues that, "When instigation to violence arises… people who have relied on leaders for guidance and protection will find it more difficult to bear the threat, anxiety, and frustration of basic needs they experience. Second, when policies and practices are instituted in a group that harms others, people will be less willing to oppose the authorities and the rest of the group… Third, such strong respect for authority makes obedience to immoral orders by authorities more likely" (Staub, 1999: 184).

1.4. The Perceived Crisis in Moral Education

Though the greater part of this work is committed to addressing theoretical challenges, the persistent theme of "crisis" or "failure" in moral education (Wringe, 2006; Purpel, 1989) has, of course, practical as well as theoretical implications. There appears to be broad social/political consensus that some kind of moral education is essential, and, as Berkowitz and Oser (1985) point out, it is a rapidly growing research field. Yet, despite the on-going clamour that something be done or changed in the domain of moral or values education, determining the specific content and criteria of such education in contemporary, diverse and largely secular societies remains deeply problematic.[16] I will argue that empathy represents the best available normative criterion for a new approach to ME.

I suggest in Chapter 8 that the perceived crisis in moral education is rooted in the apparent incommensurability of conflicting ME visions. Though each vision (I will call them "authoritarian/realist" and "democratic/relativist" for the moment) has been ascendant at different times, neither view ever recedes entirely. This ebb and flow of opinion is determined largely by the vicissitudes of social attitudes and political control. Whether provision of clear "authoritarian" moral direction, or "relativistic" embrace of diversity and learner autonomy, each family of ME construals has its strengths. I will argue that the collision of each vision's defining flaw (we might characterise these as either excess or deficiency of moral certainty) is the basis of the current crisis of incommensurability. In Chapters 9-10, I will explain how and why I believe that a new empathy-driven ME synthesis, informed by an interdisciplinary conversation, can be assembled from the best aspects of each contending vision. My argument is that empathy can be positioned as the limited, imperfect, but nevertheless most realistic central normative value suitable to occupy this middle ground between authoritarian and relativistic approaches.

Given the dramatic shift in attitudes regarding alternative lifestyles and declining trust in key institutions over the last thirty years (See, for example, the 2013 British Social Attitudes Survey, 2013, Park *et al.,* 2013), it is unsurprising that attitudes towards the normative values

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[16] Despite interesting work seeking to balance, for example, values of national cohesion with multiculturalism (Blum, 2014), I will argue that one's (typically unspoken) position on a realist/relativist moral spectrum is the *most* essential point of difference in ME discourse and focus my analysis accordingly.

embedded in school curricula, and the ways in which we expect learners to engage with them, are disputed and unstable. I argue in Chapter 8 that top-down, authoritarian models are indeed unviable and out of step, and that supplanting these approaches with explicitly or implicitly relativistic frameworks, though democratic in one sense, fails to address widespread demand for the institutional provision of some consistent and clear moral message. I argue in Chapter 8 that new approaches to EfE represent our best prospect for establishing a sufficiently broad consensus for a new normative core for ME in societies like the UK. The question of whether to situate EfE in a dedicated curriculum space or integrated with other subjects is not a concern of this current research. I would suggest, however, that any temptation to integrate EfE into current Religious Education (RE) programmes would not be likely to succeed.[17] For, even if desirable, authoritarian ME models are arguably incompatible with inclusive and culturally heterogeneous societies. However appealing talk of broad virtues' development in schools may be to some, national guidelines in the UK and elsewhere inevitably tend to be rather ineffectual and, perhaps by tacit design, ambiguous.[18]

Clarifying specific ME values, "British" values, for example, are difficult to precisely articulate. Conversely, inclusive but vague relativistic responses often suffer a lack of moral content or clarity. In light of many communities' incompatible moral agendas and commitments, one strategy has been to focus primarily on the development of emotional skills in ME. As a moral realist, I will suggest that the more or less unconditional acceptance of disparate ethical values and beliefs entailed by relativistic approaches represents a weakness in their structures, but that any adopted core value must retain some flexibility.

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[17] Religious Education (RE), in particular, given the negativity of entrenched attitudes towards the subject and the potential inconsistency of its various content and aims, is not the ideal vehicle for the programmes or approach I will propose. In relation to the challenges confronting RE, it has been commented (McConville, 2014) that, "..it is striking that in the UK we do not have a well-established educational framework for tracing a person's moral and spiritual development, as expressed in their own voices: it is embedded in the non-statutory national framework for RE. "This [framework] sets out the guidelines not only for what young people at different ages should know about religion, spirituality, and other belief systems, but also the kinds of moral attitudes that should be learned from them. There are nationally agreed criteria for... Dishearteningly for those interested in promoting and measuring moral and spiritual development, this guidance is due to be jettisoned from September 2014, which is part of a wider decline of RE's status in the UK" (p. 32-33). Speaking as a former head of RE at an inner London comprehensive school, I concur with McConville's description of the subject's low status. However, to my mind the key question is not how a subject like RE can be revitalised and reformed as a new and more effective vehicle for instilling the kind of moral skills and values that a critical mass of stakeholders might be able to agree upon. However important the development of empathy may be (and I will argue that it is both possible and important), and however worthwhile the goals of RE, the task of moral education is not well suited to the direct curricular requirements of Religious Education as currently understood.

[18] See, for example, UK DfE Schools' guidance for *Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development* (2011).

Beyond persistent tensions between more and less authoritarian/realist approaches, a further problem, as I see it, is that ME is too often characterised by a woolly conceptual drift between essentially self-oriented skills, (sustaining "mindful" focus, for example) and primarily other-directed dispositions such as empathy or compassion. Though both important, these types of goals should not be seen as interchangeable. I do not wish to deny that cognitive empathy is indeed useful to us as individuals. I do suggest that the value of orienting our moral concerns further outward transcends any strictly individual considerations and supports worthwhile, shared moral/social goals.[19] This is, I think, an important distinction.

Persistent moral disagreement is a permanent (and arguably vital) aspect of democratic moral discourse. Consequently, any requirement for absolute or comprehensive moral consensus is an unrealistic basis for a programme of moral education. There is certainly nothing in the arguments of the moral psychologists I draw on to support the idea that moral disagreement, so often based on intuitive and/or affective sources, is eliminable. The current enquiry is limited to arguing that defining a clear set of reasonably universal moral priorities suitable for diverse communities is possible and that empathy is the best available vehicle for their joint expression. In the absence of comprehensive or universal moral consensus on a range of divisive issues, it is worth exploring whether the goal/value of better interpersonal understanding, and the increased other-directed affective concern which is typically a consequence of this, is the best compromise for a discourse which seeks to define real and workable content for programmes of ME.

1.5. EfE in Moral Education: the Philosophy of Education Discourse (Five Debates)

This section concentrates on specific areas in which my research overlaps with contemporary moral education discourse. Specifically, I argue firstly that empathy is a more philosophically compelling core or organising principle for moral education than character or virtue.

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[19] This conflation of self and other-oriented educational goals allows policy makers to elide the thorniest questions of what it is we potentially can or must *agree upon* in normative value terms. While this shallow conflation of the instrumental and the normative may make achieving a certain consensus about/for ME more possible, it does not directly contribute to resolving the *most* essential question - that of finding some workable basis for shared and fundamental moral values in public education.

Secondly, the argument about core values leads to a related but distinct debate about international mindedness and the illusive search for a unifying force in moral education. I am interested in considering whether it is possible to find value(s) relevant to both modern, secular contexts and to more traditional, faith-based environments. Thirdly, my work engages with the question of whether the core function of moral education is to provide a supportive context for moral inquiry or clarification of one's existing value structures, or whether a more prescriptive vision of moral formation is optimal. Fourthly, this work is also relevant to on-going debates about the relevance of contemporary neuroscience to learning and education. Finally, this work relates to current inquiry into the possibility and desirability of educating the emotions.

1.5.1. Empathy or Virtue: A Core Value for Moral Education?

Surveying contemporary moral education discourse, especially in a UK context, quickly reveals the growing influence of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Values at Birmingham University's School of Education. Singling out the work of two particularly influential thinkers broadly sympathetic to the kind of virtues-led education advocated by the Centre, David Carr and Michael Hand, illustrates some pivotal divisions in current moral education discourse. In discussing the work of Carr (2014) and Hand (2014), I seek to illustrate both relevant aspects of contemporary ME discourse and to situate my own perspective and research aspirations relative to this discourse. Though diverse, work associated with the Jubilee Centre tends toward a rationalist approach to moral cognition and virtues-centred normative foundations.

The Centre's impact on moral education discourse extends beyond academic circles. In November 2014, UK Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, visited the Jubilee Centre. During her visit, Morgan commented that, "Organisations like the Jubilee Centre have been pioneers in recognising that character can be taught… Like the Jubilee Centre, we passionately believe that we owe it to today's young people to help them marry the highest standards of academic rigour with the character foundation needed to help them flourish" (Jubilee Centre, 2014). A neo/Aristotelian, character or values-based approach, championed individually by thinkers including Carr (2014) and Kristjánsson (2013) and collectively by organisations like the Jubilee Centre, seems to be very much in the ascendant. This work argues for an alternative source of moral value; specifically, the argument will be made for a

utilitarian construal of the Good as a best ultimate normative reference point. I later argue that increased empathy is a value-bearing project in a recognisably utilitarian sense. It is acknowledged that any ultimate justification for a utilitarian construal of irreducible Good remains problematically "open" in the same manner in which G.E. Moore (1903) suggested all normative ethical theories reduce down to an "open" or necessarily contestable origin or foundation. I will argue, however, that utilitarian normative construals are broadly compatible with emerging scientific understandings of the way moral choice actually functions, and that a utilitarian framework is amenable to empathy as a guiding expression of, or vehicle for, increased collective utility.

It follows that the moral starting point of this work is a belief that there is an incomparably strong, *prima facie* argument for the ontological reality of utilitarianism's corporeal starting point: its consistent grounding in felt experience and the relatively tangible descriptions or gradations in normative value it argues supervene upon this. However prominent in other areas of applied ethics, the utilitarian normative ethics I found my arguments upon appear out of vogue with the mainstream of moral education discourse. I note, for example, a sharp contrast between the explicitly utilitarian language that characterises reasoning in, say, public health discourse, and that characterising debate in or about public education.[20]

 In Chapter 4 I expand on my argument that even those moral systems purporting to be non/anti-utilitarian are either ultimately committed to values understandable, after some reduction, to utility, or alternatively, that they refer to entities that conceptually disintegrate on closer analysis. The prominence of utilitarian language in one policy domain (health) and relative obscurity in another (education) raises an interesting question. There is something ostensibly base or unpleasant about the instrumentalist language of utility relative to the more rarefied and inspiring language of character and virtue. This is something I suspect many engaged in education, given its child-centred focus, are more sensitive to than those working in domains in which relatively quantitative analysis of value-based decisions (who should receive a scarce organ for transplantation, for example) is more established or typical. The

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[20] As Carlo Petrini puts it, "... public health is based primarily on population-level utility, making it more attentive to issues such as epidemics, social determinants of health, and cost-effective decision making: a 'pervasive utilitarian component' in public health is thereby 'undeniable' (Levy BS. Creating the future of public health: values, vision, and leadership. Am. J. Public Health. 1998;88:188–192. Op cit. Petrini, Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2010 Jan; 7(1): 189–202)

generally uninspiring nature of utilitarian moral language is indeed a kind of problem for the doctrine.[21] My view is that this problem of perception, though motivating for those who seek alternatives to utilitarianism, is not the kind of philosophical difficulty that reveals deep inconsistencies or otherwise undermines utilitarianism in any fundamental sense. Nevertheless, this language/perception issue is important enough to merit future exploration.

This work is founded on a naturalist ontological base that is inconsistent with a construal of any particular virtue or moral standard as normatively irreducible. Many generally recognised virtues, such as courage or beneficence and the decisions and behaviours they seek to describe and encourage, are potentially of great instrumental importance in securing outcomes that are desirable from a utilitarian point of view. I do not, however, see these or other virtues as sources of autonomous moral value irreducible to, or incommensurable with, a utilitarian source.

The most fundamental aspects of my own ontological view of the world are expressed in my section on philosophical naturalism. My thoughts on these most essential knowledge questions are most closely aligned to Dewey's (1927, 1929) "half-hearted" naturalism and the more contemporary expression of this general viewpoint in Shook's account of "flexible naturalism" (2008). Dewey, in particular, elucidates a deep coherence and connection between a morally and pedagogically progressive framework for education (1916) and a pluralistic, naturalist knowledge foundation (1927).

I am founding my arguments on utilitarian ethical theory in that a classical construal of utility is the normative measure by which I assess, or argue for, later arguments on the importance of empathy. Before I do so, however, I build up to this utilitarian position through establishing arguments for a pluralistic philosophical naturalism. I argue that, of all available normative systems, including virtue ethics, utilitarianism is that which most credibly follows from a naturalistic commitment. Utilitarianism is most supported by, or comports with, the philosophical naturalism in which all arguments to follow are explicitly or implicitly based. Moral arguments often begin with some conceptually irreducible starting point and, for this work it is confidence in the possibility of real normative distinctions between desirable and

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[21] I suspect that it is this Gradgrindian taint that leads contemporary thinkers like Joshua Greene (2013) to employ alternative terminology (i.e. "Deep Pragmatism") for moral systems that are, to my mind, otherwise indistinguishable from mainstream utilitarianism.

aversive experiences of the world. This ontological starting point is an essential foundation for the normative arguments I will make about the desirability of utilitarian frameworks relative to alternative moral systems.

Though utilitarian, my arguments leave room for the language of moral virtues and character in classrooms and curricula. Such language can be very useful at various operational levels of moral education. In other words, reflection on moral behaviour through the lens of developed or developing traits or "character" often provides essential context and tools for guiding moral action, reflection, and ultimately development. At times, describing certain ideals about justice or upholding (justifiable) moral standards with virtues terminology has a general tendency of increasing utility or welfare. Only the most nuanced and comprehensive articulations of utilitarianism, after all, make clear the distinction between the doctrine and a facile egoism with which it is frequently confused.[22] I am not, at this stage, referring to any philosophical project speculating on whether virtue might ultimately be in accordance with utility in some deep way in the manner Julia Driver (2001), for example, has suggested. Rather, I am making a more pragmatic point about actual classroom practice. I am mindful that philosophical nuance is easily lost in transfer to practical practice and, consequently, of the need for flexibility in the translation of arguments. In any case, the prevalence of what I see as misrepresentations of the doctrine is a key reason I devote so much time to my assessment of criticisms of utilitarian moral theory.

My central point at this stage is that my work is built upon a kind of naturalist foundation that construes utility, rather than character, duty, or virtue, as the best single irreducible normative value. It follows that increasing social skills including cognitive empathy, and personal dispositions such as affective empathy, both of which I argue tend to increase collective and individual well-being, should be recognised as desirable ends of moral education.[23] I make

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[22] I suggest in Chapter 5 that the prevalence of arguments that utilitarianism is variously profoundly selfish *and* that the doctrine is unrealistically demanding, speaks to a widespread misunderstanding of the classical tradition's core arguments.

[23] Recent research has suggested a positive correlation between prosocial (charitable, for example) spending and personal well-being (Aknin *et al*., 2013; Norton, Dunn and Aknin, 2008). Aknin *et al*. argue that their research lends ".. first support for a possible psychological universal: human beings around the world derive emotional benefits from using their financial resources to help others (*prosocial spending*)… data from 136 countries… shows that prosocial spending is associated with greater happiness around the world, in poor and rich countries alike (Aknin *et al*., 2013: 2). This research appears promising, at least if one finds it probable that highly empathic people are more likely to engage in prosocial spending than those with relatively less empathy.

distinct but related arguments that this can be done and that moral education ought to pursue this goal of general empathy increase.

1.5.2. Moral Education for a Multicultural Context

I argue that empathy is the ME value most likely to bridge profound normative divides between individuals and cultures and that it is the moral value best suited to win support in diverse or globalised contexts. I make this case without resorting to what I see as the untenable assertion that moral disagreement is superficial or can be universally resolved. Such complete resolution does not seem to me a realistic possibility; I am not even convinced it would be desirable. Mine is a more limited argument that empathic understanding and care represents our best hope for a general consensus in ME. Participants in this values globalisation discourse suggest a variety of different normative alternatives. Noddings proposes care ethics as. "..a powerful approach to ethics and moral education in this age of globalization" (Noddings, 2010: 390). At the same time as she employs William's concept of 'ethical reflection' to discourage moral relativism, Kwak advocates equipping learners to "...develop a coherent way of responding to cultural pluralism" (2007: 460). Standish laments the "…relativism evident in certain versions of multiculturalism" (Standish, 2006: 79) and argues for a different interpretation of toleration in school curricula and the wider multicultural context.

1.5.3. Moral Inquiry or Moral Formation

Based on the normative base I advocate, I argue that ME can and should be about moral formation rather than what can be seen as the more limited goal of moral inquiry. Specifically, successful ME affects long-term disposition and the behaviours that result from it. Though systematic inquiry is, of course, also required for any transformative process, moral formation is a deeper and more ambitious goal than the mere provision of a forum for exploration or expression of moral ideas independent of specific behavioural objectives.

Disagreement about the central goal of moral education is a definitive source of division in education discourse. In Chapter 8, I engage with the debate over whether the goal of moral education ought to be fundamentally about non-judgmental clarification of one's values as some suggest (Kirschenbaum *et al*., 1977), or whether communicating an explicit prescriptive message should be the objective as suggested by Hand (2014). Underlying strong moral realist

positions tend to incline discourse towards more directive approaches, while an underlying moral antirealism or irrealism tends to draw ME discourse towards a more non-judgmental, "moral clarification" approach. This entails that an account of where one falls on the realism/antirealism spectrum is a necessary, or at least useful, precursor to engagement with the directive/clarification education debate. It follows that the extent to which one is a moral realist (if at all), says something important about one's actual or potential beliefs about moral education. It is important to note, however, that a metaethical belief in the possibility of moral truth in some form does not, in itself, entail a commitment to any specific normative ethical theory.

Michael Hand's argument for a positive programme of moral formation suggests an underlying moral realism.[24] His normative ethical theory, however, is based in a character or values (rather than a utilitarian) approach. Hand is concerned with addressing what he describes as a tension between public demand for moral education and disagreement as to the appropriate content of these programmes.[25] Hand is right to focus on this challenge; I also work to propose an ameliorative response to this tension. In contrast with the moral standards-based approach advocated by Hand, I endorse a different kind of normative value: that (cognitive and affective) empathy is the best and most fundamental core of effective and meaningful moral education.

With Hand, I believe that moral formation (as well as inquiry) is an essential component of moral education. Moral formation goes beyond mere inquiry or reflection in its attempt to actually influence character and behaviours that result from (differences in) character. Hand reasonably implies that the success of moral formation depends to a great extent on the strength of "moral commitment" (Hand, 2014: 527). Hand's construal of moral commitment implies motivation to actually act in a particular way rather than to simply make certain kinds of moral judgment. Hand's description of moral commitment is very important in revealing a central tenet in his argument: "A person is fully committed to a moral standard when she is

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[24] Hand's perspective is that any programme of moral education "… not centrally concerned with moral standards would thereby be deficient." (Hand, 2014: 525). Hand's own theory of moral education is, "....of the applicability-flaunting kind: a practical theory with pragmatic relevance. It aims to advance justified action-guiding principles in response to an identified practical need. " (Hand, 2014: 520).

[25] "What is the current practical problem my theory purports to address? It is a problem that consists in the tension between two thoughts. The first thought is that morality must be learned. The second thought is that morality is controversial: there is deep uncertainty about both the requirements of morality and the reasons to comply with them." (Hand, 2014: 521)

both dispositionally inclined to hold herself and others to it and convinced that she has good reason to do so" (Hand, 2014: 525). Moral formation, in Hand's construal and mine, is conative as well as cognitive. I am also especially interested in the strong affective aspects embedded in Hand's construal of moral formation and feel he is right to emphasise the essential role played by nonrational forces in moral formation.

Hand suggests that, "From the fact that some moral standards have an uncertain justificatory status, it does not follow that all do..." (2014: 528); I find little to disagree with in this. There is a core distinction, however, between my approach and that of Hand. This distinction is defined by differing views of ideal intended outcomes of moral formation. There is a further, but related, difference in terms of my perspective on how fundamental a level we can reach from a psychological or deep character point of view. In terms of the first (ideal outcomes) distinction, In Chapter 6 I argue that, while moral principles are very important tools as expressions of moral judgment, empathy is a still more powerful origin or catalyst of action than any particular moral principle. I argue that increased cognitive and affective empathy is a more important outcome for moral education than rationally derived confidence in specific moral principles.

Aside from the ideals we seek, there is a related but distinct difference in terms of my somewhat less constrained view of what may be psychologically possible in moral education terms. Hand's own discussion of what David Copp calls the "problem of sociality" (2009; as cited by Hand, 2014: 528) illustrates a difference between his views and mine as regards the fixed parameters of empathic or sympathetic feeling between persons. The problem of sociality results from, "...certain contingent but permanent features of the human condition: namely, our vulnerability to one another, our limited capacity for sympathy, and a limited supply of needed or wanted resources. If we were invulnerable to attack, or capable of infinite altruism.. it may be that moral standards would be unnecessary…" (2014: 528).

In contrast with the limits accepted by Copp and Hand, I will argue in Chapter 6 that one can exert some modest influence on those reserves of sympathy. These reserves of sympathy, though (rightly) limited, are present in almost all of us and amenable to growth and development. In the same chapter, I will describe an emerging picture from new research in moral psychology which suggests that dispositional empathy can be effectively nurtured through narrative approaches (Batson, 1997; Batson *et al.*, 2003); I will argue that these

approaches can be adapted to moral education. If these insights about empathy can be effectively imported from moral psychology to moral education, then this has significant and exciting implications for both the outcomes sought and the methods used in achieving those outcomes.

If the question of the value of empathy education is settled, the argument next turns to the process of actually teaching this skill and disposition. Just as Hand believes that moral standards can be taught "…by means of praise and admonition, example and modelling, habituation and training" (2014: 530), so too can empathy be developed by similar means. My primary focus is on the various ways in which empathy can be modelled and provide examples based on moral life narrative storytelling.

Hand suggests, and I agree, that moral education needs to be about more than analysis or understanding. He is right to suggest that it should also be concerned with moulding the forces that drive human action. Hand believes that "…somewhere in the melee of controversial moral standards and arguments, there are at least some standards on which all are agreed and to which subscription is demonstrably justified" (2014: 528). Batson's work suggests that the centrality of empathy (critically, both cognitive and affective) for morally desirable action is demonstrably valuable. Just as Hand believes that "..a programme of moral education not centrally concerned with moral standards would thereby be deficient" (2014: 525), I argue that moral education without empathy at its centre is deficient. The chapters that follow are ultimately my attempt to expand and develop this core argument.

1.5.4. The Future of Education: Human, Natural or Neuroscience

As Immordino-Yang points out, "The past decade has seen major advances in cognitive, affective and social neuroscience that have the potential to revolutionize educational theories about learning" (2011: 98). As has been noted by Clark (2015), interest in neuroscience by philosophers of education is a relatively recent phenomenon. Clark is right to suggest that emerging interest in this area is to be welcomed, but "...if it is to get real bite then it must begin to focus in on asking some hard philosophical questions" (Clark, 2015: 37).

I argue that emerging insights in cognitive neuroscience and moral psychology are potentially important for moral education.[26] Specifically, the "affective revolution" arguments I put forward in Chapter 6 suggest that empirical psychological investigation potentially reveals useful insights into human moral cognition. A central concern of Chapter 6 is to explore the extent to which emerging empirical accounts are mainly in agreement on the affect-led nature of empathy. If these "affective revolution" accounts of empathy are sustainable, and if empathy development is endorsed as a legitimate goal of moral education, then it would seem that empirical accounts have something valuable to contribute to moral education discourse.

This position is in direct contrast with, for example, Carr's opposition to what he describes as the "(social) scientific drift of much moral educational enquiry and research and related hope of progress via empirical methods.." (Carr, 2014: 502). It is important, however, to qualify my position on this at the outset. For example, I feel the scientistic hyperbole of Sam Harris, and his 2010 work *The Moral Landscape* (subtitled "How Science can determine human values"), lacks nuance and creates unhelpful distractions. While Harris' dogmatic approach fails to bridge, or even fully recognise, the key distinctions between descriptions and prescriptions in cognitive neuroscience and moral psychology. I will suggest (in Section 2.2.- 2.3.) how and why we ought to also resist equally dogmatic caricatures, such as those found in the work of Mary Midgley (2001, 1992), or Roger Scruton of neuroscience or "neurononsense" (Scruton, 2014c) and related disciplines as necessarily irrelevant or trivial in terms of what it may contribute to our understanding of aesthetic or moral phenomena.

Given the pluralism of my own approach in this work, I reject any forced and false dichotomy between moral philosophy and the social or physical sciences as artificial and unnecessary; I certainly think that such a distinction is inconsistent with the empirical spirit of, for example, Aristotle or Hume. I am not convinced that either moral philosophy or the social/physical sciences should be regarded as the exclusive lodestone for insight into the goals and methods of moral education. There appears to be a rather dogmatic and somewhat unhelpful bifurcation on the status of neuroscience derived projects in the educational domain. Descriptions of brain activity accessed through fMRI scans, for example, are not necessarily tantamount to explanations of our experiences; such non-invasive technologies are too much in their infancy for excessive confidence in what they can now reveal. By the same token, however, the youth

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[26] Greene's account of the development of the moral emotions makes particular use of neurological or physiological evidence (Cushman *et al.,* as cited in Greene, 2013: 36). See Section 6.10.1. for discussion)

of these nascent tools and approaches might also be taken to suggest that it is inadvisable to avoid prematurely dismissing their future potential.

Carr's criticism of what he feels is an excessive influence of the social/physical sciences in moral education is illustrative of this bifurcating tendency. Carr (2014) describes an on-going contest between (rationalist) moral philosophy and the physical/social sciences for the soul of moral education. He also inveighs against "...the recent sentimentalist… drift of much ethical thinking evident in the work of Haidt (2001) and others", and complains that, "…the major contributors to the theory of moral education for more than a century have been social scientists of one stamp or another" (Carr, 2014: 501). Given this reliance on social science, Carr finds it "striking" that, "…so much work has also explicitly drawn inspiration from the moral theorising of ancient and modern philosophers". Carr alleges that many of these attempts to rest social scientific moral construals upon philosophical foundations "do not sit easily with the metaphysical and ontological presuppositions and/or commitments of modern natural and other scientific enquiry" (2014: 502).

My own work draws heavily on emerging insights from empirical moral psychology, with a particular emphasis on Batson's (1997, 2003) Empathy Altruism Hypothesis, which suggests a positive correlation between exposure to moral narrative and self-reported empathic affect. Additional and more recent scholarship in narrative transportation theory suggests a positive correlation between "transportation" into fictional narratives and subsequent spikes in empathy (Johnson, 2012; Bal and Veltkamp, 2013). Transportation theory comports well with both Batson (Batson, 1997; Batson *et al*., 2003) and Mar *et al.* (2009) findings on the use of literature as an especially efficient means of transmitting social knowledge. It is Batson, however, who offers the most comprehensive and compelling empirical accounts of spikes in empathy resulting from interaction with narrative.

Such empirical methods extend or complement, rather than compete with, an established philosophical narrative about morality and knowledge. Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of David Hume's (1748) moral theory (and that of other moral sentimentalists) is the conviction that moral cognition is primarily led by affect or sentiment. That belief alone is enough to mark a clear distinction between a philosophical tradition rooted in Kant and other rationalists and continued in modern form by psychologists like Kohlberg (1984, 1981, 1973) and a distinct and consistent sentimentalist thread running from Hutcheson (1725), Hume

(1738) and Smith (1759), to their contemporary expression in the work of social/moral psychologists Joshua Greene (2013) and Jonathan Haidt (2012, 2011, 2007).

I am more sanguine than Carr about the possibility of such mutually reinforcing empirical/philosophical construals of moral thought and action. My reading of Slote (2010), supports Carr's contention that care ethics borrows heavily from the moral sentimentalism of David Hume. I am less in accord, however, with Carr's subsequent assertion that, "What seems not to have been noticed by those prone to such borrowings… is that the accounts of moral life and development of many of these past philosophers do not sit easily with the metaphysical and ontological presuppositions and/or commitments of modern and other scientific enquiry" (2014: 502). Carr further argues that this "attempt… to serve two masters – is often a source of not only deep theoretical tensions but of genuine practical confusions about what moral education really means and how such education might or ought be properly distinguished from other sorts of human socialization or behaviour change" (2014: 502). These allegations, if true, would suggest that my account is founded on an inaccurate construal of the relationship between useful empirical accounts of moral cognition and an ontologically and epistemologically sound and consistent basis in a naturalist philosophy.

It is interesting to note Carr's argument that moral philosophy must push back against empirical encroachment. In responding to Carr's arguments, and his allegations relating to Hume, it is important to acknowledge the specific debt or relationship between his work and contemporary scholarship in neuroscience and empirical moral psychology. I begin by confirming that my reading of Hume centres on his positive project rather than the scepticism for which he is perhaps better known. A close reading of Hume leaves an unmistakable sense of his favourable prognosis for the future of what he himself termed "the moral sciences" and of moral philosophy's potential contribution to this project. Among Hume scholars, I find the Kemp Smith (1941) interpretation of his work most compelling, and my emphasis on Hume's positive project reflects this influence. Garret suggests in the preface to a recent edition of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, that Kemp Smith's analysis is still, "..unsurpassed in its comprehensive coverage of the ideas and issues of Hume's *Treatise*" (1941). The work of Flew (1986: 2; cited in Williams, 1990: 294) is important for speaking both to the positive aspects of Hume's thought and for its emphasis on his expansive pluralism; as Flew notes "…for Hume, philosophy was a contribution to 'the moral sciences', which include not just history, economics and the other social sciences, but also psychology" (Flew, 1986; as cited in

Williams, 1990: 294). I spend a significant amount of time on Hume and those I view as his contemporary inheritors in moral psychology and related domains. I do this in order to illustrate what I feel is the deep consistency of Hume's positive project and on-going work in moral psychology.

When self-described "neurophilosopher" Patricia Churchland's argued that, "The great philosopher David Hume gave the questions their clearest analysis and set the stage for modern scientific investigation" (2011: 44), she was referring to Hume's account of an illusive self and its relationship to growing empirical understandings in this area. In other works (see 2012, 2002, 1989). Churchland describes the use she has made of Hume's compelling accounts of natural sentiment and sociability in humans and how these accounts are fundamentally consistent with our growing understanding of oxytocin, vasopressin, and other aspects of the neurochemical structure of trust, especially in kin group contexts. Consistent with the notion that his work contained positive as well as negative or purely critical aspects, I concur with Churchland's argument that the contemporary empirical project to build understandings of morality through empirical moral psychology is something Hume would have considered deeply consistent with his own orientation.

Perhaps the "the recent sentimentalist drift" Carr condemns actually promises to lead moral education discourse towards more compelling and powerful construals of the essential nature of moral cognition, motivation and action. In any case, the possibility remains that incorporating these empirical insights into our discourse will lead to more comprehensive and accounts of moral psychology and, by extension, to more effective programmes of narrative and affect-led moral education. Carr asserts that synthesising the philosophical project of Hume and contemporary moral psychology is impossible or results in "deep theoretical tensions" and "practical confusions". In contrast with Carr, in Section 2.8 I argue…. I argue that a naturalist foundation with which Hume would have been broadly sympathetic generally supports the methods and aims of contemporary empirical moral psychology.

Though Carr is critical of Hume, or at least of those who see themselves as Hume's empirical inheritors, his endorsement of Kant's continued authority in moral philosophy and moral education is enthusiastic. Aligning Piaget and Kohlberg with rationalist, Kantian conceptions of moral judgment, Carr argues that it is "of the utmost importance to appreciate the deep metaphysical gulf between Kant's moral psychology and…modern constructions" (2014:

504). Carr avers that Kant's conception of explicitly moral agency is "obedience to the categorical imperative…quite independent of or unconditioned by any.. empirically determined motives." He reminds us that "Kant's epistemology subscribes to a 'noumenal' reality that transcends the causally ordered perceptions of empirical experience, so his ethics presupposes a source or ground of moral agency that must – if we are to be genuinely free and responsible moral agents – utterly transcend the causal nexus of otherwise empirically conditioned human conduct" (2014: 504).

Carr's arguments raise an essential question. Specifically, if theoretical systems, such as that of Kant, conflict with empirically supported construals of, for example, moral cognition, which ought to prevail? It seems wrong to reject empirical explanations solely because, or even to the extent that, an observable reality is considered to be inconsistent with purely abstract philosophical systems. Such *prima facie* rejection would not seem to be a helpful approach for those who would seek to produce or predict observable (behavioural) educational results. As Clark puts it, "Rational theory appraisal requires that competing theories be put to the test and their incompatibility be resolved either by one replacing the other or both being eliminated and replaced by a third more encompassing theory" (Clark, 2015: 45). There is no requirement for empirical explanations to comport with purely theoretical systems. If one rejects the idea of some kind of foundational first philosophy, it would seem to be normatively right for purely theoretical explanation to either adapt or give way when warranted by new empirical evidence.

1.5.5. Narrative and "Educating the Emotions"

A final current moral education conversation germane to this work revolves around the role of the arts, specifically narrative, in educating the emotions; I engage with Greene's speculation on the development of the moral emotions in Section 6.10. Debate on the efficacy of literature and other artistic vehicles in nurturing understanding and care for self and others is a lively and important subject (See McIntosh, 2015). I am among those who argue that literary and life insights are, to a degree, positively correlated. This question is further explored in my (Chapter 7) exploration of narrative as a "primary act of mind". Also relevant to the question of narrative and educating the emotions is Egan's (1993) argument on the particular affective power of fairy tales; I engage with this work in Section 9.3.

Chapter 2

A Pluralist Philosophical Naturalism

This research combines philosophical discussion and relatively abstract arguments about narrative-led experience with more empirical accounts of empathy. The specific role of this chapter is to describe the particular form of "pluralistic" naturalism, which I argue is the best available description of knowledge. In doing so, I go into considerable detail in an attempt to situate my own pluralistic naturalism within the context of a broader ontological/epistemological spectrum.

I take time to engage with both the uncompromising physicalism of David Papineau (1993, 2008) (in Section 2.2.) and the more strongly dualist approaches of Mary Midgley (1992, 2001) in Section 2.3. and Roger Scruton (1997, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c) in Section 2.6. My reason for choosing these particular thinkers is the particular force and clarity of their arguments, albeit in defence of sharply contrasting perspectives. Ultimately, my intention is to position my own naturalism in relation to both more and less physicalist arguments; I outline the pluralistic naturalism I subscribe to in Section 2.5 and Section 2.7. In brief, I argue that Papineau's very strong physicalism would be unlikely to endorse narrative reflection about the world as a useful philosophical project. At the other end of the spectrum, I contrast a physicalist inspired primacy of scientific entities and methods with Scruton's view that empirical accounts are likely to reveal only "trivial" truths about morality.

My work relies on both empirical arguments about the nature and catalysts of empathy and a positive engagement with more opaque theorising about moral life narrative. The contrast between the methods and truth conditions in these two domains compels me to include a thorough explanation of how I believe that each can be encompassed within a single knowledge framework without contradiction. This chapter explains a form of pluralistic naturalism that both privileges the methods and findings of the physical sciences and recognises the usefulness and legitimacy of alternative modes of explanation and description, such as narrative. Rather than engaging directly with narrative moral education, therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to establish a framework for the arguments about narrative and empathy that follow.

2.1. The Role of Philosophical Naturalism in this Research

In my first chapter, I described this research project as being ultimately for an actionable plan for education for empathy (EfE). Working backwards from this goal, I will now describe the logical progression of my arguments. First of all, my EfE programme is built upon an endorsement of a moral life narrative approach (MLN) to moral education. I believe that a MLN approach, given the affective engagement I will argue it typically entails, is more likely to produce tangible positive learning outcomes than (relatively reason-led) values/character centred alternatives. Secondly, my beliefs regarding the relative efficacy of narrative/affect-led learning for empathy is founded on two primary sources. My 2010 workshop impressed upon me the power of actual rescuer/bystander/victim life narratives to create what appeared uniquely powerful learning engagements. My approach to designing a genocide education programme in Phnom Penh did not grow out of any primary or secondary research on historical or moral education; my impressions emerged from practical experience with students. The experience was affecting, memorable and very powerful for teacher and students alike. My work was not at that stage grounded in any wider theoretical or empirical framework or assumptions. This experience prompted my interest in pursuing an inquiry into story/affect-led empathy education. These inquiries led me to emerging research on empathy and its relationship to narrative.

As long as I have had a considered view on ontological or epistemological questions, I have been closest to the particular philosophical perspective embodied in John Dewey's "pluralistic naturalism" (1927, 1929) or similarly expressed in the more contemporary form of John Shook's construal of "flexible naturalism" (2008). I will describe the nature and entailments of this naturalist perspective in this chapter. By way of introduction, it is important to note the role this description of naturalism plays within the work as a whole.

Specifically, I believe that the empirical research of *inter alia* Haidt (Haidt and Joseph, 2004; Haidt, 2001, 2003, 2003a, 2003b, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012), Batson (1997; 2011; Baton *et al.,* 2003) and Greene (2013, 2007) and Paxton *et al.*, 2012), facilitates an important step forward for our understandings of human moral cognition. My endorsement or privileging of empirical methods is consistent with a naturalist approach. I also argue, however, that ineffable moral descriptions or experiences, embodied in, or expressed by, narrative, and not reducible to the methods and entities of the physical sciences, also have an important role to play in this work.

Dewey and Shook express a compelling and consistent form of naturalism. Their construal of naturalism is consistent with both the empirical account of empathy I explore and the more theoretical story of narrative I employ to support my particular EfE account.

As part of my project for putting a particular view of knowledge and human moral nature into an historical/philosophical context, I will touch upon the work of David Hume (1738, 1748). I expect the rationale for the links I make between my current research and Hume's thought will soon be evident. A work construing moral cognition as an affect-led process and drawing on empirical moral psychology, ought, I think, reference the pre-eminent thinker of the sentimentalist tradition and his empirical aspirations for future "moral science". More specifically, both Hume's positive and sceptical projects are relevant here. The former relates to what I will argue was Hume's sanguine view of drawing defensible and useful conclusions about morality from empirical approaches.

Hume's scepticism is also very relevant; I am bound to maintain that the self is, as Hume gestured and others developed, more of a process than a thing or fixed entity. Self, at least in any scientifically literate construal, must be seen as characterised by continual flux and redefinition. The very fact that these boundaries and definitions are not entirely fixed is one reason that moral education can influence aspects of emerging, changing identities. Much rests, however, on how far we take the notion of ephemeral self. If the self is construed as completely illusory, then moral autonomy and accountability, also required of a positive project of moral education, seem to be fatally undermined. In examining arguments of Hume and Midgley, I seek to construe a self sufficiently elastic to change in a normatively meaningful way, but also sufficiently fixed to bear responsibility for actions and moral identity over time.

This chapter, then, is concerned with a defining ideological confrontation. This confrontation is between variously uncompromising physicalist interpretations of human moral nature and those that reject this alleged "atomism" or "reductionism" of moral phenomena. Many astute and influential thinkers assume – or are assumed to assume – absolutist positions in this clash of visions. Perhaps it is the nature of this (or any?) discourse that the most extreme or uncompromising positions are often taken, *ex ungue leonem,* as representative of their wider movements. In this chapter, I seek a synthesis of broadly empirical/naturalist epistemologies

with the ideas of thinkers typically construed as inflexibly resistant to this "reductionist" intrusion into the "ineffable" realm of moral judgment and experience.

My selection of thinkers is based on a number of factors. First of all, I am interested in their unique (and, at times, uncompromising) contributions to the question of what cognitive science can actually contribute to our understanding of morality. I also base my selection on the prominence and influence of their ideas. Some thinkers I engage with, such as Sam Harris (2010) and Roger Scruton (2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2006, 2004, 1987), are most influential as popularisers of ideas for non-specialist audiences. Harris, in particular, is firmly established as a major figure in public moral discourse. In the preface to Harris' *Moral Landscape* (2010) are found enthusiastic endorsements from such prominent public intellectuals as Ian McEwan ("Reason has never had a more powerful advocate.."), Steven Pinker ("Harris makes a powerful case.."), Richard Dawkins ("Harris' work.. will turn their [moral philosophers'] world upside down"),   and Lawrence Krauss ("..readers are bound to come away with previously held convictions about the world challenged, and a vital new awareness about the nature of science and reason in our lives").

Harris' impact as a populariser of a certain form of hard-line empiricism, even scientism as regards moral questions is evident. Though thinkers like Harris and Scruton communicate with one another through more general or popular media, their ideas are also important for explicitly academic inquiry. Harris and Scruton matter to this work because they matter to so many. The influence of Harris, Scruton is broad and deep; it is felt both within and beyond strictly academic discourse. The tendency of these two ideological adversaries to occasionally take the easy case and present a somewhat course-grained analysis of their opponents' views, actually raises an interesting opportunity to draw out a surprising but coherent synthesis of their ideas.

I also choose to engage with thinkers, like Patricia Churchland (2011, 2012) and Mary Midgley (1992, 2001). It is true that the methods and audiences of Churchland and Midgley, though both are broadly influential, tend to be more traditionally academic than Harris or Scruton. The (contrasting) arguments Churchland and Midgley choose are particularly cogent and influential expressions of their (apparently) completely incompatible moral outlooks. I focus on Churchland and Midgley, as each is influential in their specialist area and, perhaps even more importantly, each has experienced great success in reaching a relatively wide

audience through their more popular works. It is through their impact on middlebrow media, rather than their more specialist work, which prompts me to single them out. If hearts and minds are to be won over to EfE, influencing popular opinion is perhaps more important than an exclusive focus on debate within the academy.

Whether popularisers or not, I engage with all of these thinkers in order to explore whether there is a way to coherently combine some aspect of either argument, or whether the differences are as profound and incommensurable as they initially appear. I will suggest that a pluralistic form of naturalism can embrace key aspects of both positions without losing what is most useful and interesting about them. It appears to me that in the broadly, pluralistically, naturalist tradition of Dewey and Shook we find tools and justifications to endorse or combine the best aspects of otherwise irreconcilable positions.

I think that the importance of this naturalist synthesis for my overall project is apparent. Specifically, the construals of moral philosophy and (moral) psychology I subscribe to draw upon robust empirical reference points and tools. This is not the end of this story, however. My work on narrative explicitly draws strength from (rather than in spite of) what others and I construe as irreducible and subjective experiences of MLN. The very ambiguity of story, and necessity of (inter) subjective interpretation will be described as a source of deep meaning-making and, I believe, enduring learning. The question of the extent to which learning outcomes of such empathy engagements are measurable is important. However, the value ("truth" and otherwise) of narrative process is situated within an ineffable realm distinct from more empirical knowledge domains and is unlikely to admit of objective verification. I do not believe that it is possible (or discursively necessary) to reduce narrative experience down to some kind of notional core. I will seek to explore how the kind of moral life narrative learning I propose draws on both these (empirical and ineffable) domains without contradiction.

There is a common and current distinction between a methodological naturalism (which I accept), and a (strong/unqualified) substantive naturalism (about which I am more circumspect)[27]. In the section that follows, I will be distinguishing between a pluralist

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[27] As Peter Railton puts it, "Naturalism can be a doctrine about either method or substance. Methodological naturalism holds that philosophy does not possess a distinctive, *a priori* method able to yield substantive truths that, in principle, are not subject to any sort of empirical test. Instead a methodological naturalist believes that philosophy should proceed *a posteriori*, in tandem with - perhaps as a particularly abstract and general part of - the broadly empirical inquiry carried on in the natural and social sciences. Substantive naturalism, in contrast, is

naturalism primary concerned with a naturalist methodological approach, with a (stronger) form of physicalist naturalism typified by Quine (1994, 1985) or David Papineau (2008, 1993). The physicalist requires both naturalist methodology and suggests that any hypothesis or theory which refers to something not well substantiated by current empirical science is unlikely to be promising as an object of enquiry. What I mean to say is that, while (as a methodological naturalist) I support the goal that the methods of philosophy should be consistent or coextensive with those of the natural sciences to the greatest extent possible, I also believe (and argue that) the pluralistic naturalist is right to acknowledge the value of certain autonomous knowledge projects with distinct methods and truth conditions.

I have always found a relatively inclusive naturalism the most compelling. In the specific context of this work, this orientation is amenable to systematic and empirical problematisation of empathy and behaviour, amenable too to the idea of empirical measurement of pro/antisocial behaviours and the potential impact of (for example) MLN in terms of tangible educational/behavioural outcomes. To my mind, however, the pluralistic naturalist is not bound by any of this to a belief that empirical methods enable the physical sciences to bore down to methods, terms, conditions of MLN in purely empirical terms. I believe that each (more and less empirical) understanding is potentially legitimate in its respective domain. It follows that, against what John Dewey criticised as "apart thinking" (Dewey, 1963), integrated explanations are a defining aspect of this work.

The first part of this Chapter is about relative epistemological positioning. Specifically, I will illustrate how one shade of (pluralistic) naturalism is congruous with my subsequent arguments, while more and less "purely" naturalistic frameworks would fail to authorise the kind of evidence or arguments I offer about the efficacy of ambiguous narrative.

The second part of this chapter is about connections. I consider the long and influential tradition of (the search for) moral "science", specifically its background in the thought of David Hume and Adam Smith. While recognising the importance of pluralistic approaches to our understanding of a phenomenon as complex as morality, I also argue that something new, substantial and meaningful is being added to our understandings of the basis and motivation

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not in the first instance a view about philosophical methods, but about philosophical conclusions. A substantive naturalist advances a philosophical account of some domain of human language or practice that provides an interpretation of its central concepts in terms amenable to empirical inquiry (1989:155-6)."

for empathy and prosocial action, I will describe empirical research supporting the claim that it is possible to positively influence affective empathy. Though emphatically interdisciplinary in composition, inquiries across these disciplines share varied but consistently empirical methodologies.

Epistemological alignment with these methodologies calls for elaboration and defence of a broadly naturalist orientation. A second kind of connection I describe is that of moral sentimentalism (as manifest in the work of Hume, Smith and Bentham) and moral theories such as Michael Slote's (2007, 2010) construal of care ethics, both of which are centred on empathy and sentiment/affect. At a later stage in this work I concentrate on what is new and what, I believe, this combination of arguments contributes to our moral understandings. The connections I make regarding earlier ("sentimental"/affective") and more current ("scientific/empirical") traditions in moral thought serve to contextualise emerging research in an appropriate historical/conceptual tradition.

2.2. Philosophical Naturalisms

52 per cent of professional philosophers, when questioned in a recent comprehensive survey, declined to classify themselves as philosophical naturalists (Bourget and Chalmers, 2013: 15). Thus, it is clear that such (naturalist/non-naturalist) foundations continue to be contested philosophical territory. With this in mind, it is necessary to justify the pluralistic construal of naturalism adopted in this work.

I privilege empirically derived truth claims above non-empirically derived arguments. Drawing support from claims based on "naturalist" construals of cognition, demands a precise construal of that polysemous term. The ontological/epistemological framework best equipped to articulate and integrate diverse sources of knowledge into new insights is a form of pluralistic naturalism. Unconvinced of the quasi dualism of Midgley or Scruton, I am also a considerable distance from the aggressive confidence of Patricia and Paul Churchland, two additional thinkers who have also reached a large audience beyond the academy, albeit with a view diametrically opposed to Midgley or Scruton.

I will briefly describe some degradations of naturalism and are for a particular form or pluralistic naturalism relative to them. I would say at the outset that I approached this work

thinking of naturalism as primarily a system of progressive evidence-driven ontological/epistemological exclusion (of entities and knowledge processes), or series of demarcation problems. Having determined that the extensive support I attempt to draw from empirically led inquiry compelled me to explore the discourse of naturalist worldviews and their critics. I am increasingly convinced that the widest and wisest set of construals/descriptions of empathy reside in broad, pluralist naturalist frameworks.

I will later describe my accepted construal of naturalism. Part of this description is drawn from a discussion of how flexible or pluralistic naturalism triangulates between a family of views I associate with philosophers Roger Scruton and Mary Midgley and the influential strong physicalism of David Papineau. I choose the work of Scruton (2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c) and Midgley (1992, 2001) as personifications of the most unconditional opposition to empirical construals or investigations of morality for two reasons. First of all, their prominence and wide influence as thinkers lend a kind of *prima facie* importance or authority to their objections.[28] Secondly, aspects of their arguments are very compelling. The popularity of Scruton and Midgley's work is testament to their articulate and interesting expression of a counter narrative to philosophical naturalism.

I will argue that Scruton and Midgley construe the borders between empirical and non-empirical enquiry as more impenetrable than is actually the case; their hostility can seem dogmatic, almost tribal, at times. They are both too quick, in my opinion, to dismiss any prospect of empirically driven progress or fresh insight into our understandings of moral decision making. And yet their arguments suggest a welcome check, on a certain strain of uncompromising scientism (See, Sam Harris, 2010) that seeks to situate all meaningful psychological insights within a narrow empirical framework. Though he does not acknowledge a specific intellectual debt, Harris' psychological reductivism and ambition for a future neuroscience are strongly suggestive of the sort of eliminative materialism espoused by Patricia or Paul Churchland (1981).[29]

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[28] It is not claimed that Scruton and Midgley present identical objections. I do feel, however, that there is something shared in the essence or spirit of their resistance to "reductionist" approaches to the understanding of moral psychology and staunch defence of exclusively non-empirical approaches in the search for (non-trivial) insights in this area.

[29] "Eliminative materialism is the thesis that our commonsense conception of psychological phenomena constitutes a radically false theory, a theory so fundamentally defective that both the principles and the ontology of that theory will eventually be displaced.. by a completed neuroscience... even our introspection may then be

The "flexible" (2008, 2011) naturalism of John Shook provides a compelling balance between the eliminativism of the Churchlands and the dualism of a Scruton or Midgley. Shook has provided a succinct description of "three modes of understanding" upon which naturalist perspectives and projects are based or draw from. In Shook's construal, "Naturalism is a philosophical worldview that relies upon experience, reason, and especially science for developing an understanding of reality" (2011:1). Shook's affirmation of scientific method as the best or most reliable available method for acquiring knowledge about reality does not extend to a full elimitivist project.

Given the heterogeneous interpretation of naturalism, I agree with Shook that a useful starting point for any naturalist-led description is a clear statement of what is rejected by, or outside of any recognisable naturalist perspective. There is no space, for example, for supernatural entities in any naturalist ontology. Crucially for this work, this distinction between the natural and supernatural can be contextualised in moral education discourse. Introspective justification for the goodness of commonly held notions of the value of virtues or character trait, such as resilience or humility, does not constitute a sufficient basis. As Churchland (1981) points out, " … introspective judgments about one's own case turn out not to have any special status or integrity anyway… an introspective judgment is just an instance of an acquired habit of conceptual response to one's internal states, and the integrity of any particular response is always contingent on the integrity of the acquired conceptual framework (theory) in which the response is framed" (p. 70).

For a worldview rooted in such a strong ontological naturalism, virtues of this kind represent nothing more than "folk" entities, ripe for elimination. Pluralistic naturalism endorses a different course of action. A flexible naturalism acknowledges the distinctiveness of cultural concepts, such as these virtues, from entities/ontologies described by the physical sciences. A flexible naturalism, however, contains room for concepts such as these to assert their own autonomous truth-value in different terms. A crucial consideration in terms of this work is whether the good of certain values, such as empathy, can be reduced down to some more essential value, which does indeed somehow comport with the kind of ontological entity a naturalist could endorse. I later make the argument that a pleasure or good supervening on a

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reconstituted within the conceptual framework of completed neuroscience… and more substantially integrated within physical science generally" (Churchland,1981: 67).

brain-state contingent form of utilitarianism is continuous with a kind of good produced by the development and expression of empathy. Without wishing to pre-empt these later arguments, I will say here that empathy, to my mind, is a more foundational value that any other "virtue".

Empathy, in this view, facilitates or motivates derived virtues such as generosity or forgiveness. These virtues are essentially reducible to empathy and empathy is reducible to the kind of descriptions of desirable or aversive brain states, which are recognisable as within the context of physical science ontologies. Of course, it must be recognised that this pluralistic stance expands naturalism out considerably from the kind of more narrow construals favoured by Churchland. The pluralistic naturalist seeks neither to continually eliminate nor universally reduce. Shook's (2008) "modes of understanding" facilitate broad-based inquiry and place scientific method at the centre of this project, but have room for knowledge or truths derived from wide-ranging experience.

In Shook's construal, naturalism "is a description of the relationship between science and philosophy. Yet, the term 'naturalism' is often used to refer to a variety of divergent, if not conflicting, doctrines. In its various forms naturalism may be construed as materialism, eliminative, reductive, non-reductive, scientistic, pragmatic, holistic, 'soft', and many other.. descriptions" (2008: 1). Shook's own position, "..while committed to the scientific method as a means of acquiring knowledge does not attempt to explain away entire areas of human culture into the language or ontology of the physical sciences" (2008: 1).

The naturalism of John Dewey or John Shook is most fit for purpose to account for and integrate various and mutually complementary (non)empirical construals of empathy. Those who unequivocally oppose any suggestion that empirically-led study of, for example, moral psychology, promises any "non trivial" insight, offer, to my mind, the more narrow and less useful (even meaningful) construals of our moral natures. I will suggest, perhaps controversially, that Scruton is more of a cultural or strategic, and less of a strictly philosophical, critic of empirical psychological study than even he might assume. There may well be some (to use Scruton's term) "neurononsense" out there; there is certainly abundant (neuro) hyperbole and overblown claims. I will maintain, however, that an open and comprehensive naturalism is unthreatened by Scruton's positions. Pluralistic naturalist concepts and descriptions actually grow more nuanced and compelling when incorporating aspects of Scruton's critique. Before I attempt this synthesis of plural naturalism with one of

its fiercest critics, however, it is well to say a bit more about various construals of naturalism and the demarcation lines within this world view.

2.2.1. Papineau's Physicalism

David Papineau (2008, 1993) argues that all natural phenomena are physical. His thought is closely associated with an influential and relatively strong construal of physicalism. Papineau suggests that, in contemporary discourse, the term "naturalism" is both familiar and, given its varied construals, ambiguous. He suggests that, (1) "For some philosophers, the defining characteristic of naturalism is the affirmation of a continuity between philosophy and empirical science. For others (2) the rejection of dualism is the crucial requirement. Yet others (3) view an externalist approach to epistemology as the essence of naturalism" (1993:115).

Before I begin to explore what I feel are the similarities, differences, and relevance of various construals of naturalism, I need to comment on what naturalism, at least in its more thoughtful articulations, clearly is not. The reason I do this is to illustrate what I believe a cursory analysis of anti-naturalist criticism will reveal; the target of even naturalism's most skilled critics (such as Midgley, 2014), is to a large extent, a strawman. I hasten to add that it is not surprising that, given unequivocal and overhasty negation of any coherent concept of self in sections of the popular media,[30] the problem with both popularising arguments for the limitless possibilities of physicalist neuroscience explanation and the increasingly popular criticisms of them, is that both responses seem, at times, somewhat dogmatic in their tribalism and rejection of common ground. In light of this, I hope that even an explication of naturalisms as brief as that which follows will illustrate that certain naturalist construals retain both the valuable essence of this world view and an openness and respect for alternative modes of explanation unavailable to more polemical or dogmatic expressions of opinion.

Genuinely reductive physicalism alleges that discovery of all reality (and attendant truth conditions) must be reducible to, or consistent with, how the physical sciences do their work. For the reductive or narrow physicalist, no conceptual description is, or could be, complete unless or until it can either be substantively reduced to the specific knowledge processes characteristic of the natural sciences (with special [elevated] status assigned the concepts and

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[30] See Jan Westerhoff in *New Scientist* (March 1st, 2013).

language of physics as *primus inter pares*) or explained using some kind of bridging laws to physics (or at least to one of the other, "special", sciences). In such a framework, discussion of a range of cultural phenomena (including ethics), no matter how ubiquitous these inquiries may be, is either queer, misguided, or incoherent. In a reductive physicalist context, the objects of any cultural practice (art or ethics, for example) must be (actually or potentially) reducible to, or supervene upon, some existing or recognised physical "fact" or category.

If this is not the case, if there is reason to believe the cultural practice permanently escapes any existing physical categories, then (artistic or ethical, for example) disagreement is regarded as permanently intractable. In other words, the philosopher (in this construal) has nothing to contribute to the discourse associated with such knowledge domains or cultural practices. In the spectrum of naturalisms, from most Dewyan and pluralistic, to most Papineau-esque: uncompromising and physicalist, it is the former perspective which is amenable to the kind of alternative and autonomous explanations made available in story or narrative modes. Human life is, of course, a "natural" phenomenon in a literal or biological sense. In Chapter Nine I will argue that narrative is intrinsically embedded in human life. In Chapters Nine and Twelve I suggest that the truths of narrative are both potentially meaningful and ill-suited to purely physical explanations. This position is consistent with expansive, pluralistic forms of naturalism, but not with David Papineau's relatively stronger physicalist construals.

Mary Midgley (1992, 2001) is a trenchant and influential critic of naturalism. The problem with her critique is that it is too broad, and fails to make a distinction between the kind of pure physicalism supported by Papineau and the more subtle and pluralistic form expressed by thinkers like John Dewey (1927, 1941). I now turn to Midgley's criticism of naturalism and consider the extent to which her objections legitimately apply to the varying naturalisms of Papineau and Dewey.

2.3. Midgley's Objections to Naturalism

Mary Midgley's (22 May, 2014) address to the Royal Society of Arts provides a useful example of a certain type of non-naturalist objection. The subject of Midgley's talk was the idea of the self as illusory (and her opposition to this position) rather than a critique of the general truth status of naturalist construals of reality. It is apparent, however, that the

discourse surrounding the idea of self (and mind) may serve as a useful proxy for associated questions of the reality of non-naturalist entities in general. Midgley's ideas matter for a number of reasons, the first of these being simply her prominence and influence as an active and persistent critic of what she describes as a "strange, imperialistic, isolating ideology about science.." and associated imposition of this ideology with "impersonal, reductive, atomistic methods.. into social and psychological enquiries where they work badly" (Midgley, 2001:1). Midgley also matters because on some key points, her criticisms are absolutely valid and relate something useful about the limitations which one ought to recognise as constraining the reach or depth of explanation (potentially) facilitated by purely empirical explanations of mental phenomena.

Midgley suggests, and in both cases, rejects, what she construes as two approaches to "atomising.. human life" (2001: 2). The first of these is a "social atomism" which rejects the very notion of the group as "a meaningful conceptual category", endorsing instead a radical and unqualified individualism. A second "atomising" tendency is allegedly expressed in a reductive materialism. Midgley is right to object to those who reject group or social categories insofar as the socially embedded nature of moral cognition is central to emerging understandings of those, such as Haidt (2012, 2011, 2010, 2007, 2003, 2003a, 2001; Haidt and Joseph 2011; Haidt and Kasebir, 2010; Haidt and Kasebir, 2004), whose social/affect-led empirical models are an integral part of their arguments. Midgley thereby conflates "social" and "physical" "atomism" into a singular belief set. I will argue that she is mistaken in this and that it is possible (as I do) to reject the former, while largely accepting the latter.

Collections of people become "a meaningful conceptual category" upon reaching some critical mass of a consistent and shared quality. For the pluralist naturalist, there is nothing queer of meaningless about describing a group of people as (politically) "progressive" or "tall", for example. These terms are, of course, subject to a fluid process of intersubjective definition. Recognition of the legitimacy of their use depends on myriad ethnic, cultural or institutional factors. To dismiss (and I do not infer that Midgley would do so) the possibility of empirically refining or bracketing these terms is clearly not reasonable. The sort of ideas which would qualify someone as politically progressive on, say, acceptance of sexual or ethnic diversity in 1950 as opposed to 2015 are very different, and this is to say nothing of religious/intercultural variation at any given time. For example, 'tall' people from Holland and the Philippines are likely to be of quite different stature.

Whether physical height or social attitude, however, it is clear that empirical measurement allows consistent and meaningful distinctions to be made. The conceptual targets may be on the move continually, but at any given time/context, our attempts at clarifying them may be more or less wide of the mark. Perhaps parsing, counting, measuring, dividing (groups) does represent a form of social atomism, but meaning is retained, I think, when the cultural fluidity of (measurement) boundaries is taken into account. The pluralistic naturalist is perfectly comfortable with assigning some special status to the human, at least in terms of cultural expression. Rather than being problematic, construals of group identity that do not admit of (primarily) empirical description are neither more nor less than distinct and complementary categories or modes of explanation.

In follows that, in my opinion, Midgley moves too quickly in suggesting that "social" and material/scientific (atomistic) orientations must entirely move lockstep together. As I see it, the relationship is more of a dance with empirical and non-empirical modes taking the lead as appropriate, in a sense applying pressure to one another at times, but also giving way as required in the interests of a coherent logic of (holistic) explanation. Perhaps Midgley is, at root, a pluralistic naturalist, though I suspect she might reject this characterisation. Even if she is perhaps too dismissive of cognitive science, her articulate and thoughtful arguments are helpful in reining in the more breathless hyperbole that sometimes characterises visions of new neuro-futures, hyperbole which unnecessarily undermines more thoughtful and measured speculation.

Paul Zak's work, *The Moral Molecule: the New Science of what makes us Good or Evil* (2012) was sufficiently influential to be featured in the *Wall Street Journal* Online (2012), and *The Guardian* Online (2012). Zak is a reductionist; he is among those who argue that the biological sciences are equipped and ready to consume psychology and moral philosophy into the terms and understandings of neuroscience and neurochemistry. When Zak suggests that a single physical substance (the titular "Moral Molecule"), "…orchestrates the kind of generous and caring behaviour that every culture everywhere on the planet described as 'moral'" (Zak, 2012: xii), it rippled through the popular culture and influences the academic discourse as well. There is a reductionist ("atomist" perhaps) and course-grained argument about morality expressed in a particular wave of empirical study; Zak is confident about what (oxytocin) makes us "moral".

Thinkers like Sam Harris prepared the stage for these arguments by assuring us (in his 2010 New York Times bestseller, *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values*)[31] that morality "… should be considered an undeveloped branch of science" (Harris, 2010: 4). So, on one side of the argument there are academics/popularisers, like Zak and Harris, who claim that our emerging human science tools will facilitate a new, objective and universalisable moral science. On the other side (but defined by a similar kind of broad, physicalist orientation) one finds the successors of Quine.[32] The defiant and explicitly "scientistic" orientation of philosopher Alex Rosenberg (2011), for example, is a paradigm example of a narrow, physicalist orientation leading in exactly the opposite (arguably nihilistic) direction in its assertion that "the physical facts fix all the facts" and characterisation of all talk of normative standards as "nonsense" (Rosenberg, 2011: 97).

Anyone engaged with cognitive neuroscience talks and literature, the *PowerPoint* presentations and their inevitable, colour-coded fMRI[33] brain scans and other weary tropes, might initially be inclined to be sympathetic to Midgley's description of scientific psychology's, "unbalanced fascination with the imagery of atomism" (2001: 2). fMRI representations of mental activity, for example, are neither valuable nor valueless in just *prima facie* terms. Supposed localisation or identification of brain processes, as illuminated through fMRI or lesion studies (Damasio, 1999, 1994, Damasio *et al.,* 1996), for example, does potentially facilitate a range of ameliorative therapies and extends our mechanical/biological explanations of mental phenomena. Yet description does not, in itself, constitute explanation.[34] If differences can be bridged, there is a profoundly important conversation to be had between those espousing various complementary (as opposed to oppositional) modes of explanation for psychological states and phenomena. Midgley herself proposes her own version of balance in this regard.

Reasonably enough, Midgley has no objection to the scientific pursuit of "actual facts about the world" (2001: 1). She does confront, however, what she views as an almost messianic

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[31] Harris *might* have suggested that science helps us to reach, or guides our understanding of values, but chooses not to. Instead, the stronger and more unequivocal "determines" is used in title of his work.

[32] Quine's non-cognitivism led him to suggest that, "...ethics, as compared with science, is methodologically infirm"; this fatal flaw was apparently attributable to ethics' lack of responsiveness to observation (Quine, 1981 as cited in Tersman, 1998: 1).

[33] *"Functional magnetic resonance imaging"*

[34] The most current evidence from within the cognitive neurosciences shifts focus away from localisation of brain activity (mathematical reasoning "happens" here, for example) towards "plastic" or changeable – explanations drawing on legion studies (Damasio,1999, 1994) and network-based cognitive models.

ideology, a "scientism (which requires), the idea of salvation through science" (Midgley, 1992: 37). Yet perhaps Midgley's picture of biology and the cognitive sciences is painted with too broad a brush. She argues, "Both [material and social] atomistic doctrines rest on the idea that competition between separate units is the ultimate law of life. Both ignore the obviously equal importance of co-operation between organisms" (2001: 3). Ironically, it is Midgley who is synechdochically taking (the study of) evolved competition as manifesting all (possible) empirical/biological projects, and that this uncharitable representation is inaccurate and misleading. There are few more eminent living biologists than E.O. Wilson. Group dynamics, (limited) altruism and cooperation are defining aspects of Wilson's (2012) work. His construal of human nature is subtle, refined and balanced.

Wilson's exhaustive and highly empirical research has convinced him that "human groups are formed of highly flexible alliances, not just among family members but between families, genders, classes, and tribes. The bonding is based on cooperation among individuals or groups …" (Wilson, 2012: 17). I reject what I believe is an overly hasty, perhaps even dogmatic, dismissal of worldviews primarily grounded in naturalist frameworks. However, I continue to believe that it is important to engage, however summarily, with the arguments of prominent and influential thinkers like Midgley and Scruton in order to describe the points upon which a genuine and material conflict exists between their ideas and naturalist construals and where (often as a consequence of unsophisticated self-representation by naturalists themselves) a strawman naturalist is being attacked.

2.4. Supervenience and Reduction

Papineau argues that "Supervenience on the physical means that two systems cannot differ chemically, or biologically, or psychologically, or whatever, without differing physically" (1993: 2). Though arguments expressed in support and opposition to Papineau's (and similar) physicalist construals are exceptionally technical and require considerable elaboration, it is possible to grasp the essence of his naturalism through understanding one of his more accessible theses, specifically his construal of supervenience. Papineau's explanation of supervenience stresses that, "…all special properties, like chemical, or biological, or psychological properties, should be identified as types with physical properties…" (1993: 2). Without commenting (yet) on its truth value, appreciating the argument that any phenomena describable as chemical, biological or psychological is a consequence or an entailment of

("supervenes upon") some (more essential) underlying physical reality or change, is clear enough.

The question of reducibility is key here, and requires us to consider its relationship with supervenience as described by Papineau. Certain description types are available in certain knowledge domains and unavailable in others. For example, a type or level of identity description available to the chemist (the atomic structure of hydrogen, for example) provides one type of precise description potentially unavailable to the psychologist for the (meaningful) description of, for example, psychological properties (emotional states, for example). The power of this point to illustrate the gulf between an actual working out of (Papineau's) naturalism and (for example) Midgley's account is important.

> In particular, it seems unlikely that psychological properties, such as being worried about the future, for example, can be identified with any specific physical properties, along the lines of having a certain arrangement of molecules in your head. It is surely implausible to suppose that all the different people who have ever been worried about the future might have some intra-cranial molecular property in common (Papineau, 1993: 202).

This raises what an important point in relation to this chapter's wider argument. Specifically, the "atomism" which Midgley implies is a consequence of physicalist perspectives ought to entail that physicalists (like Papineau) argue for coherent reduction of some essential property or aspect of a phenomenon from the level of the individual to the molecular (or further). It is apparent, however, from the previous two Papineau extracts, that this kind of reducibility is not entailed by his particular construal of supervenience. Suggesting, as Papineau does, that a change in (chemical or biological, for example) physical structure, has some consequences at a higher, organic, level, is not the same thing as saying that a specific change has a (perhaps necessary and sufficient) causal relationship to some specific outcome. The critical point is that Papineau's construal does not imply anything consistent or universal in the outcome resulting from specific physical changes.

Papineau's account of supervenience does not suggest that some specific physical change will produce some specific outcome at a higher level. His account does not imply that worrying about a particular event, for example, looks a specific way at some more fundamental level. If it is not coherent to speak of meaningful reduction of some property ("being worried", for example) from one level to the next in the context of a single individual, such a proposal is all

the more doubtful as a generalisable account. Papineau's argument does not entail that some consistent property describing the way something ("being worried) supervenes upon identical causal factors at the subatomic/molecular ("microphysical") level across a range of different persons.[35]

2.5. Dewey's Pluralistic Naturalism

One seminal thinker whose thought, I believe, strikes the most compelling balance between naturalistic epistemological rigour and openness to relevant, though more ineffable, mode of explanation is John Dewey. Dewey accepted Santayana's characterisation of his naturalism as "half-hearted" (cited in Dewey, 1927). Though pluralistic, the naturalistic core of Dewey's orientation is beyond question. For Dewey, "Nature" is the locus of all that is "...real [and] substantial).. To me human affairs, associative and personal, are projections, continuations, and complications, of the nature that exists in the physical and pre-human world. There is no gulf, no two spheres of existence…" (Dewey, 1927: 58). And later, "...the main features of human life (culture, experience, history - or whatever name may be preferred) are indicative of outstanding features of nature itself…" (1927: 59).

There are a number of reasons why Dewey's naturalistic ideas fit well with this work. His prominence as an educational thinker is, of course, well recognised. The central place that issues of education and/in democracy occupy in his work are indicative of the social nature of his work and ethical commitments. This emphasis on the social is a key factor (and to my mind, strength) of his work. Dewey takes care to recognise explicitly social factors in situating human behaviour and political/moral concerns. Dewey's willingness to extend his thought into the realms of the social and political in works such as *Democracy and Education* (1916) express the open and inclusive nature of his wider work and concerns. This openness of Dewey is opposed to that of fellow naturalist, W.V.O. Quine, who is described by himself (Quine, 1985) and others (Malone, 2001) as being closer to more narrow behaviourist accounts. Dewey describes mind as "… a function of social interactions" (Dewey, 1929, vi);

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[35] Further elaboration of Papineau's position on property emergence and the relationship between the micro and macro realms is unnecessary (not to mention impractical) at this stage. Relevant further or supporting arguments are found, however, in his 2008 essay, *Must a Physicalist be a Microphysicalist?* In this work, Papineau makes a very clear and compelling distinction between the belief that everything is metaphysically necessitated by the physical, and the (associated but more unqualified) belief that this assertion also entails that everything is metaphysically necessitated by the microphysical.

the sociality which permeates Dewey's constructivism deeply contrasts with the reductionist and asocial perspective on human behaviour characteristic of Quine's behaviourist (Skinnerian) orientation and the manner in which he sought to naturalise behavioural understandings.

I hope that this discussion of Dewey's broad or pluralistic naturalism that follows, abbreviated as it is, will serve to clearly communicate that his worldview does not marginalise all non-empirical knowledge processes. To import the language of a different argument, given the general inclusiveness of Dewey's naturalism, empirical and aesthetic imagination/experience may peacefully coalesce in (ontologically) non-overlapping magesteria. In the following section, I also explore the (anti-naturalist) ideas of Roger Scruton. In doing so, I focus on two aspects of his thought. Specifically, I will consider (1) the extent to which his idea of cognitive dualism necessarily conflict with pluralistic naturalism and, (2) what his embrace of the aesthetic imagination contributes to arguments for MLN.

In contrast with Papineau's physicalism, Dewey's' broad naturalist project imposes no comparable requirement to reduce entities, or to consider how one ontological level might supervene upon another. The Deweyan broad naturalist is neither troubled by the autonomy of different methodologies and truth conditions, nor is he excessively concerned with the (present or potential) availability of bridging laws or the possibility of interdisciplinary consilience. The "problem" of finding such laws is, in fact, a pseudo problem. Of course, as a naturalist, Dewey inevitably privileges the methods of the natural sciences as a best available model for the acquisition of reliable knowledge. In accepting the autonomy of various knowledge projects, Dewey was interested in the general coherence (as opposed to reducibility or supervenience) of terminology and claims across cultural (including scientific) practices. If, for example, a term like "empathy" is construed in such a way by the neuroscientist that is becomes unintelligible, or in fundamental discord with, say, a social psychologist's articulation, then some refinement is required for the naturalisation of this concept across different domains. Suggesting natural origins for empathy is not to suggest a fallacious appeal to nature as source of its normative authority; making a moral realist case requires a related but separate discussion.

Dewey's naturalism does not include the view that all moral or aesthetic phenomena are reducible to more fundamental constituents. Rather, he grants areas like morality relatively

full autonomy in terms of their claims and entities. The cognitivist hypothesis itself may serve to illustrate the distinction between reducibility and physical realisability. What is perhaps most interesting in this regard is that the cognitivist hypothesis, at least in its original, found in, for example, Noam Chomsky's (1959) formulation, endorses a ("computational") model of cognition which is at once explicitly (to some excessively) mechanical/empirical, and repudiative of physicalist reduction. As Varela *et al.* note: "The central intuition behind cognitivism is that intelligence... so resembles computation in its essential characteristics that cognition can actually be defined as computations of symbolic representations." It is subsequently argued (in the same work) that, "To understand the hypothesis properly, it is crucial to realize the level at which it is proposed.. Although the symbolic level is physically realized, it is not reducible to the physical level.. the same symbol can be physically realized in numerous physical forms.. Because of this non-reducibility it is quite possible that what corresponds to some symbolic expression at the physical level is a global, highly distributed pattern of brain activity" (Varela, *et al.,* 1993: 40-41). I do not wish to digress excessively on this point, but I do think that this hypothesis clearly demonstrates a pluralist naturalist approach. Specifically, we are presented with a model which it seeks to systematize and create multilevel, rule-governed accounts of a natural phenomenon (cognition) without postulating reduction or supervenience.

The original cognitivist construal of cognition posits that intelligent behaviour presupposes the ability to represent the world as being in certain ways. "What is controversial is the.. cognitivist claim that the only way we can account for intelligence and intentionality is to hypothesise that cognition consists of acting on the basis of representations that are physically realised in the form of a symbolic code in the brain or a machine" (Varela, Thompson and Rosch*,* 1993: 40). I will argue that Dewey's naturalism is reconcilable with moral realism. Without anticipating too much of my arguments in coming chapters, I want to make an initial comment on what I regard as a broad compatibility of that naturalist/realist compatibility. The pluralist naturalist advocates embedding natural science-like methods and truth conditions within the various epistemologies that seek to understand our cultural practices, including morality. To take one example, one may consider whether broad naturalism is sufficiently flexible to describe a(n "is" natural) story that explains how communities express and ultimately internalise sets of moral norms, thereby performing the cultural practice of (enforcing) normative "oughts". Without engaging yet with a motivational story or an account of the normative authority of moral prescriptivity, this initial account seeks to situate morality

in the context of the natural world and to explain how communities may come to consider moral norms as "true". Of course, this is a contingent and subjective account of the formation/normalisation of moral "truth" in various communities. I support a stronger, more realist view of morality; the full argument, however, must wait until the next chapter.

2.6. Scruton's Cognitive Dualism and Aesthetic Experience

Roger Scruton's (2012, 2014) determined interventions against what he sees as hubristic scientific trespass into the incompatible and unknowable realm of cultural or aesthetic experience are assured and persistent. I would not pretend that the philosophical differences between someone like Scruton and Papineau are merely superficial — Papineau's position is, in many ways, as unequivocal as that of Scruton. And yet, Scruton's struggle is quite explicitly a counter-offensive. In this section I seek to illustrate that the most important ontological/epistemological division between (even) Scruton and a measured and informed naturalism is easily overstated. There is much of value in Scruton's ideas, but one senses in the intensity of his invective against "neuro envy" and "neurononsense", a warding off or writing against, some threat. This animus is unhelpful to the extent that it forces an unnecessary segregation between discursive streams that, I believe, could flow in a similar direction. Specifically, it is argued that, (1) there is nothing in Scruton's thought that is unrecoverably incompatible with an ontological naturalism and, (2) Scruton's argument on the inevitable (empirical) unknowability of many aspects of our experience does not entail that empirical exploration of these aspects, especially when also informed by aesthetic knowledge or experience, is capable of revealing only trivial truths.

It follows that Scruton may in fact be an ally of this work's arguments for MLN learning/experience. If one is prepared to join him in endorsing aesthetic experience as baring its own, autonomous, value, then a distinct source of value for MLN is potentially revealed. If his arguments in this regard are rejected, the possibility for empirical/utilitarian justification remains untouched and must stand or fall on other, distinct, merits of deficits.

Aspects of Scruton's arguments, especially those which relate to aesthetic experience as a distinct and legitimate knowledge process, could have fitted into either this or a later stage of the research, at which time I introduce moral life narrative. The ideas of Roger Scruton stimulate both potential criticism (of empirically-grounded construals) and potential support

(of the value of aesthetic [literary] experience). As Scruton's ideas have, to my mind, somewhat greater importance for the former (naturalist) discourse, I include the discussion in this section.

> ".. I think that this it [there is no reality over and above the material] is both true and false. It's true that we exist only insofar as we are embodied, but it's not true that we are identical with our bodies... It is true that the Mona Lisa is a collection of pigments on a canvass, but it's not true that she is just a collection of pigments on a canvas. It's true that that is how she is constituted, but what you see and encounter in that picture is, of course, a complex spiritual reality that is face to face with you and challenges you to assign a meaning, not just to it, but also to yourself, and I think that we are like that to each other, and when we look at each other merely as the bodies in which we are, as it were, incarnate, then we don't see what is actually there for us (2014, podcast)".

In this passage, taken from an interview Scruton gave for the *Philosophers Zone* podcast in 2014, he accepts the legitimacy or reality of material or physical descriptions, while refusing to find them sufficient to explain deeper significance or meaning in cultural phenomena such as artistic artefacts. Scruton is more circumspect in his positive explanation of what would constitute complete explanations, though he does, critically, rule out one type of explanation. During this interview, Scruton later maintains [that he is], "…not a Cartesian dualist, I don't think that we understand this mystery by proposing another realm, a secret, private realm of immaterial things, no… there is no ghost in the machine - but the thing is not a machine." Scruton espouses a cognitive dualism in this interview. Having already established that his is not an ontology based on irreducibly distinct material/immaterial realms.

Scruton proceeds to describe an explicitly scientific process of law-governed conceptualisation of "everything", and formulating physical laws according to set ideas of spatiotemporal continuity: "But, when it comes to the human world, we don't conceptualise it in that way, and if we try, we go completely wrong". This seems to me an especially important statement. Scruton appears to suggest that "we" are in fact not of this physical world, that is, if the "we" in this sentence is taken to mean some form of ineffable and mysterious human essence. Scruton presents us with a separate human world (of "..intention, goals, meanings and relations of a dialectical kind") and suggests that it is possible to give a physical account of, for example, music (in terms of, say, sound waves) "..without describing the music". Scruton suggests that understanding the music as the musician does, involves a completely different set of concepts (flow, climax, closure). He comments, "In understanding [the music] in that way, you're using a completely different conceptual scheme - but you are understanding it

completely…It is two ways of looking at the same thing - but they are complete ways. It is not as though there are any gaps in the musician's understanding"

Without stretching a phylogeny/ontogeny parallel too far, I do think that Scruton's dismissal of descriptions grounded in evolutionary psychology (i.e., phylogenic development) suggests a certain prospective view of empirical explanations for (ontogenic) moral development. Evolutionary/adaptive explanations for "advanced states of mind" are, for Scruton, "…true, we assume, but…trivially true". On this point, Scruton's example is mathematical. Mathematical capability may well impart some adaptive advantage, without, he suggests, "..telling us anything about what numbers are, or what mathematical truth is". Similarly, one might infer, that, for Scruton, the construals of certain types of moral behaviours as conferring individual/group adaptive advantages perhaps provides context, while still failing to capture some illusive but essential essence of the underlying (moral, for example) phenomenon.

2.7. Contemporary Pluralist Compromise

Though I will argue that empirical psychology has something of (non-trivial) value to contribute to our understandings of morality, it is not necessary to pass over in silence that which escapes its formal categories. I do not think that there is any inevitable contradiction in these two claims. For Scruton, "...the attempt of modern science to give us a way of living without shadows is…absolutely self-defeating"; for "The sacred, the forbidden, the transcendental..." inhabit, in Scruton's words, the "shadows". I believe (and will later develop the argument) that literature too, is present in these shadows. Literary engagement with the "mysterious" or "unknowable" (along with what may or may not be separate, empirical justifications) also has significant value.

Roger Scruton's ideas are germane to more than one aspect of this research. Scruton's exegesis of Wittgenstein on musical understanding describes a specific type of, or path to, knowledge. I do not believe that there is a necessary conflict between the path described and a broad, naturalist knowledge process. For this reason, I include a brief description of what I view as the most compelling formulation of naturalism in order to reinforce the point that broad naturalism may embrace multiple, autonomous and diverse sources of knowledge. This question of inclusiveness represents a general point. The more specific point in addressing Scruton's (2004) essay is to illustrate what I believe is a partial but helpful parallel between

musical aesthetic understandings and what I suggest are their literary or aesthetic counterparts. Though I address this second point only briefly at this stage, I anticipate that its relevance will be immediately evident when I later describe specifically narrative modes of learning and relating to knowledge and experience.

Scruton is a consistent and uncompromising sceptic of the claims of neuro-philosophers/scientists like Joshua Greene or Patricia Churchland that new empirical methods facilitate new and important understandings about human nature (2012). Most recently, he has argued the importance of religious belief and general inadequacy of modern science to provide succour and insight (2014a). He is a consistent and committed critic of the value of empirically informed construals of our shared moral nature.

Despite such scepticism, however, aspects of Scruton's work contribute to (even reinforce) aspects of my arguments. A brief description of Scruton's epistemology suggests that though conflict of his position with that of the more narrow or unqualified wings of the naturalist family (Papineau or Harris, for example) his belief in the unique knowledge value of aesthetic experience is not inconsistent with a broad naturalist framework. What is more, Scruton's description of knowledge bred of aesthetic experience, for example, is supportive of arguments I will later make on the value of narrative imagination. There is a parallel, I believe in what Scruton has to say (or approves of) about understanding music and understanding of literature. Scruton asserts that, "…at some level, you understand a piece of music only if you imaginatively grasp the state of mind expressed by it" (Scruton, 2004: 1).

Harris (2010) buries a critical and under-examined clarification of his definition of "science" in the *Moral Landscape's* second endnote. Harris' construal of science is very much more expansive, even pluralistic, than his critics (and at times Harris himself) lead most people to believe. As his description is, to my mind, so pivotal, I think it is worth quoting in full.

> For the purposes of this discussion, I do not intend to make a hard distinction between 'science' and other intellectual contexts in which we discuss 'facts' – e.g. history. For instance, it is a fact that John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Facts of this kind fall within the context of 'science,' broadly construed as our best effort to form a rational account of empirical reality. Granted, one doesn't generally think of events like assassinations as 'scientific' facts, but the murder of President Kennedy is as fully corroborated a fact as can be found anywhere, and it would betray a profoundly unscientific to deny that it occurred. I think 'science,' therefore, should be considered a

specialized branch of a larger effort to form true beliefs about events in our world. (Harris, 2010: 129)

I think it is interesting to compare Harris' (relatively inclusive) construal of "science" as "…our best attempt to form a rational account of empirical reality". Harris appears to me reluctant, at least in this instance, to confine his account of science within tight methodological boundaries. One might even suggest that what Harris speaks of, when he speaks of science is more akin to *wissenschaft* or *sciencia*, described by Johnson (1961: 9) as, "… originally the sum of knowledge" …and that it is possible that the unity of the concept of knowledge broke up at the end of the Hellenistic period." Johnson suggests that, "..specialization and the desire to classify, to generalize through quantification and to develop predictive values" drove later knowledge fragmentation. As Johnson further explains:

> "…mathematics and experimental sciences meant advancement of knowledge while historical writing – in the widest logical sense of the term – came to be considered as an enrichment through experiences. The scientist and the man of letters appeared to part ways and the ensuing polarism has served us ill, particularly in a society which profited extraordinarily from the applied sciences and technology" (1961: 9).

At least in my opinion, Harris' flexible construal of science makes him less of a "polarising" figure than initially appears to be the case – perhaps less even than he intends to be.

2.8. Hume's Naturalism and Relevance to this Research

David Hume's ideas are a central intellectual inspiration for the arguments that follow. I will draw on what will be argued as the remarkably prescient nature of Hume's views on our innate nature; views which remain so useful in integrating the wider discourse [...]. The spirit, if I may use such an unscientific and amorphous term, of Hume's thought is also embedded in this inquiry. Hume is often considered a seminal proto-psychologist. The enduring relevance of Hume's insights in this area will be highlighted when I later deal with the work of leading moral psychologists such as Marc Hauser, Daniel Batson and Jonathan Haidt. As someone who made significant and widely acknowledged contributions as a philosopher, historian, economist and (proto)psychologist, Hume consistently demonstrated a pluralistic openness to the methods and insights of a variety of disciplines. I believe that a foundation for moral education that draws on a more intellectually diverse selection of disciplines is likely to lead to more fully informed and effective programmes of moral education.

Hume's ideas and general approach to epistemology and human nature are important influences on this work. In my introduction to this work I suggested that it is important to situate emerging empirical understandings of moral cognition within an established philosophical discourse centred on the extent to which (moral) judgments are led by either reason or affect. I will argue that Hume's work, in particular the arguments first put forward in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1738), and later refined/revised in the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), describe a project for the understanding of human nature and behaviour within the context of an established, though evolving, empirical project many of whose contemporary inheritors are engaged in research in the cognitive/neuroscientific domains. I am confident that the author of the *Treatise* would approve of contemporary efforts to elaborate on and reinforce his project to create a moral "science" (understood as broadly as *wissenschaft*) through a continuous process of empirical and epistemological progression and interdisciplinary dialogue.

In addition to acknowledging the spirit of Hume's (balance of) rigour and interdisciplinary openness, there is another reason to cite Hume at this stage. Hume's perspective is also important in suggesting demarcation lines between what we are justified in expecting from moral "science" and the limitations of the disciplines Hume includes in his (broad) conception of "science". I would suggest that Hume is an ally only in the articulation of my naturalist approach and the possibilities and implications I draw from it. I do not draw on Hume as a source of unqualified support for my assertion that (objective) moral "knowledge" is indeed conceivable in a context in which error is, nevertheless, possible. In, *David Hume: Philosopher of Moral Science* (1986), Anthony Flew (1986: 2 cited in Williams, 1990: 294). suggests that:

> "..for Hume, philosophy was a contribution to 'the moral sciences', which include not just history, economics and the other social sciences, but also psychology". Knowledge is possible only where error is inconceivable, so that knowledge depends on having reasons that entail the truth of the proposition known; that we never have non-inferential knowledge of anything beyond the content of our own minds."

The reality of the kind of intersubjective moral truths (the absolute negative value of pain, for example), I defend does not meet the criteria for entailment outlined above. What is more, I do not believe that such any Humean moral "science" (it is perhaps now better to speak of a

Humean moral *wissenschaft*) could articulate or endorse any form of realist, necessary moral knowledge or truth. Perhaps this captures a deep essence of moral antirealism in Hume. Specifically, moral *wissenschaft* is, by necessity, inclusive of the kinds of inquiry (social scientific, for example) in which entailment and necessary truths are trespassers. I believe that, for Hume, this impossibility of the formal, logical necessity of any moral assertion renders the entire moral project, if not worthless, then at least deeply contingent and permanently uncertain. The kind of moral *wissenschaft* I am working within is, of course, even more expansive than that of Hume. The suggestions I make are that intersubjective moral truths may be extracted from the sciences (physical and social), the humanities, and literary narrative in particular.

In sum, the similarities and distinctions between Harris' and Hume's construals of moral knowledge (and underlying epistemological requirements) are useful in helping me to situate and explain the sources and form of my own moral realism. Along with Harris and Hume, I think that moral "knowledge" is only possible when derived from diverse sources (I explained how this argument is implicit in Harris and explicit in Hume). Like Harris and Hume, I endorse the idea (explicit in Harris and inferred from Hume) that moral knowledge may be sufficiently certain to justify specific programmes of action, based on certain (in my case, utilitarian) moral facts about the world and human nature. Access to, and understanding of, these facts is a project to which both empirical and literary projects can and do contribute in distinct but complementary fashion.

Aside from the explicitly epistemological, Hume's thought is important in reinforcing the idea that moral knowledge (to the extent it is possible at all) is (or could be) achievable through rigorous and systematic research and methods. There is something in the prefix "neuro" (as in, for example, Churchland's *Neurophilosophy*, 1989) which has the feel, for thinkers like Scruton, of a contrivance or gimmick. Given this, it is important, to consider how and to what extent, contemporary philosophers like Patricia Churchland, with their confident speculation of the empirically ascertainable origins of moral behaviour are indeed the inheritors of Hume. Patricia Churchland's explicit acknowledgement of her Humean heritage (2011) serves as important confirmation of, at least her self-conception as someone moving a long-standing philosophical tradition forward.

Reinforcing the idea that contemporary neuroscientists owe a direct and significant debt to

Hume, as acknowledged by Patricia Churchland, is also important in order to reinforce the idea that neuroethicists are not an (universally) hubristic upstarts with outsized ambitions and comparably unrealistic assessment of their importance and potential contributions to developing our understanding of morality. Rather, I will maintain that the ideas of many of these thinkers, though on occasion guilty of excess and a narrow reductionism, do represent an identifiable stream of thought from at least the time Hume.

Of course, Hume remains a controversial philosopher whose work has produced competing interpretations. My reading of Hume has led me to largely accept what has been termed the Kemp Smith interpretation. In the mid-Twentieth Century, Norman Kemp Smith was instrumental in shifting the representation of Hume as a purely sceptical thinker almost exclusively interested in a negative project of philosophical attack and deconstruction to one also concerned with a positive construction of a revised (and entirely naturalistic) framework for the understanding of human psychology and society.

My emphasis will be on what I shall argue is, in important ways, a coherent and continuous lineage from Hume's naturalist project through to what I argue is the contemporary empirical product of his (and similar) perspectives and arguments. I argue that those who focus on Hume's scepticism alone and entirely exclude the constructive aspects of his thought are failing to understand the overall importance of Hume and the fashion in which these two directions in his thinking actually complemented one another. Given the preceding assertion, I am mindful of the need not to paint a comparably monochrome picture of Hume. For this reason, I will briefly explore some relevant aspects of Hume's scepticism and assess their impact on the pluralist naturalist epistemology upon which subsequent arguments will rest.

2.8.1. Hume's Sceptical/Sentimental Project

In many ways this is the most essential or fundamental of Hume's sceptical arguments. Hume's contention that neither *a priori* reasoning nor accumulation of observed experience entitles an argument for causal connection between observed phenomena in any necessary sense is well known. Hume supplants Parmenides' contention that *nihilio ex nihil fit* with his own suggestion that anything may arise from anything (1738).

Bertrand Russell and Isaiah Berlin both noted the robustness of Hume's argument against what had previously been considered an axiomatic truth of human reasoning. The depth, success and influence of this particular epistemological attack provoked too wide and sustained a response to be dealt with in this current analysis in any depth. However, I will argue that Hume himself did not feel that everyday decision making and the requirement for (progressive) certainty underlying it, was undermined by his attack on this aspect of the formal requirements of his epistemology.

With this formal/practical knowledge balance in mind, Simon Blackburn's (1993) articulation of his "quasi-realist" perspective is helpful. Blackburn's quasi-realism suggests that we typically (and ought to) proceed as if on the basis of objective moral certainty – even though these "truths" are not (yet) known to us. Blackburn argues that this outlook is essential in order to reach any workable conclusions on moral questions. Hume too was interested in the practical application of his ideas; his mitigated scepticism avoids the sort of off-putting and anti-intuitive epistemologies found in the scepticism of George Berkeley (1975), for example. Blackburn is right to reject as impractical any assertion that an "agree to disagree" relativism is enough to settle any practical dispute over moral issues; Hume would probably not have wished his argument regarding the formal limitations of strictly deductive reasoning to preclude sufficient epistemological confidence in various matters of practical significance[36].

A settled position (either implicit or explicit) on free will is a requisite part of a logical critical path for ethical arguments. Hume's position on free will is typically described as "compatibilist".[37] Compatibilist views argue both that human actions are the result of causal factors and that some aspect of free will or choice may be consistent with this. Expressivism is the view that, though our choices are determined by our own environment and experiences, they nevertheless express some definitive aspect of our enduring identities. The proposition that (moral) choices are in some meaningful way connected to enduring and distinct human attributes is an essential attribute of moral identity. Moral identity is, in turn, requisite to sustaining coherent construals of moral judgment and moral motivation. Though, as is the case

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[36] The "quasi" in Blackburn's quasi-realism seems to me a suggestion that living *as if* we have some moral certainty is essential in order to avoid incapacitating doubt or indecision. The question of whether one's *specific* moral beliefs are "correct" or "incorrect" is not, at this stage, a necessary part of the argument.
[37] "David Hume is widely recognized as providing the most influential statement of the "compatibilist" position in the free will debate — the view that freedom and moral responsibility can be reconciled with (causal) determinism" (Russell, 2008).

with causality, it is beyond the scope of the present work to deal with this issue in great depth, it will be shown that questions of moral agency (and the compatibilist assumptions on which they supervene) are relevant in a number of respects.[38]

Hume's perspective on metaethics was characteristic of contemporaries such as Shaftesbury, Hutchison and Adam Smith; Hume argued for the existence of an innate and universal human predisposition to feel sympathy or connection with the experiences, emotions and interests of other persons in a morally relevant fashion. Though it is difficult to argue that Hume was utilitarian in a Benthamic, or even Millian, sense, Rosen (2003) argues persuasively that Hume is demonstratively closer to a utilitarian perspective than to, for example, Aristotelian or deontological moral systems.

Professor Peter Millican is one of the UK's foremost authorities on the philosophy of David Hume. Millican situates moral judgment within a (Humean) sentimentalist approach and elucidates how particular passions retain their moral status or legitimacy within even the most utilitarian of frameworks (*Philosophy Bites* podcast, 2010). Millican provides the example of a nurse acting on an affective desire (or sentimentalist "passion") to assist a patient to become well. It may be argued that, as her action is based on a passion and as the satisfaction of a passion produces some pleasure for the agent, then the action may be described as essentially self-interested. However, Millican suggests that it is reasonable to speak of the passion, which after all precedes the action and its resulting satisfaction, as virtuous in itself. A morally relevant characteristic of the nurse's identity is the presence of this virtuous passion (or "desire" in more contemporary language). Millican, therefore, provides an example of how an expressivist view of moral action/judgment tells us something important about the moral character of both action and agent without requiring any contra-causal notion of free moral choice. As James Harris puts it, "Hume rejected the view that all actions are done out of self-love, and accepted a foundation in human nature for at least some moral distinctions." (2010: 123).

In subsequent sections, I position various neuroscientists and philosophers along an epistemological spectrum from Harris' strict physicalism to radically anti-naturalist positions. I

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[38] Sam Harris, for example, arguably gets himself into difficulty when arguing the possibility of moral accountability within a framework of reductive physicalism which maintains that all reality and truth conditions must be reducible to how the physical (and especially neuro) sciences operate.

will maintain that the reductivism embedded in views such as those of Harris (2010) does preclude the possibility of coherent moral judgment and responsibility, and that this limitation cannot be overcome without significant epistemological shift towards a more pluralist naturalism. My own (compatibilist) position allows sufficient scope for moral judgment and individual moral agency.

Hume famously described the product of his own introspection on the question of the self, concluding that his search for a self revealed nothing but, "…a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux…" (Hume, 2003: 180). Again, this question of self matters because moral judgment matters, and this judgment requires both some notion of autonomous choice and some stable and continuous concept of self; this self may be held accountable, and is, in a sense, an on-going moral sum of its choices. It will be argued that the idea of what has been described, as a "narrative self" is sufficient to sustain an adequate notion of moral identity. This narrative self as an awareness, at any given moment, of what is felt to be a continuous and characteristic life narrative or story that sets the parameters for our representation of ourselves, is sufficient in this context. In terms of the efficacy of moral education, I would add that these personal narratives, though defined by a certain consistency of theme, are not so fixed as to be insusceptible to variation and change based on new learning and experience.

2.9. Contemporary Perspectives on Affect and Intuition

I think most prevailing approaches to moral education are overly rationalist in nature and depend too heavily on the idea that learners primarily think their way through to moral growth or more enlightened positions. I have never been convinced that rational psychological forces or processes primarily determine the fundamental drivers of either moral behaviour or moral motivation. My argument is that guided affect can or should play a comparable role in moral education as it does in unstructured moral judgment. The affective is not the only mode of arational/nonrational cognition. Growing understandings of embodied cognition cast some light on our typical unawareness of factors (both internal and external to ourselves) that influence our judgements, motivation and (I believe) actions in ways that are not, strictly speaking, rational or affective in nature.

The study of embodied cognition is concerned with how one's physical surroundings impact

moral judgment in a non-rational (and often non-emotional) fashion. We are not (exclusively) our brains; nonrational and largely arbitrary aspects of our bodily states and their interaction with our physical surroundings often influence components of our moral selves. Intriguing research supports the idea of disgust as an explicitly moral emotion (Pizarro, *et al.* 2011). Research has emerged suggesting that, for example, gustatory disgusting and the experience of sweet or sour flavours appear to have a tangible, but subjectively unknown, impact on moral judgment (Eskine *et al.,* 2011). None of this is implies that the self and the brain are interchangeable entities; our brains enable our minds. "We" are not (exclusively) our brains, however as Gerald Edelman (2006: 24) suggested, "The brain is embodied and the body is embedded [in a social/cultural respect or context]". Our growing understanding of embodied cognition suggests that physical context is very influential in determining the content of our moral judgments.

Growing understanding of embodied cognition ought to repel, rather than attract, accusations of reductivism. The self within an embodied cognition paradigm is understood as brain and body inextricably linked both to one another and to the external environment. These ideas extend rather than reduce our conception of the self. Nevertheless, the naturalist narrative is often construed as reductivist (Scruton, 2014, 2012) and reductivism itself as mechanistic and dehumanising. Yet it can be argued that the contributions of evolutionary ethics, neuroscience and cognitive psychology (embodied cognition) collectively express a subtle, organic, social, situated and above all fully human view of the Self.

2.9.1. Embodied brains in embedded bodies

Enquiry into rapidly developing understandings of embodied cognition may seem a considerable departure at this stage, and yet there are several reasons to engage with these emerging ideas. First of all, situating moral judgment in the thick context of embodied brains within (socially) embedded bodies comports with the general thrust of the affective/social model of moral judgment I embrace. What is added to, if not affect-led, then at least arational cognitive models are robust behavioural construals possessed of real predictive power – and little evidence of the deliberate, ratiocinative processes described by Kahneman (2011) as "slow thinking".

It follows that one reason to introduce the arguments of the most influential thinkers in what I will call embodied/embedded (EE) cognitive research is to deepen and further elaborate an arational context or model of cognition which I have already defended and described in the work of, *inter alia*, Haidt and Greene. There is a further, distinct, but no less interesting and important, reason to engage with EE research. As noted, Scruton rejects any assertion that our ineffable/spiritual selves are coterminous with our physical selves in any profound way; Midgley rejects "atomisation" (again, of the whole into the physical). Given these objections, I engage with EE understandings to explain how empirically inspired construals of moral self are not reductivist - at least not in the way suggested or feared by thinkers like Scruton or Midgley.

The suggestion that casting light on the corporeal/external influences on behaviour is, for Scruton, suggestive of a summary exclusion of ineffable, incorporeal aspects of human being. This body focus is sometimes suggested to be a paradigm, if not definition, of a reductivist approach to understanding human moral behaviour. The question of reductivism is a persistent presence in confrontations between naturalistic and non-naturalist perspectives. "Reductivist" accounts of human/cultural phenomena are variously construed as (1) wrong (insufficient or inaccurate), or (2) repellent or unpleasant. Often the distinction between these two objections appears to be (un) consciously conflated.

In terms of objection (1), I have maintained that incorporating or acknowledging different levels of (autonomous) explanation can only enrich our overall understandings of cognitive processes. I argue that it is the opponents of multilevel explanations of cultural phenomena (e.g. morality) who unnecessarily limit or reduce our shared understandings through precluding the possibility of meaningful complementary narratives or explanations.

It is beyond the scope of this work to say too much on objection (2), or the perceived unpalatability of naturalistic accounts of human nature and experience. I acknowledge that such accounts stubbornly refuse to go "beyond" the natural world to source or support their explanations or to assign or assume some kind of transcendent, (innate or emergent) quality unique to our species. And yet, it is not apparent that the absence of a ghost in the machine somehow degrades our common identity.

2.10. Reduction and Physicalism

The Deweyan naturalist posits a multilevel model of the universe. An example might be useful at this stage. An architect's model of a building is not going to talk about quarks, it will discuss space, function, materials, the harmonisation of internal and external environments, et cetera. The architect's description will not include, or directly supervene upon, subatomic particles, and yet an uncompromising reductivism would maintain that our multilevel map of the universe corresponds to a single-level territory. It is to be expected, however, that our beliefs about objects shift according to their scale (molecules, cells, tissues, individuals, human groups). We translate knowledge from one level to another - or perhaps transliterate is a better term here. Each level instantiates at least partly autonomous, law-governed and internally meaningful and coherent frameworks of knowledge and causal relationships.

At the level of the building we have descriptions that are meaningful and have truth conditions. There are some configurations of quarks which will transliterate to the building's form and structure, and some in which it will not. If this building is reified in the quarks in the "world out there", then a multi-level map may represent the building. Just because the building cannot be ontologically reduced to a unified concept at a more fundamental level of explanation does not entail that it is not a "real" entity. The "building" has autonomous truth conditions (does it, for example, describe an enclosed space, or provide shelter). These conditions are available to objectively assess its status at the level at which it is normally recognised.

Naturalism in general entails a relatively high level of confidence that the world described by scientific theories exists in a real sense and that it is possible to gain real knowledge about this world. Being realist about scientific knowledge, however, does not necessarily entail a realist stance on the relatively less tangible terms and entities upon which a moral realist position relies. Peter Railton suggests "...contemporary philosophers, even those who have not found scepticism about empirical science at all compelling have tended to find scepticism about morality irresistible (1986:163). This reasonable assertion implies that some kind of explanatory step must be made between a defence of "real facts" of science and arguments for "real facts" in the moral domain. I have argued that my pluralistic naturalism inclines me to

believe that empirical moral psychology, for example, progressively reveals non-trivial truths about our moral nature.[39]

If Railton is right to suggest that such a commitment to the positive ontological status of various descriptive accounts does not, in itself, necessarily entail a comparable belief in normative or moral "facts", then it would seem that there is some work to do before I describe the particular normative ethical theory which fits my larger framework and argue why it is most convincing. After all, the assertion that a particular normative theory is true, or at least "best", begs the question of whether any normative ethical theory can be true; this point speaks to the essential nature of metaethical discourse. In Chapter Nine, I define a middle ground in moral education terms between relativistic "values clarification" and traditional, more absolutist approaches. In the chapter that follows I work to articulate a moral realist account which avoids both unequivocal or unsupported assertions of moral "fact" on the one hand, and leaves conceptual space for an ethical naturalism based on an argument that moral claims are *sui generis* and supported through a coherent structure of *a priori* reasoning.

One goal of Chapter Five is to build upon a general realist/naturalist foundation to support a construal of specifically moral reality based largely upon Railton's ethical naturalism. A second goal of the next chapter is to set the stage for the argument that, among sources of "real" normative value, empathy has a special utility in practice and promise in terms of being the best available value for bridging interpersonal or intercultural moral disagreement and thus forming a real workable basis for moral education.

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[39] This does not necessarily entail that the moral/psychological facts extracted from these empirical processes will ever reveal complete or exhaustive accounts of moral natures or phenomena or that they are not complemented by supplementary, autonomous, cultural accounts — hence *pluralistic* naturalism.

Chapter 3

Empathy and Moral Realism

3.1. The Role of Moral Realism in this Research

Directly relevant to my core research question is a tension which I have suggested exists between a widespread public demand for moral education in schools with deep disagreement as to what form this education ought to assume in a modern, heterogeneous society. In Chapter 8, I will suggest that arguments about or for moral realism speak to a central and enduring, if often unspoken, division in perspectives on the status and goals of moral education. In Chapters 4 and 5, I will defend a utilitarian normative ethical perspective. This specific endorsement of a utilitarian perspective supervenes upon a general metaethical argument about moral realism and the extent to which any moral claim is truth-apt. Arguments for an approach to moral education that valorise any central ideal, empathy included, are necessarily based on some form of realist moral ontology.

It is not essential, in my opinion, for a work about, or for, empathy to produce a *prima facie* case for empathy's reality or value. However, I wish to engage with the pivotal arguments and objections relating to my proposals with as philosophically complete a narrative as practicable given the limitations of a work of this kind. I earlier outlined the "half-hearted" (Dewey, 1927, 1929) or "flexible" (Shook, 2008) form of naturalism which is, I believe, amenable to both the insights of empirical moral psychology as well as the more ineffable insights of literature or narrative inquiry. My work on philosophical naturalism provides a coherent foundation for the empirical (psychological), as well as narrative arguments that follow. This naturalist base is not an unconventional foundation for a utilitarian ethics. Meta-ethics mind maps (Baron, 2014, for example) typically situate utilitarian ethics firmly within or upon wider naturalist frameworks. My affirmation of a naturalist philosophy is especially important given my quite extended engagement with arguments from empirical moral psychology and the implied endorsement of empirical methodologies this entails.

I would suggest at this point, however, that there is no necessary contradiction in simultaneously arguing that we primarily feel rather than think our way to moral judgements and that general subjective utility, understood in terms of brain states, is the best objective

standard available for normative valuation. The terms of attractive or aversive brain states are set subjectively (and correlate with positive or negative affect in a strong sense), but the assertion that greater utility is more desirable than lesser utility provides, I think, an unassailable ontological starting point. I believe this starting point is something one can be morally realist about in an absolute sense.

3.2. (Moral) Realism and (Philosophical) Naturalism

Philosophical naturalism necessarily entails a degree of realism as regards the truth or validity of scientific knowledge. Ethical realists endorse, to a greater or lesser degree, the truth of certain ethical statements or at least the possibility of more or less truthful ethical "knowledge". My own arguments about EfE have grown out of a naturalist foundation and extend to a prescriptive case in favour of a particular approach to developing a particular normative value or (empathic) behaviour. I see the bridge, or critical path, between this philosophical naturalism and my prescriptive programme has two components. I will first (in this chapter) argue a general case for an ethical realist perspective. I follow this assessment of the possibility of ethical facts or knowledge with a case for that particular prescriptive ethics approach which most comprises or endorses the kind of facts or knowledge with which my own ideas comport. I would argue that of all the things to be realist about, ethical beliefs or "facts" are arguably the most difficult or problematic. The uniqueness of the ethical within a wider realism is one reason to focus specifically on ethical realism in this short chapter.

If some moral facts exist about/in the world, then it is reasonable to assume that the success of various normative frameworks is a function of the extent to which they conform to, or clash with, given normative "facts" about the world. I am not yet concerned with the content of normative prescriptions or moral frameworks, only in their moral realist possibility. There is nothing, for example, in the core idea of moral realism that would preclude a perceived normative obligation to submit to "God's will" or any particular categorical moral imperative. The purpose of the two chapters that follow this one is to advocate a particular (essentially Benthamic utilitarian) normative ethical theory.

Moral realism is very much a heterogeneous concept. The first step in explaining the type of moral realism this work is grounded in, is to provide some explanation of the concept of moral realism itself. Among moral realists, Peter Railton's arguments are especially relevant and

compelling. A philosophical naturalist drawing from psychological realist models, Railton's ideas on the possibilities of instilling useful character traits or "habitudes" (Railton, 2011), represent an important enhancement from earlier virtue-centred theories and, consequently, are important in moving the discourse of empathy education forward; I will focus on this aspect of Railton's thought in Chapter 10. So it is Railton's defence of moral realism that matters most at this stage; I begin with his account of (divisions within) moral realism and a subsequent construal of the realism Railton defends and I share.

3.3. From Scientific to Moral Realism

For many, the core difference between scientific and moral realism is articulated in the time-honoured distinction between descriptive "is" and normative/moral "ought" truth claims and conditions. Hume famously suggested (1738/2003) that no statement about what one ought to do necessarily follows from facts about the world. If Hume is correct in his belief that facts and values belong to incommensurable categories then statements about what ought to be the case cannot be derived from observed realities about the world. Though closely aligned with the broad sweep and spirit of Hume's thought, Patricia Churchland (2012, 2011, 2009, 2002, 1989) is one of the foremost critics of any construal of permanent separation between fact and value as axiomatic. It is worth quoting Churchland at some length on this count.

> Morality is not the product of a mythical pure reason divorced from natural selection and the neural wiring that motivates the animal to sociability. It emerges from the human brain and its responses to real human needs, desires, and social experience; it depends on innate emotional responses, on reward circuitry that allows pleasure and fear to be associated with certain conditions, on cortical networks, hormones and neuropeptides. Its cognitive underpinnings owe more to case-based reasoning than to conformity to rules (Churchland, 2009: 427).

What Churchland is trying to prompt here and elsewhere in her work, is a reversal of the burden of proof. It is not to those who seek to create a supposedly "artificial" connection between fact and value to justify their unity or connection; no category mistake is being made. Those, like Churchland, who base their arguments on empirical observed reality, may promote the view that that which nurtures human flourishing or increases our safety or happiness, individually and collectively, is in the same category as that which, the same reality suggests, assists in our survival. Societies in which cooperation is honoured rather than scorned are not just happier, they are also stronger and more adaptively successful (Sober and Wilson, 2000).

Certainly this particular argument needs much development; I do not want to appear naïve about the challenges faced in developing it further. I would suggest, however, that these kinds of unitive, empirical arguments are compelling in more than a strictly intellectual sense. To my mind, it is the very empirical reality of these observations, and the connections they reinforce between the natural environment and us as a species, our biology, and evolved history which suggest a holistic vision of humanity both compelling and beautiful in its expression of interconnection. In any case, rather than spending too much time on this particular question, it is well to proceed with a more general account of the kind of moral realism I find most convincing.

3.4. Railton's Ethical Naturalism

Railton (ref) argues that "Although rationalism in ethics has retained adherents long after other rationalisms have been abandoned, the powerful philosophical currents that have worn away at the idea that unaided reason might afford a standpoint from which to derive substantive conclusions shows no signs of slackening" (1986: 163). In a statement on the essence of the challenge, Railton suggests that, "… ethical naturalism has yet to find a plausible synthesis of the empirical and the normative: the more it has given itself over to descriptive accounts of the origin of norms, the less it has retained a firm connection with descriptive social or psychological theory" (1986: 163). This question of synthesising aspects of the empirical and normative is sufficiently fundamental to my work to justify considering it from multiple perspectives. Patricia Churchland (2012), for example, has made important (and more current) contributions to these questions, but I will first consider Railton's approach to creating "… a more satisfactory linkage of the empirical to the normative" (1986: 163).

3.5. Moral Principles and Reality

There are different degrees of claiming that moral statements potentially bare objective truth-value. On one hand, we find the strong moral realism of David Enoch (2011). Enoch's confidence in the existence of moral truths "[which are] …perfectly objective, universal, absolute..", and ".. just as respectable as empirical or mathematical truths" (Enoch, 2011: 1), is indeed a "Robust Realism". Whatever the merits of Enoch's arguments, a comparably unequivocal realism is not required for my arguments. The epistemological scope of the type of "objective" moral truth I will argue for in the next two chapters (based on utilitarian

conceptions of irreducible value) is more limited. My claims are severely circumscribed by the limited number and specificity of any (purportedly self-evident) moral principles available to the agent who would instantiate such principles in particular cases. It would be wrong, however, to downplay the implications of this epistemological foundationalism. Significant consensus on moral principles can be achieved despite the on-going influence of bias within, and misunderstanding of, moral principles. I will later cite compelling evidence for - and this is part of a naturalising process — the empirical claim that there is majority consensus on many key principles.

This assertion of naturalisability is embedded within a falsifiable empirical hypothesis. What appears genuinely new in this approach is the proposal that some support for a foundationalist epistemology may be found in this kind of naturalising process. Again, this is pragmatic naturalism broadly understood. For current purposes, I am interested in only this first stage naturalisation, that is to say in establishing the innate character of certain moral judgments. A more ambitiously naturalist, or even physicalist, project of attempting to reduce explanations further to neurological or even subatomic substrates is not proposed. Consistent with Deweyan naturalism, I argue the potential coherence and autonomy of one (complementary) explanatory story told from the viewpoint of empirical psychology.

3.6. Pluralist Good and Monist Right

Harris' (2010) narrowly construed consequentialism commits him to a monist conception of the Good, and there is nothing internally inconsistent in his position on this. I would argue, however, that this indifference to plural values represents an insufficiency in his position. This insufficiency, coupled with his silence on any (explicit) notion of deontological conceptions of the Right, illustrates a deficit in Harris' ethical framework. What is more, if empirical psychology indicates, as it appears to, some defensible notion of innate and shared moral principles, then one is obliged to resist at least one central aspect of his position, specifically the monist reliance on a single defining conception of an all-encompassing (even if inadequately elaborated) conception of the Good. Harris can, of course, describe all moral judgments that are not of a purely utilitarian nature as the products of mistaken or inadequate reasoning. If he is correct in thinking that error characterises even moral positions held across the most diverse demographic samples, then assertions that such a fundamental change in moral judgments can be affected seems unwarranted and overly ambitious. I would go further,

and suggest that the monist conception of the Good, which leads Harris to assert that these judgments are erroneous, is itself mistaken, or at least inadequate. Ross, "held that there is an irreducible plurality of ultimate goods" (Ross in Stratton-Lake (ed.), 2013: xxxix). There are two aspects of pragmatist philosophy with which this particular assertion is attuned. First of all, there is the assertion that truth itself is subsumed within the Good - that it is only one of many constituents of the Good. Given this, there is no contradiction in arguing that any one particular Good must conform most closely to an objectively best Good, and thereby ought to reign as *primus inter pares* among alternative conceptions of the Good. Again, pluralism in explanation (via different academic disciplines) is accompanied by pluralism in appraisal. Of course, pluralism does not entail a complete relativism; criteria remain for relative assessment and appraisal. I only maintain at this stage that Moore is right to reject a monist conception of the Good.

I am more circumspect when it comes to pluralist conceptions of the Right. Intuitionists such as Samuel Clarke (Stratton-Lake, 2013) were free to assert four classes of duty: Beneficence, Equity, Self-Preservation and Honouring God (Clarke cited in Stratton-Lake, 2013: 351) . I would contest both the ontological status of Clarke's fourth category of duty and the practicality of its forming any part of an acceptable programme of moral education. The idea of self-preservation as a duty is difficult to defend independently of theistic arguments. However, it should be stated that the contestable nature of any eventual principles or duties which might form part of an education programme represent a strength rather than a weakness in terms of their validity and practical effectiveness. Articulated principles become increasingly contentious as they acquire specificity in particular cases. Any discourse surrounding translation from broad principle to particular interpretation is itself educative.

Clarke's principle is a very interesting example of an innately, one might argue necessarily, conservative principle. Where is any normative principle for moral improvement in Clarke's counsel that the Principle of Equity obligates the agent to treat others as he expects they would treat him in similar circumstances? Adam Smith's suggestion that, though they provide an important part of out moral awareness, we best base our moral judgements on not only our direct experience of social standards and norms as expressed in the observed actions of others, but also on a conception of what an impartial spectator would advise. Recognition of the universal tendency towards self-regarding preference is evident in the positions of both Clarke

and Smith. In contrast with Clarke, however, Smith admonishes us to rise above this tendency to the greatest degree consistent with self-preservation and general propriety.

Chapter 4

A Classical Utilitarian Normative Ethical Theory

I argued early in this work that approaches to moral education, at least in the United Kingdom, tend to centre on nurturing various construals of moral virtue. Such virtue-based orientations appear to be more prominent than approaches explicitly founded in utilitarian construals of the Good. A central purpose of this chapter is to begin to outline an alternative normative foundation for moral education. This chapter seeks to supplement Chapter 3's metaethical framework with what I argue is a compelling normative ethical argument.

Considerable time is spent in this chapter making a distinction between classical and contemporary conceptions of utilitarianism. Specifically, I argue in this chapter that though the utilitarianism of Peter Singer is often considered the definitive expression of the doctrine, earlier construals are both more intuitively compelling and better comport with emerging empirical insights about moral cognition. This chapter makes the argument that the classical utilitarianism of a moral sentimentalist like Jeremy Bentham or Adam Smith contains a more realistic construal of obligations and feelings around interpersonal connection than Singer's account. In Chapter 4, I contrast Bentham's qualified endorsement of partiality based on affection or social connection with what I argue is Singer's less realistic, excessively demanding proscription of partiality.

The classical/contemporary distinction is central not only because Singer's utilitarianism is uneasy with interpersonal connections and loyalty, but also because of the general centrality of rationality, as opposed to affect, in his construal. If readers take utilitarianism to mean Singer's utilitarianism, then the points made in Chapter 6 on the central importance of affect in moral cognition are likely to appear out of place or even inconsistent. An elaboration of classical utilitarianism's construal of the importance of moral sentiment and sociality in moral affairs is, I argue, an important addition to my wider arguments about morality.

To summarise, from a pluralist naturalist base, an argument has been made for a moral realist metaethic and subsequent, essentially Benthamic, normative ethical theory. These positions constitute the ontological/normative substructure for a construal of moral education; they are a combination of what I argue is "real" and what I argue is important. Later chapters will

integrate empirical insights on moral cognition into this framework and seek to extend the argument that affect-led moral education is more powerful than reason-led moral education in terms of empathy development. Of course, these arguments turn on the relationship between empathy and utility. I initially explore this relationship in my analysis of Batson's Empathy Altruism Hypothesis (Section 6.12.) and return to the subject in Section 8.5.

4.1. The Importance of Utilitarian Normative Ethical Theory to this Research

My overall objective in this work is to make the case for a reassessment of dominant approaches to moral or character education. In Chapters 1 and 2, I introduce the work as a whole and describe the naturalistic foundation supporting my instrumental use of empirically grounded construals of moral judgment. In Chapter 3 I describe the nature and extent of the moral realism which grounds my argument for Benthamic utilitarianism as the normative ethical theory which most coheres with and supports my subsequent arguments for empathy-centred moral education.

The current chapter is designed to achieve two central aims. First of all, I hope to convince readers that the utilitarian approach and perspective, in general, is relatively accommodating to the type of empirical construals of moral judgment on which this work draws. A second aim is to contrast Bentham's (classical) with Singer's (contemporary) approach and justify my allegiance to the former construal of the doctrine. In making this comparison, I will pay particular attention to the relative status of sociality and affect in the work of Bentham and Singer. In Chapter 7, I consider and respond to some common or compelling criticisms of utilitarianism. The classical utilitarian tradition associated with Jeremy Bentham (1834, 1780), John Stuart Mill (1863, 1861) and Henry Sidgwick (1907), while itself heterogeneous, represents a coherent overall normative theoretical base upon which later empirical arguments and evidence can consistently rest.

I will attempt to take full account of the limitations of a hedonistic, quantitative act utilitarian framework through a brief review of what I see as the most compelling arguments against this position. It will be argued that contemporary utilitarianism, specifically as expressed in the thought of Peter Singer (2009, 2001, 1977, 1972), is actually *more* vulnerable to attack and less in accord with emerging empirically-based understandings than its ideological precursors. I will suggest that the widespread belief that Singer's account represents the most convincing

expression of the doctrine is erroneous, and that Bentham's greater relative emphasis on sociality and sympathy/affect is actually far more in accord with the new understandings of moral judgment emerging across an impressively diverse range of empirical investigations.

In assessing the perceived weaknesses of (contemporary and classical) utilitarian approaches, I will also examine the role of justice in utilitarian thought. I will argue that the charge that utilitarian social organisation is inherently unjust and prone to "tyranny of the majority" outcomes is misleading. It will be argued that justice may reasonably be construed as a form of utility rather than a separate and autonomous moral value and that the utilitarian concept of "securities" achieves much of the normative work usually expected of justice. It is argued that an appreciation of the essential role of securities in Bentham's thought should allay fears that utilitarianism condones or encourages the exploitation or abuse of minority groups in favour of some misconceived notion of a quantitatively determined Greater Good.

4.2. Utilitarianism and Empirical Construals of Moral Cognition

In making a positive case for Bentham's (and rejecting Singer's) articulation of utilitarianism, I believe it is necessary to deal with some of the more prominent critics of the doctrine. I argue that key aspects of the classical tradition have been substantively misconstrued by certain critics of the doctrine. I also argue that there is warrant for much criticism of Singer's construal of utilitarianism. However, before exploring these differences within utilitarian construals, I will describe the arguments which have remained consistent across both classical and contemporary articulations.

Utilitarian construals of moral judgment (particularly Bentham's psychological hedonism) and empirical descriptions of moral judgment embedded in the methods of, for example, contemporary neuroscience, are natural allies. What is shared in these knowledge projects is a confidence that moral or cultural phenomena can largely be reduced to, or at least better understood, in terms of underlying sensations or brain states. In subsequent sections I will describe how scientific and technological developments are contributing to our understandings of these brain states and their relationship to moral reasoning.

The neuroscientist assumes the descriptive responsibility of examining brain states and their relationships to various embodied and external phenomena while the normative utilitarian

ethical theorist assigns himself the task of promoting brain states with particular characteristics. Among ethical systems, utilitarianism most construes normative value as something that may be reduced and measured. No virtue or value is considered a thing of substance unless it describes some real or potential change in sensation or brain states. The utilitarian argues that all moral values, to the extent that they have value, are reducible to the foundational moral value or principle of utility or, in Bentham's phrasing, "The Greatest Happiness Principle" (1789). Bentham spends a great deal of time describing the variable and subjective nature of individual pleasures and pains and how these sum to net happiness. Though his terminology is not that of modern neuroscience, I believe he would endorse the idea that we may understand pleasures and pains as at all times correlating to (more or less desirable) brain states.

In later sections, I will discuss how enhanced non-invasive technologies such as functional MRI, though still in its infancy, hold the promise of identifying neurological substrates to what we have heretofore only been able to assess on a purely subjective basis. I will also describe the extent to which anticipated technological developments suggest a future potential for quantification of pleasure/pain intensity in a manner which reifies much of Bentham's thought and bolsters his insight on the differential impacts of (quantitatively equivalent) gains and losses.

Benthamic reduction of moral value is clear and consistent in its references to utility as the sole normative measure. The goodness of pleasure and badness of pain are considered irreducible and defining moral axioms. This inherent desirability/goodness of the former and averseness/badness of the latter are the metaphysical starting point of Bentham's system. It follows that, in Benthamic terms, when we describe (and categorise, as he does in exhaustive detail in his *Deontology or The Science of Morality*) pleasures and pains, we describe something elemental and irreducible. Mill also viewed utility as embodying the type of first principle or "ultimate end" which did "not admit of proof, in the ordinary acceptation of the term" (Mill, 1861a: 35).

However formless or vague terms like "good" and "bad", I agree with Bentham that correlating them as closely as possible with brain states or felt sensations directs us to the clearest normative meanings we can assign them. If it is proposed that some value, such as fairness, honesty or justice has moral worth independent of utility, the utilitarian response is

always to expand or adapt the way we describe pleasures or pains rather than to suggest alternative innate values which are in some way required as a supplement to hedonistic understandings of normative value/utility.

As well as suggesting that the justification for all moral value flows from the single normative wellspring of utility, Bentham also attempts to adopt the empirical methods of the natural scientist in his approach to the (requisite) quantification of (desirable or aversive) sensations. Though differing in tone and emphasis, this singular focus on utility as the sole repository of moral value and confidence in systematic approaches to both its measurement and potential distribution is characteristic of all ethical systems rightly understood as utilitarian. Bentham felt the need for only one foundational Principle. He did not advocate absolute principles aside from Utility or attempt to construct arcane or authoritarian social or moral systems. Rather, Bentham's methodology is characterised by the natural scientist's proclivity to focus on the concrete, reducible and relative. His moral theory is infused with a legal scholar's intolerance of esoteric language or amorphous "fictitious entities".[40] In Bentham's psychological hedonism, what is felt is what, and all, that matters; that which can be felt can also, in his view, be quantified and measured.[41]

Bentham's "felicific calculus" approach to moral accounting, which implied that all moral reasoning could (and should) be measured, quantified and goods (re)distributed with consistency and precision, expresses an overconfidence regarding the potential reliability and accuracy of any attempt to quantify subjective sensations. Bentham's overconfidence in terms of the extent to which normative outcomes can be predicted, is a product of an excessively rationalistic construal of human judgment. The shifting scientific consensus in favour of greater emphasis on affective (relative to rationalist) aspects of decision-making will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven. At this stage, I would only suggest that, in terms of

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[40] Bentham (Bowring, 1846, cited in Dinwiddy, 1989: 43) suggests that much moral discourse is densely populated by "fictitious entities" such as "obligation" or "right". Bentham suggests that most people tend to overestimate the (objective) reality of these terms, when they should be seeing them as the subjective and nebulous concepts they really are (Dinwiddy, 1989).

[41] It should be pointed out at this stage that Bentham's model of psychological hedonism does not require him to advocate any *particular* type of pleasure over any other (aside, of course, from those characteristics useful for its measurement and quantitative assessment). Homogeneity of utility as a singular normative good does not entail homogeneity of *preference*. This question of individual/group distinctions in utility will be central to subsequent consideration of whether utility aggregation provides warrant for the "tyranny of the majority" charge against utilitarianism.

this increasingly superseded rationalist reasoning model, Singer offends more seriously than Bentham. It is also the case that utilitarianism as a whole is no more guilty of excessive confidence in rational processes than Kantian or Aristotelian models of moral reasoning and action. It is, nevertheless, important to acknowledge that underestimating the role of affect in moral judgment limits both classical and contemporary utilitarianism. I will later describe the role of affect in moral reasoning and the problems it creates for those keen to negotiate moral agreement and predicting moral outcomes. Suffice it to say at this stage, I remain convinced that despite an overly ambitious project of reforming the questions of morality in the language and methods of the natural sciences, a great deal remains in the utilitarian tradition which is of use to us in this process.

In summary then, I agree with the broad utilitarian arguments that (1) brain states are the original and ultimate reference points for moral value and that (2) the relative precision of methods and measurement characteristic of the natural sciences suggest imperfect but best models for understanding moral reasoning. I contend that, in order to have normative authority, all moral values ought to in some way refer back, or be reducible, to utility, and that the most informative descriptions of ethical reasoning draw on empirical research and understandings to the greatest extent practicable.

4.3. Bentham's Utilitarianism

To those who assume that the supposed inheritors of Bentham have moved utilitarian thinking forward and dealt with at least some of the doctrine's critics, it might initially appear unusual that I ground my ethical theory in a classical, as opposed to contemporary, construal of the doctrine. The reason for this is that I feel that the utilitarianism of both Bentham and Mill in particular is more consistent than more contemporary interpretations with the affective and social position on moral reasoning and judgment that underpins the approach to MCE defended in this work. I should clarify that when speaking of the "classical" tradition in utilitarianism, I will be referring explicitly to Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick except in those instances in which the difference between them must be explained and dealt with.

I do not wish to discount or disregard the important differences between these thinkers, but argue that they coincide sufficiently for current purposes to be grouped together most of the

time. Though I argue the importance of distinctions between utilitarianism's classical form and its contemporary construal (in Singer's thought), all these thinkers draw from a common core. When citing a position shared by both classical and Singerian construals I will simply use the term "utilitarian(ism)". On occasion, I will refer to utilitarian arguments particular to Mill or Sidgwick when different aspects of the doctrine need to be dealt with.

The first point to be made about classical utilitarianism is that it is characterised by consistent emphasis on the social context of moral judgment. We are continually enjoined to remain mindful of public preferences and opinion in determining moral standards and expectations. Leaving aside, for the moment, the question of whether this inclines societies towards reactionary resistance to innovative ideas (it need not), it is important to note that this continual reference to public opinion and normative expectations differentiates the approaches of Bentham and Singer. Another clear difference of emphasis between current and earlier utilitarianism is the central role played by moral sentiments in the classical tradition. It is not necessary to argue that sympathy and affect are analogous or interchangeable terms. It is argued, however, that sympathy, as construed by Bentham in particular, comprises a substantial and indispensible emotional or affective component.

4.4. Against Singer's Utilitarianism

4.4.1. Singer's Unconditional Proscription of Partiality is Unrealistic

Although I retain the core (and many controversial) aspects of a fairly robust (hedonistic, quantitative, act rather than rule) utilitarianism, I will argue that it is not these characteristics themselves, but their misinterpretation or distortion, which lead to difficulties in the assessment and understanding of utilitarian thought. In clarifying my utilitarian approach, I differentiate my position from that of one particularly influential contemporary utilitarian, Peter Singer. One reason to focus on Singer in general is his unusually broad influence as an intellectual engagé and the extent to which he has become something of the paradigm of utilitarianism in both scholarly and popular imaginations. Though I explore a range of Singer's writing, I will primarily focus on Singer's seminal 1979 work *Practical Ethics*, which contains the most informative account of his core ideas in this area.

An even more important reason to explore Singer's work is that those aspects of Benthamic utilitarianism most in harmony with emerging moral psychology models are also those areas in which Singer most deviates from his utilitarian predecessor. Contemporary commentators, such as Stephen Asma (2013) have argued that there is no place for (psychological/emotional proximity-based) preferences or partiality in utilitarian thought. It is my belief that Asma's (mis)interpretation is at least partly attributable to the high profile accorded Singer's interpretation of the doctrine. In *Against Fairness* (2013) Asma argues that empirical evidence suggests that partiality and favouritism are so universally embedded in human moral thinking, that any ethical theory which fails to incorporate this descriptive reality is doomed to irrelevance. Taking Singer as his archetypical utilitarian, Asma asserts that utilitarianism suffers from an unrealistic over-rationality to such a degree than it cannot provide a viable basis for ethical reasoning. Asma's solution is to abandon the doctrine entirely in favour of systems originating in the type of (non-western) cultural traditions that unapologetically draw on ethical favouritism.

The extent to which Asma identifies Singer's asocial account with the entire utilitarian tradition is evident in his discussion of a classic trolley-car scenario in which he suggests that:

> "Most people... will try to maximize the greatest good for the greatest number. They'll crunch the utilitarian calculus and throw the switch to save five pedestrians [resulting in the death of one]. The outcomes of the thought experiment change radically, however, when you replace the lone track-walker with your brother or sister, mother or father, or even best friend. Most people cannot overcome their biases in order to 'do the right thing' (in the utilitarian sense) (Asma, 2013: 41).

As Asma clearly believes the "right" "utilitarian" answer is to disregard preference, it is telling that Singer is repeatedly singled out in his work. Though Singer is Asma's favourite target, he does reference Bentham on occasion — though he critically fails to make a material distinction between their attitudes towards partiality. "This sort of [Benthamic] utilitarian approach was the beginning of the end of favouritism in the West. The seeds of our opposition to bias and partiality are sown in this Enlightenment era" (Asma, 2013: 54).

While I approve of Asma's extensive use of neurological and other empirical data to assert the general primacy of affect and sociability and his assertion that "[concepts of] true fairness developed in tandem with the cognitive advances of primate neocortical evolution" (Asma,

2013: 40), his dismissal of utilitarianism *in toto* is premature and his implied belief that the doctrine's most compelling arguments are advanced by Singer, mistaken.

Asma's confusion is typical of a certain tendency to misread certain utilitarian concepts. He argues "[Smith's] idea of an impartial spectator survived in the subsequent utilitarian tradition, started by Jeremy Bentham and continued by John Stuart Mill, which tried to formalise and mathematize the sentiments-based ethics of.. Hume and Smith" (Asma, 2013: 53). Along with (apparently) Asma, and Rosen (2003), but against consensus, Adam Smith was essentially utilitarian. The importance of this lies in Asma's misunderstanding of Smith's construal of impartiality. Smith's construal does not demand that everyone value everyone else's interests to the same degree, as Asma seems to believe, but rather that they be valued appropriately, given the total set of actual circumstances one finds oneself in. Of course, social circumstances (connections) are an important part of this. If a father learns simultaneously of the death of his son and of a stranger, the impartial spectator would not condemn his disregard of one death relative to the other or his expression of deep emotion. As someone notably influenced by stoic thought, Smith did feel that most of us tend to over-value our own interests relative to those of others. However, there is clearly a crucial gap between a requirement to re-balance this innate moral frailty and the elimination of all partiality or preference.

The impartial spectator assesses the bereaved father's reaction based on a kind of norm-referenced ideal of propriety or proportionality. This is the same type of ideal applied to the judgment of moral actions and omissions (one firmly situated within an holistic and realistic social/situational context). Far from condemning partiality, Smith would take a dim view of anyone devoid of these natural moral sentiments. Smith's impartial spectator represents a kind of external reference point, from which we may ask ourselves given that this is my situation, would a/n (impartial) person, without any vested interest in outcomes, judge that I have acted correctly? Obviously, this has completely different implications than a point of view that urges us to disregard our own interests and social connections.

The difference between these two positions also expresses the extent to which Singer differs with classical utilitarianism on the normative validity of impartiality. Of course one feels more for the child in front of us than one a great distance away. Of course people feel differently flipping a switch on a track rather than personally pushing another human being off a bridge, of course a physician feels differently withholding care as opposed to delivering a lethal

injection. The problem with Singer's moral psychology isn't only that its queer and counterintuitive nature renders it impotent from the perspective of moral motivation. The problem is also that Singer fails to acknowledge that in many (though naturally not all) circumstances, partiality bred of both biological connection and reciprocity has collective survival value and clear prosocial implications.

As opposed to Asma, I believe that, although the differences between Bentham and Singer superficially appear quite subtle, they cumulatively amount to very different construals and expectations of morality and human nature. Singer does not entirely disregard affect's role in motivating moral judgment. It will be evident, however, that at least some aspiration for a far more rational basis for moral judgment is implicit in his normative theory.

Though supportive of utilitarianism's hedonistic, quantitative, act-based original construal, Singer's contemporary utilitarianism is founded upon a materially different model of moral psychology. What is more, this model will be shown, in Chapter 8, to be less consistent than that of Bentham with insights emerging from cognitive science and related empirical disciplines. In this section, I argue that the differences in Singer's approach, in particular his emphasis on the rational in moral judgment and de-emphasis on more social aspects, support a normative model which fails to conform with increasingly agreed aspects of our common moral psychology, in particular our innate and enduring partiality for those closest to us. Related to this, is my concern that while discounting this affective mainspring of moral motivation, Singer simultaneously raises expectations of positive moral action far beyond that expected or required by his utilitarian predecessors.

However indicative his normative objections to (largely emotion-based) kin/kith partiality between persons, it is Singer's rejection of ("speciesist") preference of homo sapiens over other, non-human, animals, which is most telling. At once the boldest and most counter intuitive of his ideas, Singer's thoughts on speciesism (2009, 2001, 1992, 1977) provide further evidence of both his rationality bias and the intuitive peculiarity of his moral vision.

As an anachronistic expression of benevolence towards non-human animals, Singer presumably approves of Bentham's famous statement in reference to the moral status of non-human animals.

Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps, the faculty for discourse?...But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, can they suffer?" (Bentham, 1780: 311).

Though concern for non-human animals is shared, Bentham's explicit rejection of the capacity for reason (rather than sensation) as the most informative normative criterion for assessing moral worth is clear difference with Singer. After mounting an attack on the moral legitimacy of partiality, Singer (2009, 1977) proceeds to suggest a sliding normative scale correlating moral value and cognitive capacity.

Singer asserts that he is consistent in rejecting all preferences not based on cognitive function, whether social and biological preferences within the species or more general preference for homo sapiens relative to other species. Singer argues that it is disingenuous to endorse at the most specific (kin/kith) level and also the most general (species) level, while rejecting it at the intermediate level of race. In *Speciesism and Moral Status* (2009), Singer draws this analogy between species and race based preferences. That is an interesting, and certainly provocative point; I believe this point presents a real challenge for those who would defend preference as a prescriptive moral requirement (a parent has duties to children which are not owed strangers, for example). Singer implies that, to be consistent (as he certainly is), preferences must apply at all levels (family, relatives, friends, race, species) without exception.

There does initially appear to be a case for arguing that, if proximity (broadly understood) is a legitimate criterion, then one should be expected, even encouraged, to acknowledge that those of the same race are more proximate than others (strangers) not sharing this characteristic. In response, I would argue that it is possible to support preference at both the immediate (family, *et cetera*) level and the level of the species, while rejecting it on racial terms. First of all, I acknowledge that the (diminishing) number of those who self-report as having explicitly racist views are accompanied by those demonstrating exclusively implicit or automatic racial preference as demonstrated in studies such as the ongoing Harvard Implicit Association Test, as well as a range of other experiments (Crosby, Bromley, and Saxe 1980; Devine, 1989; Fazio et al., 1995; Gaertner and McLauglin, 1983; Greenwald and Banaji, 1995; Wittenbrink, Judd, and Park, 1997, as cited in Greenwald, *et al*., 1998). These experiments have indeed found that a majority of subjects make automatic normative associations based on race when

tested. Of course, the relationship between (automatic) implicit and (comfortably consciously expressed) explicit racial preference is too complex to unravel at this stage. My purpose in referencing the above studies is only to acknowledge that race-based preferences may well have an enduring impact on feelings of similarity and resulting interpersonal preference.

In response, I would suggest a thought experiment in which a decision is forced as to which of two individuals ("A" and "B") to either favour or spare from harm. Assume that one has an opportunity to ask only one question about these individuals before making a decision. For a certain minority, the top priority might indeed be to know each individual's race. Perhaps religious affiliation would be decisive for a separate group. I would argue, however, that when given a choice, most people would wish to have some type of information reducible to relevant normative criteria consistent with a utilitarian metric. Learning that "A" was a dedicated primary school teacher and "B" a vicious criminal, for example, would be, I believe, more pertinent to the decision process of more people than, for example, racial or even religious criteria. This is an empirical argument; I am not aware of any such experiment and might be mistaken in my predictions. However, I stand by the assertion that, when required to distribute goods to strangers, for whom beyond kin/kith ties are not relevant, most people adopt a broadly utilitarian approach which takes moral desert into account in some fashion not inconsistent with utilitarian calculation. There is no reason why Bentham would be uncomfortable with the use of such normative criteria for assessing preference between strangers.

4.4.2. Singer's Account of Moral Psychology is too Ambitious Overall

Singer's arguments on moral obligation relating to development aid or charitable giving assert that we ought to disregard feelings that moral obligation and proximity are (and ought to be) positively correlated. Bentham's differing, and more lenient, moral expectations suggest to me a more nuanced and realistic view of the enduring force of these connections in our moral judgment and action. It is important that Bentham's recognition of moral judgment as explicitly social and strongly influenced by affect or "sympathy" not be lost in Singer's tendency to de-emphasise these aspects in his revision of the classical doctrine. In distancing my own position from that of Singer, I draw on both the strength of established anti-utilitarian arguments as well as my own support of empirical justifications of a relatively social and

affective (rather than atomised and rationalist) construal of moral reasoning and judgment which I feel is inconsistent with Singer's model of moral psychology and motivation.

I believe that two types of distinct but related weaknesses mar Singer's construal of utilitarianism. The first is an excessively rationalistic or cerebral view of moral reasoning which is too demanding of individuals and relies on a psychological construal inconsistent with a growing body of empirical evidence emerging from cognitive and moral psychology regarding the central role of affect in moral reasoning; Singer factors out, or at least de-emphasises, the role of affect in moral motivation. A second weakness, as I see it, is that this (enfeebled) rationally driven moral motivation is expected to fuel a far more selfless and demanding standard of moral judgment and behaviour than is expected in the classical tradition. It is well to remember that much of the thrust of the classical tradition urges us to ensure that our behaviour is no worse than what we perceive to be the community standard. Of course, this was not to preclude higher expectations or ideals, but one does not find the kind of condemnation of the regrettable but understandable absence of self-sacrifice for strangers that characterises Singer's judgments.

Singer's thought is characterised by exceedingly high expectations of positive moral behaviour. In his 1972 essay on the previous year's famine in what was then East Bengal, Singer articulates the demands of his moral code. Singer argues that we have a duty to "prevent bad things from happening unless in doing so we would be sacrificing something of comparable moral significance.." (1972: 241). It is acknowledged by Singer that this entails a charitable obligation to give to the point of dollar for dollar marginal utility. In other words, one's duty is not satisfied unless or until one is nearly reduced to the level of the most wretched and deprived oneself.

Singer is ambitious for (improvement of) moral standards - and, arguably, of human nature itself. He balks at the suggestion of Sidgwick and Urmson that "we need to have a basic moral code which is not too far beyond the capacities of the ordinary man, for otherwise there will be a general breakdown of compliance with the moral code" (Singer 1972: 327), arguing that it "takes insufficient account of the effect that moral standards can have on the decisions we make" (Singer 1972: 327). At the same time that he so raises the bar on what is to be considered praiseworthy or acceptable moral behaviour, Singer presents a weakened and less compelling account of moral motivation than that found in the classical tradition. Perceived

need or suffering of others is, of course, one possible motivating factor for moral action, while the proximity (in every sense, but primarily emotional) of us to them is another. Singer accepts that both are factors in moral motivation, but rejects normative legitimacy of the latter.

A further concern I have with Singer's strain of utilitarianism is that the central strength of its original formulation, specifically the organic connection between moral motivation and moral judgment, is at best underemphasised and at worst, undermined completely. This connection between (prudential) moral judgement and (normative) moral motivation is encapsulated in Bentham's (explicitly social) construal of "enlightened self-interest" (1988). Bentham suggests that the enlightened utilitarian is capable of identifying a compelling correlation between his own interests and those of others, the social (dis)pleasures are the essence of this correlation; I will shortly return to their role in Bentham's philosophy. In Bentham's thought, the importance of sacrifice as a moral imperative is negatively correlated with the real pleasure found when connection with others (and advancing their interests) becomes central to our goals and experience. Unfortunately, Singer does not connect his notion of moral duty to self-interest, enlightened or otherwise, as compellingly as his utilitarian forebears. Singer's vision is, at times, strikingly traditional in its reliance on the demands of moral duty and justified sacrifice.[42]

My point here is to suggest that Singer's moral ultimatum is more suited to saints than citizens. Of course, proposing an unattainable ideal is not in itself pernicious. What it does do, however, is illustrate an exquisite strangeness in Singer's conception of mass psychology. This strangeness is reinforced in one of Singer's thought experiments in which he invites us to consider what he argued was the normative irrelevance of proximity in determining moral status and duty (1972: 231). Singer suggests that we imagine being the sole witnesses to a child drowning in a shallow pond. To save the child, we must wade in and ruin our trousers. Singer has a point, I hope, when he suggests that there would be near universal consensus that the life ought to outweigh the cost of the trousers. He then points out that an equivalent sum could save at least one child in a least developed country. Failing to remit this equivalent sum without delay is not is regrettable but understandable. For Singer however, failure to remit

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[42] It is interesting to note Singer quoting theologians such as Ambrosius and Aquinas to support his assertion that such high moral expectations are not without precedent. He quotes from the *Decretum Gratiani,* "The bread which you withhold belongs to the hungry; the clothing you shut away, to the naked; and the money you bury in the earth is the redemption and freedom of the penniless." (Aquinas, *Selected Political Writings*, cited in Singer 1972: 239). However inspiring these words may be for those who dream of a world defined by different moral possibilities, in more practical terms, these sentiments illustrate the somewhat other-worldly nature of Singer's moral vision.

represents a positive failure of moral duty for all who enjoy any level of income in excess of that required for their own subsistence.

The reason that the drowning child/charity "parallel" feels false or strange to almost everyone is because Singer's stated intention to "take no account of proximity" (1972: 231) is a paradigm case of an unrealistically rationalist conception of moral duty. Of course one feels more for the child in front of us than one a great distance away. Of course people feel differently flipping a switch on a track rather than personally pushing another human being off a bridge, of course a physician feels differently withholding care as opposed to delivering a lethal injection. The problem with Singer's moral psychology isn't only that its queer and counterintuitive nature renders it impotent from the perspective of moral motivation. The problem is also that he fails to acknowledge that in many (though naturally not all) circumstances, partiality bred of both biological connection and reciprocity has collective survival value and clear prosocial implications.

Of course, it is not immediately apparent that the infeasible nature of Singer's normative ambitions is in any way malign. I would argue, however, that nuance or emphasis is very important if our understandings of moral judgments are to have a tangible impact on MCE policy. The common perception that moral theory is an impractical and dispensable supplement to more tangible educational projects is likely to be reinforced by standards whose unattainability reduces them to irrelevance - and policy makers to inaction.

4.4.3. Singer's Account of Moral Psychology is Unrealistically Rationalist

Singer is recognised as a moral rationalist (Nichols, 2002). Moral rationalists, such as Singer or Michael Smith, argue that "morality is based on reason or rationality rather than the emotions or cultural idiosyncrasies.." (Nichols, 2002: 1). Affect is not, according to the moral rationalist, strictly required to facilitate our passage to morally desirable judgments. We are to understand that it would be irrational for us to pursue a course of action contrary to that which our rational judgment has determined to be normatively optimal. Failure to act in an (objectively) best way is, in this construal, the result of a failure to understand reasons for such behaviour.

The growing field of psychopathology presents serious problems for those, like Singer, who would argue that the requirements of morality are the requirements of reason. As Nichols comments, "Empirical Rationalism is seriously threatened by empirical evidence on the psychology of psychopathy. Recent evidence indicates that the capacity for moral judgment is in fact seriously disrupted in psychopaths, but this seems to be a result of an emotional deficit rather than any rational shortcomings" (2002: 2).

Nichols points out Singer's suggestion that reason allows us to "distance ourselves from our own point of view and take on, instead, a wider perspective, ultimately even the point of view of the universe" (Singer 1995, cited in Nichols 2002: 9). We do not here have the time or requirement to consider whether Singer's lofty view of reason's capacity to achieve a God's Eye view of the world is realistic. What is important to note at this stage, is not any positive attack on emotion's place in moral reasoning, but its conspicuous absence in his construal of moral motivation and judgment - particularly in his rejection of any familial or group loyalty or preference.

In Chapter 8, I will describe the ongoing contributions of neuroscience and empirical moral psychology to our understanding of empathy. I will outline how empathy is typically subdivided into its cognitive (theory of mind) and affective components and how both of these capacities are required in order to produce moral motivation and action. Singer explicitly commits himself to the importance of the cognitive aspects of empathy (though he doesn't use that term) while disregarding its affective component. We search in vain in Singer's work for an equivalent of Bentham's discussion of the pleasures and pains of self (dis)approbation or credible responses to Hume's Sensible Knave.[43]

Singer's moral rationalism entails a different view of the relationship between normative reasons and motivation than that which characterises Bentham's approach. My intention here is not to examine the complex questions of moral in/externalism or (non)cognitivism inhering in this distinction. What I would do is point out another difference reinforcing the suggestion

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[43] Hume's "Sensible Knave" thinks his way, in amoral and presumably emotionless fashion, to whatever course of action justifies his own narrow self-interest. As Hume puts it, "[The Sensible Knave], it may perhaps be thought, conducts himself with most wisdom who, observes the general rules, and takes advantage of all exceptions" (Hume, 2004,: 283). Hume seems to imply that something more than neutral thought is required to impel moral behaviour. Once again, Hume's insights would appear to be borne out by research, in this case, recent work on the importance of "affective framing" in ethical decision-making (Maiese, 2014) and the (low/no affect) decision processes of psychopaths (Tassy *et al.,* 2013).

that Singer's view of moral psychology is less realistic than that of Bentham. Specifically, Bentham describes (and prescribes) a convincing balance between selfishness, and our innate and nearly universal human capacity (though not necessarily behavioural tendency) to behave altruistically.

Bentham's view of moral motivation draws on a far broader and stronger foundation of normative reasons than is the case with Singer. His view of our (limited) capacity for altruism is, in fact, more suggestive of Haidt's characterisation of our moral nature as "90% chimp, 10% bee" (Haidt, 2012: 273), than the Singerian vision already described. The rough equivalent of Haidt's 10 per cent is evident in Bentham's suggestion that: "The way to be comfortable is to make others comfortable. The way to make others comfortable is to appear to love them. The way to appear to love them - is to love them in reality" (Bowring, 1843: 106). Overall, however, Bentham's view of moral potential is constrained. In justifying his explicitly reciprocity based construal of moral judgment and our potential for selflessness, Bentham describes a "good-will bank" in which one make deposits (favours granted) and withdrawals (and requested) from others in much the same way one speaks of politicians earning or spending "political capital". In his influential analysis, *The Expanding Circle: Ethics, Evolution and Moral Progress* (2011), Singer both acknowledges the genetic/evolutionary basis of kin/kith preference, and argues that we can reason our way to new and transcendent normative standards. While expressing confidence in moral progress, Bentham and Mill make no such case for rationalist drivers powering us to root and branch transcendence of our innate moral natures.

4.4.4. Singer's Asocial Construal

I will propose, in Chapter 8, an explanation and normative justification of limited partiality based on its adaptive nature and collective utility. Suffice it to say at this stage, that Singer's moral monoculture represents, in my view, an overly simplified version of the more subtle, social (with all the attendant gradations of love and loyalty this entails) and compelling portrayal of right action embedded in classical utilitarian accounts. I will later argue that better understanding the painstaking process by which empathy is deepened and extended begins with our organically closest (biological) ties and builds affectively outward in a more compelling fashion than any inert and rationalist standard Singer would be associated with.

Singer's expectations go far beyond what is expected in the classical utilitarian tradition. What is more, his unconstrained and elastic view of individual and collective moral possibilities is not consistent with emerging understandings of (largely affective - and therefore partial) moral judgment and reasoning. I would argue that a position of either unqualified scepticism as to the possibility of some ameliorative impact of MCE or belief in its transformational potential would render the current work irrelevant. By definition, MCE operates within the context of mass public institutions. Consequently, its expectations must take into account our shared faults and limitations and well as innate virtues and ameliorative possibilities.

4.5. Moral Equality and Partiality in Classical and Contemporary Utilitarianism

Belief in the moral equality of persons (defined as belief that the interests of all matter, and matter equally) inheres in both Benthamic and Singerian construals of utilitarianism. While Singer appears to derive a rejection of partiality from this belief, however, it is put to different use in Bentham's thought. The importance of this will later be reinforced when the central role of (kin/kith based) partiality in moral psychology is explored in Chapter 7. It is important to note a difference in expectations here which divides the personal and political spheres. In the former domain, classical utilitarians acknowledge the normative legitimacy of some degree of partiality. This is contrasted with the (essentially) non-proximate character of most public/legislative processes. While an appreciation or understanding of the role of partiality in our lives is important for those who create, interpret and enforce our laws, this does not imply that partiality before the law is in any way acceptable. All liberal utilitarians are bound to object to any such form of institutional favouritism.[44]

4.5.1. Bentham and Mill on Moral Equality and Partiality

Neither Bentham nor Mill would suggest that the normative value of any person's interests is in any way contingent on their membership of, or exclusion from, any particular group, whether based on nationality, ethnicity or even community of opinion or belief. Both thinkers support moral equality of persons. This support is not compatible with normative differentiations of the relative value of the interests (and hence of the person themselves) of

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[44] Bentham's advocacy of competitive examinations for civil service positions were expressly intended to combat the nepotism which he argued accompanied many of these appointments.

different individuals (or collection of individuals) based on what would be viewed as morally irrelevant criteria.

Equality of persons, however, does not equate to equality of passions in Mill's thought. In *Utilitarianism* (1861a), Mill famously differentiates between "higher" and "lower" pleasures in a qualitative sense. However, I will argue that belief in moral equality of persons (and their interests) provides our normative starting point prior to subsequent qualitative assessment of the (un)desirability of one collection of interests (and desires which motivate them) relative to any other.

One might suggest that advocating the kind of moral equality that councils that all persons, as persons, have normatively equal claims to life's goods suggests a kind of Kantian valuing of persons as ends in themselves. This would be problematic for a Benthamic view, as it would entail some normative value separate from utility. However, this argument can be approached from a somewhat different perspective than the person-specific.

According to Mill, Bentham argued that "everybody to count for one and nobody for more than one" (1861a: 257). This begs the question as to exactly in what sense each person "counts". I have, after all, argued that (net) pleasure is the only thing that "counts" for Bentham. I do not think that there is conceptual space in Bentham's thought for the valuing of a person (*qua* person) — at least not independently of her (potential) to experience sensations. One of the most radical aspects of Bentham's thought, in my view, is the implied rejection of the concept of the Sacred evident in such essays as *Swear not at all* (Bowring, 1843), his thinly veiled criticisms of religious belief, and even his curious endorsement (acted upon in his own case) of preserving and cadavers for display as "auto-icons".

Bentham is understandably accused of eccentricity for these and other reasons; charges of logical inconsistency are less defensible. Though it cannot be instantiated independent of a sentient agent, I believe that pleasure itself remains the exclusive normative criterion for Bentham. What this means, I believe, is that moral equality entails equal value of quantitatively equal net sums of pleasure, as manifest in the experience of a sentient creature. Bentham's expressed benevolence towards non-human animals is also indicative of his constancy in locating all normative value in the experience of pleasure itself. This is the basis

for my belief that moral equality can be defended within a Benthamic framework without requiring any alternative (non-utilitarian) normative goods such as the sanctity of the person.

There is a further potential challenge to the argument that moral equality is a foundational Benthamic belief. In addressing this point, we uncover what is in fact a central strength of Bentham's system. Specifically, it is not immediately apparent why any of us should care whether or not society functions as if moral equality were in force. One of the most instinctively distasteful aspects of utilitarianism for many people is the impression that the utilitarian is immersed in a solipsistic world, with no concern for others independent of how their circumstances or behaviour directly impacts him/herself. Of course, what is perceived as an obsessive self-regard might simply be the price required to avoid the kind of disconnect between personal motivation and moral duty which undermines other approaches to moral motivation. After all, Bentham denies that one ever has an obligation to act against one's own interests; the pivotal point is how broadly or narrowly those interests are defined.

We must return here to the central role played by the social pleasures in Bentham's thought. These pleasures (and pains like exclusion or disapprobation) are considered so valuable to Bentham (in a perfectly quantifiable fashion) that a life without full participation in the lives of others, with all the loss and triumph this entails, is considered an impoverished and unfulfilled existence. In other words, Bentham construes us as having a direct interest in establishing mutual empathic concern. Bentham recognised the utility of empathic (or sympathetic) concern; he did not, however, go so far as to suggest that one ought to have equal empathic concern for all persons without regard to (the extent of) our social connections with them.

It was argued by Bentham, Smith that both individuals and societies would benefit from a relative rebalancing or shift in immediate concern away from the self and towards other people (as well as a temporal shift from present to future utility). However, there is no argument in the classical tradition that each person is expected to equally value the interests of self, group and stranger. This would have been perceived as unrealistic and (were it even possible) pernicious, given the exclusive access each individual has to the nature of their own constitution and desires. As already mentioned, moral neutrality between persons is the duty of the legislator and (ideally) characterises the public domain of legislation, in which law makers, or those otherwise exercising authority within the public realm, are expected to

deliberate and act as if all citizens are equally valued without consideration of allegiances or interests.

So, for Bentham, the task of moral objectivity belongs to legislators rather than private individuals. Smith suggests that we imagine the perspective of an "impartial spectator" to assist us in rebalancing our (excessive) concern with our own interests as opposed to our (typically insufficient) concern for the interests of others. It was not Smith's intention, however, that one merges with the impartial spectator. We are to be informed by the spectator's judgments, but properly remain distinct as individuals and members of specific interest-defined groups. Smith, in my view, intends us to treat others as equals (based on our common and universal value *qua* human beings), but not necessarily equally (as our social essence is based on proximity defined relationships - with all the particular interests and attendant responsibilities these entail).

4.5.2. Singer on Moral Equality and Partiality

While Bentham focuses on the social aspects of our moral lives, Singer entreats us to care less for some (self, kith and kin) and more for others (strangers) than is credible, or perhaps even desirable, from a motivational point of view. Though he considers Sidgwick the greatest of the classical utilitarians (Singer, 2011), Singer does not agree with Sidgwick's suggestion that "Common sense... holds that we owe special dues of kindness to those who stand in special relations to us, and seems to regard this as immediately certain and in no need of supporting argument." (Sidgwick, 1907: 114) There is a strong contrast between this and Singer's determination to [take] "..no account of proximity or distance" (1972: 231). In discussing the difference between charity and duty, Singer states that spending money on (minor) personal goods rather than to aid (core) interests of others (including strangers) is wrong - and wrong in a way that can be condemned in no uncertain terms:

> "... we ought to give money away, rather than spend it on clothes which we do not need to keep us warm. To do so is not charitable, or generous. Nor is it the kind of act which philosophers and theologians have called 'supererogatory' - an act that it would be good to do, but not wrong not to do. On the contrary, we ought to give the money away, and it is wrong not to do so" (Singer 1972: 235).

Classical utilitarians understood (though it was not put in these terms) the survival value of concentric circles of allegiance and concern for our species. I will later make the argument that favouring kin and kith is wrong in many instances, supererogatory in others, but positively praiseworthy in still other situations.

In summary, Bentham and Singer are united in their confidence that utility represents an ultimate and irreducible moral reference point and source of normative value and that quantitative assessment is an indispensible aspect of (ideal) moral reasoning. Of course, these are very important points of agreement. However, I have attempted to suggest ways in which Bentham's and Singer's construals of utilitarianism differ, and to explain why I find the doctrine's earlier formulation more convincing. One way to further explain both these intra-doctrinal differences is to assess the extent to which each formulation is equipped to effectively respond to criticism. It is to some of those criticisms I now turn.

Chapter 5

Objections to Utilitarianism

This chapter continues the work of Chapter 4 in terms of further developing a utilitarian normative foundation for this research. Chapter 4 focused on what was argued to be the vital distinction between Bentham's and Singer's utilitarianism in terms of the role played by sociality and affect. In this chapter, I describe a range of arguments still deployed against utilitarianism and suggest that they are relatively more effective against Singer's contemporary, as opposed to Bentham's classical, construal of the doctrine. These arguments serve to further elaborate the ME normative base I endorse.

5.1. The Primary Objections Introduced

Specifically, in this chapter I assess three primary categories of criticism that I believe constitute the strongest challenges to normative arguments for utilitarianism. The first of these criticisms suggests that utilitarianism favours "base" or superficial pleasures, while the second class of objection centres on the accusation that utilitarianism sanctions oppression of minorities by "tyrannies of the majority". A third category of criticism takes issue with the positive presence of allegedly unlimited or "boundless" obligation within the doctrine.

A central tenet of the tyrannies argument is that utilitarian endorsement of (utility) aggregation sanctions or even encourages unjust or inequitable distribution of goods - or even outright exploitation of some in the interests of others — in a manner that most would find objectionable. This argument suggests that, as utilitarians reject the idea of universal and imprescriptible natural rights, they thereby leave all exposed to appropriations of goods or otherwise transgressive action in the interests of securing a (perceived) greater aggregate net utility. In asserting that tyrannies arguments misconstrue the operation and implications of aggregation, my securities based response will argue that, at least in Bentham's political thought, no public authority which recognises and respects the utility of robust assurances against transgression, as he required them to do, could possibly condone their violation

without meeting the most extreme justificatory standards.[45]

A final class of criticism alleges that utilitarianism requires too much of us, at least in terms of its stipulations on moral obligation. Specifically, this type of criticism argues that the concept of negative responsibility embedded in any consequentialist ethic, creates boundless moral obligation, thereby rendering it hopelessly unrealistic as a normative theory. It is, perhaps, already apparent that I believe Singer's utilitarian construal more vulnerable than that of Bentham to all of these criticisms, but will explore this assertion further in this chapter.

5.2. Utilitarianism Especially Endorses Pursuit of Base or Superficial Pleasures

Robert Nozick's (1974) Hedon Machine thought experiment attempts to suggest the repugnant implications of hedonistic approaches to morality. I will argue that it relies on an unrecognisable construal of human nature and that this false view embeds a fatal flaw in the structure/validity of the thought experiment itself.

Nozick (1974) wishes to demonstrate that a moral view that construes all normative value as forms of pleasure is fundamentally flawed. Nozick works to persuade us that we desire more from life than the pleasures that delimit the utilitarian's normative domain. To achieve his goal, Nozick invites us to imagine the possibility of relocating to a so-called "experience" or "hedon" machine in which, it is proposed, we would experience only the most intense and pure pleasures. In the machine, we would neither interact with others - nor do anything at all beyond the physical confines of the machine. Nozick suggests that life within the machine (and, therefore, utilitarian criteria for value) fails to appeal, at least as a permanent option, because we desire more from life than could be derived from an undiluted stream of pleasure.

If our circumstances were as suggested in the experiment and if human nature (potentially) approximated that posited in Nozick's model as well, then the experiment's conclusions could be very compelling. The central problem, as I see it, with this thought experiment, is that it

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[45] At least not their visible and public violation. Henry Sidgwick (1907) makes an interesting argument in this regard. Sidgwick's doctrine of "esoteric morality" appears to argue that the *appearance* alone of the inviolability of core individual interests may be sufficient to secure the (useful) belief in the wider population that all citizens are, in fact, secure from violation of these interests. My account of utilitarianism owes more to Bentham than to Sidgwick, however. Bentham demonstrated so much concern over the potential role of the "sinister interests", "interest begotten prejudice", and of the "ruling few" in public affairs that I find it difficult to believe that he would ever condone the use of official deception to misrepresent the authorities' actions to the "subject many".

demands a construal of human nature which is (and can only be conceived as being) unreal - so unreal, I believe, that the (proposed) agent barely appears human at all.

I believe that thought experiments, and the counterfactuals upon which they are constructed, are essential tools for clarifying arguments, exploring implications or finding otherwise obscure strengths and weaknesses. I accept, with Philippa Foot (2002), that in the context of thought experiments, one must simply accept that we find ourselves in a situation that is as described.[46] However elaborate and artificial the scenario, the success of these experiments in revealing tensions within arguments and opportunities for clarification must not rely on both elaborately contrived external circumstances and an unfamiliar (I would say implausible) construal of human nature.

Nozick's thought experiment requires one "if" too many; no experiment, thought or otherwise, has any validity without controlled variables. "We" are the control variable in this thought experiment. The "we" must represent human beings characterised by some realistic (or at least conceivable) character or nature. I don't think that it is possible to conceive of a real, sane human being who does not tire of pleasures or require some novelty.[47]

The difficulty, as I see it, is that Nozick requires us to adjust every variable — something in the external world (the Hedon Machine's existence) and deep aspects of our own makeup. Specifically, the universal human requirement for novelty and variation is excluded from consideration. Much as Williams (1973) suggests that there "is no desirable or significant property which life would have more of, or have more unqualifiedly, if we lasted for ever" (p. 89), I would suggest that there is nothing in our physiology that would make a life of undiluted pleasure indefinitely desirable. This assertion might initially appear to undermine the broader case for a hedonistic ethic. In response, I would point out that a utilitarian need not be committed to the idea that pleasures never lose their force, but rather that utility (understood in Bentham's expansive, "enlightened" sense) given the real circumstances of the

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[46] Exposing subjects to variations of Foot's trolley problem, for example, has proven very useful for contemporary empirical moral psychologists (Greene, 2013) in describing how brain areas normally responsible for quantitative calculation are consistently employed by subjects in certain construals of the experiment, while more affect oriented areas are mobilised in alternative forms of the problem.

[47] Much of the force of John Rawls' 1971 thought experiment assertion (that we would tend to choose relatively egalitarian social conditions were we to imagine ourselves behind a veil of ignorance) derives from the fact that the scenario's initial conditions, though obviously complex to fully develop, are at least relatively easy to imagine.

world we find ourselves in, is the best available moral standard. This is my point in suggesting that Nozick requires one "if" too many and why I feel his thought experiment lacks the methodological validity of the previous examples. One is methodologically permitted to construe internal psychology or external circumstances however the thought experiment requires, but to do both is to have only independent variables, and hence an invalid experiment. The improbability of counterfactuals is not, in itself, a problem for a thought experiment. What is problematic from a methodological point of view is the creation of a scenario in which both the external circumstances and the contrived psychology of the subject of those circumstances are alien to our experience. I cannot accept that inhabitants of Nozick's machine could indefinitely experience pleasure in the way his experiment requires.

First of all, one would be limited, in Nozick's machine, to the pleasures that our mind could conceive of at the outset of the experiment, as stimuli from the outside world are removed; no novelty is available. But, even if our internal schema is sufficient to generate novelty at such a rate and quality that psychological fatigue or diminishing returns never reduces our pleasures, there are many ways in which the inhabitants of the Hedon Machine (at least continually satisfied and pleasure experiencing ones) come to look less and less like any "we" which we recognise as real (or desirable - but that is a different argument).

However, if one continues to believe that an imagined perpetually and intensely happy inhabitant of the Hedon Machine is nevertheless feasible, there is another, to my mind even more potent, difficulty. The Hedon Machine would likely be irresistible in the short term. After all, a brief experience would be exactly the kind of novel experience I argue it is innate for humans (near universally, but to different degrees) to pursue and enjoy largely because of its novelty. Choosing permanent residence in the machine is another matter, however. Nozick's argument implies that purely utilitarian perspectives would suggest a choice for life in the machine - and do so permanently - because choosing to leave the machine at any point would indicate that a lesser sum of net pleasures could be chosen (from this point of view) over a greater sum - impossible in Nozick's (caricatured) account of Bentham's psychological hedonism.

The problem with the Hedon Machine experiment, or at least the force of this kind of attack, is with the predominance of social pleasures in Bentham's felicific calculus. If one appreciates the essence of the highest (quantitative) value pleasures for Bentham, one is struck by how

dependent they are on the opinion and approval of others as well as amity, mutual affection, and, above all, love. Perhaps social pleasures could be reproduced in the machine. These pleasures should not, however, be accorded an equivalent status as social pleasures experienced outside of the machine for what is the fairly uncontroversial point that they are ontologically undermined by the (actual) absence of other people.

Of course, life within the Hedon Machine is (actually) led in total psychological isolation; there is no (real) sense in which any of these relationships may be credibly described as actually obtaining in reality. As with any other psychological state, Nozick could reply that one must assess the machine (again) as if manipulation of the subject's perceptions, thoughts and experiences could lead that subject to the (false) belief that they are genuinely experiencing (uniformly pleasurable) interactions with other persons. This would entail that one's current self would need to deliberately choose to mislead one's future self in order for that future self to enjoy the benefits of the kind of pleasurable social interactions which Bentham viewed as inseparable from the best kind of life.

This draws us to an objection to (life within) the Hedon Machine that is so fundamental that I believe it transcends (choices for) any particular ethical stance. Specifically, accepting that social pleasures (as Bentham would) are inseparable from the best life and that self-deceit (of our future selves) would be required, I do not believe that anyone (including Bentham himself) would deliberately choose to undermine our future interests in this fashion. Bentham suggested, after all, that enlightened self-interest entailed (the explicitly social injunction) that we ought to extend our interests outwards to include an ever-expanding circle of concern for others as well as temporally forwards to increase the value of our future states of being.[48]

For Nozick's experiment to damage Bentham's position we would have to believe that Bentham would endorse a choice to deceive our future selves; this does not seem credible. One is compelled to consider the status of a false but pleasurable "knowledge" that one is loved by (fictional) others in the Hedon scenario. Edmund Gettier (1963) famously undermined a prevailing definition of knowledge in demonstrating that one may fail to "know"

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[48] Bentham's prescient argument anticipated current research in behavioural economics on the depth and prevalence of (irrational) future discounting.

things that one nevertheless has warrant or justification to believe. Our deceived future selves would have that warrant but not the knowledge that they are loved in the world of the Machine. Adequately dealing with this point would require a substantial digression; I will only assert at this stage that we can say a number of things to underscore or summarise scepticism regarding the relevance of Nozick's experiments to Bentham's position.

To summarise, the Hedon Machine requires a construal of human beings which is not realisable without their becoming something other than recognisably human. Secondly, no subject within the Hedon Machine could actually experience any of the pleasures Bentham describes as having the greatest utility. Finally, the (self) deceit required to make a subject in the Machine believe that she is, in fact, experiencing these pleasures would not be consistent with any normative ethical theory or position, including Bentham's utilitarianism.

5.3. Utilitarianism is Unjust and Potentially Tyrannical

There is a common view that injustice (and potential tyranny) are embedded within utilitarian values. I first consider the charge that utilitarian frameworks allow or encourage the oppression or exploitation of minorities and, secondly, the allegation that utilitarianism would condone a minority (up to and including a "monstrous" minority of one) to oppress all others. Both arguments suggest an innate injustice embedded in the doctrine.

5.3.1. Some Initial Points on "The Tyranny of the Majority"

Bentham was no more comfortable isolating groups (unless required for some kind of metric) than with the idea of natural and universal human rights. At their least pernicious, arguments founded on the (particularly differential) moral status of different groups detracted from the potential clarity (as he saw it) of his arguments; they represent an unhelpful distraction. A still greater danger of viewing or assessing human rights through the prism of group membership and status was that this opens the door to potential self-interested manipulation by "sinister interests" with the power to deceive the "subject many" into misconceiving their own best interests. This is not to suggest that Bentham's approach to moral judgment could in any way be construed as simple. I have already suggested that Bentham overestimated the role of deliberate and systematic reasoning in moral judgment.

As classical liberals, Bentham and Mill believed (in both normative and descriptive terms) in the decisional autonomy of individuals. With the individual so firmly at the centre of their frames of reference, it would seem odd for them to use anything other than the individual (such as groups) in the assessment of moral value.

5.3.2. Nozick's Utility Monster

In his arguments against utilitarianism, Robert Nozick takes a different, but equally critical, approach to asserting the innate injustice of utilitarian morality. Nozick (1974) proposes the idea of a "utility monster" to test our commitment to total aggregate net happiness as the sole moral good. The monster "is someone who would gain more happiness than we would lose whenever he is given any of our resources" (Parfit, 2004: 9). The monster receives a sum of undiluted pleasure from consuming some good which exceeds the aggregate sum of all other persons' consumption of the good. Therefore, the argument runs, all goods should rightly be given the monster rather than to anyone else — that is if one accepts utility maximisation as the sole or defining normative value. Certainly the idea of a moral principle which called for the reallocation of resources from (potentially all others) to such a creature is repugnant. However, Derek Parfit suggests that the impossibility of imagining such a creature represents a fundamental, rather than superficial, flaw in Nozick's thought experiment.

Bentham's obsession with precise legal language is almost as renowned as his rejection of universal and imprescriptible natural rights as "nonsense upon stilts".[49] It will be argued that "natural rights" often refer directly to the safeguarding of economic or political goods which could just as easily be expressed in the language of positive or negative utilities. I believe that a type of "natural rights" which fails to refer to experiences or goods not reducible to identifiable utilities ("fictitious entities" in Bentham's terminology) is indeed too vague to be interpreted or acted upon by policy makers. Again, this is more than an auxiliary or peripheral point. Though utter clarity is never possible in the process of articulating and translating ethical goals to policy priorities, unnecessary (or even deliberate) ambiguity over competing

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[49] Philip Schofield (2003). Jeremy Bentham's 'Nonsense upon Stilts'. *Utilitas*, 15, pp 1-26.

objectives opens the door to self-interested manipulation of public goods for narrow, sectional interests.

The adverse effects of favouring one group over another are discussed extensively in the work of both Mill and Bentham. One might argue that favouring, say, one social or ethnic group over another is not consistent with argued utilitarian belief in the moral equality of persons (and consequently the equal value of their interests). Bentham and Mill differ in terms of their belief in the equal (Bentham's suggestion that "poetry" might be "as good as pushpin") or unequal (Mill's discrimination between "higher and base" pleasures) quality of different pleasures. However, both agreed on the essential *prima facie* equality in value of each person's interests when considered separately from these qualitative distinctions. It follows that both thinkers would disagree that any particular individual or (same size) collection of persons should be preferred in the allocation of goods (again, independent of Mill's qualitative distinctions between pleasures).

Anti-utilitarians may still argue that even accepting moral equality of persons, utilitarianism may, nevertheless, require terrible sacrifice of individuals or numerically inferior groups in the interests of maximising overall or aggregate utility. There is a distinction to be made between normativity and prescription at this stage. A utilitarian is no less likely than others to admire (what appears to be - as the utilitarian argues that we never knowingly act against our long-term interests) self-sacrifice on behalf of others. However, the difference between celebrating and requiring these actions is that this would recommend individual sacrifice for others at a level beyond that which even Singer suggests. Singer obviously felt justified in sanctioning our (near universal) failure to give up to the point of marginal utility, but even in the life and death development scenarios he described in Bangladesh, he stopped short of prescribing the level of giving to save others. Bentham would also reject this kind of prescribed sacrifice, supplemented with the additional positive doctrine of security to reinforce his resistance. If the security principle could not safeguard the most core interest — that of life itself — it is difficult to imagine what type of intrusion into citizens' lives it could be used to resist.

This is not to suggest that there is no foreseeable case in which such prescriptive intrusion could be justified, the utilitarian typically avoids such categorical assertions. In fact, one strength of the absence of absolute principles (accepting Utility itself) in Bentham's scheme is that each situation must be judged on its own terms. So, for example, a homeowner might be

compelled to accept compensation and allow his land to be appropriated for some critical infrastructure project. There is a basis for believing that Bentham would set the evidentiary bar at an extremely high level to justify such an action, but the decision would be subject to utilitarianism's characteristic rejection of inflexible absolutes.

There are additional arguments available to Bentham and Mill which provide a robust response to claims that an utilitarian authority would prescribe sacrifice or condone exploitation. The first type of response (most fully articulated in Mill) is based on his description of the negative social impact which knowledge of (what might seem arbitrary) exercise of collective (typically state) power against individuals in the interests of a "greater good", whether real or imagined, would have. Undermining the security one feels in believing that there is a realm of personal interest (physical or economic, for example) into which the state simply can not intrude is no small affair - its removal produces great anxiety and social damage. Mill's description of the political loss produced by an over powerful or intrusive state is compelling, while Bentham's description of the specific psychological harms when citizens have reason to fear their state adds further invaluable insight.

A second response to the accusation that Bentham would authorise sacrifice of the few (or the one) to a tyrannical majority is rooted in a (growing) understanding of the (individual) phenomenology of gains and losses. I will argue that revised understandings of questions of irrationality, choice and subjective perceptions of gains and losses are emerging in fields such as behavioural economics which are enormously important in contextualising this aspect of the argument. I will describe the contribution that empirical research has already made to our understandings of the largely irrational nature of economic decision-making later on in this chapter. Bentham implicitly recognises our shared tendency to disproportionately feel the impact of losses (over gains) in his Disappointment Prevention Principle, which recognised the "common utility" of embracing a variety of securities, such as a "secondary principle" securing private property (Kelly, 1990, cited in Rosen 2003: 54).

5.4. Tyranny and "Security"

One persistent criticism of utilitarianism is that it provides the grounds, or even a normative requirement for, the appropriation of goods possessed by individuals or minorities, if such action would secure greater utility or net happiness overall. I will assess the arguments of

Bentham and Mill, in terms of their equal concern for different, often competing, groups and the suggestion that a danger is inevitably posed to minority or disempowered groups by the aggregation of interests to achieve overall utility maximisation.

Though these two seminal figures of the classical utilitarian tradition directly (Mill) or indirectly (Bentham) addressed the idea that their systems threatened "the tyranny of the majority", a belief persists that (their) utilitarianism, in supporting a hedonistic Total Principle ("if other things are equal, it is better if there is a greater total sum of happiness" (Parfit 2004,: 8) (potentially) authorises the oppression of minorities in favour of (numerically and therefore, normatively) superior claims of majorities. Though Mill's position was more qualified, Bentham unambiguously supported the hedonistic Total Principle as the sole normative guide in moral questions. However, both thinkers would have disputed the assertion that exclusive fidelity to this Principle entails differentiation in the prima facie moral value of one person's interests relative to that of another. "Tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling" was considered by Mill "more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself." (1859: 13).

The idea of securities (common to both his and Mill's work) is absolutely essential to Bentham's thought and achieves much in fortifying the interests of minorities or otherwise disempowered groups. Securities represent certain publically acknowledged guarantees that those in power recognised certain individual goods, such as the expectation of equality under the law, inviolate. "Common utility" resulted from such guarantees to such a degree that an extraordinary burden or proof would have to be passed in order for them to be transgressed. [50]

Classical utilitarians prefer to speak of securities rather than rights. For both Bentham and Mill, ensuring citizens' security was an absolutely fundamental component effective governance. Mill emphasises security as a central or primary good in his utilitarianism.

> "..security, to every one's feelings the most vital of all interests... security no human being can possibly do without; on it we depend for all our immunity

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[50] Though he was, of course, on balance critical of utilitarianism, the desirability of securities to a certain degree inheres in John Rawls' 1971 idea of the *maximin*, or general tendency to favour original conditions designed to maximise the minimum conditions obtaining in society.

from evil, and for the whole value of every good, beyond the passing moment.." (Mill, 1879: 58)

Rosen has highlighted importance of this in Bentham's work.

> The first is that in a political context Bentham's greatest happiness principle means mainly the maximisation of security applied equally to all members of a given society. Although the object of legislation is to maximize the happiness of al members of society, that object in turn means to effect the maximization of security. Furthermore... no one is secure unless everyone is secure" (Rosen 2003: 235).

Mill and Bentham provide detailed and compelling arguments that utilitarianism poses no special threat to the interests of minority or disempowered groups. Moreover, whether or not one endorses or rejects the essence of their utilitarian framework, the claim cannot be made that utilitarians must somehow compromise other principles in order to safeguard the interests of minorities.

5.5. Mill on Tyranny

The most potent defence against construing utilitarianism as permitting "tyranny of the majority" was presented by Mill himself in his seminal work, *On Liberty* (1859). Before going into the subtleties of Mill's defence of liberty, and its utilitarian foundation, I will explore whether one of our most eminent philosophers is guilty of inserting a deep contradiction into the heart of his most celebrated work.

Mill is often seen as a moderator of Bentham's uncompromisingly quantitative utilitarianism. To the extent that Mill acquiesced to what might be considered the intuitive appeal of qualitative distinctions between pleasures, for example, this perception is justified. However, despite this, and other, differences, both thinkers are typically considered representative of classical utilitarianism. I will consider how both dealt, explicitly (Mill) or implicitly (Bentham), with the potential problem of tyranny of the majority.

On Liberty is most fundamentally about the value of autonomously formulated ideas and beliefs and their positive role in human flourishing. Great (arguable the greatest) value is assigned by Mill to minority perspectives and ideas. For Mill, even unpopular or false beliefs (taking care not to imply any necessary link between those descriptions) have social value - provided they are accepted into public discourse.

There are almost no circumstances in which society is justified in excluding minority or unpopular opinions. As Mill puts it, "If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if they are wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of the truth, produced by its collision with error" (1859: 19).

Mill is famously robust in defending the autonomy of individual thought and expression against numerically superior opposition. He unambiguously rejects any suggestion that beliefs in any area or public discourse ought to be considered settled or sacred and thereby sheltered from criticism. Given his opposition to sheltering majority views from individually based attacks on their veracity, would it not be strange if, in the same work, Mill made allowance for groups of individuals at some level below that of the majority to be silenced or excluded? Surely, this would represent a deep contradiction at the centre of Mill's most celebrated work.

As might be expected, I don't believe that Mill's essay contains any such contradiction. Mill's focus was on the individual rather than the group; I feel that he chose this focus because he wished to give himself the hardest or most potentially unpopular case to defend and to take up the cause of those most isolated subjects of state or other collective coercion or control. I believe that if Mill succeeds in defending the individual right to dissent and offend, then a group right ought to be taken as given. I would add that "group" as understood here is not the locus of some sort of emergent, autonomous identity, but simply an aggregate of individual interests — and to that extent, even more important than any single set of interests from a quantitative point of view.

Unless a minority group seeks to express their opinions through, for example, violence, they ought to be able to form a community of opinion and be protected from aggressive interference to its expression, at least from the state, and arguably from the court of public opinion as well. Mill appears to go beyond neutrality in his defence of minority or contrary opinions in suggesting that, "He who does anything because it is the custom, makes no choice. He gains no practice either in discerning or in desiring what is best." (Mill, 1859: 58) "The despotism of custom is everywhere the standing hindrance to human advancement." (Mill, 1859: 70) Mill cites "remarkable diversity of character and culture" (Mill, 1859: 72) as a

defining strength of Europe (in relation to China). Again, this is best understood as a culture in which individual innovation is facilitated and expressed.

Mill clearly values variation and difference (*On Liberty,* Chapter 11) and spends a great deal of time denouncing the idea that numerical superiority (of opinion, for example) justifies any form of domination. It would be strange if such a spirited defender of the interests of the individual relative to the collective would in turn support a case for the domination of one (larger) collective over another (smaller) collective. This would be contrary to the spirit of the entire work.

5.6. Bentham on Tyranny

Perhaps Bentham's famous rejection of natural rights is the source of the (mis)perception that vulnerable groups (usually, but not always, in the minority) are left exposed to a predatory appropriation of their goods, whether by a numerically superior group of other persons or a privileged minority of the "ruling few".

Bentham saw division of power in society between a "ruling few" and "subject many" as an ironclad inevitability of hierarchies inherent in all social organisation. As someone who believed in the prima facie moral equality of both pleasures (provided they were of equal utility) and of persons, Bentham was concerned that the interests of the "ruling few" tended to be over represented in most political systems. Bentham advocated inbuilt structural safeguards to restrain the expression of narrow, sectional or, in his terminology, "sinister" interests as an indispensible aspect of effective representative democracy. Bentham was indeed concerned with minorities and their interests. However, in terms of "the ruling few", his concern was more with their pernicious dominance of, rather than victimisation by, majorities.

Bentham's active engagement in international politics and constitutional law informed his awareness of the propensity of majority groups to dominate (less empowered) minorities. His condemnation of this tendency is particularly robust in his commentary on the first Greek constitution.

> The exclusion put on this occasion upon so large a part, perhaps the largest part, of the existing population is at present it would seem an unavoidable arrangement but it is a

highly deplorable one. It entails upon the country the existing division, reversing only the position of the confident races. It places the Turks under the Greeks [as] the Helots were in under the Spartans, in the situation that the Protestants in France under the Catholics, in Ireland the Catholics under the Protestants, in the Anglo-American United States the Blacks under the Whites. In no country can any such schism have place but in point of morality and felicity both races are, in however different shapes, sufferers by it: the oppressors as well as the oppressed. To lessen the opposition of interests - to bring them to coincidence as speedily as is consistent with security should therefore be an object of constant care and endeavour. (Bentham, cited in Rosen 2003: 233)

As Rosen (2003) goes on to point out, Bentham chooses to make clear his opposition to any form of sectional dominance. This obtains irrespective of whether the dominant group is in the majority or minority of the wider population.

One may well be in agreement with Bentham's defence of moral equality of persons, and consequently their normatively equal claims to life's goods, on a variety of normative grounds. However, one might nevertheless argue that, in purely quantifiable terms, the redistribution of goods (economic or otherwise) from minorities to majorities can be justified based on the simple weight of numbers (or utility). This line of attack has been taken in any number of exotically constructed thought experiments in which a minority, or more often, a single individual, is sacrificed for the best interests (typically the pleasure) of a (larger) group of other people.

Bentham's defence of minority interests is not restricted to incidental references to historical cases in which those interests have been (or continue to be) unjustifiably undermined. He is unequivocal in his resistance to any temptation to intrude on the interests of a minority in order to redistribute goods to a majority. What is more, this obtains without any compromise in his commitment to the supremacy of his hedonistic Total Principle (1780).

5.7. Utilitarianism Entails "Boundless Moral Obligation"

Bernard Williams (1988) is right to suggest that the utilitarian views one's normative relationship to differing states of affairs as something for which we may be judged, whether that state of affairs is produced directly by us (killing, for example) or the action of another made possible by us, though, of course, this is not to suggest anything approaching identical degrees of culpability in either case.

A preliminary point is to consider Williams' comparison of the role of negative responsibility in utilitarian and non-utilitarian moral judgment and reasoning. Williams describes negative responsibility as implying that "…if I am ever responsible for anything, then I must be just as much responsible for things that I allow or fail to prevent, as I am for things that I myself, in the more everyday restricted sense, bring about." (Williams, 1988: 31). Williams then argues that, "The strong doctrine of negative responsibility flows directly from consequentialism's assignment of ultimate value to states of affairs." I concur with Williams on this second point.

Williams suggests that, "the issue of negative responsibility can be pressed on the question of how limits are to be placed on one's apparently boundless obligation, implied by utilitarianism, to improve the world" (1988: 43). This is a sound point, though one with limited application. It has already been argued that Singer's expectations of selflessness and moral sacrifice are unrealistic in terms of what ought to be expected of someone when the facts of a situation are relatively well established: for example, one may have warrant to believe it probable that a charitable donation above a certain value is likely to save at least one life.

In relation to moral responsibility, the question remains as to whether some (relatively strong, utilitarian) form of negative responsibility entails that agents must suspend doubt that actions (in)directly within their control will produce certain and foreseeable consequences. Perhaps we are to simply assume secure knowledge that we instigate a particular causal consequence is available. However, in the real world, uncertainty overwhelms the causal chain our action(s) initiate at too early a stage for us to assume we have the capacity to best judge what will optimise outcomes in situations too far removed from our immediate situations. Williams appears to acknowledge this point when he later suggests that "a Utilitarian… has the general project of bringing about maximally desirable outcomes...", but "how he is to do this at any given moment is a question of what causal levers, so to speak, are at the moment within his reach" (Williams 1988: 44) if we interpret "within his reach" to bundle together an ability to produce a particular outcome with justified belief that this outcome will indeed be produced.

Presumably some kind of feasibility criterion is required at this stage. The form of utilitarianism one espouses will again make a difference here; in order to consider the feasibility question in the appropriate context, it is necessarily to briefly describe a (supposed) distinction within utilitarianism, specifically between "act" and "rule" utilitarianism. The latter

may be defined as a normative assessment criterion which asserts that "the rightness or wrongness of a particular action is a function of the correctness of the rule of which it is an instance (Garner and Rosen, 1967: 70). This is contrasted with "act" utilitarianism, which suggests that "…a person's act is morally right if and only if it produces at least as much happiness as any other act that the person could perform at that time" (Lyons, 1965: vii).

I raise the point in order to deal with what I feel is a serious challenge for (act) utilitarianism. In terms of the feasibility of knowing the right course of action in any given situation, it is reasonable to argue that moral rules, such as a prohibition on stealing, potentially hold great value (for those subscribing to rules based moral systems) as simplifying normative heuristics. Doing so reduces the cognitive burden of assessing each situation on its own merits without a *prima facie* exclusion of certain prescribed actions.[51]

I agree with those, including David Lyons (1965), who suggest that the distinction between "rule" and "act" utilitarianism is artificial (as the former inevitably collapses into the latter). Though I see the division as artificial and distracting (I believe that only "act" utilitarianism retains the doctrine's unequivocal core consistency),[52] if the distinction must be referred to, I am comfortable characterising my approach as act utilitarian.

What the distinction entails in terms of the feasibility question is that the decisional task of the (act) utilitarian cannot, with consistency, be simplified with the use of guiding principles or rules. It follows, then, that we are returned to the question of how much it is feasible for one to know in terms of the future consequences of our actions. Daniel Dennett famously described what he called the "Three Mile Island Effect" (Dennett, 1995: 484), in his account of the limitations of utilitarian reasoning. Dennett's suggestion is that it is still not clear whether the benefit of reviews of nuclear safety prompted by the event outweigh the harm down at the time.

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[51] Of course, in practical terms, the most unequivocally "act" based utilitarian will inevitably apply decisional heuristics. This is both inevitable, given our limited time and cognitive resources, and justified given the material normative similarity of many situations we encounter.

[52] Socrates famously asks Euthyphro whether something is right because it is willed by the Gods or willed by the Gods because it is right. The *act* utilitarian affirms that the right or wrongness of an action inheres in the general normative tendency of the class of actions to which it belongs to produce net good or harm. This is contrasted with an argument that the right or wrongness of an action inheres in its conformity to a general moral principle, including those principles premised on utility. A rule utilitarian (as Mill possibly was) is bound, I think, to either "collapse" rule into act utilitarianism or to advocate something closer to a deontological position.

Dennett is right to point out the limitations to our reasoning in this regard.[53] Russell Hardin makes a very useful and practical distinction between moral impulses and the inevitable limitations on our "knowledge and scientific understanding" (rightly) restricting our certainty of specific outcomes resulting from our actions. As Hardin notes:

> "If we develop a better system for determining relevant causal relations so that we are able to choose actions that better produce our intended ends, it does not follow that we then must change our ethics. The moral impulse of utilitarianism is constant, but our decisions under it are contingent on our knowledge and scientific understanding" (Hardin, 1990: 4).

Of course, a great deal more could be said on this point, but this would require too extensive a digression. I can only argue at this stage that, in response to this kind of objection, the very indeterminacy of outcomes and limitations in our knowledge and skill prevents utilitarianism from entailing "boundless obligation". If "ought implies can", then we can only be bound to produce outcomes which we can predict with some reasonable standard of certainty or confidence.

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[53] I would point out that these limitations are more problematic for Singer's hyper-rationalist model (2011b) than for classical utilitarian accounts, which provide at least some space for other, more affective or intuitive, inputs into decision processes.

Chapter 6

Convergent Construals of Moral Cognition

I have argued that moral sentimentalists, principally Bentham, demonstrate a comparatively high awareness of the importance of social relationships and affect in their moral theories. Bentham's normative ethical foundation comports well with a stream of emerging thought in moral psychology which assigns affect a central role in moral cognition. My overall argument is that moral life narrative learning is an especially powerful form of moral education. I will argue (in Chapters 7 and 8) that the power of moral life narrative largely derives from its affective aspects and the onus it places on learners to interpret and engage with relatively thick accounts of moral life. In Chapter 7, I assess narrative construals of life and consider whether moral stories endure and have particular power because, at least for many people, life itself feels like an on-going form of personal narrative. In Chapter 8, I will argue, with Keen (2006) and others, that (story) character identification invites the development of empathic understanding and affect.

The specific focus of this chapter is on a family of distinct but related research that suggests that moral cognition is primarily or typically led by affect. Jonathan Haidt's Social Intuitionist Ethics (2001) is introduced, and his associated arguments for affect-led construals of moral cognition are considered. Joshua Greene's (2013) Dual Process Model of moral cognition broadly corroborates Haidt's findings while also incorporating an element of prescriptivity in the form of his "Deep Pragmatist" normative theory. The chapter concludes with a description of Daniel Batson's (2011, 1997; see also Batson *et al.*, 2003) Empathy Altruism Model. In this chapter I also engage with the thought of one of Batson's most forceful critics, Robert Cialdini (Cialdini *et al.* 1997). Again, the broad sweep of Batson's work reinforces the findings of Haidt and Greene in terms of the centrality of affect in moral cognition.

In the context of this work, Batson's most important contribution is his hypothesis that empathy can be systematically increased (2011, 1997; Batson *et al.*, 2003). Batson's work suggests that exposure to evocative life narratives has a potential to produce spikes in empathic affect, and that increased empathic affect is likely to translate into altruistic behaviour. Increased altruistic behaviour is likely, I argue, to have value in utilitarian terms. Cumulatively, Haidt, Greene and Batson constitute a critical bridge between a philosophical

naturalism which privileges empirically derived insights and the overall argument that moral life narrative is an effective tool – provided, of course, that one endorses nurturing empathy and altruistic behaviour as legitimate goals for moral education.

6.1. The Importance of this Chapter

The arguments and evidence presented in this chapter are intended as a systematic progression or extension of the naturalist framework I have already endorsed. The utilitarian ethical theory I have laid out is the normative framework most compatible with an emerging (empirical) consensus on moral cognition as a deeply social and affect led process. The broad thrust of the most influential work in contemporary empirical moral psychology appears to support the insights of the great utilitarians at the expense of their (more rationalist) philosophical opponents. Given this theoretical/normative foundation I have established, the current chapter describes this "affective revolution" with a view to understanding how it fits in with and builds upon earlier arguments.

In similar fashion, *iff* previous arguments are accepted, then this emerging approach to understanding moral cognition ought to better inform approaches to refining or developing it. This chapter, then, is designed to both link back to my initial normative justifications, and forward, to what I argue is a more effective approach to moral/empathy education based on these new insights. I will extend/apply these arguments further in my concluding chapters, in which I suggest that social, richly contextualised, affect-led approaches, in which we draw on archetypal moral stories, are the best way to nourish moral awareness and empathy. Of course, this is not a new idea; the pedagogic use of moral narrative is as old as civilisation itself; the very continuity of moral narrative is part of its authenticity and confirmation. However, challenges from more narrowly rationalistic approaches (which I describe in Chapter 11) are almost as venerable. What is added as new to this discourse is the growing diversity and strength of empirical arguments for moral story. These are arguments which collectively support a particular view of the way our moral cognition actually functions. There is also some indication as to how this cognition can be systematically influenced through the creative use of moral life narrative learning and teaching.

6.2. Defining the "Affective Revolution" (AR)

A convergence is occurring across an impressively diverse range of knowledge domains. This convergence of opinion represents a collective shift in emphasis in our understandings of human moral nature and decision-making away from the isolated, ideal and rational and towards the social, instrumental and affective. Expanding scholarship in moral psychology (Greene, 2013; Boehm, 2012; Greene and Haidt, 2002), economics (Kahneman and Riis, 2005), anthropology (Fontaine *at al*., 2013), information behaviour and research (Nahl and Bilal, 2007), cognitive neuroscience (Bartels and Zeki, 2004; Keverne and Curley, 2004; Damasio, 1999, 1994; Damasio *et al.,*1996) and moral philosophy (Churchland, 2002) who support an emerging paradigm of human moral nature (henceforth EPMN). I will maintain that the diverse and interdisciplinary nature of opinion supporting EPMN represents, in itself, a kind of limited but significant epistemological justification for its acceptance.

6.3. "Revolution" and Hyperbole: "Moral Molecules" and "Mind-Reading" Neurons

Paul Zak (2012) has claimed that essentially all moral behaviour can be reduced to the presence and interactions of oxytocin and vasopressin in the brain, while Ramachandran has argued that they have, "identified a small subset of principles underlying all the diverse manifestations of human artistic experience" (Ramachandran and Hirstein, 1999: 33). The publication of the now famous Parma lab findings on what came to be called mirror neurons (Gentilucci *et al*., 1989) provoked waves of excitement in popular media, including in the *New York Times* (2006) and *Wall Street Journal* (2005). Ramachandran's (2009) TED Talk on the subject was titled "The Neurons that Shaped Civilization". Ambition and excitement are not lacking in the discourse surrounding newly prefixed "neuro" disciplines.

Given this at times uncritical attention, it is understandable that such over-hasty assertions that we are on the brink of unrecognisably altered (and complete) understandings of phenomena as complex as moral behaviour and aesthetic experience have provoked a backlash. The exaggerated claims of some within the neuroscience community have sometimes provoked dogmatic responses, leaving an unhelpfully bifurcated discourse in its wake. It is understandable that many thinkers, both within (Hickok, 2014) and outside (Scruton 2012, 2014a, 2014b; Midgley, 2001) the physical sciences, have called for a more circumspect attitude towards any presumption of the transformational potential of new technologies and techniques in neuroscience and related cognitive disciplines.

The occasional embellishments of Zak (2012), Ramachandran (2009) or Harris (2010) should not, however, distract us from the fact that a wide and increasingly deep consensus is emerging about real-world moral decision-making. In this chapter, I engage with the idea of the EPMN and what Haidt and others have termed an "affective revolution", which variously construe moral cognition as a deeply social and affect-led process. In doing so, I will concentrate on the work of three especially influential moral psychologists: Jonathan Haidt, Joshua Greene and Daniel Batson. I will also cite examples from other, very separate, research areas, including behavioural economics. I do this in order to illustrate the breadth and diversity of what I see as a remarkable convergence on social/affect led construals of moral cognition, an emerging paradigm in moral nature.

It is true that some, like Harris, have overstated the scope of EPMN, or in their cursory dismissal culturally based accounts, interprets it too narrowly. I have acknowledged that the kind of evidence available to study the evolution of behaviour is very different from that available for explanations of purely anatomical changes. I also acknowledge the obvious possibility that research gesturing towards EPMN is flawed. However, the diversity of disciplines engaged suggests that those who do feel something very significant is happening would need to be making many different kinds of methodological mistakes for this the overall picture to be deeply flawed.

Our understanding of the nature of (affective) empathy and its role in moral judgment is increasing quickly. I will now describe some core assumptions upon which, I believe a range of inquiry is converging. (1) Collective understandings of the nature of empathy and affect and its role in moral judgment/motivation/action are developing quickly and indicate multidisciplinary support for both the primacy of affect in moral judgment and a greater stress on the explicitly social nature of moral judgment.[54] (2) Insights of EPMN provide a promising platform from which to develop more effective programmes of empathy education with the potential to extend and deepen dispositional empathy. There is growing recognition of the persuasiveness of empirically grounded arguments advocating an (1) increased emphasis on the role of affect and (2) social context in understanding moral judgment. Support for this adjusted construal is emerging from a wide range of disciplines and lines of enquiry.

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[54] (1b) A growing body of empirical evidence suggests a measurable and significant decline in dispositional empathy (de Souza, 2014; Konrath *et al.*, 2011; Krahé and Möller, 2010)

6.4. The "Revolution" in Historical Context

In many ways, this convergence represents a shift back towards a well-established tradition in philosophy and related human sciences but newly supported by an emerging body of empirical research. The EPMN's long speculative history includes such canonical consturals as Aristotle's essential characterisation of humans as *zoon politikon* or innately political or social beings. Innate sociality and emotive judgment are defining aspects of utilitarian/sentimentalist traditions (Rosen, 2003), while Darwin, in his seminal 1859 work, speculated on an explicitly social, instrumentalist view of the adaptive value of in-group empathy and altruism. All of these ideas form part of an essentially unbroken tradition.

What is new is the emergence of a range of technological resources and compelling empirical data to support EPMN; this is partly responsible for, and reflected in, its increasing acceptance and influence. Supporters of this EPMN, though heterogeneous in terms of discipline, methodology and construal specifics, tend to share a general belief in the central importance of affect, intuition and sociality in human moral judgment and are motivated largely by the attempt to better understand the cross-cultural prevalence of altruism, empathy and prosocial behaviour. It is argued that EPMN has the potential to better inform our understandings of moral judgment/motivation/behaviour and dispositional empathy as expressed at both individual and group levels.

The EPMN does not argue that human moral nature is predominantly (or even largely) benevolent or selfless. It does have a good deal to say about the affective basis of loyalty, and loyalty is, after all, a morally ambivalent force. The work of Haidt (2011, 2012) in particular, sheds light on the unwavering importance of in/out group loyalty and intergroup competition in moral judgment. However, altruistic behaviour represents a near universal, and predictably persistent, subset of social behaviour (Andreoni *et al*., 2007; Batson, 1997; Batson *et al*. 2003).

Moreover, the EPMN rejects explanations of, for example, agents "mistakenly" persisting in tipping in foreign cities or returning incorrect change, as forms of moral mistake or misjudgement (Saunders and Lynn, 2010). To the extent that empathy/altruism is a tangible social fact, EPMN offers compelling, empirically grounded explanations. Moral mistakes may

well be a reality, as will be discussed when we explore the limitations of moral heuristics and the sometimes absurd conclusions these quick intuitive judgments can generate. However, these inconsistencies will largely deal with logical problems such as act/omission issues rather than decisions to act altruistically *per se*. We will then be describing an altogether different category of moral reasoning.

6.5. Moral Cognition and the Possibility of Change

We develop counter heuristics to ameliorate the effect of consistent problems of reasoning, such as a common tendency to assign higher probability to a compound than to a simple event. Kahneman (1984) finds that when questioned, even recognised experts suggest greater probability that USSR will invade Poland than that diplomatic relations between USA and USSR will deteriorate significantly [A versus A+B] fail in appreciating that adding details reduces probability but makes scenario *sound* more plausible.

This convergence (EPMN) approaches the understanding of moral judgment and action differently from more rationalist and/or individualist construals of moral communities and the status of individuals which comprise them. The EPMN challenges still prevalent (and until relatively recently dominant) rationalist/cognitivist construals of human moral nature which have previously characterised discourse in social psychology, moral philosophy and microeconomics. The EPMN particularly disputes construals of social nature primarily characterised by amoral, asocial competition in communities of consistently rational and narrowly self-interested individuals (Lee et al., 2009); this *homo economicus* construal was originally foundational in decision theory and closely related disciplines.

6.6. An Interdisciplinary Overview of AR

Social scientists working across a range of disciplines are currently leading a multi-front assault on traditional models of rational agency. On one front, we find positive models of empathy or affect-led decision-making (Greene, 2013; Batson *et al*., 2003; Haidt, 2001, 2003, 2003a, 2007, 2011, 2012; Lee *et al*., 2009); elsewhere the picture is of cognitive overconfidence in light of predictable and systematic bias and error in "rational" cognition itself (*see* Kahneman and Tversky, 1984, 1979).

6.6.1. Behavioural Business Ethics/Behavioural Finance

If behaviour in general, and ethical decision making in particular, is centred on rational, autonomous construals of agential moral judgment, then it stands to reason that clear and clearly communicated systems of reward, sanction and control should be sufficient to restrain illegal or "merely" unethical behaviour. And yet, growth of research and teaching in business ethics, enhanced industry/public regulatory structures, imperious statements of high-minded values and guiding principles, does not appear to effectively inhibit the incidence of corporate scandal and the attendant economic fallout such behaviour entails. In this section, I will briefly examine a (hopefully now familiar) cognitive paradigm which has recently arisen to challenge existing practice and the construal of autonomous, rational agency that purportedly underpins policy in this domain.

The regulation/supervision of business, and the financial sector in particular, is, I believe, a paradigm case of a failed model of moral judgment and risk perception. Having worked in this sector for some years, I am convinced that recent (and quite spectacular) failures in regulatory control are to a large extent the inevitable result of supervisory structures that assume consistently rational agency on the part of individual "players" involved in both regulation and the financial sector itself. Paradigms based on uniformly rational behaviour fail to sufficiently integrate the central role personal loyalty, insecurity and fear play in the process of enabling or restraining excessively risky corporate behaviour.

It is not necessary to conduct systematic research in the field to note growing incidence, or, at the very least, awareness, of major corporate scandals. As Mishima *et al*. (2010: 701) note: "Recent high-profile corporate scandals involving prominent, high-performing firms cast doubt on assertions that the costs of getting caught decrease the likelihood such high performers will act illegally". The last decade has witnessed rapid growth in various regimes of market-based and self regulation (Vogel, 2008) and increasing requirements for ethics teaching in business curricula (Falkenberg and Woiceshyn, 2008). A growing mass of (normative) corporate principles, values, and corporate codes designed to enhance (perception of) corporate accountability and to embed various construals of ethical practice have been devised at company and industry level in recent years. This is a response to concerns about corporate (mis)behaviour and reputational damage and the resulting call for greater

supervisory/regulatory control prompted by these public concerns. Aspirations to create structured guidelines for the assessment and control of conscious, voluntary behaviour in a business or corporate context has attracted criticism from a growing collection of scholars many who argue that such aspirations to modify behaviour through such schemes are ineffective to the extent that they are based on questionable models of behaviour and cognition. Recent research (Borgerson *et al.*, 2009) identifies persistent and problematic inconsistency between the "organizational (employees' values mix)" and "operational (active doing)" identities of prominent firms. This is representative of dissociation between the ethical brand identities many firms seek to nurture and the actual behaviour of employees within those firms.

6.6.2. Emerging and Traditional (Rational Agency) Models of Economic Behaviour

Champions of the new field of behavioural business ethics, reject what they generally characterise as the failure of traditional normative models of business ethics (De Cremer *et al.*, 2011; Weaver and Brown, 2012). Proponents of emerging models of behavioural business ethics accuse more traditional approaches of failing to address the field's central question and challenge. Behavioural business ethics, on the other hand, claims to be better equipped to answer the foundational question of why is it so difficult to explain (let alone prevent) widespread unethical behaviour and decision-making in the presence of multiple control and monitoring systems? Traditional behavioural models in business ethics, it is argued, rest upon excessively autonomous and rationalistic behavioural assumptions (De Cremer *et al.*, 2010; Marnburg, 2001). The central "accusation" is that (purportedly) outmoded prescriptive models rest upon "...the idea that individuals are rational purposive actors who act in accordance with their intentions and understand the implications of their actions" (De Cremer *et al.*, 2010; Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe, 2008, cited in De Cremer, 2011: 3).

If decision-making in corporate contexts is driven by rational processes, then legal and regulatory structures (when effectively communicated and understood) ought to be sufficient to discourage unethical/highest risk behaviours. Of course, this is premised on the presence of a belief that such behaviours will indeed be detected and punished in, our outside, the organisation. There is evidence that authorities, at least in developed countries, are achieving reasonable levels of success in this regard. Yet increasing conviction rates is only an indirect objective; the primary objective is to positively influence underlying behaviours. Studies by

De Cremer *et al* (2010, 2011) seek to explain what appears to be widespread and persistently irrational behaviour on the part of individual and institutional actors. The persistence of these incidents undermines claims that behaviour can be guided by regulatory regimes that speak only to rational aspects of decision-making.

Numerous examples of massively flawed or biased reasoning are available in this context; one interesting illustration of this is provided by Mishima *et al*. (2010) in their description of the role of hubris and the so-called "house money effect". It is suggested by Mishima *et al*. (2010) that one source of irrationality is the so-called "house money effect" (Thaler and Johnson, 1990, as cited by Mishima *et al*. 2010: 705) in which business gains and losses are not typically afforded equivalent value in mental accounting processes. Risk decisions are disproportionately framed by remembered histories of profit and loss. "Individuals with prior gains perceive themselves to be gambling with 'the house's money" or profits from prior winning 'bets' rather than with their own capital. Prior losses, on the other hand, lead to risk aversion, except when individuals believe that there is a chance to break even or end up ahead, in which case they also lead to risk seeking" (Mishima *et al*., 2010: 705).

A traditional model of economic decision making would suggest that framing risk decisions in this fashion is not rational as "…prior gains and losses represent 'sunk costs' and should have no baring on subsequent decision-making (Denzau, 1992, cited in Mishima *et al*., 2010: 705). Disproportionate differential valuation of gains and losses is not rational. Underestimating the value of specifically downside costs relative to absolute, rapid gains exacts a cognitive cost. It is argued that "extended periods of high performance can make organizational managers believe in their own infallibility, leading them to be more risk seeking" (Hayward and Hambrick, 1997; Roll, 1986, as cited by Mishima *et al*., 2010: 705).

6.6.3. Rational Models and Efficient Markets

Theoretically speaking, "Efficient" securities markets incorporate new, market sensitive information more or less instantly. The "Efficient Market Hypothesis" (EMH), most closely associated with Eugene Fama (1970) asserts that the only way for investors to outperform markets is to assume greater risk by buying equities on the basis of less informed decisions. If the EMH obtains, stock valuations are based on systematic and rational assessment of more or less universally available information regarding a firm's fundamentals. Consensus on the

primary drivers of investment decision making have undergone a remarkable shift since former United States Treasury Secretary, Larry Summers, suggested that "The proposition that securities markets are efficient forms the basis for most research in financial economics" (Summers, 1986: 591). To describe, "[the efficiency of securities markets as] … the best established empirical fact in economics" (Jensen *et al*., cited in Summers, 1986: 591), would now sound quite incredible.

Models premised on construals of relatively limited rationality are increasingly influential in what has come to be termed "behavioural finance". Once again, the influence of psychologists such as Thaler (1993) and Kahneman and Tversky (1979), and Slovic (1972) is felt. A model of limited ("bounded" in Slovic's terminology) rationality has arisen largely based on the idea that "a full understanding of human limitations will ultimately benefit the decision-maker more than will naive faith in the infallibility of his intellect" (Slovic, 1972, cited in De Bondt *et al*., 2008: 2). Similarly, arguments as being made to mobilise "imaginative" (as opposed to strictly rational) forces must be mobilised more effectively if business ethics training is to be made more impactful. As Falkenberg and Woiceshyn (2008) put it, "…. a consensus has emerged that instruction should not be based on the rightness of a particular set of moral principles or the quoting of doctrine. Rather the goal should be an enhanced awareness of ethical issues... and stimulation of the 'moral imagination', and identification of the students' own value sets (Pamental, 1989; Stiles *et al*., 1993, cited in Falkenberg and Woiceshyn, 2008: 213).

6.6.4. A More Social Economic Model

Among the most influential challenges to established models of rational agency in economics was instigated by a Noble Prize winning psychologist, Daniel Kahneman. As Maxwell (2014) notes in his review of Kahneman's ground-breaking *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (2011):

> "There is a movement afoot in psychology that has the potential to usher in the kind of radical transformation of the critical thinking canon not seen since the advances made in logic in the MiddleAges. That movement is behavioural economics... a field of research.. that seriously challenges the model of rational agency that is foundational to neo-classical economic theory" (Maxwell, 2014: 135).

Another illustration of a shift away from *homo economicus* is found in the work of Dietz, Ostrom and Stern (see Dietz *et al.*, 2003) on global governance. Ostram was jointly awarded the Nobel Prize (with Oliver Williamson) in 2009 for her work on a definitive economic problem first termed the "tragedy of the commons" by Garrett Hardin in 1968. Hardin's hypothesis was that any resource shared amongst a group of individuals would inevitably ("tragically") be depleted in a fashion contrary to the collective sum of long-term interests of all concerned. According to Hardin, this would occur irrespective of agents' knowledge that their actions would result in this negative outcome; awareness of this result would not prevent each individual agent from consuming as much as possible, in fact failing to doing so was considered irrational behaviour. The two categories of response to this imagined dilemma were either privatisation of the commons, which aligned consumption with (each) individual interest, or nationalisation and externally imposed consumption limits from above. Effective collective and cooperative management of shared resource was deemed unrealistic.

Evidence suggests that Hardin's concept relied on dogmatic (and overly pessimistic) construals of human nature, which fail to recognise the implications of innate sociality and capacities for cooperation. The achievement of Dietz *et al*. (2003) was to demonstrate how common governance of fisheries, for example, can be achieved. As they comment: "Thirty-five years ago it seemed that the 'tragedy of the commons' was inevitable everywhere not owned privately or by a government. Systematic multidisciplinary research has, however, shown that a wide diversity of adaptive governance systems have been effective stewards of many resources" (2003: 1910). The adaptive governance systems in questions are grounded in an organic process of on-going communication between community members and the subsequent imposition of informal, but highly effective, systems of social sanction to reign in irresponsible consumption at the individual level.

Development economists have also learned to harness the power of sociality in guiding prudent consumption of shared goods and controlling free riding. The Grameen model of microfinance focuses on social pressure within a recognised community to impel/compel repayment and discourage debtor default. The demonstrable success of the Grameen Banks (Simanis and Hart, 2009) is testament to the practical efficacy of recognising the social context of economic decision-making and potency of a kind of institutionalised public opinion.

6.7. Haidt's Model of Adaptive Morality

There is a good deal of compelling new research on the dissociation of systematic reason and moral judgement (see Hauser *et al,*, 2007, for example). Jonathan Haidt (2012, 2011, 2010, 2007, 2003, 2003a, 2001; Haidt and Joseph 2011; Haidt and Kasebir, 2010; Haidt and Kasebir, 2004) however, is particularly prominent in this reason/affect discourse of moral judgement. Haidt is among the most cited and influential of contemporary social psychologists. Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory and Social Intuitionist Model integrate a substantial body of social psychological research into a compelling defence of EPMN. As argued in the introduction, thinking and findings from a variety of disciplines are converging on a central body of insights expressed in the EPMN. I will take an interdisciplinary approach to supporting and critiquing the EPMN, however, proportionately the most time will be spend assessing the contribution of moral psychology on this question, as it is here we find the most compelling and influential arguments. Among contemporary moral psychologists (indeed, social psychologists in general) Jonathan Haidt is generally considered among the most influential. In an area (research on emotions in reasoning) that is stimulating steeply rising volumes of publication, Haidt is among the most cited in the academic literature.

The area of Haidt's research most germane to this research is his Social Intuitionist Model (SIM) of moral judgment, though his Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) is also directly relevant. Haidt's work on moral dumbfounding supports affective/intuitive construals of moral judgment, and is of particular importance. It will not be suggested that Haidt's MFS/SIM cannot be superimposed on the preceding arguments in normative ethics without qualification. For example, Haidt criticises placing an exclusive focus on either harm or justice as vectors of moral concern. He suggests that preoccupation with these two moral categories is characteristic of a small global minority comprised of "educated and politically liberal westerners" (Haidt, 2011: 367). However, Haidt's research provides strong evidence for the EPMN in a number of ways. In particular, Haidt's work directly assails rationalist construals of moral judgment through a series of arguments.

6.8. Disgust, "Moral Dumbfounding" and Arational Moral Cognition

One such argument is based on the concept of "moral dumbfounding" (Haidt, 2007). Moral dumfounding occurs when subjects are incapable of articulating or justifying moral judgments

even when given sufficient time and explicit encouragement to do so. Morally dumbfounded subjects have taken a clear position on an ethical question with little apparent effort. Haidt argues that these positions are frequently based on an intuitive sense that some particular act (incest, for example) is inherently wrong without reference to specific consequences or reference to relevant moral principles. This phenomenon is described by Haidt as occurring, "when a strong intuition is left unsupported by in articulable reasons. The clearest evidence of dumbfounding is that participants will often state that they know or believe something, but cannot find reasons to support their belief" (Haidt *et al.*, 2000)

Haidt and others' work on disgust as a nonrational but potent basis for moral judgment is a useful tool for understanding socially determined intuitions. Haidt opines that moral judgements are not generally the product of moral reasoning. Haidt's "social intuitionist" model of moral judgment (2001) de-emphasises private aspects of moral reasoning in favour of explicitly social/cultural influences. Justifications of specific moral judgments are, for Haidt, the product of quick (almost automatic) intuitions, the basis of which may not be available to individuals, even for the purposes of *ex post facto* justification or explanation.

The manner in which Haidt informs or tests his intuition-led model of moral judgment is the most valuable and interesting aspect of his work in this area. First of all, the process of moral judgment itself is defined as explicitly social or, as Haidt puts it, "... these [moral] evaluations are made against the backdrop of specific cultural practices..." (Haidt, 2001: 817) Thus, judgments of individuals and their actions are compared against, "... a set of values held to be obligatory by a culture or subculture (Haidt, 2001: 817)". Given the lack of rational forethought (the absence of which agents may or may not be aware of), it is perhaps unsurprising that subjects are often incapable of providing reasoned justifications for the judgments. Despite this lack of reasoned justification in such experimental settings, subjects' confidence in their judgments often remains unshaken. This phenomenon, dubbed "moral dumbfounding" (Haidt *et al.,* 2000: website) counters construals of moral judgment as informed by careful, systematic reasoning.

Haidt's concept of moral dumbfounding is compelling both in its secondary accounts of others' moral intuitions which, though dominant in a particular moral reasoning process, do not appear to have reasons available to conscious expression, but also through our own experience. In his inimitable fashion, Peter Singer (2001) has implied that non-vegetarians

have no moral grounds upon which to oppose bestiality. Once again, Singer's conclusions are both entirely consistent with an unmitigated rationalism in moral judgment, while also alien and objectionable to socially agreed and universal moral standards. Such standards do not necessarily derive from and rely on traditionalist moral frameworks. Even respondents considered "WEIRD" ("Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich and Democratic") by Haidt (2012) experience a disgust response to suggestions of behaviour (such as incest) essentially similar to Singer's bestiality example.

6.9. Haidt's Social Intuitionist Ethics

Haidt (Haidt and Joseph 2004: 55) describes an "empiricist" perspective on moral knowledge/beliefs/action which rejects any innate moral structures or predisposition and which argue that any coincidence of these is a product of common different peoples facing similar resource constraints and collective challenges. These approaches are contrasted with "nativist" views of morality which holds that, "…knowledge about such issues as fairness, harm and respect for authority has been built into the human mind by evolution. All children who are raised in a reasonable environment will come to develop these ideas, even if they are not taught by adults" (Haidt and Joseph, 2004: 55). In staking out their "modified nativist view" Haidt and Joseph clarify their belief that intuitions are innate "in important respects", but that virtues are "social constructions" (2004: 56).

For Haidt and Joseph, moral intuitions centre on similar "patterns" which are recognisable across cultures. Specifically, Haidt and Joseph speak of "suffering, hierarchy, reciprocity and purity" (2004: 59). While these moral intuitions are to a large degree universal, moral virtues are described as culturally specific and incommensurable across cultures. Haidt and Jospeh are right to suggest that recognising the alternatively shared and distinct nature of moral intuitions and moral virtues represents an opportunity to "develop new approaches to moral education..." (Haidt and Joseph, 2004: 56). While the shared basis of certain instinctive responses to abstract ideas of harm or fairness, for example, provides common ground or goals, understanding normative diversity in the varied construals or what actually constitutes harm or satisfies conditions for fairness provides important substantive content for moral or empathy education.

Qualitative, cultural explanations of morality must also be acknowledged. One type of (moral origins) story is rooted in cultural models/explanations (Prinz, 2013). The importance of these approaches is acknowledged; it is also argued that they need not undermine the psychological/biological story told in this work. Engaging with these cultural accounts beyond making this argument exceeds the scope of this research. The claim is not made that empirical accounts of moral judgment are complete and exhaustive, only that they are coherent and useful.

6.10. Greene's Dual Process Model of Moral Cognition

I introduce Greene's thought at this stage, as his prescriptive inclusion of a positive normative programme facilitates a transition between Haidt's purely descriptive account and Daniel Batson's (1997, 2011; see also Batson *et al.,* 2003) analysis of the potential for moral behaviour/empathy development through engagement with moral narrative. It is difficult to engage with the evolving landscape of moral psychology without (repeatedly) encountering the work of Joshua Greene. For example, the following endorsements appear on the cover of Joshua Greene's 2013 work, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them*. Greene's research is described by Peter Singer (a natural normative ally, I will suggest) as "…brilliant and enlightening...", while Robert Sapolsky, calls his work "dazzling" and suggests he, "…helped start the field of moral neuroscience". Steven Pinker contends that Greene contributes "several… genuinely new ideas on the nature of morality", while Daniel Gilbert restricts himself to calling Greene's *Moral Tribes* (2013) a "masterpiece". Given Greene's great (and emphatically interdisciplinary) influence, and his vision of the centrality of the moral emotions in "supersocial" creatures like us, it would be a mistake not to explore his ideas at some stage in a work of this kind.

I am convinced that Greene's research, in particular the empirical evidence he employs to support his (social/affect-led) construal of moral cognition, adds something original and worthwhile to the discourse of moral psychology. Even though theories of behavioural evolution cannot be justified with the same kind or extent of evidence as their (strictly) biological counterparts, Greene's ideas about (patterns of) behaviour are subject to controlled

observation in the here and now[56]. Application of these ideas and models in a contemporary context is, after all, my ultimate interest and concern.

6.10.1. Greene on "Me versus Us" and "Us versus Them"

Greene is right in describing his work, *Moral Tribes* (2013) as ambitious. Greene's quest is for nothing less than a "global moral philosophy that can adjudicate among competing tribal moralities…" (2013: 15). His analysis, though fundamentally in concert with Haidt's ideas, is distinct in its embrace of a specific normative theory ("deep pragmatism" – not easily distinguished from Singer's utilitarianism), and attendant call to action. This single work of Greene's is, in fact, so ambitious and influential that it is worth spending some time focused on it exclusively.

Greene (2013) posits the existence of two categories of moral problem, the most basic moral problem is "Me versus Us: selfishness versus concern for others". According to Greene, our moral brains have adapted, through the mechanism of positive-sum cooperation, to address this first problem type. Greene suggests that this moral brain is generally fast and efficient in its "automatic" settings. Speed (though not flexibility) of judgment, is achieved through the operation of our moral emotions (2013: 15). This evolved speed renders it unnecessary for us (most of the time) to devote (potentially scarce) energy and time to systematic reflection because most of the time our feelings, "…do the thinking for us" (2013: 33).

While universal cooperation (between morally heterogeneous groups) remains tragically beyond the realm of the possible in Greene's thought, he cites evidence to suggest that cooperation (morality) within groups has evolved as "...a set of psychological adaptations that allow otherwise selfish individuals to reap the benefits of cooperation" (2013: 23).[57] There is nothing idealistic about Greene's (initial) construal of morality, construed as it is as an "inherently competitive process", driven by ruthless intergroup competition. Sacrifice of one for the group (has evolved to) occur(s) – but ultimately in the interests of us as opposed to the Other. As Greene puts it, "Cooperation evolves, not because it's 'nice' but because it confers a

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[56] Greene does accompany his analysis with a familiar type of speculation on the origins of moral behaviours in the assumed conditions and adaptations characteristic of the Pleistocene period.

[57] Even if Greene's default definition of us as "otherwise selfish" requires some justification, his instrumentalist definition of adaptive responses to the "Me versus Us" problem confirms his instrumentalist view of morality. This is a familiar enough line of reasoning. It is on the second ("Us versus Them") problem in which his approach is most distinctive.

survival advantage" (2013: 24). Of course, reciprocity, or reciprocal altruism, has been extensively studied. Greene cites a seminal series of Prisoner's Dilemma experiments (Axelrod and Hamilton, 1981, cited in Greene, 2013: 32) to support the idea that patterns of reciprocal behaviour tend to develop in multiplayer simulations. He also notes that this "logic of reciprocity" could be arrived at through a process of slow, deliberate reasoning – but that the moral emotions (anger or gratitude, for example) can be more efficient in producing the same optimising patterns.

Greene speculates a great deal on the development of the moral emotions, but it is an instinctive nonaggression and prevalence of positive acts which is most germane to the current discussion. Greene cites a study in which subjects were consistently reluctant to follow instructions to smash what appeared to be a human leg, but which subjects knew to be artificial. The experimenter noted, "..simply *pretending* to do these nasty things caused their peripheral blood vessels to constrict dramatically, literally giving them 'cold feet'" (Cushman *et al.* 2012, cited in Greene, 2013: 36). There may well be a problem of overdetermination in this instinctive aversion to violence against strangers (it is not clear how deep, instinctive fear of retaliation could be distinguished from care-based violence aversion, for example). Greene does appear, however, to be onto something deserving of further investigation.

The very possibility of what would appear to be strictly irrational acts of kindness towards complete strangers (defined here as those from which we cannot realistically expect beneficial or harmful reciprocal responses) puts exclusively instrumentalist views of moral evolution under considerable pressure. Of course, though our moral brains often incline us to feel anger at unjustified harms to others, this does not amount to *prima facie* rejection of harmful action. What appears to be general support or, at times, even zeal for prosocial or altruistic punishment under both experimental[58] and real-world[59] circumstances seems suggestive of

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[58] Greene mentions Fehr and Gächter's influential "Public Goods Game" simulations of altruistic punishment in humans (see Fehr and Gächter, 2002, cited in Greene, 2013: 59). In these simulations, patterns of "costly" punishment emerged in which players chose to punish free riders – even when such punishment came at personal cost. This behaviour is not (narrowly speaking) rational, but makes sense if, as Greene suggests, ".pro-social punishment is by emotions." Greene also notes that, "Nowhere is our concern for how others to others more apparent than in our intense engagement with fiction" (2013: 59).

[59] In 1988 David Cash Jr. made only a "half-hearted" attempt to prevent his companion, Jeremy Strohmeyer, from molesting and murdering a seven-year old girl in Las Vegas. Having only "failed to stop" rather then directly commit, the crime, it was not possible to convict Cash of any crime under Nevada or federal law. Paul Bloom notes that decades after the event, "Cash is now stalked on the Internet; people report on his whereabouts, hoping to ruin his prospects for getting a job and making friends, wishing to destroy his life, even though they

something important and innate; this obtains whether or not we wish to characterise this predisposition or capacity as a moral structure, tendency or otherwise. Recent work on the prevalence and consistency of social evaluation in preverbal infants (Bloom, 2013; Hamlin *et al*., 2007) suggests a promising complementary line of inquiry on the universality of innate moral judgement.

Greene's second category of moral problem is "Us versus Them: our interests and values versus theirs" (2013: 14); this is a (perhaps, *the*) modern moral problem. One can enlist any number of clichés about globalised societies and unbounded, technology driven, communication at this stage. Suffice it to say, profoundly different, often mutually hostile value "tribes" are in closer contact now than ever before and that is unlikely to change. Greene believes that our moral brains have had the requisite time to adapt responses to "Me versus Us" problems, but lag behind in dealing with the collision of group moralities. We have, in Greene's view, evolved to resolve the former cooperatively, but without a comparable skill in resolving this more modern moral problem.

Greene is optimistic enough to suggest that morality can be moulded into something that transcends its original purpose.[60] As he puts it, "...being wired for tribalism does not mean being hardwired for tribalism. Brains can be rewired through experience and active learning (2013: 55). Greene is most original on prospects for resolution of the "thoroughly modern…" Us versus Them" problem, and it is here where he gestures towards something more hopeful, and positively agential, than this view of morality as submission to brute (collective) necessity. Greene believes that the in-group loyalty/out-group hostility nature has equipped us with can be reprogrammed or "rewired".

The possibility that subjects acted in hopes of reciprocal reward in Milgram and colleagues' experiments, in which a majority of "lost" letters were returned (at times with insufficient postage made up) is less than a possible fear of (reciprocal) punishment in the violence

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were personally unaffected by his failure to act" (Bloom, 2013:11). The scapegoating rage directed at Haringey social services following their failure to prevent the murder of 17-month old Peter Connelly ("Baby P") in 2009, provides a similar (British) example of (misguided) altruistic punishment of someone perceived as a perpetrator on behalf of a victim.

[60] Borrowing from Wittgenstein, Greene suggests that, "…morality can climb the ladder of evolution then kick it away" (2013: 25).

aversion study (Milgram *et al.*, 1965 cited in Greene, 2013: 37). It is this (instinctive) "feeling bad" for (harm suffered by) others which Greene recognises as a core basis for empathy. As we shall see, Batson puts it in similar fashion.

6.11. The Normativity of Greene's "Deep Pragmatism"

Greene characterises his (instrumentalist) approach to morality as "deep pragmatist" (2013). Though more interested in what morality is than what it does, Greene is quick to brush aside relativistic construals of morality. Greene's spurning of relativism is not on the basis of its supposed falsehood in any formal sense, but rather its irrelevance in a world in which we are compelled/impelled to choose some standards or values. At this stage one hears an echo of Harris' impatience with metaphysical conjecture and search for foundational principles.

As a self-described moral pragmatist, Joshua Greene (2013) is not primarily concerned with ultimate metaethical questions on the (non)objective status of various ethical edicts or systems. It would appear that the habitual inability of moral relativism to provide any practical action guidance renders it irrelevant to his arguments. Both individuals and collectives, must, after all, adopt (and act upon) some system of normative ideas or values. It follows that Greene's primary concern is with which moral system would be most broadly acceptable in both an abstract and practical sense.

Greene's suggestion is that it is possible to avoid "the morass" of multiple and incompatible appeals to sources of ultimate or irreducible moral value, whether religious, rational or empirical. He seeks what he believes is a secure (and universalisable) utilitarian foundation in "the common currency of experience" (2013: 291). Greene reasons that we all wish to experience mind states that we subjectively construe as agreeable. It is interesting to note that, in Greene's formulation, it is only the addition of "impartiality" which facilitates the emergence of the moral from this self-oriented collection of preference and aversion. Greene does not comment on impartiality in detail; he does not offer an opinion on the degree of impartiality required or desirable. Greene's exposition of impartiality is restricted to an affirmation of recognition of the moral equality/equal worth of the preferences of different persons ("Your happiness and your suffering matter no more, and no less, than anyone else's" [2013: 291]). Clearly, Greene's ("deep pragmatism") construal of utilitarianism aligns him more closer with Singer than Bentham, but I do not think that this particular theoretical point

is pivotal at this stage. Greene's makes a very useful contribution to the EPMN in the form of his "Dual Process" theory of moral psychology.

According to Greene, "...we have dual-process brains, with automatic settings that make our thinking efficient and a manual mode that makes our thinking flexible" (2013: 171). Greene describes our brains as possessing a "manual" mode of moral reasoning, whose slow, considered nature make it flexible but inefficient, and an "automatic" mode of moral reasoning, which is inflexible but efficient in the speed at which it arrive.s at conclusions. It is an empirical fact, according to Greene (2013), that the majority of our moral decisions are made in automatic mode, and are driven by the "moral emotions".

6.11.1. "Action Tendencies" and Moral Motivation

Greene succeeds in illustrating how neuroscience can contribute to moral/normative theory in a meaningful way. A pressing question when considering the significance of Greene's work, and of the moral emotions in general, is whether it is possible to significantly influence "point and shoot" moral tendencies. According to Greene, emotional states, such as disgust and fear, inevitably entail associated action tendencies. A key question at this stage is whether empathic feelings are similarly correlated with action states. If compassionate or empathic affect translates to action in similarly direct fashion, with reason disintermediated from any affect to motivation direct loop, then a number of EfE questions are raised. The challenge for EfE, therefore, may be that so much moral judgment is the product of affective (as opposed to rational) reasoning processes, and that this places moral motivation/action beyond the remit of conscious explanation, justification or constructive revision. If intuitive or affective drivers map onto actual moral motivation and action as tightly as Haidt or Greene suggest, then, to be effective, EfE needs to access these drivers at the most fundamental (affective) level possible in order to have a tangible impact on decisions and behaviour. I will later suggest that moral narratives are the best tools available to achieve this end.

Vitz opines that, "morality is grounded in personal emotional experience" (Vitz, 1990: 713) as well as social norms and much of these individual inputs are unreachable to a large extent. However, classrooms are their own cultures, and cultures can foster change because learners are predisposed to be receptive to culturally determined moral infrastructures. Learners are neither moral "blank slates" nor closed and inaccessible moral systems.

6.12. Moral Narrative and/in Batson's Empathy Altruism Model

Along with Haidt and Greene, Daniel Batson, an acknowledged leader in moral psychology, also embraces a social/affect-led model of moral cognition; there is no fundamental contradiction in their general beliefs on this subject. There is, however, a (complementary, as I see it) difference in their normative ambitions and the prescriptive action plans these differences entail. Greene's greater comfort (relative to Haidt) with moral realist prescriptivity differentiates those two thinkers and, I believe, moves us closer to a justifiable action plan for empathy education. In similar fashion, Batson's (relatively less expansive and more focused) theories on the specific role moral narrative can play in developing dispositional empathy further expedites the transition from theory to (narrative based) empathy education practice.

The essence of Batson's Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (2011, 1997, Batson *et al.*, 2003) is that exposure to specific stimuli (moral narratives) is (perhaps uniquely) potent in provoking affective, and consequently empathic, responses to others, and that these states of mind tend to elicit altruistic behaviour. I acknowledge at this stage that the (subjectively reported) spikes in feelings of concern and closeness Batson tracks and reports in his studies are short-term. Batson takes observer/subject similarity (age, gender, ethnicity, membership of home college, for example) into account, and these factors do appear to prove relevant empirically. However, his findings critically suggest empathy spikes across what Greene describes as tribal lines. In fact, Batson's success in stimulating empathy for explicitly stigmatised groups is especially interesting and important.

It must be acknowledged that there is no evidence that this prosocial affect obtains over time. While granting the absence of extensive longitudinal data, I make what appears to me a justified leap of faith in my final chapter.[61] In that chapter I suggest that the preponderance of different types of evidence for the efficacy of moral narrative suggest that it is plausible that systematic and embedded use of this narrative technique over the long term in an educational context will elicit comparably long term benefits in terms of empathic dispositions and altruistic action. Psychologist Jeffrey Strange has studied the way in which "… judgements

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[61] There is some evidence that effects of certain types of perspective-taking experiences endure beyond the short term. "Clore and Jeffrey (1972) found that assuming the role of a disabled person by travelling by wheelchair about campus for an hour, or watching someone else do this, significantly improved attitudes towards the disabled – not only on a measure immediately following the experience but also in response to a disguised attitude measure 4 months later (cited in Batson, 1997: 105).

about people, problems and institutions in the everyday world" are often influenced by "...invented characters in imagined situations" (Green *et al,*, 2002: 264).

Batson contends in his Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis that exposing subjects to evocative life narratives tends to deepen empathy, broaden perspectives, and increase the incidence of "purely" altruistic behaviour (see Batson, 1997; Batson et al., 2003). It is in this area, the translation of empathic perspective to altruistic/empathic behaviour, in which Batson's contribution is most evident. The discourse surrounding egoistic and altruistic interpretations is complex and nuanced. For this reason, it is important to provide Batson's (1997: 497) precise explanation of his empathy-altruism hypothesis.

> This hypothesis defines empathy as an other-oriented emotional response congruent with the other's perceived welfare; it defines altruism as a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare.

Batson's (1997: 508) assertion that, "our data suggest… that empathy evokes concern for the other, distinct from oneself, that is beyond self-interest", is quite a radical claim and requires justification. I will attempt to achieve an effective synthesis between Batson's empirical evidence for trained, enhanced empathy and a revised operational definition of self-interest suitable to support the goals of this research. Batson (1997: 508) argues that, "perspective-taking has proved effective in inducing empathy not only for complete strangers… but also for members of stigmatized groups". This contention is particularly important given Staub's assertion that, "When conflict with another group arises, it may be more difficult for them to take the perspective of the Other and consider the Other's needs" (2005: 300).

6.13. Against Empathy-Altruism: Cialdini on Self-in-Other Merging

As the implications of Batson's work are central to my research, I will critically consider the most prominent criticisms of his position. Cialdini *et al.* (1997) describe Batson's work as, "the most prominent and easily the most research productive of the empathy-based formulations" (Cialdini *et al.*, 1997: 481) and comment that Batson is a leading proponent of the idea that genuine selflessness, the notion that we may be "motivated solely or principally to enhance the welfare of another" (1997: 481) is possible. However, Cialdini *et al*. 1997 (see also Cialdini, 1991) take issue with the contention that pure altruism is possible.

As one of Batson's most persistent critics Cialdini *et al*. (1997: 1) confront the Empathy-Altruism Model of helping with Batson's proposition that "pure" altruism is undermined by "Self-Other" overlap. It is argued that, "empathetic concern affects helping primarily as an emotional signal of Oneness" (1997: 1). The contention of both Batson and Cialdini is that "pure" altruism demands a primarily other-oriented response. Batson (1997: 497) acknowledges that, "if the empathy-helping relationship is due to self-other merging, then the Empathy-Altruism hypothesis is not correct; it is not even meaningful". If one experiences joy in helping others or pain at their misfortune, then a necessary overlap between self and other has been produced, and, both psychologists agree, the possibility of "pure" altruism is lost.[62] Where they differ is on the question whether this primarily other-directed altruism is possible (Batson) or whether it must also overlap with the self (Cialdini).[63] Cialdini *et al*. (1997) assert that Oneness or the Self-in-Other is rooted in one or more of the cues of kinship, friendship, similarity and familiarity.[64]

I accept Cialdini's assertion that closeness of personal connections is positively correlated with altruistic motivation. However, I concur with Batson that even in the absence of such connection, altruistic motivation can be present, though not in the precisely "pure" formulation employed by him. Oneness-based criticisms do not undermine the fundamental utility of Batson's findings for those arguing for the positive impact of a certain type of ethical education. These criticisms are important in terms of refining our understanding of the precise nature and motivations for altruistic behaviour and for this reason they should be addressed. However, this work is less concerned with arguments concerning whether the "I" in question is exclusively situated within the Self or Other than with the practical impact of empathy-perspective-altruism training. A concept of "pure" altruism is not required to support the

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[62] It is interesting to note the difference between select philosophical and psychological construals of altruism. Affective factors such as sadness (at the witnessed suffering of another) or guilt (resulting from a perception of personal responsibility for this suffering) are considered egoistic by Cialdini and his colleagues. Cialdini, and indeed Batson's, definition of altruism is very demanding. Perhaps there is scope (or even a requirement) to address the narrowness of a definition of altruistic motivation that necessarily precludes the benefit of any positive, personal affect resulting from helping behaviour. If the primary motivation for an individual to act is to cease, diminish or prevent present or future personal sadness resulting form the specific fact of another individual's suffering, how helpful or precise is it to describe this motivation as "egoistical"?

[63] Consideration of Bentham's 1834 conception of "other-regarding" self-interest could be useful on this point. Bentham's belief that all action is essentially egotistical (motivated by the pursuit of [one's own] pleasures and avoidance of [one's own] pains) *and* that the primary pleasures and pains are rooted in our experience of internal and external approbation might serve to clarify the psychologists' debate.

[64] Of Cialdini's Four Cues, I anticipate that understanding the role of kinship in altruism will be of particular importance. The fierce allegiance to kinship ties in Khmer society is illustrated in Khmer proverbs such as,

ឆាប់វល្លិមួយ រញ្ជាយដល់ដើម ។
("Grab onto vine, the whole plant will shake")

ឆាស់អាងស្លាប់ ជាលអាងកាប់ ក្ពែងអាងល័ ។

central objective of this work. Batson's findings on (measurable) empathy increasing through the exploration of moral narratives are central to the project. A goal of ethical education, as argued for in this research, is to increase what might be termed the expression of a Benthamic conception of enlightened self-interest.

Ultimately, this research story concludes with an attempt to draw out what I feel are the collective implications of these ideas from Haidt, Greene and Batson (and, in subsequent chapters, specific work on [moral] narrative) for an explicitly affect-led, narrative approach to moral education. I have suggested that this final stage (into a distinctly programmatic/educational domain) is original, and that it is also a reasonable extrapolation if one accepts the preceding ideas.

Chapter 7

Life as Narrative

The overall argument of this work is that moral life narrative is an effective tool for stimulating empathy, and that developing empathy for others is a worthwhile goal for moral education. I have engaged with Batson's arguments (Section 6.12.) positing a positive correlation between empathy and altruistic behaviour and have argued that nurturing such altruistic behaviour is consistent with the normative ethical framework I endorse. In the next chapter, I will largely restrict my focus to narrative in an educational/developmental context. In this chapter, however, I seek to provide a more general account of narrative, experience and moral imagination. I argue that narrative modes are especially effective in facilitating ethical understanding and that the development of what Nussbaum (2006) terms "narrative imagination" reinforces the shared and mutual in human affairs in a manner consistent with the development of empathic capacities to understand and, arguably, to increased dispositions for concern and care.

Without suggesting conceptual homogeneity amongst them, this chapter explores the research of a range of prominent thinkers who subscribe to the idea that narrative is a central mode of many people's experience; I also explore a range of arguments that oppose such narrative construals. Of course, my argument is for specifically *moral* narrative as a central tool for moral education. Nevertheless, I think it is worthwhile to spend some time contextualising this argument within a wider conversation about narrative. I have argued that affect is more typically characteristic of narrative than non-narrative learning. In this chapter, I seek to extend this account with consideration of what narrative *qua* narrative might contribute to our imaginative capacities to discover general truths about ourselves and others through reflection on particular lives and circumstances. The connection between such imaginative capacity and cognitive empathy seems clear. While I do not develop this point further, one could argue that more effectively imagining ourselves into the experience of others might increase affective empathy as well.

7.1. The Goals and Design of this Chapter

This chapter begins with an inquiry into claims that narrative is a "primary act" or "principle function" of mind. Granting such an essential status for narrative in general would provide some justification, I believe, for the particular (and again, essential) role occupied by narrative in my vision of empathy education. I believe it is helpful to initially appraise claims relating to the status and use of narrative in relatively general terms before progressing to the more targeted assessment of the potential of moral life narrative in the work of, *inter alia*, Vitz (1990) and Tappan and Brown (1989). Therefore, in this chapter I will progress from broader to more focused assessment of the value of narrative in order to contextualise and justify its use as a primary educational device. If our experience and understanding of the world is as deeply embedded in narrative structures as Barbara Hardy (1968), Jerome Bruner (2004), Martha Nussbaum (1989, 2011) or Alasdair McIntyre (2007) maintain, it follows, I believe, that empathy engagements assembled in (affect-led) narrative are likely to be particularly powerful, memorable and meaningful learning experiences.

7.2. Life and Narrative

For Jerome Bruner, "we have no other way of describing 'lived time' save in the form of narrative" (Bruner, 2004: 2). Barbara Hardy describes life itself "as narrative" and construes narrative as a "primary act of mind" (Hardy, 1968: 5). If narrative is as essential to the operation of mind, motive and memory as Hardy and Bruner, among others, suggest, then the type of narrative-led empathy education I will propose is grounded in, or consistent with, our most deeply rooted and universal psychological predispositions and structures.

7.2.1. Bruner: *Life as Narrative*

Jerome Bruner is influential as a sceptic of cognitive models centred on rationality and "logical thought" and proponent of (affect-led) narrative as a meaningful description of cognition and experience. For Bruner, "…logical thought is not the only or even the most ubiquitous form of thought" (2004: 691). In *Life as Narrative* (2004), Bruner suggests, "We seem to have no other way of describing 'lived time' save in the form of narrative", and that "… the mimesis between life so-called and narrative is a two-way affair… that is to say… life imitates art." (Bruner, 2004: 692). In Bruner's (constructivist) account, "There is no such thing

psychologically as 'life itself'. At the very least, it is selective achievement of memory recall: beyond that, recounting one's life is an interpretive feat" (Bruner, 2004: 693). The claim that recall, including that of defining life events, is an active and continual process of (re)construction and (re)interpretation is not especially controversial. A general consensus on the substance of remembering has existed at least since F. C. Bartlett's description of remembering as "imaginative reconstruction or construction [of events]" in his seminal work, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Bartlett, 1932: 10).

Bruner's description of autobiographical stories as "slippery" (1932) is consistent with his own protean construal of remembering. One must be realistic, if accepting such a construal, about expectations or verification of "facts" presented in (auto) biographical narratives; this question of verification will arise more than once in this section. However, it is this very assertion of (self)narrative instability which generates one of Bruner's most interesting and, for current purposes, promising, suggestions. Specifically, Bruner argues that,

> "this… instability makes life stories highly susceptible to cultural, interpersonal, and linguistic influences. This susceptibility to influence may, in fact, be the reason why 'talking cures', religious instruction, and other interventions in a life may often have such profound effects in changing a person's life narrative" (Bruner, 2004: 694).

The fact that potential for personal change is contextualised by Bruner within religious or therapeutic interventions is not the most relevant aspect of his thought. Rather, it is the prospect of change itself (to our narratives) that is most important in the context of our current (empathy from narrative) discussion.

For Bruner, the power to affect change in a life narrative does not follow from systematic recognition of parallel (empirical) truths recognised in one's own and other stories. Bruner cites James Joyce's description of the "epiphany of the ordinary" (2004: 696) to highlight the universality of everyday moral dilemmas into which such affective human constants as jealousy, loyalty or love present, in some sense, comparable opportunities and challenges for those experiencing them. It would seem that recognition of story similarity depends not on objective assessment of factual parallels between our lives and those presented (told) to us, but of some more amorphous, but no less influential, force. This force is shaped by language and culture no less than the ebb and flow of our own autobiographical creations. I return to this theme of change and its implications in Chapter 9.

7.2.2. Hardy: Narrative as "Primary Act of Mind"

A compelling vision of narrative as absolutely innate or inseparable from our art/life-making, or as she puts, a "primary act of mind", is found in the work of Barbara Hardy (1968: 5). Hardy's interpretation of art is strikingly redolent of Bruner. It is the nature of this narrative "primary act" to transfer experience or knowledge (through narrative) to art from life. This seems counterintuitive to those who imagine the narrative flow in the opposite direction or construe narrative as an artistic contrivance. For Hardy, however, "The novel ... heightens, isolates, and analyses the narrative motions of human consciousness" (1968: 5). In suggesting that we read novels "to find out about narrative", Hardy is not positing a widespread wish to understand literary criticism. Rather, her contention is that the essence of experience is itself contained within, and expressed by, personal narrative structures.

In Hardy's account, "We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative. In order really to live, we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future" (1968: 5). For Hardy, the above list, though extended, is "highly obvious" (p. 5). In the absence of empirical support, Hardy's confidence in narrative as a defining aspect of mind is such that her position appears more assertion than argument at times.

It is also the case that efficacy claims for narrative-led empathy education have traditionally been less amenable to empirical measurement than more positive/quantifiable approaches (though Hoffman's empirical studies offer much encouragement for related general claims, such as the possibility of engineering short-term surges in subjectively reported empathic affect). Whether in relation to assertions of the life-centrality of narrative itself or the impact of narrative-led learning, the question of evidence is important and, consequently, will resurface later in this chapter.

Hardy opposes the view that we somehow grow out of narrative, or that story-telling/experiencing ought to be understood as childish fantasy from which, with the proper guidance, we emerge as lucid and rational adults. "Educationalists still suggest that the process

of maturation involves a movement out of the fantasy-life into a vision of life 'as it is'. Teachers have even constructed syllabi on the assumption that we begin with fairy tales and daydreams and work gradually into realistic modes" (1968: 5). In contrast with what she terms a "[fantasy] transcendence" view, Hardy suggests that we continue, "oscillating between fairy-tale and truth, dream and waking" (1968: 6) throughout our lives.

While acknowledging that excessive reliance on, or retreat into, fantasy is counterproductive for individuals and societies alike, I find her suggestion that narrative "... acts on future, joining it with the past. [that] It creates, maintains and transforms our relationships..." (1968: 6) introspectively compelling. I also sense that her suggestion that narrative "lends imagination" to "faithful memory and rational planning" is particularly important in the context of empathy education. As with explicitly or exclusively personal memories, stories (about self and others) are not understood independently of imaginative engagement. To the extent that certain feelings are not largely automatic or, as Hoffman (1989) puts it, "developmentally primitive and involuntary" (1989: 285), to that same extent is some imaginative (empathic?) faculty required. In suggesting that memory and rational planning are ideally supplemented by narrative engagement in order for us to "create, maintain and transform our relationships", Hardy proposes a normative model of interpersonal relationships/narrative engagement consistent with the social and affect-led cognitive model underpinning this work.

7.3. Literature, Education and Insight (Nussbaum and Gadamer)

Philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2011, 1989) has explored the relationship of, and boundaries between, literature and (primarily moral) philosophy in particularly lucid and eloquent fashion. In her preface to *Love's Knowledge* (1989), Nussbaum argues for "a conception of ethical understanding that involves emotional as well as intellectual activity and gives a certain type of priority to the perception of particular people and situations, rather than to abstract rules" (Nussbaum, 1989: i). She argues that "[her] ethical conception finds its most appropriate expression and statement in certain forms usually considered literary..." (1989: i). In Nussbaum's view, literature speaks to us "about the totality of our [social] connections... it searches for patterns of possibility - of choice, and circumstance, and the interaction between choice and circumstance - that turn up in human lives with such a persistence that they must be regarded as our possibilities" (Nussbaum, 1989: 171).

In later work championing the importance of the humanities in (post) secondary curricula, and the capabilities of literature within the humanities, Nussbaum introduces her construal of "narrative imagination" as a defining aspect of her educational vision. Narrative imagination is described as "… the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have.. The narrative imagination is cultivated, above all, through literature and the arts" (Nussbaum, 2006: 390-1). On this point, the parallel of narrative imagination with (particularly cognitive) empathy is evident.

Narrative imagination is one of three components comprising Nussbaum's "capabilities development" model of education. It is through this empathic capability, along with a capacity for self-examination, and recognition of oneself as bound to others through mutual concerns, which collectively "cultivate [our] humanity". It is important to note that these three strands are interwoven into an organic whole. Nussbaum finds inspiration in what she perceives as those universal and timeless aspects of human character or concern, whether jealousy, rage, love, moderation of appetites, mortality, or desire for meaning, which transcend particular cultures or epochs. As a polymath and prominent classical scholar, Nussbaum is well placed to unearth and describe the constant or universal in human affairs. In response to what she sees as a tendency towards excess cultural/moral relativism, Nussbaum recommends development of narrative imagination in the interests of creating (critical) awareness of, and insights into, the many shared aspects of human life and experience.

Nussbaum is not alone in her confidence in the unique power of narrative to facilitate deep (self and other-oriented) psychological insights. One is reminded of Proust's description of the novel as an "optical instrument", which enables the reader "...to discern what, without this book, he would never have perceived in himself. And the recognition… in his own self of what the book says is the proof of its veracity..." (Proust, 1993: 322). Naturally, acceptance of (reader interpretations of) authors' construals of character and motivation is neither passive nor unquestioning. Active engagement and analysis is central to developing the "critical capability" Nussbaum intends the humanities to lead in nurturing.

If one accepts, with Nussbaum, that narrative makes accessible a *sui generis* category of insight, then it is reasonable to accept that those claimed insights are (or ought to be) subject to an equivalently *sui generis* process of verification than that by which we gauge knowledge claims in, for example, the physical sciences. Gadamer's comparison of "ideal" method in historical research (as opposed to in the physical sciences) provides a helpful, if partial, analogue with what readers can expect from (claims derived from) narrative encounters. In asserting that the reader "...is himself part of the meaning he apprehends" (1974: 333) Gadamer begins to distance literature from the type of inductive knowledge accumulation/progression which (putatively) characterises the physical sciences. The intrinsically subjective character of understandings within the "moral [human] sciences" suggests to Gadamer that:

> "... historical research does not endeavour to grasp the concrete phenomenon as an instance of a universal rule.. Its ideal is rather to understand the phenomenon itself in its unique and historical concreteness. However much experiential universals are involved, the aim is not to confirm and extend these universalized experiences in order to attain knowledge of a law.. but to understand how this man, this people, or this state is what [he or] it has become or, more generally, how it happened that it is so" (Gadamer, 1974: 4).

Provided one accepts that story making may be rightly construed as a (albeit unique) kind of historical research, one is also likely to sense a correspondence between Gadamer's belief in the knowledge value of deep understandings of the particular and Nussbaum's arguments on the value of imaginative (rather than law-governed) critical engagement with particularistic accounts of individual lives and the "patterns of possibilities" those (narrative) lives present.

7.4. MacIntyre: Narrative and Life Unity

Chapters 9 and 10 are bracketed by two sets of arguments on ethical theory (for moral realism and utilitarianism as a normative foundation see Chapters 4-6; and for a model of narrative-led empathy education see Chapters 9-12). Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) is one of the most influential thinkers on, among other matters, the applicability of narrative construals to ethical theory, and a certain vision of the right or good aims of moral education/development. According to MacIntyre (1981), personal narratives are largely moved forward or understood as a progression from one moral choice to another, and that less obviously moral decisions (on

the equity or justice of outcomes, for example) are often informed by some normative judgment.

As Tappan and Brown (1989) suggest, "..the key to understanding the psychological complexity of moral experience..is that we sustain as a fundamental unity its cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions" (1989: 186). As an Aristotelian (and Thomist), MacIntyre subscribes to a teleological view of human life, one that entails both unity and direction. In this view, the course of our lives is neither entirely random (though somewhat buffeted by fortune) nor determined (at least not in a narrow and strictly materialist sense). For MacIntyre, there is some typical and essential form of individual lives, and this form or unity does not admit of strictly empirical explanation or summary.

MacIntyre's teleological psychology is not as it might be imagined in, say, Aristotelian physics. This is not teleology as some sort of physical law(s) or (necessarily) a suggestion of conscious design in the world; it is a psychological description of the way our minds universally perceive a causal inter-relationship between past, present and future. The narrative form is an echo of a near universal perception of personal causal agency and feeling of life as temporally bounded or structured.

Of course, narrative construals of life rest upon specific and contentious assumptions of free choice and a stable or enduring self. MacIntyre would subscribe, I believe, to a broad category view of self (and the decisions which flow from it) understood as having a degree of stability or consistency through time. This (alleged) continuity of self assumes story-like form in both our phenomenological experience of life and our external perception of the lives of others.

I do not think that this (again, alleged) existence of a relatively stable self need imply that the stories we tell ourselves (about ourselves and others) are not continually revised and reconstructed, but rather that our patterns of experience and their story-like (re)telling tend to assume recognisable and fairly consistent forms. These forms or patterns describe and contextualise individual choices and manifest enduring personality traits. This idea of patterns reflects something of MacIntyre's suggestion that our moral lives (whether or not we are aware of it) cohere and possess a certain unity.

If we have some agency in the events which mark the passing of our lives, and some essence of these decisions resides within enduring selves, then the prospect of making sense of (a) human life or lives has real meaning. One thesis, in many ways the defining thesis of MacIntyre's 1981 work, *After Virtue*, argues that the idea of narrative as centrally expressive of human life is unintelligible to (post) modern minds. This is contrasted with indigenous traditions infused with, even defined by, myth and story. That these traditions describe the broad arc of human history is evidence for MacIntyre that contemporary life is a fractured and artificial interplay of dissonant roles and identities. Perhaps MacIntyre is right in suggesting that our lives are intrinsically embedded in narrative and that moral decisions are often the most defining aspects of these stories. However disenchanted we may have become with religious or other cultural accounts as supplements to our personal stories (a core concern of MacIntyre), this does not necessarily entail that our most consciously private or independent construals of self are now less entangled with narrative and private myth. One way to assess the plausibility of the life as narrative theses presented by Bruner (1987), Gadamer (1974), Nussbaum (1989) and MacIntyre (1981) is to consider the arguments of one of the most influential critics of this family of views, Peter Lamarque.

7.5. Lamarque on "Expecting too much from Narrative"

7.5.1. "Narratives are Necessarily Selective and Perspectival"

Peter Lamarque (2004) is one of the more widely cited critics of this strong view of narrative. As his criticisms set the terms for some broad categories of objection, I will take some time to examine some selected arguments expressed in them.

According to Lamarque, narratives are "…of necessity selective and perspectival…" (2004: 398), and that "[Narratives] can never be comprehensive or transparent.. personal narratives virtually never attain completeness, closure, or unity" (2004: 405). Almost every word of this criticism is potentially useful. I concur with Lamarque that narrative is indeed selective and perspectival in nature, but not that this is, as he implies, a source of epistemic weakness. Thinkers like Nussbaum (1989) have helped to illustrate how the best (use of) narrative engages both subjective perspective and (near) universal constants of human nature and experience to help us identify patterns and possibilities for our own lives. Nussbaum's epistemology of narrative (1989), for example, is fed by both the universal

(affective aspects of our character and experience) and the particularistic (circumstances in which these constants manifest and are recognised). To again draw on Gadamer (2004), "..experiential universals are involved" (p. 4), yet the aim is to understand "this man", or how his actions came to be in some particular context. That others will inevitably construct different explanatory stories for the same particulars sets of circumstances does not enfeeble narrative explanation. In arguing against the possibility of physicalist reduction of phenomenological features, Robert Nozick (1974), argues that "every subjective phenomenon is essentially connected with a single point of view, and it seems inevitable that an objective, physical theory will abandon that point of view" (p. 2). [A theory of] narrative explanation refuses to abandon "single [subjective] points of view" or conflate multiple perspectives into an "objective" or "uniform" whole. For Nussbaum and others, this explanatory diversity is not a vulnerability. Rather (and especially from the educator's point of view), variation of interpretation injects the process of narrative imagination/inquiry with meaning and legitimacy (for the learner).[65] As with their literary counterparts, autobiographical or life narratives are also necessarily selective, with all the meaning-making and potential for change this entails.

Lamarque is again accurate when he accuses narrative of failing to provide "comprehensive and transparent" explanations. This assertion evokes questions concerning (1) which (relative) epistemological standard should narrative be compared against as a knowledge tool, and (2) what would constitute an (absolute) standard of "comprehensive" explanation? Robert Musil famously begins his 1952 work *The Man Without Qualities* with a clinically precise (and, in a sense, entirely empty) description of a "fine" August day in 1913.[66] First of all, any endorsement of narrative understanding implicitly suggests that, for example, strictly empirical accounts of human action/perception are inevitably incomplete. It is indisputable that we naturally incorporate (our versions of) empirical facts into any attempt to understand

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[65] I acknowledge that I have not presented anything so far which explicitly precludes the possibility of incompatible or even perverse interpretations of the same stories. There is no analytic reason that a viewer of, for example, *The Winter's Tale*, should not emerge from the play believing that its central message is that jealousy, distrust and possessiveness are an ideal foundation for a marriage. I do not think, however, that this is a likely insight. There is *some* reasonable expectation that broadly similar conclusions are typically drawn from particular works, at least when they are fashioned from psychologically plausible characters.

[66] "A barometric low hung over the Atlantic. It moved eastward toward a high-pressure area over Russia without as yet showing any inclination to bypass this high in a northerly direction. The isotherms and isotheres were functioning as they should. The air temperature was appropriate relative to the annual mean temperature and to the aperiodic monthly fluctuations of the temperature. The rising and setting of the sun, the moon, the phases of the moon, of Venus, of the rings of Saturn, and many other significant phenomena were all in accordance with the forecasts in the astronomical yearbooks. The water vapour in the air was at its maximal state of tension, while the humidity was minimal. In a word that characterizes the facts fairly accurately, even if it is a bit old-fashioned: It was a fine day in August 1913" (1995: 3).

complex human (inter)action, for example, to inform our decisions to (morally) approve or disapprove of some behaviour or belief. Nevertheless, the (narrative imagination) pursuit of pattern-based, as opposed to rule-governed, truth, is constitutive of what is perhaps a more realistic standard. As stated, its educational use lies also in the greater personal investment and meaning-making required in the exercise of narrative imagination.

In terms of the second question, given that Lamarque does not himself elaborate on the meaning of "comprehensive" explanation, it is not immediately apparent what this standard would require. I can only assume that "comprehensive" is not intended as some summit of Laplacean total knowledge. Lamarque partially acknowledges the limitation of specifically empirical explanation in his suggestion that "…mapping facts without any discrimination or weighing.. is surely unwarranted and unreasonable" (Lamarque, 2004: 398).

It is sufficiently difficult to focus on the challenging task of acquiring those incomplete and fractured (as opposed to "complete" or [entirely] "unified") narrative truths which careful reflection makes available to us. There is a limit to what we are warranted to expect from any facts or explanatory medium. Specifically, we should seek no more than an epistemically limited, compressed, and, in a sense, arbitrary accounts of our lives. There are many different accounts of "mind-independent" moral values in moral realist construals positions and mine calls for a relatively restricted view of value independence in relation to beliefs. My commitment to a form of moral realism does not rule out acknowledging that the observer is to a large degree the locus of his or her own (moral) truth-adjudication.

Our stories revolve around particular incidents and (valid or not) causal explanations for them. We may feel that such explanations provide a kind of life summary or establish a pattern or "logic" of our lives. The somewhat arbitrary nature of our explanations does not, in my view, render these narratives insignificant. It is exactly the perspectival aspect of these accounts that makes them revealing and important. In the absence of such elaboration on what is expected by Lamarque (and how best to get there), it is best to move on to a different category of objection.

In terms of the assertion that narratives "virtually never.. attain closure or unity" (Lamarque, 2004: 405), I would object only to the inclusion of "virtually" in Lamarque contention. Even for MacIntyre, overall unity in one's life narratives is expected in only a very general sense. A

specific narrative episode, persevering to achieve a specific goal, for example, requires "unity" only in terms of an internal logic or coherence.[67] This internal unity is required if we are to call a chain of events a narrative in any sense. Without intelligible causal relations, life events fail to assume any kind of narrative form.

Lamarque argues that a lack of life unity in terms of our personality means that seeking or attempting to construct any "grand narrative for our lives will be futile.. Those of us without such self-assurance will hesitate to embark on a grand self-narrative, being too aware of the tensions, inconsistencies, and multiple personalities of our lives" (Lamarque, 2004: 406).[68] On this point Lamarque wrongly attributes a systematic and conscious choice to what is an almost automatic and often unconsidered process of continual self-construction through narrative. Even if one does accept this (to my mind unlikely) insinuation that narrative creation is typically a voluntary and chosen process, it is difficult to imagine a life in which one makes no attempt at self understanding – "grand" or otherwise.

A very different category of criticism is expressed in Lamarque's (2004) observation that, "Arguably having a self-conception – thinking of oneself as ambitious or extrovert – already presupposes a self in the philosopher's sense" (p. 405). "It is far from clear that narrative produces unity or personal identity. More plausibly the narrative presupposes this unity" (p. 406).

From a philosophy of mind point of view, it is difficult to fault Lamarque's assertion. However, there is a distinction to be made between questions of the ontological status of the self and general (perhaps "folk") belief in its reality. My current focus is on the psychological status or utility of narrative as a tool for moral investigation and personal insight. I acknowledge the point that this project is premised on particular foundational assumptions of a stable and enduring self. Presumably this could be construed as an analytical weakness or

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[67] On September 2nd, 2013, 64 year-old Diana Nyad completed a 177 km endurance swim from Cuba to Florida. Clearly, an "intelligible" version of this story would unify this single event with the four attempts that preceded it; there is no question that these previous events are relevant to narrative imagination or understanding of Nyad's particular success. Nyad's personal history of overcoming adversity might form an additional layer to this account, as might themes derived from apparent causal relationships between her extraordinary personality (traits) and her achievements. This drawing out of the coherence of, in this case, extreme hardship and extraordinary determination sums to a logical explanation or pattern in this narrative.

[68] One is reminded of the particular view of life unity expressed by Nietzsche's 1886 work *Beyond Good and Evil,* "If one has character, one has one's typical experience, which always recurs" (p. 80).

insufficiency, but then (personality) psychology as a whole begs the question of the ontological status of enduring and stable selfhood.

Lamarque's use of "closure" is also significant. One may well wonder whether closure in the context of conclusive (and presumably final) life knowledge would be desirable at all; it might be argued that pursuit of closure is actually something to be avoided. From a moral education (personal accountability) point of view, it is necessary to retain a moral link between a current self-story and its past, autobiographical counterpart.

7.5.2. "Narrative is often Prosaic and Trivial"

Lamarque (2004) suggests that, "We do often tell stories about ourselves but more often than not they are mundane, fragmented, inconsequential, and for the most part blandly true rather than grandly inventive" (p. 403). He later argues, "Given that a narrative has explanatory value, while true, is not especially profound. Given that a narrative is just the ordering of a sequence of events, including the placing of events in causal sequences, it is a truism that narratives can explain" (p. 406). This point is entirely valid; narratives of our getting up in the morning or paying a bill are unlikely to be of much interest to anyone,
ourselves included.

Yet there is no reason why, or requirement that, our life stories ought to be consistently interesting. By and large, our stories recount nothing more (or less) than the flow and rhythms of everyday life. Acknowledging the veracity of Lamarque's point on this count does not establish its importance. Belief that any given life (story) is empirically dominated by such inconsequential episodes does not entail rejecting the potential significance of specific events or our (in)voluntary inclusion of them as defining episodes in our narratives. The "blandness" Lamarque speaks of almost certainly characterises most events of most lives most of the time - especially when considered objectively or at some distance. The current objective, however, is to make life marginally more intelligible (rather than exciting). A self-insight need not be dramatic or grandiose in order for it to be revealing and helpful to us in moments of self-reflection.

Moral Life Narrative Education

This brief chapter introduces some specific thoughts about narrative in order to consider how narrative resources have, or might, be utilised for the purposes of moral education. In particular, Tappan and Brown's (1989) research on authorship and moral development in children is compelling. Hoffman's (2013) work on stories for empathy development in children is especially apposite to my thesis, as are the thoughts of Keen (2006) (Section 8.4.) on empathy and character identification. The chapter concludes with Section 8.5. (*The Utilitarian Basis of Empathy*), in which I work to link the affective experience of narrative and moral emotions back to my foundational arguments about utilitarian value.

8.1. The Goals and Design of the Chapter

My overall aim in this work is to explore the possibility of developing or amplifying dispositional empathy through the use of moral life narrative (MLN) approaches to learning and teaching. In Chapter 7, I assessed the idea that narrative is an intrinsic, even defining, aspect of the way in which our lives are framed, experienced, revised and linked to ourselves and others. In the first part of this chapter, I shift to a more explicit focus onto those types or aspects of narrative that most closely address specifically moral cognition and motivation, whether incidentally or through conscious design. The goal, therefore, of this chapter is to set the stage for subsequent reappraisal of contemporary approaches to MLN education.

8.2. Assessing the "Moral" in Moral Life Narrative

In Chapter 7, I considered the work of thinkers who, in various forms, support the idea that our experiences are infused with, and our perceptions shaped by, our shifting stories. It was implied that these stories commit, or at least predispose, us to certain beliefs about ourselves and the world, or, as Barthes put it, "[narrative is] international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself (Barthes, 1977: 79, as cited by Tappan and Brown, 1989, p. 185)".

Augusto Blasi's suggestion that "moral responsibility…is tied directly to an individual's sense of his or her moral identity and authenticity" (1983, 1984, 1985. cited in Tappan and Brown, 1989: 190), provides some guidance as to how we may pass from discussion of narrative as generally constitutive of personal identity to the role of explicitly moral stories in forging those identities. I have so far focused on the affective foundations of moral judgment/action and, given my affirmation of the "affective revolution" as the best source of explanations of moral judgment and motivation, it is reasonable to continue in this vein. It is important to note, however, that the reasons we have for those of our beliefs which emerge from narrative may rest primarily upon either affective or rational foundations. Unconditionally endorsing the view that narrative shapes or expresses beliefs entails a judgment that our actions (to the extent they are conscious and chosen) are in turn motivated by such beliefs.

This judgment does not require an internalist position entailing a necessary correlation between intellectual convictions and motivation. Rather, I suggest only that narrative produces beliefs, which, in turn, emerge from either primarily affective or primarily rational origins or shifts. It is neither necessary nor practical to delve into questions of moral internalism/externalism in this work. It is necessary, however, to say something about an intended shift from arguments about narrative as formative of self in general and those concerned with narrative as formative of explicitly moral aspects of self; these moral aspects include moral judgment and motivation.

8.3. Tappan and Brown on "Authorship" as Moral Development

Tappan and Brown's (1989) exploration of the relationship between narrative, morality and moral development is widely cited. It is important to note at this stage that the type of narrative upon which Tappan and Brown focus is not literary or collective, but that of the individual's own self-story. Invariably, these are stories about "choices and decisions" (1989: 187), which are given meaning to the teller through their recounting.

In shifting from their own discussion of the centrality of narrative as generally descriptive of lived experience, to its specific role in moral experience or development, Tappan and Brown suggest that to understand this aspect, it is necessary to appreciate the interrelationship between the cognitive, affective and conative aspects of life. Unlike more rationalist accounts of moral development (see Kohlberg, 1981, 1984), this tripartite synthesis of reasoning,

feeling and acting components of moral experience emphasises these three are "indissociable dimensions of moral experience" (Tappan and Brown's, 1989: 187). It is not asserted that it is impossible to cleave off or "abstract out" any one of these three aspects of experience, rather, Tappan and Brown argue (with Bruner) that to do so is to diminish potential understanding of an experience.

For, if "I think", "I feel" and "I do" are as fused in on-going experience as in accounts of, for example, fictional protagonists, then deep understanding of one's own or other's experience must also engage all three aspects to the greatest degree possible. In Tappan and Brown's construal, narrative form is the adhesive by which these aspects are bonded and given form in our imagination or remembering. The "indissociable dimension" of cognitive, affective and conative is helpfully unravelled in Tappan and Brown's concept of "authorship" as a normative goal rather than (inevitable) stage of moral development.

It is Tappan and Brown's contention that, "...individuals develop morally by 'authoring' their own moral stories and by learning the lessons in the stories they tell about the moral experiences in their lives" (1989: 189-90). It is this process of "authoring" stories as part of moral development that I now turn. Tappan and Brown take pains to confirm that theirs is an explicitly normative, even teleological, construal of "development", the ideal end result of which is "authorship".

Tappan and Brown describe the process of (moving towards) "claiming authority" or "authoring" one's actions by suggesting that, one must "acknowledge one's own moral perspective", and "authorize…what one thinks [cognitive], feels [affective], and does [conative], with respect to what is right and what is wrong " (1989: 190). It is clear from this description that "authorship" independent of a fused notion of thought, feeling and action is not comprehensible. A feeling, summative, stage in this authoring is the agent's assumption of responsibility for their actions. Even if falling short of unambiguous affirmations of personal responsibility, Tappan and Brown suggest, following Ricoeur, that "to narrate a story is already to reflect upon the event narrated" (Ricoeur, 1986, cited in Tappan and Brown, 1989: 192).

8.4. Stories and Empathy-building: Contemporary examples

In Chapter 7, I introduced arguments relating to the construal of life as embedded in, or expressed by narrative and story. I argued that the work of Barbara Hardy (1968), Jerome Bruner (2004), Martha Nussbaum (1989, 2011) and Alasdair McIntyre (2007) is particularly central to the understanding of this narrative construal. I narrowed the focus of these arguments about narrative to focus on moral education in my subsequent examination of Tappan and Brown's (1989) work on stories for moral education in this chapter. Though I have not explored his ideas in depth, Vitz (1990) has produced a useful synopsis of a growing emphasis on narrative in psychological practice and research. As Vitz puts it:

> "... over the last 10 to 20 years psychologists investigating and conceptualizing moral development have come to emphasize such processes as empathy (Hoffman, 2013), caring and commitment (Gilligan, 1977), interpersonal character and personality (Coles, 1986, as cited by Gibbs, 2014; also Staub, 2005). It is proposed that narratives and narrative thinking are especially involved in how these processes lead to moral development and therefore that narrative should be rehabilitated as a valuable part of moral education" (Vitz, 1990: Abstract).

From narrative in general, to narrative in moral education in general, it is well to now move on to briefly consider narrative education in practice. Before returning to broader philosophical and moral education issues in the next chapter, it is necessary to address two issues. The first task is to present some more specific examples of the use of particular narrative resources to develop empathy; the second task will be to reinforce the connection, as I see it, between empathy and utilitarian normative value. Hoffman (2013) provides several contemporary examples of the use of stories for the systematic development of empathy in children. As he notes:

> "Stories have always been used to teach life lessons as well as entertain. Reading and talking about stories can teach children valuable lessons about empathy. There are stories in which the main character's empathy for someone is a critical part of the story. Two classic examples are...*Beauty and the Beast* and *Charlotte's Web.* [Children] can learn even more if we point out the examples of empathy in stories" (2013:1).

Hoffman lists a variety of print and film narratives (2013: 1) which he feels suitable for empathy-nurturing narrative education. Hoffman does not, however, offer a more detailed account of what the specific characteristics of a story like *Charlotte's Web* so effective. One thinker who has provided a systematic theory of narrative empathy is Suzanne Keen (2006).

For Keen, it is character identification which draws the reader or viewer in and invites the development of empathic understanding and affect. Unsurprisingly, Keen opines that some aspect of shared experience between character and reader serves to reinforce empathic feelings. It is important to note, as Keen does, that the extent of reader/character shared experience is an important driver of empathic response. Though much of this shared experience is a question of individual variation, aspects of such experience can define groups of readers in addition to individual readers[69].

8.5. The Utilitarian Basis of Empathy

The first challenge in this section is to address the idea that a utilitarian moral perspective is inevitably incompatible with construals of affect-led moral cognition. A subsequent challenge is to explore the relationship between a particular moral emotion (affective empathy) and utilitarian value.

8.5.1. Utilitarianism and the Moral Emotions

As discussed earlier in this work, utilitarianism is widely perceived as a relatively impersonal and rationalist moral theory, and I have argued that such a reason-led construal of moral cognition is indeed fundamental to Singer's contemporary formulation of the doctrine. It has even been argued elsewhere that utilitarian moral judgment and empathic concern are negatively correlated (Gleichgerrcht and Young, 2013). In discussing subject responses to various trolley problems, Gleichgerrcht and Young write that:

> "…Recent amendments to [Greene's] dual-process models of moral judgment suggest further that personal (as opposed to impersonal) harms are more precisely defined by the interaction between *intended* harm and harm via *personal force*, i.e., the execution of a motor act that involves using one's own physical means to harm someone [16, 17]. Such personal harms (intended harms via personal force).. elicit the most robust emotional responses and therefore non-utilitarian judgments" (2013: 1).

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[69] This variation in the strength of empathic responses between individuals based on the extent of experiences they share with protagonists does not negate the possibility of the existence of certain generalisable narrative techniques which aid with character identification. As Keen puts it, "Narrative theorists, novel critics, and reading specialists have already singled a small set of narratives techniques – such as the use of first person narration and the interior representation of characters' consciousness and emotional states – as devices supporting character identification, contributing to empathic experiences, opening readers' minds to others, changing attitudes, and even predisposing readers to altruism" (Keen, 2006: 213).

The wording of this passage is very telling; it appears that, for Gleichgerrcht and Young, it is self-evident that emotional responses are *ipso facto* non-utilitarian response. [70]

8.5.2. Empathy from Utility

I have argued that utilitarian ethical theory provides a foundation for moral education, which is less ambiguous and potentially more universalisable than any of the various construals of virtues which others, at the Jubilee Centre for example, have argued provide a best end or basis for moral education. I have argued that the principle importance of this point lies in the fact that most moral education discourse is embedded in conversations about virtue rather than utility. I have argued that the language of virtue valorises personality traits or qualities, such as resilience or courage, which have genuine personal and social worth. Despite this recognition of a derivative value of virtue, however, I have argued that the root value of such virtues positively correlates with the extent to which they are reducible to utility.

I have not argued that quantification of moral right and wrong is ever likely to admit of calculation with the precision suggested by, for example, Jeremy Bentham (see 1988: 30). However, I have argued that utilitarian perspectives entail a metric for assessment which is consistent and continuous with empirically verifiable methods and descriptions originating in the human and physical sciences, and that this assessment supervenes upon tangible and observable brain states and changes in brain states. I argued that this brain state orientation is a firmer foundation for normative assessment than various qualitative descriptions of, for example, "essential" or "cardinal" virtues. Collectively, these arguments reinforce a utilitarian normative foundation for moral education.

The ideal of moral education I seek to advance has empathy at its core. A robust link, therefore, must be made between empathy and utility. There are a number of different ways this empathy/utility nexus could be construed. I will characterise one way to describe this nexus as "utility from empathy", and a second as "empathy from utility". The former

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[70] One problem for Gleichgerrcht and Young (2013) is that the dual-process model to which they refer is associated with Joshua Greene (2013). I argued (see Section 8.11.) that Greene's "deep pragmatism" is functionally indistinguishable from Benthamic utilitarianism. Clearly Greene is satisfied that utilitarian judgments are not incompatible with the operation of the moral emotions.

describes the manner in which elevated levels of empathy are useful, the latter, moving in the opposite direction, describes the manner in which a utilitarian foundation entails valorising empathy as a core normative source.

An instrumentalist ("utility from empathy") argument is often made that relatively high levels of empathy are personally advantageous. Empathy has been argued to be useful in legal reasoning (Obama, 2004. cited in Rollert, 2010: 89), political or business leadership (*see* Shogan, 2009; Kellet *et al.*, 2002; Goleman, 2004), medical practice and clinical outcomes (Ogle *et al.*, 2013; Hojat *et al.*, 2011) and general academic success (Goleman and Senge, 2014). All of these lines of enquiry reinforce the argument that empathy tracks some essentially useful and transferable qualities or behaviours.

Accepting all or some of these argued utilities could well be enough justify pursuing empathy as an end goal for moral education, or at least for exploring promising approaches to empathy education, such as moral life narrative. While appreciating the value of these varied arguments for utility from empathy, my implicit case throughout this work has been that increased (though not excessive) empathy should be endorsed as a direct educational goal. Increased understanding of others, when coupled with positive concern, might seem such an essential social good as to be irreducible. Arguing that it is constitutive of the Good to care for the interests of others, especially when coupled with better understanding of the nature of those interests, is arguably tautological. Such close relationship between willing/wanting benefits on behalf of others and utility itself can be extrapolated from Bentham's work.

Bentham's thoughts on the idea of settled and stable dispositions are nuanced; his focus on the tangible effects of actions leads him at one point to describe "disposition" as a, "fictitious entity, feigned for the convenience of discourse" (Bentham, 1988: 126). However, Bentham subsequently acknowledges that, "It is with disposition as with every thing else: it will be good or bad according to the effects it has in augmenting or diminishing the happiness of the community" (p. 131). Whether "fictitious entity" or not, dispositions may be, for Bentham, generally "bad", "good", "depraved" or "beneficent". As he notes: "Where the tendency of the act is *good,* and the motive is the purely social one of *good-will.* In this case the disposition indicated is a beneficent one" (p. 134). Bentham elaborates with an example; "A baker gives a poor man a loaf of bread. His motive is compassion; a name given to the motive of

benevolence, in particular cases of its operation. The disposition indicated by the baker, in this case, is such as every man will be ready enough to acknowledge to be a good one" (p. 134).

Bentham describes Benevolence and Prudence as "... the only two intrinsically useful virtues, all others must derive value from them and be subservient to them" (1834/2005: 201). Benevolence is construed as, "...that capacity which leads us to feel happiness in proportion to the quantity of happiness enjoyed by those subject to our actions" (p. 127). *Effective* benevolence is described as actually producing happiness in others (p. 140). The importance of both virtues issues from their "usefulness", or capacity to produce happiness (p. 146). While Bentham describes the exercise of either virtue as requiring effort, the "… seat of that effort, in the case of prudence, is principally in the understanding; in the case of effective benevolence, mainly in the will and affections" (p. 145).

For Bentham, then, benevolence or compassion is a critically important social motive. Bentham's arguments on (social) moral sanctions make it clear that utility and "enlightened benevolence" are essentially interchangeable terms; "… the dictates of the moral sanction will so far recede from a coincidence with those of utility (that is, of enlightened benevolence) that the disposition indicated in this case can not be otherwise than a good one upon the whole" (1834: 137). Sympathy or good-will itself is an important source of pleasure in Bentham's taxonomy and the nature and extent of these pleasures is elaborated at various stages in his seminal 1780 work *The Principles of Morals and Legislation*.

If one accepts that Bentham's thoughts on compassionate motives and resulting benevolent action track essentially the same arguments and ideals as motives rooted in affective empathy and resulting altruistic behaviour, it is clear that empathy as an end or ideal comports well with a Benthamic normative framework. Of course, if one finds Bentham's utilitarianism inadequate, then the question of its relationship with empathy is likely to be irrelevant – but that defence belonged to an earlier chapter.

Whether Bentham's moral "truth" is better or more true than virtue-based construals is a pivotal question. Even more fundamental, however, is the question of the original truth status of *any* moral beliefs or systems of belief. In the next chapter, I seek to situate a moral realist position within my naturalist framework and then to consider how these rather abstract ontological considerations drive us toward one or other ideal and approach to moral education.

Chapter 9

Realism, Rationalism and Contemporary Moral Education

This chapter surveys aspects of recent thought relating to moral education and builds on my arguments regarding moral realism. I suggest that considering the extent to which a moral education approach that is underpinned by (often unstated) moral realist or anti-realist assumptions is a useful frame for understanding or categorising different approaches to moral education.

This chapter also returns to the arguments alleging a "crisis in moral education", at least insofar as it illustrates the depth of dissensus in this domain. I argue that recent academic discourse and public discussion surrounding moral education confirms that consensus on how moral education ought to be carried out (if at all) is elusive. Finally, I engage with Gibbs' (2014) criticism of Haidt's (2011, 2007, 2003a, 2001) affect-led moral construal and assess the strength of these criticisms in light of Gibbs' example of one student's transformation through an allegedly deliberative and reason-led process.

9.1. The Goals and Design of the Chapter

In this chapter I work to bring together the broad naturalist/realist philosophical themes I developed earlier with discourses specific to moral education. In particular, I suggest that arguments about or for moral realism help to describe a critical and enduring, if often unspoken, division in debates about the nature and goals of moral education.

In moving from discussion of moral narrative in general to its specific (actual and proposed) role in moral education, it is well to briefly explore the overall moral education landscape (Part One) early in this chapter and, subsequently, the shape and status of narrative education in particular (Part Two) within its contemporary discourse. I will engage with representative justifications for the three main ME traditions before moving on to consideration of the practical strategies relating to their implementation in class and curricula.

My survey of the discourse convinces me Tappan and Brown (1989: 198) are correct in suggesting that four main approaches have dominated the moral education discourse and practice of the last 60 years or so. Specifically, these can be described as (1) the Kohlbergian cognitive developmental model and arguments/ideas of influential neo-Kohlbergians such as Elliot Turiel (Turiel *et al.,* 1978; Turiel, 2008), or James Rest (Rest *et al*., 2000), (2) the "values clarification" approach of, *inter alia*, Simon *et al*., (1995), (3) a revised character education approach, and (4) the neo-Kohlbergian, feminist care tradition associated with Carol Gilligan (1977) and Nel Noddings (2010). Each approach is committed to fundamentally different visions of the origins of moral "goodness" (or at least behaviours generally considered pro/antisocial) and construals of the role of teachers. None of these approaches is described by its advocates as relativistic; each approach is premised on distinctive views of the ontological status, source and teachability of moral "truths".

In Chapters 4-6, I began a process of building upwards from a pluralistic naturalist base, to a realist moral ontology, and onwards to a kind of utilitarian normative ethical theory. One of my goals in this chapter is to explore the extent to which various ME approaches are consistent with this framework. Of course, shifts between these pedagogic paradigms are a product of a broad (and largely unknowable) range of cultural/social change. It does appear that, for example, more and less conservative/authoritarian pedagogic models generally correlate positively with more and less conservative times; perhaps this is a trivial observation. More interestingly, one might isolate a position on moral (ir)realism, explicitly stated or merely implied, as perhaps the most fundamental differentiator between (neo)Kohlberg, moral clarification and character education approaches. I will touch on this in my introduction to each of these traditions.

A aim of this chapter is to describe some practical strategies for narrative learner narrative engagement (Part Three), such as structured discussions/interviews, films, essays, journaling and the observation/construction of dramatic performances. Though detailed descriptons of possible practical implementations belong to a future work, I will suggest that one good reference point to begin is Martin Lipman's (Lipman, 2003; Lipman *e al*., 1980) 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) programme, which provides useful parameters for constructive group discussion of moral themes in selected stories.

9.2. Kohlberg Model of Cognitive Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg is one of the most influential names in Twentieth Century childhood moral development and education. As Martin Hoffman points out, "The dominant moral development theory – Kohlberg's – assumes the primacy of cognition. It defines a moral act as one that follows a process of moral reasoning and judgment based on principles of justice and fairness" (1991: 276).

Lawrence Kohlberg's influence on educational thought is deep and enduring. As Noam (cited in Walsh, 2012: 41), put it, "we have three members of our senior faculty [Harvard Graduate School of Education] alone whose intellectual work has a direct line to Kohlberg (Kohlberg, 1970; Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977). I don't think there's another person, living or dead, about whom that could be said" (Walsh, 2012). The influence of (Neo)Kohlbergian construals on moral education is such that any brief account (as this must be) is likely to appear cursory and inadequate. His most definitive beliefs in terms of cognitive moral development describe a continuous tradition from Piaget's 1932 work, to thinkers like Turiel *et al.*, (1978) and James Rest *et al.*, (2000). My description of Kohlberg's construal of moral development and its application to the classroom is followed by a brief exegesis on Eliot Turiel, a particularly influential, and in the context of this work, particularly relevant, contemporary advocate of a broadly Kohlbergian position on moral development and education.

The metaethics of Kohlberg's theory of moral development is distinctly cognitive/rationalist in its descriptive construals, and principle-based in both a descriptive and prescriptive sense. Successful moral development, for Kohlberg (1984, 1981, 1973, 1970; Kohlberg, and Hersh, 1977) describes a progression from self-centred, to group-centred to (in a minority of individuals) a principle-centred moral outlook, construed as the apotheosis of moral development.

It was characteristic of Kohlberg to carefully consider the philosophical foundations and implications of his ideas. His work in developmental psychology is complemented by an array of philosophical conjecture; Kohlberg's analysis of fact/value distinctions is particularly germane to moral education discourse. Whether "Stage 1" was "merely" utilitarian or if "Stage

2" required a commitment to moral relativism were important questions for Kohlberg; both these questions relate to the research at hand.

In Kohlberg's famous "Mr Heinz" (1970, 1973) experiment, subjects are presented with the case of Heinz, whose terminally ill wife will die if she does not receive a particular medicine. The druggist who produces this medicine sells it at ten times its production costs and is unwilling to either lower his selling price or defer payment in any way. Subjects were asked whether Mr Heinz should take the opportunity to steal the drug to save his wife. For Kohlberg, the differentiator between lower and higher levels of moral reasoning is best described by the structure rather than the content of the subject's decision to endorse or condemn a theft. The idea that utilisation of any (universal) moral principle is superior to any justification explicitly based on the happiness or interests of Heinz or his wife, would seem to suggest that Kohlberg unambiguously assessed (universalisable) principle-based moral reasoning as normatively better than consequentialist modes. Aside from his broad and deep influence, Kohlberg's work is particularly germane to this work in another sense. Specifically, it could be argued that refusing to adjudicate between contradictory responses in the Heinz case does suggest a certain moral neutrality, or at least, reluctance to consciously direct decision-making. This reluctance would seem to distance him from the more authoritarian wing of ME traditions.

Kohlberg's prescriptive view of moral development, however, speaks to a decisive and clear conception of (deliberative) moral hierarchy, while his work to fuse the "is" and "ought" of moral development further suggest a rejection of moral relativism. Kohlberg devotes some time to lamenting what he describes as the "…grand canyon of modern moral philosophy" (Boyd and Kohlberg, 1973: 358). Boyd and Kohlberg (see Boyd and Kohlberg, 1973; Boyd, 1990) seek to unite psychology's descriptive approach with the "ought work" characterising normative analysis in moral philosophy. Boyd inquires "...how developmental research that yields facts of psychological development can be relevant to moral argumentation, to our claims of what is morally right (Boyd, 1990: 148). While acknowledging an indefeasible distinction between fact and value, Boyd argues (in my opinion, very credibly) in his defence of Kohlberg's prescriptive viewpoint, that the arguments of moral philosophy do not, "… just fall out of the sky", but are "… offered for our rational consideration by real persons who not only have their own history of personal development, but who also cannot avoid making empirical assumptions about what human beings are like and what it is possible for them to be like, in their very conceptions of justification" (Boyd, 1990: 148).

Certainly the logical challenge of prescriptive judgements derived from descriptive "fact" remains open and demands greater exploration than is possible in the context of this work. At this stage, my goal is only to suggest that the pragmatic demands of the current EfE project rest upon a secure philosophical fact/value fusion or footing. Though I do not see moral development as an explicitly rational process of cognitive development in similar fashion to Kohlberg and his acolytes, I appreciate Kohlberg's committed engagement with philosophical challenges. What is more, the depth and breadth of Kohlberg's influence suggest to me that his arguments for (logically valid) prescriptions derived from findings of empirical psychology was/is judged as sufficiently robust for a substantial cohort of moral/developmental psychologists.

Kohlberg's moral development theory is likely to be too familiar to readers to require detailed exposition, but I will provide a brief and broad description. For Kohlberg, development of moral reasoning in individuals is possible and follows a foreseeable "progression" through a series of ever more sophisticated and normatively desirable cognitive stages. In his construal, progress from "preconventional", "conventional" and "postconventional" moral reasoning generally tracks general emotional/cognitive development and age, though the speed and end point of this process are subject to great individual variation. According to Kohlberg, one's structure of moral reasoning advances through an undeviating series of hierarchical stages, progressing from "lower", "punishment-obedience" ("conventional" cognitive) orientations, through ("conventional" cognitive) outlooks most valuing maintenance of formal order and social relations, to ("postconventional") cognitive orientations defined by what is termed an "universal-ethical-principle orientation" (Kohlberg, 1971; Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977). Agents utilise the "highest" level of reasoning available, while new levels are made available through confrontation with/recognition of inconsistencies in one's perspective. Such contradictions are ideally identified in ratiocinative discussions in which students are invited to think through moral conflict and moral principles such as justice.

9.2.1. "Progressing" from Affective to Rational Moral Judgment

In Kohlberg's unambiguous terminology, "higher" developmental stages are normatively superior to "lower"; "...a higher or later stage of moral development is 'objectively' preferable to or more adequate than an earlier stage of judgment according to certain moral criteria"

(Kohlberg, 1973: 630). What is more, Stage 5 is specifically described by Kohlberg as having "utilitarian overtones", while the (more advanced) Stage 6 "has a distinctively Kantian ring" (1973: 632). This raises a central challenge in the evaluation of Kohlberg's work, which should be addressed before proceeding. Once again, the question arises of distinctions between descriptive and prescriptive aspects of Kohlberg's model. In *From Is to Ought* (1971)*,* Kohlberg argues that, "The scientific theory as to why people do move up from stage to stage is broadly the same as a moral theory as to why people should prefer a higher stage to a lower" (1971:155). Though always mindful of the underlying philosophical assumptions and implications which underpin his work, Kohlberg's perspective is most essentially that of a developmental psychologist, rather than a moral philosopher. I raise this point as I feel it begs an explicitly philosophical question that ought to be addressed before proceeding.

Specifically, Kohlberg and his inheritors argue (successfully, in my opinion) that moral reasoning moves from more consequence-based to more moral principles-based foundations as children mature. One might suggest that both mental and emotional maturation or development and increased time for moral decision-making might both facilitate normatively "better" judgments. A reasonable inference from Kohlberg's work is that moral judgments become less utilitarian and more principles-based given the argued "fact" of moral development. In contrast with Kohlberg's argument that moral judgments typically become more principle-based with enhanced conditions, it has been found that increasing time allowed for moral decision-making may actually increase incidence of utilitarian justifications for moral judgments (Paxton *et al.*, 2012).

It does appear that utilitarian (and presumably more affect-based) moral reasoning is more characteristic of "lower" or initial, as opposed to "higher" or later (Kohlbergian) stages of moral development. Granting, for a moment, that Kohlberg is correct in suggesting that moral cognition typically "progresses" from more to less utilitarian frameworks, the question arises as to whether this necessarily implies that utilitarian moral reasoning is less "advanced" than its Kantian competitor and, by the same token, inferior?

The question, then, is whether such shifts from consequentialist to principle-based reasoning, which Kohlberg argues obtain even across broad cultural divides, necessarily imply that principles provide better value foundations for moral reasoning/judgment than purportedly earlier consequentialist orientations. If this is the case, it would seem to be best to direct moral

education towards facilitating this transition and moving children towards ever more principle-based and rationally-derived modes of moral reasoning. In light of this, it initially appears that adopting an affective/empathy-driven ME model would actually hinder or inhibit the normal and desirable process of moral development.

The response to this requires a couple of stages. First of all, I concede that utilitarian normative theory is, comparatively speaking, simpler than, for example, Kant's convoluted creations. "Don't lie" or "Don't cheat" are, of course, fairly fundamental and accessible moral injunctions, but empathic self/other connection, and the affective merging that accompanies it, is even more essential. In relation to the simplicity or essentialness of one moral outlook as opposed to another, whether complexity itself a source of epistemic strength? Is more "developed" or complex moral cognition *ipso facto* better of more true? Surely, it is at least arguable that the opposite may be the case, and that the moral value most readily grasped is in some way the stronger. Aside from the essential nature and accessibility of a morality based on care/harm, there is another response to the proposal that patterns of moral development generally progress towards the adoption of relatively sophisticated moral principles.

Kohlberg (1971) rejects a (developmental) fact/(moral) value incommensurability in his construal of moral development. However, in the particular context of consequence-to-principle changes in normative orientation, such a distinction is indeed evident, or at least defensible. There are, after all, instances of desirable capabilities or traits that diminish as we develop or mature. Our capacity to acquire languages (Lenneberg, 1967; Penfield and Roberts, 1959) or think creatively and without restrictive mental categories and constraints (McCrae et al., 1987) has been argued to decrease over time. I acknowledge that the dynamics of development may well, over time, favour rationality over affect. To do so, however, does not necessarily commit one to the proposition that such a shift invariably represents normative progress. Provided that certain essential developmental milestones have been reached, it is not evident that the essential moral instincts characteristic of later childhood are inevitably inferior to that of a typical adult. It is not obvious to me that, beyond the solipsistic confinement of early childhood, increasingly supplanting more affectively-based empathic attachments with more rational or principle-based normative attachments represents personal or collective moral progress.

Aristotle's *Poetics* (2013) famously contrasted and celebrated the openness and sociability of youth with the more jaded and cautious periods of life that followed. To automatically assume (again, given attainment of certain developmental milestones, such as a base capacity for perspective-taking) that adult moral possibilities are more expansive or respond to better, higher instincts than that characterising earlier life, is to potentially disregard what is lost or gained in the process of moral maturation (or, perhaps, simply "change").

I have tried to make the case that arriving at moral principles, however laudable, through rational processes, is not a sufficient basis for moral motivation. I have described how the work of Haidt, Greene and others gives credence to Hoffman's (2000, 1989) suggestion that reason's role is largely *ex post facto* and justificatory, while the real motivational force behind moral judgment lies in more primal affective/instinctive attachments. These primal motivations, whether compassionate or cruel, have yet to be absorbed and moderated by culture and collective experience. I have contended that these affective forces are motivationally foundational. To suggest that the dominance of such forces is more characteristic of relatively early moral development should not be surprising. There is a danger that when speaking exclusively to relatively inert moral principles in place of affect, ME loses some of its motivational potency.

Given that I ground later analyses on the relatively realist account of utility/empathy as a foundational moral principle(s) in this thesis (See Chapters 3-6) and reject arguments (Chapter 3) that the persistence of moral disagreement deals a death blow to the ontological possibility of (truth value-baring) moral assertions, I do not believe (with Rest *et al*., 2000: 383) that the "abandonment of the view that morality is primarily based on foundational principles" undermines Kohlberg's ultimate ("Universal Moral Principle") stage of cognitive moral development.

Given its rationalist foundation, it is tempting to imagine (neo)Kohlbergian positions on moral development as essentially inconsistent with affect-led moral life narrative; in fact, this difference is sometimes oversimplified or inappropriately expounded in mutually exclusive terms. There is much of value in (neo)Kohlbergian arguments which is informative and of enduring importance in moral education. There is nothing in proposals for moral life narrative which necessarily opposes the kind of development/learning model proposed in most

(neo)Kohlbergian approaches and no reason why they would not be complemented by moral life narrative orientations and tasks.

Kohlberg and Hersh (1977) are, however, careful to note that moral judgment "is influenced by affective factors such as ability to empathize and the capacity for guilt" (Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977: 57), as well as the rational operations which he sees as their primary source. Kohlberg is also clear in his recurring expressions of concern that his "…theory of cognitive moral development is sufficient to the task of moral education" (1977: 58). Kohlberg and Hersh suggests that his cognitive development approach to moral education is incomplete in terms of its "...[1] stress… on form rather than content... [2] focus on rights and duties rather than issues of the good [and]… [3] emphasis on moral judgment rather than behaviour" (1977: 58). While any of the limitations above could provoke a substantial analytical departure point, it is Kohlberg's acknowledgment of a presumably deep distinction between moral judgment and motivation, and the behaviours which result from differing moral motivations, which is the most important.

Moral reasoning has an essential role to play in moral education. Whether positive reasoning relating to judgments of relevant circumstances (how likely was it that an agent was aware of a particular fact, for example), or more normative assessments of the morality of different actions, affect-led does not entail affect-exclusive. It is an essential assumption of my construal of moral life narrative (MLN) that there is a positive correlation between morally relevant affect (disgust or sympathy, for example) and a motivation to act (or refrain from acting) in specific ways.

A central Kohlbergian contention is that moral judgment is "primarily a rational operation"; it is this point which most clearly differentiates his approach from MLN (Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977: 57). It follows that if one arrives at moral judgments primarily through rational reflection, then systematic rational exchanges, especially those centred on (ostensibly reason-derived) moral principles would be a suitable means of "stimulating cognitive conflict", thereby influencing (moral) judgments. Consistent with this, Kohlberg suggests that (moral education) practice entails "[teachers and schools]…help[ing] the student to consider genuine moral conflicts, think about the reasoning he uses in solving such conflicts, see inconsistencies and inadequacies in his ways of thinking and find ways of resolving them" (1977: 57). One source of the moral conflicts Kohlberg requires that we address is generated in the school

context. As Kohlberg puts it, "...teachers should challenge students with the moral issues faced by the school community as problems to be solved, not merely situations in which rules are mechanically applied. One must create a 'just community'" (1977: 57).

9.3. (Anti-Realist) Values Clarification

Just as the tradition of Piaget, Kohlberg and Turiel, *inter alia*, is partly defined by opposition to certain opposing construals of moral nature, such as psychoanalytic or behaviourist accounts, which are seen as excessively deterministic, so too, does the values clarification (hereafter VC) approach claim a long-established heritage. The lineage of VC approaches is consistently traced back to Raths, Harmin and Simon (1978) who are, in turn, closely associated with aspects of John Dewey's thought (Simon *et al.*, 1995: 9).

Both influenced by the humanistic psychologies of Rogers (1961) and Maslow (1954), Dewey's interactive pedagogy and the VC approach share a construal of learning or development as a process of continual, and above all, active, interpretation or worldly engagement and ongoing construction of meaning in the world. Dewey believed in the possibility of moral "progress" (both personal and social levels). Such progress is facilitated not through acquaintance with pre/proscriptive divine commands or *a priori* moral laws, but through continual revision and clarification of our own values and beliefs based on what we experience and observe in others and ourselves.

In more contemporary thought, the VC process of active value construction coheres with the modernity described by Zygmunt Bauman (2013) or Anthony Giddens (1990). This late or "liquid" (Bauman, 2013) modernity, characterised by continual social flux, is produced by continual information flows and personal/cultural adaptations. Without attempting to draw too close a parallel between a wider sociological context and a specific pedagogic strategy, the VC approach, with its pluralistic, non-judgmental emphasis on variable, autonomous moralities, and reluctance to construct or rely upon grand, unitive meta-narratives, is very much a product of this discursive milieu. It is just this relativist refusal to judge that many find an unacceptable characteristic of VC.

One of the most prominent and interesting sources for understanding the VC approach is the work of Howard Kirschenbaum. Kirschenbaum is considered one of VC's most influential

early proponents (see Kirschenbaum *et al*., 1977), and is now comparably important as an active critic of the approach (see Kirschenbaum, 2000). His work will assist us both is assessing the VC approach and in introducing his adopted tradition, that of "moral" or "character education".

9.4. Kirschenbaum on Value Neutrality

Kirschenbaum begins his "Defence of Values Clarification" (Kirschenbaum *et al.*, 1977) with an assertion that "[VC has experienced a]… rapid rise in popularity… throughout the United States and Canada" (p. 743). He asserts his/co-authors' credentials as "… authors of both the original volume and the most popular sequels on values clarification, and as nationally recognised trainers and proponents of this approach" (p. 743). He also expresses concern that the approach is subject to widespread and pernicious misunderstandings and the authors' intention to address these false impressions.

This defence of VC is begun with a diagnosis of what is suggested to be a malignant and pervasive values conflict/confusion afflicting both citizen and society alike. Value conflict leads to "individual anguish or suffering [and]… inefficiency and a reduction of constructive activity in society… Nations around the globe suffer form similar value confusion" (Kirschenbaum *et al.*, 1977: 743). In fact, as Kirschenbaum *et al.* note, "The very survival of the plant is endangered by such value conflict" (1977: 743). So VC consists of both a premise (that individual/social values must be clarified) and a process of achieving such clarification through an educative process defined by strategic questioning of assumed values and the analysis of individually experienced moral dilemmas. The desired outcome of this process is "[for individuals to]… experience positive moral value [and]... act more constructively in the social context" (1977: 743).

Greater personal value, we are later told, results in "less apathy, higher self-esteem" (Kirschenbaum *et al*. 1977: 745). Moreover, "...when discussing value-laden areas and controversial issues, the value-clarifying teacher or parent accepts all viewpoints and does not try to impose his or her own views (although they may be shared). In that sense, the approach is indeed 'value-free'" (1977: 744). I will leave aside the question of the extent to which an authority figure can "share" their views without, to a greater or lesser extent, "imposing" them; presumably much will depend on familiarity with the norms and expectations of the process.

In any case, imposition of (normative) authority is not the most concerning aspect of the VC approach.

While asserting that student responses are "not judged better or worse; each student's views are treated with equal respect" (1977: 748), Kirschenbaum *et al.* suggest that their process entails a positive valuation in favour of critical over uncritical thought, careful consideration over impulsive behaviour, and free choice over "yielding passively to authority" (1977: 744). If one construes morality as an essentially social/cultural project, it is difficult not to be struck by the individualistic nature of suggested VC approaches. Critical and careful thinking and control of impulsive behaviour are useful habits or attributes which are likely to contribute to the realisation of, among other things, prosocial behaviour (1977: 743). Yet, however generally helpful these attributes are, they are more accurately classed with processes of practical, rather than explicitly normative/moral reasoning. Critical reasoning and impulse control are arguably of equal use for careful criminality as for selfless beneficence.

In fairness, a host of other values (prizing, choosing, acting, thinking, feeling, choosing, communicating, acting) are cited in Kirschenbaum *et al.*'s 1977 work, but none in my view, contain or necessarily entail clear and unambiguously moral appeals. "Justice", "freedom" and "equality" are the only unequivocally normative "terminal" values raised in the argument. The former is suggested in a series of ambivalent conditional statements: "If we support moral reasoning as Lawrence Kohlberg defines it, then we value justice. If we uphold free choice, then we uphold autonomy or freedom. If we encourage 'no-lose' conflict resolution, then we value equality" (1977: 744). Use of the conditional may be only a stylistic choice; perhaps the message is that justice, freedom and equality are central normative values in this approach. I have the impression, however, that the use of examples in the context of this explanation speaks to the situation-relative and conditional character of these normative endorsements. In fact, the authors later reinforce the mutability of their normative commitments by agreeing that they will not affirm or deny the existence of any absolute values.

It is doubtful that the authors of this argument would subscribe to the kind of culture (though not mind-) independent moral realism, which would characterise an empathy-led moral life

narrative.[71] Though they address social goals and implications of their thinking when suggesting, for example, that "nations.. suffer from value confusion" (1977: 744), the weight and thrust of thinking is essentially at the individual level.

9.5. Character Education and Socialization

While confirming in later (2000) work that values clarification was "arguably the most widespread of the innovative approaches to values and moral education that were popular during this period [late 1960s to mid-1980s] (National Education Association, 1976; Superka, Ahrens and Hedstrom, 1976; as cited by Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 4), Kirschenbaum suggests that, "since the 1980s", the approach "came under widespread criticism from which it has not recovered" (Baer, 1982; Bennett, 1980, cited in Kirschenbaum, 2000: 4). He suggests that support, including his own, has now shifted from values to character education. Once again, Kirschenbaum is cited as an opinion leader (Character Education Partnership, 1996; International Center for Character Education, 1999; cited in Kirschenbaum, 2000: 4), but in this case, he is leading a movement which, in his own words, "...frequently declares itself opposed to values clarification" (Kirschenbaum, 2000: 4). The fact of, and justifications for, a shift in Kirschenbaum's perspective speak to a more general shift in the moral education landscape.

In Kirschenbaum's analysis, the key weakness in the VC approach is that it "took traditional values for granted". It assumed that people had within them enough decent goodness, intuitive understanding of right and wrong, fairness and justice, and strength of character that, given a chance to identify their own deepest feelings and thoughtfully examine the alternatives, they would ultimately make good and responsible choices" (2000: 11). I agree with this point; clarification is not creation, after all. One does not "clarify" something that is not already, in some sense, present. Kirschenbaum's admission that "a certain degree of socialization, self-control, and empathy are required for the…process to work" (Kirschenbaum, 2000: 12), resonates with Hunter's assertion that a pedagogy based on what he terms a:

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[71] This is not to deny the importance of culture. From the point of view of understanding and motivation, moral life narrative originates from, and is sustained by, particularities of both individual lives and wider (cultural) narratives. The realism described above refers to nothing more (or less) than a belief in empathy as instantiating (from a consequentialist perspective) an objective moral good.

"psychological strategy... [and] based upon shared method [contains a] working assumption that all of us possess an innate capacity for moral goodness; character resides within each of us, largely independent of the relationships we have or the communities into which we are born. These endowments only need to be coaxed out and developed within the personality" (Hunter, 2001: 10).

Or as Kirschenbaum himself puts it, "…values clarification is only part of a much broader process of values education" (2001: 15).

The central challenge, and perhaps fall from favour, of the values clarification approach lies in the contradiction (or, at least, tension) of ostensibly guiding students towards "better" values or behaviour without explicitly inculcating any particular set of values. Kirschenbaum (2000) is not alone is suggesting a mainstream shift from values clarification towards character education occurred largely as a response to this perceived shortcoming.

If justifying the absence of explicit value criteria was/is a challenge for the values clarification approach, character education approaches face the core challenge of justifying the ex/inclusion of explicit normative criteria. Considering the question in a UK context, Arthur (2005) asks "…how is it possible for a heterogeneous society that agrees about basic values to reach a consensus on what constitutes character education?" (Arthur, 2005: 239). These questions of normative priority, value and perspective are the essential questions to be asked of the character education (hereafter CE) approach. It is well to begin, however, with some more general description as to the nature of this approach.

Accusations that "relativistic methods" offered no substantive direction or guidance as to the content of desired moral outlook or behaviour, "...made it [values clarification] an easy target for a variety of critics" (McClellan, 1999: 21). Criticism of CE approaches, on the other hand, tend to centre on the problematic nature of prescribing particular values or virtues in the context of diverse, cosmopolitan societies (see Kohn, 1997, for example). I will later suggest that an explicitly empathy-led care ethics approach is most likely to strike an optimal balance between learner autonomy/cultural sensitivity and substantive normative content.

In a UK context, the period of most rapid recent ascendency of CE approaches coincides with the Conservative administrations of 1979-1997. Arthur (2005) cites establishment of the National Curriculum in 1988 and passage of the Education Reform Act in the same year, with its imposition of a universal duty that schools promote the "spiritual, moral, cultural, mental

and physical development of pupils..." and the establishment of the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community under the auspices of the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) and its goal to discover "…whether there were values on which there was common agreement in society" (Arthur, 2005: 242) as relevant milestones.

In a UK context, time and again, the implicit message of government policy, for example, the *Crick Report on Citizenship Education* (1998, cited in Arthur, 2005: 244), is that students should act according to "a(n) [unspecified] moral code". In *Excellence in Schools*, a newly elected Labour government suggested that children "appreciate and understand a moral code on which civilised society is based..." (1997, cited in Arthur, 2005: 244). If one determines that moral or character education ought to prioritise a certain moral approach or "code", the profoundly difficult question arises as to the nature of what this substantive content ought to be. In the first chapter I cited the current Education Secretary's endorsement of the goals and approach of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Values, and the confirmation it provides that "...character can be taught" (Jubilee Centre, 2014).[72] To its credit, the Jubilee Centre provides a reasonable level of specificity in, for example, its descriptions of "…prototypical virtues" – that will be recognised and embraced by representatives of all cultures and religions..." (Kristjánsson, 2015: 16). It is difficult to take issue with any single "moral character" virtue cited by the Jubilee Centre ('Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion for others, Self-Discipline, Gratitude, Humility/Modesty").[73] The distinction between the Jubilee Centre approach and what I propose, is centred on the pivotal role I suggest affective engagement plays in moral motivation and, through this, the expression of these worthy character traits or behaviours.

The persistence of moral disagreement, even under "idealised conditions" [74] also represents a serious challenge to any specific proposals for moral education criteria. Arthur (2005) calls upon Cass Sunstein's judgment that "…we must live together and show respect for one another and that this alone represents an 'overlapping consensus' among reasonable people...

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[73] See: http://jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/other-centre-papers/Framework. [Accessed 24 March 2014]).
[74] Defined by Stich (1990: 129) as requiring (1) impartial agents (2) fully informed of all relevant facts, and (3) "free from any 'abnormal' states of mind…"

[sufficient to achieve]... 'incompletely theorized agreements on particular cases'" (Sunstein, 1994: 139, cited in Arthur, 2005: 250-1) as suggestive of a possible starting point. And yet the question is not finessed quite so easily; depending on the extent of any supposed consensus asserted, we are typically confronted with either implausibly broad or trivially normative content. This can only be avoided if we are able to focus on some shared value, a value broad enough to be both acceptable to a critical mass of stakeholders and yet specific enough to lead us in a particular direction in terms of moral education.

The very phrase, "moral education" can have a rather sanctimonious ring to the ears (typically progressive) educators, especially those in the state sector where potential policies have the greatest influence. It is certainly the case that scholars grounded in faith traditions (see, for example, Hunter, 2001), whether or not this aspect of their identity is made explicit in their educational writing, are more comfortable with normative conversations about character and values. Arthur's (2005: 253) concern that a moral education is likely to be "...aligned to reactionary politics" is representative of a substantial body of liberal opinion. Some degree of consensus at local levels is essential for successful implementation. Just as "moral education" is burdened in popular imagination with reactionary overtones, so might "empathy education" suggest a mushy and insubstantial relativism at the other end of the political spectrum. It is this latter belief that I am working to address in this work.

9.6. Gibbs' New Synthesis

The most current work of influential moral psychologist John Gibbs is difficult to ignore in the context of this debate. Gibbs has produced a sweeping critique of Kohlberg, Hoffman and Haidt in his expansive *Moral Development and Reality* (Gibbs, 2014). The Third Edition of Gibbs' work has been praised by an array of prominent thinkers. The book is described as a "...penetrating examination of moral development [that] challenges all of us to think more deeply about the moral landscape" (Narvaez, book jacket review) and containing a critique of Kohlberg, "...far more sophisticated, well-grounded, and balanced than one finds in most other texts" (Pope Edwards, book jacket review). Indeed, it is suggested by David Moshman in the Foreword that it represents "...the most important contribution to the study of moral development since the turn of the century" (Gibbs, 2014: ix).

There is much at the centre of Gibbs' work that is entirely consistent with the construal of moral judgment and action that I have become convinced of, and seek to advance in this thesis. The "reality" to which the title refers is, after all, that of our social interconnections and the framework of "objective" moral truth in which they inhere. Gibbs also believes that morality "owes as much to emotion as to cognition" (Gibbs, 2014: ix).

Despite important overlap in key areas, Gibbs' compelling criticism of Kohlberg, Hoffman and (especially) Haidt compels me to engage with his arguments in some detail. Of course I cannot accept all of Gibb's criticisms of Haidt's (2007) New Synthesis and certainly not his re-assertion of a primarily rational model of moral judgment. However, my earlier metaethical arguments mean that I am actually closer to Gibbs than to Haidt on the fact, if not the substance, of some objective moral standards and criteria for judgment.

In this thesis I have examined a crucial distinction between being realist about ultimate sources of normative moral value and realist about the existence of specific rules or behaviours. I have argued that only utilitarian construals supervening upon subjective brain states have an ontological clarity and coherence not present in, for example, virtue-based starting points. While falling short of highly specific behavioural prescriptions, this point about an ultimate source does suggest the presence of a general guide to best behaviour. Accepting this view entails a real endorsement of normatively better or worse behaviours or outcomes. This view does not, however, extend to precise description of ideal behaviours beyond the general argument that increased empathy is a personal and social good in general terms. Stephen Stich (1990) has described the inevitability of moral disagreement, even under "idealised" conditions. Following Brandt (1959, cited in Stich, 1990: 25), Stich argues that moral disagreement will persist even in circumstances which are ideally suited to the resolution of moral disagreement. Indeed, moral disagreement will persist even when different parties are "...*inter alia*, (1) impartial, (2) fully informed and vividly aware of the relevant facts, and (3) free from any 'abnormal' states of mind, like insanity, fatigue or depression" (Brandt, 1959 cited in Stich, 1990: 25).

Given the limitations of reason to resolve moral disputes, it appears that any moral project premised on the notion that we can think our way through to agreement on universal and specific moral guidance is deeply questionable. I have set out a moral realist position which looks primarily to affect as the source of ultimate origins of normative value. My argument

also adopts an affect-led explanation of the primary drivers of moral motivation and action. If these views are indeed compatible, then there is nothing inherently inconsistent about arguing for a metaethical position that is both grounded in affect and embedded in an essentially moral realist base. In the next section, I will describe Gibbs' objection to the lack of prescriptivity in Haidt's work. Given that a lack of moral prescription is seen as a "serious limitation" (Gibbs, 2014: 36) in Haidt's theories, it is reasonable to view Gibbs' own moral position as anti-relativist and favouring positive moral prescriptions.

His relatively rationalist orientation initially makes Gibbs' synthesis appear incompatible with the ethical theory and view of moral judgment that I have laid out. However, Gibbs' framework can be shifted slightly towards the affective, and away from the rationalist primacy, without losing its consistency. Testing this idea, however, requires some exploration of Gibbs' most recent exegesis. I will then move on to a description of Gibbs' critique of Haidt (2001, 2003) and assess what can be learned from his arguments on that score. One of the most important aspects of Gibbs' analysis is his espousal of the coprimacy of empathy and justice as the primary (moral) motives; in doing so, he describes his position as "...neither 'affective primacy' (Hoffman's position) nor 'cognitive primacy' (Kohlberg's position) but *co*primacy (*both* empathy and justice as primary motives)" (Gibbs, 2014: 10).

The principle of reversibility is central to Gibbs' realist construal of moral judgment. Reversibility has been described as [that principle which] requires, "…that the behaviour in question must be acceptable to a [mentally and emotionally healthy as well as adequately informed] person whether he is at the 'giving' or 'receiving' end of it" (Baier, 1965 cited in Gibbs, 2014: 2). Gibbs' extensive discussion of reversibility, drawing on very diverse authorities, among them the work of Adam Smith (1769), is suggestive of a deep confidence that he has identified, or at least draws on, a normative criterion the truth-value of which obtains independent of historical or cultural considerations.

9.6.1. Gibbs' Critique of Haidt

It is clear that Gibbs takes Haidt's work seriously. He begins his critique of Haidt with the proclamation that, "By the early twenty-first century, the impact of Haidt's and related work on the field arguably was already superseding that of prior works by Kohlberg and Hoffman" (Gibbs, 2014: 17). While acknowledging Haidt's influence, Gibbs takes issue with several

aspects of Haidt's construal. It is, at times, unclear in Gibb's critique whether his response to Haidt obtains from the fact that he is unconvinced or uncomfortable, and I seek to explore this distinction in his arguments. It is true that Haidt "fails" to "...champion the 'part of us' that is 'something greater': the higher reaches of human development and morality, the ideals of maturity and rationality". Gibbs asks us, "Why not endorse those better angels as preferable to the alternatives?" (2014: 36). In response, Haidt might suggest that his own theory avoids these assertions because they are not descriptively necessary. Haidt's metaethical theory describes, but does not endorse, an affect-led construal or moral judgment and value. There is nothing in Haidt's theory that excludes the possibility of additional prescriptive ethical projects advocating various normative goals (educating for empathy, for example). I do not believe that either Haidt, or his theories for that matter, are relativistic. The best evidence that Haidt is not a moral relativist is that Haidt unequivocally states this himself: "I am not saying that all moral visions are equally good, or equally effective at creating humane and morally ordered societies. I am not a moral relativist" (Haidt, 2012: 338).

Given that Gibbs' primary purpose in the work is to understand the process of moral development or progress, dealing with Haidt's purportedly relativistic metaethical construals is a natural starting point for his broad re-working of moral psychology. Relegating – a word I think Gibbs would approve using in this context – moral behaviour to primarily affective substrates denies the very possibility of moral development itself. The prospect of moral development, bundled as it typically is, together with notions of improvement over time, disappears along with that of (criteria for) objective standards of moral judgment and behaviour. At least this is the implicit foundation of the early stages of Gibbs' arguments.

It is difficult to imagine anyone disputing, for example, the suggestion that moral intuition is important, or that the conclusions drawn from moral reasoning affect our feelings about moral questions or judgment of moral action. No one would seriously dispute the near universal, enduring and likely evolved, intuitive disapproval of incest, for example. I doubt many would be so obdurate as to permanently refuse to shift their opinions as new information or insights emerge. The root division between informed positions on either side of the affective/cognitive/co-primacy debate consistently reduces down to viewpoints on what is most primal or which type of process (cognitive or affective) is the first mover in the overall formation of moral judgement. The difference between serious analyses ultimately comes down to quite fine distinctions in the assessment of relative roles or catalysts. This is a

question of whether moral reasoning is unconsciously a legacy of moral intuition or has a more material impact that might initially appear to be the case. These subtle distinctions, however, extend or expand into quite divergent beliefs as regards optimal normative outcomes and the best means to achieve them.

As a framework for his assessment of Haidt's (2001, 2003) work, Gibbs focuses on the moral decision- making of one actual "rescuer" as illustrated by Robert Coles' *Moral Life of Children* (1986). The context of the teenager's story in Coles' work is an American high school going through a trying process of racial desegregation and the manner in which the white majority come to terms with the new, emerging racial dynamic. The student in question progresses from having a blatantly hostile attitude, including direct engagement in acts of racist abuse, to a perspective in which he began "to see a kid, not a nigger" and expresses feelings of guilt related to his earlier hostility. In considering the evolution of his views, the young man muses:

> "I'd be as I was, I guess, but for being there in school that year and seeing that kid - seeing him behave himself, no matter what people called him, and seeing him insulted so bad, so real bad. Something in me just drew the line, and something in me began to change, I think" (Coles 1986, cited in Gibbs 2014: 29).

Gibbs finds in this example evidence for a comparable role for rational and affective forces in the student's transformation:

> "Did not the White youth, pondering the unfair treatment of the African-American youth, develop precisely such a deeper inference and perception... the youth began to change, affectively and cognitively…" (Gibbs, 2014: 30).

While I agree with Gibbs that the youth's shift of attitude is representative of moral progress or growth in a non-relativistic way (more on this shortly), I see no reason why a primarily intuitive/affective explanation is necessarily less compelling than a relatively more rationalist account. Gibbs' suggestion is that "the White youth did not just experience a switch in his intuitions; he grew, evidencing a deeper and more accurate perception of the 'out-group' member as a person, a fellow human being" (2014: 35). Gibbs infers a great deal from the youth's own laconic descriptions of the change which had occurred.

If we return, for a moment, to Haidt's Social Intuitionist model (2001) (figure 11.1), and contrast it with a rationalist model of moral judgment (figure 11.2), we are reminded of the

diversity or range of explanations within Haidt's framework. Social persuasion and (especially) in-group solidarity dominate as the youth jeers "go, nigger, go...[and] meant it" (2014: 18).
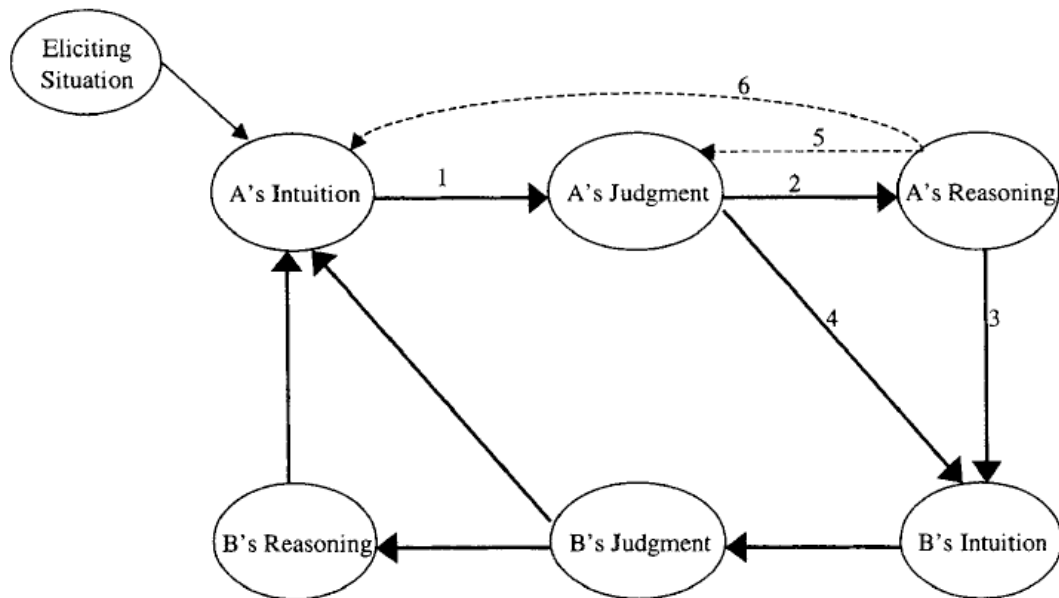

figure. 9.1.

Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgment (Haidt, 2001: 815)
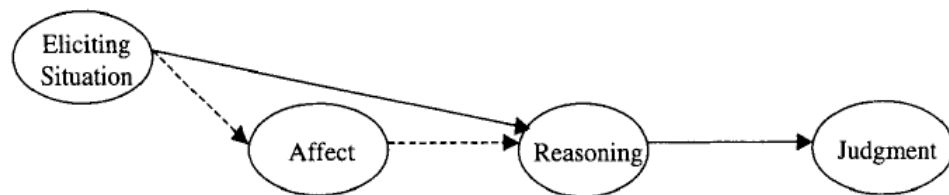
figure. 9.2

Haidt's representation of a "rationalist model of judgment (Haidt, 2001: 815)

Alternatives explanations are available, however, to Gibbs' account of a young man thinking his way through to guilt-driven remorse and attitude change. Haidt (2001) suggests that intuitionism "refers to the view that there are moral truths and when people grasp these truths they do so not by a process of ratiocination and reflection but rather by a process more akin to perception" (p. 814). Leaving aside the provocative use of moral "truth" for the moment, there is enough in Haidt's suggestion of automaticity of (moral) intuition and his later reference to

"a quick flash of revulsion" (Gibbs 2014: 36) at something one knows intuitively to be wrong to offer an explanation at least as powerful as Gibbs' suggestion that the student "…did not just switch intuitions; he grew beyond a superficial and distorted perception", through growing understanding (Gibbs 2014: 35). But should we attribute, as Gibbs does, the lamentable initial attitude to intuition, and the second (commendable or matured) attitude to *ex post facto* reasoning? Intuitions, as emotions, are rarely experienced in their pure form. The student's story could easily be retold with different vital characters or forces.

The teenager (perpetrator) experiences initial pressure, perhaps even malign pleasure, in being categorically part of the single, braying mob. Perhaps there is another, intuitive, voice inside him, even at that time. Perhaps the teenager felt a prophetic flash of revulsion at his group's action. Of course, we, and perhaps even he, can not know whether this was the case; we can know that no affective force of comparable power manifest itself at the time of his participation in the group's activities. The white teenager witnesses, as he construes it, his African-American classmate "behave himself… [after] being insulted so bad" (Gibbs 2014: 29). He reasons through what he has seen (*see* step 6 in figure 9.1: Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgement), and this reasoning is decisive in triggering a new attitude towards the eliciting (and similar) situation(s).

The student now feels differently about his former victim: "It just came out of my mouth. I was surprised to hear the words myself: 'I'm sorry'" (Coles, 1986, cited in Gibbs, 2014: 21). This line of reasoning is not necessarily stronger than Gibbs' (though it is, perhaps, a bit more consistent); it does not appear conclusive. The onus, however, is on Gibbs to produce a tangibly more convincing ("co-primary") account to justify his challenge to Haidt's construal of moral judgement. It is difficult to conclude that Gibbs has decisively succeeded with this example of attitude change. Gibbs describes what he sees as at least three serious limitations [in Haidt's new synthesis]: descriptive inadequacy or negative skew; unwarranted exclusion or studied avoidance of prescriptive limitations; and moral relativism.

"Does our vaunted rationality…", Gibbs asks, "…reduce to arationality or irrationality, to the happenstance of circumstantial emotional influences?" (2014: 33). Gibbs is concerned that such "reductionism", "demeans" the actions of the initially racist student in the example above. Gibbs' selection of terms is illustrative of a hierarchical view of reason and emotion, with the former occupying an unequivocally elevated position; Gibbs discusses the "higher

reaches of human reason and existential self-awareness" later in the work. Gibb also comments that Haidt's "negative skew", "discourages study in moral psychology of higher reaches of morality such as rational moral reflection..." (2014: 15) and suggests that it is not right to "relegate moral reasoning exclusively to conscious, linear cognitive processes" (2014: 33). Gibbs' use of language is indicative of a core normative judgement in his thinking. If we are to avoid "reducing" or "relegating" processes of moral judgment, and instead aspire to the "higher reaches" of morality, we ought to nurture the noble (reasoning) at the expense of what is relatively base (emotion). Prior to voicing concern over Haidt's "exclusion of prescriptivity" (2014: 35), Gibbs appears to reveal his own normative commitment to reason as morally superior to affect. Of course, this is not in itself any kind of weakness or problem. It does, however, suggest an inappropriate or unhelpful conflation of prescriptive and descriptive goals in Gibbs' exegesis. Perhaps the conflation of description and prescription is inevitable given that Gibbs is committed to describing a progressive, developmental process.

There is a fundamental ontogenetic distinction to be made at this stage. Specifically, I agree with Gibbs that, through a variety of life experiences (and, not to forget, the narratives which we extract from them), people can, and often do, mature in a normative moral sense. We can take inspiration from the way in which youth often lends itself to intrepid audacity, selfless sacrifice or unflinching moral courage without forgetting accompanying tendencies towards rash, simplistic and harsh judgments. Old age can temper and restrain earlier, untutored and unforgiving moral certainties. Alternatively, we can, as easily, curl up into ourselves, battered, perhaps, by the consequences of our own best motives and actions, compressed by cynicism and ever more narrow moral horizons.

Thus, Haidt's development description is only "inadequate", as Gibbs suggests (2014: 35), if one subscribes to (some form of) moral stage theory in which one irreversibly ratchets up from one level to the next. There may be some truth in this construal of development; there is some validity in the notion that we tend to move beyond our earliest solipsism in which the requisite perspective taking is not yet enabled. To a certain extent, it must be conceded that some moral skills (beginning with awareness of separate others with separate interests) emerge in broadly similar fashion to the acquisition of other, for example, physical, skills and capacities. Gibbs does not explicitly confine his theory to childhood moral development, however. If, and I am going beyond what Haidt himself argues at this point, one construes (moral) lives as typically

characterised by retreats (as well as progress) or contractions (as well as growth), then the process of development will look very different from that to which Gibbs appears to subscribe.

A point here is that, while conceding what seems the incontrovertible fact that we generally express our moral values or judgments with growing sophistication as we mature, I am less convinced of moral development/progress as a unidirectional process. In the case of Gibbs' white youth, baser and worse intuitions gave way to better intuitions; I agree that this was representative of moral progress. Without necessarily construing the change as good "moral luck" on the student's part, however, it is easy to imagine a different set of external circumstances, perhaps one in which the African-American youth exacted some horrible revenge on his tormentors. Perhaps the white youth would not have progressed under those circumstances. Perhaps such a scenario would have stoked the passions of their in-group-derived hostility, perhaps to the point of committing even more regrettable actions in a cycle of retaliation. Fortunately, this was not the case. However, less desirable conditions and outcomes do continually obtain; these prompt profound intuitive/affective shifts, and, I argue, the instrumental *ex post facto* rationalisations used to justify these changes.

Gibbs' suggestion of a "negative skew" in Haidt's affective paradigm is also interesting. It is not clear to what extent Gibbs weighs the normative value of various (positive) emotions, such as empathy or love. It is not clear where such outward looking, other-regarding, social intuitions fit into his description of affect-led morality as diminishing or "reducing", "higher" rational processes.[75] In terms of Haidt's other foundations such as in-group solidarity and social persuasion, one must acknowledge the positive, as well as the negative, forms which the former can assume (interpersonal loyalty, obligation, *et cetera*) and the indispensible nature of social persuasion in producing, for example, the guilt or shame which prevents, or follows in the wake of, antisocial actions. Gibbs appears to equate Haidt's normative neutrality with a negative construal of moral nature; Gibbs describes, "A moral psychology that emphasizes human foibles or worse, and punts on remedial treatment or moral education, falls seriously short of paradigm status" (2014: 36).

Haidt is indeed reluctant to prescribe certain attitudes or behaviours over others; his is an explicitly descriptive project, and his obdurate neutrality does make for occasionally

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[75] This would seem an almost Platonic construal of (more or less) "capricious" and "corrupting" emotions, as opposed to prudent and controlled rational processes.

frustrating reading.[76] However, as I have argued, Haidt's affect-led metaethical explanations are not necessarily inconsistent with supplementary prescriptive valuation of given types of affect (empathy or compassion, for example). Haidt is disciplined and consistent in presenting his theories as a purely explanatory framework. Gibbs repeatedly attacks Haidt's supposed moral relativism as a "serious limitation" in his work (Gibbs, 2014: 36). And yet, Haidt's own disavowal of moral relativism would conclusive in to undermining Gibbs' accusation. It would seem to me, after all, that an honest personal rejection of relativism is sufficient proof that anyone is not a relativist, whether or not that person goes on to engage with or describe the precise content of their moral beliefs.

9.6.2. From Affect-led to Story-led

This chapter has explored different perspectives on moral education. I have used the extent to which various orientations can be classified as morally realist or relativist, as well as rationalist or affect-led, as primary organising principles in my descriptions. Moral realists are relatively confident and robust in their support for prescriptive moral education, while relativists are more likely to embrace or support programmes which facilitate the clarification of existing individual beliefs in a relatively non-judgmental fashion. A moral realist who construes moral cognition and development as a reason-led process will focus on programmes which purport to develop the kind of intellectual skills which equip learners to reach truthful conclusions as to the basis of right action. In comparison, a moral realist who construes moral cognition as affect-led views moral feeling or emotion as more potent than moral thought in driving moral judgment, motivation and action. Though it has already been argued that reason remains a key part of the moral formation process, an affect-led moral realism is relatively more likely to endorse programmes which primarily engage learners on affective terms.

In Chapter 7 I explored various general perspectives on the centrality of narrative forms and understanding in human life. I return to narrative in Chapter 9, but situate my arguments in an explicitly educational context. I will suggest, for example, that it is the very ambiguity of story which best leads learners to autonomously constructed and enduring moral understandings. The moral realism I have defended underpins a belief that the humanising and empathy enhancing potential of story is a valuable goal. Growing prominence of affect-led cognitive

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[76] Haidt's repeated neutral reference to the traditional practice of female genital modification rather than mutilation, for example (Haidt and Kesebir, 2010).

models leads me to believe that the power of story to evoke feeling potentially endows stories with a unique power to nurture empathy and caring.

Chapter 10

Stories for Thinking

This chapter explores classroom use of narrative and stories in various learning contexts. This chapter seeks to learn from, *inter alia*, the role of "caring thinking" in Martin Lipman's story-based Philosophy for Children (P4C) programmes (Lipman 2003; Lipman *et al.* 1980) Returning to themes raised in Chapter 7, but with a more applied and child-centred orientation, this chapter considers the work of Egan (1993) and Fisher (1996) on the positive educational use of the kind of abstraction and innuendo which typically characterise narrative and the process by which learner interpretation of thick story context engenders useful meaning-making and memorable learner engagement.

It has not been the goal of this work to construct a practical curriculum for EfE. What I have worked to do is to defend a philosophical account of the value of empathy as a normative core for ME and to suggest that there is a compelling empirical case that moral narratives have a unique power to stimulate empathic understanding and concern. If these philosophical and empirical arguments are credible, then there is a strong case that further research into developing approaches and resources for narrative-led EfE is justified.

10.1. The Goals and Design of the Chapter

I suggested in the introduction that this largely philosophical work is bracketed by relatively pragmatic ideas relating to classroom practice. I now return to my original question of the value and use of affect-led, story-based approaches as an instrument for the creation of uniquely memorable and engaging learning. I have described my own pluralistic, naturalist philosophical perspective. I have maintained this perspective is consistent with a privileging of insights extracted from empirical moral psychology and related (empirical) domains. I subsequently argued that a pluralistic naturalism can consistently embrace distinct and autonomous insights originating in story or narrative. I argued that "truths" of narrative are not reducible to the terms or understandings of the physical sciences, but that this irreducibility is not problematic. In the section that follows, I begin to explore what educational use might be made of story's affecting and ambiguous nature. I will examine how story-led learning is already used in diverse areas to engage learners in the autonomous construction of their own

learning and return to my original proposal that these methods are uniquely suited to the goals and methods of EfE.

10.2. "Vivid and Memorable" Learning

Zazkis and Liljedahl (2008) suggest that, "Telling a story creates more vivid, powerful and memorable images in a listener's mind than does any other means of delivery of the same material" (Zazkis and Liljedahl 2008: ix). This is an argument that educators from a wide range of subject disciplines have embraced. In this section, I begin my inquiry of moral narrative education with a brief discussion of the expansion of narrative or story-led learning and teaching in other areas. The use of stories in the development of, for example, literacy is extensively documented (Gurgeon and Gardener, 2000; Fisher and Williams, 2013), mathematics (McGrath, 2014; Way and Hickton, 2011; Zazkis and Liljedahl, 2008) and biology (Kelemen *et al.*, 2014) are additional subject areas in which there is encouraging research on the success of story-led methods for learning.

This on-going development of narrative resources and methods in other areas is illustrative of the flexibility and efficacy of these approaches in a diverse range of learning/instructional domains. In particular, I believe that describing the use of story in contexts as diverse as medical school training, anti-bullying programmes, education in mathematics and the natural sciences deepens and strengthens the contention that learning facilitated through story is unique in its depth, resilience and meaningfulness.

10.3. Egan on Useful Abstraction

Ambiguity is an abiding aspect of narrative; subjective interpretation, construction and meaning-making is a central aspect of narrative learning. Narrative education, therefore, embraces this native task of variable construction. It is this constructive process which, in this model, is the source of a learning's meaning and memorability. Fairy tales are among the most universal and enduring types of narrative for children.

Kieran Egan finds it "uncontentious" that fairy tales "engage young children...and that children learn and remember their contents quite readily..." (1993: 120) He argues that "One of the most obvious structural features of these stories is that they are based on powerful conflicts

of…good and evil" (1993: 120-1). The two "noteworthy" aspects of fairy tales, in Egan's estimation, are that they are (1) abstract and (2) affective. Fairy tales, of course, are typically blunt and binary accounts of unambiguous good and evil; they do not invite subtle or nuanced analysis. Egan argues that such Manichean thinking comes to be moderated in later development of intermediary or "mediated" concepts ("warm", between hot and cold, "ghost", between living and dead, for example).

Most interesting in Egan's description is the, arguably, counter-intuitive suggestion that progress in understanding (with young children) can be made by making learning more abstract (through story, for example) rather than more concrete. The most salient aspects of stories, whether of magic rabbits or martians or other mystical creatures, is the general familiarity that story struggles represent. In other words, at least to Egan's mind, the essential queerness or unfamiliarity of talking rabbits or little green men is immaterial in respect to deeper story meaning. What is transferable, shared and relatable in these stories are the universal themes, such as good against evil or security and threat that these stories evoke.

It is this (hopefully now familiar) idea of narrative imagination that Egan (1993) suggests was pivotal in two experiments on perspective taking in early childhood. In the first "Three Mountain" experiment (Piaget and Inhelder, 1956), three to four-year-old children were asked how a three dimensional landscape would appear from a physically different situation from their own. Bearing out Piaget's suggestion of childhood egocentrism, most children "were unable to answer correctly". This is contrasted with a second experiment, Hughes (1975 cited in Donaldson, 1978: 21), constructed in similar fashion, but with the critical addition of narrative perspective. In contrast with the original Three Mountains experiment, in the second experimental scenario, a little boy is described as attempting to hide from a policeman, and it was noted that: "90% of children from ages 3.5 to 5 were able correctly to take perspectives other than their own" (Donaldson, 1978: 10). As Egan puts it, "the difference between the two experimental situations is not in the logical structure of the task but is in the fact that Hughes embedded his task in narrative; he gave the elements of the task motives and intentions comprehensible to young children" (Egan, 1993: 120).

10.4. Philosophy for Children and "Caring Thinking"

In this section I will briefly describe, assess and speculate on the utility of Martin Lipman's

(Lipman, 2003; Lipman *et al.*, 1980) story-based Philosophy for Children (P4C) and similar approaches to the project of developing empathy-enhancing story based resources and approaches in curricula and classroom. Growing expertise in programmes for critical/creative thinking, collaborative problem solving, and other transferable skills or lines of enquiry, have much to contribute to a process designed to enhance cognitive or affective empathy through story engagement. For, P4C encourages learners to actively engage with stories which deliberately create ambiguity.

P4C was originally centred around the work of Matthew Lipman and arose in the United States during the 1970s. P4C, and similar thinking and collaborative problem solving skills programmes, are a broad and fast moving area of enquiry. It is necessary, therefore, to focus on a particular (representative and influential) thinker and type of intended learning outcomes. A common denominator of these programmes is their primarily rationalist approach; these are self-described programmes of "thinking", not feeling, and there is much that is not directly relevant to the affect-led empathy programme I describe. And yet, Lipman (2003; Lipman *et al.,* 1980) is clear in his rejection of an exclusively rationalistic cognitive model. I have taken some time to emphasise that putting stories at the centre of practice, and focus on what are often emotional responses to, or connections with, these stories, does not entail dismissing or marginalising systematic and critical reflection.

What is more, with Lipman, I believe we have a normative stake in both the development of philosophical skills as a goal, and also the specific capacity to reason philosophically about normative value questions. In 2003, reflecting on the progress which had been made on his P4C projects since the 1970s, Lipman suggested that one shortcoming was that "no serious effort was mounted to construct a valuational component, in which students would be able to talk together freely about the different sorts of values, and how they would be appreciated" (Lipman 2003: 5). Lipman also highlights that his approach encourages "…caring thinking (as well as thinking about caring)" (2003: 135), which he describes as "a paradigmatic case of emotive thinking" (2003: 138). Lipman is, therefore, interested in channelling emotion towards normatively desirable ends rather than banishing them to the sidelines. What is more, in Lipman's P4C programmes (see Lipman, 2003; Lipman *et al*., 1980;) we are presented with a systematic, supportive, and I believe in key aspects, transferable framework for the collaborative discussion of the themes, thoughts (and, yes, feelings) that emerge from methodical engagement with particular stories.

One common theme encountered when exploring story-led learning is the contention that children are ready to engage with challenging material earlier than is generally asserted. A belief that complicated ideas can be accessed by very young learners is an integral part of the position held by Kelemen *et al.* (2014) on the teaching of evolution which I deal with in the next section. As for Lipman, the suggestion is made that, with the aid of his materials, children as young as six are capable of critical and reflective thinking. Once again, it is the ubiquity, familiarity and universality of story experience that forms the basis for this contention.

Although the approach or goals I advocate for empathy education are, in key respects, distinct from those upon which P4C is based, there is a good deal to be learned about the use of stories in the P4C model. Predictably, thinkers like Lipman and Robert Fisher (Fisher and Williams, 2013; Fisher, 2013, 1996) focus more on cognitive over affective aspects of empathy than I do. They also, in their wider (and, to my mind, desirable) goal of developing philosophical reasoning skills, move beyond the more limited (empathy directed) objectives I have set myself. As we will see, however, P4C has laid down certain useful and transferable criteria for the use of stories for the engagement of learners with challenging and complex ideas.

It is not possible to do justice to the full range of formative thinkers working in the P4C domain, and much of their work on critical thinking, however valuable, is not directly relevant in the context of affect or empathy-led story engagement. I have already suggested that neither my approach nor that of P4C's proponents clings exclusively to either emotive or affective modes of cognition. Both explore rational, affective and conative dimensions and cognition in a narrative context. Of course, the teaching feel or emphasis varies between a relatively dry dialectic, and approaches more centred on affective drivers or dimensions of a story. However, in describing (and largely endorsing) the P4C approach to story engagement, I am, to an extent, focusing on one particular goal of P4C work. Specifically, it is useful to explore the P4C approach to developing what Lipman (2003) describes as "caring thinking". Fisher (2006) is also careful to emphasise that:

> "P4C does not overlook the emotional aspects of living and learning together... The community of enquiry creates the conditions that foster emotional engagement and self-expression.. engender awareness of new feelings towards others.. Caring thinking involves.. developing empathy and respect for others." (Fisher, 2006: 102)

Fisher also explicitly references Goleman's (1998) idea of 'emotional intelligence', and construes empathy as that component of emotional intelligence which assists us in "..sensing what other people are feeling, and using that information in our dealings with them, being able to have a rapport with a wide range of people" (2006: 103). So empathy is acknowledged as important, but only as an expression of (rational) understanding; affective aspects are not similarly acknowledged.

While I feel that relatively more affect-led engagements with story lives are more likely to be developed, retained, and provide motivating future models, there is a great deal to be learned from the best aspects of P4C design. First of all, Fisher's work embraces stories as "..a natural stimulus for discussion, investigation, and problem-solving…" (Fisher, 2013: 16). He suggests that "Human life can be regarded as a story, a narrative structured in which everyone has a part… To understand the narrative structure of stories, or of human lives, requires more than the exercise of human reason, it requires what Egan calls 'the other half of the child' namely imagination" (Fisher 1996: 18).

10.5. Fisher on Learner Construction and Useful Innuendo

As Robert Fisher puts it, "For Lipman, a dialogic text, made up of constructed conversations, can contain innuendo, irony, and many other qualities that other prose lacks" (Fisher, 1996:. 19). Once again, this ambiguity of meaning is portrayed (by Fisher) as pedagogic strength rather than weakness. While this "polysemic" process of narrative or dialogic engagement is less precise or controlled in terms of content, this is counterbalanced by the benefits inherent in autonomous interpretation and learner construction of meaning. As Fisher puts it, "[the great stories of humanity]...have within them layers or levels of meaning or significance which we become aware of as we grow in experience and insight" (Fisher 1996: 17). As Kieran Egan puts it, "...there seems some lag between acceptance of a significant narrative component in our mental lives, and elaboration of ideas about learning that clearly reflect that narrative component" (Egan 1993: 120). I have already engaged with this idea of a narratively-embedded self. In this chapter's less abstract context, I would not wish to overstate the value of ambiguity. It is difficult to argue with Fisher's assertion that, "One reason why stories have this affective power is that stories have, as Egan says, a crucial feature which life and history lack, they have beginnings and ends so can fix meanings to events" (Fisher 1996: 18).

10.6. "Humanising" Stories and Empathy

The majority of results returned in any broad "empathy education" search relate to training of medical professionals. Something particularly useful and striking in research in clinical contexts is the extent to which clinical outcomes can be quantified. One recent study by Lateef (2014) on the use of "Timeslips" or group story-telling in which medical students were engaged with dementia patients, suggested that these interactions "...created substantial improvement in students' attitude. The original perception of dementia patients as being difficult to work with and extract information from, was completely changed after the programme" (p. 51). The study suggested tangible improvements in clinical outcomes resulting from the story sessions. As Lateef comments:

> "Stories help medical students and doctors develop empathy which can have a significant positive effect on patient satisfaction... Hoja *et al.* showed in their study of 891 diabetic patients that patients whose physicians had high empathy scores were significantly more likely to have good control of their HbA1c and LDL (low density lipoprotein) levels. The study also found the level of empathy to have a unique impact contribution in predicting positive patient outcomes" (2014: 51-52).

Chapter 11

Conclusions

No single piece of my preceding arguments is new. My pluralistic naturalist foundation is not original. My realist conception of scientific and moral truth is not unique. I draw upon, rather than contribute to, emerging research in empirical moral psychology. My discussion of (moral) narrative is similarly largely descriptive. My later assessment of the explicitly educational use of story or narrative, though also informed by my own direct experience of my own learners' responses in Cambodia, is largely inspired by increasingly established research in this area.

I am confident, however, that these diverse discourses and inspirations have been fused into a coherent and unique contribution to knowledge in moral/empathy education. I have worked to produce a philosophically fundamental and comprehensive response to the practical question I raise in my first chapter. In my introduction, I asked what is the best response to pervasive tension between broad demand for moral education/formation and apparent discord as regards the content of this education. I do not think that the practical nature of this question should discourage us from engaging with essential metaphysical and ethical reflections, or render the result of such enquiry irrelevant. This coupling of moral demand and disagreement is not trivial; though glib and dogmatic responses are often proposed, the question is not amenable to simple solutions.

I do think that moral education is profoundly important. My belief, reinforced by years of engagement with personal Cambodian stories of both unimaginable darkness and unforgettable inspiration, reinforces my own conviction that these stories can have real power to engage, warn and inspire. My literature surveys reinforced a belief that no single discourse within moral education fully exploits transformative possibilities emerging understandings of moral cognition present. I found many disparate pieces of effective practice, especially relating to inquiry-led use of story and narrative. In using similar story resources myself, I witnessed, first hand, the construction of new meanings and autonomous moral formation under the influence of affective engagement with the stories of victims, bystanders and rescuers.

Inclined towards a philosophically naturalist perspective, these experiences motivated me to explore various empirical explanations of empathy development and found the accounts of the "affective revolution" thinkers, scattered across a compelling range of disciplines, deeply compelling. Fusing these empirical insights with narrative-led educational practice seemed to me a promising direction and I worked to understand the potential interdependence between these ideas and their pedagogic potentials.

Despite finding emerging research on empathy, and the affect-led or arational catalysts that appear to encourage its development or expression deeply compelling, I felt that something more would be required in order to create a sufficient foundation for a fundamentally distinct approach to moral education. Aware of the deep and enduring influence of educational approaches extracted from virtues or character based moral philosophy models and their expression in the work of, for example, the Jubilee Centre in the UK, I wondered about the prevalence, even dominance, of these rationality and virtue-led approaches. Empathy as a core normative value is a poor fit for values-based (or for that matter, deontological) models. I did not wish to work backwards from empathy as a central value to arguments for whatever normative foundation would accommodate it with the least theoretical tension. Rather, having found broadly utilitarian normative ethical theory unassailable, at least in terms of its most essential and unique irreducible value, I worked to test the relevance and general discursive strength of this theory in the context of this research.

Throughout this work I have sought to develop a foundation for a fully justified theory of education for empathy without respect to disciplinary boundaries. Having decided that utilitarian normative ethical theory is ideally suited to support a moral education programme with utility enhancing empathy at its core, I was concerned that this position be more than the product of naïve introspection. This is the reason I begin this work with a metaphysical, rather than ethical, exploration.

I sought, and believe I have found, an equilibrium or narrative continuity in the story I relate. My first task, as I saw it, was to assess a philosophical naturalism through posing a number of ontological and epistemological questions. Upon investigation, I concluded that the pluralistic and inclusive naturalism of Dewey (1927) and Shook (2011, 2008) coherently endorses the ontological reality of ineffable knowledge (for example, that often gleaned from narrative sources) without making what I see as unjustifiable and unnecessary conceptual leaps towards

endorsement of transcendent domains of a fundamentally different status than anything in the natural world. Full, precise or meaningful descriptions of much moral or aesthetic experience through the terms and methods of the physical sciences are not, in my opinion, possible. I would go as far as to suggest purely physicalist accounts of such phenomena must always be either inadequate or trivial. This boundary arguably represents a limitation of human reason itself (and its real-world scientific tools) rather than an intellectual stage we shall collectively overcome one day. However, in relationship to this realm of the ineffable, I do make a distinction between the possibilities of description (in a scientific or empirical sense) and the possibilities of experience. At this stage this pluralistic naturalism must, and I think can, find conceptual space for narrative knowledge and experience.

Though no single piece of my preceding arguments is new, I believe that this kind of interdisciplinary justification of education for empathy is unique and valuable. The originality of this contribution is based on drilling down (as deeply as practicable in a single work) from narrative-led EfE practice to its most fundamental interdisciplinary justifications, both empirical and theoretical. This justification of narrative is inspired by the work of researchers like Batson (Batson, 1997; Batson *et al.,* 2003) and others who, though they have not made a systematic link to education practice, have made important contributions to understandings of the relationship between moral narratives and empathy. My analysis of the empirical moral psychology research of Batson and others is inspired by a utilitarian endorsement of empathy as a key normative value and reflections on the validity of naturalist explanations of scientific and moral truth.

I hope that the continuity and coherence of this story is clear. I have worked to build a theoretical foundation sympathetic to, and informed by, what I feel is very promising new empirical research on empathy and moral cognition. Emerging from my own inquiry into empathy and moral life narrative is a belief that sufficient evidence is already available to justify investigation beyond the current work. Further research might explore the curricular embedding of empathy into moral education curricula and future operationalisation in classrooms. There is now a critical mass of evidence supporting the proposal that systematic empathy development is the best available way forward for a public both weary of empty moral relativism and wary of authoritarian diktat.

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