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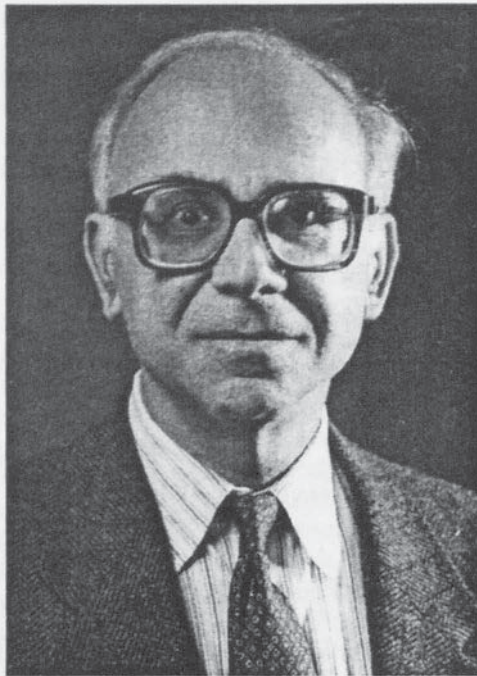
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*Robert Audi*

## The Scope of Motivation and the Basis of Practical Reason

Robert Audi

The topic of motivation is central both in psychology and in the broad philosophical area where philosophy of mind and action overlaps moral psychology and normative ethics. Whatever else motivation is, it is manifested in our motives, and they in turn are crucial in explaining our actions, in appraising our character, and, on some views, in determining the rationality of what we do. Many kinds of things have been called motives: desires, emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and other common elements in human psychology, as well as things that are only indirectly psychological, such as theft and competition, which entail essentially motivated action but are not themselves motives. In part because of this diversity, it remains less than fully clear what motivation is.<sup>1</sup> I believe, moreover, that even if we achieve a good account of it, important questions will remain concerning its role in the philosophy of action and the theory of practical reason. I am especially interested in the question whether there are certain kinds of objects of motivation, most notably pleasure and pain, that are essential or even foundational for motivation. For instance, are all motives ultimately hedonic, as many have thought? And quite apart from this, does every hedonic experience produce motivation?

Whether or not we answer these questions affirmatively, it is important to answer a related question concerning the (intrinsically) good, of which pleasure seems to be one clear case: must human beings—or, at any rate, rational ones—always or at least sometimes be motivated by the good, particularly when some form of it has been experienced?<sup>2</sup> Does an experience of something that is intrinsically good, for instance, necessarily motivate us to continue that experience or to seek a similar one? In exploring such questions, I want to begin with some points about what motivation is, and then to proceed to consider some psychological and normative theories of it. My results should be of use both in understanding the explanation of our actions and in seeing some of the connections between motivation and value.

### I. Motivation, Desire, and Belief

If we take seriously the idea that motivation inclines an agent to act—and with it the idea that motives are, in virtue of their very content, *for action*—we cannot identify motivation with desire. Even though certain desires are paradigms of motivation, one can have a desire that one has no inkling—and no way to discover—how to fulfill, such as a desire to live in another galaxy. Here one has *potential motivation*, in the sense that, given the formation of a belief to the effect that some action (A-ing) would accomplish this goal, one would be motivated to A. Since motives are for action, desires that are, in the way just noted, too far from action are not motives, even if every desire has the potential to generate

motivation that is related to it in content.

A similar case of potential motivation to *A* occurs where one has a strong disposition to want to *A*, but no actual desire to *A*. I may thus be potentially motivated to learn a poem I have never read if, on reading it, I would want to learn it. As this kind of example suggests, likes and dislikes are sources of potential motivation. They commonly yield this motivation through desires that are partly constitutive of them, but they need not yield it in this way. Liking and disliking are often affective responses prior to desire formation.

Might we say, then, that to have motivation is to have a desire which, suitably combined with one or more beliefs, inclines one toward action, say a combination of (1) desire to do something—the action one is said to be motivated to perform—in the wide sense in which desiring includes any kind of wanting,<sup>3</sup> and (2) some instrumental belief expressing a way one takes oneself to be able to do it?<sup>4</sup> This formulation is not quite right. One could be motivated to *A* when one is only disposed to believe, but does not in fact believe, *A*-ing will realize the desire in question. Jack could have a motive to prevent a mutual friend, Jim, from visiting Jill when Jack does not believe, but *would* believe upon brief reflection on the relation between the two, that Jim wants to take Jill away from him. A motivational *attitude* may necessarily embody some kind of actual wanting, but motivation in the wide sense ranges beyond propositional attitudes actually held.<sup>5</sup>

It might be adequate, however, to say that motivation to *A*, for instance to please Leah, consists in (1) a desire, or at least a disposition to form a desire, to *A* suitably combined with (2) a psychological direction toward action to satisfy the desire, where this direction can be indicated by any of at least three elements: a belief about how to realize the desire; a disposition to form such a belief; and a behavioral direction contained in the content of the desire itself, as where one wants to please someone *by bringing her flowers*.<sup>6</sup>

There is a subtlety that should be noted here. There is an oblique sense in which one might be said to be motivated to *A* when, although one has no belief to the effect that *A*-ing is equivalent to *B*-ing, it is in fact equivalent to *B*-ing and one is unqualifiedly and transparently motivated to *B*. Thus, I might be *obliquely motivated* to invite Nancy to join my seminar if I want to invite the author of the winning (anonymous) paper in the department's essay competition and I have no notion who wrote it. If, however, I cannot find out who wrote it until after my seminar, I may not before that have a disposition want to invite Nancy (conceived as Nancy), and we thus do not have a case of motivation as described above. Oblique motivation can be important, particularly when there is a likelihood that it will generate transparent motivation, such as my wanting to find out who wrote the essay or my intending to ask a colleague to recommend my seminar to the winner. Oblique motivation is also significant for understanding ascriptions of motivation where (as in this case) there are others who can ascribe motivation to us knowing of the identity we do not believe to hold. Thus, someone who knows that Nancy won and mistakenly thinks I do, too, may say to a third party that I surely want her to join the

seminar. This is false as stated; but it calls attention to a truth that can be conflated with it: that in a *de re* sense I have the relevant kind of motivation. It is true of Nancy that I want her (under the description, 'the winner') to join my seminar, but false that I have any motivation whose (intentional) content is: to have Nancy in my seminar. What follows will take some account of oblique motivation, but does not pursue it separately.<sup>7</sup>

One problem for the directed desire view of motivation just sketched is that it may require us to consider a desire which is both weak and massively outweighed by competing ones to be a motive provided it has a suitable psychological direction (carried by some cognitive element). Am I, however, motivated to go to the library today when, although I have a weak desire to go, there are many things that I believe preclude my going and that I want far more? In my view, I am so motivated, but one might think it is more accurate to speak again of merely potential motivation here. Nevertheless, since, that any desire with appropriate action-directed content can produce motivated action when all opposition from other desires and other sources (such as fatigue) is removed, it may be best simply to speak here of *weak* motivation.

The case of weak motivation brings to the fore a need to distinguish it from marginally outweighed motivation, which may appear similarly unlikely to produce action. Consider a case where a powerful desire to A is, by a slim margin, overridden by an even more powerful desire to B. Here the likelihood of the less powerful desire's producing action is small; even the likelihood of the stronger desires yielding it may be small, since one may as it were differentially hesitate out of reluctance to give up the object of the less strong desire. This kind of case shows that low probability of action, even when due mainly to motivational factors, is not sufficient for weakness of motivation. It may, however, indicate something similar: *weak resultant motivation*, i.e., the degree of motivation to A possessed by the agent all things considered.

Intending to A may now suggest itself as embodying both cognitive direction and the kind of desire required for motivation. I do believe that intending to A entails being motivated to A and is indeed a paradigm case. But surely one can be motivated to do something one is resisting doing and has no intention to do. Almost any detective story exhibits people meeting this description: they have a motive for the crime but did not do (or intend) it. Intending, then, is only a sufficient condition for motivation.<sup>8</sup>

If we accept the idea that motivation is (roughly) psychologically directed action-desire (or a disposition to form such a desire) of an appropriate strength (which may be minimal if there are no competing desires), we confront two problems. First, how do desires of the relevant kind cooperate or combine when they constitute motivation for the same action, say to acquire the painting and to please the painter (in so doing), where one wants to achieve both? Second, we must explain how emotions and even beliefs can apparently count as motives. Let us consider these problems in turn.

Suppose I want to please Tom and also want to please Don (both being colleagues of mine and each other), and assume I also believe, regarding each,

that A-ing, say, supporting a certain policy, will please him. I now have two motives for A-ing. Must they combine to produce a single motive with the content: to please Tom and Don? Surely not. I may not put two and two together; and if I do, I may not get four—since I may realize that one of them will be displeased by the other's being pleased. I may then revise my idea about how to please one or the other or both and cease to be motivated to A at all. We may conclude, then, that motivation is not automatically *agglomerative*, even when the objects of the motives in question are plainly compatible: two or more motives for the same action need not yield, or be replaced by, a single motive representing that action as instrumental to the realization of their combined objects.

The same case suggests that two or more motives for the same action need not combine forces, i.e., render the agent more motivated to perform the action than by virtue of any of the motives alone. We have seen that the thought of the two or more results of the action can actually undermine the motivation to perform that action. It is also possible that the agent temporarily forget one of the projected results of A-ing and thus not, at least at certain times, be additionally motivated by the desire to realize that outcome. I believe, then, that just as motives need not agglomerate, they need not be *dynamically combinatory*. Neither in content nor in energy do allied motives automatically combine. The question of when and how they may dynamically combine, like the question of when they agglomerate, has a multitude of conceptual and, especially, empirical dimensions, but I cannot explore them here.

Regarding the question of why so many things other than desire are considered motives or motivational phenomena, take jealousy as a case of emotional motivation, and consider believing one was cheated by a telemarketer as a case of cognitive motivation. May we not take jealousy, when it is a motive, to entail action-desire—for instance to prevent a rival's supplanting one—together with an appropriate belief or disposition to believe? And could a belief that someone cheated one be a motive apart from an appropriate desire and cognitive direction, say a desire for revenge or rectification and some belief about how to achieve it? Surely we cannot read off the nature of motivation from what receives the name; we must consider context. Even non-psychological terms like 'theft' can designate motives, but only where the context indicates an appropriate desire and cognitive direction, say wanting the jewels and believing they were in the purloined suitcase.<sup>9</sup>

## II. Hedonism

The sketch of motivation I have suggested enables us to make good sense of psychological hedonism. I take this to be the view that all our intrinsic desires are hedonic and all our other desires (and motives, if there are any that are not dependent on desires) trace to them by broadly instrumental cognitive chains. That is, (1) anything we want for its own sake we want in some sense *for pleasure* or *to avoid pain* (where the specific content of the wants may range widely, e.g.

from wanting something on the basis of taking it to be enjoyable to wanting a sensation one believes to be a pleasure); and (2) anything we otherwise want is such that we want it, directly or indirectly, in virtue of what we take to be its contribution to one or both of these goals. If the connection is indirect, as where we want something other than pleasure as a means to it, the belief may be non-hedonic, say, that exercising will strengthen our muscles. But every such belief will ultimately be connected by a chain of instrumental beliefs to a hedonic desire.<sup>10</sup>

Given how broad are the notions of wanting something for pleasure and of wanting to avoid pain—since indefinitely many things can be seen as pleasurable or painful, or *pleasant* or *unpleasant*, if we take our terms in the widest sense—psychological hedonism can be viewed as accounting for at least much of human motivation. Certainly, nothing in the concept of motivation (as I here portray it) rules it out. I will not, however, presuppose it. One reason is that this psychological version of hedonism is empirical, and I do not see how philosophical reflection alone can determine its soundness. More important, it will serve our purposes better to work with a wider theory of motivation that takes hedonic desires to be important but not our only basic motives. Before stating the wider theory, however, I want to consider the normative counterpart of psychological hedonism. For my interest is not just in what motivation is, but in how normative notions may play a role in it.

I refer to *valuational hedonism*, the view that only pleasure is intrinsically good and only pain is intrinsically bad. For Mill and a number of other philosophers, pleasure includes the absence of pain. In addition, a plausible hedonism should construe increases in pleasure and decreases in pain as, if not intrinsically good, then *necessarily* good by virtue of increasing goodness or reducing badness. This theory may be more plausible than psychological hedonism, but I do not want to presuppose it either and will suggest a wider view that incorporates the idea that pleasure is intrinsically good and pain intrinsically bad. My point here is that hedonism, overall—i.e., the double-barrelled psychological and valuational version—exhibits something quite powerful in the theory of practical reason: the idea that the good and the bad are basic in motivation.

We can sharpen this idea if we ask how the good or the bad *as such* could be of practical significance if they had no connection with our motivation? Without some such connection, they could only fortuitously influence action, whereas they can have the greatest practical significance if our motivational structure is subservient to them. Hedonism may be seen as giving the good and the bad the highest possible degree of practical import: our very natures are such that we direct our conduct—our practical lives—toward the one and away from the other.

This wider view should, like any adequate theory of practical reason, meet a *motivational constraint*: it should (and I think does) exhibit whatever it takes to have intrinsic value, or to be otherwise essentially connected with reasons for action, as such that, given our psychology, we human beings at least can be motivated by the relevant elements.<sup>11</sup> A theory that fails to meet this constraint

would at best have little practical interest. Moreover, a theory of practical reason that connects the normative and the motivational tightly will, other things equal, have an advantage over one that connects them loosely. Thus, hedonism does better on this count than a view that says that although pleasures and pains are the only goods and evils, we merely can, but need not, be motivated by them. The question I now want to pursue is whether there is a theory of the foundations of practical reason that is superior to hedonism at least normatively and amply meets the motivational constraint.

### III. Eudaimonistic Pluralism

Hedonism at its best is not monistic, but pluralistic. This idea is certainly confirmed by Mill's Aristotelian version of hedonism, which is, historically, perhaps its leading version.<sup>12</sup> It is in part because of the great variety of pleasures and pains that the theory is plausible. I believe, however, that there are good candidates for non-hedonic (basic) goods and evils, including moral and aesthetic goods and evils. Doing justice can be intrinsically good, hearing a poor performance intrinsically bad; but in neither case must the goodness or badness be hedonic.<sup>13</sup> Doing justice can be difficult and unpleasant even when it is intrinsically good and is perceived as such; hearing a poor performance may be simply dull rather than unpleasant. Moreover, these things can also be objects of apparently non-hedonic basic desires: one can want to do justice for its own sake apart from anticipating pleasure, as one can intrinsically want to avoid hearing a poor performance without expecting pain from it if one should hear it. In the former, positive case, however, one has a kind of thing that intrinsically counts toward human flourishing—the notion central in eudaemonism—and in the latter one has the kind of thing that detracts from human flourishing.

If one wishes to take pleasure and pain so broadly that they extend to such experiences, one can defend (valuational) hedonism after all. In that case, however, the difference between the eudaemonistic view I suggest and hedonism is largely verbal. On both views, I might add, some goods may be regarded as superior to others. Indeed, some theories would permit at least a *prima facie* hierarchy, with, say, rich intellectual pleasures at the top and the relatively unidimensional ones, such as those of a single breath of cool air after a long meeting in a sultry room, near the bottom. Both views may also take the overall intrinsic good of a complex state of affairs, such as enjoying seeing a bully being frightened, to be organic. These are matters that may be left open here.<sup>14</sup>

Since hedonism meets the motivational constraint, we should expect eudaemonism, as countenancing hedonic goods and evils, to do so as well—at least insofar as we focus on those hedonic values. Is there any reason to doubt, however, that non-hedonic values can also motivate us? Can't we want to do justice for its own sake or be intrinsically averse to hearing a poor performance? I think so. This is not to say that such motivation is not *learned*, say in the course of our acculturation, during which we are exposed to such good and bad things



and taught appreciation and discrimination. But the motivational power of a consideration may be basic in an agent at a time even if the relevant desires are not "primitive."

Perhaps it is largely because pleasure and pain seem capable, and perhaps uniquely capable, of motivating prior to any education that hedonism, at least in its psychological form, is as plausible as it is. It could be that if we were not built so as to enjoy some things and be pained by others we would not or could not learn to want other things for their own sake. But it is essential to distinguish here between genetic primacy and motivational hegemony. The former does not entail the latter. It may be that we would not learn to value non-hedonic goods intrinsically if we were not first motivated by hedonic ones; but non-hedonic desires that we come to have only as civilized people need not be subordinate to hedonic desires, and they can be stronger. Our early years under the tutelage of pleasure and pain need not prevent our developing autonomous values. I reject, then, the *two-dimensional model of motivation* so natural for hedonism: the idea that all motivation resides either directly in hedonic desire or in desire instrumentally based on it.

To be sure, once we regard something as good in itself, we tend to take pleasure not only in realizing it but also in the thought of achieving it, even apart from any expectation that it will lead to any good beyond itself. Sometimes it is as if the childhood teacher returned to applaud the adult accomplishment. Pleasure is perhaps the most primitive and enduring kind of reward in human life and (as I have stressed) it is important in learning to value other goods. But this does not entail that we seek all other goods for the pleasure of their realization, nor does pleasure in contemplating the realization of a good entail that one seeks it *for* pleasure. We can take pleasure in the thought that we will resist temptation, even though we know that doing so will be unpleasant and that we will be doing it not for pleasure but to keep our word.

#### IV. Motivation and Value

I have so far suggested that we can be motivated by the plurality of goods and evils that a plausible eudaemonism posits. I am proposing, then, both a theory of motivation that is at least as broad as motivational eudaemonism and a theory of value that is similarly pluralistic. But must we be motivated by each intrinsic good? The idea that just as the intellect seeks truth, the will—conceived as central for motivation—seeks the good is both venerable and, in many ways, theoretically attractive. How much credence should we give it in the motivational domain?

It is essential to distinguish two ways in which the good may motivate (I omit consideration of the bad, but parallel points should hold). It may motivate *cognitively*, in the sense that believing something to be intrinsically good or—what is more common—to belong to one of the species of intrinsically good things, such as pleasurable experiences—entails motivation to pursue, promote, or preserve it.<sup>15</sup> It may also motivate *experientially*, in the sense that experienc-

ing it (in an appropriate way, e.g. taking it to have the relevant properties) entails such motivation. Let us take these questions in turn.

One aspect of the question of cognitive motivation has been much discussed under the heading of “motivational internalism,” roughly the view that some degree of motivation is internal to any sincere self-addressed moral judgment. For the thesis that the good is cognitively motivating—*cognitivist motivational internalism*—can be seen as a generalization of motivational internalism if we take the latter to conceive realizing obligation as a kind of moral intrinsic goodness and the former to construe realizing intrinsic goodness in general as similarly motivating.

I think that cognitivist motivational internalism is mistaken, though we may plausibly maintain the version restricted to *rational agents*, or at least “fully” rational agents. Roughly, except in idealized human agents, I do not see that the intellectual grasp of intrinsic goodness necessarily constrains the volitional in this way. More specifically, though still roughly, normative belief is not necessarily motivating; but where there is no deficiency in rationality, normative belief and motivation will be in harmony in the suggested way. We might say, moreover, that the *more* rational one is, the more motivated one tends to be by beliefs to the effect that an action open to one would promote an intrinsic good.<sup>16</sup>

The experiential case is quite different. Here we imagine an agent experiencing an intrinsic good, such as the pleasure of a good swim, and ask whether the agent must be motivated to continue the activity or to repeat it. Typically, this seems so. Indeed, it is at best odd to say things like ‘I enjoyed that, but even though it had no ill-effects I don’t want to do it or anything like it again’ or ‘That was painful, but I’d have no objection to experiencing it again, for its own sake’. Still, we have criteria for enjoyment and for pain, as well as for moral satisfaction and for aesthetic dissatisfaction, that enable us to make sense of their occurrence apart from the posited motivation. It seems quite possible that, perhaps owing to some abnormality, a person might enjoy swimming and fail to be motivated to do it in the future (at least beyond its last enjoyable moment).<sup>17</sup>

If, however, we again consider only rational agents, there is much more plausibility in holding the generalized *experientialist motivational internalism*, as we might call it. Could a rational agent fail to want, in the required way, a good that the agent experiences as such? There is, to be sure, the possibility of depression, but that could be construed as deflating motivation in a way that reduces rationality. I hesitate to go so far, but am inclined to think that a perfectly rational agent would have at least *some* degree of the required desire.<sup>18</sup> If, however, we ask about an agent who is highly, and non-defectively, rational but imperfectly so, the case becomes harder. It is plausible to hold here that there is a *tendency* to have the relevant motivation, but that may be as far as we should go.

It may help in this difficult matter to compare the case of theoretical reason on the point. I suggest that the analogue of experienced goods—the kind that

tend to produce, and can always to some degree render rational, desires for their continuation or for more of their kind—is experiential grounds of belief. Sensory experiences, for instance, tend to produce beliefs and can always to some degree justify them (the degree may be such that defeat of the justification is possible, but nothing turns on that here). Still, one can see a thing without forming beliefs about it, or at least without forming beliefs about every aspect of it that one sees. Seeing a conically shaped tree, for instance, does not entail forming a belief that it has a conical shape (as opposed to being disposed to form this belief).<sup>19</sup> And a commitment to skepticism—or interference with the brain—might reduce the natural tendency to form beliefs in response to visual and other sensory experiences. Why should we expect the connection between experience of the good and motivation to pursue it to be any tighter—or any looser—than the connection between experiential evidence for a true proposition and believing it? I think we should not.

If this conclusion is correct, then we may also find no good reason to think that the connection between believing that an action would be intrinsically good and being motivated to perform it should be any tighter than I have suggested. If *experiencing* a good need not motivate one toward it or its like, why should merely believing that one can realize a good by A-ing necessarily motivate one (so far as one is rational) to A or to do something similar? It appears that the motivational power of such a belief would depend—at least in rational persons—on the rewards one has experienced. One connection seems to be this: rewarding experiences tend to generate desires for more of the same or for similar experiences, and a *rational* person tends not to believe an experience will be good without an appropriate reason, such as similar experience in the past or credible testimony about such experience. This point does not entail that such a belief cannot by itself produce motivation; but to suggest that motivation is internal to the belief is to ascribe to it a kind of power not necessarily belonging even to the experiential basis on which the belief properly rests, much less to the belief alone.

If, however, we do not endorse cognitivist and experientialist motivational internalisms, how can our theory of value be practical? Why does it not cut agency off from the valuable ends that should guide it? The answer is this. The theory is practical in exhibiting rational persons as both naturally and properly motivated to bring about what they take to be intrinsically good; it simply stops short of ascribing to the intellect the power of automatically creating motivation in line with an agent's experiences of value or with the agent's normative beliefs. Moreover, if preserving an analogy with theoretical reason is something that a good overall theory of motivation—one that encompasses both conceptual and normative dimensions—should achieve, there is some reason to be positively disposed toward the kind of account of motivation this paper sketches.

## V. Normativity and Explanation

It will be obvious that the account of motivation I have been developing brings the normative and the explanatory together. By taking the motivational grounds of action to be the kinds of desires that tend, in rational persons, to be produced both by experience of the good (or the bad) and by beliefs that something one can do would be good (or bad), I am giving normative notions a major if indirect place in explaining our actions. Is this a way of giving causal power to normative notions or perhaps even of naturalizing those explanations of action that portray action as aimed at realizing the good?

In a way, it is, and in a way it is not. If pleasure is intrinsically good and can produce motivation and thereby action, then the good has causal power at least in the sense that something essentially good, such as a pleasurable experience, has that power. To be sure, the *property* of being good, as opposed to something it supervenes on, need not have causal power; but this property is not correctly conceived as a causal property in the first place. The broad idea I am suggesting is this: an experience is good in virtue of being, say, pleasurable, and that hedonic property is a basis of the intrinsic goodness of the enjoyable experience in question. A ground of something normative may thus produce motivation, and the content of the motivation it yields may be directly normative, say to achieve something good. Nonetheless, the pleasure that is both a ground of the goodness of the experience and a cause of the desire for a good of that kind (or at least for an experience of that kind) is a natural property. Thus, the “ultimate” psychological basis of the action, though not itself a normative element, is essentially connected with one.

This brings us to the problem of the nature of explanation of action by appeal to such normative goals as the promotion of goodness. There is much to say, but I must be brief here.<sup>20</sup>

There is no question that we can explain an action by appeal to the agent’s wanting, for instance, to promote justice for its own sake, or to make the life of a poor child intrinsically better. The motivational *concepts* operating here may not admit of any naturalistic analysis; I shall assume they do not (unless justice, e.g., does). Still, it is roughly the *property* of wanting to promote justice (or to make the child’s life intrinsically better) that does the explanatory work.<sup>21</sup> On some plausible accounts of what a property is, this property might be natural and there might be an adequate description of it that does not depend on normative concepts. Still, as an intentional property, it would not be the property it is apart from the content of the desire, and that content is normative. If a property with normative content has causal and explanatory power, then the normative has such power *in that sense*.

It may be that nothing can, simply qua normative, explain action, as opposed to providing a justification for performing an action of that kind,<sup>22</sup> but it may also be that some actions cannot be explained apart from some essential connection with what is normative qua normative, for instance a connection with something that is the basis of a normative property. If being pleasurable

is what makes an experience intrinsically good in a sense implying the dependence of that kind of goodness on being pleasurable, which is a natural property, it is nonetheless the case that the pleasure also cannot occur without that resultant normative property.<sup>23</sup> It is apparently not a merely contingent truth that a pleasurable experience is (qua pleasurable) intrinsically good. Some causal elements, then, have normative implications as well as causal consequences.

Motivation has psychological roots, and its explanatory power depends on how the intentional states and events in question bring about the actions they motivate. My suggestion is, in effect, that although normative properties, such as being intrinsically good, are not reducible to the natural properties, such as being enjoyable, that are their base, explanations of action by appeal to such normative properties, for instance explaining an action as aimed at promoting the good of others, can be conceived as motivational explanations in a sense that is broadly causal.<sup>24</sup> Given our basic structure—which may be attributed to evolution, divine plan, both, or neither—normative elements in our experience can produce motivation, rather as evidential elements in sensory experience can produce belief.

Thus, the psychological grounds of at least some of our basic motives, like those of at least some of our basic beliefs, have normative significance. To the extent that these two kinds of grounds are normatively significant, action can be subordinated to the good, rather as cognition can be subordinated to the true. But the subordination is not automatic: we may fail to want, or to want strongly enough, what is good, as we may fail to believe, or to believe strongly enough, what our evidence indicates to be true. There is no reason, however, why we *must* fail. Whether we do or not may be seen as partly a matter of how, in governing ourselves, we use our freedom.<sup>25</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> A recent advance in our understanding of motivation, however, has been made by Alfred R. Mele in, e.g., "Motivation: Essentially Motivation-Constituting Attitudes," *Philosophical Review* 104, 3 (1995), pp. 387-423, and "Motivational Strength," *Noûs* 32, 1 (1998), pp. 23-36.

<sup>2</sup> Some philosophers have expressed skepticism about the intelligibility of the notion of the intrinsically good, e.g. Judith Jarvis Thomson in "The Right and the Good," *Journal of Philosophy* XCIV (1997), pp. 273-98. A brief account of intrinsic value and an initial reply to Thomson is found in my "The Axiology of Moral Experience," forthcoming in the *Journal of Ethics*.

<sup>3</sup> I have clarified this wide sense of 'desire' in "The Concept of Wanting," in my *Action, Intention, and Reason* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> In the case where one can just do the thing "basically," without taking any means to it, this instrumental belief normally drops out or is trivial.

<sup>5</sup> This point seems consistent with Mele's 1995 paper cited above.

<sup>6</sup> The relevant notion of a disposition to believe is explicated in my "Dispositional Beliefs and Dispositions to Believe," *Noûs* 28 (1994), 419-434. To see the need to require that the cognitive direction is *suitably* combined with the desire, note that, e.g., it won't do if the agent believes A-ing would achieve a thing desired but not under a description the agent can see applies to that same thing. Believing that buying a painting will help the painter will not motivate me to buy it by connecting the action with my desire to help a friend who is that painter if I have no idea the painting is *by* the friend.

<sup>7</sup> A parallel distinction holds for belief and other propositional attitudes. The distinction is developed and illustrated in Ch. 1 of my *Epistemology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> The nature of intending is highly controversial. In "Intending and Its Place in the Theory of Action," in Ghita Holmstrom-Hintikka and Raimo Tuomela, *Contemporary Action Theory*, vol. 1 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), pp. 177-196, I have defended an account of intending that highlights its motivational properties and cites other treatments of the topic. The same volume contains a related treatment of intending by Myles Brand that considers its connection with action plans; see "Intention and Intentional Action," pp. 197-217; and for a general theory of intention and plans (critically considered by Brand) see Michael E. Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987). For the role and motivational properties of intending in social action see Raimo Tuomela, *The Importance of Us* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> An indirect motivator, such as theft, indicates direct motivation to do something, e.g. steal the jewels, but there is also a different phenomenon, *being indirectly motivated*. This occurs (at least) where one has a desire to A and believes that B-ing is required for one to A but has not formed a desire to B. One may never form such a desire, since one may abandon the desire to A or may A without B-ing or indeed may B, and thereby A, without realizing that one is B-ing and without forming any desire to B.

<sup>10</sup> The relevant connecting relation is *non-transitive*; thus, even if we also believe that strengthening our muscles will conduce to pleasure, we need not in addition believe—as opposed to being disposed to believe—that exercising will conduce to pleasure. This point and related matters are discussed in my "The Structure of Motivation," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 61 (1980), pp. 258-275.

<sup>11</sup> The possibility must exist under normal conditions of human life and not just where, e.g., hypnosis or drugs or brain manipulation induces or can produce motivation.

<sup>12</sup> I refer above all to John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism*, ch. 2. There is a huge literature on hedonism and on Mill's version in particular. For a particularly useful discussion of the plurality of "higher" and "lower" pleasures Mill distinguishes, see Susan L. Feagin, "Mill and Edwards on the Higher Pleasures," *Philosophy* 58 (1983), pp. 244-252. Also valuable are Irwin Goldstein's "Hedonic Pluralism," *Philosophical Studies* 48 (1985),

pp. 49-55 and "Pleasure and Pain: Unconditional, Intrinsic Values," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* L (1989).

<sup>13</sup> I argue for a wider pluralism in ch. 11 of *Moral Knowledge and Ethical Character* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) and in "The Axiology of Moral Experience," forthcoming in *The Journal of Ethics*. In the former, I suggest that only experiences are *intrinsically* good but argue that non-experiences, such as a beautiful painting can be *inherently* good in a sense implying provision of non-instrumental reasons for action. Nothing will turn on my ignoring this distinction here.

<sup>14</sup> Detailed discussion of organicity is provided in ch. 11 of *Moral Knowledge* and carried further (with additional references to relevant literature) in "The Axiology of Moral Experience," cited above.

<sup>15</sup> These positive terms are meant broadly, but the list may still need expansion to cover all the kinds of positive motivation possible here.

<sup>16</sup> Motivational internalism is discussed in detail, and much literature on it cited, in ch. 10 of *Moral Knowledge*. In the course of the chapter most of the points in this paragraph are defended in detail.

<sup>17</sup> I am leaving open that enjoying something may entail wanting to do it for its own sake, though even this seems mistaken, as where one enjoys it for the first time and only *then* comes to want to continue it.

<sup>18</sup> Even here the desire need not be present at *every* moment of enjoyment: witness the case in which one first finds something enjoyable and only then comes to want to continue it. For a contrasting position see Bernard Gert, *Morality*, 2nd. ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press in 1998), esp. chs. 2 and 3; his view is roughly that the only motivational requirements of rationality are negative desires: to avoid the basic evils.

<sup>19</sup> I argue for this in ch. 1 of *Epistemology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> Some of what I have to say is developed in "Ethical Naturalism and the Explanatory Power of Moral Concepts," in *Moral*



<sup>21</sup> This view is defended in “Ethical Naturalism.”

<sup>22</sup> Thus (as argued in my “Ethical Naturalism,” cited above) although governmental injustice may explain a revolt, it does not do so *qua* normative but in virtue of police brutality, seizure of lands, and other ordinary causal factors.

<sup>23</sup> That this ‘cannot’ is necessary and conceptual is argued in *Moral Knowledge*, esp. chs. 3-5.

<sup>24</sup> Such causal explanations may, but need not, be conceived as covering-law explanations.

<sup>25</sup> Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, held in Boston in August of 1998, at Davidson College, and at the State University of New York at Brockport in the Annual Series of its Center for Philosophic Exchange. I benefited from audience discussion in each case and for further comments would like to thank Myles Brand, Joseph Gilbert, Hugh McCann, Alfred Mele, and Raimo Tuomela.