Assessing Feelings

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In a recent paper about his views and mine Allan Gibbard was kind enough to mention the first time we met, in Michigan in 1983. For me that meeting was the beginning of a friendship that I have cherished ever since, and from that time, thirty-five years ago, Gibbard has been a fixed point in my own philosophical life. From the very beginning I admired not only his work, but the whole cast of his mind, and the many years since then have only seen that admiration grow. In dark days when books and papers were pouring off the presses excoriating expressivism I always took comfort from being able to reflect that if a philosopher of Gibbard's stature continued to refine and defend it, then it couldn't be all that bad. I would have felt more oppressed if the criticisms had been directed at Blackburn's expressivism; when they were directed instead at Blackburn and Gibbard's expressivism I slept more easily. So it is a great pleasure and a privilege for me to contribute to this volume, honoring someone I regard as a touchstone of philosophical acumen and imagination.

In the paper I mentioned Gibbard explores, with great delicacy and subtlety, one of the few issues on which he and I appear to diverge.[1] He says, of this divergence, 'My impression is that Blackburn sees no need for this aspect of my views. He doesn't denounce it, as far as I know, though Blackburn knows how to denounce. I wonder whether, on this point, I am the rare fool whom Blackburn suffers gladly'. So let me say at once that I certainly would not dream of denouncing Gibbard's view, and even more certainly do not

[1] Allan Gibbard, 'Improving Sensibilities' in *Passions and Projections, Themes from the Philosophy of Simon Blackburn*, ed. Robert Johnson & Michael Smith, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

regard him as any kind of fool. But as an aside, I want to enter a small plea. I really think I am quite slow to identify anyone as a fool, and even quite good at suffering the few I do so identify gladly. As when dealing with students, I think that I express annoyance only at writings that seem to me not so much foolish—in fact quite often not foolish at all—but instead false to some values I take to be central to the spirit of philosophical enquiry. An enquiry should be an unswervingly honest and cautious attempt to see if a suggested opinion stands up, whether it needs modification, or even rejection. I hope I only get hot under the collar about writings that are too polemical, prejudiced, one-sided, or glib to fit this description, and I cannot imagine Gibbard presenting any such thing, any more than I could imagine other giants, such as David Lewis, doing so.

The divergence that troubles Gibbard concerns a certain kind of psychological dissonance, and the ingredients we need in order to make sense of it. Gibbard's central example was the time in the nineteen-sixties when young men started wearing their hair long, and, he confesses, he felt disapproval, 'but when I asked myself whether anything was really wrong with long hair for men, I answered myself no'. In his later terminology, he felt that his own feelings were not warranted, and to say that a feeling is or is not warranted expresses a special state of mind, which involves what Gibbard calls 'accepting a norm'. The special nature he accords to this state is an aspect of his own views that, he confesses, he finds suspicious, but he doesn't know how to do without it.

The problem is not raised by any old case of expressing a norm, for after all Gibbard's feeling that it was wrong for youths to have long hair is itself a matter of a norm, and if he told a friend of this he would be expressing it. But this is not in itself the problem he is posing. The problem is set rather by cases in which someone has an attitude or a feeling, but is at the same time afraid that the attitude or feeling is not warranted. They are,

as it were, worried about the justice of their own reaction. The difference between us is not, of course, that I don't recognize the phenomenon, nor do I mind saying that the second of the mental states in question involves 'accepting a norm'. The difference is that Gibbard is afraid that it might take what we could call non-Humean ingredients to identify this state of mind, whereas I am more sanguine or more relaxed about it. I might mention in passing that there is a pleasing symmetry about Gibbard wondering whether I treat this too lightly, since I once wondered similarly whether he had helped himself too lightly to materials that enable us expressivists to pass over Frege's abyss, separating the propositional from the purely ejaculatory.[2] I now think that criticism was misjudged. But in each case we have a potential stumbling block in front of the project we share, of giving a naturalistic account of humanity's involvement with normativity.

If it were not for this ambition, then it would be quite easy to describe Gibbard's state, simply by using normative language. Gibbard felt queasy about seeing young men with long hair, but he did not think this state was justified, or right, or warranted or 'fitting' and he feared that there were no good reasons for his discomfort. The philosophers sometimes called 'reasons-primitivists' such as A. C. Ewing, or in the recent scene Tim Scanlon or Derek Parfit have no difficulty in saying that, and in effect stopping there.[3] But on the face of it they are also involved with non-natural, Moorean notions of fittingness, or of a primitive relationship denoted by one thing being a reason for another, and few naturalists are likely to be satisfied with these as useful stopping-points. So the problem becomes one of understanding these locutions and the qualities of states of mind that they serve to express, on a natural basis.

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[2] Simon Blackburn, 'Gibbard on Normative Logic' *Philosophical Issues* vol. 4, 1993, pp. 60–6

[3] A. C. Ewing, *The Definition of Good*, New York: Macmillan, 1947, Tim Scanlon *Being Realistic about Reasons*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014, Derek Parfit *On What Matters*, vols 1–3, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011–17.

There are, of course, different ways of regarding the requirement of naturalism. Writers such as John McDowell or Peter Strawson counsel a relaxed naturalism that has no particular difficulty including the normative elements in our language and our natures, whereas others find it necessary to do some work to understand these.[4] Gibbard and I belong to the second group. I do not regard this as a matter of finding the right definition of naturalism, as if it has a Lockean real essence we should set about finding. Instead I think it is a question of explanatory ambition: just how far back can we start in order to give the most insightful genealogy of our moral natures, or indeed our normative tendencies in general? I return to this below.

Gibbard recognizes that in *Ruling Passions* I addressed this problem, but he may well feel that I prowled around it rather than clearing it up satisfactorily.[5] I mentioned and rejected a simple proposal for a solution, which applied to the present case would have it that on the one hand Gibbard's younger self disliked long hair on young men, but on the other he desired not to have this dislike. This would be the account along lines discussed by Moore and Frankfurt, identifying our values not by means of what we desire, but by what we desire to desire. The main problem I highlighted for this account is posed by the case of Satan, whose sense of the evil he follows and the good he has lost does not issue in desire to change at any level. I thought, however, that some modifications of this idea would put us on the right track. In order to count as being aware of his own evil, Satan, I supposed, would at least *regret* his state, or *rue* the day he fell from his previous state, or in some similar way manifest a split between what he actually desires and what he can 'identify with', where his being unable to identify with his desire would issue in such states of mind as discomfort,

[4] John McDowell, *Mind, Value, and Reality*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998; Peter Strawson *Skepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
[5] Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998, pp. 58–68

irritation with himself, discontent, or even a wish he could have been different, although that wish need not issue in an actual desire, for wishes with counterfactual content typically do not. When our desires appear to ourselves not to be appropriate to their objects there is a disruption of the pleasant harmony between our desires on the one hand, and the sense of their defensibility or propriety on the other, that we like to enjoy.

One aspect of it that I think I hadn't fully recognized at the time is the 'wrong kind of reason' problem, introduced by Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Ronnow-Rasmussen.[6] Here someone may have reasons for wanting to hold onto an attitude, but which are not reasons for supposing the attitude to actually fit its object, or equally she might have reasons for wanting to change an attitude, which are not reasons for supposing the attitude unfitting. There may be threats or rewards surrounding admiring someone, for instance, providing a motive for doing so independent of whether there is anything admirable about them. Or, there may be costs to feeling some way about something arising not from threats or bribes, but in other ways. Gibbard gives the example of someone who feels outrage over bullying, but 'perhaps feeling outrage over bullying doesn't improve the situation; the bullying will go on undiminished however I feel about it and my feelings of outrage about what I can't prevent just depress me'. Here there is a reward in sight for becoming indifferent to bullying, namely freedom from depression, and hence this person might regret his sensitivity to the evils of the world, but still think bullying is abhorrent and deserves outrage. So the challenge remains. Is it possible to delineate more accurately the kind of dissonance involved, using only Humean materials?

Part of the difficulty here may be knowing just what count as Humean materials. Suppose, for instance, the naturalist suggests that holding an attitude to be fitting is a matter

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[6] Wlodek Rabinowicz & Toni Ronnow-Rasmussen, 'The Strike of the Demon', *Ethics* 114, 2004, pp. 391–423.

of identifying yourself with it, and that in turn is a matter of feeling able to stand by it, or defend it, and at the very least feeling no shame or guilt about holding it. In this example the subject may wish he didn't feel so strongly about bullying. But he would not feel ashamed of feeling so strongly about it. Nor would he feel less proud of another, his daughter say, on finding that she shares his abhorrence of bullying. Whereas if she says 'I used to feel like that, but I realize it did no good, and now I just don't care' then his daughter is not really presenting herself in an admirable light, and perhaps he becomes a little less proud of her. Would this be enough for a Humean to solve Gibbard's problem? Perhaps not: pride and shame are themselves moral emotions, so appealing to the special kinds of comfort or discomfort that they signal is, perhaps, ducking the challenge. One can imagine a reasons-primitivist insisting that they in turn signal an awareness of the right reasons in the case, with pride following upon supposing that we are aligned with them (or, in this case, that our daughter is), and shame, the feeling that in some respect we are in an indefensible position, following upon supposing that we are not after all aligned with right reason.

Perhaps so, but just as I have felt bolstered by finding Gibbard standing beside me, so now, I suggest, we might together feel bolstered by the formidable naturalist history standing behind the pair of us. The first element is Humean: we should remember that when Hume turns to moral psychology in Book II of the *Treatise* the very first sentiment that he treats is that of pride. A major support of his thinking about this is due to Adam Smith. Following on from Hume, Smith explores in some detail the mechanisms of internalization, whereby the actual or imagined attitudes of others become the voice of the impartial spectator, the 'man within the breast' whose verdicts on ourselves we have to listen to, sometimes uncomfortably enough.[7] These two give us inroads into the problem of

[7] Adam Smith *The Theory of Moral Sentiments,* Part 1, Section 1, Chapter 4.

dissonance between how we feel on the one hand, and what we feel comfortable or even proud about feeling on the other. Thus, I may feel bitter and resentful on being told that a rival has got some benefit that I had hoped would come to me. But if I am half aware that an impartial spectator would see nothing unjust about this outcome—for the rival deserved it just as much as I did—then I cannot expect others to feel indignation on my behalf (in Smith indignation is the third-person counterpart of private resentment). My resentment then becomes a social orphan, unsupported and unloved. It would be better to be without it. In this way the imagined gaze of the impartial spectator is enough, sometimes, to give us pause. I return to this approach below, in connection with our interests in achieving a common point of view with others.

A further naturalist project in contemporary work is the pragmatist substitution of genealogy for analysis. The idea is that a naturalist agenda can be pursued not by traditional 'reductions', seeking to analyze apparently awkward customers into naturalistically respectable components, but by advancing accounts of how creatures such as ourselves, starting with an intelligible endowment of mental states, and having typical human problems to solve, might be expected to end up talking, thinking, or feeling as we do. A paradigm of such an account is Hume's own treatment of the emergence of conventions, whereby self-interested creatures such as ourselves, anxious only to secure benefits and avoid threats and costs, might naturally evolve the combinations of restraints and expectations that follow upon the arrival of conventions—including those conventions governing such institutions as language, money, property, promises, law and government. [8] These accounts creep up on the

[8] David Hume *Treatise*, III, 2, 2; *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix 3. Hume's is of course a "bunking" genealogy, fitted to produce increased confidence in what we have done and what we have become. It contrasts with the more familiar "debunking" genealogies associated with Nietzsche. But for a more nuanced view of Nietzsche's overall

complexity of the normative way of thinking, in ways taking off from relatively simple interactions, such as tit-for-tat behaviours, that could be found amongst non-linguistic or proto-linguistic communities. Expressivism is of course itself an example of this kind of naturalism in action. Deflationist views about truth are of the same kind.

Again, we need to be careful about the naturalistic credentials, and such approaches face two kinds of hurdle. The first is that the starting-point for the stories they sketch should be free of whatever problems made the story desirable in the first place. The second is that there should be no saltations or incredible jumps in the imagined evolution. Applied to morality this means that moral commitments must not be felt to belong to an especially spooky area of knowledge, in danger of requiring transactions with non-natural properties and relations. There should be nothing similarly spooky in the psychological starting point, and no jump from the natural to anything non-natural at the endpoint. This is certainly the intent of Hume or Smith's forays into moral psychology. [9]

Returning to Gibbard's challenge, I think we should first notice that the *kind* of dissonance involved seems to go far beyond cases with a peculiarly moral flavor. For in fact, almost across the board, whenever we enter a verdict on the basis of a personal feeling or attitude, we seem capable of checking ourselves, either wondering whether we are wrong, so that our verdict is not the one justified by the case, or fearing that it is even *likely* to be wrong, so that we ought to some extent to discount our own reaction. Here are some examples.

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work, see Matthieu Queloz, 'Nietzsche's Pragmatic Genealogy of Justice', *The British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 2017, pp. 1–23.

[9] 'Normativity' arrives on the scene with positions being ones that attract social approval and disapproval, expressed through sanctions: 'when a man says he promises anything he in effect expresses a resolution of performing it; and along with that, by making use of this form of words, subjects himself to the penalty of never being trusted again in case of failure.' Hume, *Treatise* III, ii, vi, p. 522.

X sees the cloth as brown, but is unsure whether it is actually brown, since the artificial light has a sodium tinge.

X hears the music as a jumble of notes, but is unsure whether it is a melody he is failing to catch.

X was not herself bored by the play, but fears that it might have been boring, because she knows her interest was sustained by the fact that her daughter was acting in it.

X does not himself enjoy the wine, but can tell that it may be excellent. He is a jaded connoisseur, who knows his wine, but has lost his appetite for it.

X finds Y somewhat creepy, but suspects he may be perfectly likeable, and just has an awkward manner.

X enjoys the paintings of Renoir, but has been led to worry whether they are too easy and sentimental.

We could go on indefinitely. In none of these cases is there a direct question of a moral judgment at stake. But there is a possibility, which X might cheerfully or ruefully accept, of herself being deficient, or the circumstances in which they have been exposed to the object of their feeling, being "off" in some way, either making them reluctant to advance their own judgment as authoritative or significant, or meaning that their opinion is to be discounted if they are not so reluctant. Either they themselves are suffering some disadvantage, or perhaps the situation is not one in which we expect judgment to be reliable. As Hume remarked in his great essay on the topic,

> A man in a fever would not insist on his palate as able to decide concerning flavours; nor would one, affected with the jaundice, pretend to give a verdict with regard to colours. In each creature, there is a sound and a defective state; and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of a taste and sentiment. [10]

Together with this there are better and worse situations for judgment. We do not or should not trust our own judgment if the light is bad, the theatre is hot, the concert hall is noisy, and so on, and we will discount the verdicts of others when we learn of inappropriate circumstances in which they made their judgment. But furthermore we may not be sure that

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[10] 'Of the Standard of Taste', *Essays Moral, Political and Literary,* ed. Eugene F. Miller, Indianapolis: The Liberty Fund, Part I, Essay 23, p. 233–4

we were in a sound state—perhaps the day's events were preying on our minds, perhaps if we revisited the matter after a good night's sleep we would feel entirely different. So we worry about whether our judgment was trustworthy. Importantly as well, the good critic must clear his mind of particular personal prejudices. A critic who cannot do this

> never sufficiently enlarges his comprehension, or forgets his interest as a friend or enemy, as a rival or commentator. By this means, his sentiments are perverted; nor have the same beauties and blemishes the same influence upon him, as if he had imposed a proper violence on his imagination, and had forgotten himself for a moment. So far his taste evidently departs from the true standard; and of consequence loses all credit and authority.[11]

Why do we have these practices? Why do we hold our reactions of the moment subject to potential failure and revision? In questions of taste a large part of the explanation is going to be that in conversation, while we may or may not be interested in how a particular individual responded to something, it is seldom that our interest is confined to that. When someone tells us something our normal concern is what *we ourselves* are to think about it and typically this is expected to be what *we together* are to think about it. Simply by asserting that something is so, they are, as Brandom puts it, in the game of giving and asking for reasons.[12] So if, to take the first example, someone tells us that the cloth is brown we may be set to act upon what they say, and this would set us up for disappointment in one project or another if in fact (which implies in normal daylight) the cloth is not brown, but, for instance red. Things would not turn out as we had expected or hoped they would. The informant's excuse that it looked brown to him may go some way to exonerating him, but if he adds that of course the light was not at all standard then we may reasonably feel that he should have been more careful. In short the public expression of a reaction does not only answer to the sincerity of the informant. It is telling people what they may expect to think or

[11] Ibid, 23, Miller p. 238

[12] R. Brandom, *Making it Explicit*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994

what they *are to* think about something, and this purpose will be ill-served by the fact that *I,* the informant, felt something, if in addition it seems likely that for internal or external reasons, I was in a poor position to judge.

This explanation of our practice is pragmatic in spirit. It identifies coming to judgments about things as a 'common pursuit'.[13] This should not however be misunderstood. It might sound as if success is achieved (we score a goal in the game of giving and asking for reasons) if our verdict is accepted, for instance by enough of our peers. But our practice goes beyond trying to come to an agreement, or trying to come to solidarity with others, to use Rorty's phrase.[14] In a world permeated by the madness of crowds, solidarity with crowds is scarcely a goal. Our aim is to have a properly grounded view, or in other words to search for truth rather than agreement. Rorty parses this as the hope of being justified not just to a present audience but to an imagined future audience. But if so, the future audience needs to merit its status as a superior or more authoritative arbiter (it is no skin off my nose if I cannot justify myself to future persons who are ignorant or incapable). It is, of course, not easy to know how to think about superiority, authority, or truth, in aesthetic matters, since variation of taste and judgment is such a pervasive fact of life, and scepticism about the pretensions of the connoisseur is not uncommon. But even in the face of such divergence, there is the hope for opinion that can be 'assimilated, validated, corroborated and verified', to use William James's phrase.[15]

Following Hume we can approach this by reflecting on the merits that make someone worth listening to on his subject. After many illustrations Hume hits on the

[13] The phrase comes from T. S. Eliot, who defined literary criticism as 'the common pursuit of true judgment'. The phrase was later used as the title of a book by the formidable literary critic F. R. Leavis.
[14] Richard Rorty, 'Solidarity or Objectivity' in his collection *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*, Cambridge: Caambridge University Press, 1990.
[15] William James *Pragmatism*, New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907, p. 197.

necessary qualities for the critic whose verdicts can be assimilated, corroborated, validated and verified:

> 'Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty.'[16]

The rest of us, lacking these credentials, may have our feelings and indeed express them. But we stand to be corrected. If our sentiments are not delicate then we miss things others find to matter; if we are coming to some kind of work with no practice or have no suitable comparison class in our repertoire then we literally don't know what we are talking about; and if we are apparently biased by other prejudice then we forfeit authority. If we insist on asking *why* this character alone entitles the critic to being someone worth listening to, then pragmatism comes to the rescue (for it would be tossing in the sponge just to say that these virtues are indicators of aesthetic truth). The good critic can show us things we had otherwise missed, enable us to place works in their traditions, to come to understand what is more satisfying and permanently satisfying, and thereby increase our enjoyment. Virtue, here as everywhere else in Hume denotes a quality of mind whereby a person is 'useful or agreeable to himself or others' and when a critic meets Hume's criteria, this is what we find her to be.

The genealogy of our own capacity for worrying about our own reactions is now apparent. If people act upon my having told them that something was brown, or boring, or disgusting or enjoyable and not only fail to find them so, but also fail to find anything commonly supposed to put such a reaction in place, then I will be put in a metaphorical dock. I will lose status; people may start to whisper behind my back. I am deemed to be

[16] Hume, ibid, 23, Miller p. 241

unreliable, and) that is a serious criticism. I hope I am not risking it, and may revolve in my mind the chances that I am.

It is, I think, worth remarking that just as Peirce and James approach the problem of truth in general by asking about the '*particular go of it*', or in other words the human practices of enquiry and the satisfaction of doubt, so Hume approaches aesthetic truth by reflecting on the discriminations and practices that, in this area, constitute enquiry. We may start by being suspicious of any abstract conception of 'the truth' in matters of taste, or even in ethics. But we all happily deploy the difference between those who know what they are talking about and those who do not, those who are practised and those who are not, and those from whom we can learn and those from whom we cannot. [17]

There are also cases in which we care little about achieving a common point of view. Kant thought that this was typically so with pleasures of the palate, where there is only sensation and no real imaginative involvement.[18] I can express my delight at chocolate ice-cream without caring whether you have the same taste (although even here there are shadows of a desire for solidarity. If you do not share at least some of my tastes, then we are not going to get along very well). If I go round an art gallery with my wife, the afternoon will be enjoyable enough if we find ourselves having similar reactions to paintings, and we may not care very much whether one of Hume's sensible critics would feel and think differently. There are also limits to our worries about superior audiences to whom we may be unable to justify ourselves. We can, I suppose, play with the idea of a superior musical culture that finds the work of Mozart simplistic or jejune, but it need not affect our enjoyment, nor our

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[17] This summarizes a longer treatment in Simon Blackburn *On Truth*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

[18] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment* trans. Werner Pluhar & Mary Gregor, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987. Book I, part 3, p. 47.

sense that our enjoyment is well enough grounded. The thought that our standards are *our* standards does not undermine the practices of criticism.

If all this is so with aesthic feelings and attitudes, it is even more so when we returning to the moral case, for here feelings and attitudes matter more and have more direct expressions in action. It need not matter all that much to me if some third party goes on admiring Renoir when I find him sentimental. But it will worry me more when our plans conflict, or when the practice of the other strikes me as boorish or depraved, indecent or dishonest. Hume talked of achieving a "common point of view", so, for instance, we can abstract from our own involvement in a state of affairs and disinterestedly contemplate the features of whatever we are judging. This enables us to take up attitudes to people in history, or even fiction, where our own interests are absent. This search for a common point of view is the essential ingredient in a Humean attack on Gibbard's problem, for it is this that separates simple likes, dislikes, and preferences from the more reflective and disinterested states of mind that underlie public approval and disapproval.

> When a man denominates another his *enemy*, his *rival*, his *antagonist*, his *adversary*, he is understood to speak the language of self-love, and to express sentiments, peculiar to himself, and arising from his particular circumstances and situation. But when he bestows on any man the epithets of *vicious* or *odious* or *depraved*, he then speaks another language, and expresses sentiments, in which, he expects, all his audience are to concur with him.[19]

It was an inability to make the same transition that was a crippling disqualification in a prejudiced critic, above.[20]

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[19] Hume, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* ed. Selby Bigge, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 9.6, p. 272–3.

[20] There has been much discussion of exactly how Hume thought of the common or general point of view, and how it relates to Adam Smith, and indeed to subsequent utilitarianism. A seminal paper is Geoff Sayre-McCord "On Why Hume's 'General Point of View' isn't Ideal—and Shouldn't be,' *Social Philosophy & Policy*, volume 11, number 1 (Winter 1994), pp. 202-228.

It is quite possible to imagine people lacking the capacity, or more likely having it only to a limited degree. In fact, Hume himself thought that some people were primitive in this respect. Like the wanton, they would be unable to stand back and ask whether they need to discount their personal prejudices and defects in the interest of a 'common pursuit'. Indeed he thought it was quite difficult for any of us to manage this when we are faced with serious emotional blocks in front of doing so. Allowing that our enemy has a musical voice may be one step too many for some people, and parents are notoriously slow to admit their childrens' deficiencies.

I believe that once we have the idea of a common point of view, or the common pursuit of true judgment, the 'right reasons' problem largely solves itself. The right reasons for a verdict are just those features of a subject matter that can be advanced in a common pursuit: the ones that do not appeal only to individual peculiarities of prejudice or motivation or that only appear in certain circumstances. We can advance a feature such as her cheerfulness for calling someone an admirable mother, because we expect all unprejudiced audiences to find such a trait useful and agreeable to the subject herself, to her children, and to others. We cannot, or should not find the fact that a tyrant bestows wealth on those who admire her as a mother, and punishments on those who do not, as a reason for supposing her admirable, since it has not located any useful or agreeable trait that she possesses. And in any case the tyrant's bribe or threat is only likely to result in lip-service. If a tyrant tries to bribe or coerce us into admiring a person who is quite the reverse of admirable, we may manage to behave as if we do, but as with Pascal's wager it would take a whole sea-change for us to find ourselves doing so. Similar remarks apply across the whole field of gerundively-laced descriptions: there are specific features that need to be cited if we

are to defend a verdict that something is exciting, boring, delicate, enjoyable, creepy, and so on.

Do naturalists need to dig deeper than this? In the case of morals, much more than that of taste, it seems fairly straightforward to sketch a story. Animals evolve social natures when they need to coordinate, in hunting or managing a territory or just practicing skills as they grow. Wherever there is coordination, there is the possibility of defection, or public nuisance, and wherever this is so there is space for aggression against such nuisance. A famous example of this is the 'canid bow', which is the signal whereby a dog signifies that it is willing to play; among packs of wild dogs, such as the Westen coyote, a dog that gives such a signal, but then takes advantage of its victim being off-guard to attack it, is shunned and in effect expelled from the pack. We have here the first signs of convention, of the will of the collective to enforce accordance with it, and of the internalization of the criticisms we know that defection and nuisance will bring down on us. Gibbard himself has written brilliantly about the social function of guilt in the face of anticipated anger.

So if I say that some male should be ashamed because they have let their hair grow, then outside of some special context, (such as it being likely to be caught in the machinery they operate) I am criticizing them unjustly. I am probably supposing that increased vigilance will discover hidden vices or flaws in them, but very likely I would be wrong about that. I will feel uncomfortable if I fear that I risk being in that position, just as I might feel uncomfortable and ashamed at having committed many another social gaffe, or even having risked doing so, for example by having made a significantly off-colour remark which fortunately went unheard.

I hope that these considerations take away the threat of there being inexplicable jumps in the journey from reactions such as desire or aversion towards judgments of good

or bad, right or wrong. But the other naturalistic concern is the starting point of the genealogy. Have we smuggled naturalistically suspect materials into the very starting point of the account?

I think the only way to turn this worry into a criticism would be to complain that all psychological ascriptions involve us in 'the space of reasons', and hence in 'normative governance'. So even a starting point that makes use of our foresight, or prudence, or desires or beliefs of any kind at all is starting, as it were, too far up. This is why in his fine and unjustly neglected book *Lingistic Behaviour* Jonathan Bennett took us back to primitive goals and registrations as features of quite simple animal life that nevertheless underpin more complicated cognitive states, such as desires and beliefs.[21] Here I have no space to do more than commend Bennett's approach, as one that brings intentionality in general into the sphere of the natural.

To finish with I shall venture a remark about reasons and the naturalistic attempt to do better than 'reasons-primitivism'. The basic phenomenon is our habit of saying that A is a reason for B. I hold that we say this to express an attitude (Gibbard might say, a plan) of approval for a cast of mind that taking in A, is disposed to be guided towards B. The range of the relation might include almost any mental state: desires, attitudes, plans or beliefs. The domain of the relation includes beliefs, but not only beliefs, since experiences and events can also initiate admirable movements of the mind towards a conclusion. Amongst the central examples of events that give people reasons for beliefs are observations. A person who has been and looked and seen the eggs in the fridge has reason for believing that there are eggs in the fridge; a person who for some unaccountable reason is deluded into thinking that he has been and looked has less reason, and in one good sense has no reason at all. In this sense

[21] Jonathan Bennett, *Linguistic Behaviour*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, Chapter 2.

reasons include causes and an unfortunate implication of Sellars's distinction between things that do, versus things that do not, belong to the space of reasons is the implication that these spaces are entirely disjoint. This makes nonsense of the very notion of observation. Making an observation is putting yourself in line for a causal impact from a state of affairs, and provided the causal impact is one that can be expected if, but only if, the state of affairs obtains, it is a very good way of acquiring a reason for believing in the state of affairs. [22]

Then the same things can be said about the attitude of accepting one thing as a reason for another as we said above about verdicts and judgments in general: finding yourself disposed to react to A by moving towards B is one thing; being prepared to commend this movement publicly is something else. When we think we have been run away with by our hopes and fears, or manipulated or seduced by the salesman, these come apart. We can be as comfortable, or uncomfortable, with out own tendencies and responses in this respect as in all the others I have been describing.

So my position is that Gibbard was absolutely right to insist that there is something special about our capacity for normative governance, but had no need to fear that what was special about it also took it out of the range of a Humean psychology.

I am sure Gibbard has long got over his discomfort with long haired youths, and I concur with him in thinking that he had no reason for this discomfort. But I also think that it was at least excusable to be infected by the censorious attitudes more commonly found in the far away days when we were both young.

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[22] I expanded this point, directing it against coherentists such as Davidson, in 'Pragmatism: All or Some?" in H. Price (ed) *Expressivism, Pragmatism and Representationalism* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 67–84.