12.2   Moral Reasons

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Summary

How are moral reasons to be integrated into empirical psychology? The answer depends on our views about both morality and reasons for action. As regards morality, there is disagreement about whether we should be Rationalists or Antirationalists, and hence about whether one mark of the moral is that moral requirements entail reasons for action. As regards reasons for action, although it is widely agreed that we have a reason to do what we would be motivated to do if we deliberated well, there is disagreement about what it is to deliberate well. Should we be Humeans about deliberating well or Reasons Primitivists, or Constitutivists? The main difference between these views lies in their accounts of the rational evaluation of intrinsic desires. Psychologists who talk about moral reasons and the philosophers who collaborate with them therefore need to be clear about which of these assumptions they are making in their research.

1.   Different Views about Morality, Reasons for Action, and Their Relationship

Moral reasons must in some way be integrated into empirical psychology, but the manner of their integration will depend in large part on which of the competing philosophical views about morality and reasons for action we should accept. Our views about morality will depend on what we think moral knowledge is knowledge of, and hence on whether we think that basic moral facts are knowable a priori. Our views about reasons for action will depend on our understanding of the constitutive norms governing belief and desire, and hence on our understanding of the functional roles that these states play, where their playing these roles is what makes them the psychological states that they are. Unfortunately, few views about these matters are uncontroversial, so how should we proceed?

At a minimum, psychologists should be explicit about which of the controversial views concerning these matters their theories and hypotheses assume, and this in turn suggests that they should engage with philosophers who can help them navigate the conceptual minefields. To make clear the nature of these conceptual minefields, this chapter will describe two views about morality—*Rationalism* and *Antirationalism*—and three views about reasons for action—*Humeanism* and two anti-Humean views: *Reasons Primitivism* and *Constitutivism*—and consider how these views are to be combined with each other. Some criticisms will be offered, but since these criticisms are themselves controversial, readers will be left to judge the overall merits of the views for themselves.

2.   Morality

Let's begin by getting clear about the nature of morality. What is the mark of moral principles?

Moral principles are practical principles that tell us, *inter alia*, what we ought to do. Although there is disagreement about their substance, it is more or less universally acknowledged that the mark of moral principles—that is, what distinguishes them from practical principles of other kinds like aesthetic principles, principles of etiquette, and rules of games—is, *inter alia*, that they are principles of *impartial* conduct (Gauthier, 1986; Hare, 1981; Scanlon, 1982). Put slightly differently, the moral viewpoint is the viewpoint we adopt when we think of ourselves as just one among many, each of whom is to be accorded the same consideration as everyone else. It is in this sense that moral principles tell us that we ought to treat each other, ourselves included, impartially, under some interpretation of what it is to treat each other impartially.

Disagreement about the substance of morality, so understood, is disagreement about either the scope of principles of impartial treatment or the conception of impartiality. Perhaps we're required to treat impartially *all sentient beings*, or *all rational agents*, or *all those to whom we can justify our conduct*, or all of the members of some other group of which we are members. Answering this question about the scope of principles of impartial

treatment requires us to give an account of which of the many kinds of which we are members is the kind in virtue of which we are owed impartial treatment. The idea that moral principles are by nature impartial leaves this open.

Similarly, the idea that moral principles are by nature impartial leaves it open whether treating each other impartially requires us to give the similar interests of each the same weight in decisions about how we act so as to promote, as best we can, the welfare of all; to act in ways that leave people free to choose how to live on condition that they leave others similarly free; or to be able to justify our conduct to each of the parties affected by our conduct. The idea that moral principles are by nature impartial is thus consistent with utilitarianism, deontology, and contractualism and no doubt with many other candidate moral views too.

If the mark of moral principles is, *inter alia*, that they are principles telling us to act impartially, then what is ruled out? What is ruled out is the idea that moral principles might tell us, at the most fundamental level, that certain individuals count more than others simply in virtue of being the individuals that they are. It is thus a conceptual confusion to suppose that *our* welfare, *our* freedom, or *our* recognition by others counts for more morally than that of others simply because it is ours. Egoism in all its forms is thus a nonmoral view par excellence. It should therefore come as no surprise that the paradigmatic immoral person is someone who is utterly selfish.

In this respect, moral principles stand in stark contrast to principles of epistemic and practical rationality—these are the constitutive norms governing belief and desire mentioned earlier—at least on the conception of such principles we have inherited from Hume (1739–1740/1969). This is important because, as we will see shortly, it is widely agreed that there is a tight connection between reasons for action and how we would be motivated to act if our motivations conformed to principles of epistemic and practical rationality. The stark contrast between moral principles and Humean conceptions of epistemic and practical *rationality* thus suggests a stark contrast between moral principles and Humean conceptions of *reasons for action*.

3.   Humeanism about Reasons for Action

According to Humeans, principles of epistemic rationality specify how we ought to form our beliefs in response to the evidence available *to us*, and practical principles specify how we ought to be motivated given *our* intrinsic

desires for different outcomes, which may vary in their strength, and our beliefs about which of *our* options satisfy these intrinsic desires—let's call these *instrumental beliefs*—where these may vary in their associated confidence levels. People are thus epistemically and practically rational, according to Humeans, to the extent that they have and exercise the capacity to form beliefs and be motivated in ways that conform to these principles, principles that are themselves thoroughly self-referential.

Note that Humean principles of practical rationality provide us with a way of assessing the rationality of agents' *motivations* in the light of whatever intrinsic desires and instrumental beliefs they happen to have and that Humean principles of epistemic rationality provide us with a way of assessing the rationality of agents' *beliefs* in the light of the evidence available to them. Insofar as attempts have been made to codify these Humean principles of epistemic and practical rationality, the codification has come in the form of the probability calculus as a way of modeling rational belief revision and expected utility as a way of modeling rational decision making.

Importantly, this means that the Humean view that there are no principles in terms of which we can assess the rationality of an agent's intrinsic desires has itself leaked all the way into theoretical psychology. This is not surprising given the very different understandings of intrinsic desires, on the one hand, and beliefs, on the other, we have inherited from Hume—understandings that have become part of common sense. Although intrinsic desires and beliefs both have representational content, Hume thought that intrinsic desires are unlike beliefs in not representing anything to be the case. Instead, they represent a way the world could be associated with positive affect, or a way that we would be disposed to make the world if we believed we had the option to make it that way. Moreover, Hume thought it followed from this that intrinsic desires are unlike beliefs in another respect as well, namely, in not being sensitive to evidence of truth and falsehood, and so in not being assessable for their reasonableness. This is why Humeans deny that there are any principles in terms of which we can assess the rationality of intrinsic desires.

According to Humeans, intrinsic desires thus stand in stark contrast not just to beliefs but also to instrumental desires, which they take to be amalgams of intrinsic desires and instrumental beliefs, amalgams that are apt to cause action. Since the instrumental beliefs that partially constitute instrumental desires are sensitive to evidence of truth and falsehood about the nature of the possible worlds in which we pursue our options, Humeans think

that the instrumental desires thus partially constituted are also sensitive to evidence of truth and falsehood, and hence assessable for their reasonableness. This is a big difference between instrumental desires and intrinsic desires, but it is a difference explained by the fact that Humeans think that the former are, whereas the latter are not, amalgams partially constituted by beliefs.

We have focused on Humean conceptions of epistemic and practical rationality because, as signaled earlier, on many views of reasons for action, both Humean and anti-Humean, there is an intimate connection between the reasons for action agents have and the principles of epistemic and practical rationality to which they are subject. This is because of a platitude about reasons for action. Reasons for action are those considerations that would motivate us to act if we were to deliberate well, where deliberating well is a matter of our meeting three conditions: first, our beliefs must conform to all principles of epistemic rationality; second, our motivations must conform to all principles of practical rationality; and third, our beliefs and motivations must conform to these principles in circumstances in which the world is maximally and reliably revealed to us, that is, in circumstances in which we can be certain about everything that's relevant to the formation of our beliefs and resultant motivations (Korsgaard, 1986; Williams, 1981).

Note that this platitude about reasons for action helps us understand the often-made distinction between *subjective* and *objective* reasons for action (Sepielli, 2018). Objective reasons for action are those considerations that meet all three conditions just mentioned, whereas subjective reasons for action are those considerations that meet just the first two conditions. Subjective reasons for action are thus relative to the available evidence, where that evidence may be misleading. Objective reasons for action, by contrast, are relative to the facts. The platitude also helps us to understand the commonsense distinction between what there is *some* reason to do and what there is *most* reason to do. Since agents may have multiple motivations, some weaker and others stronger, it follows that they have *some* reason to do whatever they would have some motivation to do if they deliberated well, where that motivation may be weak or strong, and that they have *most* reason to do whatever they would be most strongly motivated to do if they deliberated well.

We are now in a position to see that what gets codified in expected utility conceptions of rational decision making is the Humean's conception of what we have *most subjective* reason to do. In what follows, we will mostly ignore such reasons and focus on what we have *some objective* reason to do, as this focus will make it easier for us to see the contrast between Humean conceptions of reasons for action and moral requirements. Unless flagged otherwise, all talk of reasons for action in the remainder should therefore be understood accordingly. How do Humeans think about such reasons? They think we have (some objective) reason to do each of the things that we would have some motivation to do if we were to deliberate well on the basis of the facts about what would satisfy our various intrinsic desires (Schroeder, 2007; Williams, 1981).

One immediate consequence of this Humean view of reasons for action is that, in certain circumstances, there are some people who have no reason at all to act in accordance with moral principles. Imagine someone utterly selfish whose only intrinsic desire is to promote his own welfare. In circumstances in which the evidence reveals to him that his own welfare won't be promoted by his acting impartially, under any conception of impartiality, he will violate no principle of epistemic or practical rationality by having no motivation to so act. According to Humeans, he therefore has no reason to act impartially. Whether people have a reason to act impartially will therefore depend entirely on what intrinsic desires they happen to have and whether their acting impartially will lead to the satisfaction of one of these desires.

4. Rationalism versus Antirationalism about Moral Reasons for Action

Is this an objection to the Humeans' view of reasons for action, and hence to their conception of principles of practical rationality? Not necessarily.

I said at the outset that we will consider two views of morality. One of these views is Rationalism, the view that if there are any moral requirements, then the basic requirements are knowable a priori and entail corresponding reasons for action (Kant, 1785/1948). The other view is Antirationalism, which is just the denial of Rationalism (Brink, 1989; Railton, 1986). If Rationalism is true, and if those who have no intrinsic desires that would be served by their acting impartially are nonetheless subject to moral requirements, then this is a decisive objection to the Humean view of reasons for action. But if Antirationalism is true, it is no objection at all.

Moreover, at first sight, there seems to be nothing implausible about Antirationalism. Consider norms of other kinds. People can be subject to rules of games—"Thoroughly shuffle the deck before dealing the cards in poker"—and social rules like requirements of etiquette—"Reply in the third person to an invitation sent in the third person"—without having any reason at all to

conform to these rules or requirements (Foot, 1978). A magician who has been secretly hired to entertain the other players with their card tricks need have no reason at all to shuffle the cards when playing poker, and a maverick who receives an invitation written in the third person need have no reason at all to reply in the third person. Since the basic requirements of poker and etiquette can change over time, knowledge of such requirements also seems to be a posteriori knowledge par excellence, not a priori knowledge. Antirationalists are therefore within their rights to ask why we should suppose that requirements of morality are any different.

How will Humeans who are Antirationalists think about moral reasons? They will think that people have moral reasons only contingently, and they will think that they have them in virtue of having some intrinsic desire that would be served by their acting impartially in the sense of "impartiality" picked out by the correct conception of morality. Humean Antirationalists may disagree among themselves about what the empirical facts are that make a conception of morality the correct conception. However, they will all agree that in circumstances in which people have no such intrinsic desires, they have no moral reasons.

Note that Humean Antirationalists needn't deny that some people will have moral reasons more robustly than others. For example, those who happen to have an intrinsic desire to act in accordance with moral requirements will have moral reasons even when their acting in accordance with such requirements doesn't serve any other intrinsic desire they happen to have, whereas those who lack such a morally loaded intrinsic desire will only have reasons to act impartially when they do have some other such intrinsic desire. But even those who have morally loaded intrinsic desires, and so have moral reasons robustly, will still only have such reasons contingently, as they wouldn't have had such reasons if they hadn't had an intrinsic desire to act in accordance with moral requirements.

5. The Problem with Humean Antirationalism about Moral Reasons

How plausible is Humean Antirationalism about moral reasons? The main attraction of this view is its modesty.

As regards psychology, Humean Antirationalism about moral reasons assumes only easily understandable conceptions of belief and desire, ideas that have been codified in the probability calculus and expected utility conceptions of rational decision making, and as regards norms, it assumes that moral requirements are no different from

other, more familiar norms like rules of games and social rules like requirements of etiquette. If we are to reject Humean Antirationalism, then moral requirements must be very different from these other norms, and belief and desire must be rather different from the way they're ordinarily taken to be.

Rationalists think that moral requirements are indeed very different. The problem, as they see things, is that Humean Antirationalism cannot be squared with the conditions under which we hold people morally responsible. Let's begin with people's responsibility for having knowledge of basic moral facts. We assume that such knowledge is within the grasp of anyone with normal powers of reasoning independently of where or when they grew up. In this respect, it is more like knowledge of basic mathematical facts. Although this doesn't entail that basic moral facts are, like mathematic facts, knowable a priori, it does rule out many of the obvious empirical alternatives. For example, if we assume that intelligent extraterrestrials would have knowledge of basic moral facts, as it seems we do, then that rules out moral facts being empirical facts that are peculiar to human beings or to life on Earth.

Now consider people's responsibility to act in accordance with moral requirements. When people fail to act in accordance with a moral requirement, we take them to be fit candidates for blame if they don't have an exemption or an excuse. Exemptions include the fact that they lack the normal powers of reasoning required to have knowledge of basic moral requirements—perhaps they are infants or insane—and excuses include their being nonculpably ignorant of the fact that the circumstances that they find themselves in are circumstances in which the moral requirement applies to them.

Importantly, however, someone's lacking any intrinsic desire that would be served by their acting in accordance with a moral requirement is neither an exemption nor an excuse. Imagine an immensely callous person who fails to help someone in need when their helping them is morally required. The fact that they don't care is neither an excuse nor an exemption for their failure to help. Those who fail to act in accordance with a moral requirement simply because they lack any desire that would be served by their doing so are therefore blameworthy. The question is whether this can be squared with the Humean's conception of moral reasons.

There is a difficulty here, as it seems that someone couldn't be blameworthy for failing to help if they had no reason to help (Darwall, 2006; Portmore, 2011). They couldn't be blameworthy because it would be completely unreasonable to expect anyone to do something

that they have no reason to do. Someone's being a fit candidate for blame thus seems to presuppose that there was at least some reason for them to do what they're blameworthy for failing to do. Indeed, it seems to presuppose something much stronger, namely, that there was a decisive reason for them to do what it would be fit to blame them for failing to do. Someone's failing to act in accordance with a moral requirement is in this respect very different from their failing to act in accordance with the rules of a game or with requirements of etiquette.

Failures to abide by rules of games or requirements of etiquette do not in general imply that violators are fit candidates for blame, as the examples given earlier amply illustrate. Of course, blame is appropriate in such cases if the violation of the rule of the game or the requirement of etiquette is, in the circumstances, also the violation of a moral requirement. But that just reinforces the point that there is an important difference between moral requirements and other norms like rules of games and requirements of etiquette, and that the difference lies in the fact that moral requirements do, whereas rules of games and requirements of etiquette do not, entail reasons for action.

Here, then, lies the problem with the Humean conception of moral reasons. According to Humeans, those who lack intrinsic desires that would be served by their acting in accordance with a moral requirement have no reason at all to so act, but this cannot be squared with the conditions under which we hold people morally responsible. This is because, on the one hand, we don't blame people for acting in ways that they have no reason to act, while on the other, we do blame them for failing to act in accordance with moral requirements, absent an excuse or an exemption, where lacking an intrinsic desire that would be served by their so acting is neither. Something has to give, and it appears to be the Humeans' view of reasons for action. But what is the alternative to the Humeans' view?

Let's return to the platitude about reasons for action. It tells us that people have reason to do what they would be motivated to do if they deliberated well. Where Humeans seem to go wrong is in their conception of what it is to deliberate well, particularly in their view that there are no principles of practical rationality in terms of which we can assess an agent's intrinsic desires. But Humeans are surely right that intrinsic desires don't themselves represent anything to be the case but instead represent things as being either a way things could be that is associated with positive affect or a way that we would be disposed to make them if we believed that we

had the option of doing so. If they aren't truth-assessable, then how can there be principles of practical rationality in terms of which we can assess their rationality? We will consider two answers Anti-Humeans have given to this question, a radical answer and a not-so-radical answer. Only the radical answer requires us to reject the Humeans' conception of intrinsic desire.

6. Reasons Primitivism about Reasons for Action

According to Reasons Primitivists, Humeans go wrong at the very beginning (Parfit, 2011; Scanlon, 2013). At the most fundamental level, the considerations that support the truth of our beliefs do so because they *count in favor* of believing, where counting in favor is a *primitive* relation that considerations stand in to states of believing, a relation that is not further analyzable in terms of being truth-supporting. If we ask what it is for considerations to count in favor of believing, Reasons Primitivists tell us that all we can say is that it is for them to provide reasons, and if we ask what it is for considerations to provide reasons, they tell us that it is for them to count in favor.

Of course, Reasons Primitivists don't deny that the considerations that count in favor of believing support the truth of what's believed. What they deny is just that we could analyze the reason-relation in terms of truth-supportingness. In their view, it is a substantive truth about a certain class of reasons, reasons for belief, that they are truth-supporting. We cannot turn this into an analysis of the reason-relation, they say, because not all of the considerations that count in favor of psychological states for which reasons can be given—call these *judgment-sensitive attitudes*—are truth-supporting considerations. The judgment-sensitive attitudes include not just believing but also intrinsically desiring, intending, trusting, admiring, fearing, and so on. Although the considerations that count in favor of believing support the truth of what's believed, the considerations that count in favor of intrinsically desiring, admiring, and trusting don't count in favor of the truth of what's intrinsically desired, what's admired, and what's trusted. Reasons for beliefs are thus outliers in this group.

Reasons Primitivists thus recommend radical alternatives to the Humeans' principles of epistemic and practical rationality. In their view, ideally rational people are those whose beliefs and intrinsic desires—and their intentions, attitudes of trust, feelings of admiration, and so forth—come and go to the extent that they take there to be considerations that count sufficiently in favor of them. Someone who is ideally rational thus acquires intrinsic desires, just like they acquire beliefs, when they

take there to be sufficient reasons for them, and they lose their intrinsic desires, just like they lose their beliefs, when they don't take there to be sufficient reasons for them or when they take there to be insufficient reasons for them. Where Humeans see a striking difference between beliefs and intrinsic desires, Reasons Primitivists see a striking similarity.

This, in turn, suggests a very different Reasons Primitivist account of what it is for there to be (some objective) reason for action. Remember again the platitude about reasons for action. It tells us that what we have a reason to do is what we would be motivated to do if we were to deliberate well, where deliberating well is a matter of our beliefs conforming to all principles of epistemic rationality, our motivations confirming to all principles of practical rationality, and our beliefs and motivations conforming to these principles in circumstances in which the world is maximally revealed to us.

Reasons Primitivists think that the first and second conditions are met when agents are ideally rational—that is, when they have beliefs and intrinsic desires, and hence resultant motivations, that they take there to be sufficient reasons for—and they think that the third condition is met when the considerations that agents take to be sufficient reasons for believing and intrinsically desiring are sufficient reasons. In other words, a crucial aspect of the world that Reasons Primitivists think needs to be maximally and robustly revealed to us if we are to deliberate well is the normative part, the part that concerns which considerations are sufficient reasons for believing and intrinsically desiring, and hence for being motivated.

The difference between the Humean conception of reasons for action and the Reasons Primitivist conception can thus be summed up as follows. Whereas Humeans think that there are reasons for agents to do whatever will satisfy *their intrinsic desires*, Reasons Primitivists think that there are reasons for agents to do whatever will satisfy *the intrinsic desires that they have sufficient reason to have*. In their view, the concept of a reason is therefore polysemous. The primitive reason-relation holds between considerations and judgment-sensitive attitudes. Since actions are not themselves such attitudes, they do not figure as a relatum of the primitive reason-relation. The concept of *a reason for action* is defined in terms of the concepts of *a reason for believing* and *a reason for intrinsically desiring*, where the latter is the primitive reason-relation, the relation of counting in favor. This relation is primitive because no general account can be given of why certain considerations count in favor of

judgment-sensitive attitudes rather than others. They are just the ones that count in favor, in the sense of providing reasons for them.

What do moral reasons look like, according to Reasons Primitivists? Agents have moral reasons for action, according to Reasons Primitivists, if and only if they would be motivated to act impartially, given the correct conception of impartiality, if they deliberated well, where this requires that there are considerations that count sufficiently in favor of their being motivated to so act. These moral reasons will be noninstrumental if the intrinsic desires that they have sufficient reasons to have, and that are satisfied by their acting impartially, themselves have impartial contents; otherwise, they will be instrumental. This, in turn, means that agents will have moral reasons robustly—which is to say independently of there being sufficient reasons for them to have intrinsic desires that just so happen to be served by their acting impartially—just in case they are noninstrumental.

Note that this Reasons Primitivist account of what it is for agents to have noninstrumental moral reasons combines readily with Rationalism. What is it for an action of a certain kind to be morally required in certain circumstances? The most plausible answer for Rationalists to give is that an action of that kind is morally required in certain circumstances just in case there is a *decisive* noninstrumental moral reason to perform an action of that kind in those circumstances. According to the Rationalist who is also a Reasons Primitivist, this in turn requires that there be a sufficient reason for an agent to have an intrinsic desire with the right kind of impartial content, that acting in that way satisfies that intrinsic desire, and that that sufficient reason is itself strong enough, given the other reasons in play, for the agent to be most strongly motivated to act in that way in those circumstances.

The Rationalist Reasons Primitivist thus has no problem at all making sense of the conditions under which we hold agents responsible. Imagine again a callous person who is morally required to help someone but who fails to help not because he has an excuse or an exemption but just because he doesn't care. We blame him for his failure. According to the Rationalist Reasons Primitivist, we blame him because being morally required to help entails that he has a decisive moral reason to help, and he has this reason because there is a sufficient reason for him to have an intrinsic desire with impartial content that will be satisfied by his helping, an intrinsic desire sufficiently strong to make him most motivated to do so. The fact that the callous man lacks any desire that

will be satisfied by his helping is thus neither here nor there as regards his having such a reason.

We have spent some time outlining the Reasons Primitivists' alternative to the Humeans' account of what it is to deliberate well. The main advantage of Reasons Primitivism is that it combines so well with Rationalism, as this allows it to square with the conditions under which we hold people morally responsible. The main disadvantage is that it does so at the cost of postulating a primitive normative relation of a consideration's *counting in favor* of an attitude. This isn't just metaphysically profligate but also psychologically demanding, as Reasons Primitivists have to think that people have attitudes toward this primitive relation—the attitude of taking considerations to count in favor of their believing and desiring—and that they are epistemically and practically rational to the extent that their beliefs and desires are sensitive to these attitudes. It is thus worth noting that one upshot of Reasons Primitivism is that those who deny the existence of such a primitive relation are apparently irrational by default.

This forces us to ask an obvious question: is a less radical alternative available that combines just as well with Rationalism? If so, parsimony and plausibility will tell in favor of preferring that view to Reasons Primitivism.

7. Constitutivism about Reasons for Action

Anti-Humean Constitutivists—hereafter "Constitutivists," for short—think that such an alternative is available (Korsgaard, 1986; Smith, 2013). In their view, the Humeans' principles of epistemic and practical rationality are fine as far as they go. The problem isn't that we should reject these principles, as Reasons Primitivists do, but rather that we need to add more principles. But what are these extra principles, and why should we add them?

Constitutivists begin by reminding us that the complete set of rational principles governing beliefs and desires are those principles, whatever they are, that fix the roles these states play when we deliberate well. They then point out that it follows from this that if having certain intrinsic desires is itself necessary in order to deliberate well, then these intrinsic desires will be rationally required. In their view, Humeans therefore go wrong in moving from the premise that intrinsic desires cannot be assessed for their truth to the conclusion that they cannot be assessed for their reasonableness. They point out that they would still be so assessable if satisfying them were partially constitutive of what it is to deliberate well.

For Rationalism to be true, intrinsic desires with impartial contents would be required for us to deliberate well. Is this plausible? Constitutivists think it is. They point out that deliberating well is a robust activity, not something that we manage to do by chance or happenstance. This is why one of the conditions on correct deliberation is that the world *reliably* manifests itself to us. But this means that other wordly conditions are necessary too. After all, we will not deliberate well if we are in the company of others who deceive us, or if we deceive ourselves, or if others coerce us, or we coerce ourselves, or if others stand idly by while we succumb to some preventable deterioration in our deliberative capacities, or if we stand idly by ourselves. Nor will we deliberate well if we or others aren't *reliably* disposed not to deceive, coerce, or stand idly by while we succumb to some preventable deterioration in our deliberative capacities.

What this suggests to Constitutivists is that deliberating well must take place in a social context in which others deliberate well too, a social context in which each deliberator has a strong intrinsic desire that they do not interfere with anyone's exercise of their deliberative capacities—neither their own nor anyone else's—and a strong intrinsic desire that they do what they can to ensure that everyone has deliberative capacities to exercise. Let's call these "the desires to help and not interfere." The role of these intrinsic desires to help and not interfere, to repeat, is to make sure that when we act, we not only don't undermine but also sustain the possession and exercise of the deliberative capacities that make it possible for us to deliberate well.

Note that the intrinsic desires to help and not interfere have impartial contents. If having such intrinsic desires is constitutive of deliberating well, then it follows that all agents, independently of having reasons to satisfy whatever other intrinsic desires they might happen to have, will have noninstrumental moral reasons to help and not interfere. Since all agents have such moral reasons, Constitutivism entails Rationalism, with moral requirements understood in terms of reasons in the way suggested earlier. Constitutivism therefore squares well with the conditions of moral responsibility.

Constitutivism also entails that, to the extent that people's satisfying whatever intrinsic desires they happen to have doesn't undermine anyone's helping and not interfering, they will also have reasons to satisfy whatever intrinsic desires they happen to have. This is why Constitutivism is a less radical alternative to the Humeans' account of what it is to deliberate well. It tells

us that it is rationally permissible to satisfy whatever intrinsic desires we happen to have, so long as doing so is consistent with our acting on our moral reasons to help and not interfere when these reasons are decisive.

We saw earlier that the mark of moral principles is that they are impartial, where this leaves it open what impartiality consists in. Note that Constitutivism takes a stand on this issue. The idea that we all have reasons to satisfy whatever intrinsic desires we happen to have, so long as our doing so is consistent with our acting on our moral reasons to help and not interfere when these reasons are decisive, sits happily alongside the familiar deontological conception of moral principles as protecting the freedom of each person to live a life of their own choosing, so long as their doing so is consistent with everyone else's doing the same thing. According to this view, welfare is not of intrinsic moral significance. Welfare matters morally only to the extent that it affects freedom.

8.   Conclusion

The question we began with is how moral reasons are to be integrated into empirical psychology. We have seen that the answer we give to this question will depend on our views about both morality and reasons for action.

As regards morality, although it is widely agreed that the mark of moral requirements is their impartiality, there is disagreement about whether we should be Rationalists or Antirationalists and hence whether a further mark of moral requirements is that they entail reasons for action, as Rationalists think they do. As regards reasons for action, although it is widely agreed that we have a reason to do what we would be motivated to do if we deliberated well, there is a great deal of disagreement about what it is to deliberate well. Should we be Humeans about deliberating well, Reasons Primitivists, or Constitutivists? The main difference between these views lies in their very different accounts of the rational evaluation of intrinsic desires.

Given the disagreement, psychologists who talk about moral reasons need to make clear the assumptions they make about morality and reasons for action. Do they assume Rationalism or Antirationalism about morality, and do they assume Humeanism, Reasons Primitivism, or Constitutivism about reasons for action? If they make these assumptions clear, then, with the passage of time, the answer to a further important question will hopefully emerge: do certain of these assumptions rather than others make for a more productive research program? The answer to this question will be of great significance to psychologists and philosophers alike.

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