

way short of actually endorsing it. Nevertheless, his speculation on this matter ties in with his documented uncertainty on the question of whether the world increases in perfection and explains why he became uncertain about that.

One final question remains, however. Why did he come to think that the increases in perfection of the blessed might outweigh the decreases in perfection of the damned? In an early work, the *Confessio Philosophi* from 1672–3, Leibniz has this to say on the matter:

the blessed ... experience delight incessantly ... because without perpetual novelty and progress there is no thinking and hence no pleasure ... [yet] those who are furiously against the nature of things ... they will be continually irritated by new objects of indignation, of hatred, of jealousy and, to say it in a word, of madness.

(A VI iii 139)

Yet almost forty years later in the *Theodicy*, Leibniz was not so quick to state that the damned continually get worse, arguing instead that in their descent they would eventually reach or at least approach a lowest possible limit:

The blessed draw near to divinity through a divine Mediator, so far as can belong to these created beings, and make such progress in good as is impossible for the damned to make in evil, even though they should approach as nearly as may be the nature of demons. God is infinite, and the devil is finite; good can and does go on *ad infinitum*, whereas evil has its bounds.

(H379)

It might seem odd that the later Leibniz was so certain that the blessed undergo an unlimited increase in perfection and the damned a limited decrease in perfection, while remaining uncertain on the question of whether the universe as a whole increases in perfection; but it is not really odd at all, for with the fates of an infinity of creatures to take into consideration, even a superlative mathematician such as Leibniz was at a loss to calculate whether the infinite gains made by some creatures either balanced or outweighed the finite losses incurred by what was presumably an infinity of others. This, I suspect, was why he informed Bourguet that he could see no way of demonstrating which one of the rectangle, triangle and hyperbola hypotheses was true.^{30,31}

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³⁰Full English translations of many of the previously-untranslated Leibniz texts cited in this paper can be found on my website at <http://www.leibniz-translations.com>.

³¹My thanks to Vernon Pratt, Patrick Sherry and Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad for their comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper.

ARTICLE

SIGNS OF VALUE: REID ON THE EVIDENTIAL ROLE OF FEELINGS IN MORAL JUDGEMENT

Terence Cuneo

Imagine the following scenario: you walk into a crowded party of associates and friends in a large reception room. As you make your way toward a more quiet area, you're pulled aside by a colleague and introduced to one of his associates. You engage in some light conversation. After several minutes, however, you find yourself feeling very uneasy about this fellow for reasons that are not at all clear to you – it might be his tone of voice, his excessive smoothness in conversation, the sort of distracted attention he gives you or his mildly dismissive remarks about the work of someone you do not know. In any event, you find yourself forming the judgement that this man is untrustworthy. You politely excuse yourself, convinced that your uneasiness and subsequent moral judgement are not unfounded.

Or consider a somewhat different, non-moral case: you are steadily working on writing an essay and are rereading a draft of it. You find yourself vaguely dissatisfied with the way a point was put, or the way a paragraph flows, or the cogency of an interpretation without having a clear sense of what is wrong with the point, the paragraph, or the interpretation. Upon having this feeling of dissatisfaction, you form the judgement that something is not quite right with the way you have stated the point, written the paragraph or couched the interpretation, and resolve to rewrite the relevant section.

There are some interesting differences between these two cases, but what they have in common is the following feature: feelings play a special sort of role in generating the value judgements in question. It is consequent upon your feeling uneasy about the acquaintance at the party that you form the judgement that he is not to be trusted. Likewise, it is consequent upon feeling dissatisfied with what you have written that you form the judgement that something is not quite right with how you have written your essay. In both cases, feelings of various kinds function as experiential inputs, and value judgement is the output. If we assume that in cases such as these, feelings reliably indicate value, then they also function as

signs or indicators of evaluative features of the world. They are evidence of value.¹

I take it to be fairly uncontroversial that cases such as I have just described form a part of our shared experience. To stick with just the moral case, I assume that in some situations, we are prompted to form moral judgements by virtue of having feelings of various kinds – feelings of aversion, disgust, repulsion, uneasiness, distress, guilt, attraction, pleasure, relief, delight and the like, toward various things.² I take it to be fairly uncontroversial that in some cases we trust the judgements that are the upshot of feelings of this sort; we take them to be reliable responses to value. I assume also that in some cases we are *entitled* to trust them as such; we commit no epistemic impropriety in so trusting them. Finally, I assume that these judgements are often immediately formed; in a wide range of cases, they are not the upshot of an inference from a belief that one is feeling a certain way.³ It is of some

¹In this essay, I take a fairly liberal view with regard to the ways in which a cognitive state can function as evidence. According to the view I shall assume, a cognitive state is evidence for the formation or maintenance of another cognitive state if the first state tends to confer positive epistemic status on the latter state. Cf. J. Greco, *Putting Skeptics in their Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 167. Reid's own views on evidence, I judge, approximate this. Cf. EIP II.xx.

All references to *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (EIP) and *An Inquiry Into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (IHM) are to the critical editions edited by Derek R. Brookes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997 and 2002, respectively). References to *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind* (EAP) are to the version edited by Baruch Brody (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1969). Citations from the *Essays* and the *Inquiry* follow an abbreviated title, essay, chapter, page number format. (The exception to this is references to EAP essay III, which follow an essay, chapter, section and page number format.) Quotations from Reid in the text are followed by parenthetical references in the text to the relevant passage from Reid's work.

²Unless I indicate otherwise, I will talk of feelings, affections and passions indiscriminately. Within this class of entities there are, of course, interesting distinctions to which Reid himself draws our attention. Some have representational content, while others do not. For my purposes, these differences will not much matter, and (unless I indicate otherwise) I shall not observe the technical sense in which Reid uses these terms. The only stipulation I will make for the purposes of this paper is that these entities do not have as their ingredient some moral judgement. I should also note that I use the term 'judgement' to designate an occurrent act of judging.

³There are various reasons for thinking that the beliefs in question are formed immediately. In the first place, we often do not form beliefs about the feelings in question (although we are ordinarily aware of them in some fashion). Second, as Robert Adams suggests in his book *Finite and Infinite Goods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), it appears constitutive of moral competence that feelings of various kinds function as experiential inputs that yield immediate moral judgements:

But our evaluative competence is childish indeed if it does not go beyond the ability to accept evaluative beliefs that we have been taught and draw correct inferences from them. A mature and autonomous evaluative competence is responsive to a wide range of inputs that are not beliefs. These include feelings, emotions, inclinations, and desires. Just as something about a sensation helps us to recognize President Clinton or an image of him, so something about our own emotions may help us to recognize that something is good or bad. It is not that we form a belief about the emotion that we then use as evidence for the evaluative belief. The doxastic process takes the emotion itself as an input, rather than a belief about the emotion. We may not be able to characterize the emotion adequately except in terms of the evaluative belief, perhaps as a feeling that something would be wonderful or horrible.

interest, then, that such a stalwart champion of common sense as Thomas Reid claims in various places that (when all goes well) feelings of the sort I have just mentioned are (causally/logically) consequential upon moral judgement, but are not the inputs to what he calls the 'moral sense' – are not signs or indicators of value. Why did Reid claim this? And are his reasons for claiming this convincing? I want in this essay to explore these questions. I am going to suggest that Reid was mistaken in rejecting the 'affective model' of moral judgement that I have sketched above. I shall further suggest that Reid has ample resources in his own thought to remedy this defect and that, appearances notwithstanding, he has an admirably high appreciation of the epistemic role of affect.

My topic, then, is the role that affect plays in Reid's moral epistemology. However, I want explicitly to indicate that I take the following discussion to contribute to two more general projects. First, Reid is sometimes portrayed as a rationalist whose views do not differ significantly from thinkers such as Richard Price and Samuel Clarke.⁴ In what follows, I will suggest that his views share more in common with the sentimentalist positions against which he polemicized than is often acknowledged. Second, the claim that affect has an important role to play in moral epistemology is receiving increased attention, especially by those working within so-called feminist epistemology.⁵ Part of my aim will be to establish that there is a plausible way to interpret Reid according to which his position can make a valuable contribution to this endeavour.

MORAL PERCEPTION

Throughout both the *Essays* and in his lectures,⁶ Reid repeatedly speaks of our being able to *perceive* moral features of the world. I have argued elsewhere that this is not a mere stylistic idiosyncrasy on Reid's part, but indicative of the fact that Reid thinks that there is a sense in which we can

However, I hesitate to accept Adams's claim that, in many cases, we cannot characterize the emotion adequately except in terms of an evaluative belief. It seems to me that in a large range of cases we can characterize the feeling or emotion in question by reference to its representative content (say, that something would be horrible), where this need not be a belief.

⁴See A. MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York, NY: Collier Books, 1966) 177 and J. Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) 8–11.

⁵See, for example, M. Little, 'Sensing and Caring: The Role of Affect in Feminist Moral Epistemology,' *Hypatia*, 10 (1995): 117–37; L. Antony, 'Naturalized Epistemology, Morality, and the Real World,' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, supplementary volume 26 (2000): 103–37; and A. Jaggar, 'Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology,' in *Gender/Body/Knowledge*, edited by A. Jaggar and S. Bordo (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

⁶See *Practical Ethics*, edited by K. Haakonssen (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990) 144.

perceive moral qualities.⁷ Since the affective model is helpfully seen as a mode of moral perception, let me begin by sketching the outlines of what I take to be Reid's general account of the nature of perception.

In the *Inquiry* and the *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, Reid develops a broadly semiotic account of perception according to which a person's perceiving a quality or object O is a matter of her apprehending O and forming a belief about O that it exists (or some belief that entails this) by way of being aware of a sign that signifies O.⁸ In some cases, such as in visual perception, the signs in question are properties of objects. For example, Reid tells us that in cases of visual perception an object's 'visible figure' (roughly, the two-dimensional appearance of an object when placed obliquely to the eye) functions as a sign for its 'real figure' (roughly, the way an object is in itself). When all goes well, awareness of an object's visible figure (say, its elliptical appearance) immediately evokes the apprehension of and belief about that object's real figure (say, its roundness) that it exists in her environment (or some belief that entails this.) In other cases, such as in tactile perception, Reid emphasizes that the signs in question are not properties of objects, but sensations of various kinds. To employ Reid's favourite example, a person's perceiving the hardness of an object consists in that object's hardness affecting her sensory organs in such a way as to occasion a sensation of pressure, which in turn immediately evokes the apprehension (or, as Reid says, 'conception') of that hardness, and the belief about it, that it exists as part of her environment (or a belief that entails this).

As I understand him, Reid thinks of moral perception as satisfying the first type of schema sketched above – what Nicholas Wolterstorff calls Reid's 'non-standard' schema of perception.⁹ At work in Reid's account of moral perception is the claim that the countenance and behaviour of an agent S function as signs for moral qualities such as her temperance, courage or kindness. When all goes well, another person's awareness of these signs evokes in her the apprehension of and belief about these qualities that they are instantiated in S. In a paper entitled 'Reid Making Sense of Moral Sense', Alexander Broadie points out that there is also an interesting similarity between Reid's account of moral perception and the second schema of perception just sketched, what we can call Reid's 'standard schema' of perception. In both cases, feelings of a sort are components of perceptual states.¹⁰ According to the standard schema, sensations function as signs of qualities in the external world; they are the experiential inputs to external sense. According to Reid's account of moral perception, by

contrast, feelings are (together with the apprehension of moral qualities and moral judgement) the output of what Reid calls the 'moral sense'. Putting this together, we can schematize Reid's full account of moral perception as such:

Moral quality of S → Sign (countenance or behaviour of S) →
Apprehension of moral quality/moral belief by S' → Affection/feeling in S'.¹¹

In the *Active Powers*, Reid calls the complex state of the apprehension of some positive moral quality, the corresponding *de re* moral judgement, and the affection and feeling to which they give rise, 'moral approbation'. Moral approbation includes 'not only a moral judgment of ... [an] action, but some affection, favourable ... toward the agent, and some feeling in ourselves' (EAP III.iii.vi: 238).¹² The idea is that, for a person morally to approve of a possible or actual act-token is, first, for that person to judge of that act that it has (or would have) one or another moral feature and, second, to have some affection toward the agent who performs (or would perform) that act, which is itself accompanied by a feeling tone of some sort. For example, for me morally to approve of your having said a kind word to my daughter is for me to judge that your act is (appropriately) kind, esteem you on account of your having acted in this way and for this esteem to be accompanied by a positive feeling tone of a certain kind.¹³

This, I think, represents the main lines of Reid's account of moral perception. If pressed on the details, however, I suspect that Reid would qualify this statement of his view in two ways. First, although Reid himself talks of moral judgements *tout court* as giving rise to affections, I think he would say that moral approbation is the upshot of only *certain kinds* of moral judgement.¹⁴ Experience tells us that not all of our moral judgements are affectively loaded; only some are. For example, in a very depressed state,

¹¹I assume that S and S' are different agents: moral perception, for Reid, is always the perception of the moral qualities of others. I will also assume that this schema assumes that there is some sense in which moral qualities are causally efficacious. For more on this matter, see 'Reidian Moral Perception'. The first and third instances of the '→' stand for the relation that Reid calls 'occasioning'. The second instance picks out that phenomenon that Reid calls 'suggestion'. See IHM VI.xxi: 175. For more on Reid's use of these notions, see R. Copenhaver, 'A Realism for Reid: Mediated but Direct', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 12 (2004): 61–74.

¹²Cf., also, EAP V.vii: 480. Reid says that affections 'have persons for their immediate object, and imply, in their very nature, our being well or ill affected to some person, or, at least, to some animated being' (EAP III.ii.iii: 139). (Although what Reid says at EAP III.iii.vii: 244 indicates that affections can also be had toward an agent's conduct.) Feelings, by contrast, do not have intentional objects, in Reid's view.

¹³Cf. EAP III.ii.iii: 152, where Reid identifies esteem as a type of 'benevolent affection'.

¹⁴Adam Smith makes this sort of qualification in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, edited by K. Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 219.

⁷See 'Reidian Moral Perception,' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 33 (2003): 229–58.

⁸I use the term 'quality' here and elsewhere to pick out an instance of a property. Cf. EIP V.iii: 367. I shall also use the term 'perceive' as a success term.

⁹See *Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁰*Reid Studies*, Vol. 1. (1998): 5–16.

I might form a judgement that one ought to tell the truth. In such a state, a judgement of this sort need not be accompanied by any affective state. Second, Reid would add that the present account of moral perception is supposed to be an account of what happens when all goes well. There are also deviant cases in which feelings occasion moral judgement. Consider this passage from Reid's 'Essay on Taste':

Our moral and rational powers justly claim dominion over the whole man. Even taste is not exempted from their authority; it must be subject to that authority in every case wherein we pretend to reason or dispute about matters of taste; it is the voice of reason that our love or our admiration ought to be proportioned to the merit of the object. When it is not grounded on real worth, it must be the effect of constitution, or of some habit of casual association. A fond mother may see a beauty in her darling child, or a fond author in his work, to which the rest of the world are blind. In such cases, the affection is pre-engaged, and, as it were, bribes the judgment, to make the object worthy of that affection. For the mind cannot be easy in putting a value upon an object beyond what it conceives to be due. When affection is not carried away by some natural or acquired bias, it naturally is, and ought to be led by the judgment.

(EIP VIII.iv: 614)

Elsewhere, in the *Active Powers*, Reid says

It is an old observation, that affection follows opinion; and it is undoubtedly true in many cases. A man cannot be grateful without the opinion of a favour done him. He cannot have deliberate resentment without the opinion of an injury; nor esteem without the opinion of some estimable quality; nor compassion without the opinion of suffering.

But it is no less true, that opinion sometimes follows affection, not that it ought, but that it actually does so, by giving a false bias to our judgment. We are apt to be partial to our friends, and still more to ourselves.

(EAP III.ii.v: 164-5)¹⁵

I suggested earlier that the affective model of moral judgement comprises two claims: first, a claim that feelings can be the experiential inputs into the moral sense and thereby occasion moral judgement and, second, that in so doing, feelings can be reliable indicators of moral value (or morally relevant features of the world). What the passages quoted above reveal is that Reid does not reject the first component of the model; affections can be the experiential inputs that occasion moral judgement. But Reid does reject the second component of the model. Feelings are not reliable

¹⁵Cf., also, EAP V.vii: 462-3.

signs of value. Rather, they function merely to 'bribe' judgement (EIP VIII.iv: 614).

WHY DOES REID RESIST THE AFFECTIVE MODEL?

To this point, I have claimed that there are considerations taken from the phenomenology of moral judgement that speak in favour of the affective model of moral judgement. Reid, I have also indicated, resists adopting the model and claims that something like it captures only deviant cases of moral judgement. Why is that? Reid's most explicit reason seems also to be an argument from moral phenomenology: when we consider a wide range of cases, in which all goes well, it is moral judgement that elicits affective states of certain kinds and not vice versa. After having noted that in cases of perceiving an external object judgement is consequent upon sensation, Reid says

But in most of the operations of mind in which judgment or belief is combined with feeling, the feeling is the consequence of the judgment, and is regulated by it.

Thus an account of the good conduct of a friend at a distance gives me a very agreeable feeling, and a contrary account would give me a very uneasy feeling; but these feelings depend entirely upon my belief of the report

I am likewise conscious, that this agreeable feeling in me, and this esteem of him, depend entirely upon the judgment I form of his conduct. I judge that this conduct merits esteem; and, while I thus judge, I cannot but esteem him, and contemplate his conduct with pleasure. Persuade me that he was bribed, or that he acted from some mercenary or bad motive, immediately my esteem and my agreeable feeling vanish.

(EAP V.vii: 463)

In the interest of thoroughness, Reid extends this account to show that it best explains propositional attitudes such as hoping, respecting, gratitude, resentment, and esteem.¹⁶

Reid's contention that affection follows upon moral judgement is meant to do important work in showing that Hume's putatively non-cognitivist model of moral 'judgment' is implausible. According to Reid, Hume's model is untenable because it offers no explanation of how moral judgements cause and regulate feelings.¹⁷ But as an argument against the affective model, what Reid says is inconclusive for reasons that we have already seen. There are also cases of moral judgement taken from our ordinary experience that seem

¹⁶Cf. EAP V.vii: 463-4; III.iii.vii: 241ff.

¹⁷See, e.g., EAP V & VII. I discuss this issue in 'Reid's Moral Philosophy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Reid*, edited by T. Cuneo and R. van Woudenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

to conform to the affective model and do not undercut it. The phenomenology points in both directions.

However, sometimes a philosopher's explicit reasons for rejecting a position are not his deepest. And this, I think, is one such case. I have just noted that when we view Reid's phenomenological argument for rejecting the affective model, the broader context is one in which Reid is interested in showing that Hume's putatively non-cognitivist view is false. It is worth emphasizing that Hume himself does not (on Reid's interpretation) adopt the affective model. Nor do other sentimentalists such as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson or Smith. Nevertheless, it is plausible to speculate that one of Reid's fundamental aims in rejecting the model is to distance his own view from those present in the sentimentalist tradition that emphasize the role of affect in the formation of moral judgement.¹⁸ In fact, in some places, Reid writes as if something like the affective model implies a version of moral antirealism according to which moral qualities are akin to Lockean secondary qualities.¹⁹

In the next section, I am going to return to this issue and suggest that there is no interesting connection between the affective model of moral judgement and a version of moral antirealism according to which moral qualities are similar to secondary qualities. For present purposes, however, let me draw attention to a deeper reason yet for Reid's uneasiness with the affective model of moral judgement. Consider the following quotes from the *Active Powers*:

It is true indeed, that men's passions and appetites, too often draw them to act contrary to their cool judgment and opinion of what is best for them. *Video meliora proboque, deteriora, sequor* [I see and approve the better, but follow the worse], is the case in every willful deviation from our true interest, and our duty. (EAP III.iii.ii: 209)

He that will judge of the colour of an object, must consult his eyes, in a good light, when there is no medium or contiguous objects that may give it a false tinge . . .

In like manner, he that will judge of the first principles of morals, must consult his conscience, or moral faculty, when he is calm and dispassionate, unbiased by interest, affection, or fashion.

(EAP III.iii.vi: 236)

When we are capable of contemplating the actions of other men, or of reflecting upon our own calmly and dispassionately, we begin to perceive in them the qualities of honest and dishonest, of honorable and base, of right and wrong, and to feel the sentiments of moral approbation and disapprobation.

(EAP V.i: 369)

¹⁸See D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2nd edn, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) 471. Also, see F. Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions*, introduced and annotated by A. Ward (Manchester: 1999) 11.

¹⁹EAP V.vii: 480.

Our condition here is such, that, on the one hand, passion often tempts and solicits us to do wrong; on the other hand, reason and conscience oppose the dictates of passion. The flesh lusteth against the sprit, and the spirit against the flesh. And upon the issue of this conflict, the character of the man and his fate depend.

(EAP III.ii.vi: 181)²⁰

Coming to the surface in these passages is Reid's conviction that affect and passion are primarily epistemic inhibitors, factors that impede the reliable working of our belief-forming faculties. In various places, for example, Reid invokes the rhetoric of the benefits of 'cool' disinterested reason and of reason's subduing passion. He further insists, in keeping with a dominant Enlightenment theme, that the passions belong to the animal part of our nature, while reason belongs to the properly human part. Indeed, as the second passage above indicates, Reid characterizes good epistemic conditions for making moral judgements in terms of being calm and dispassionate and bad ones in terms of being biased and passionate.

Present in Reid's thought, then, is a commitment to what Margaret Little calls in one place the 'bureaucratic model' of our cognitive faculties.²¹ Since I cannot improve upon Little's description of the model, let me quote it at length:

According to one central and influential tradition, the stance appropriate to moral wisdom is a *dispassionate* one. To make considered, sound moral judgments, we should abstract from our emotions, feelings, sentiments – what the eighteenth century would call 'passions' – and from our desires, inclinations – what now go by the ungainly terms 'pro' and 'con' attitudes. Emotions and desires are not part of the equipment needed to discern moral answers. To be sure, their presence may be essential to our *responding* appropriately once we reach those verdicts – to act and to feel as we ought; but only trouble, it is thought, can come of their intrusion into deliberations toward the verdicts themselves. At best, they are irrelevant distractions, like so many pains and tickles. At worst, they are highly distorting influences: Emotions 'incite' and 'provoke' us; desires 'cloud' our judgment and 'bias' our reasoning. This would be a problem in any epistemic endeavor, but it is disastrous to moral judgments, whose role is precisely to serve as corrective to the standard, partisan focus of our sentiments. According to this view, then, to be objective is to be *detached*;

²⁰Cf., also, EAP III.iii.ii: 207ff; III.iii.iii: 213; III.iii.vii: 245; III.iii.viii: 250; and EIP VIII.iv: 612–14.

²¹'Seeing and Caring: The Role of Affect in Feminist Moral Epistemology', 118.

to be clear sighted is to achieve *distance*; to be careful in deliberation is to be *cool* and *calm*.²²

What the bureaucratic model tells us, then, is that there is a clear division of labour between reason, on the one hand, and affect, emotion and feeling, on the other. Reason's task is primarily to grasp moral reality and render moral verdicts by way of making moral judgements. It then issues its report to the affective side of our nature. When all goes well, this results in the state of an agent's being motivated to act appropriately. But passion is, as it were, always clamouring to rub out the division that separates it from reason; it wants also to issue verdicts about what is morally the case. The bureaucratic model tells us, however, that if the division of labour is confounded, then moral confusion sets in. By biasing our judgement, passion becomes an epistemic inhibitor that blinds us to the contours of moral reality.

In one variety or another, the bureaucratic model is present in the thought of rationalists such as Clarke, Price, and Kant and even, I think, in the views of sentimentalists such as Hume.²³ It is worth emphasizing, however, that advocates of the bureaucratic model do not typically claim that the passions lack any role to play in the moral life. There is, of course, the famous passage in the *Groundwork* in which Kant expresses his wish to be rid of the passions altogether.²⁴ And in various places Richard Price voices his conviction that the more we grow in virtue, the less necessary the affections are.²⁵ Reid himself says something similar in one case.²⁶ However, as I have indicated, what advocates of the view ordinarily claim is that the passions are indispensable for motivating us to action. And Reid is no exception on this score. Throughout the *Active Powers*, Reid says that the affections are indispensable to our living well and to the moral life. Central among the reasons why affect is indispensable to the

²²Ibid.

²³Hume (according to a standard interpretation), for instance, arguably reinforces the model by giving affect no epistemological role to play in the apprehension of moral reality. Affect's role is to project itself on the world – to gild and stain it. It is also crucial for motivating us to action; but it plays no role in helping us to apprehend the shape of the good.

²⁴Recall that Kant says that 'the inclinations themselves, as sources of needs, however, are so lacking in absolute worth that the universal wish of every rational being must be indeed to free himself completely from them' (*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by L. W. Beck, New York: Macmillan, 1959) 46.

²⁵See R. Price, *Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*, edited by D. D. Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948) 44, 62, and 74–6.

²⁶It is true, indeed, that perfect virtue, joined with perfect knowledge, would make both our appetites and desire unnecessary incumbrances of our nature; but as human knowledge and human virtue are both very imperfect, these appetites and desires are necessary supplements to our imperfections.

(EAP III.ii.ii: 132)

moral life is that it plays an important role in motivating us to appropriate action. While reason may persuade us that acting in a certain way is good or demanded, it is affect that provides the necessary 'push' toward acting in that fashion.²⁷ To this, Reid adds two broadly Humean points. First, the 'desires we have... are very friendly to real virtue, and make it more easy to be acquired' (EAP III.ii.ii: 134) in so far as our desire to be esteemed by others is 'a great inducement to good conduct' (EAP III.ii.ii: 135). Second, affect is also friendly to virtue in so far as our passions serve to condemn us when we act wrongly and exhort us when we act well.²⁸ So, in Reid's view, affect is best characterized as having a three-part function in the moral life: (a) together with the verdicts of reason it motivates us to action; (b) it helps us to acquire virtue in so far as we are desirous of the esteem of others; and (c) it helps us to acquire virtue in so far as we tend to become distressed when we act wrongly and grow pleased when we act virtuously. Herein lies affect's proper role.

REVERSING REID'S JUDGEMENT

At the outset of this essay, I suggested that moral experience recommends the view that feelings of various sorts can be signs of value. On some occasions, feelings are the experiential inputs that issue in warranted moral judgements and are not merely consequent upon moral judgement. I have called this the 'affective model' of moral judgement and have suggested that there is nothing intrinsic to a realist view about morals that should make us particularly suspicious of it. Reid, I have also pointed out, was suspicious of the model, and rejected the idea that, when all goes well, feelings are signs of value. In this section, I want to suggest that there are reasons already present in Reid's own position to rescind his negative verdict on the affective model and ultimately to embrace it.

One reason for taking the model seriously is that adopting it promises to secure a pleasing symmetry between Reid's account of our perception of the external world and his account of our perception of moral qualities. Recall that, in Reid's view, perception of the external world is best thought of in terms of two schemas. According to the standard schema, sensations of various kinds function as signs of qualities of objects. According to the non-standard schema, signs of various kinds that are themselves not mere sensations (e.g., appearances) function as signs of qualities of objects. Adopting the affective model of moral judgement allows for there to be a rather exact symmetry between perceptions of external and moral sense. According to the affective model of moral judgement, feelings of various kinds function as reliable signs of moral qualities (or morally relevant

²⁷See EAP II.ii: 74–5, III.vi: 183.

²⁸See EAP III.iii.vii: 243–5; EIP IV.iv: 337.

qualities). It thus parallels the standard schema. According to the account of moral perception that Reid explicitly endorses, signs of various kinds that are themselves not mere sensations (e.g. the countenance and behaviour of agents) function as signs of moral qualities (or morally relevant qualities). It thus parallels the non-standard schema. Adopting the affective model, then, allows us to claim that *both* the standard and non-standard schemas are paralleled in moral perception. Certain cases of moral perception parallel the standard schema while others parallel the non-standard one.²⁹ There is also this further similarity between cases of moral perception that conform to the affective model and cases of external object perception that conform to the standard schema: in both instances the feelings at issue bear no resemblance to the qualities they signify. Cases of moral perception that conform to the affective model thus equally support Reid's insistence that advocates of the 'way of ideas' had gone badly wrong in thinking that a feeling or sensation should resemble what it signifies.

Admittedly, this is an inconclusive reason for surrendering resistance to the affective model. This is because Reid has a principled objection to adopting the model, namely, that feelings are notoriously unreliable indicators of value. In most cases, feelings obfuscate rather than aid our access to the moral realm. I think it should be acknowledged that Reid's objection has some force. Feelings often *are* unreliable guides to reality and are prone to distort moral judgement. Nevertheless, I want to urge that Reid has internal reasons for resisting this sort of sweeping dismissal of the epistemic role of affect – reasons that issue, in part, from his account of the virtues.

When I introduced the bureaucratic model of our cognitive faculties, I said that Reid subscribed to the model in one form or another. But that is not quite right. Although Reid has some denigrating things to say about the epistemic role of feelings, this is only one strain of his thought. Listen to what Reid says elsewhere:

All our natural desires and affections are good and necessary parts of our constitution; and passion, being only a certain degree of vehemence in these, its natural tendency is to good, and it is by accident that it leads us wrong ...

[E]very passion naturally draws our attention to its object, and interests us in it ...

The mind of man is naturally desultory, and when it has no interesting object in view, roves from one to another, without fixing its attention upon any one. A transient and careless glance is all that we bestow upon objects

²⁹In fact, I think the matter is more complicated than this. Certain cases of moral perception will be such that there is a 'double-sign' at work. In such cases, the countenance and behaviour of an agent will be a sign of her moral qualities, but the countenance and behaviour will itself evoke a feeling in the perceiver that also functions as a sign for the moral qualities in question.

in which we take no concern. It requires a strong degree of curiosity, or some more important passion, to give us that interest in an object which is necessary to our giving attention to it. And, without attention, we can form no true and stable judgment of any object.

Take away the passions, and it is not easy to say how great a part of mankind would resemble those frivolous mortals, who never had a thought that engaged them in good earnest.

It is not mere judgment or intellectual ability that enables a man to excel in any art or science. He must have a love and admiration of it bordering upon enthusiasm, or a passionate desire of the fame, or of some other advantage to be got by that excellence. Without this, he would not undergo the labour and fatigue of his faculties, which it requires. So that, I think, we may with justice allow no small merit to the passions, even in the discoveries and improvements of the arts and sciences.

(EAP III.ii.vi: 183: 184–5)

And in the context of his most extended discussion of the phenomenon of attention, Reid writes this:

The mind is rarely in a state of indifference, left to turn its attention to the object which to reason appears most deserving of it. There is, for the most part, a bias to some particular object, more than to any other; and this, not from any judgment of its deserving our attention more, but from some impulse or propensity grounded on nature or habit.

(EAP II.iii: 78)

So, in spite of his rhetoric elsewhere, Reid is keenly aware that dispassionate detachment makes us *less* likely to pick up on what is important, morally or otherwise. Good epistemic conditions do not always consist in being 'calm and dispassionate, unbiased by interest, affection, or fashion' (EAP III.iii.vi: 236). In fact, Reid suggests here that without bias or interest we would be, as it were, epistemic wantons. Passions, in Reid's view, need not be epistemic inhibitors; they also play the role of being epistemic *abettors*. Nowhere does their role as epistemic abettors manifest itself more clearly than in Reid's account of the virtues. The propensity to give certain kinds of things appropriate attention, says Reid, is constitutive of the virtuous agent:

Attention may be given to any object, either of sense or of intellect, in order to form a distinct notion of it, or to discover its nature, its attributes, or its relations and so great is the effect of attention, that, without it, it is impossible to acquire or retain a distinct notion of any object of thought. ...

A great part of wisdom and virtue consists in giving a proper direction to our attention; and that however reasonable this appears to the judgment of every man, yet, in some cases, it requires an effort of self-command no less than the most heroic virtues.

(EAP II.iii: 76–7; 80)

The reason these passages require us to re-evaluate Reid's position with respect to the epistemic role of affect is this: Reid has already told us that the passions are (in a wide range of cases) required to draw a person's attention to various kinds of feature of her environment. As such, they are (in a wide range of cases) also necessary to direct the virtuous agent's attention to what deserves it. However, since the virtuous agent is characterized by a reliable tendency to direct her attention to those features of her environment that deserve it, it follows that the passions of the virtuous agent reliably direct the virtuous agent's attention to what matters morally.³⁰ So, the passions are for Reid far from simply being epistemic inhibitors or distractions; they are for the virtuous agent a *sine qua non* of seeing the world aright.

Lying at the heart of Reid's view of the moral life, then, is the phenomenon of attention. The passions are especially important in so far as they draw our attention to certain objects and not others. In this respect, Reid displays a sensitivity to the epistemic dimensions of affect rarely present in the writings of his seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cohorts. While I believe what Reid says positively about the passions goes a long way toward addressing his qualms about their distorting influence, it would be a mistake to interpret what Reid says as an endorsement of the affective model of moral judgement. There is, after all, a distinction between the generic phenomenon of a passion's directing or fixing one's attention to some object and a passion's directing or fixing one's attention to some object in so far as it acts as a *sign* for that object. In his better moments, Reid clearly recognizes the former phenomenon, but he nevertheless explicitly resists the second. So, let me now adduce several considerations in favour of the conclusion that Reid himself has good reason to adopt the affective model of moral judgement.

We have seen that, according to Reid, the wise and virtuous person reliably pays attention to those moral (or morally relevant) features of the world that deserve his attention. We have also seen that, in a wide array of cases, an agent pays attention to features of his environment only if his passions direct him to those features. Let us also note that in the last passage I quoted, Reid is explicit about the way in which we are ordinarily 'biased' (by our passions) to pay attention to objects of certain kinds: we are not ordinarily so biased because, on some occasion in which we pay attention to some object, we explicitly or occurrently judge that that object deserves our attention.³¹ Rather, we are ordinarily so biased by virtue of the fact that 'mechanical' habits – habits that 'operate without will or intention' (EAP III.i.iii: 114) – draw our attention to an object, independent of any explicit or occurrent judgement that that object deserves our attention. It follows that, according to Reid, in a wide array of cases, the passions direct the

virtuous agent's attention to those moral (or morally relevant) features of the world to which he ought to pay attention and do so because of his exhibiting mechanical habits of certain kinds.

Now all this is compatible with its being the case that the passions also typically direct the virtuous person's attention to objects that he ought not to consider. For all that has been said, then, it might be that even in the wise and virtuous person, the passions ordinarily direct his attention to both what deserves and does not deserve attention, and, by dint of a voluntary exercise of his active power, the virtuous person fixes his attention upon only those objects that deserve his attention. Consequently, we cannot rule out the possibility that, according to Reid, the passions sometimes lead even the virtuous person's attention astray. Is this a problem for Reid's view?

It seems to me not. First, there is nothing incoherent about claiming both that a feeling reliably indicates that to which one ought to pay attention and that another feeling simultaneously directs one's attention to that which does not deserve it. For example, a feeling of guilt could indicate the wrongness of one's action even if it is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure that directs one's attention to how enjoyable it was to perform that action. Second, it is plausible to believe that any adequate account of the virtues cannot countenance the possibility that the virtuous person's affections systematically lead him to consider things he ought not to. Definitive of being a virtuous agent is walling-off considerations of certain kinds that are harmful, tempting or distracting, for 'the powers of judging and reasoning depend chiefly upon keeping the mind to a clear and steady view of the subject' (EAP II.iii: 78). (Recall, in this regard, Aristotle's claim that *akrasia* is best explained by the fact that the akratic is distracted by passion.³²) If this is right, however, in a wide range of situations, the virtuous person's affections will direct his attention to what deserves his attention and only to what deserves his attention. In this range of cases at least, we can say that the virtuous person's affections reliably direct his attention to only those things that deserve his attention. Let me add that this is not a surprising result under Reid's view. Reid is clear that mechanical habits can be morally good or bad.³³ Accordingly, given that Reid is committed to the claim that what is not under voluntary control is not an object of moral assessment,³⁴ it follows that the mechanical habits of the virtuous person are in some sense under his voluntary control; they are formed, shaped and sustained by his virtuous behaviour. It is thus plausible to believe that, for the virtuous person, since the mechanical habits in question are themselves the product of, and shaped and sustained by the virtuous agent's voluntary behaviour, in

³²EN VII, 1147b.

³³See EAP III.i.iii: 115.

³⁴See, in particular, the second of Reid's first 'general' principles of morals: 'What is to no degree voluntary, can neither deserve moral approbation or disapprobation' (EAP V.i: 361).

³⁰For Reid on the reliability on the virtues, see EAP II.iii: 85.

³¹See EAP II.iii: 78.

a wide range of cases, they reliably direct his attention to only those features of the world that ought to be the object of his attention.

So far, I have offered a reconstruction of Reid's view on the interconnections between passion, attention and virtue. My claim, once again, is that Reid is committed to the view that the wise and virtuous agent reliably pays attention to those features of the world that deserve it and that the passions are necessary to direct his attention to these features. I want now to suggest that Reid's views on these matters open up an avenue of argument for the conclusion that anyone who accepts these views ought to embrace the affective model.

The argument begins by noting two claims that sit uneasily together and to which Reid is committed. The first claim is that feelings do not function as reliable signs of moral reality; they do not function as inputs into the moral sense that thereby elicit warranted moral judgements. The second is that, in the case of the wise and virtuous agent, feelings function in a wide range of cases so as to direct that agent's attention reliably to morally relevant features that deserve his attention. The passages quoted from Reid suggest that they do so in two main ways. First of all, feelings can function as a general background condition that helps direct the virtuous agent's attention toward certain objects that deserve it. For example, Reid suggests that passionately caring for the truth seems to be required if an agent's attention is to be directed toward important features of his environment.³⁵ And, second, feelings often help an agent to bring some relevant feature of a situation into sharper resolution. As Reid says in one place regarding imagination,

[o]bjects, either good or ill, conceived to be very distant, when they are considered coolly, have not that influence upon men which in reason they ought to have. Imagination, like the eye, diminishes its objects in proportion to their distance. The passions of hope and fear must be raised, in order to give such objects their due magnitude in the imagination

(EAP III.ii.vi: 183-4)

The main premise of the argument I wish to develop is that, if we accept the second claim that feelings function in a wide range of cases so as to direct the virtuous agent's attention reliably to morally relevant features that deserve his attention, then we have no good reason to accept the first claim that feelings do not function as reliable signs of moral reality. Put more compactly the claim is:

The No Relevant Difference Premise: If the wise and virtuous person's feelings function so as to direct his attention reliably to moral (or morally relevant) qualities to which he ought to pay attention in a range of circumstances C, then there is no good reason to reject the claim that

³⁵See EAP III.ii.vi.

feelings can direct his attention reliably to such qualities in so far as they are signs of them in C.

Denying The No Relevant Difference Premise requires adducing some reason for thinking that, although the affections function to draw the virtuous person's attention to morally relevant qualities that deserve his attention, they nevertheless do not thereby function as reliable signs of moral reality. Reid himself does not furnish any such reason. And it is hard to see what such a reason would look like; there seems no more reason to believe that affect is more reliable in guiding an agent's attention to what is valuable when it does not function as a sign than when it does. If we grant what Reid says positively about the epistemic role of affect, then it is difficult to see a good reason to reject the affective model of moral judgement. Let us now add that not only does Reid not furnish good reasons to reject the model, but that there are also good positive reasons for endorsing it. Most important among these are the considerations I broached at the outset of this paper: the phenomenology of the moral life certainly appears to count in favour of the claim that affections can in some cases be reliable signs of moral value (or what is morally relevant). Moreover, there is even empirical evidence that suggests something similar to the affective model best captures the nature of non-moral value judgements of certain kinds. For example, recent work on the way in which we read the body language of others suggests that our feelings can alert us to evaluative features of our environment such as danger.³⁶

³⁶Consider, for example, the following non-fictional case from a recent article by Malcolm Gladwell about the ways in which we read the facial language of other people:

Some years ago, John Yarbrough was working patrol for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. It was about two in the morning. He and his partner were in the Willowbrook section of South Central Los Angeles, and they pulled over a sports car . . . Yarbrough was driving, and in a two-man patrol car the procedure is for the driver to make the approach and the officer on the passenger side to provide backup. He opened the door and stepped out onto the street, walking toward the vehicle with his weapon drawn. Suddenly, a man jumped out of the passenger side and pointed a gun directly at him. The two of them froze, separated by no more than a few yards . . . 'He was about 17. He had a gun in his right hand. He was on the curbside. I was on the other side, facing him. It was just a matter of who was going to shoot first. I remember it clear as day. But for some reason I didn't shoot him . . . Is he a danger? Sure. He's standing there with the gun, and what person in his right mind does that facing a uniformed armed policeman? If you look at it logically, I should have shot him. But logic had nothing to do with it. Something just didn't feel right. It was a gut reaction not to shoot - a hunch that at that exact moment he was not an imminent threat to me.' So Yarbrough stopped, and, sure enough, so did the kid.

(*The Naked Face*, *The New Yorker*, 5 August 2002, 38)

Yarbrough's vague feeling that something was not right issued in the judgement that the teenager was not an imminent danger to him. What occasioned the feeling? The article suggests that Yarbrough had non-consciously picked up on some very subtle body and facial language of the teenager, and this had occasioned the feeling in question. To which it should be added that this case seems not to be a fluke or lucky guess on Yarbrough's part. Yarbrough has scored remarkably well on exams administered by psychologists that test for how well one can read the body and, in particular, the facial language of other people.

These are not considerations that Reid would ignore. Reid prided himself in being a common-sense philosopher and, as Reid himself insists, being a common-sense philosopher dictates that when we formulate our moral theories we do so in such a way that they accommodate features that are an important part of our shared moral experience.³⁷ An important part of our shared moral experience, I have suggested, are cases in which feelings prompt moral judgements of various kinds and thereby function as reliable signs of value. Accordingly, fidelity to the principle that a good moral theory ought to save the appearances as best as possible gives us reason to take the affective model seriously. To which it is worth adding this: in so far as the affective model may be able to accommodate whatever is most plausible in non-cognitivist views of moral judgement – viz., that feelings play a special role in the formation of moral judgement – a Reidian realist may have additional reasons to *want* to adopt it.³⁸

I have argued that considerations of parity dictate that what Reid says positively about the epistemic role of the passions also counts in favour of the affective model of moral judgement. In order for the argument I am developing to go through, I need to address a piece of unfinished business. In particular, I need to address the worry that the affective model yields a version of moral antirealism according to which moral qualities are akin to secondary qualities. The best way to do this, I propose, is to offer a sketch of how, according to Reid's view, feelings might function as evidence of value.

The key to such an explanation is taking note of what we might call Reid's 'faculty-based' semiotics. It is Reid's view that feelings of various kinds function as signs of qualities of certain types on account of our having certain types of faculty or ability whose function or 'aim' is to draw our attention to those qualities upon having those feelings.³⁹ Put more pedantically, Reid's view is that a feeling token of kind K is a sign for a person S of a quality of kind Y if and only if there is a faculty or ability F of S's whose function is, given feelings of kind K, to draw S's attention to qualities of kind Y in circumstances C in distinct enough fashion so as to allow S to apprehend and form a *de re* judgement about instances of Y in C, and, when all goes well, reliably does so. Tactile sensations, for example, count as signs according to Reid because they

³⁷See EAP V.iv: 387.

³⁸Interestingly, Reid seems willing to grant that feelings play a special role in the formation of our first moral conceptions:

Our first moral conceptions are probably got by attending coolly to the conduct of others, and observing what moves our approbation, what our indignation. These sentiments spring from our moral faculty as naturally as the sensations of sweet and bitter from the faculty of taste.

(EAP V.ii: 372–3)

³⁹See IHM VI.xxi: 177. That Reid is committed to such a view is brought out in his repeated claim that, had God designed us differently, it would be possible that, say, tactile sensations indicate smells, olfactory sensations indicate colours, etc.

satisfy this account of the nature of signs. The reason tactile sensations function as signs for, say, an object's hardness for ordinary humans is because we have been 'programmed' in such a way that (when all goes well) these sensations draw our attention to instances of hardness so as to allow us to apprehend and form *de re* judgements about them. Similarly, sounds of certain kinds function as signs because they satisfy this account of the nature of signs. To use Reid's example, the reason a person's auditory sensation of a certain kind functions as a sign for a coach passing by is because that person has the (learned) ability to discriminate different types of sound sensations well enough so that (when all goes well) she reliably apprehends and forms *de re* judgements about the coaches that cause them.⁴⁰ Similarly, I have contended that Reid is committed to the position that, in a wide range of circumstances, feelings of certain kinds draw the attention of the virtuous agent to features of reality that deserve his attention well enough for that agent to apprehend them and form *de re* judgements about them. When such feelings function as signs, the explanation for this is that the wise and virtuous agent possesses a certain kind of ability, namely, a virtue whose 'aim' is not only to form and sustain mechanical habits in which the passions direct the virtuous agent's attention to what deserves his attention, but also to interpret these passions aright. Were a virtuous person to lack this ability (or these abilities), then, in the relevant circumstances, feelings of certain kinds would not reliably draw his attention to those things that deserve it.

It is, I suggest, Reid's faculty-based semiotics that offers us an explanation of how feelings might function as signs of value. In this case, too, the 'programming' of an agent explains why experiential inputs of certain kinds function as signs. Granted, the programming in this case is not simply the agent's native constitution; it is rather a learned disposition, a development of the moral sense. Once we see the contours of Reid's view, I think it is evident that the philosopher who adopts the affective model need not claim that feelings are constitutively connected with moral qualities in the way that the secondary quality theorist about colour tells us that colour sensations are constitutively connected with colours. She might claim instead that feelings indicate moral reality in a way similar to the manner in which tactile sensations indicate an object's hardness: tactile sensations function to indicate an object's hardness, but an object's hardness, as Reid himself emphasizes, is not simply a disposition to elicit tactile sensations of certain kinds. Similarly, feelings of certain kinds might be inputs to the moral sense and thereby indicate moral features, without it being the case that the latter are themselves simply dispositions to elicit such feelings.

⁴⁰See IHM IV.ii: 50.

In summary, my argument has been that what Reid says about the character of feelings, attention, virtue, and signs generates significant pressure to embrace the affective model of moral judgement. To be sure, the model is best understood as an account of how *virtuous* agents form moral judgements in certain types of situation. In this respect, it is limited. And, admittedly, the model sheds little light on how we should go about ascertaining when it is permissible or appropriate to trust that one's feelings accurately indicate evaluative features. But it can at least be pointed out that, if this is a problem for the affective model, then it is also a problem for Reid's official account of moral perception. For, recall that according to Reid's official model, it is the countenance and behaviour of agents that function as signs for the moral qualities of persons. However, I take it that in a large range of cases, we have no more reliable method of ascertaining when it is permissible or appropriate to trust that one has accurately discerned that behaviour of a certain kind is a sign for a moral quality than we do in determining that feelings of a certain kind accurately reveal evaluative qualities. Indeed, in both cases, we are sometimes not even consciously aware of or have names for the signs that generate moral judgement.⁴¹

Discerning whether experiential inputs of certain kinds function as reliable signs for moral reality, then, requires paying attention to the complexity of one's moral situation, one's moral and epistemic habits, and so forth. Although I think what Reid says could contribute to a fuller and more adequate treatment of this issue, I want to conclude this section by considering an objection that may appear to throw into doubt what I have said about Reid's view.

The objection says that, even if certain things Reid says appear to commit him to the affective model, there is nevertheless a poor fit between the affective model and Reid's general account of moral judgement. The poor fit is supposed to be due to the fact that Reid claims that rational moral judgements are ultimately evidentially based on general moral propositions that are believed – what Reid calls 'moral first principles', some seventeen of which Reid canvasses in the *Active Powers*.⁴² However, Reid never canvasses any first principles of morality that tell us that feelings function so as reliably to indicate moral value (or morally relevant features). Consequently, it is difficult to see, according to Reid's view, how moral judgements that are causally or logically based on feelings could be entitled or rational.

While I do not deny that one could interpret Reid to claim that all moral judgements are evidentially based on moral first principles, it seems to me that this would be to misconstrue Reid's considered position. Reid should be understood to claim that all moral *reasoning* is evidentially grounded on first principles, not that all immediately warranted or entitled moral judgements formed in cases of moral perception are evidentially based on moral first principles.⁴³ A better way to interpret what Reid says – indeed, what appears to me to be the only way to make sense of what Reid says about moral perception – is this: in cases of moral perception, moral first principles function in a similar fashion to the way in which the first principles of common sense function in cases of the perception of external objects. When an agent forms the immediately entitled belief that, say, the table he is touching is hard, his belief is not evidentially based on the belief that his perceptual faculties are reliable. If anything, the proposition *that the particular deliverances of his perceptual faculties are the product of a reliable belief forming process* is something that this agent takes for granted in his everyday activities, but does not explicitly or occurrently believe. It does not, therefore, function as an evidential basis for his belief that the table he is touching is hard.⁴⁴ Similarly, the first principle *that we ought to prefer a greater good, though more distant, to a lesser* is not something that ordinarily evidentially grounds the moral judgements formed in cases of moral perception (although, again, it can function to ground moral judgements formed on the basis of moral reasoning). Rather, it is something that is part of a background or horizon of propositions that an agent takes for granted in her ordinary activities, but is not something that she explicitly or occurrently believes in cases of moral perception. Indeed, one way to interpret what I have argued in this essay is that, given what Reid says positively about the affections, among the propositions that the virtuous agent takes for granted in ordinary life is that feelings of certain kinds in certain types of situation are reliable indicators of value. Since such a proposition is not held in common by all competent adults, it is not a first principle of morality. But that is as it should be, for it explains why such a proposition is not included among Reid's list of first principles.

⁴³See EAP V.i: 360. I might add, incidentally, that Reid claims that he intends 'to point out some of the first principles of morals, without pretending to a complete enumeration' (EAP V.i: 361).

⁴⁴This interpretation of Reid is defended in ch. IX of Wolterstorff's *Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology*. Granted, if the agent were particularly reflective, he might cite such a proposition in support of his belief that the table he is touching is hard; but that would not establish that the proposition itself plays the evidential role of supporting his perceptual belief. We, on reflection, sometimes cite considerations in support of a belief that did not actually function evidentially to ground that belief.

⁴¹See what Reid has to say about sensations in general at IHM VI.xx: 168. Also see Reid's account of 'instinctive' aesthetic perception in which case some quality delights us, but we know not what (EIP VIII.vi: 596–8).

⁴²See EAP V.i. In several places in his book, *Thomas Reid: Ethics, Aesthetics and the Autonomy of the Self* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998), Roger Gallie appears to attribute this view to Reid. See xi and 86, but also see 105.

CONCLUSION

There is an interesting asymmetry between Reid's treatment of reason and feeling in the *Inquiry* and the *Intellectual Powers* and his treatment of it in the *Active Powers*. In the former two works, Reid's tendency is to highlight the limitations of reason and the importance of sensation in our knowledge of the world. Reid writes that, though the evidence of reason (e.g., evidence from self-evident propositions) seems to him the least mysterious, it is in scanty supply. The bulk of a person's knowledge of the external world comes 'by another channel, which is open to those who cannot reason. He is led to it in the dark, and knows not how he came to it' (EIP II.xx: 233). The other 'channel' of which Reid speaks is (in part) the senses that yield a diverse lot of sensations that convey information to us about the world. We do not know how these sensations convey such information, but they do; and 'it is ridiculous to doubt' their deliverances (ibid.).

In the *Active Powers*, the tenor of Reid's discussion is different. Here Reid highlights the importance of reason and the limitations of affect for our knowledge of the moral realm. Whereas in the *Intellectual Powers*, Reid is generally unimpressed by the sceptic's insistence that the senses habitually deceive us, he is very impressed by the manner in which affect skews moral judgement – and this in spite of the fact that he says that it is by accident that passion 'leads us wrong' (EAP III.ii.vi: 183). In the moral sphere, it is not at all ridiculous to doubt the epistemic deliverances of affect.

This asymmetry is not a contradiction. I am not even sure that it is an objectionable tension. But it is somewhat surprising. We might have expected that the tenor of Reid's anti-rationalism in the *Inquiry* and the *Intellectual Powers* would have been more forcefully expressed in his moral epistemology in the *Active Powers*. Given his commitment to the view that, by a law of our constitution, feelings of various sorts can convey information about the world utterly dissimilar to those feelings themselves, we might have expected that the affective model of moral judgement would have had greater appeal for Reid than it did. My suspicion is that, surprising or not, there are various reasons why the asymmetry stands in Reid's thought. One reason why the asymmetry stands is that the affective model is most attractive when it is viewed as one manner in which the virtuous agent forms her beliefs. As such, it offers us an account of how virtuous agents can reliably form true moral judgements. Throughout both the *Essays*, however, Reid's eye is on the *ordinary* person. Indeed, it is Reid's habit to emphasize that what morally should be done is ordinarily obvious to the plain person.⁴⁵ However, the affective model is not as plausible an account of how the ordinary person

reliably forms moral judgements as it is an account of how the virtuous person does. And the kinds of judgement affect yields often are not of the type that are just obviously correct; affect is often a subtle inducement to moral awareness. In light of this, it is natural to speculate whether Reid's emphasis on the ordinary and the commonsensical helped him (nearly) to miss one way in which affect reliably reveals the moral landscape.⁴⁶

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⁴⁵See, e.g., EAP III.iii.v: 235.

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