What is Emotion?

And is it Necessary and Sufficient for Moral Judgments?

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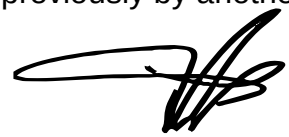
I declare that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. In addition, it contains no material written or published previously by another person, except where references are made within the thesis.



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Introduction

In recent years, Humean sentimentalism that grounds moral judgments in sentiments has enjoyed resurgence. One contributing factor may be the works of the prominent philosopher Jesse Prinz. He has employed many neuroscientific and psychological studies to argue that moral judgments are emotional constructs. He has notably claimed that emotion is necessary and sufficient for moral judgments.

I agree with Prinz that emotions play an essential role in our lives; but I disagree that moral judgments are essentially grounded in emotions. Instead, I claim that moral judgments are grounded in many ways that we interact with our environment such as cognition, perception, intuition, experience, as well as emotion.

This thesis explores Prinz's evidences for his claim. It is divided into three chapters. The aim of the first chapter is to give an understanding of what Prinz means by emotion. His view of emotion is called non-cognitive because he claims emotions are elicited primarily without the employment of cognition. Since non-cognitive view is the negation of cognitive view, as the name suggests, I will briefly explain cognitivist view of emotion in the beginning of chapter to clarify some of Prinz's views, as he refers to cognitivism in his statements repeatedly. I believe that understanding these two views will be also helpful in order to follow the arguments in the subsequent chapters. In addition, several terms such as bodily changes, cognitive appraisal, cognition, and emotion among others are explained for the same reason. In this chapter, I will also examine whether emotion requires cognition, and whether it has a specific function.

In the second chapter, Prinz's claim and his empirical reasons for his claim are explained. I will begin the chapter with Hume's ethical stance to provide a conceptual

angle to Prinz's mainly empirically constructed approach. Next, Hume's two main arguments for the separation of emotion and reason, and his subsequent preference for emotion will be discussed. Then, I will explore the dumbfounding cases which, according to Prinz, satisfy the sufficiency condition of emotion for moral judgment. Furthermore, I will explicate Prinz's three main reasons for his necessity claim viz. children moral development, psychopathy and divergence of moral values. In addition, I will expound sentimentalism theory of right, and its connotation of moral relativism. I will include some of the advantages of sentimentalism that in Prinz's view make it the obvious choice in comparison with other ethical stances.

In the final chapter, I will assess Prinz's findings. I will conclude that the separation of emotion and reason is not supported by our scientific studies. I also hope to establish that many of his empirical validations for his claim of emotion being necessary and sufficient for moral judgment are not conclusive. Moreover, I will attempt to demonstrate that his constructive sentimentalism (meta-ethical cultural relativism) has unappealing normative consequences.

Chapter 1 What is emotion?

One of the most important aspects of the human life that affords quality and meaning to our existence is our emotions. “Emotions are what we live for, and at times die for. Thus it is not surprising that many great philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Descartes, Hobbes and Hume have spent much effort constructing and formulating theories of emotion,” (de Sausa, 2013, 1). In recent times, many psychologists such as Paul Ekman and Richard Lazarus, and neuroscientists such as Antonio Damasio and Kristen Gilchrist have also spent years researching human emotions, seeking to understand them at a greater depth. However, what is surprising is that despite all these efforts, there is no consensus over even a definition for emotion. One reason for this may be that studying emotions covers physiological and neuro-psychological states as well as adaptive dispositions and social processes. In other words, studying human emotions is rather complex because it is not an exact science.

1.1 Two Accounts of Emotion

I do not intend to investigate various accounts of emotion; as such a task is well beyond the scope of my aim. I intend to examine two influential contemporary accounts of emotion. The reason I have chosen these two accounts is that these two accounts encompass the entire spectrum of cognitivism to non-cognitivism, and the majority of other accounts can fit relatively well within these two. While there are nuances in either side of the spectrum, they are inconsequential for the purpose of this thesis. I stress that my aim here is to provide some rudimentary background information regarding Prinz’s non-cognitivist account of emotion, necessary for

understanding his claims. Since non-cognitivist account is the negation of cognitivist account, I will briefly explore cognitivist account to ensure both accounts are clearly differentiated and understood.

The account that Prinz defends is non-cognitive which simply defines emotion as a reaction to bodily changes. I have chosen Lazarus' cognitive view of emotion to contrast with that of Prinz's. The reason for this choice is that Prinz himself uses Lazarus' remarks extensively (to contrast against his own) in his two books of *Gut Reaction* and *Emotional Construct of Morals*. Another reason is that Lazarus is a contemporary influential psychologist with decades of practical experience in the field of emotions. He has also published several books and articles claiming that cognitive appraisals are the most important part of eliciting emotions.

Remarkably, these two accounts which at first glance seem to sit at the opposite ends of spectrum do indeed have some common grounds. In my view, both these accounts are also plausible.

The main difference between these two accounts, suggestive by their names, is the role of cognition in their respective theories. Cognitive theories claim that cognition is the most important factor for an emotional episode; while non-cognitive theories claim that cognition is neither necessary nor sufficient for emotion.

1.1.1 Cognitivist Account

For cognitivists, emotion is more than just the feeling of emotion. According to them, to understand emotion adequately, we must fathom how any emotion is generated

and what it drives us to do. Cognitive theory of emotion claims that emotion consists of more than just one element. Generally speaking, these elements are a combination of cognition, bodily changes, cognitive appraisals, and action tendencies (Lazarus, 1994, 139). One of the most prominent contemporary psychologists who has contributed much to understanding and expounding of our emotions is Richard Lazarus.

Lazarus argues that any emotion consists of six psychological ingredients. “They include: the fate of personal goals; self or ego; appraisals; personal meanings; provocations; and action tendencies,” (Ibid).

For him, two motivational factors are necessary to arouse an emotion. First, an event must transform a routine encounter into one that involves harm or benefit, something we wish to happen or not happen. Second, the way we judge the fate of a goal determines whether the emotion is positive or negative.

Now let us briefly consider the six aforementioned elements.[1] Self or ego is the executive in charge of our affairs; what binds our many tendencies and keeps us moving forward consistently. Appraisal is an evaluative (cognitive) judgement of an occurrence for our well-being; it is the process of reasoning on which emotions depend, the heart of emotion process. Personal meaning, which is what arouses our emotions, is the product of an appraisal, and is different from a person to another. This personal attachment of meaning to events explains why people show different emotions under the same situation such as an exam. Some might exhibit anxiety, others indifference or even delight. Provocation refers to an event, involving either

[1] I do not intend to discuss these six elements. My intention is to give a brief summary of these elements to draw attention to the complexity of emotion based on the cognitive view as opposed to non-cognitive view that regards emotion as a simple phenomenon of a reaction to bodily changes.

the physical or social environment that is deemed significant by the individual who experiences it. Emotions engender biological tendencies to act in a certain way. For example when we feel fearful of an attacker, our fear causes us to either flee or fight based on our appraisal of the situation (Lazarus, 1994, 139-150). For example, countering a poisonous snake, we may feel the fear generated by the thought of getting bitten, appraising different parameters cognitively such as our distance to the snake and its relative lack of agility, we may decide to outrun the snake. Conversely, cornered by a vicious dog, we may conclude that outrunning it is not a viable option; and perhaps the right course of action is to confront it.

Based on these six ingredients of emotion, Lazarus defines emotion as such:

> Emotions are complex reactions that engage both our minds and bodies. These reactions include: a subjective mental state such as the feeling of anger, anxiety, or love; an impulse to act such as fleeing or attacking; and profound changes in the body such as increased heart rate or blood pressure. Some of these bodily changes prepare us for and sustained coping actions, and others such as postures, gestures and facial expressions communicate to others what we feel, or want others to believe what we are feeling. An emotion is a personal life drama, which has to do with the fate of our goals in a particular encounter and our beliefs about ourselves and the world we live in. It is aroused by an appraisal of the personal significance or meaning of what is happening in that encounter. The dramatic plot differs from one emotion to another, each emotion having its own particular story (Lazarus, 1994, 151).

For Lazarus, these ingredients are not tantamount to emotions but necessary conditions for emotions. For him, emotions are “psychophysiological reactions to … cognitive appraisals (1991, 38).” He also believes that emotions include action tendencies (1991, 40). His theory is considered cognitive because cognitive appraisals are the most important part of arousing an emotion (as described by Prinz, 2004, 17).

1.1.2 Non-Cognitive Account of Emotion (Jesse Prinz's Account)

The account of emotion that Prinz defends is not a new account (admitted by Prinz, 2004, 2); rather a variation of an account that was pioneered by William James (1884) and Karl Lange (1885) that recently has been brought to prominence by Antonio Damasio (1994). According to this tradition, emotions are perceptions of patterned changes in the body. More informally, emotions are gut reactions.

As opposed to Lazarus who believes that the appraisals give rise to emotions, Prinz claims that emotion is a reaction to bodily changes. According to him (2004, 4), common sense tends to assume that the bodily changes occur only after an emotion is experienced. We feel elated and our hearts race; we feel embarrassed and we blush. However, according to Prinz, this is a mistake. James and Lange arrived at the same conclusion independently that common sense gets things backwards: bodily changes precede our emotional experiences. Our hearts race and we may feel elated. Consequently, an emotion is a reaction to bodily changes. In support of their view, James and Lange proposed their readers to imagine feeling an emotion, and then imagine subtracting away the feelings of corresponding bodily states systematically. Imagine feeling elated without feeling your heart racing (2004, 4). Their point is that once bodily changes are gone, there seems to be nothing left to the emotional experience. For James, "our feeling of [bodily] changes as they occur is the emotion," (1884, p. 190). This theory is called *Somatic Feeling Theory.*

Somatic change can be a change of facial expression, an increase in heart rate, a secretion of hormones, and so on. Lange focused on the vasomotor system, which regulates blood flow. James believed that the range of bodily states underlying

emotional experience was much more comprehensive such as changes in the viscera, facial expressions and instrumental actions from tremors and tears to striking out in rage. Antonio Damasio (1994), an influential neuroscientist, agrees with James and Lange essentially that emotional experiences are experiences of changes in the body. However, according to Prinz (2004, 5-6), Damasio's theory differs in three aspects. First, Damasio expands the range of bodily changes to include changes in levels of chemicals in the brain and hormones in the body. Second, he allows for possibility of an emotional response in the absence of bodily changes when brain centres associated with bodily changes are active. The brain can enter a state and cause an emotional response as though a bodily change has occurred without the actual bodily change taking place. Third, Damasio argues that emotions are not exhausted by feelings; the brain can register changes in bodily states without conscious awareness. In other words, emotions can be unconscious.

Prinz agrees with James, Lange and Damasio that an emotion is a reaction to bodily changes. For Prinz, an emotion is a non-cognitive bodily appraisal with a valence marker (2004, 5). Valence markers are inner reinforcers that if negative they dissuade us from situations that elicit them, and if positive they encourage us to seek out the situations that provoke them (Ibid, 174).

Prinz accepts that emotions can at times facilitate actions; for example anger enables aggressive behaviour, but that does not entail that for every emotion there is a specific action, nor does it mean that emotions cause us to act every single time. According to him, emotions encourage us to choose an appropriate response to perpetuate or end the situation that induces them. Thus emotions can cause us to

act but they are not action tendencies. To stress the point, emotion and action tendency are two separate items and should not be equated as one.

Prinz agrees that some emotions are caused by cognition such as fear caused by uncertainty towards one's future; and that cognition can play a role in determining the significance of our emotions. For example, such fear can develop to anxiety or even depression due to a downturn in economy. However, he maintains that emotions can arise without cognition, and therefore, they should not be treated as one. Again to stress the point, emotion and cognition are two separate items. Simply put, emotions are embodied appraisals. Prinz's view is non-cognitivist since he believes cognition is neither necessary nor sufficient for arousing emotions.

1.1.3 Agreements and divergences

There seems to be some agreements among cognitivists and non-cognitivists concerning emotions. Emotions play an important role in our lives. They are some sort of psychological or physiological reaction to a change in our surroundings that we deem important to us. They are also meaningful and purposeful; the purpose of emotions is to maximise the chances of survival, which can be a swift response, fight or flight in case of fear when faced a threatening danger, or a coping mechanism in case of sadness when confronted with the loss of a loved one. There seems to be an agreement also about an appraisal element in experiencing emotions. In addition, both cognitivists and non-cognitivists also seem to agree that there are some basic

and universal emotions (fear, anger, happiness, sadness, disgust and surprise), that other complex emotions are constituted from.

However, there are some contentious issues as well. Prinz insists that emotions are rather simple bodily appraisals, whereas Ekman and Lazarus contend that emotions are complex cognitive appraisals: emotions have many elements such as cognition, bodily changes, appraisals and action tendencies, and not considering all these elements in experiencing emotions would simplify emotions to such a degree that renders them meaningless. Prinz contends that all these elements are causes and effects of emotions; they should not be confused with emotions.

In following section, I examine the understanding of cognition by these two accounts, and attempt to provide an answer to whether emotions involve cognition.

1.2 Do emotions require cognition?

The most contentious issue for cognitivists and non-cognitivists concerning emotions is the relevance of cognition. Lazarus claims that cognitive activity is a necessary as well as sufficient precondition of emotion (Lazarus, 1984, p. 247). Zajonc, however, argues that affect and cognition are separate and partially independent systems; and although they ordinarily function conjointly, affect can be generated without a prior cognitive process (Zajonc, 1984, 259). Prinz, following Zajonc's lead, claims that some emotions are caused by cognition, and that cognition can play a role in determining the significance of our emotions; however, he argues that emotion can

occur without cognition such as the fear induced by a loud noise (Prinz, 2004, 243). Therefore, he disagrees with Lazarus that cognition is necessary and sufficient for emotions. In this section, their reasons for their claims are examined.

Zajonc argues that emotions are phylogenetically and ontogentically prior to cognition. He points out that emotion-indicative facial expressions and behaviour can be observed in human infants and nonhuman animals without any reason for thinking they are associated with cognition. “The rabbit cannot stop to contemplate the length of the snake’s fangs or the geometry of its markings. If the rabbit is to escape, the action must be undertaken long before the completion of a simple cognitive process,” (Zajonc, 1980, p. 156). Lazarus responds by asserting that for all we know, infants and animals are making cognitive appraisals whenever they exhibit emotional responses. Just as continuity in nature demands that simpler creatures have emotions, continuity in nature demands that simpler creatures have cognition as well. In addition, as a result of its neural inheritance and experience, the rabbit already has cognitive schemata that signify danger at the sound of a slight noise in the grass. According to Lazarus, the appraisal of danger does not have to be deliberate (1984, p. 252).

As a second line of evidence, Zajonc argues that appraisal and affect are sometimes uncorrelated. For example, our judgments about people can come apart from our emotional responses to them. Correspondingly, a change in appraisal does not always translate to a change in affect. Suppose Sally gets angry at her husband for arriving late to an important function. Upon finding out

her husband's valid reason, due to an unavoidable circumstance, her anger still resists dissipation. For Zajonc, this example demonstrates the independence of cognition and emotion. According to Lazarus, such an interpretation implies that cognition is rational whereas feeling is irrational. For him, our emotions depend on beliefs whose accuracy is often irrelevant to the elicitation of those emotions. The point is that cognition cannot be equated with rationality. The cognitive appraisals that shape our emotional reactions can distort reality as well as reflect it accurately (1984, p. 253).

As a third line of evidence, Zajonc argues that emotional reaction can be established without appraisal. He offers taste aversion as an example. Studies show that an animal can develop an aversion to a food if it is injected with a nausea-inducing substance after that food is ingested. Such an aversion can be established if the substance is injected while the animal is unconscious. Zajonc takes such unconscious learning as an evidence for emotion without cognition. Furthermore, he claims that in humans, merely seeing a stimulus on one occasion can generate a preference for that stimulus on future occasions, even when one has no recollection of the first encounter. Lazarus is not convinced. For him, cognitive appraisals do not necessarily imply awareness of all the factors in any encounter. He argues that some appraisals such as preferences may utilise primitive logic, but that does not mean that they are non-cognitive. Unconscious process is a primitive, automatized process with some degree of cognitive activity (Lazarus, 1984, 253).

According to Prinz, Zajonc's final evidence is the most direct and compelling proof for emotion without cognition (Prinz, 2004, 37). Emotions, According to Zajonc, can be induced by drugs and hormones. They can also be induced by changing facial expressions. If one smiles, one's level of happiness can increase. One study (Strack et al, 1988) found subjects with a pen between their teeth, forcing a subtle grin, exhibited happier mood than other subjects holding a pen with their puckered lips, forming an inadvertent grimace. This study suggests that an emotional response can be aroused by unintended facial expressions. If Zajonc's interpretations of these cases are right, it might be the case that emotions are essentially not cognitive. Lazarus has not offered any response to these cases. One answer can be that the feelings aroused by drugs, hormones and facial expressions are not real emotions. Emotions have meaning and purpose as Prinz admits frequently, whereas a happiness generated by a forced smile or a drug does not seem to have any meaning or purpose. Imagine that every time you are hungry, just before consuming food, a bell is sounded. If you hear that bell, even though you are not hungry, your body can react as though you are about to consume food by the previously induced association; for example, your mouth could salivate. However this is not real hunger as your body does not need any food. Similarly, Zajonc's cases appear not to be the cases of real emotions. Prinz employs a better example to demonstrate independence of emotions from cognition. By better, I mean the emotion in his example is real. He argues that when someone smiles at us, we smile back and immediately feel happier (2007, 40). I agree with him that in this example, the emotion of happiness at observing a stranger smiling at us is real. However, our happiness can be caused by our values that regard friendliness or politeness in others in high esteem. This shows

that there is a degree of appraisal and cognitive activity at work in Prinz's example. In order to prove the point further, for example, we might not smile back at someone that we regard as an enemy. At the conclusion of a soccer match, the fans of a losing team would not smile at the happiness portrayed by the opposition fans.

Earlier in this section, I mentioned that Prinz's claim that the fear experienced by a loud noise proves that emotion can be elicited without cognition. However, the response to a loud noise is startle and startle is not an emotion. Startle, according to Lazarus, is a primitive neural reflex process; it signals that something has happened, and although it can precipitate a true emotional response such as fear, it is in itself merely a physiological response to an unanticipated change, similar to an eye blink in response to a sudden burst of light (Lazarus, 1984, 253).[2]

Thus far we have used the term cognition under assumption that it may have the same meaning for Prinz and Lazarus. I do not believe this to be the case as presented by following arguments in the next paragraphs. I do not suggest that if their understanding of cognition were the same, their theories of emotion would overlap. However they may not be as far apart as they are now. Prinz, for example, has a rather specific notion of cognition in mind; whereas Lazarus understands cognition in a broader sense. For us, this difference in interpretation is essential in understanding them; for example, when Prinz contends that

[2] See Ekman p., Expression and the Nature of Emotion, 1984, pp. 328-329, for a detailed account of startle as a preemotional state due to its simpler organization and expression in comparison to true emotions.

cognition is not necessary for emotion, he does not mean the same cognition that Lazarus claims to be necessary and sufficient for emotion.

As we saw earlier (1.2), Lazarus does not believe that cognition can be confused with awareness, rationality or deliberation. It should be noted that conscious thinking, rationalising and deliberation are all acts of cognition; but according to Lazarus, they should not be equated to cognition. Another point drawn from him is that unconscious cognition is possible. Zajonc is in agreement with Lazarus that consciousness access should not be equated with cognition. Prinz provides a good example to justify why Zajonc is right: “Consider the incubation effect. After consciously thinking about a problem for some time, one sometimes gives up trying, and then suddenly the answer pops in one’s head … The processing that gives rise to the solution is not reportable or controllable, but it answers to an ordinary notion of being cognitive,” (Prinz, 2004, 42). Prinz defines cognitive states as processes that exploit representations that are under the control of an organism rather than the control of environment (p. 46). He explicitly explains what he means by control. “A representation under organism’s control is a representation in or drawn from memory,” (Ibid). Slightly later, Prinz narrows his definition of control even further:

> It may also turn out that certain representations fairly far from the sensory periphery are outside of organismic control. It is well known that recognition far exceeds recall. I cannot perfectly recall the face of Rosalind Carter, the former first lady, but I could recognise her. The representations by which I recognise her may not be under my control. Perhaps many mental representations are like this. They aid us in making our way through the world, but we cannot manipulate them by act of will, as it were (p 49).

If my interpretation of Prinz is right, unconscious cognition is not possible since it is outside the control and manipulation of organisms. If this is right, in my opinion, he has contradicted himself with his incubation example. Nonetheless he is very clear in asserting that emotions are not cognitive because they are not under cognitive control (Ibid). In contrast, Lazarus understands emotions as "a reflection of a person's ongoing appraisal of information for one's well-being, rather than being merely fortuitously conditioned to physical stimuli," (1984, p. 224).

In my opinion, Prinz has a narrow view of cognition. We tend to accomplish many tasks automatically without thinking about them. At some point, we have employed our cognition to learn how to do those tasks and then submitted them to our subconscious so we do not need to think unnecessarily. Therefore, subconscious cognition cannot be non-cognition. It is cognition in a lower level.

In the subsequent section, the function of emotions will be examined.

1.3 Functions of emotion

As I previously mentioned (1.1.3), both cognitivists and non-cognitivists believe that emotions are meaningful and purposeful. Both camps seem to view emotion as an interface between an organism and its environment, negotiating between constantly changing circumstances and the individual's behavioural responses.

The emotional processes generally follow a linear progression. They have three individual and important phases. The trichotomous phases of emotional process are:

first, an unanticipated event occurs that is perceived important by the organism (this event can be either external or internal); second, the evaluation (either cognitive or bodily) of the event or stimuli for the organism's needs and goals; and third, the preparation for action, physiological or psychological, in response to the event or stimuli. According to Klaus Scherer (1984, 295), the flexibility of the behavioural adaptation of organisms to their environment is largely due to emotion processes. For him, emotions decouple the behavioural reactions from the stimulus event by replacing rigid reflex-like stimulus response pattern or instinctive mechanisms. As higher species evolve, they develop a need for complex information processing together with greater flexibility and variability of behavioural inventories. In order to achieve this, the organism requires a mechanism to allow for an adequate adaptation of its response to changing environment. In organisms capable of emotions, reflexive mechanisms are replaced by evaluative emotional processes. This process allows constant evaluation of complex stimuli and events quickly because preparation of the response is a part of the emotion process. In short, according to Scherer, the major function of emotion is the constant evaluation of external and internal stimuli in terms of the relevance for the organism and the preparation of behavioural reactions as a response to those stimuli. In other words, emotions are adaptive and learned capacities to maximise the survival of an organism.

Scherer's claims appear to be in line with cognitivists such as Ekman and Lazarus, and also non-cognitivists such as Zajonc and Prinz. As we have seen before (1.1.1), Lazarus in defining emotion asserts that for an emotion to arise first, an event must transform a routine encounter into one that involves harm or benefit, something we

wish to happen or not happen; second, the way we judge the fate of the goal determines whether the emotion is positive or negative. He also believes that emotions engender biological tendencies to act in a certain way. For example when we feel fearful of an attacker, our fear causes us to either flee or fight based on our appraisal of the situation. Prinz is in agreement, but he contends that the evaluations are not necessarily cognitive.

The question that may arise here is this: are all emotions beneficial? While it is rather easy to understand how fear can be advantageous for survival of an organism; it might not be as easy for other emotions such as sadness, love and jealousy. For Prinz, “sadness has been evolved as a response to loss. Bad weather, failures of achievement, loss of a friend, and cool treatment from a lover can all sadden us. For example, bad weather signals a potential reduction in accessibility of essential resources” (2007, 62). All of above-mentioned reasons for sadness pose a threat to well-being, and thereby it is advantageous to seek coping strategies to minimise the threats imposed upon the affected individual. Similarly, love strengthens the bond and commitment among couples to ensure the safety and well-being of their offspring. It also encourages couples to stay with each other, and not leave as soon as a better partner emerges. Likewise, Jealousy provides an incentive to fight against a threat for an individual’s well-being (Prinz, 2007, p. 62; Prinz, 2004, pp. 119-121).

In this chapter, I have attempted to provide an overview of two theories of emotion in order to assuage confusion in the forthcoming chapters when we consider the role of

emotions for moral judgments. In summary, cognitivism views emotions as a whole; many elements are included in the emotional process, from the moment an organism determines an event emotional until a corresponding action is carried out. Non-cognitivism, in contrast, views emotions as a part; emotion is the reaction to bodily changes upon perception of an event as important; other parts are causes and effect of emotions. The two camps diverge extensively when considering the role of cognition in eliciting emotion, but converge in the function of emotion, that is, the evaluation of stimuli considered important to us and the preparation of behavioural reactions to maximise our chances of survival.

In the next chapter, I will attempt to explain why Prinz claims that emotion is necessary and sufficient for moral judgments. In order to establish his claims and reasons for his claims accurately, I will keep my comments to minimum. As a matter of fact, I will try to make his case as strong as possible, where I can, to do justice to his claims. I will assess his theory in chapter 3.

Chapter 2 Is emotion necessary and sufficient for moral judgment?

How does one determine whether an action is morally right or wrong? Moral theorists who attempt to answer this question are generally divided into three groups. Some argue that moral principles are requirements of reason. Philosophers, such as Kant, Hobbes and Locke claim that indeed rationality determines if an action is good or bad. Others, such as Filmer and Pufendorf believe that only God's will can reveal such principles. Yet others, such as Hutcheson and Shaftsbury argue that a moral sense, an emotional responsiveness, manifesting itself in approval or disapproval, can differentiate what is morally right from wrong.

David Hume sides with the last group. For him, moral judgments are formed through the pleasure of approval and uneasiness of disapproval when we contemplate an action from an unbiased point of view. Hume claims that reason is needed to discover the facts of any situation, but it is insufficient to yield a judgment that something is virtuous or vicious.

In this chapter, I attempt to answer the second part of my thesis' question: is emotion necessary and sufficient for moral judgment? Jesse Prinz believes that the answer to this question is a decisive affirmative. He considers himself to be a sentimentalist and a Humean in essence. He attempts to substantiate his ethical stance, almost exclusively, through psychological and neuroscientific experiments and studies. For these reasons, I think it might be worthwhile to understand Hume's theoretical sentimentalism before trying to unpack Prinz's views. I will explain Hume's sentimentalism briefly in order to add a theoretical angle to Prinz's mostly empirically grounded claims. My intention is not to either prove or disprove Hume's ethical

claims. My focus will be primarily on Prinz's claims, since he has been credited with reviving sentimentalism. Prinz's sentimentalism while essentially Humean, departs from Hume in some major aspects.

2.1 Humean Ethical Stance

"Hume's position in ethics, which is established on his empiricist theory of mind, is noted for claiming three theses: 1- Reason alone cannot be a motive to the will, but rather is slave of passions; 2- Moral distinctions are not derived from reason; and 3- Moral distinctions are derived from sentiments: feelings of approval such as esteem and praise, and disapproval such as blame felt by one who considers a character trait or an action," (Cohen, 2010, 1).

Hume argues that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will, and that reason alone can never oppose passion in the direction of the will (*Treatise*, Book 2. Chapter 3. Section 3). According to him, reason provides information, in particular about means to our ends, and that makes only a slight difference to the direction of the will. His point is that "reason alone cannot move us to act; the impulse to act itself must come from passion" (Cohen, 2010, 4). For him, reason pursues knowledge and causal relations in order to achieve the passions' goals, and as such it is slave of the passions. But how does he substantiate this claim?

Hume attempts to prove his claim by two different sets of arguments: empirical and representation. The Empirical Argument asserts that when we anticipate pain or pleasure from some source, we feel aversion or propensity to the object, and are motivated to avoid or embrace what will give us the pain or pleasure (*Treatise*, 2. 3.

3; Cohen, 2010, 5). Our aversion or propensity makes us seek the causes of pain and pleasure, we use reasoning to discover what they are. Once we do, our impulse naturally extends itself to those causes, and we act to avoid or embrace them. In other words, the impulse to act does not arise from the reasoning but only directed by it (Ibid). The aim of the Representation Argument is to demonstrate that a passion cannot be opposed by or contradictory to reason. According to Hume, passions do not refer to other entities; they are "original existences," (T. 2. 3. 3;), "original facts and realities" (Ibid), not mental representations of other things. As opposed to passions, reason consists in representation of ideas. Therefore, a passion, not having this feature, cannot be opposed by reason (As related in Cohen, 2010, 7). Hume draws two conclusions from this argument: first, passions cannot be reasonable or unreasonable; and second, "reason cannot immediately prevent or produce any action by contradicting or approving of it," (T, 2. 3. 3).

As we have seen, according to Hume, reason alone can never immediately prevent or produce any action by contradicting or approving it. However, moral judgments influence our passions and actions; we are frequently persuaded or discouraged by our opinions of justice or injustice. Hume concludes that moral judgments are different from reasonableness or unreasonableness, and hence they cannot be derived from reason alone. For Hume, it is impossible to distinguish between good and evil from reason alone (T, 3. 1. 1; Cohen, 2010, 7).

"Hume claims that moral distinctions are not derived from reason but rather from sentiment," (Cohen, 2010, 7). He argues against moral rationalists who claim that moral properties are discovered by reason, and also purporting that what is morally

good is in accord with reason and what is morally evil is opposed to reason. For Hume, some of our beliefs might be influenced by reason but not by reason alone; our moral judgments are primarily derived by our sense perception. In addition, Hume grounds morality in sympathy. For Hume, the compass of morality is sympathy. “No quality of human nature is more remarkable … than that propensity we have to sympathise with others,” (T, 2. 1. 11).

Jesse Prinz, a Humean sentimentalist, does not agree with some of Hume’s conclusions. For example, Prinz claims that emotions have concerns and thereby they are evaluative. Whereas Hume claims that passions cannot be judged right or wrong. For Prinz (2007, 62), emotions are reliably caused by bodily changes but they also represent concerns such as loss and danger in cases of sadness and fear. “Fear can be triggered by hearing a loud noise, feeling a sudden loss of support, seeing a snake or perceiving a looming danger,” (Ibid, 63). Each of these inner states can represent a mental file (what he calls a calibration file) that is capable of causing the bodily pattern we experience as fear. “These calibration files contain a wide range of representations, both cognitive and non-cognitive, and these representations can change over time,” (Ibid). According to Prinz, these calibration files are not components of emotions; the representations in these files are triggers of emotions and occur prior to the onset of emotions. However, since emotions are triggered by mental files representing concerns, these concerns and their associated emotions can be judged as correct or incorrect. If one fears a caged snake, one’s emotion may be judged an error, but the fear experienced from an approaching venomous viper is perfectly justified. Therefore, emotions are evaluative; emotions can be justified or unjustified, reasonable or unreasonable. Prinz also argues against

the primary role of sympathy as the grounding source of morality for Hume. According to Prinz, Hume places too much emphasis on sympathetic responses. “We can morally condemn an action without thinking about a victim, and that sometimes we think about victims only after an action has been condemned,” (Prinz, 2007, 98). In the subsequent sections, I will introduce Prinz’s sentimentalism and explain his reasons for his claims.

2.2 Sentiment

Sentimentalism is a view that claims that there is an essential role between emotions and moral judgments. David Hume, Frances Hutcheson and Adam Smith are the early theorists credited as the founders of this view. For these thinkers as well their contemporary advocates such as Jesse Prinz and Michael Slote, sentiments influence our judgment of an action as good or bad (right or wrong) rather than reason. I think we should define sentiment at this stage in order to circumvent any confusion.

Prinz employs the term sentiment to refer to an “emotional disposition,” (Prinz, 2007, 84). For example, care is a sentiment; other examples include liking, disliking, loving, hating and resenting. When one likes something, one is happy when that thing is attained or near, and sad when lost or far away. For Prinz, sentiments are real, physically implemented states of mind (Ibid, 85). “A disposition in psychology can be identified with encodings in long-term memory that can be retrieved by working memory, and manifested there during explicit mental processing. In neuroscientific terms, a disposition is often identified with connections between neurons that can activate the assemblies of neurons that they connect,” (Ibid). A

sentiment is therefore, a disposition whose occurrent manifestations (working memory encodings or neural activation patterns) are emotions. In other words, emotions are the manifestation of sentiments. If one has a positive sentiment towards justice; one is filled with contempt when an unjust act is occurred. For Prinz, sentiments are the backbone of morality (Ibid, 86).

2.3 The link between emotions and moral judgments

According to Prinz, one of the most obvious reasons that sentimentalism has to be taken seriously is that moral judgments are often accompanied by emotions. We seem to feel the effects of emotions when we are informed by media of severe acts of cruelty such as ethnic cleansing, war atrocities, paedophilia, and so on. Our emotions gather intensity as we perceive a crime particularly immoral. The more immoral an act is perceived, the stronger our emotional response appears to be. For example, we deem crimes against defenceless children worse than crimes against adults, and subsequently we exhibit stronger emotional responses towards them (2007, 21).

The emotional impact of moral judgments is apparent from the fact that we tend to avoid socially bad behaviour even though some bad behaviour can be instrumental for our success, and thereby advantageous for our materialistic wellbeing. Cheating in an exam, taking credit for an idea or action initiated by a subordinate, stealing from others when there is no possibility of getting caught are examples of such behaviour that the majority would avoid in their daily affairs. The reason: these kinds of behaviour make us feel bad.

This point was clearly demonstrated by an experiment conducted by Stanley Milgram in early 1970 (as related in Prinz, 2007, 21-22). He asked a number of his students to get on a train and ask people to give them their seats. These students were supposed to ask a total number of twenty people and record their findings. The majority of students stopped after asking one or two people; only one persisted with the experiment. However, even he could not finish the exact number requested by Milgram. They all reported an intolerable anguish experienced during the experiment; albeit the majority of people were quite happy to give their seats generously. Frustrated by his students' lack of commitment, Milgram took it upon himself to accomplish his own experiment. He reiterated his feelings after his first request was obliged by a man as such, "I actually felt as I was going to perish," (Blass, 2004, 174). The experiment reveals that when we violate a moral law, we suffer an emotional cost.

Jesse Prinz concludes from this experiment and other similar empirical studies that moral judgments are constituted by emotional responses (Prinz, 2007, 22). He also claims that emotions influence moral judgments. One way he hopes to prove this is by drawing attentions to moral intuitions about killing and letting die. According to him, and justifiably in my opinion, we tend to think that killing is morally more reprehensible than letting die. But why is that? Prinz believes that killing arouses stronger negative emotions (Ibid, 23). If your actions allow someone to die, and killing that person is not your primary intention, it is possible for you to divert your focus from the victim and onto the primary intention. However, if your primary intention is to kill someone, then it is harder to overlook the victim and ineluctable negative emotions attached to that action.

Prinz employs this intuition to explain different Trolley Thought Experiments (Thomson, 1976). In these thought experiments, we are typically asked to compare two scenarios. In both scenarios, a trolley is heading towards five people working on the tracks. In the first scenario, one can save the five people by pulling a lever that switches the trolley to another track where only one person will be killed. In the second scenario, the trolley can be stopped by pushing someone off the bridge, onto the tracks, causing the trolley to stop. Both scenarios have the same result: one man dies to save five people. Many people find it morally permissible to switch the tracks, but impermissible to throw a man off the bridge. But why is that? According to Prinz, our answers are grounded in our emotions; we have negative feelings about killing and positive feelings about saving lives and a few feelings about letting die. When considering moral dilemmas, the stronger feeling wins; therefore, “saving trumps letting die and killing trumps saving” (Prinz, 2007, 23-24). In the first scenario, we are not actively participating in killing and by pulling the lever, we are saving five lives. However, in the second scenario, we are killing one person by throwing him off the bridge, and that action fills us with intense emotional angst. This negative emotion is what makes the second scenario morally worse than the first on, albeit causing the same result as the pulling scenario (Prinz, 2007, 24). Prinz claims that this explanation has two outcomes: first, emotions do play a significant role when considering moral judgments; and second, our intuitions about what is morally right should be influenced by changes in emotional content of the scenarios we consider. “If moral rules are grounded in emotion then factors that alter our emotions should affect our applications of those rules,” (Ibid, 25).

Greene et al (2001) used MRI (magnetic resonance imaging machines) to measure the brain activity of subjects while considering trolley cases. Emotional activity in the subjects was significantly higher in the second scenario as compared with the first. Prinz is not surprised; according to him, in the pushing scenario, subjects are in a heightened emotional state of imagining themselves killing someone intentionally, overwhelming the weaker emotions associated with saving lives. Whereas, in the pulling lever, subjects are throwing the lever to save lives and that is their primary focus.[3]

There are other studies that suggest a direct link between emotions and moral judgments. Schnall et al (2005) asked subjects to make moral evaluations of a few stories while sitting at a desk that was either filthy or tidy. Those seated at the filthy desk judged the scenarios to be worse than subjects seated at the clean desk. Lerner et al (1998) showed their subjects some film clips that were either neutral or evocative of anger. They were then asked to evaluate some minor transgressions. Subjects who viewed anger inducing clips recommended harsher penalties than the ones who viewed neutral clips. According to Prinz, such studies clearly demonstrate that emotions do affect our moral judgments (Prinz, 2007. 28).

Prinz argues that emotions are constituents of moral judgments. If they are not, then they must be a causal influence; if that is the case then they would be neither

[3] A caveat might be necessary here. The trolley cases were purposefully devised by the virtue ethicists to demonstrate the inadequacy of their competing normative theories namely Kantian deontology and consequentialism in providing answers to these moral dilemmas (Foot, 1967; Thompson, 1976). Sentimentalism seems to have a plausible answer for these cases. However, there are other cases such as capital punishment, torture, abortion, euthanasia, and so on that sentiments might not provide an obvious answer.

sufficient nor necessary regarding moral judgments. Therefore, moral judgments are concepts above and beyond emotions and independent of them. In other words, there should be cases which we should be able to moralise without having emotions. Prinz attempts to argue against this by the concept of basic values. The notion of basic value and Prinz's corresponding arguments will be explicated in the next section.

Prinz claims that emotions are constituents of moral judgments, but he also makes a stronger claim. He claims that having a moral attitude is a matter of having an emotional disposition. If this is right then someone should be able to have a moral attitude in the absence of any rational justification. Emotional attitudes should be necessary and sufficient for moral attitudes. According to Prinz, "when pressed, people's deepest moral values are based not on decisive arguments that they discover while pondering moral questions, but on deeply inculcated sentiments," (Prinz, 2007, 28). In the following section, I will consider Prinz's evidence for affording emotion such a primary role for moral judgments.

2.4 Emotion is necessary and sufficient for moral Judgments

Thus far, Prinz has suggested that there is a strong link between emotions and moral judgments. However, as I mentioned before his claim is stronger. He claims that having a moral judgment is about having an emotional disposition towards a trait or an action (2007, 29). Simply put, emotion is necessary and sufficient for moral judgment. He employs some experiments and studies to demonstrate that we form moral judgments in absence of any other rational justification. He argues that these cases provide strong evidence to draw the conclusion that emotions are the

foundation of our moral decisions rather than reason. Let us consider some of these cases.

In one study, Wheatley and Haidt (2005) hypnotised subjects to feel disgust upon hearing the words ‘take’ or ‘often’. The subjects were then asked to morally evaluate the protagonist of various stories containing one or both trigger words. The subjects condemned any story that the trigger words were used in a negative connotation. A congressman who is ‘often’ bribed or ‘took’ bribes was deemed to have acted morally wrong. However, even a protagonist doing something neutral such as ‘a student ‘often’ picks interesting articles’, filled the subjects with disgust. They could not say why though; they claimed that he was up to something.

In another study, Murphy et al. (2000) examined moral attitudes towards consensual incest. “They asked American college students to consider a case which a brother and sister have sex. In the scenario, the siblings consent to intercourse, use contraception, enjoy the experience, and keep it a secret. Eighty percent of the subjects judged that the behaviour morally wrong; but they had great difficulty explaining why,” (Prinz, 2007, 30). Some students argued that the siblings could have deformed children; they were reminded that contraception was used. Some were worried about the effects on the community; they were reinformed that the couple in the scenario kept the affair a secret. Yet others argued that that the couple would be traumatised; but were told that the scenario specifies that they actually enjoyed the experience. The students were presented with decisive counterarguments to all their arguments. They conceded that the counterarguments were successful, but only 17 percent of students changed their initial moral

judgment. The majority declared that incest is just wrong, with or without reasons (As related in Prinz, 2007, 30).

Murphy et al. (2000) found the same pattern of responses with a scenario involving cannibalism. A woman, working late one night in a medical pathology lab, decides to cook and consume a discarded piece of a human cadaver that was donated for medical research. Once again, the subjects decided that the action was morally wrong, but could not articulate reasons to support their conclusion. According to them, cannibalism was just wrong.

Prinz draws two important conclusions from these cases. The first conclusion is taken from the last two cases known as ‘dumbfounding’ in literature. He asserts that values can be basic in a way that places them outside reason-giving game. Prinz argues that in attempting to rationalise moral questions, we would eventually get to a point that we are unable to provide a reasonable answer as to why we have some beliefs; we might say that something is just wrong. These beliefs or values, according to Prinz, are basic values; basic values provide reasons but they are not based on reasons. Consider another example, why is drunk driving wrong? The answer could be that it endangers innocent lives. Why is it wrong to endanger? Since it can cause harm to innocent people. Why is it wrong to harm innocent people? According to Prinz, at this point the question becomes odd, and many have to resort to ‘it is just wrong’ statement to justify their value (Prinz, 2007, 28-31).

The next conclusion which is drawn from all the three cases is that we can form the belief that something is morally wrong by simply having a negative emotion directed

towards it. In this sense, emotions are sufficient for moral appraisals. In the first case, the subjects felt an emotion of disgust towards a neutral action without any reason to substantiate their moral judgment. In the second and third cases, all the reasons for moral appraisals were discredited; basic values were decided to play the essential role in determining the moral judgments, and those values are demonstrated not to have their foundation in rationality (Prinz, 2006, 31). These cases show that we need only emotions to form moral judgments. Therefore, emotions are sufficient for moral judgments. But are they necessary?

In his paper *Emotional Basis of Moral Judgment* (2006, 31-33), and his book *the Emotional Construction of Morals (2007, 32-48)*, Prinz lists a few arguments to show that emotions are necessary for moral judgments. Due to parsimony, I have chosen three of his arguments that, in my opinion, are the most convincing.

The first argument is to do with moral development. Prinz argues that children need a lot of training to conform to moral rules; and parents spend a lot of time giving their children moral instructions. There are three techniques that parents use to teach their children moral values (Hoffman, 1983). One technique is power assertion: by physical punishment or threat of such punishment, kids are persuaded through fear to do the right thing. The second technique is called induction: children are distressed by being alerted to the harm they may have caused. The third technique is love withdrawal: children are made apprehensive of losing the love and affection if they do not behave. Each technique is designed to condition children to experience negative emotions in conjunction with bad behaviour. I think that Prinz's point is that if we can teach children to behave properly only through emotional stimuli, then

perhaps emotion is necessary for moral judgment. He concedes that this argument is only suggestive; it does not prove that emotion is necessary for moral judgments.

The second argument, the strongest evidence for Prinz, comes from the research on psychopaths. According to Prinz, psychopaths are perfectly intelligent and articulate people who are capable of understanding the consequences of an action without realising that it is immoral (2007, 42). “They engage in antisocial behaviour, from lying and stealing to torturing and killing, and they commit these crimes without incurring any emotional cost. When psychopathic killers hear words pertaining to violence, they do not display a normal emotional response, (Gray et al. 2003; Prinz, 2007, 42). “They also show little empathy, guilt, shame or remorse,” (Hare, 1998; Prinz, 2007, 42). “They appear not to distinguish between moral and conventional rules,” (Blair, 1997; Prinz, 2007, 44). “Blair administered the moral/conventional test on children with psychopathic tendencies, and found that these children tend to treat moral transgressions as if they were conventional,” (Prinz, Ibid). For them, morality is like etiquette; hitting and hurting another child is equal to speaking in class without raising hands. A normal person adheres to moral rules no matter what authorities say; for example, a student would not hit another child even if the teacher demanded it; however, he might speak without raising his hands if the teacher allowed it. A psychopathic student cannot make such a distinction, and treats moral rules as arbitrary convention adopted by a social group.

Prinz concludes that a deficit in moral motivation for psychopaths co-occurs with a deficit in moral competence. He believes that the deficit in moral comprehension is a direct result of the emotional deficit (Prinz, 2006, 32; Prinz, 2007, 44).

“If moral properties were not essentially emotion-involving, then there should be a way of drawing the moral/conventional distinction without appeal to emotions. Psychopaths should be able to learn the difference,” (Prinz, 2007, 46). According to Prinz, the fact that they fail to achieve this task, given their normal intelligence, suggests that the moral/conventional distinction is not possible without experiencing emotional responses. Prinz concludes that the distinction is emotional to the core. Moral judgments are only possible if we experience emotions. Therefore, emotions are necessary for moral judgments (Ibid). In the following chapter, we will see that psychopathy is not just an emotional disorder; it is rather a mental disorder.

The final argument in favour of emotion being necessary for moral judgment is from anthropological records. Prinz argues that if moral judgments were based on something other than emotion, such as reason, we would expect more moral convergence cross-culturally over time. However, diverse cultures have different moral beliefs; and that demonstrates that moral values are not driven by reason. They are then must be driven by emotions. Therefore, emotions are necessary for moral judgments. I think what Prinz is claiming is this: moral judgments are either founded on emotions or reason; if they were founded on reason, different cultures should come to the same or similar values in time. They should not have different or contradictory values over the same thing. But many cultures do. Therefore, reason is not what moral judgments are founded on. Indeed, it must be emotions which are moral values are founded on. If our moral values are founded on emotion, then emotion is necessary for moral judgments. For example, Aztecs sacrificed thousands of people and consumed their bodies. Romans took pleasure in gladiatorial blood

sports for centuries. Some cultures regard marriage exclusively as a monogamous bond between a man and a woman; others practise polygamy or polyandry. Some cultures consider marriage between first cousins incestuous while others encourage it. In some societies, homosexuality is considered immoral and punishable by death, while in other cultures it is commonplace. Hence it may be plausible that moral values hinge on culturally inculcated passions. Thus the divergence of moral laws is a strong indication that emotions are necessary for moral judgments (Prinz, 2006, 33; Prinz, 2007, 189).

Up to now, we have considered empirical evidences that are suggestive of emotions playing a major role in forming our moral judgments. In subsequent section, I consider sentimentalism's theory of right and its advantages as a meta-ethical theory.

2.5 Sentimentalist theory of right

Most sentimentalist theorists agree that an action has the property of being morally wrong or right just in case there is an observer who has a sentiment of disapprobation or approbation towards it. This formulation is consistent with the view that moral properties are powers to cause emotional states. If an observer has sentiments towards certain actions, and these sentiments dispose that observer to have emotions, then the actions in question have the power to cause emotions. But who is the observer who can decide what actions are morally right or wrong?

Sentimentalists seem to have different views on this. For Hutcheson and Hume, the observer has to be a virtuous character. Hutcheson claims that benevolence is the

source of all virtues; benevolence is what motivates us to treat others well. Therefore, benevolence is the moral motivator and only a benevolent person can judge an action morally right or wrong. Hume agrees with Hutcheson that right and wrong are determined by emotional responses of a person of character; however, he thinks sympathy is more fundamental than benevolence: sympathy is the cause of benevolence. We are motivated to help those in need, because we sympathise with their suffering. Hume also claims that sympathy grounds the virtue of justice. According to Hume, sympathetic feelings motivate us to behave justly and condemn injustice. Therefore, a man of character, "a man of temper and judgment," is a sympathetic man (Hume, 1739, 312; Prinz, 2007, 104). Some sentimental theorists have suggested a normal or ideal observer. A normal observer is a well-informed and unbiased person. According to Michael Slote, an ideal observer is an impartial, benevolent, well-informed, calm spectator (Slote, 2010, 48).

Prinz agrees with Hume in criticising Hutcheson for inflating the role of benevolence as a moral motivator. However Prinz thinks that Hume can be accused of doing the same thing with sympathy. For Prinz, sympathy is only a weak moral motivator, particularly when helping others carries significant cost. He believes that other emotions such as guilt and anger can be stronger moral motivators (Prinz, 2007, 104). I think Prinz is right because there are cases where actions can be morally judged in absence of any direct victims. For example, tax evasion is a crime without a direct victim to sympathise with; however, many can suffer due to the lack of services such as hospital care and education should tax evasion becomes commonplace in a society. Moral judgment against people and industries that commit environmental crime is another example that does not rely on sympathy

since such crimes have no direct victims. Prinz also disagrees that the observer has to possess particular character traits. Character traits such as normal, just, impartial, benevolent and ideal are not only vague but also imply that there are objective virtues outside our psychology; something that he denies strongly (2007, 157).[4] Prinz suggests eliminating all the conditions for the observer, allowing any observer with a sentiment to be sufficient. He does realise that his formulation introduces a strong form of relativism, but he believes that within a culture most observers come to the same conclusions (2007, 92).

In the next section we shall consider why sentimentalism is appealing.

2.6 Advantages of Sentimentalism

Prinz believes that there are three main advantages for sentimentalism over other ethical stances. These advantages are due to the fact that morality is regarded as social science and not something chimerical. Prinz argues that morality comes from us and no other mysterious power or concepts such as God, religion or metaphysical ideas. In other words, morality is our construct.

The first advantage is that sentimentalism accommodates the evidence used to support moral intuitionism without taking on any of the baggage associated with other moral views. Rather than constructing moral values on a single moral principle (happiness for consequentialism; universalisation of moral values for Kantian deontology), multiple values can be discovered by intuition without drawing any inferences. In this way, according to Prinz, we do not need weird metaphysics and epistemology to discover moral facts; they can be known by intuition and observation

[4] For a detailed account against virtue ethics, see Prinz, *the Emotional Construction of Morals*, pp. 152-157.

rather than mysterious ways. This is what Prinz calls the plurality of basic values, such as emotional dispositions (sentiments) against killing or incest (Prinz, 2007, 87). It should be noted that intuition is not a mysterious faculty for Prinz; it is an instance of mundane capacity to introspect on our emotional states, what he calls gut reaction. In this sense, moral judgments are also self-satisfying, because the emotions we experience when we grasp those judgments are responsible for making those judgments true; moral facts are the consequences of our emotional reactions.

The second advantage is that moral judgments have prescriptive powers. When I judge one's action to be wrong, I will experience a form of disapprobation that is directed at that person. My disapprobation does not merely describe what one has done; it prescribes that one should act otherwise. Therefore, moral judgments act as motivating incentives for moral conduct (Ibid, 89).

The final advantage is that sentimentalism provides answers to critiques such as Mackie (1977) who argues that moral facts are odd and non-existent. "Mackie claims that moral concepts are hopelessly confused. On the one hand, we act as if moral facts are part of the fabric of the world. On the other hand, we tend to think that moral facts are action-guiding. These assumptions, according to Mackie, are difficult to reconcile. For him, we have no reason to think that moral properties exist; moral properties are false and vacuous. They are no more real than fairies and phlogiston," (Prinz, 2007, 88). In response to Mackie, Prinz employs an analogy to demonstrate that moral properties do exist and they are indeed action-guiding. Colours seem to be in the world, located on the surfaces of things. They also seem to cause experiences in us, because they can vary even when surfaces have not undergone

any physical transformation. Moral properties, much the same as colours, can cause experiences in us by generating emotions; therefore, they exist and in that sense are features of the world. Since they have powers to cause emotion, they are motivating as well. Therefore, they are action-guiding (Prinz, 2007, 88).

Thus far, in this chapter, I have put forward Prinz's arguments for emotion being necessary and sufficient for moral judgments. His theory of good and the advantages of his sentimentalism have been considered too. But there is another feature of his ethical stance that, in my view, needs particular attention: the cultural relativism. He claims that sentimentalism leads to moral relativism. "…this approach leads to moral relativism. Hume resisted relativism, and I argue that he shouldn't have," (2007, preface). In the next section, I put forward his claims and reasons for his opinion. And in the following chapter, I will assess his claims.

2.7 Cultural relativism

Prinz claims that sentimentalism leads to moral relativism. It should be noted that not every sentimentalist is a moral relativist. Hume, for example, was not a relativist. For him, human beings share the same nature and thereby have the same sentiments; moral disagreements stem from non-moral facts (Hume, 1751, Dialogue Appendix; Prinz, 2007, 190). Prinz does not agree that our sentiments stem from human nature. According to him, moral values are based on sentiments, and sentiments are influenced by cultural context. I do not intend to examine if sentimentalism leads to moral relativism or not, because that is in itself a large project and outside the scope of this thesis. I tentatively agree with Prinz that sentimentalism does indeed lead to moral relativism because sentiments appear to be divergent.

When contemplating moral relativism, the first worrying issue is the coherence problem: how can two or multiple moral views be correct at the same time. How can slavery or cannibalism be considered morally good for one society and wrong for another? Perhaps we should begin by defining relativism that Prinz has in mind to understand his point of view.

According to Prinz, “moral values diverge and this divergence matters,” (2007, 173). “Some moral philosophers think moral variation has been exaggerated. Others think that variation in moral values has no implication for variation in moral facts: there can only be one true morality despite differences in moral convictions,” (Ibid). Prinz rejects their claims by asserting that there is no universal moral truth and all moral judgments are context sensitive. In his words, “the truth conditions of a moral judgment depend on the context in which that judgment is formed,” (Ibid).

According to this formulation of moral relativity, if a society has negative sentiment towards slavery or cannibalism, for that society, both are considered immoral. However, another society that has a positive sentiment towards these practices considers them perfectly moral. According to Prinz, there is no tension for two different cultures to have different moral values. The coherence problem is solved. A tension might arise when a member of one culture moves to the other and judges their values wrong. According to Prinz, this is a mistake because it is difficult if not impossible to understand how other cultures have developed their moral values in an entirely different backdrop of environmental and cultural conditions unfamiliar to us (2007, 191). Let us consider some controversial examples.

In recent years female circumcision has been the focus of many articles in Western media. The majority have determined that the practice is categorically wrong. Prinz believes that the push by some campaigners to eradicate this practice is an imposition of Western values. He also argues that the majority of arguments against this practice are based on a few myths. The first myth is that female circumcision eliminates sexual desire for women who have undergone the procedure. Prinz, referring to some studies, argues that female circumcision, much the same as male circumcision, does not necessarily result in reduction of sexual interest. The second myth is that men impose this procedure on women. According to Prinz, women are the ones who support and promote this practice. Another myth is that women are unwilling victims; they do not wish this procedure to happen. Prinz argues that in these cultures, circumcised genitals are considered more attractive and regarded as an important rite of passage for females. In the majority of cases women are willing to participate in the procedure. I should stress that Prinz is not condoning the practice; he is cautioning us against judging other cultures based on our own values, especially when some of our own practices such as painful cosmetic surgeries are highly questionable in the same sense (Prinz, 2007, 208-210).

Another example is the blood sport of ancient Romans. In the Colosseum and other arenas like it, Romans watched in delight Christians and other prisoners being crucified, burnt or torn apart by animals. They also watched gladiators clash in a deadly combat. Every combat ended in one gladiator being killed with the crowd cheering and encouraging the victor. This practice lasted for over 600 years (264 BCE until 404 CE). For Prinz, it is a mistake to judge this practice immoral without

understanding the history and cultural values of the Romans. They had complex moral views that were shaped by their particular cultural situation. Romans valued courage as the ultimate virtue; and had a preoccupation with expanding their empire through military conquest. They valued violence in a sense that only the strong and courageous had the right to prevail (2007, 191). Christian values were deemed a threat for the empire duo to their non-violence nature.

Prinz employs many other controversial practices such as cannibalism, slavery, abortion, polygamy, polyandry, and cousin marriage to draw two conclusions. First, there is no one set of moral laws; and second, moral laws are context dependent. The context is the culture that makes all moral laws.

Prinz's conclusions raise two immediate issues. First, if there are multiple moralities, and there is no way to prove that one morality is better than others, then the morality that we embrace is not privileged. Our moral values have no claim to truth; then, why should we continue to adhere to these values? In this sense, moral relativism is often regarded as insidious because it is charged to undermine moral values. The second issue is that the notion of culture is rather vague. It can signify a group of people, a race, a society, a nation or followers of a religion. Why such a vague notion should have such a privileged position as the moral maker?

Prinz counters the first issue by pointing out that we embrace our values because they are our values. We believe something to be morally right or wrong when we have positive or negative sentiment towards it. The fact that others do not value what we value is entirely moot unless our valuing something depends on the assumption

that the value is universal. According to Prinz, this assumption is implausible (2007, 211).

Prinz defines a culture as a group of individuals with uniform socially learned traits, each of whom gets all of one's socially learned traits from other members of the group. Prinz notes that this is an ideal culture and in reality no cultural group is ideal. Cultural groups often blend, criss-cross, and overlap. One individual can take cues for different aspects of one's life from different groups. One individual can identify herself as a woman, a liberal, an atheist, an academic and Australian. For this reason, it is often useful to talk about dimensions of culture: gender, political party, professional group, religion, and so on (2007, 184).

For Prinz, culture plays three important roles for morality: "culture can be the cause of morality, the effect of morality, and the reason for morality. Qua cause, culture is the primary source from which we get our values. We learn to be moral by undergoing a moral education, which involves being emotionally conditioned by the people around us including caregivers, role models and peers," (2007, 185). The fact that people in different cultures have different values proves that they get their morality from their respective cultures. In this way, morality can be regarded as a cultural construct. "Qua effect, cultures can be sustained through moral values," (Ibid). Shared moral views allow for a kind of cohesion that is rather stable, because morality has an impact on behaviour. Qua reason, morality is "a system of rules needed for people to function collectively in stable and productive way," (Ibid). Moral values persuade us to work towards the collective good of our community, and

dissuade us from harming others within our culture. In this sense, culture is the reason for morality.

In the course of this chapter, I have endeavoured to put forward Prinz's claims and arguments for sentimentalism as impartially as possible. At times, I added some of my thoughts and intuitions to strengthen his claims. However, I think sentimentalism as a meta-ethical stance is less than satisfactory, for reasons that will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Sentimentalism examined

In this chapter, I attempt to show that sentimentalism in general and Prinz's sentimentalism in particular is inadequate to equip us to make correct moral judgments. I claim that sentimentalism is mistaken to separate emotion from reason, endorsing the former as superior for moral judgments. I maintain that sentimentalism is not supported by science; some of Prinz's findings are being disproved by science already. I also argue that sentimentalism as a meta-ethical theory has negative normative implications. I will include three of such implications. First, moral values according to sentimentalism are non-evaluative, resulting in perpetuation of values such as FGM. Second, sentimentalism does not encourage moral progress; according to Prinz, our past values (slavery, cannibalism, infanticide, racism, sexism, and so on), current values (gender equality, wealth distribution, justice) and future values are just different codes of moral values for their respective times; comparing them in terms of moral progress is an illusion. And finally, sentimentalism is unable to resolve moral disagreements.

3.1 Separation of reason and emotion

As we saw earlier, Humean sentimentalism is founded on the separation of passion and reason, and affording passions a superior role for the motivation to act. Prinz claims that emotion and cognition are controlled by different parts of brain, and emotional responses have a special role for our moral judgments. In this section, I will argue that Hume's arguments for such separation are not particularly conclusive. I will also claim that such separation is not supported by our science, something that empiricism prides itself to be founded on.

3.1.1 Hume's arguments

Hume claims that passions can make us act while reason alone cannot. For this reason the two are different (the empirical argument). This argument is not decisive. For example, a drug addict who has lost his life savings and the love of his wife and children might decide to quit his addiction, attempting to get his life back on the track. He does this in spite of his craving (passion) for his drug of choice. His motivation for giving up is due to reason: his addiction is not good for him despite the pleasure that it provides. Hume would argue that reason alone cannot motivate our drug addict to make such a decision; he must have developed another stronger passion such as winning back his wife and children. I counter his argument by asserting that the strongest desire for an addict is the avoidance of pain and seeking the pleasure of receiving the drug. No other passion can possibly compete with that, especially a contingent outcome such as winning his wife and children back. And if Hume claims that a weaker desire can overcome a stronger desire in such a case, he must vindicate how a weaker desire can overcome a stronger desire without any aid from reason. Otherwise, it is possible that reason is the stronger motivator. It is plausible that our addict has finally understood that the cause of all his misery is his addiction; and he may have many valid reasons to rid of it. It is also plausible to see that these reasons are the stronger motivation rather than his weaker desire. Having said that, I concede that my argument is not a knock down argument; but my point is that Hume's argument is not either.

His second argument, the Representation Argument, is based upon his own definition of passions as original realities, as opposed to reason being representation of other things: impression of ideas. If I understand Hume right, he claims that

passions are real because they stem solely from us; they are realities that do not refer to anything else; they do not represent anything else. In contrast to passions, according to him, reason involves things outside of us (*Treaties*, book 2, part 3, sec. 3). Reason refers to external objects, and thereby represents copies or impressions. Therefore, real and impression cannot be contradictory. Contradiction can only exist "in the disagreement of ideas, considered as copies, with objects they represent," (Ibid). As an example, if I am thirsty, my desire for water is real and cannot be true or false; whereas my belief that there is water in the fridge can be true or false. Hume concludes that every passion (unless is founded on false beliefs) is real and cannot be opposed by reason. "It is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger," (Ibid). In addition, Hume concludes that "reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them," (Ibid). Therefore, if passions are real and reason is an impression and slave to passions, then reason has no authority over passions.

I have two problems with the representation argument. First, the Humean notion of real and impression may lead us to solipsism (only 'I' exist). If my passions are real, then I am real; but all other things including other human beings are impressions. Impressions are less than real things in the sense that they can be true or false whereas I am unconditionally real. Therefore, I should regard myself in a higher status than everyone else. In that case, why should I care about anyone else? Why should I care about morality? The second problem is that passions might not be as real as Hume suggests. Passions are generally directed at objects outside of us as well; they are directional and intentional. When I desire an ice cream, the desiring is

directed to another object. When I get angry, my anger is intended at someone for what one may have committed against me. Subsequently, passions seem to be representational too. Thus, if passions are representational, or at least have a representational component, the distinction between passion and reason are not as sharp as Hume claims. The representational argument falters. Furthermore, as we saw earlier, Prinz claims that emotions have concerns and thereby they are evaluative; they can be justified or unjustified, reasonable or unreasonable (refer to section 2.2). For example, if one fears a caged snake, one's fear is unreasonable and must be dismissed. Therefore, reason has the authority to endorse or dismiss an emotion and is not merely slave to it. Prinz's argument reduces the force of the representational argument considerably.

Humans are cognitive and emotional. We appear to use cognition and emotion constantly in conjunction to make decisions. Every thought and every action has a cognition component and an emotional component. Even in a moment of rage, we still evaluate the situation constantly; we cannot stop thinking. We might do something irrational, but that does not mean that we stopped thinking. Conversely, while pondering over an idea dispassionately, it would be very difficult if not impossible not to feel any emotions; we are emotional beings. Lazarus (1984, 234) seems to agree. For him, thoughts and emotions are inferred from observations of a person. How we separate these concepts and emphasize theoretical sequences is a matter of theoretical and methodological convenience. "Yet we should not ignore the fact that cognition and emotion are inferential processes, not entities, each with a separate and independent existence. We must realize that in nature, that is, in the

actual phenomena of human experience, they are usually fused and difficult to separate," (Ibid).

3.1.2 Prinz's arguments

Following Hume who claimed that there were faculty of passion and faculty of understanding in our minds, Prinz seems to believe that cognition and emotion are processed in different centres of brain. For example, he claims that psychopaths are perfectly intelligent but suffer from emotional deficiencies such as sadness, guilt and fear deficiencies (Prinz, 2007, 130). This claim is suggestive that psychopaths' cognitive centres are normal while their emotional centres are anomalous. He also refers to the amygdala and the thalamus as two emotional regions of brain that work together to cause an emotion, independent of the neocortex which is a cognitive centre (2007, 57). "We don't need the neocortex to trigger a bodily response, that when experienced, would be identified as an emotion," (Ibid). These claims are suggestive that Prinz may support the notion of modularity of brain. Based on this theory, the entire brain is divided into highly specialized modules with specific functions. Much the same as a Swiss Army Knife, the brain is an assembly of specialized tools, each designed for a particular purpose. In recent years, this view, has found many supporters among evolutionary psychologists, neuroscientists and philosophers. They (Cosmides and Tooby, 1994; Sperber, 1994; Pinker, 1997; Samuels, 1998; Carruthers, 2006 among others) claim that brain is massively modular: it is made of numerous modules.

In the next section, I will briefly explain the massive modularity and locationist theories of mind. I will also attempt to clarify Prinz's stance which is somewhat

vague. I will conclude that if I am right about his stance regarding the separation of cognitive and emotional centres in the brain, according to our latest scientific research, he may be wrong.

3.1.2.1 Modular or locationist

The notion of modular mind began its rise in popularity when Jerry Fodor, a cognitive scientist and a philosopher, published his book the *Modularity of Mind* in1983. According to Fodor, the mind is divided into systems which some are modular and others that are not. Low-level peripheral systems are modular whereas high-level perception and cognitive systems are non-modular. For Fodor, a module has nine features which in their original order include domain specificity, mandatory operation, limited central accessibility, fast processing, informational encapsulation, shallow outputs, fixed neural architecture, characteristic and specific breakdown patterns, and characteristic ontogenetic pace and sequencing. According to Fodor, simple perception and cognitive systems are modular if they exhibit some of these features to an interesting extent (Fodor, 1983, 37).[5]

Peter Carruthers reduces the numbers of the features of Fodor module to extend the modularity thesis to the entire mind (Carruthers, 2006, 4-7). Carruthers argues that if massive modularity is to be plausible, then by module we cannot mean Fodor's module. In particular, domain specificity, fast processing, shallow output and innate channelling have to be struck out. For him, a module is an isolable function specific

[5] I have not explained what these features mean due to the scope of this thesis. For a detailed account refer to Fodor, *Modularity of Mind*, 1983; Carruthers, *Contemporary Debates in Cognitive Science*, 2006; and Prinz, I*s the Mind Really Modular*?, 2006.

processing system that has mandatory operations, with specific neural structure. It is also encapsulated from the remainder of cognition and inaccessible to it (Ibid, 7). A module is just a dissociable component much the same as when we talk of a CD player or speakers within a hi-fi system; each module can work independently of others.

One of the main arguments for massive modularity, according to Carruthers (2006, 10) comes from biology. People can have their language system damaged while leaving much of the remainder of cognition intact (aphasia); they can lack the ability to reason about mental states while still being capable of much else (autism); they can lose their capacity to recognize faces while retaining all the other mental capacities (Sacks, 1985; Shallice, 1988; Tager-Flushberg, 1999).

But what does Prinz think about the massive modularity theory? His position is somewhat unclear. Prinz (2004, 232-236) defends the modularity of emotional systems based on Fodor's account of modularity. However, in his paper, *is the Mind Really Modular? (*2006), Prinz rejects all nine of Fodor's criteria for the thesis of the modularity of mind. For him, the three properties of automaticity, speed and shallow outputs are more of a grab bag than a coherent constellation (2006, 4). He then proceeds to prove that other properties are inadequate to carve out interesting divisions in the mind. Furthermore, Prinz rejects Carruthers' massive modularity on the account that different parts of the mind are not fully encapsulated from one another, and are indeed accessible (Ibid, 9). Prinz claims that "it is grossly misleading to say that the mind is modular. At best, the mind has a smattering of modular parts," (Ibid, 12). For Prinz, the mind can be described as a network of

interconnected systems and subsystems. In his book (the *Emotional Construction of Morals*, 2007, 56-57) Prinz appears to endorse the locationist view that supports specific emotions are located in specific areas of the brain such as fear in the amygdala.

Is it possible to reconcile Prinz's views on his different publications? I think so. In my view, Prinz does not believe in the modularity of mind the way Fodor and Carruthers represented it. He supports a weaker modularity theory where different parts of the mind have different functions; the different operations of the mind can be attributed to different locations in the brain. For example, he agrees that there is fair degree of localization in the brain, but he rejects the idea that brain regions are exclusively dedicated to specific functions. For him, mental functions are located in large-scale over-lapping networks that are accessible to each other (2006, 3). While he has been slightly unclear, possibly due to the current rapid advances in neuroscience and neuro-imaging devices, I safely assume that he believes that emotion and cognition are: first, mental organs; and second, somewhat separated. If I am right in reading Prinz's views concerning this weaker division of the mind, he endorses the separation between emotional and cognitive centres while still allowing for cognitive and emotional functions to be attributed to multiple centres in the brain. He resembles the mind to a machine with many parts and components that are interconnected.

In the next section, I will challenge this weaker locationist/ modular approach. In a recent study done by neuroscientist Kristen Lindquist and her colleagues, lasting six years, the locationist view of mind that claims discrete emotions are attributed to

particular regions of brain was examined. They found no evidence to support that view. In contrast, they found more evidence to support that the brain functions as a network: many parts of the brain are active simultaneously to achieve a function or during an emotion. Based on their findings, there is not a single region of brain in charge of any single or category emotion, such as the amygdala for fear, as it was previously thought. More precisely, they concluded there are no separate regions of brain responsible either for cognition or emotion. I think this study weakens Prinz's scientific foundation for his moral philosophy. Firstly, the separation of cognition related to different centres in the brain is rejected. Secondly, since the brain does not differentiate between cognition and emotion, one can seriously doubt the legitimacy of claiming one superior to the other for moral judgments. Let us consider this study in more details.

3.1.2.2 Psychological Constructionist Approach

Lindquist et al. compared the locationist approach (i. e., the hypothesis that discrete emotion categories consistently and specifically correspond to distinct brain regions) with the psychological constructionist approach (i. e., the hypothesis that discrete emotion categories are constructed more of general brain networks, not specific to those categories), in order to understand the brain basis of emotions. They found little evidence that discrete emotions are consistently and specifically localized to distinct brain regions. They found that a set of interacting brain regions, commonly involved in basic psychological operations of both emotional and non-emotional nature, are active during emotion experience and perception across a range of discrete emotion categories (Lindquist et al., 2012, 121).

For a period of 6 years, Lindquist et al. conducted a series of neuro-imaging studies on specific regions of the brain that according to locationist approach are the centres for emotional categories, such as fear, disgust, anger and sadness. The amygdala is either the brain locus of fear or the most important hub in a fear circuit (LeDoux, 1983; 1985; 1990; Davis, 1992; 2008). Lindquist found that in many fear instances such as giving a speech, the amygdala actually decreased activation. Moreover, electrical stimulation to the amygdala produced a range of experiences, calling into question that it was linked to instances of fear. According to psychological constructionist view, the amygdala is a part of the distributed network that helps to realize core affect (what allows an organism to know if something in the environment has motivational salience) (Lindquist, 2012, 130). According to Lindquist, fear falls into the class of uncertain therefore salient stimuli. The amygdala shows increased activity in some instances of fear but it is not specific to fear. It increased activity when stimuli are experienced as subjectively arousing, intense, emotionally impactful or valuable.

The anterior insula is regarded as the basis of disgust according to the locationist account. Individual with damage to their anterior insula have difficulty perceiving instances of disgust in facial and vocal caricatures (Calder, 2000; Adolphs, 2002). In psychological constructionist view, the anterior insula plays a key role in representing core affective in awareness. Consistent with this view, the anterior insula showed increased activity during awareness of body movement. “Electrical stimulation of the anterior insula produced sensations consistent with category disgust, but it also produced a range of other visceral sensations including feelings of movement,

twitching, warmth and tingling in the lips, tongue, teeth, arms, hands and fingers," (Lindquist, 2012, 134).

Locationist accounts link the orbital frontal cortex (OFC) to anger (Murphy et al., 2003; Vytal & Hamann, 2010). According to psychological constructionist view, the OFC unites internal and external sensory information to guide action. Lindquist et al. found that the OFC increased activity not only during anger, but during instances of disgust and high arousal. These findings were more consistent with the psychological constructionist view that the OFC plays a more general role in integrating sensations (Lindquist, 2012, 135).

According to Lindquist, emotions emerge out of more basic operations within the brain that are not specific to emotion. For her, mental categories such as anger, sadness, fear, et cetera, are not respected by the brain. Similarly, emotion, cognition and perception are not respected by the brain either (Ibid, 123). If Lindquist et al are right, there is no physical location in the brain that consistently and specifically correspond to either emotion or cognition. The locationist approach is thereby wrong.

I conclude that Prinz's example of the brain resembling a machine with many parts and components is not a full picture. In my view, a better example may be a complex computer that performs its job with different software and applications. This computer does neither respect nor differentiate between Excel, PowerPoint or Word. No software has any physical location within the hardware of the computer. The computer uses them to perform its tasks. Similarly, the brain uses cognition, emotion, perception, intuition, experience and any other means that we might

discover in the future to perform its function, that is, to allow organism accomplishing its goals. Another example may be a large corporation. This corporation has many departments such as, accounts, research and development, manufacturing, sales, and so on, with designated functions. All these departments are unified to serve a common purpose but functioning independently. At difficult times, some staff or even a department might be axed, and their duties may be taken over by others without much negative effect on the corporation as a whole. However, in some cases, the leave of one or more of the essential people can have a catastrophic effect for the company. This company relies on information such as current market forces, the strength of local and global markets, changing laws, customer needs and trends, innovations, and so forth to stay afloat. This example illustrates how sometimes the brain can recover from some sever anomalies by training other parts to take over from the damaged regions. Whereas in other circumstances, a malfunctioning highly specialized region can manifest itself in cases such as aphasia and autism. In this example, emotion, cognition, perception and intuition are represented by the information that company needs from outside world to subsist.

Another conclusion that I draw from above findings is that if emotion, cognition and other things are the ways that we receive information and thereby deciding the best course of action for ourselves, perhaps separating them and endorsing one above others is the wrong point of view. They should all be used in conjunction to engender the best result. We might decide on emotion or cognition to provide us with necessary information on occasions depending on circumstances, but qualifying one or the other categorically is a mistake.

3.2 The necessary and sufficient case

When Prinz claims that emotion is necessary and sufficient for moral judgment, he may simply mean that emotion and moral judgment are co-occurrent (Prinz. 2007, 99). This statement would be uncontroversial. We are emotional beings and every decision we make is somewhat important, eliciting emotion in varying degrees and vice versa. As we saw earlier, Lazarus claims that appraisals are necessary and sufficient for emotions. In the sense of co-occurrence, I find this statement to be uncontroversial as well since we are cognitive beings too. However, Prinz insists that there are cases that we only use emotions to form moral judgments; therefore, we only require emotions to make moral judgments; we do not need anything else. "Having a moral attitude is a matter of having an emotional disposition," (Prinz, 2007, 29). I disagree with him. Let us assess his arguments and his cases.

3.2.1 Emotion as a sufficient condition

Prinz believes that dumbfounding scenarios prove that we do not require reason to form moral judgments (refer to section 2.5). Similarly, people making judgments under hypnosis or chemical inducement, without any rational justification, demonstrate the sufficiency of emotion for moral judgments.

From dumbfounding cases (Murphy et al., 2000) such as consensual incest and innocuous cannibalism, Prinz concludes that we derive our moral judgments from our emotional dispositions and basic values and not reason. His point is this: if these students cannot justify their moral judgments, emotion must be the determining factor for our moral judgments. I think he has been rather hasty to draw such a conclusion based on one study where the subjects are young college students. They

may not be adept enough to deal with such moral quandaries; they may have never encountered such dilemmas and hence not considered them rationally and deliberatively. The fact that these students could not articulate good reasons for their moral judgment does not mean that there are none. There are many reasons why siblings (brother and sister) should not have sex: sex is a highly emotional experience that can disrupt the affection between the siblings; it can generate expectations resulting in many negative emotions such as sadness and jealousy; it can affect future relationships such as resentment towards prospective brother-in-law and sister-in-law. There are also reasons why the woman in the lab should not consume a piece of the donated body: the body was donated specifically for scientific purposes and not consumption; using it for any other purpose can be regarded as theft. As specie, we have decided that cannibalism is a sign of disrespect to a person's body, the surviving family and our specie; this decision has rational and emotional grounds.

Prinz claims that the fact that people form moral decisions under hypnosis or chemical inducement, and not being able to rationalize their decisions, attests to emotion being sufficient for moral judgments. The claim simply is this: if we believe something or someone is disgusting but we have no reason for it, we have made that judgment through emotion. Therefore, emotion is sufficient for moral judgments. This argument presupposes that under hypnosis or drugs, we make emotional decisions because we have no reasons for them. The argument is also premised on an assumption that hypnosis and drugs affect our cognitive faculties and leave emotional ones unaffected. Neither of these premises can be defended satisfactorily. Under hypnosis, one is forced to feel a certain way (disgusted) through the power of

suggestion. One could have made to believe a non-emotional fact such as ‘the Earth is flat’ with the same conviction but with no emotion involved. Under hypnosis, our perception is altered to obey the commands of the hypnotist. Our decisions are not made by ourselves, and that is why we cannot account for them. Drugs interrupt the normal operation of the mind by affecting the chemical reactions in the brain. In my view, it is presumptuous to claim that our decisions under influence of drugs are primarily emotional.

3.2.2 Emotion as necessary condition

Prinz claims that there are empirical proofs demonstrating that emotion is necessary for moral judgment. Three of his empirical confirmations were explained in the last chapter. They were: child moral developmental techniques; evidence form psychopathy; and the divergence of moral laws in different cultures.

The first evidence entails that since children are morally developed through techniques based on emotions, emotion is necessary for moral judgments. In response, I point out that only a few decades ago, children were morally developed by teachers and parents through other techniques such as the corporal punishment. It would be a mistake to conclude that then violence was necessary for moral development. Advances in child psychology and the reduction in birth rate were some of the contributing factors of abandoning the practice. Likewise, it is possible that in a few decades due to similar reasons, parents and teachers would have more time to spend with children. Therefore, the emotional coercion might end as well. Notably, Prinz concedes that the evidence from children moral development is not a decisive reason for emotion being necessary for moral judgment; it is rather

suggestive. I do not share the same enthusiasm. Some of our teaching techniques may be suggestive that at times we as parents and teachers tend to take the easy way out.

The most important empirical evidence for emotion being necessary for moral judgment, for Prinz, comes from the research in psychopathy (refer to section 2.6). “The main thing that distinguishes psychopaths from us is their emotional indifference,” (Prinz, 2007, 130). For Prinz, psychopathy is an emotional disorder. Psychopaths are perfectly intelligent people that lack empathy and emotions such as fear, sadness and guilt. Psychopaths do not comprehend moral values. Therefore, moral values must be grounded in emotions. Emotion is necessary for moral judgment.

Prinz refers to studies done by psychologists such as Cleckley (1941), and Blair (1995; 1997) extensively as the sources of his conclusions regarding psychopaths (Prinz, 2007, 42-45). I think that Prinz’s views on psychopaths are mainly influenced by Cleckley (*the Mask of Sanity*, 1941). Cleckley described the condition of psychopathy as a constellation of interpersonal, affective, and behavioural characteristics. With regard to interpersonal characteristics, Cleckley claimed that psychopaths were intelligent, egocentric, glib, superficially charming, verbally facile, and manipulative. Emotionally, Cleckley described psychopaths as individuals who displayed short-lived emotions lacking important human characteristics such as empathy and remorse. Behaviourally, he believed that psychopaths were irresponsible, prone to seek novelty and excitation, and likely to engage in moral transgressions and antisocial acts. More specifically, Cleckley stated that

psychopaths showed “indications of good sense and sound reasoning,” had “high abilities,” and were individuals whose “outer perceptual reality is accurately organized” (Cleckley, 1976 edition, 202-205). In sum, Cleckley believed that psychopaths had “excellent rational powers,” and in “full possession of rational faculties” (Ibid, 240).

Since Cleckley, there have been a few empirical studies conducted on the relation of psychopathy and intelligence. Some studies show that psychopaths demonstrate average to good intelligence (e. g., Crawford, 1959; Kipnis, 1965; Holland, Beckett & Levi, 1981). However, there are others who claim that psychopaths suffer from deficiency in intelligence (e. g., Solomon, 1939; Van Vorst, 1943; Wechsler, 1944; Gorenstein, 1982; Raine, O’Brian, Smiley, Scerbo & Chan, 1990; Newman, 1998). For example, Gorenstein concluded that psychopaths suffer from neurological deficits. He also claimed that psychopaths exhibit deficits in cognitive processes associated with the frontal lobe. Raine et al. suggested that psychopaths exhibited learning difficulties. In a recent study, Salekin et al. (2010, 740) suggested that Cleckley was partially right, and that the concept of psychopathy is inversely related to intelligence. They also concluded that much research is needed regarding the construct of psychopathy and its relation to intellect (Ibid). In addition, Prinz (2007, 43) refers to a study done by Schalling and Rosen in 1968 on psychopaths. According to this study, psychopaths made numerous errors when completing mazes of increasing difficulty; they went down paths that would not succeed. Jeanette Kennett (2006, 70-76) challenges the idea that the impairment in psychopaths is the result of an affective deficit only. Referring to two famous cases in psychopathy and other empirical studies, Kennett maintains that “psychopaths

display significant failure of practical rationality," (Ibid, 75). According to her, the evidence suggests that psychopaths demonstrate a weak capacity to evaluate their desires, to foresee the consequences of their actions, to circumvent immediate gratification for longer term goals, and to resolve conflicts among their desires. They also seem to choose disproportionate means to reach their goals (Ibid, 76). If Kennett is right, the lack of such mental capacities is suggestive of some defects in cognitive faculties, and not just affective ones.

There is another important point that Kennett refers to that in my view is worth elaboration. She writes that "even if the psychopaths' most fundamental deficit is affective, it is hard to see how this undermines rationalism," (79). Kennett means that to become a moral agent, both rational and emotional capacities are required.
I extend Kennett's view to mean that a brain with mainly defective emotional centres should be regarded as a defective brain, and not as a brain with defective emotional centres. It might be worth remembering that according to Prinz, the brain is made of interconnected overlapping networks. A defect in one area (emotional centre) cannot be fully isolated from the other areas. Perceiving a situation erroneously by a defective emotional centre can ripple through cognitive centres engendering bad decisions. A child with mainly defective emotional centres can suffer in two ways; first, due to interconnectivity of the brain centres internally, the defective emotional centres impede the cognitive centres; and second, due to misreading of emotional cues externally, the cognitive analysis of circumstances are adversely affected, inhibiting one's social and moral development. Therefore, it may be implausible to claim that psychopaths possess defective emotional centres whilst their cognitive centres are perfectly functioning. For Prinz to claim that psychopathy is just an

emotional deficit he has to prove that emotional and cognitive centres are substantially independent; and cognitive centres are functioning in perfect order.

Thus far I have attempted to demonstrate that we have no conclusive evidence to suggest that psychopathy is just an emotional disorder. Based on empirical data available to us, it would be assuming too much to claim that psychopaths suffer from only emotional deficits as suggested by Prinz. In addition, according to Lindquist et al., the brain does not respect emotion or cognition (refer to section 3.1.2.2); therefore, to label a mental condition either cognitive or emotional is a misunderstanding of how the brain operates. I conclude that psychopathy is not an evidence for emotion being necessary for moral judgment.

The last evidence for emotion being necessary for moral judgment that I will consider here is what Prinz calls the anthropological evidence. According to him, the fact that we have divergent moral values across cultures is a testament that moral values are constructed via emotion by cultures. If moral values were constructed from reason, we would have a closer convergence of moral values crossculturally. Therefore, moral judgments must be founded on emotions. Hence emotion is necessary for moral judgment.

Interestingly, some of Prinz's examples to demonstrate this divergence are abandoned already. Slavery, cannibalism and gladiatorial games are considered immoral acts that have no place in humanity any longer. That in itself demonstrates some kind of convergence in morality. We seem to have learned from the past mistakes and found ways to curtail sever cases of injustice. The examples are

numerous: many countries united to stop the genocide and ethnic cleansing during the Balkan wars; currently, the world is coming together to stop the atrocities committed by the Islamic State; the United Nations and its affiliates are working tirelessly to make this world a better place; people sponsor children in poorer countries through World Vision and other charities to give them a better life with no expectation of reciprocity.

However, Prinz's point that we have diverse moral values in different parts of the world cannot be ignored. Different countries and cultures do seem to have different moral values. Does this fact entail that we derive our moral values from emotion? Prinz believes so. If they were construed from reason, we should all have similar moral values. I find this logic unsound. If that were true, then rational people should agree on everything. Philosophers all should have similar beliefs; scientists should all agree on their findings. This is obviously not true. Unlike computers that are designed purposively to output systematic and consistent functions, human beings interact with their environment. We are complex beings who constantly communicate with the outside world, changing and modifying our responses and beliefs. We rely greatly on the information that we receive from our environment to shape our responses. Our knowledge and experience is burgeoning exponentially since we learn ontogenetically as well as phylogenetically. We evaluate all this information through every means (cognition, emotion, perception and experience) at our disposal to make our judgments. That is why we are not predictable like computers; and our views can be diverse.

In the past, societies lived in almost in total isolation. These societies generated their own moral codes based on their own independent facticity and requirements. Due to the factors such as distance, language barrier, and lack of communication devices, there was minimal exchange. It is no wonder that people had different moral values. Aztecs invaded other tribes constantly, killing the conquered and consuming their bodies; Romans pillaged and plundered other countries, and forced the subjugated soldiers and citizens to slavery and blood sports. Such actions are not considered permissible any longer. We realize the suffering of anyone in the world, almost instantly, with a click of button on our computers; and we endeavour to mitigate it. We seem to care. Our morality is converging and its rate of convergence will accelerate rapidly due to the fact that people in the world are communicating with each other. Our moral values are being tested frequently; and the ones not based on solid foundation do and must dispel. In my view, Prinz is rather cynical to think that there is no convergence in morality. He is also mistaken to conclude that emotion is necessary for moral judgment due to the diversity of moral values.

Hitherto, I have been focusing on demonstrating that emotion is not necessary and sufficient for moral judgments, at least not as strongly as Prinz suggests it to be. Now, I would like to propose that his version of sentimentalism, in particular, has undesirable normative implications.

3.3 Normative implications of sentimentalism

Sentimentalism is a descriptive metaethical theory; it is not a normative theory. While normative ethics address such questions as ‘what should I do?’, thus endorsing some ethical evaluations and rejecting others, meta-ethical theories such as

sentimentalism address questions such as ‘what is goodness?’ and ‘how can we tell what is good from what is bad?’, seeking to understand the nature of ethical properties and evaluations. Nonetheless, while not a normative theory, sentimentalism has normative implications; and some of them are unappealing.

The account of sentimentalism that Prinz defends is called constructive sentimentalism (2007, 9). The term sentimentalism refers to the role of sentiments, and the term constructive refers to the fact that sentiments literally create morals, and moral systems can be created in different ways. Accordingly, there are no objective moral laws, moral laws are subjective; right and wrong are the referents of our concepts of right and wrong (Ibid).

Hume, in rejecting ethical rationalism, claims that transition from premises containing ‘is’ to a conclusion by ‘ought’ is “altogether inconceivable,” (Treatise, 3.1.1). Attention to such deductions would “subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceiv’d by reason,” (Ibid). “Hume says here that no ought judgment may be correctly deduced from a set of premises expressed only in terms of ‘is’, and that rationalist systems of morality commit this logical fallacy,” Cohon (2010, 9). There have been much interpretive debates about what exactly Hume means; however, Cohon (2010, 9), Slote (2010, 70), and Prinz (2007, 3) agree that Hume himself constantly has made such inferences in the *Treaties*. Cohon’s interpretation is that the moral properties cannot be discovered by inference from nonmoral premises using reason alone; rather some input from sentiment is required. “It is not simply by reasoning from the abstract and causal relations one

has discovered that one comes to have the ideas of virtue and vice; one must respond to such information with feelings of approval and disapproval," (Cohon, 2010, 9). Prinz defines 'ought' as a prescriptive sentiment: "When one ought to do something, one is disposed to engage in a conduct that one feels bad if one does not," (Prinz, 2007, 4).

The upshot of constructive sentimentalism in grounding moral judgments in emotional dispositions inculcated through culture, leads to some serious normative implications. These implications do not refute sentimentalism as a meta-ethical theory. They may demonstrate that sentimentalism is undesirable or that it is deficient in some ways.

I will consider three of these implications here: first, moral values based on sentiments are non-evaluative; second, moral progression makes little sense; and finally, moral disagreements cannot be resolved.

3.3.1 Non-evaluative nature of moral values

As I mentioned before Hume does not advocate cultural relativism. However, Prinz claims that sentimentalism does indeed lead to cultural relativism. Prinz spends a great deal of effort to demonstrate that every moral value is the product of historical, environmental and cultural conditions that is difficult if not impossible for a member of a different culture to understand. He maintains that we should refrain from judging other cultures' moral values without understanding them in their historical and cultural settings. Prinz proceeds to explain many factors in implementing moral

values in other cultures that we might find reprehensible (refer to section 2.8; Prinz, 2007, 208-241).

In one sense, we might think that cultural relativism is about advocating cultural tolerance. Prinz is quick to rectify our misapprehension: “Relativism does not entail tolerance,” (Prinz, 2007, 208). Tolerance, much the same as any other sentiment, is treated relatively. One culture might regard it as a good sentiment while another might not.

I agree with Prinz that we should not pass judgments on other moral values without adequate historical and cultural consideration. However, I disagree that such a judgment is emphatically impossible. I think it is possible to study other cultures, learn from them, adopt good values and repel the bad. The fact that Prinz has attempted to educate his readers concerning other cultures’ moral values through many examples indicates that it is possible to put a moral value in its context, and judge it accordingly.

Let us assess one of his examples to see if he has been successful in demonstrating that every moral value, placed in its context, is at least understandable. This is rather an important factor for Prinz; and that is why he has spent a great deal of effort to illustrate that moral values of diverse cultures are just different, and cannot be contrasted and evaluated. In other words, if we decide that a moral value is not as good as another, perhaps then we can conclude that it is possible to evaluate cultural moral systems. And if we can evaluate cultural moral systems, then they are

not equal: therefore, emotion and culture should not be the only determining factors in constructing our morals.

Prinz refers to female genital mutilation (FGM) as female circumcision for impartiality purposes (Prinz, 2007, 208). I think this is a mistake because it suggests a parallel between male and female circumcisions. The intention in male circumcision is not to affect sexual desire. However, the main purpose of female circumcision is to cut sensitive parts of the female sexual organ, ensuring she has no desire to engage in sexual activities. In this sense, FGM is comparable to male castration and not circumcision. Prinz claims that women are generally willing to participate in this tradition. Prinz also claims that victims of cannibalism may feel genuinely honoured to be eaten (2007, 122). Both claims are rather bizarre. The picture that Prinz draws is that the girls in such societies are following their sentiments and traditions by exercising their choices, fully informed and voluntarily. The reality is rather different. Naive and uneducated young girls are forced to endure inhumane and excruciating pain of their most sensitive parts being cut by untrained tribes' elders, in some cases, without anaesthetic. These girls have no say in the matter and are treated as an object. While I can understand that such a tradition might have begun in tribes where girls were treated secondary to men, many centuries ago, based on descriptive facts such as women's comparative lack of physical strength to men; I am unable to understand why such a tradition is defended by Prinz at present. This value is clearly in contrast with our experience and science that regards women equal to men. Therefore, the value is wrong and must be eradicated since it is discriminatory and unsubstantiated.

According to Prinz, we are obligated to follow the rules we actually endorse (2007, 159). For him, these rules are set by our culture. Any moral value, as long as it is endorsed within our culture, irrespective of its value, is considered our moral value. Accordingly, if we believe in slavery, cannibalism, or apartheid, we are within our rights, and no other culture should intervene or judge our values. The Romans who invaded other countries and enslaved millions of people were within their rights; Aztecs were also right to consume the bodies of the conquered. From these examples (Prinz's own examples) I conclude that Nazis were right to annihilate other nations due to their sentiment of racial superiority. Islamic state is within its right to slaughter foreign journalists, kill members of other faiths and enslave their women and children.

Moral values being non-evaluative in constructive sentimentalism appear to have severe implication for normative moral judgments. It seems to exonerate a culture that does terrible atrocities, in the case of the Nazis, but condemns another culture that judges and intervenes, in the case of the Americans entering the WWII to combat them.

3.3.2 The problem of moral progress

I claim that there is no incentive for moral progress in constructive sentimentalism. As a matter of fact, moral progress is nonsensical. According to constructive sentimentalism, there are many cultures in the world with their own independent moral values which are culturally constructed; none can claim that their values are better than others simply because every value is constructed based on conditions that may be foreign to others. Thereby, all moral systems are valid and equal; they

cannot be compared or evaluated against each other. This brings us to the main point of this section: if the moral values of contemporary cultures cannot be compared against each other, then the moral values of the same culture in two different points of time cannot be contrasted either. The two sets of moral values are just different, and if the present culture considers its preferences better, the reason is solely because it has abandoned the previous ones (Prinz, 2007, 288). Therefore the concept of moral progress is redundant and nonsensical. If there is no moral progress, then seeking moral progress might seem futile as well. But this idea is highly undesirable because it promotes conformity and defeatism. It promotes conformity because it advocates that there is no other value better than my own; it promotes defeatism because it does not believe in advancement.

We have eradicated slavery, and we are striving to get rid of racism, gender inequality and injustice. Our current values appear to be an improvement over the values of the past. We seem to have morally progressed. These reforms have come at a great cost. It took a civil war to end slavery in America; many thousands have died to end apartheid in South Africa; women are struggling for equality. Constructive sentimentalism seems to overlook the sacrifices that many have endured seeking justice and better values for us all.

3.3.3 The problem of resolving moral disagreements

The last normative implication that I consider here is the inability of constructive sentimentalism to adjudicate among opposing moral values. According to Prinz, moral values are grounded in sentiments and they are constructed by cultures. It is plausible that two cultures to have different or even contradictory sentiments towards

the same thing. For everything that one culture deems good, another may deem evil. Can constructive sentimentalism resolve such disagreements?

Prinz's position is very clear. "The truth conditions of moral claims depend on the context which they are uttered," (2007, 200). And, "there is no way to prove that one morality is any better than any other," (205). While his position is clear, it is not helpful. Let me clarify the issue via two examples. The first example is focused on when two cultures have opposite views over one thing; and the second example indicates the possibility of having similar issues within one culture.

Japanese soldiers do their duties based on an honour system. They are brave and fight for their country to the bitter end. They do not surrender; they commit suicide instead. They believe that if they are defeated, they would bring shame on their family and country. The only way to restore their honour is by killing themselves. Australian soldiers are brave as well. However, if the defeat is inevitable, they would not kill themselves. Instead, they would surrender. These two moral values clashed during WWII with disastrous consequences for the Australian prisoners of war. The Japanese soldiers mistreated, tortured and beheaded many of the Australian POWs because they had brought shame on themselves by getting captured; they should have committed suicide (according to the Japanese moral view). The Australian soldiers suffered many atrocities even though they had nothing to feel ashamed about (according to their own moral values). Sentimentalism is incapable of resolving this disagreement. Both cultures have strong sentiments over the same thing and both are considered to be right.

Now let us consider a small fictitious country that has no abortion laws. A pro-choice woman goes to the only doctor in her village to abort her accidental pregnancy. As it happens the doctor is pro-life, rejecting the woman's pleas based on his own sentiment. As it may have been noted, this example can be extended to demonstrate the problem in many countries such as the United States where the doctors who administer abortion are murdered often by pro-life extremists. My point is that even within the same culture, moral values are often at odds; and sentimentalism is unable to resolve such disagreements.

Thus far, I have demonstrated that constructive sentimentalism has some serious normative consequences. However, these consequences cannot be utilized to argue against constructive sentimentalism. One cannot reject a descriptive theory by attesting that it has unattractive implications. I have attempted to show that this theory has normative implications that make it unappealing. And if a theory has major undesirable effects as constructive sentimentalism has, perhaps we should look elsewhere.

Conclusion

In chapter one, I contrasted Prinz's non-cognitivist account of emotion with cognitivist account. As it may be apparent from some of my statements, I do have a slight inclination towards cognitivist account. However, it was not my intention to argue for one account or the other. My goal was to give a brief overview of both accounts in

order to prevent any misunderstanding in the following chapters. Prinz understands emotion as a simple reaction to bodily changes, a gut reaction. Cognitivists claim that emotion is a complex psychological and physiological reaction to an event deemed important by an individual. Prinz thinks that emotions are not cognitive whereas the other camp believes cognition (appraisal) is the most important part of any emotion.

I attempted to explain why Prinz claims emotion is necessary and sufficient for moral judgments in the second chapter. His empirical evidences were conveyed. The dumbfounding cases established the sufficiency condition; and children moral development, psychopathy and divergence of moral values satisfied the necessity condition. In addition, I explained sentimentalism theory of right, and its connotation of moral relativism. That is so because what is right is reliant on a positive sentiment; and sentiments can be different towards the same thing.

In the final chapter, I challenged Hume's arguments for the separation of reason and emotion, concluding that neither Empirical nor Representation argument is conclusive. Based on our current neuroscience, cognition and emotion are not mental organs; our brain does not respect emotion and cognition and does not have different locations designated to either. These scientific facts reject Prinz's notion of cognitive and emotional centres in the brain. In addition, I examined Prinz's necessary and sufficient empirical cases, and concluded that they are not as decisive as he suggests. For example, we have no indisputable evidence to think that psychopathy is an emotional deficit only. On the contrary, we have more evidence to consider it as a mental disorder. Furthermore, I argued that

sentimentalism has some undesirable normative implications. These normative implications such as the perpetuation of unjust values, removal of incentive for moral progress, and inability to reconcile moral disagreements render this descriptive meta-ethical theory unappealing.

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