**Appendix A: An Outline of Chapter Six**

*Introduction*

There are three features of morality for which I claim the realist cannot give an adequate account, as all are incompatible with the realist’s second core tenet. Since these features are too important to ignore, and since McDowell’s view of moral properties and moral judgments can adequately explain them while also avoiding all the objections that were raised against antirealist positions in Chapters 4 and 5, we ought to conclude that any form of realism committed to the two core tenets is indefensible (given our criteria for defensibility).

The objectivity that those forms of realism can get for us cannot be had. The objectivity we *can* have for our moral judgs. is that which McDowell’s position entails. I try to say more about what I think that is in the Conclusion to this dissertation.

– the three features:

feature 1 (discussed in Chapter 6): the subjective feel of our moral value experience

This subjective feel is evident in three ways (I also refer to these “ways” as *features* of our moral practice):

feature (a): we often do consider how the object we are judging strikes us emotionally (think of Hume’s example of Wilful Murder); we assume that how things typically affect us and others should be taken into consideration in our moral evaluations

feature (b): we judge people to be ethically lacking if they fail to have the proper emotional response; in particular, we deny that a person truly believes that they morally ought to do X if they fail to be motivated to do X; intuition suggests, in other words, that the thesis of internalism is true: if one thinks they ought to do X, then they take themself to have a reason to do X (i.e., they are motivated to do X)

feature (c): we take our reasoned value judgments to be evaluations; moral judgment often requires perception, and perception isn’t simply a matter of what is there but of what we bring to it; the virtuous agent is not mechanically applying rules, as if the knowledge she relies on is codifiable or independent of any point of view

feature 2 (discussed in Chapter 7): we conceive of morality as largely aiming at human well-being; but if human well-being has this role in our conception of morality, we have to reject the realist’s second core tenet; for what constitutes human well-being is partly, or even largely, determined by us

feature 3 (discussed in Chapter 8): our realist won’t be able to account for internalism; it seems that our realist must be committed to externalism, and externalism looks to be implausible

*The subjective feel of our moral value experience*

The overall aim of Chapter 6 is to show that there are three closely related features—(a), (b), and (c) above—of our moral value experience for which the realist needs to give an account. I argue that these three features are strongly present in the formation of our moral judgs. and in our understanding of the nature of these judgments. (Once we see what the features are, it will be fairly obvious why the realist cannot account for them.) If they are strongly present, they cannot be ignored; they have to be adequately accounted for. Since the realist cannot adequately account for them, but McDowell’s view can, we have reason to conclude that realism is indefensible.

feature (a): we often do consider how the “object” we are judging strikes us emotionally, and we think we should take our affective responses into account when forming our moral judgments

– we typically have a variety of affective responses (emotions, feelings, attitudes) to situations, actions, and character traits

Do these emotions, feelings, and attitudes have a *necessary connection* to our moral judgs.? If they do, this would seem to pose a problem for our realist.

(\*) the realist understands a moral judgment as the expression of a belief; the affective responses in question are non-belief states; so if the affective responses have a necessary connection to our moral judgments, then it doesn’t seem that we can understand those judgments as merely expressions of beliefs.

– Hume’s example of Wilful Murder illustrates the presence of an attitude of disapprobation: we look upon murder unfavorably. The example is ammunition against our realist who says that moral beliefs are true simply in virtue of corresponding to facts in the world, facts existing prior to our perception of them.

– the moral sentiments that we find present in the formation of our moral value judgs. are important for the practical import they have; without these sentiments, our judgs. won’t have any practical import; this fact alone, however, doesn’t threaten our realist; but the realist *is* threatened if the connection betw. our judgs. and their associated sentiments is a necessary one (see ‘(\*)’).

– **two problems** the realist can raise for the position that I am trying to defend: (i) internalism appears to conflict with our belief that moral requirements apply categorically to agents; and (ii) people can have the wrong affective responses, so why base moral right and wrong on these responses?

[*Remark*: At this point in the chapter I begin to address feature (b) even though I haven’t completed my discussion of feature (a); I return to discussing (a) on pp. 289-308; there I offer reasons for why we ought to think that moral properties have both subjective and objective aspects to them.

It makes sense to discuss (b) given that I have brought up the issue of a necessary connection so soon. If the realist can make a good case for externalism, it will be much more difficult to point to feature (a) as a reason for rejecting realism. So bringing internalism into the mix seems unavoidable. My original aim, however, was to defend internalism *after* arguing for the subjectivity of features like (a), (b), and (c). If there are good reasons for (a), (b), and (c), it is more difficult for the realist to make a case for externalism. To some extent I think Chapter 6 still accomplishes this.

Although I distinguish between features (a), (b), and (c), the subjective feel of our moral value experience seems to demand a holistic treatment; for example, features (b) and (c) offer evidence for the existence and importance of (a); conversely, if we accept (a), we will be more inclined to accept (b) and (c).]

feature (b): internalism appears to be true

[*Remark*: here I give a partial argument in support of internalism; the rest of the argument is found in Chapter 8.]

– if someone sincerely believes that she ought to do X, then she takes herself to have a reason to do X

This intuition seems to follow directly from the meaning of ‘ought’.

– taking oneself to have a reason to do X is being motivated to do X

Absent coercion, it is hard for us to make sense of the person who thinks or says that she ought to do something and yet doesn’t actually care about doing it; if she doesn’t in any way value or approve of what she thinks she ought to do, what would lead her to think that *she* nevertheless ought to do it?

: This concludes the partial argument in support of the claim that (b) is a feature of our moral practice.

– but this understanding of internalism raises a **third problem** for the antirealist position I aim to support: we cannot understand “taking oneself to have a reason to do X” simply as a belief state; nor can we understand it simply as a non-belief state; it appears to be that mysterious thing called a “besire”; (besires look to be quite mysterious because they are supposed to be a single psychological state but with the distinguishing characteristics of both beliefs and desires; how can a besire be a single, unified state when beliefs and desires have opposite “directions of fit”?)

It is difficult to argue for the existence of a necessary connection without begging the question. But if there is reason to think that “taking oneself to have a reason to do X” is a single, unified psychological state, and that this state is both belief-like and desire-like in the appropriate ways, then we have reason to think a necessary connection exists.

Otherwise it seems we have to show that a necessary connection exists between two distinct kinds of psychological states; but if the states are indeed distinct, why think that a necessary connection exists between them?

[A look ahead: proponents of McDowell’s view can maybe argue as follows: we should see “taking oneself to have a reason to do X” as a psychological state that cannot exist in isolation from other belief and desire states; so we have to be careful about what we mean when we say that it is a single, unitary state; we also need to keep in mind that the desire state or states associated with “taking oneself to have a reason to do X” are not immune from critical scrutiny; in fact, one would expect these desire states to have undergone some form of scrutiny (desires in themselves don’t give us reason to do anything; see Chapter 1 of (Scanlon 1998)); so while it can be useful to distinguish between beliefs and desires in terms of direction of fit, and see them as having opposite directions of fit, this doesn’t mean that the desires and beliefs involved in “taking oneself to have a reason to do X” have directions of fit that are governed by opposing aims, or criteria—the aims or criteria one employs when assessing the reason-giving force of candidate belief-desire combinations.]

– McDowell’s view of moral properties and of moral judgs. is the view I think we should subscribe to

As we will see, the view allows us to avoid the three problems raised for the internalist who is also a cognitivist.

As we will see, the view enables us to see the interconnections between features (a), (b), and (c).

It is a position that lies between that of the realist and that of the projectivist; such a position is what we seem to need in order to fit the moral phenomena.

– Hume’s argument and what was said in support of internalism gives us a reason to reject realism; I now look at Blackburn’s argument/example involving the teenagers and ‘fat↓’ to see why it is that we ought to reject projectivism (even though Blackburn intends his argument to give support to a projectivist view); we should take our affective responses into account in our moral judgments, but not as the projectivist does

– our focus is now on features (a) and (c)

– although the teenagers who find fat people disgusting are making an evaluation, Blackburn’s analysis of what is going on when we evaluate things doesn’t carry over to moral evaluations

– Blackburn’s example aims to undermine McDowell’s view that there are both objective and subjective aspects to our moral evaluations

Blackburn claims that, to be a competent user of ethical concepts one does not need any *special* cognitive sensitivity. In other words, there is no objective aspect to our moral evaluations (in the sense that they might be truth-apt); these evaluations are simply expressions of attitudes.

McDowell, however, claims that the virtuous agent has a special sort of perceptual capacity over and above what the non-virtuous agent has; but this perceptual capacity requires that one’s affective nature be shaped appropriately.

According to McDowell, the objective and subjective aspects cannot be disentangled. Blackburn of course denies this.

– Blackburn’s example aims to persuade us that we should reject the thesis of entanglement

– the thesis of entanglement is less mysterious if it is the case that we perceive other, more familiar properties which have both an objective and subjective aspect to them, aspects which cannot be disentangled

We perceive colours and colours are properties that are both objective and subjective in nature.

The objective and subjective aspects of colours cannot be disentangled.

Colour perception is certainly partly cognitive in nature.

– why think that moral properties have both objective and subjective aspects to them?

A reason for objectivity emerges when we reflect on two facts: (i) we think that some kinds of lives are better for us, *qua* human beings, than other kinds of lives, and moral questions are often questions about how we ought to live our lives; and (ii) we think that moral properties supervene on natural properties. (Other reasons for objectivity have been presented in Chapters 4 and 5.)

Reasons for subjectivity: (i) moral terms have evaluative meaning: when someone says that a certain action is cruel, we take them to hold a negative attitude toward actions of that sort; if they fail to have such an attitude, they are misusing the term ‘cruel’; (ii) we think that we ought to take our affective responses into account:

~ morality is largely about how we ought to live our lives; since we are sentient creatures with certain affective capacities, and since we are capable of shaping our affective natures, we have to consider what shape our affective natures ought to take;

still, one might ask why our affective responses should be taken into account when judging the rightness or wrongness of an action, or the value of a character trait; one might think, e.g., that we can best determine the shape our affective natures ought to take using criteria not based on the kinds of responses we characteristically have; the thought may be that we should look only to our rational natures for such criteria;

but ignoring our affective natures doesn’t seem sensible or wise for the following reasons:

~ how we are affected informs us about the kinds of creatures we are and can be, and about the kinds of relations in which we stand, or might stand, to the world

we cannot ignore our affective natures; it is problematic for us if we believe we ought to do something but aren’t motivated to do it; consider the example of Jim and the Indians.

we want morality to be something we can live by; certain affective responses are characteristic of us and, as such, cannot easily be ignored, suppressed, or transformed into some other kind of affective response.

our affective responses might indicate the presence of practical reasons of which we are not fully conscious, or not able to articulate at the moment of the response

Objection: I am suggesting that how things strike us makes a difference not only to how we do live our lives, but to how we ought to live our lives; it ought to matter to me, e.g., if a certain kind of behavior offends others. So one might ask, in spite of what has already been said: why take our affective responses into account when it is so easy for us to have inappropriate responses?

One answer to this question is that these responses are in a sense unavoidable; this brings us to a third reason for thinking that there is a subjective aspect to our moral judgments:

(iii) our affective natures play an important role in how we perceive things and in what we are apt to perceive; so subjectivity is unavoidable

We can also add a fourth reason for subjectivity:

(iv) [this is closely related to feature (c)] moral inquiry asks about reasons for acting; in order for an agent to take something to be a reason for acting, they have to see it in a certain light; but nothing forces us to see things in the required way; even if there is just one way to be fully practically rational, why think there is just one way to live an ethical life? why think that practical rationality entails just one kind of ethical life? Or, if like McDowell we think that the demands of morality depend in part on the sets of practices which constitute the form of life in which we live, why think that there is just one form of life for human beings?

– what about the objection, though?—the worry that, because people can be wrong in the affective responses they have, it would be a mistake to take these responses into account when judging moral right and wrong?

This threat of error doesn’t pose any special problem; the fact that we can be wrong in our beliefs or misperceive things doesn’t lead us to conclude that we should ignore all of our perceptions and beliefs.

We have a good sense of the kinds of dispositions needed in order to have a good life, or in order to improve our chances of having a good life.

Because our affective natures partly determine how we perceive things and what we are apt to perceive, our moral judgments can never be entirely free of our affective responses.

In response to this worry, also see the digression on pp. 291-96.

: This concludes the argument in support of the claim that (a) is a feature of our moral practice; we have also addressed one of the three problems raised for the antirealist position that is of interest to us.

– Four things remain to be discussed: feature (c), why we ought to think that the objective and subjective aspects of moral properties cannot be disentangled, how McDowell’s view of moral properties gets us what we need, and the other two problems raised for our internalist

feature (c): we take our reasoned value judgments to be evaluations; perception isn’t simply a matter of what is there (as if we have direct access to reality and the nature of things-in-themselves) but of what we bring to it; we are not mechanically applying rules

– the claim is that our moral judgments are evaluative in the sense that they rely on normative frameworks, or sets of evaluative beliefs; evaluative frameworks, either in whole or in part, might be rationally rejected

– support for this claim comes from the plausibility of McDowell’s description of the virtuous agent; the idea of an evaluative framework provides us with a way to explain how it is that the virtuous agent takes certain features of a situation to be morally relevant but not others

Part of what constitutes the virtuous agent’s normative framework is her conception of how to live; this conception of how to live involves having certain dispositions; it is not just an intellectual conception; we should think of it as an “orectic psychological state”; this conception of how to live seems to be the same thing that McDowell calls the virtuous agent’s “second nature”.

We can see how this conception is employed if we break down the virtuous agent’s practical reasoning in syllogistic form.

– why should we think that this kind of normative framework is subjective (and in such a way that we can still say that moral judgs. have a kind of objectivity to them)?

We don’t think that the rationality of virtue is demonstrable from an external standpoint.

Again: something won’t count as a reason for action in an agent’s mind unless it is related in the right way to other beliefs and attitudes that the agent holds.

– the rationality of virtue might be demonstrable from an external standpoint if the psychological states motivating the virtuous agent could be disentangled in the way the noncognitivist thinks beliefs and desires can be disentangled

In Chapter 8 we see that disentanglement for the cognitivist seems to entail externalism and that externalism is implausible.

Disentanglement conflicts with the moral phenomenology.

– in support of entanglement:

What we are apt to perceive depends on the set of concerns and interests we have.

~ this idea, in turn, explains why the virtuous agent sees certain features and not others as morally relevant

~ also, if we don’t care that actions might be cruel or unjust, it is highly unlikely that we will be reliable perceivers of cruelty and injustice

So moral judgments are like colour judgs. in the sense that the subjective element enters in in the *processing* of input from an external reality.

The main alternatives to entanglement face difficulties:

~ in Chapters 4 and 5, we saw good reasons for rejecting projectivism; we also see in this chapter that Blackburn’s example with the teenagers doesn’t carry over to moral judgments;

~ in the present chapter we are seeing reasons for rejecting intuitionistic realism;

There is entanglement in our moral concepts.

~ terms like ‘cruel’ and ‘rude’ have both descriptive and evaluative meaning; why are there not well-known terms that do just the descriptive work that these terms do?

~ nonseparability is also suggested by the fact that the nonevaluative properties of the object being judged must *merit* the negative affective response.

– because of nonseparability, properly applying moral terms requires a *special* cognitive sensitivity; it is not just a matter of seeing the external features that might make an action cruel or rude; it is a matter of knowing when these features do in fact make an action cruel or rude; that is, it is a matter of knowing when the features are morally relevant

– a second, related way in which the normative framework used in moral thinking is subjective: our moral thinking relies on concepts grounded in shared practices; but different groups of human beings might have different sets of shared practices; in other words, there is more than one form of life available to human beings

– given the ways in which McDowell’s view is subjective, what kind of objectivity does that view get for our moral judgs.?

McDowell claims that our moral concepts are genuine concepts; as such, we can misapply them; our moral judgs., in other words, can be correct and incorrect.

Blackburn’s example with the teenagers tries to persuade us that moral concepts are not genuine concepts; but the example fails to accomplish this aim, for it does not capture what is going on when we form moral judgments.

~ We believe we can misapply terms like ‘cruel’ and ‘rude’; there is no way for us to see how this can be true of ‘fat↓’; our agreeing with Blackburn, then, that fat↓ness is not a concept doesn’t tell against the idea that understanding what cruelty and rudeness are is a conceptual matter.

~ Even though his example fails to do the work he wants it to, suppose Blackburn is right about how we should understand moral judgments. Then we can disentangle the subjective from the objective aspects. In fact, it will have to be the case that we can identify the objective aspect separately from the subjective aspect if we are to have a way of critically assessing the correctness of our moral judgments while still espousing supervenience. But if the objective aspect can be identified separately, expressivism permits the possibility of the amoralist. This result directly conflicts with expressivism’s commitment to internalism.

– under McDowell’s view, the virtuous agent has a certain kind of knowledge then: (i) knowledge of the particulars of the situation one is judging; (ii) knowledge of the form of life in which one is living, especially the practices surrounding the use of moral concepts; (iii) knowledge of how a human being should live (within the given form of life?)

Of course, correct application of moral concepts also requires having the right set of dispositions.

– Moralists are often tempted to say that acting immorally is irrational; if we subscribe to McDowell’s view, we need to be careful about making this kind of claim

Because there can be different forms of life for human beings, we can’t say that moral requirements apply with equal force to all adult human beings in full possession of their faculties, and simply in virtue of being such an adult human being; this is one kind of objectivity that McDowell’s view doesn’t get for us.

However, McDowell’s position is such that moral requirements will still be categorical in the sense that they won’t depend in any direct sense on the desires of individual agents.

– the third problem raised for our antirealist view is addressed above, on p. 445; I also provide a different kind of answer for this potential problem in Chapter 8.

: This concludes the argument in support of the claim that (c) is a feature of our moral practice.