Making More Room for High Functioning Autism in Ethics: A Closer Look at the Position of High Functioning Autism in Discussions of Moral Motivation

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Contents

Introduction

Ethics throughout history has always maintained a clear objective, to decipher what is "Good". The central group of people that philosophers are concerned with, regarding questions about the "Good", are "normally developed people", without mental ailments, handicaps or illnesses. And this seems like a fairly reasonable consideration. It is strange to ask an extremely deranged person whether a certain action can be counted as good or bad, or to ask a child of three for a comprehensive answer to whether Sophie was properly motivated to justify her choice between her children.

It is completely reasonable that certain restrictions are, and were, set in the world of ethics that limit the range of considerations. The possible questions and answers that sprout from the question "What is Good?" would be astronomically big, and the amount of answers we have is already enormous. But, in limiting ourselves to only take "the normal, well thinking man" as our starting point, we lose sight of some of the people in our society that are worth including in the discourse. And it might even be the case that this exclusion prevents us from getting to a more definitive answer about the "Good", whatever form that answer might take.

In my thesis, my aim is to show a way in which we can look at discussions in ethics and try to position a group of people that have largely been overlooked in these discussion, namely, people with high functioning autism. What I want to show is what position people with high functioning autism can have in these discussions and to discuss whether there is a possibility of changing the ongoing debates or find some different points of view when we include people with high functioning autism.

The information available and the research done on people with autism is relatively young. A hundred years ago no one had heard of people with autism and the first uses of the term were for denoting people with severe schizophrenia. The term 'autism' has seen many different uses to denote a large group of people, and even nowadays we are still not quite sure what exactly 'autism' should mean.

Before people were diagnosed with autism, or something on the autism spectrum, they would have been counted under the group of 'typically developed people', we simply didn't realize that they could be categorized as a different group of people with different ways of making judgements and different ways of being motivated. But since the introduction of autism as an a-typical development we have not had a discussion about the implications of this 'new' definition of this group of people for discussions ethics. I am of the opinion that we have to take a look at the position people with autism, and specifically high functioning autism, can occupy in these discussion, and how they can possibly change them.

I will not pretend that I can point out every possible way people with high functioning autism can be included in all the discussions surrounding ethics. So, I will limit the scope of this thesis to some discussions regarding moral motivation and judgement.

The discussions about moral motivation and moral judgement have seen a lot of new data since the 80's, mainly because of advances in neuroscience. Research on autism has seen a lot of development, especially the last 15 years. I believe that the increase of scientific knowledge can and must have some influence on discussions surrounding theories of moral motivation

and judgement. I choose to address these two particular topics simultaneously, because of how interwoven they are. When we talk about moral motivation, we must also address moral judgement and vice versa. I want to limit the scope of the thesis even further by focusing on the two biggest, most influential camps namely, rationalism and sentimentalism. I could argue that almost every theory and idea surrounding moral motivation and judgement derive their ideas from these two big camps. What better way to address the position of high functioning autism in ethics than with these two opposing ideas.

The main question will therefore be: "How can the better positioning of people with high functioning autism change the way we look at discussions about moral motivation and judgement?"

First, I want to paint a clear picture of what Autism is and even further, what high functioning autism is. I will address the characteristics and the official diagnoses of people with Autism and high functioning autism. Doing this will show how their point of view on the world and their interaction with it, might differ from that of "normally developed people".

Second, I want to focus on the two big camps in the discussion of moral motivation and judgement. First, we will look at the rationalist camp, mainly what Kant wrote and later on what contemporary philosophers did with Kant's ideas and how they expanded upon them. All the while, we will be looking at possible ways how people with autism can be situated in these rationalists' ideas and whether we are going to run into problems when doing so. Again, I will not be trying to fix these possible problems, but seeing that problems arise, at all, will hopefully give rise to some further thinking on the topic.

Third, I want to take a look at what sentimentalists wrote, notably David Hume and then some of the contemporary philosophers following in his steps. We will, again, try to fit people with Autism into these discussions, and see what problems, if any, arises.

Fourth, we will apply the same method in different sub-discussions surrounding moral motivation and judgement. These discussions range from the discussion about so-called "motivated" and "unmotivated" desires, to externalism and internalism about judgements and reasons for action. In this chapter we will also touch upon a group of people that have been included into all these discussions while not being categorized as "normal, well thinking people" namely, Psychopaths. We have seen that including psychopaths in discussions about motivation and judgement has brought forth some arguments for different viewpoints, so we know that the implementation of different groups of people can lead to changes in the discussions. However, I would argue that psychopaths, as a group of people, are outliers when it comes to the inclusion of groups of people in moral discussions. The "otherness" of psychopaths is mainly seen in the realm of morality and therefore they can be seen as a prime candidate to include in moral discussions. But people with high functioning autism are not seen in the same way as psychopaths are and it is not as obvious to include them as a group in moral discussions. Even if it is not as obvious to include them in moral discussions, it is still valuable to explore the inclusion and see what perspectives it brings.

I will conclude the thesis by summing up the possible ways that the inclusion of people with high functioning autism in discussions around ethics can change these discussions. I will argue that only including "the normal well thinking man" as the base line, and psychopaths as

extreme outliers, cannot give a complete answer, even when it seems like it can.

1. Autism

Before we start diving into the topic of what it means to have autism, or better yet, what it means to be on the autism spectrum, I want to clarify a few things. I've tried to gather as much information as I could and I have tried to do right by the people who fall under the umbrella of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). But it is clear to me that my knowledge about ASD is not as vast and detailed as that of a psychologist. This means that I will be talking about ASD in a more general sense than psychologist would do, and this may result in some conclusions that do not apply to all people who fall under the spectrum. Secondly, autism spectrum disorder covers a large range of people with vastly different lifestyles, problems, strengths, experiences, etc. I do not want to discredit anyone's experiences. Research in ASD is still ongoing, and a lot of new information is coming to light, generating even more research questions and new ways of doing research.

In this first chapter, I want to discuss what in general autism is and sketch a profile of what I think high functioning autism entails.

1.1 Autism in General

The leading manuals for the diagnosis of mental disorders is "*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*" (DSM-V). In this manual ASD is described using five clusters of symptoms. Keep in mind that these clusters of symptoms are not always applicable to everyone, but it paints a picture of the kind of symptoms people with ASD exhibit. We must also keep in mind that this manual is specifically meant for diagnosis, this means that for the sake of this thesis I will focus on the first two clusters of symptoms; the last three focus purely on the diagnosis and less on the actual symptoms of people with ASD. But still, for the purpose of this thesis it is a good tool for sketching a profile of a person with ASD. The first cluster of symptoms is characterized by social communication and social interaction. This includes such things as social reciprocity, non-verbal communication and the development, maintenance and understanding of social relationships. The second cluster of symptoms focusses on restricted, repetitive behaviors and interests such as, stereotyped, repetitive behaviors; insistence on sameness; highly restricted, fixed interests and hypersensitivity, hyposensitivity or interests in sensory inputs (American Psychiatric Association, 2013a). If a person is diagnosed with ASD, they should have some of these symptoms, they do not have to have all of the symptoms discussed above. From this information it is clear that the diagnosis of ASD is a difficult one. First of all, it is rather subjective to decide to what degree a person should lack non-verbal communications skill to count towards the diagnosis of ASD for example. Secondly, ASD commonly co-occurs with other (mental) disorders such as AD(H)D, intellectual disabilities, language disabilities, genetic syndromes, etc. This also makes it more difficult to truthfully diagnose someone with ASD. For example, when someone is diagnosed with ASD on the grounds of hypersensitivity and difficulties developing and maintaining social relationships it could also be argued that this is not due to ASD but due to AD(H)D. This of course is an oversimplification of the diagnosis process of ASD, there are more parameters to decide if someone has ASD or not, but it at least shows that ASD is difficult to diagnose because of the scope of the symptoms and the overlap these symptoms have with other (mental) disorders. One of the bigger problems with the diagnostic frame of the DSM-V is that this manual for diagnosis is nearly nine years old. In the last nine years a lot of new studies regarding ASD

have come out which might change the way in which we can accurately diagnose people with ASD. This ranges from new theories about the theory of mind of people with ASD to new developments in neuroscience and genetics. All these new developments can alter the 'official' way we can characterize people with ASD.

1.2 What is High Functioning Autism?

For this thesis, we have to look at the way people with ASD are officially characterized, but the broad range of possible combinations of symptoms and the range of severity of these symptoms makes it hard to sketch a more specific profile of people with ASD. We need this more specific profile to ultimately look at how the inner workings of people with ASD can possibly change our way of looking at moral motivation and judgement. To get this more specified profile sketch we need to create a sub-group within ASD. Before we begin sketching such a profile, I want to firmly state that the people with ASD who do not fall into the upcoming profile sketch are in no way less or not deserving of anything. For the sake of answering the main question of this thesis we have to make a division in people with ASD to get a grip on their inner moral workings. This division is needed because some people with ASD, while still probably having an inner moral world, cannot adequately articulate how these inner mechanisms work.

The subgroup I want to create for the sake of answering the main question of this thesis will be that of 'high functioning autism' (HFA). So, to be clear, there now is a main group of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and a subgroup of people who can be designated as having high functioning autism. HFA is not an officially used subdivision of ASD. Lorna Wing puts it this way: "The criteria for distinguishing subgroups tend to be arbitrary, and are difficult to apply and unhelpful in clinical practice." (Wing, 1997). It is understandable that in a clinical setting the division is hard to make, and I would even argue that in a research setting, such as this thesis, it still remains difficult and arbitrary. To make the division less arbitrary in our research setting I want the division to be as broad as possible. In the previous paragraph we discussed the official diagnosis criteria for ASD and these criteria still apply to people who fall under the umbrella of HFA. The main difference, normally attributed to people who fall in the category of HFA, is that these people are not associated with mental retardation, which means that they have an IQ of 70 or above (Mesibov et al., 2001). For the sake of this thesis, I want to expand on this criterion of having an IQ of 70 or above, mainly for clarification reasons. Firstly, I think it is important for this thesis that we not only look at the IQ levels of people with HFA, but also look at certain capabilities. I understand that some of these capabilities I'm about to dive into are somewhat implicit in the fact that HFA is designated with a IQ of 70 or above, but I still want to make these possible implicit things more explicit, as it is important to know which attributes of people with HFA are pivotal for the rest of this thesis.

So, first of all, people with HFA should have the ability to talk and communicate with other people. It seems somewhat obvious, but there are people with ASD who are unable to talk and therefore are unable to effectively[1] communicate with other people. This ability to talk and therefore communicate is important to get a look into the moral world they experience, without these abilities it would be very difficult to do so. For the same reason I think it is

[1] 'Effectively' does not mean that it is necessary to communicate as well as neurotypical people. It just means that they are able to somewhat regularly communicate with other people.

important that the group of HFA we talk about can express some experiences of their moral world. So, not just that they can communicate some base things about morality, but that they can expand a little bit upon their ideas. For example, when an individual with ASD talks about morality or the difference between right and wrong only in ways of positive and negative proclamations such as "This is good" and "This is bad", it does not help us to discover why they say such things, but more importantly, it does not help us in discovering their subsequent motivation to act or the lack thereof.[2] The thing I want to make clear with these more elaborate criteria is that these criteria are important for our question. I also want to make clear that this does not mean that people who do not fall under this HFA umbrella cannot still have an inner moral world and can still have moral values and judgements that motivate them. It is just harder for us to check how this inner moral world functions and therefore it is, for the sake of answering this thesis' main question, important to make a subdivision in the lager group of people with ASD.

Mesibov et al. point out that the term 'Asperger Syndrome' is also sometimes used to designate what is called high functioning autism. I will not go into detail about the discussion whether Asperger Syndrome and high functioning autism are the same thing or not. I will use high functioning autism just because it gives an easier to spot difference between ASD and the subgroup that this thesis is mainly concerned with.

The main characteristics we are concerned with in this thesis, regarding people with HFA, is the idea that these people are less likely to use emotional considerations when motivating themselves to act on their moral judgements. One explanation that is given for this lack of emotional consideration is a probable deficiency in theory of mind (Samson et al., 2012). This means that people with HFA have difficulty taking other people's mental states into consideration. It is also suggested that this does not only apply to the mental states of other people, but also that people with HFA are impaired in recognizing and verbalizing their own mental states and therefore their own emotional states. Moriguchi et al. did research on people with high alexithymia[3] scores and low alexithymia scores. The outcome of this research showed that the people with high alexithymia scores have less activity in those parts of the brain that are associated with mentalization and perspective taking (Moriguchi et al., 2006). The conclusion of this research is that this deficiency in mentalizing ability of the self is correlated to ability to take the perspective of others. People who have HFA are generally people who have high alexithymia scores and this research understates the idea that taking others' perspective is more difficult for these people. This conclusion underlines the idea that people with HFA have a deficiency in theory of mind. More recent meta-studies have shown that people with HFA do not only suffer from a deficient theory of mind, but that other social and non-social aspects also play a part in the life of people with HFA and probably also play a role in the way they make moral judgements and are possibly motivated by them. These other social and non-social aspects include processing speed, verbal learning and memory (Velikonja et al., 2019).

[2] I want to clarify that it is possible that people with HFA with an IQ of 70 or above can do all the things mentioned above

[3] Alexithymia is the clinical name for the inability to identify and describe emotional states of oneself and others.

1.3 Profile of High Functioning Autism

For the sake of answering the question of this thesis it is vital to have the profile of a person with HFA clear in mind and to refer back to this profile sketch while reading the rest of this thesis. To help with this I will now give a brief summary of the profile sketched above in a systematic form to refer back to when needed.

1. The difference between 'normal' Autism Syndrome Disorder (ASD) and high functioning autism (HFA) is:
    a. As opposed to the general diagnosis of ASD, people with HFA have an IQ of 70 or above, can talk and more or less communicate effectively with other people.
2. HFA cooccurs a lot with other (mental) disorders, which include, but are not limited to
    a. Depression
    b. Anxiety
    c. AD(H)D
    d. Language disabilities
3. People with HFA have a deficiency in theory of mind
    a. They have difficulty recognizing and verbalizing their own (emotional) mental states (alexithymia)
    b. They have difficulty recognizing and verbalizing the (emotional) mental states of others
4. In addition to a deficiency in theory of mind, people with HFA have difficulty in other social and non-social areas
    a. Processing speed
    b. Verbal learning
    c. Memory

In the next chapter we will take a look at the rationalist view regarding moral motivation and apply it to the HFA profile and answer the question: "If the general rationalist account of moral motivation is correct, how do people with high functioning autism fit into that picture?"

2. The Rationalist Approach to Moral Motivation

There exists a general idea or picture of what a person with HFA is and does. Think about some very famous examples in TV shows and movies. From Spock in Star Trek, Sheldon Cooper in The Big Bang Theory, Raymond Babbitt from Rain Man, and many more. All these characters seem to have something in common. They look at the world in a seemingly more rational and logical way than most people commonly do. They do not seem overly concerned with other people's feelings and always seem to act according to some rational belief or set of rules. They also do not seem motivated by affective considerations of others or themselves. These characteristics are commonly seen, in moral philosophy, as expressions of Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy.

Kant believed that, generally speaking, the right way to behave morally is to act in accordance with reason and not to let our judgement be clouded by affective considerations, such as emotions, day-to-day turmoil, etc. This does seem to fit with the general picture of how people with HFA act. But do Kant's ideas about morality explain how people with HFA act and are there things that his rational approach overlooks when it comes to the motivational part of the moral lives of people with HFA? In this chapter, I want to sketch what this Kantian rational approach to moral motivation and judgement entails and how people with HFA fit into that picture. To do so, we will have to take a look at how Kant approaches moral motivation. Then, we will see how Jeanette Kennett, a contemporary rationalist, looks at Kant's ideas of morality and moral motivation, and how she relates these ideas to people with HFA. After this, we will take a step back and compare Kennett's ideas with our findings of people with HFA which we have discussed in chapter 1. And lastly, we will discuss what the rationalist approach might miss with regard to people with HFA, or even when we talk about moral motivation in general.[4]

2.1 Kant's Account of Moral Motivation

2.1.1 Non-Consequentialism

There are a few general distinctive aspects to Kant's account of moral motivation. One of the most known aspects is that his account is nonconsequentialist. Nonconsequentialism entails that it does not matter what the outcome or effects of moral acts are, what matters is the intention or the motive behind the action.

This does not mean that consequences are wholly out of the picture for Kant, especially when it comes to motivation. One of the consequences of acting in his moral framework is that it produces moral feelings. These moral feelings are different from the typical feelings we experience through sensibility, like anger, fear, happiness, etc. According to Kant we feel pleasure when we act, or contemplate acting, in accordance with the moral law and feel

[4] I will be using the term 'rationalist' instead of something like 'the Kantian account' or 'the Kantian theory', when I reference contemporary rationalist accounts. Kant is one of the frontrunners when it comes to rationalism in morality and, arguable, in general. But Kant is not the only one that uses a rationalist account to explain curtain phenomena in the moral world. Other moral philosophers have used certain aspects of his ideas, expanded upon them, altered them, etc. The term 'rationalist account' encompasses more than just the ideas of Kant.

displeasure when we act, or contemplate acting, contrary to the moral law (Kant, 1996, p. 6). The moral law, for Kant, is the supreme principle of morality (Kant, 1997, p. 4). We become aware of the moral law whenever we deliberate what to do, and acting in accordance with the moral law should be the primary motivator in our moral lives. The feeling of pleasure when we act, or contemplate acting, in accordance with the moral law, or the feeling of displeasure when we do not, is not an indication of whether an act is right or wrong. The question whether a moral action is right or wrong does not depend on the feeling it generates, it depends on the reasons we have for acting in accordance with the moral law. Moral feelings are not something we only have over our own actions, they can also be felt when we see others act in a moral context.

2.1.2 Conscience

Feelings of guilt and relief can also be seen as consequences in Kant's moral framework, for they are triggered by conscience. In some ways it looks very familiar to his ideas of moral feelings, but in a sense, it has a more active part to play than moral feelings do. Kant writes the following about conscience: "For conscience is practical reason holding man's duty before him for his acquittal or condemnation in every case that comes under the law." (Kant, 1996, p. 6). Conscience is at the heart of the motivational power of Kant's moral framework. It acts as an inner court, where one reflects on action, and the duty that is attached to it, and renders us innocent or guilty, triggering feelings of either guilt or relief.

Jeanette Kennett describes a cognitive mechanism that acts in a very similar way as conscience does in Kant. She describes the mechanism of cognitive dissonance which was first proposed by Leon Festinger in 1957. It is a mechanism that occurs when our desires or actions are not aligned with our judgements or values (Malatesti et al., 2010). This mechanism is motivational in itself, Festinger writes: "The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance." (Festinger, 1962, p. 3). Kant's idea of conscience as an inner judge can be seen as a precursor of this idea of cognitive dissonance. When our actions do not align with our moral duties our conscience renders ourselves guilty, and we try to strive towards a situation where our conscience can render us innocent.

2.1.3 Respect and Sympathy

One last thing I want to point out about Kant's ideas on moral motivation are the notions of respect and sympathy. According to Kant we have to have a sense of self-respect and respect for others. We have to recognize that every individual is, in a sense, the same with regard to our humanity. We are all reasonable individuals and therefore have worth in our own right. This sense of respect and sameness of every individual is something that is very important to Kant. In regard to our motives to act we must never see another individual as a means to achieve some kind of end, but we must see the other individual, and ourselves, as end in itself. He writes: "But a human being regarded as a person, that is, as the subject of a morally practical reason, is exalted above any price; for as a person […] he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in himself […]."(Kant, 1996, p. 6).

From this sense of respect Kant comes to the notion of sympathy. This is something that few people attribute to Kant, but it still has a part to play, especially in the context of our discussion about people with HFA and sentimentalism later on. Kant claims that sympathy is

a duty for us. This duty arises out of the respect of the other individual as a rational being, just as we are. He states that we have a duty to not shy away from the homeless men in the streets or the sick. We tend to have a natural inclination to feel the same feelings of suffering as other people, and sometimes these feelings make us look away in an attempt to not have to feel these feelings of (compassionate) suffering. But the duty to sympathize forces one to recognize the suffering in others and see them as individuals equal to ourselves and everybody else. They are ends in themselves and therefore worthy of our benevolence. (Kant, 1996, p. 6)

2.2 Jennifer Uleman's Account of Moral Motivation

Now that we have established some of Kant's core ideas on moral motivation, we will look toward some other philosophers who took these ideas from Kant and interpreted them in their own way. We will be looking at these interpretations and try to apply them to the sketch of people with HFA we made in the first chapter.

Jennifer Uleman is one of those philosophers who talks about Kantian moral motivation in her article '*Kant and Moral Motivation'*. She points to a few aspects she finds essential to Kant's notions of being morally motivated:

> The aspects that I think elicit respect for and commitment to actively promote fully free rational willing include release from the mechanism of nature, release from both interpersonal and inner turmoil, forms of intellectual and moral self-sufficiency, and experiences of self and others as universal, necessary, infinite, and creative. (Uleman, 2016, p. 216)

I think that what Uleman addresses here is something that fits in with the general picture of how people with HFA act and I want to focus on two of these aspects, universality, and necessity.

People with HFA tend to have an attraction to rules. This may have various causes, but the most common explanation is that it helps them have a sense of order in the world and makes it easier for them to traverse the social landscape. When rules and duties are universal it states that there is a sense of continuity in the world. We might even say that the world and the practices in this world become predictable. Universality makes it so that everywhere we go morally relevant rules and duties will be the same for everyone. Telling the truth is one of those universal duties that each individual has towards every other individual. To lie is to deceive another individual and to rob him or her from making fully rational choices, because how can one make a free rational choice when he or she does not have the full information they need to make the choice at hand?

As for necessity, Uleman writes:

> We are here assured not only that moral willing pursues something of unqualified worth but also that our own activity as morally motivated wills itself instantiates this worth and is itself crucial to constituting the fiber of the moral world. (Uleman, 2016, p. 221)

Here Uleman uses necessity as a way to point to, what Kant calls, duties. Duties are never contingent. We can abstain from our duties, but that would render us non-virtues, and, as we have seen above, Kant's notion of conscience, and Kennett's point about cognitive dissonance, point us to the necessity of following our duties. On top of this notion of necessity, Uleman states that it is also necessary that there are duties. Without the necessity for there to be moral duties there would not be a specific moral realm. This idea entails that we, as moral

beings, have a role to play in the finding of the things that can be qualified as moral worth. For people with HFA this, in theory, means that their search for the things that are morally worthy is in itself a contribution to the fabric of the moral world. Their effort in finding moral worth is not something that can be seen as lost time, the effort itself has worth, which, when known to them, could be an additional motivating factor.

People with HFA cannot fully understand the minds of others, which is shown by the high levels of alexithymia and the deficiency in theory of mind. The aspects of universality and necessity are tools for them to take part in the moral world without having to know what exactly happens in the minds of others. All this is not to say that people with HFA are actively choosing to adopt a rationalist or Kantian account of moral motivation. This would be strange to say when looking at the general profile of people with HFA laid down in the previous chapter. But it can, possibly, show the viability of the rationalist account of moral motivation.

2.3 Rationalism versus Modern Science

In recent years, there has been a big shift in what we know about the functions of the brain and how emotions and sentiments work. This is mainly due to the development of neuroscience and the tools we can use to learn more about the inner workings of our brain. Traditionally, before the coming up of neuroscience, the most popular route in philosophy and psychology for explaining our behavior has been through rationality. I will argue that this is due to the fact that we think we have some sort of grip on the way we think rationally and the conviction that we should be moved by reasons. Emotions and sentiments are a lot harder to accurately pinpoint. They seem to just well up sometimes and we do not feel we have a firm grip on them. This makes emotions and sentiments a bit slippery in a sense and harder to use in day-to-day life. But with the recent and upcoming discoveries of neuroscience we can see more clearly how emotions and sentiments work. We get a grip on them, maybe not in the way that we can mold and use them in the same way we think we can mold and use reasons to our benefit, but it at least makes some internal processes clearer. One big flaw that can be seen in this new development, and especially when it comes to drawing conclusions from these new research developments, is that it is difficult to pinpoint the exact way we use emotions and sentiments in making moral judgements, being morally motivated, etc. When we look at some research done with fMRI scans when asking people to solve some moral dilemmas (Greene et al., 2001), we can see that activity in parts of the brain associated with emotions is high. Even when we think that our conclusions are purely rational, there is still a lot of emotional activity. But we cannot conclude from this research that all judgement is influenced more by emotional stimuli than we thought. These findings can be used as an argument against the rationalist view, but it need not necessarily be. Earlier in this chapter I have shown that Kant uses notions of moral feelings, sympathy and respect when he tries to explain motivation. Emotions are not something that Kant does away with, he even states that they are necessary when we want to go from judgement to action.

But what do these new developments mean in the context of people with HFA? Recent studies have shown that activity in certain parts of the brain of children with HFA, and ASD in general, differ from those of typically developed children (Sato & Uono, 2019). These parts of the brain are linked to emotional recognition and processing. So, it is fair to say that people with HFA differ in their emotional lives from people who developed typically. This does not

necessarily conclude that people with HFA are incapable of the same emotional range as typically developed people, but the fact remains that it is different.

2.4 Jeanette Kennett's Account of Moral Motivation

In her article '*Autism, Empathy and Moral Agency, Jeanette Kennett'* sees a problem in sentimentalist accounts of morality when it comes to agency in people with HFA. She talks about the fact that people with HFA are emotionally different from typically developed people and argues that this difference should not matter in the way people with HFA can be, or become, moral agents proper. I argue that to be a proper moral agent is also to be properly morally motivated. The emotional or sentimental based theories of morality, and moral motivation, argue that what is really needed to be morally motivated, and therefore to be a moral agent, is the proper use and ability to empathize[5]. But people with HFA, as shown before, have a different emotional experience of the world and are generally seen as having less empathetic qualities than typically developed people. These deficient empathetic qualities can be attributed to a lack of perception taking and simulation. We already discussed these things when we talked about high levels of alexithymia and deficiencies in theory of mind in people with HFA in the previous chapter.

According to the sentimental based theories of moral motivation and agency, this would imply that people with HFA have, in theory, less or no moral agency and cannot be properly morally motivated. Kennett argues that this is not the case when we hold on to a more rational based theory of moral agency and motivation. She tries to show that moral agency and motivation are not in fact based on empathetic abilities as we generally understand them, she states: "I think that empathy, construed as this imaginative process of simulation with its resulting emotional contagion and reciprocal awareness, is important to us as moral agents, but I am not sure how essential it is to moral agency." (Kennett, 2002, p. 345).

As we have seen, Kant points out that being sympathetic is a moral duty, to see people as ends in themselves and see them in the situation they are in. Empathy on the other hand, presuppose the notion of being able to feel the same emotions as the other person. As we have seen in Kant, this simulation of the other's feelings is not something to strive towards. In a way, empathy blurs the boundaries between reason and emotion.

Kennett thinks moral agency, and moral motivation, should be based on the general moral concern to do the right thing. She uses another group of people, besides people with HFA, to show that people with HFA have the qualities to have proper moral agency and can be properly morally motivated. This other group is psychopathic people, who are generally seen as a group who also have a deficiency in empathy, but opposed to people with HFA, are seen as immoral.[6]

What makes it so that psychopaths are seen as immoral and having no moral agency or motivation and people with HFA are seen as people who have, or should have, moral agency

[5] There are a lot of different terms used to denote some emotional or sentimental component in morality, like empathy, sympathy, emotion, sentiment, passion, etc. My use of specific terms will be appropriate to particular authors, but keep in mind that, most of the time, these terms denote approximately the same things.

[6] I won't go into much detail about psychopaths, as it is not the main group I want to focus on. But the general understanding is that people with psychopathy have the same sort of emotional deficiencies as people with HFA, they do seem to be socially more adapt than people with HFA. They also seem to know some difference between right and wrong, but they do not seem to care about what is right or wrong.

and motivation? People with HFA and people who suffer from psychopathy have in common that they feel different than the typically developed people around them. Temple Grandin described this feeling in Oliver Sacks' book '*An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales'* as her being that anthropologist, trying to understand people as if she was an alien. The fact that people with HFA can mostly recognize that they are in a way different from other people sets them apart from people who suffer from psychopathy. Kennett states:

> Many autistic people display moral concerns, moral feeling and a sense of duty or conscience. They are persons in the sense that […] psychopaths are not. Yet according to all standard descriptions of autism these concerns cannot be based on empathetic identification with the concerns and feelings of others. (Kennett, 2002, p. 349).

2.5 Moral Concern in High Functioning Autism

We can see Kant's influence on Kennett from this statement. Moral concern is not based on empathy but based on acting in accordance with reason. As I have already pointed out, there is a difference between empathy and sympathy. Empathy is the process of simulating and mirroring other people's emotional states, feeling the same thing as they do. Sympathy is the process of understanding their situation, but without the emotional mirroring. For moral agency to be possible, and for people to be morally motivated to act in accordance with their values, do we really need to feel the same emotions as the people toward whom my moral actions are directed? Or are moral feelings, as described by Kant, enough to morally motivate people with HFA? Let me illustrate this with a few examples.

There once was a Franciscan monk who had studied the ways of the Franciscan order. Their teachings famously include to give away all earthly possessions and to live in poverty. This Franciscan monk, who was later thought to have HFA, took all these teachings to heart and lived them out in sometimes too extreme matters. He was seen giving away possessions from the monastery, which he wasn't supposed to. He even was seen giving away his clothes, to the point of almost being naked. The other monks of the monastery were put on duty to keep an eye on him, to prevent him from giving away too much. He did so because he was taught that this was the right thing to do. It was his duty and he acted accordingly.

Another example is of a boy with HFA who loved having a perfectly tuned piano in his house. He enjoyed it so much that when he found out that not all people had a perfectly tuned piano in their houses, he wanted to add an amendment in the constitution to oblige all people in the nation to have a perfectly tuned piano in their homes. He couldn't imagine people living in a house that didn't contain such a fine instrument. This instrument made him happy and he wanted everybody to feel happy.

These anecdotes show that people with HFA do have the capacity to sympathize with other people and feel moral concern for other people. They see the situation they are in, and they are concerned with the wellbeing of others. But in the words of Kennett they are "[…] often clumsy, moral agents." (Kennett, 2002, p. 345). Furthermore, it shows that people with HFA see other people as ends in themselves and they are motivated to act towards these ends. Apart from the fact that they feel a kind of difference, as shown above, they still see other people as the same as they are, and they are motivated in light of this sameness.

The clumsiness in processing and applying sympathy and moral concern does seem in need of some form of compensation. Temple Grandin states that she had to rationally learn morally and socially relevant things. These things come naturally to typically developed people through a proper appliance of theory of mind, but for people with HFA this is not really an option. So, they have to resort to a more active and conscious method of learning what is appropriate. As Kennett says:

> It appears that [people with HFA] can develop or discover moral rules and principles of conduct for themselves by reasoning, as they would in other matters, on the basis of explicit enquiry, reliance on testimony and inference from the past. (Kennett, 2002, p. 351).

As we have seen with Uleman, this finding of the things that are morally worthy is itself contributing to the fabric of the moral world. And when people with HFA find these morally worthy things, they find them as things that are universal and necessary and are therefore motivated to act toward them.

One thing that is important to the rationalists in general regarding moral motivation and judgement, is that we should have a reason to act on certain moral judgements; without reason we would not be anything more than animals. Uleman goes even as far as to say that acting without a reason, cannot be called an act at all. It would be the same as digesting food. We do it, but it cannot really be called an act. To have a good reason to have a certain moral judgement is, at the same time, a reason to act on that moral judgement and it therefore has a motivational force to perform that act.

Rationalists see reverence for duties and reasons as the core of moral motivation. Victoria McGeer argues that, while empathetic feelings are possibly not the only source of moral concern and motivation, this does not mean that reason and rationality should therefore take its place as the only source of moral concern and motivation (McGeer, 2008, p. 246). In the next chapter we will take a look at how McGeer and other sentimentalist accounts look at the issue of moral motivation and how their ideas can be translated to the life of people with HFA.

3. The Sentimentalist Approach to Moral Motivation

'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. (Hume, 1978, T.2.3.3)

This is one of several popular quotes from Hume's *'A Treatise of Human Nature'*. It immediately indicates his view on the issue of rationality, namely, that it is not and should not be the leading principle of morality. Hume is one of the founding members of the movement in philosophy that focusses not on rationality and reason, but on the importance of emotions, passions, sentiments, and intuition.

There is an argument to be made that rationalism has had the dominant position in the discussion about morality. It began with Socrates and since then it has not stopped being the dominant force. Some philosophers argue that this dominant position of rationalism in the debate about morality has overshadowed the possible relevance and importance of sentiment-based ideas and theories. Generally speaking, their argument is that, while reason has an instrumental role to play in guiding our motivations, it is not the case that it is the source of our motivations.

In this chapter, we will take a look at how the idea of sentimentalism, and associated ideas, work in the context of moral motivation and how these ideas can explain the moral lives and experiences of people with HFA. Just as in the previous chapter, we will start by looking at the account of one of the most influential sentimentalists, David Hume. Then we will discuss the account of Victoria McGeer on how Jeanette Kennett's account of rationalism is flawed when we take people with HFA into consideration, and how these flaws can be rectified through the sentimentalist account. Lastly, we will discuss the social intuitionist account of moral motivation by Jonathan Haidt and apply his ideas on people with HFA and discuss if this account can accommodate their moral motivation.

3.1 Hume's Account of Moral Motivation

David Hume is one of the most influential moral philosophers. His views on ethics have inspired many other philosophers after him to take passions, sentiments and emotions into consideration when talking about morality. His ideas about morality stand in stark contrast with those of Immanuel Kant. Where Kant argues that the passions should be the slave of reason, Hume states 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." (Hume, 1978, T. 2.3.3.3).

3.1.1 The Role of Reason

Kant recognized that moral motivation does not come directly from moral reasoning. Instead, moral reasoning triggers certain feelings in us, pleasure when we are contemplating an act that is in accordance with the moral law and displeasure when we are contemplating an act that is not in accordance with the moral law. These feelings are the direct motivating force. The difference in Hume, is that he flips the primacy of feeling and reasoning. He states that we have moral feelings, or passions, first and then reason how we can satisfy those feelings, in the case

of pleasure, or avoid those feelings, in the case of pain.[7] Hume states that one of the immediate effects of pain and pleasure is the will, with which we steer our action towards pleasure and to avoid pain (Hume, 1978, T.2.3.3)[8]. Hume argues that reason still has a roll to play, but it can never be the direct source of motivation. The role reason fulfills is twofold, demonstration and probability. Reason can demonstrate, in a sense close to mathematics, comparisons in ideas and if these ideas are congruent with each other or not. According to Hume this function of reasoning is not motivational at all, for it only deals with ideas and not in realities. It can lead us to judgements about cause-and-effect, but remains too abstract to cause any motivation (Hume, 1978, T.2.3.3.2). The probability role of reason does have some form of influence on our motivation. It does not have a direct influence, but it can direct our motivation according to the cause-and-effect findings of reasoning (Hume, 1978, T.2.3.3.3). As stated above, we tend to avoid pain and try to gain pleasure. Reason can predict a probability of what kind of action can produce pleasure and avoid pain. This is not to say that this function of reason is directly motivating us.

3.1.2 Ends and Passions

Hume argues that we set ends or goals for ourselves. These ends are not set by reasons. We set our ends with the use of, what Hume calls, calm passions. Calm passions are passions without a strong emotional feeling attached to it. For instance, most people set for themselves an end of self-preservation. This end is set by a calm passions, even though it does not feel like there is much emotion attached to it (Wright, 2009, p.226). For example, when we argue that we want to be professionally successful in life, we want to achieve that success because of some underlying ends, set by our calm passions. These ends can range from security and financial stability, self-preservation, to being seen as praiseworthy. These calm passions set the actual ends we want to achieve. We achieve them by means that can be figured out by the faculty of reason. To become praiseworthy, we have to do things that are praiseworthy, and the things that are praiseworthy can be figured out through the faculty of reason. Reason alone can never set an end by itself. Reason is only ever a tool that helps us find the means to achieve our actual, desire based, ends.

Contrary to the calm passions, there are also violent passions. Violent passions are those that rise up quick through circumstance or new information, like anger, resentment, hatred, etc. Keeping a focus on our calm passions and the ends we set because of them, is a controlling mechanism for the violent passions. For instance, when I want to work hard to get better at painting, it would not be beneficial to act on my violent passions, which would be to stop practicing and start watching a movie. But focusing on the calm passions and the ends we set because of them, keeps these violent passions in check, and motivate us to work towards our ends.

3.1.3 Sympathy

Now, I want to discuss the matter of sympathy in Hume's account, which we have already discussed from the rationalist point of view. Hume argues that all people are essentially the

[7] This idea of Hume, about avoiding pain and acting in accordance with pleasure is, in my opinion, very closely related to the idea of Cognitive Dissonance.

[8] Hume defines *The Will* as follows: "I desire it may be observ'd, that by the will, I mean nothing but the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind. This impression, like the preceding ones of pride and humility, love and hatred, 'tis impossible to define, and needless to describe any further […]" (Hume, 1978, p. T.2.3.1.2).

same when it comes to their feelings and cognitive operations (Hume, 1978, T.3.3.1.7). From this idea of sameness, he argues that when we get impressions of passions in other people (through their voice or mannerisms) we infer the cause of these passions and form such a lively idea of them that we start to feel the same passions. For example, when people see a video of a person breaking his leg after kicking a metal pole, they tend to react by grabbing their own leg and making a painful noise. Even though they didn't actually hit their leg on a pole, they still have somewhat similar feelings. According to Hume this is due to the sameness of our feelings and cognitive operations. Sympathy works by the same principles. Because of sympathy, we can feel happiness or distress when we see other people experience happiness or distress. These sympathetic feeling can, in turn, become a source of motivation.

3.1.4 Sympathy in High Functioning Autism

Hume's idea of sympathy is different than Kant's idea of sympathy. As we have seen, Kant argues that sympathy arises from an idea of sameness. This idea of sameness in Kant is different from the idea of sameness in Hume. According to Kant, sameness comes from recognizing that we are an end in itself, therefore, everyone else is also an end in itself. Hume's idea of sympathy is closer to what Kant calls compassion. Kant argues that feeling similar feelings as other people, mainly in relation to suffering, is not beneficial to acting in accordance with the moral law and the duties we need to adhere to. For example, when one person suffers from depression and we have a strong sense of compassion for this person, we too suffer in a sense. In this case, the amount of people that suffer is greater than the amount of people that actually go through the real suffering of depression, which for Kant is not helpful toward the person who is actually suffering (Kant, 1996, p.250). Hume argues the exact opposite of Kant. He states that, because we can share the same impressions of the situations of others, we can be motivated to change such situations.

Hume's ideas on sympathy are interesting when we relate them to people with HFA. As we have seen in the first chapter, people with HFA seem to be different, in a sense, when it comes to their cognitive operations. One of those differences, is that they seem to have difficulty recognizing the expressions of feelings in other people. The main theory, of why people with HFA have difficulty recognizing emotions and feelings in other people, is that people with HFA tend to avert their gaze from people's faces and therefore miss the facial expressions they make. This behavior of averting eye contact can be explained by the fact that facial expressions, and in particular the eyes, give off enormous amounts of information. People with HFA tend to be hypersensitive and making eye contact is extremely difficult for them (Stuart et al., 2022), so they avert their eyes to make certain social interactions manageable.

This is not to say that people with HFA lack the ability altogether. In some situations they can see the emotional state people are in and they even want to act on that information. For instance, when they see someone in distress, they are sometimes capable to notice that distress, but they lack the insight on what to do about the other's distress. This can point toward the lack, or deficiency, in the ability to produce such a vivid idea of the other's situation that they feel the same feelings or emotions, as Hume suggests sympathy to work. This can explain some of the behaviors that people with HFA display. For instance, when someone is in distress they often act in an improper way, or when someone displays genuine happiness, they do not seem to share the same feeling of happiness. This can be explained by stating that they do not feel the feelings of the other person and therefore do not know how to act on the feelings of the

other. Hume can account for some of the behavior of people with HFA. But then we must also conclude that his idea that everybody is the same in feelings and cognitive operations is false.

Another thing that Hume says that is of interest for our case about people with HFA, is that custom and repetition have a calming effect on violent passions, which we have discussed above, and emotional agitations. When we make a sentiment or passion "a settled principle of action, and […] the predominant inclination of the soul, it commonly produces no longer any sensible agitation."(Hume, 1978, T.2.3.4.1). Repetitive behavior can make us less prone to certain (violent) emotional responses, making the motivation, to act in accordance with our set ends, more automatic.

This is particularly interesting when we look at the profile of people with HFA. As seen in chapter one, one of the ways of diagnosing ASD in general, according to the DSM-V, is looking for restricted repetitive behavior. The tendency for repetitive behavior in people with HFA can be an indicator that, when Hume's account of moral motivation has merit, people with HFA can be motivated in the same way as typically developed people but show this motivation in a different way. People with HFA, as previously stated, are regarded to act in a more seemingly rational way. But this seemingly rational way of behavior could actually just be behavior devoid of the influence of these violent passions. This is not to say that people with HFA do not have violent passions. For example, people with HFA can have anger tantrums when things do not go as planned or when something unexpected happens. But they regulate these violent passions with what Hume calls settled principles of action. These settled principles of action may still be motivated by the sentimental ends they set for themselves.

Now that we have looked into Hume's account of moral motivation, and applied some of his ideas directly on people with HFA, I want to take a look at the more contemporary accounts of moral sentimentalism.

3.2 McGeer's Account of Moral Motivation

First, I want to take a look at how Victoria McGeer argues against some of the claims of rationalists in favor of a sentimentalist view. McGeer directly replies to Kennett's claims about rationality and how people with HFA can fit in that paradigm. First of all, McGeer states that rationality has its part to play when it comes to morality. She argues that rationality is needed in some capacity and that to be a proper moral agent, one must be a rational agent (McGeer, 2008, p. 237). One must be rational in the sense that we need rationality to keep us focused on our ends. When we look at the above-mentioned ideas of Hume, we could say that rationality is needed analyze the proper way to achieve them. She states:

> First, I do agree with Kennett that being a moral agent requires one to have certain agential capacities, in particular the capacity to control one's impulses in the service of some larger ends, […], the capacity to find value in these larger ends, and the capacity to put one's reason to work in the service of attaining such ends […]. (McGeer, 2008, p. 245)

Just like anyone else, people with HFA have certain ends they want to achieve. McGeer argues, for instance, that people with HFA strongly want an orderly and predictable world, certain boundaries in social life, which again are part of the need for things to be predictable. This idea of wanting order can be seen in the sketch of people with HFA in chapter 1, were I showed that people with HFA tend to have routines and highly repetitive behaviors. These

routines and repetitive behaviors indicate a desire for order in the world. In Chapter 2 I pointed to Temple Grandin who said that she felt like an anthropologist on Mars. Indicating that she is looking to make sense of the world around her and also that she does so out of some concern, which McGeer and Hume would ascribe to the affective ends she wants to achieve. One way this idea of making sense of the world by routine and repetitive behavior is the rigid use of rules. McGeer challenges the idea that this rigid use of rules is an indicator that people with HFA have knowledge of the reason why these rules are in place. It could be that they've been taught these rules from a young age and have used them ever since, without understanding why. She states: "[…] For many such individuals, it may well be an open question as to how deeply their "moral" judgements and behavior are genuinely guided by moral concern." (McGeer, 2008, p. 240). She follows this statement by an example from a study among adults with HFA:

> A young man with autism was participating in a board game called 'Scruples' which involves listening to stories and telling what you would do in each situation. He was given a scenario in which a store owner saw a woman stealing a small amount of food from his store. The store owner knew that this particular woman had no job, no one to support her, and several young children. The young man with autism was asked what he would do in the situation. He replied, 'Everyone has to go through the checkout line. It is illegal not to go through the checkout line. She should be arrested'. (Keel, 1993, p. 49).

McGeer concludes three things when it comes to people with HFA and their moral motivation. First, reason is a tool to be used to reflect on what means should be used to get to certain ends. Second, the ends we set for ourselves are sentimental and not due to a reverence for reason. Reason on its own cannot motivate us. The reverence for reason only comes about by noticing the effectiveness of the tool that reason provides to achieve our ends. She argues that empathy (or sympathy) is one of the most important elements in setting those affective ends, but also recognizes that people with HFA have a deficiency in this department. She argues that striving for an orderly and predictable world are all good grounds for our moral ends. So, she effectively argues that people with HFA do not need the full capability of sympathy to set their end to be morally motivated. Also, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, people with HFA can display forms of sympathy, even roughly along the lines of Hume's ideas of sympathy. Think about the young boy with HFA and the pianos. McGeer's third conclusion is that, as just states, sympathy is not the only source of moral concern. There are other sources, but that does not mean that sympathy as a motivational source should be replaced by a source of moral concern that people with HFA and typically developed people have in common. (McGeer, 2008, pp. 245-247)

3.3 Haidt's Account of Moral Motivation

Another sentimentalist I want to discuss, is Jonathan Haidt[9], and he calls his account social intuitionism. He characterizes social intuition as such: "Intuitionism in philosophy refers to the view that there are moral truths and that when people grasp these truths they do so not

[9] Haidt talks mainly about forming and reforming moral judgements. I find it hard to distinguish the forming of moral judgements and being motivated to perform a corresponding moral act in moral sentimentalism in general, especially in Haidt's intuitionist account. From what I understand, we are morally motivated when we make a moral judgement based on an intuitive feeling. So, the intuitive feeling is still prior to the judgement. I could even argue that the intuitive feeling and the moral judgement are one and the same, except that the judgement goes through a process of translation from feeling to language.

by a process of ratiocination and reflection but rather by a process more akin to perception […].”(Haidt, 2001, p. 814). He illustrates this point by telling a story and letting people respond to it. The story is about two siblings, male and female, who are travelling through France on a summer vacation. They decide that it would be interesting to have sex with each other. They use two forms of birth control, the pill, and a condom, just to be extra safe. After the deed is done, they decide to not do it again, but they also do not feel any problems with having done it. It brought them closer together as siblings. (Haidt, 2001, p. 814).

A lot of people would have some kind of problem with this situation, including me. We have been told, hopefully, that incest is wrong, no matter what the circumstances. But what reasons do we actually have to judge this situation as morally wrong? They made sure that they would not get pregnant, they used double birth control, and there was no emotional damage afterward. Still, it seems wrong to a lot of people. This nicely illustrates where sentimentalists think reason lacks some kind of authority in finding moral truths, and I would argue, also in moral motivation. The thought of performing incest incites a feeling of disgust and therefore we abstain from it. He argues that the finding of moral truths is akin to perception in that it is automatic, quick, effortless, etc.

Reasons and rationality still have a part to play in his view on intuitionism. Reasons primary use is the ability to gather and process information. But when it comes to rationality as a guiding force in morality, he has little to say in favor of it for a few reasons. First, reasoning is used to construct post hoc justifications. Reason is not used to construct moral judgements or be moved by them but is used as justification after the judgement is already made. Second, reasoning is often motivated. The process of reasoning is to help find the best possible means to get to your desired ends, who are given to us through our intuition, which fits well into Hume’s account. Third, according to Haidt, moral action covaries with moral emotion more than with moral reasoning. This can be supported by the findings of neuroscience, for example the research done by Greene et al. already mentioned in the previous chapter. The Fourth and last reason is the that, while there is a long standing idea that sentiments and reasoning are simultaneously at work while making moral judgement, the reasoning faculty is over emphasized. (Haidt, 2001, p. 815).

The intuitionist model proposes that there are four principal processes that occur when making and changing moral judgements. There is the intuitive process, the post-hoc reasoning process, the reasoned persuasion process, and the social persuasion process. In short, these processes illustrate how one gets to a moral judgement, how they justify this judgement, and the last two processes show how one can be persuaded to change their judgements.

The last two processes are particularly interesting when we apply them to the group of people with HFA. Haidt states that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to persuade someone with reasons only. What we need to do, to persuade someone to change their moral judgement and in turn be motivated by that judgement, is to trigger “new affectively valanced intuitions” (Haidt, 2001, p. 819). In Humean terms this would mean that we have to change the ends people pursue. I would argue that the last process Haidt describes is, in part, in tune with how people with HFA function. This social persuasion process focusses on the idea that people are highly perceptive and influenced by group norms. As I said earlier, people with HFA try to fit themselves into a world that is, in a sense, still alien to them. Conforming to the moral landscape of a group or society as a whole is an easy way for them to fit in. Although, it seems

that when it comes to the part of persuasion, people with HFA are having a harder time changing their views, due to their tendency to rigidly follow the rules they are taught.

Haidt still leaves some room for reasoning as a causal force of moral motivation and judgement. These processes of reasoning are the reasoned judgement process and the private reflection process (Haidt, 2001, p. 819). The reasoned judgement process is a process brought forth by sheer logical power. This seems more in line with how people with HFA seem to operate, but there are some problems with the way Haidt describes this process. Firstly, the process is rare and mostly seen when the initial intuition is weak and therefore easy to override. Secondly, when the intuition is strong, the reasoned judgment may be verbally expressed, but the intuitive judgement still holds, which is contradictory to the tendency of people with HFA to speak the truth. As for the private reflection judgement process, this process is mostly done through role-taking. This is again something that is difficult to do for people with HFA, because of the high levels of alexithymia and their deficiencies in theory of mind.

Haidt's moral intuitionist model claims that morality, and the motivation and judgements that flow from it, are more interpersonal than private. Which can be seen when looking at the first four processes described above. The social element of intuition is heavily emphasized. For people with HFA this offers, at the same time, an explanation and a problem. On the one hand, the social intuitionist model fails to explain how people with HFA come to their initial formation of moral judgements. As described in the first chapter, people with HFA have problems with getting to know what other people feel and think. They often need to be told very explicitly what certain conventions are, both morally and non-morally. This does not seem to be the way Haidt thinks moral judgements are founded. But at the other hand it does explain the rigidity of the moral lives of people with HFA. When they have a moral judgement, they stand by it and do not change it as easily as typically developed people do, mostly due to their deficiencies in the required social abilities described by Haidt and possibly due to their deficiency in theory of mind. Their intuitive ability to grasp moral truths through social context is lacking. I would argue that the problem that people with HFA have, is that they cannot rely on their intuitions, because of their limited ability in theory of mind and deficiency in role-taking. They cannot figure out what their intuitions really are and seem to compensate this deficiency with a more rational approach. Now, this does not mean that they do not have intuitions, but what it does mean is that, in everyday life, they do not rely on what they intuitively feel is right or wrong. They rely on what they are taught to be right or wrong, or what they have figured out themselves through the use of the reasoned judgement and private reflection process. McGeer touches upon this issue when she talks about Temple Grandin having an enormous library of memories of experiences, movies, tv-shows, etc. which she uses to traverse social situations. Or, when McGeer talks about Jim Sinclair who says that he has a separate translation code for every person he meets.

In some of the examples we looked at throughout this thesis, we can see that people with HFA act differently in a moral sense than people with a typical development. With Haidt's ideas we can explain that, because moral behavior is tightly linked with emotional processes and social situations, people with HFA do in fact act differently in a moral sense. Their behavior is seemingly more rational. Their emotional processing deficiencies (Hlavatá et al., 2018) can explain why they have to rely more on rationalizations to come to their moral judgements and, consequently, their moral motivation.

In the next chapter, I will attempt to answer the questions central to this thesis. What does rationalism describe better than sentimentalism? What are some things they both overlook? And most importantly, is the discussion about moral motivation in need of change if we take people with HFA into account?

4. Further Relevant Contemporary Discussions

In the last two chapters we have seen how the two main theories about moral motivation explain moral motivation and we have discussed briefly how people with HFA can fit into that picture of motivation with our knowledge of people with HFA from the first chapter. With all this in mind, we will now progress to the main issue of this thesis and try to give an answer to the main question of this thesis: How could the better positioning of people with high functioning autism influence the debate about moral motivation and judgement between rationalists and sentimentalists?

To answer this question, we still have to figure some things out. Mainly, what does the discussion about moral motivation between rationalists and sentimentalists entail? We have seen the main points in the previous chapters, being that rationalists believe that practical reason can motivate our moral actions and sentimentalists believe that practical reason cannot. But the discussion has some other nuances that we have not yet touched upon. I mainly talk about the discussion about motivated vs unmotivated desires and the discussion about internalism vs externalism about reasons for action. Keep in mind that these 'side' discussions are still aimed at the question whether practical reasons can motivate.

So, in this chapter we will take a look at, first, the discussion about whether desires can be practically motivating or not. Then, we will look at internalism and externalism about reasons for action. After we have looked at these 'side' discussions we will try to better position people with HFA into these discussions and try to figure out if keeping them in our minds while discussing these topics will change the discussion, and if so, how.

4.1 Motivated and Unmotivated Desires

In this section, we will address at the discussion about motivated and unmotivated desires. There is no question that people with HFA have desires. Whether their desires are the same as those of typically developed people, or whether their desires come about in the same way as in typically developed people, could still be debated. In this section we will look at the notion of motivated and unmotivated desires and if the implementation of people with HFA in this discussion can change or bring new perspectives to the discussion.

Thomas Nagel in his book *'The Possibility for Altruïsm'* argues there to be two forms of desires. One kind of desire he calls unmotivated desires. These are desires that assail us, they just come over us (Nagel, 1970, p. 29). He gives the example of hunger, which instills in us a desire for food. Such unmotivated desires can, even though they just come over us, be explained, mainly through explanations of a physiological nature.

The other kind of desires he calls motivated desires. These are desires that are generated through deliberation and decision-making. These motivated desires can, just like unmotivated desires, be explained, although the explanation of motivated desires is not mainly through physiological factors, but mainly in reciting the deliberate reasons for the desire.

In the previous chapters we have already touched upon the means-ends notion of practical reason and desires. The main thought, most prominently supported by Humean sentimentalists, is that desires are what determines our ends. They tell us what it is we want to achieve in the world. And practical reason occupies the roll of figuring out which means best serve toward the end. For example, with Nagel's idea of hunger and the desire for food, we can find, through practical reasoning, that, to achieve the end of satiating our hunger, we have to go to the grocery store to buy some food.

R. Jay Wallace, in his article *'How to Argue about Practical Reason'*, argues that the most appealing part of the Humean theory of motivation is the fact that it can account for the teleological character of intentional action (Wallace, 1990a, p. 356). The teleological character of the Humean motivational position entails that our desires aim us into forming the world to meet those desires. In the case of the hungry feeling and the accompanied desire to eat food, the action to go to the grocery store and buy food is a way to change the world to accommodate for our desire for food. This all depends on the, likely, presupposition that for all motivation, there needs to be an accompanied desire. If we look at Hume's theory of motivation, we can very clearly see that desire is ultimately needed to move us. But even in Kant's ideas of motivation there is room for such a thing as a desire, which is derived from a feeling of respect of the will to respect the moral law, which ultimately move us. The difference between Hume and Kant is that for Hume desire is not explicable in terms of practical reason, let alone that it could be grounded in it, and for Kant the desire to follow the moral law is gained through reasoning.

Now, we come back to the notion of motivated and unmotivated desires. Rationalists see the appeal of the teleological character of desire, they see the need for there being a desire to move us. But what they do not ascribe to is the idea that all desire is unmotivated. Nagel and Wallace both see the need to split the concept of desire in two, where one sort of desire is motivated and the other is not. For motivated desire, it is needed that they can be explained in a rational way. Wallace states:

> [A]motivated desire is one whose associated evaluative belief admits of a rationalizing explanation, where the desire is formed because the agent has arrived at the evaluative belief. A crucial assumption here is that the rational explanation for an evaluative belief may account for the formation of the motivated desire as well, so that the reasons which explain the belief will equally be reasons for the motivated desire. (Wallace, 1990a, p. 366)

So, for example, in the case of being hungry I have a reasonable explanation for why I want to eat, for when I eat the hunger will subside. I also have a reasonable explanation of why I want (or have the desire) to go to the grocery store and buy food. All the desires I have in this example are needed for me to get motivated to go to the store and buy food, but all these desires can be reasonably explained.

This line of reasoning is prone to what Wallace calls the desire-in, desire-out principle (Wallace, 1990b, p. 370). This principle entails that all reasons that give rise to desires (desire-out) are believes formed by reasoning about the appropriate actions that should be taken. In the case of being hungry it means that the desire to go to the grocery store is formed by the belief that buying food in the grocery store will satisfy the feeling of hunger. It could be said that the feeling of hunger, or the desire to eat, is prior to the desire to go to the grocery store and therefore an unmotived desire is still at the beginning of all judgement, motivation and action. But the fact that we sometimes get hungry is perfectly reasonable to explain. We get the feeling

of hunger when we get sensory input from our bodies that it needs some kind of nourishment. We can reasonably say that when we get these kinds of sensory inputs we know, or can reason, that we need food to satisfy this input. So, the question still remains if the desire to eat food falls under the desire-in principle. Is it then that the sensory input of the feeling of hunger can be qualified as a desire-in, or is the sensory input in tandem with the reasoned belief that eating will subdue this feeling the reasoned base for the desire to eat food? Of course, this discussion is not only about trivial things like buying groceries, Wallace tries to attempt to show that every desire can be reasonably explained by having evaluative beliefs. And he therefore lays the burden of proof with the Sentimentalist to show that the desire-in principle is intrinsic and cannot be reasonably explained through ways of evaluative beliefs.

But what does this discussion about motivated and unmotivated desires entail for people with HFA and what does the deliberate inclusion of people with HFA entail for this discussion? We have seen that people with HFA have difficulties with theory of mind, not only in perspective taking of other people, but also in interpreting their own feelings, desires, etc. Because of this deficit in theory of mind it is likely that people with HFA hold on to certain values they are being taught. We can see that with people with HFA around us, they seem to adhere very strictly to rules and regulations and seem to feel lost when they do not know the rules and etiquettes of unknown situations. They might have the feeling that certain desires they have, do not have an origin. For instance, when they have the desire to help people in need, they may not be able to pinpoint reasonable explanation of the desire. Rationalists might study this particular behavior and argue that their desire-in is reasonably explicable by looking at their up brining and the values they have been taught. Sentimentalists might argue that the desire to help people is not something that can be taught in the way rationalists might argue they can. This, in turn, can give rise to some arguments in discussions in the nature/nurture debate, whether desires can be taught or are necessarily innate. Or it can pose a problem for sentimentalist, showing that they, maybe unintentional, subscribe to the idea that taught desires can become so internalized that they lose their reasonably explicable characteristics. I won't give any conclusive or elaborate solutions for Rationalists or Sentimentalists, but this discussion around motivated and unmotivated desires does seem to be influenced by focusing on people with HFA.

4.2 Internalism versus Externalism about Reasons for Action

The other discussion that is going on in the field of moral motivation is the discussion about whether reasons to act are always in some way motivational, internalism, or that reasons to act are not necessarily motivational, externalism. After some general explanations I want to focus on what the ideas of internalism and externalism imply for people with HFA. But I also want to take a look at how the implementation of people with HFA in this discussion can maybe further the discussion is some way.

Let's illustrate both ideas with some examples. For internalism, when I am planning my week, I see that I have time to go golfing on Thursday. I have several reasons to go golfing, for instance, I like to go outside, and I like the sense of progression I get from practicing. I also have several reasons not to go golfing, for instance, I suffer from very bad seasonal allergies, especially related to the grass pollen, and walking in mostly well-cut grasslands is not very nice at certain times of the year. Also, golf is a very expensive sport, and I do not really want to

spend much of my money. Both the negative and positive reasons for me to go golfing have a certain motivational pull. One might be stronger than the other, but all these reasons have a certain motivational force.

For externalism, suppose that I would be a very religious man. I think all, or most, things stated in the Bible are true and I am convinced that I should live my life according to these holy scriptures. My motivation for acting in certain situations is therefore dictated by the content of the Bible and gives me reasons to act in certain ways. But it is possible that I know what the Bible said is true and still do not act on that knowledge. The truth and knowledge about reasons to act and the motivation to actually act on those reasons are two separate things.

In his chapter *'Internal and External Reasons'* Bernard Williams famously defends the idea that only internalism about reasons to act can be true. His idea is that a reason must always be in a relation to one's subjective motivational set in order to become a reason that one is motivated to act on (Williams, 1981, p. 103). In his idea about internalism about reasons he still holds the door open for practical reasoning, albeit being a smaller role than rationalists would want. He argues that practical reasoning still has a role to play in finding and considering reasons to act. For instance, if a certain reason to act is the most convenient, economical, pleasant, etc. to satisfy something in the subjective motivational set of a person, then that person has a reason to perform that act (Williams, 1981, p. 104). This may be a bit confusing, for it seems as if practical reasoning has the ability to pick and choose the reasons a person has for acting. But Williams argues that this use of practical reasoning is still controlled by other elements in one's subjective motivational set, thereby eliminating the notion that practical reasoning can be at the root of motivation.

In his article "*Ought*" and Motivation W.D. Falk tries to defend externalism about reasons to act. He states:

> If "ought" means "I am from outside myself demanded to do some act", whether by the will of another, or more impersonally by the "situation", there will then be no necessary connection for anyone between having the duty and being under any manner of real compulsion to do the act. (W D Falk, 1947, p. 126)

He argues that the "ought" from outside oneself must be seen as a kind of formal motivational statement or reason. It is more akin to a recommendation of the speaker than it being a, more or less, objective reason. For the formal motivational statement to become a reason to act for oneself, there seems to be a need for a second kind of psychological process. He argues that most people skip the formal state of "ought" and go directly to think that the statement must be internal and therefore to necessarily have some motivational force. But this is not true, according to Falk. He states that people think that their own "ought" statements are generated by themselves, but in reality, they are the product of historical and situational upbringing and education, which in turn are external.

We already touched upon the internalism vs externalism debate a little bit in the previous sub-section, when mentioning people with HFA following strict rules and posing the question whether this tendency can be said to be instantiating their moral behavior. The question here still remains that if people with HFA have the desire to help people and they have learned to follow some taught guideline to facilitate this desire, is the desire also taught and therefore external or is the desire to help others innate and therefore internal?

In Chapter 2 we talked about a young boy with HFA who wanted to make an amendment to the US constitution to oblige everyone to have a perfectly tuned piano in their home. He wanted everyone to experience the same happiness he experiences and therefore everyone should have a perfectly tuned piano in their home. Obviously, his line of reasoning lacks some consideration, but it illustrates the way of reasoning of people with HFA pretty well. This boy would probably be taught that certain people do not find joy in hearing a perfectly tuned piano and that amending the US constitution probably would not have the effect the boy wanted.

It is interesting to think about the idea that people with HFA do and think a lot of things that are being taught to them, because they cannot teach these things to themselves, through a deficit in theory of Mind. This would speak for the externalist position of Falk. People with HFA are taught, in a way, what is valuable, what is desirable and what are the effective and right ways to fulfill them. But this externalist view would only hold up for the adult HFA people, not so much the children with HFA. Children with HFA have not thoroughly been taught what is valuable, desirable, etc., both from a formal and parental educational point of view, but also from a perspective taking and theory of Mind point of view. This would mean that children with HFA would behave in a very much internalistic way, maybe even more than the typically developed child or adult.

The problem I see with internalism after thinking about people with HFA in this context, especially when focusing on Williams' ideas about internalism, is that people with HFA show, to a certain extent, the subjective motivational set is very much formed by what has been taught in the context of good or bad behavior.

The problem I see when looking at externalism in the context of people with HFA is that is it still not well defined what 'historical and situational upbringing and education' entails. Does this mean that in every situation and period in our lives people do what has been taught to them, directly or indirectly? Or are there periods in our lives, or certain kinds of people, who are not influenced by their 'historical and situational upbringing and education?

I find that especially the idea of externalism set forth by Falk, and less so but still partially Williams' internalism, is heavily influenced by the idea of typical development of people. It is interesting to see what changes in these points of view when we consider a-typically developed people, such as people with HFA.

4.3 Amoralism: The Problem of Psychopathy

In chapter 2 we talked briefly about another group of people who can be linked with philosophical problems like moral motivation and judgement. Many philosophers, who talked about these and adjacent topics, have used the group of psychopaths and the group of people with HFA to pinpoint some of these problems, and more notably, highlight the flaws in some of the solutions to these problems. In this subsection, I want to take a closer look at the discussion around the moral competence of the psychopath, what kind of problems or solutions arise, and how people with HFA fit into the picture.

4.3.1 A Profile of Psychopathy

To begin, I want to briefly mention what the main characteristics of psychopathy are that are important to our relevant discussions. The DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2013b, pp. 764-765) categorizes psychopathy as a form of Antisocial Personality Disorder. To

be clear, not everybody who is diagnosed with Antisocial Personality Disorder is a psychopath. Psychopathy has to be specified, it comes about when the criteria are met with regard to Antisocial Personality Disorder and some extra specifiers are also met. These specifiers are the most interesting part for our discussion. They include a lack of anxiety or fear and a bold interpersonal style, which in turn result in psychopaths having very low levels of anxiousness, high levels of detachment and high levels of attention seeking.

This diagnostic framework helps us start to see why many moral philosophers have used the psychopath as an example of someone who comes closest to what we would call 'amoralism'. Psychopaths never seem to take other people into their own consideration except for the cases where they need other people to achieve their goals, in which case it would be manipulative consideration of others. For moral philosophers the group of psychopaths is an interesting one, because they seem to be a group of people who really do not care about moral implications or they really do not know what the difference is between moral rules and normal conventional rules.

The existence of psychopaths seems to threaten certain morally relevant ideas in the realm of moral motivation, especially in the debate between externalists and internalists. For instance, when we assume that psychopaths do have knowledge about moral terms and concepts, and they can differentiate between moral judgements and conventional judgements, it would seem that externalists could argue that their point of view is more valid than internalism. For if a psychopath could make a proper moral judgement, but it in no way motivates him to act on that judgement, it would mean that moral judgement does not intrinsically and necessarily motivate a person in some way. In this case moral judgement and moral action are separated instances.

But if internalists keep clinging to their idea of moral judgement being motivational, they must argue that the judgements psychopaths make are not proper moral judgements. And that is exactly what they do, they argue that psychopaths make their moral judgements in an "inverted comma's" sense. Psychopaths use morally relevant terms, but they do not mean them in a morally relevant way, so their judgement is not properly moral and therefore should not have to motivate them.

One way to give this argument some scientific aid is to look at studies done with children and how/if they can make a distinction between moral rules and conventional rules. Blair conducted such a study with children who scored high and low on the Psychopathy Screening Device (Blair, 1997). It turns out that children with psychopathic tendencies tend to score low on the moral/conventional distinction tests. This may point to the idea that psychopaths do not understand the difference between moral rules and judgements, and conventional rules and judgements. They seem to think of the rule "do not hit other people for no reason" as the same kind of rule as "do not chew your food with your mouth open". This idea that psychopaths do not seem to be capable of making such moral-conventional distinctions might point to the fact that they do not make proper moral judgements and that all they do is make conventional judgements with moral terms.

It must be noted that children with HFA do not score significantly lower on test about the moral-conventional distinction (Garcia-Molina et al., 2019). They make the same kind of judgements about morally good or bad scenarios. What they do differ in is the justification of their judgements. The group of typically developed children in the study seemed to give very

homogenous justifications, attributing the seemingly correct mental states to the right people. But children with HFA were far less homogenous in their justification and displayed an overall difficulty in their moral reasoning. The study of Garcia-Molina et al. (2019) attributed this difficulty in moral reasoning in children with HFA to a lack of competence in theory of mind. Specifically, because people with HFA have a deficiency in their understanding of their own emotions and mental states, they also have difficulty attributing these things to other people and this causes them to avoid these mental states in their moral justification altogether.

This could point to a more rationalist way of making moral judgements, not based on the mental states or emotions these children with HFA have or attribute to others, but purely by the description of the problem itself. For example, these children with HFA can see someone is in distress and can take this distress into consideration when they make their moral judgement. But this does not mean that this distress causes some desire or emotion in them to do something about the distress. And even when people with HFA have desires and emotions toward the distress of others, it can be possible that they do not know what to do with them and therefore resort to a more reason-based ground for their moral motivation and judgement.

4.3.2 Arguments against moral-conventional distinction

There are, however, some arguments to be made against the use of psychopaths in the discussion of moral motivation. In this section we will look at two such arguments, one by David Shoemaker and one by Adina Roskies.

Shoemakers argues that the moral-conventional distinction is not as scientifically sound as it may appear to be. He does not argue this for the sake of a further point he wants to make, for example to strengthen the position of externalists or something else. He argues against the use of the moral-conventional distinction, purely because he thinks the distinction is not up to certain scientific standards (Shoemaker, 2011).

The moral/conventional distinction research was split into 4 different categories that could be questioned. First, the permissibility of the moral or conventional transgression. Second, the seriousness of the transgression. Third, the justification of the transgression. And lastly, the modifiability of the transgression (i.e., do statements of authority figures change the judgement from, for example, the transgression being a moral one, to become a conventional one when the authority is removed). Shoemaker argues that psychopaths do seem to make the same kind of judgements based on permissibility and seriousness, but their judgements regarding justification and modifiability seem to be different than the average person. In the justification of both conventional and moral judgements, psychopaths seem to put more emphasis on rules and not so much on the general welfare of others. This ties in with references on the modifiability of their judgements. Psychopaths, in these studies, refer to authority far less when it comes to conventional rules. They seem to judge conventional rules just as authority independent as moral rules (Shoemaker, 2011, p. 103). The most common argument for this line of reasoning is that the psychopaths in these studies wanted to look good and show very eagerly how good they were and how well they knew what was right and wrong. Shoemaker argues that the moral-conventional distinction is too broad. He argues that this distinction can be split into different distinctions that sometimes overlap, but not necessarily. He states that there are at least three smaller distinctions that can be made: (i) Permissible-impermissible distinction, (ii) more serious-less serious distinction and (iii) authority dependence-authority independence distinction. (Shoemaker, 2011, p. 110)

Adina Roskies in her article '*Are ethical judgements intrinsically motivational? Lessons from "acquired sociopathy"'* (Roskies, 2003) argues that there is a real-life example of a group of people who contradict the findings of the moral-conventional distinction. She explains that there is a group of people with damage to the Ventromedial prefrontal cortex (VM patients) who have lost the ability to be properly affected by moral situation due to this damage. This entails that they also are not properly motivated by moral situations. According to Roskies, these patients act very similar to psychopaths in moral situations. The big difference is that these VM patients still have knowledge about their previous moral reasonings and therefore score just as good as 'normal' people on the moral-conventional distinction. But they are not motivated in the same way 'normal' people are. This would be a problem for a rationalist standpoint for moral motivation and judgement. VM patients have the full rational capacity to make rational judgements and be motivated by them, but it seems that they do not (always) follow this line of action.

The idea that the moral-conventional distinction is flawed poses a problem for the rationalists' notion that psychopaths do not make proper moral judgements, and in turn cannot be properly motivated by these judgements, because they fail to make the moral-conventional distinction.

4.4 Sentimentalist Interpretation of Amoralism

As we have seen above, the rationalist's idea that psychopaths do not make proper moral judgement because of a lack of moral knowledge or a lack of efficiency in applying their moral knowledge, becomes weak when the moral/conventional distinction comes into question.

But how do sentimentalists argue about the position of psychopaths? Jesse Prinz argues in favor of the sentimentalists and has three theses to argue that emotions are essential to making moral judgements.

His first thesis is that emotions co-occur with the making of moral judgements. He argues for this first thesis by referring to studies done with watching brain activity while people make moral judgements (Moll et al., 2003). What happens is that certain parts of the brain associated with emotions are highly active when making moral judgements.

In the case of people with HFA it is highly likely that the result would be the same, although there is no real conclusive evidence. It would be interesting to see if the same result would come up, not only when we include people with HFA, but also psychopaths and maybe even people with other psychological diagnoses, think of AD(H)D, PTSS, etc.

The second thesis Prinz argues for, is that moral judgements are influenced by our emotions. He bases this thesis on research done in evoking certain emotions of disgust and then looking at how the participants would judge certain moral scenarios (Schnall et al., 2008). It turns out that the more disgusted a participant was, the more severe his moral judgements became, which, for Prinz, indicates that negative emotions, or emotions in general, influence our moral judgements.

This second thesis of Prinz is very interesting when we take people with HFA into consideration. People with HFA, as we have seen, have difficulty recognizing and processing their own emotions. Would the results of the study done by Schnall et al. be the same when only people with HFA take part in the study. It could be that the emotions of disgust are so strong and violent that people with HFA have no problems recognizing and acting upon it. But

when it comes to more subtle emotions, for instance confusion, it might be that the emotion is too complex, so that acting on that emotion or make judgements based on that emotion becomes very difficult. It might result in, for instance, no judgement and no action. It is difficult to say these things with certainty without doing specific research to variations of already existing research. Such variations would also be interesting in the case of psychopaths. Would they have the same outcome as typically developed people or would their outcome be different? Such variations on already existing research can possible have the outcome that both people with HFA and psychopaths react the same way. That could mean that certain emotions do sometimes have influence on moral motivation and judgement, but that this influence says a lot less about the moral competence of a person than Prinz might think.

Prinz' third thesis states that emotions are necessary for moral judgements. He suggests that when we look at the moral development and education of young children, we see the inducing of certain emotions while we teach certain moral rules (Prinz, 2006, p. 32). The idea is that emotions are bound to certain moral rules and practices and that the child associates such emotions with these rules and therefore become sufficient in following these rules. Which takes us back to the discussion about motivated and unmotivated desires and the question whether these desires are taught or can be innate. The main argument Prinz uses for this third thesis is the psychopath. He bases this argument on the intuition that psychopaths do not make proper moral judgements, because they lack the disposition to have (negative) emotions when making such judgements.

This third thesis is very much in line with what we discussed earlier. People with HFA are very susceptible to what they are taught. The question still remains if children with HFA make the same kind of connections between rules and emotions. Do children with HFA make the right moral judgement because of a negative emotion that is linked to the wrong moral judgement, or do they link positive emotion to the following of the rules they were taught? And in the extreme case where children with HFA do not link emotions to moral situations, does that mean they are in the same group as the psychopath or would it become less likely that emotions are necessary for moral motivation and judgement?

Conclusion

In this thesis I have sketched a profile of people with high functioning autism and applied some of the discussions surrounding moral motivation and judgement to this profile. In doing this I have shown that the conventional ideas surrounding autism and morality are somewhat outdated in terms of knowledge about autism itself and how the different ideas about moral motivation (and moral judgment) are not geared towards atypically developed people. The idea that people with autism work in a different way than typically developed people is still prevalent and partially true, but the scope of the difference is generally misunderstood. People with autism, in the most basic sense, operate the same as typically developed people, meaning that the sensory input and considerations to make judgements and act can be the same as typically developed people. The difference comes into play in the interpretation of the information that has been given.

I have shown throughout this thesis that taking people with autism into consideration sheds a new light on various different debates. In debates about motivated and unmotivated desires or internalism and externalism there has not been any research done on atypically developed people, with the exception of psychopaths. And it sometimes is even the case that people with autism are talked about in the same way as people with psychopathy. They are clumped together as atypically developed people. This shows that sometimes there is a place for atypically developed people in discussions of ethics, but the way it has been done leaves a lot to be desired.

I would suggest that further, and more precise, study must be done to show what knowledge is lacking in the space of psychology and what this newfound information does to the theories about motivation and judgement that are already established. I firmly believe that if psychology, neuroscience and philosophy work together we will come to new ways of thinking about morality. I do not think it will give answers to centuries old questions, but it can give us more precise ammunition to tackle these questions from new angles and hopefully move the discussions about moral motivation and judgement even further.

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