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Inter Non Alia: Smith's Humean *Desire* and its Psychological Fix (Abstract)
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The following paper I shall examine the Humean Theory of Motivation. I shall first briefly explain what I, as did Michael Smith, shall refer to in passing as the "Humean Theory." Then, I shall outline concerns regarding the Humean Theory. Following concerns, I shall account for some of what is described in the Humean Theory under what I will argue is the mis-categorization of psychological work and attempt to provide other possible lines of insight.

The Humean Theory addresses the causal root of what occurs when an action is inspired and put into effect. The theory, Smith suggests, seeks to act as revealing of two truths, one which is more widely accepted and another which is not. Respectively, these truths are the following:

1. There is a motivation at a certain circumstance for you to buy milk only if there is milk-drinking possibility which, at that circumstance, you both desire to take part in and believe if you were to buy milk you could then drink it. (P2)
2. There is a circumstantial motivation for you to buy milk only if there is some milk-drinking possibility that the circumstance was also including of a desire for you to drink milk and a means-end belief that if you bought milk you could then drink it.(P1)

The difference between these two, Smith writes, is a difference between desire being present, as in the former, and desire being the instrumental initiating force. From this split Smith paints two camps- those who agree with P1 and those who don't- and labeling himself not agreeing wholly with P1 as it stands but agreeing with it in part.

Smith then seeks to both elucidate and reformat P1 so that it is agreeable first by understanding whether the initial reason that you, using the above example, have to buy milk, is itself either normative or motivating. Implicit within both is that buying milk is not in itself a first-cause, that there are justifications for doing so. The precise relation of the justification to the action is at question when referring to either motivating or normative reasons.

Motivating reasons, Smith explains, create, more or less, within themselves the possibility of your buying milk as being also your reason for buying milk. However, Smith decries this as only one perspective of your buying of milk. Normative reasons, instead, demand a reason-centric explanation one which is often obviated by external perspectives, but for now it suffices to say only this and not work toward what exact string of reasons has led to your buying milk. Smith relates that P1 gives motivating reason but doesn't mention normative reason, and proceeds to exemplify occurrences in which the normative reason approach appears to waiver in its ability to account for all occasions and thus has given supporters of P1/both premises ground. In effect, Smith reveals that a motivating reason as a motivation is not so easily dismissible.

Thus Smith is left with the problem that P1 seemingly incorporates a pseudo-cyclical if not mystical component: that there is an innate and first-cause "desire." He confronts this by considering an

The Humean Theory of Motivation's exact status as attributable to Hume is somewhat dubious.[1] Michael Smith, who studied under Simon Blackwell, titled the idea after philosopher David Hume, the anti-Kant, and in the following, "Humean Theory" shall be used as a title and not as denoting of the theories of Hume himself.

The Humean Theory suggests that coupled concepts of desire and belief make up all reasons for motivation.[2] To begin, consider the following example from a situation first proposed by John Gibbons of Brown University[3]:

1. You're out of milk
2. You desire milk
3. You believe if you go to the store you can get milk
4. You have the means to act on your belief and the desire to get milk "appropriately related"[4]
5. You use your desire and means to get milk

If there is a store where you can get some milk, here, now, a little further away than you want to walk, then you probably desire to bicycle to the store and believe to get some milk. This is the second tenet, P2 (Figure I), of two principles, in what Michael Smith calls the Humean Theory of Motivation. Smith describes this theory as the "weaker"[5] of the two (92).

Figure I

Desire to get > Belief in way to get > Motivation

The "stronger" of the two principles which constitute Humean Theory is P1 (Figure II), that there is a motivation for you to have a "desire" to bicycle if there is a store you can bicycle that you can buy milk at, because you "believe" that if you bicycle to the store you can buy milk and you are so-thirsty.

Figure II

Desire to get > Belief in way to get) + Appropriate Relation > Motivation

What I represent as "desire to get," this initial desire, is a chief complaint against Smith. Smith calls the desire "*inter alia"* ***[6]***, which is a catchphrase meaning "among other things."[7] By using such a phrasing he takes the burden of responsibility off of himself to elucidate this initial concern. In itself, such an avoidance could be tolerated but it is in the context of what we are trying to solve for, motivation, that the impetus of the process cannot be so readily dismissed, disguised, or otherwise disregarded. Smith uses *inter alia* for a similar purpose within varying contexts in his other works as well,[8] and has taken criticism other than mine. In a rebuttal of Michael Smith, *Humeans, Anti-Humeans, and Motivation*, Phillip Pettit argues along a similar line. He says Smith's explanation "does not highlight the central issue."[9] This central problem is one of the desire. As aforementioned, Smith attempts to ensconce this issue using the phrase *inter alia.*

Through the rest of his Smith finishes *The Humean Theory of Motivation* by saying only it "can adequately explain why an explanation of an agent's action in terms of her motivating reason is itself a species of teleological explanation." What Smith is saying here is that the Humean Theory comes down to a teleological, or self-realizing, argument, an idea which sounds inherently fallacious. In establishing *inter alia* as an explanation, Smith's teleology leads us into tautology and there is, as Mark Platt wrote in *Hume and Morality as a Matter of Fact*, "a crucial failing."[10]

However, this failing should not be allowed to obstruct interest in the issue that Michael Smith has proposed and discussed with diligence, and indeed if there is not an adequate elucidation to be found with Smith himself than there are at least many parts of worth for acquisition. One additional obstacle, though, must be overcome.

There is an absurdity in enforcing a divide between psychology and philosophy in cases such as this wherein the categorical differentiation is the only actual divide. Michael Smith does reach out to psychological theory in The Humean Theory of Motivation, but does so through the lenses of philosophers like John McDowell and Michael Stocker.[11] In aiming to re-define psychology from the direction where it has headed, the late psychological theorist Peter Ossorio wrote on motivation from a non-empirical non-biological standpoint that though dissimilarly titled, both supports and sublimate Smith's Humean Theory. Ossorio employs certain word concepts[12] in trying to construct an explanation on the barriers of intentional actions, creating a model- not to be confused with a matrix- on which to understand an individual's psychology (Figure III).

Figure III

Knowledge

Want Performance Achievement [13]

Know-How

I suggest, however, that such a model can be reworked to account for the basic motivation that Michael Smith tries to solve for using his Humean Theory. If instead we rearrange the model (Figure IV) to represent the occasion of motivation, than we can begin to clarify what exactly Smith was trying to ascertain contemplating motivation.

Figure IV

Knowledge

Impulse ("Desire") Motivation

Know-How

In such a format, we no longer allow desire to be an initiating force. In its place we substitute an impulse, a physical. Returning to Gibbon's milk analogy, the first occurrence is:

1. You're out of milk

Gibbons says, rather inarguably, that this indicates both a belief and a fact.[14] It is also a fact that has some temporal location, as it is learned only, for example, when the refrigerator is opened. If from here we consider Smith's desire to be itself a construct initially of this impulse, this physical, and then tempered by knowledge, or the knowing that milk is what you want and quench your thirst, and know-how, or the knowing how to get some milk (in which what Smith calls "beliefs" could be suggested to exist). It is through this operation that we can create a more concrete understanding of motivation.

In conclusion, Michael Smith's Humean Theory of Motivation, from his chapter of the same title in book *The Moral Problem*, considers many philosophical and psycho-philosophical components of motivation. Admittedly, much of Smith's more withstanding arguments on individual aspects of these components have been left aside in this paper in order to allow more room to consider Smith's understanding of a particular piece: desire. Though discussing, debating, and drawing a new for of desire I hope I have helped to illuminate not only Smith's work but also the problems which he endeavored to solve.

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