BOOK REVIEWS

Wise Choices, Apt Feelings, by Allan Gibbard. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990. pp. xi + 346. Reviewed by Ann E. Cudd, University of Kansas.

The puzzle that Allan Gibbard sets for himself is: what do we mean when we call something "rational", or more broadly, what are we doing when we engage in normative discussion, and why do we do it? Gibbard's response is to provide what he calls a "norm-expressivistic analysis" of norms, and to explain human preoccupation with normative discussion in Darwinian terms. To call something rational is to express one's acceptance of norms that permit it. Normative discussions consist in expressing norms, that is, in talking about what it makes sense to do or feel or believe. Humans engage in normative discussion for vast portions of our lives because it is biologically adaptive for us.

Gibbard defends a non-cognitivist view of norms: when expressing norms, he claims, we are not stating facts (or putative facts) about the world. Facts play one biological role in our lives while norms and normative discussion play another, namely to help us to coordinate actions. Gibbard is concerned to give an account of norms that allows for everyday uses of the term "rational", and that accounts for the endorsement aspect of norms. For these reasons he rejects purely descriptive accounts of norms, and the "Hume-Ramsey" substantive account of rationality as instrumental rationality, which cannot make sense of claims that preferences are irrational.

One of the main goals of his analysis is to provide a *naturalistic* account of norms and their role in human life. In Gibbard's terms this means a Darwinian natural selection story of how norms, and the kind of psychology that we need to create them, are evolutionarily adaptive for humans. Since human normative systems and emotional responses differ widely, the story has to be about very plastic psychic devices. "In applying Darwinian theory to the human psyche, we should look not for rigid patterns of behavior, but for capacities to respond differently to different environments" (p.64). If the story is persuasive, then this gives us reason to agree with Gibbard's non-cognitivism, and he will have solved an important puzzle about how norms could have emerged without tacitly appealing to prior norms.

In his Darwinian story norms and judgments about our physical surroundings play very different roles. While the ability to make judgments about our physical surroundings is necessary for most animal functions, the abilities to create norms and engage in normative discussions are uniquely human adaptations that allow us to coordinate our actions, to cooperate for survival and for mutual advantage, and to do so in infinitely flexible ways. Humans typically face bargaining situations

with each other, situations where we stand to gain through cooperation but where there is a conflict of interest over the division of the gains. The solutions that humans take often involve norms (rather than fighting, which would destroy future cooperation), either in the form of rigid rules for splitting the cooperative effort or a framework for discussion of how norms of fairness or desert can be applied in a particular instance. Thus the ability to express norms linguistically is as essential to the story as the ability to be motivated to action by expressions of norms.

Gibbard applies his analysis explicitly to norms for action (though he claims that only the intentions and preferences guiding actions can be judged), norms for appropriate emotions, epistemic norms governing belief formation, and especially moral norms. His focus is not so much on the norms themselves, (indeed one ought not read this book looking for any practical normative advice), but rather on how discussions of norms can go at all: what moves them toward consensus. Given his non-cognitivist approach there are some especially pressing concerns: Can his account be given a formal analysis? Can normative discussions be objective? Can we ever resolve normative disagreements? Can we make sense of the (typically cognitivist) question: why be moral? Gibbard argues for an affirmative answer to each of these.

Perhaps the most important part of the book is Gibbard's account of morality and moral emotion. Gibbard's account of morality resembles, self-consciously, that of Adam Smith, with the important exception that Gibbard rejects (partly) that role of the impartial spectator. In particular, morality consists in judgments about the appropriateness of moral feelings. Anger and guilt are especially important on Gibbard's view as the primary moral emotions; societies in which persons do not feel guilt do not have morality on what he calls the "narrow construal". Moral norms are adaptive because they help us to share feelings, which in turn helps foster coordination and cooperation. Shared feelings of anger and guilt, and the ability to employ normative authority about attributions of anger and guilt, are especially effective in motivating cooperation. Emotions are cognitive on Gibbard's account, that is, we feel anger at someone, or we feel guilty, for something we have done or omitted. Anger and guilt properly come about when someone has failed to do his part. In moral inquiry we need not feel these emotions, rather we need to take a special standpoint: moral norms are norms for how to feel given full engagement. Full engagement is "vivid awareness of everything generic that would affect one's feelings toward a situation" (p.127). One's feelings are not often fully engaged, but the norms governing the emotions are to be discussed from this standpoint because taking such a stance ensures the best hope for sharing feelings, and so for cooperation. Gibbard takes from Smith the idea that moral emotions have a pragmatic role, but rejects the idea that the appropriate moral emotions are those which an impartial spectator would feel, since on Gibbard's view it is sometimes better for coordination if we

are not so impartial. I find this last point somewhat confusing in the text, however (Compare p. 127 and pp. 279-282).

It may seem that objectivity would pose a special problem for norm-expressivistic analysis. Gibbard spends the largest portion of the book (100 pages) in giving an account of normative objectivity: how and to what extent it is possible on his analysis of norms. He divides the topic of objectivity into three issues to discuss: (1) what it means to say that a norm applies independent of one's acceptance of it; (2) the distinction between accepting something as demand of rationality and making idiosyncratic existential commitment to it; and (3) the nature of claim to authority about moral norm. The first issue is easily settled when one distinguishes between accepting a norm and expressing acceptance. Since his account is about when it is appropriate to *express* acceptance, he claims that normative discussions can be as interpersonal as talk about trees. The second issue is settled by appeal to higher order norms for rationality. Then "to accept a norm as a requirement of rationality is to accept it along with higher order norms that require its acceptance" (p.169). The third issue arises when we see that every normative discussion involves claims to normative authority, often conflicting ones. The question then is, how can normative discussions reach resolution? If the answer is that someone's normative expressions must be taken as authoritative, when does it make sense to take someone else as normative authority?

I found the most interesting and illuminating parts of this book to be Gibbard's account of normative disagreement and its resolution. Normative discussions involve persons expressing norms, applying pressure on one another to accept their views of how norms govern the situations at hand. One way that a person can be persuaded to change her view is by pointing out an inconsistency in the norms that she accepts. The resulting emotion is embarrassment, and this normally causes one to reevaluate one's normative position. But Gibbard holds that consistency is only one meta-norm among several competitors, and even persons with coherent norms and beliefs can disagree. Given such deep seated disagreement, how can we agree to disagree? Gibbard outlines two general strategies for accepting disagreement: parochialism and relativism. Parochialism involves accepting some norms as, arbitrarily, beyond challenge, and then holding that those who do not accept those norms as outside one's normative community. This strategy may seem both theoretically unsatisfying and practically dangerous if the wrong combination of norms conflict. The alternative is relativism, which involves accepting higher order norms that allow (or even require) disagreement at lower orders, depending on the circumstances of everyday life. Again, this is unsatisfactory if the higher order norms conflict. Gibbard gives a sort of practical account of the results of disagreement. We choose between tolerance and (when we are in a position to do so) repression. Repression is costly because we desire

respect and repression makes that impossible. Tolerance assures mutual respect in the face of disagreement, but can be costly too when one has to tolerate serious breaches of one's norms. These are the costs that are weighed in deciding on a course of tolerance or of repression of conflicting norms.

This book is an interesting attempt to understand norms by an important contemporary philosopher. It is a clear statement of a non-cognitivist, naturalist account of norms, and a thoughtful examination of the complexities involved in trying to give a Darwinian grounding to ethical theory. It is very rich and suggestive, and leaves one wanting more. However, I have some doubts about the adequacy of the Darwinian analysis as a complete account of the origin norms. I wonder about the fact that legal, aesthetic, and etiquette norms were excluded, and how well they would fit into the analysis. My guess is that while they could each be given a coordination rationale, the latter two would fit only awkwardly. Epistemic norms, moral norms, and norms for other feelings are all pushed by facts or naturally based intuitions: the external world rules out certain kinds of epistemic judgments, as does the need for cooperation and our emotional capacities for the case of moral and emotional norms. And this may be true for the possible legal systems of norms that we could invent: some conceivable systems would not be adequate to the task of political survival and would result in their own demise. But for aesthetic and etiquette norms there are no such survival pressures at work; they seem to be completely arbitrary on this analysis.

My biggest concern is with the adequacy of an analysis of morality that is centered on the emotions of guilt and anger. First of all it is not clear why Gibbard wants to so center the analysis, except that it conveniently fits his Darwinian story. But morality seems to me to involve other emotions, such as concern, love, a sense of fairness or justice, pride, sympathy, benevolence, sadness, and shame, to name a few standard examples. Now Gibbard might respond that though these are emotions guided by norms, all *moral* judgments can be understood as judgments about the appropriateness of feeling anger or guilt over some action, which might also have inspired these other emotions. To suggest a counterexample, imagine the following scenario. Recently a man plowed under a part of his land that was one of the last pieces of virgin prairie in eastern Kansas. I believe that what he did was morally wrong, that the predominant moral emotion was a sense of sadness or loss, and that anger at him is unjustifiable. I would argue that we cannot be angry because he had a right to do what he did since he owned the land, but we can be disappointed and sad because what he did diminishes us and lessens our community feelings. The actions of various members of the community lend evidence to my interpretation. Some people were angry and tried to protest by laying their bodies in the path of the tractor, but these people were removed by the sheriff, and many people considered their actions

fanatical. It was thought by the wider community that they had gone too far. Another group held a ritualistic ceremony of mourning. Others tried to buy the land before it was destroyed. These seemed to most people to be appropriate reactions. Surely his action was selfish, stubborn, and stupid. If I am right that this was immoral and yet anger was unjustified, then it seems that this would constitute a counterexample to Gibbard's construal of morality. However, it also seems that his analysis could be broadened and still preserve the Darwinian story; it seems clearly adaptive for us to want not to make each other sad, and to be perceived as generous and wise, for this preserves community and our individual place in it. Since Gibbard notes that there are many societies that do not have guilt, his construal of morality implies that they do not have morality. This is, given my suggestion, unnecessarily ethnocentric.

I want to add a final critical note about Gibbard's choice of norms governing the gender of pronouns, and about the images of women generally in his book. He continually uses the pronoun 'he' and the term 'man' as if they were gender neutral. Since it is now a widespread practice, at least a competing linguistic norm, in analytic moral philosophy to use 's/he', or 'she' and 'he' interchangeably, one can only read this as an unfortunate deliberate choice. Worse, women appear in five examples in the book, at least three of which are extremely negative stereotypic images: Cleopatra who is irrationally angry at the bearer of bad tidings, Delilah (and we all know what she did to Samson), and the coherent anorexic. In a book about what it makes sense to do and to feel, these images are rather insensitive. Perhaps this was less intentional, but I find it no less unfortunate.

True and False Ideas, New Objections to Descartes' "Meditations" and Descartes' Replies, Antoine Arnauld, translated, with an Introduction by Elmar J. Kremer, (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), pp. xxxiv + 198. Reviewed by Roy Martinez, Spelman College.

Among his Cartesian contemporaries of seventeenth-century France, Arnauld was unquestionably a key intellectual figure. Singularly combative of spirit and prolific to boot, he managed to generate during his long life more than forty volumes of rigorously argued works dealing with various theological and philosophical concerns. Although known to most English-speaking readers as the author of the Fourth Objections to Descartes *Meditations*, Arnauld was a philosopher in his own right. If no where else, this assessment is especially vindicated in the book under review.

What motivated Arnauld to write *Des vraies et fausses idees (hereafter: Idées)* was his conviction that Malebranche, particularly in his