Michael Slote

Human Development and Human Life

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Abstract This introductory chapter summarizes what is to follow. It indicates that the sense of human development indicated in the book's title is a notion of overall development, rather than anything specifically to do, say, with one or another form of cognitive development. The development pictured is the sort of overall development envisaged by those like Erikson who speak of the human life cycle and of adult identity formation. But Erikson's theory has sexist features that Carol Gilligan has deftly criticized. We need an account of the life cycle and of adult identity that works out equally for males and females (and that is clearly also applicable to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and the transgendered), and Chap. 2 provides such an account. The final chapter, Chap. 3, speaks of what human lives in general are like. Borrowing from A.H. Maslow, R.W. White, and other psychologists, it argues that what is most pervasive of and basic to human lives is motivation that is neither altruistic nor egoistic and that places intrinsic importance on incorporating things and people outside ourselves into our lives.

Keywords Erikson · Gilligan · Maslow · Life cycle · Development · Motivation · Sexism · R.W. White · Identity

This book is about human lives and human life. It begins with a discussion of the human life cycle and then makes use of that discussion and of a great many other ideas to paint a general picture of what human lives are like. Clearly, you aren't going to see pure or purely abstract philosophy in what follows. I will be making use of ideas from psychology and social science more generally when I see them as necessary to the general purposes of this book. But the ideas and methods of philosophy will or should be evident at almost every point.

The notion of human development alluded to in the title to this book will be understood in a very specific and directed way. Cognitive development and the development of motor skills are two examples or forms of human development, but when I speak of human development I will be homing in on a particular and arguably more synoptic way of seeing our development. Talk of a human life cycle didn't occur very much, if at all, before the twentieth century, and Erik Erikson was

the first person to attempt to give a systematic picture of our life cycle and its stages. (Freud spoke only of stages within childhood, Erikson's stages extend into adulthood and old age.) And I shall here be speaking of human development in relation to and as it occurs within the or a *human life cycle*.

Erikson's theory of the life cycle borrowed heavily from Freud, but, as suggested a moment ago, extended beyond anything Freud sought to articulate or defend. However, it turns out that Erikson's picture makes some rather sexist assumptions about the life cycle. Women's stages of development are something of an afterthought with Erikson, and even when he focuses on women, he treats them in an old-fashioned way that doesn't fully grapple with women's potential for careers and meaningful work outside the home. Moreover, even when he focuses on normal male development, what he says about the stages of childhood doesn't prepare the way for his assumption that both males and females eventually reach a stage in which they demonstrate a capacity for emotional intimacy.

This last point is made by Carol Gilligan in her classic book *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, and Gilligan also shows us how sexist Erikson's approach and assumptions are. But Gilligan never offers us an alternative, non-sexist picture of the human life cycle and of overall human development, and that is what I shall be seeking to do in the first chapter of this book, the chapter titled "Rethinking the Life Cycle."

The third chapter of the book, which is titled "Picturing Human Life," is also about human life and human lives, but it is less about human development and change and more about what all human lives are *like*. Of course, many philosophers and other thinkers have offered us explicit or implicit pictures of what human life overall is like. We find such a picture, for example, in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, where it is said, in the most general terms, that man (sic) is a futile passion. But Freud, Heidegger, Hobbes, Hume, and many others also give us pictures of human life and human lives, and what I shall be saying in the second part of this book contrasts rather starkly with all these other views. I shall make use of certain familiar ideas from social science that were not, for the most part, available to the thinkers just mentioned, and this will foundationally or centrally affect what I have to say about what human lives, all human lives, are like. It will also turn out that the view, the picture, I articulate and defend is neither as pessimistic nor as optimistic about human life as other, previous views about human life have been.

What I am doing here also differs in important ways from anything I have myself done previously. Some of you may know that I have been defending a form of moral sentimentalism over the past decade or so. Hume sought to understand both moral norms/virtues and the meaning of moral language in sentimentalist terms, and I have been seeking to work out a contemporary version of normative and metaethical sentimentalism that addresses potential problems with sentimentalism and potential opportunities for sentimentalism that Hume never considered or even knew about. (Hume, for example, was really not clear about what is or would be involved in justifying deontology.) My view was worked out most fully in the book *Moral Sentimentalism* (Oxford University Press 2010), though I have had to iron

out some ancillary issues raised by that book in subsequent work. But the present book project doesn't involve any commitment to moral sentimentalism as an overall theory of ethics. Nor does it appeal or need to appeal to the more broadly sentimentalist approach (I call it *philosophical* sentimentalism) that I have been pursuing most recently in my work. Over the past few years I have come to think that sentiment, emotion, has a more central and foundational role to play in epistemology and the philosophy of mind than contemporary analytic philosophers and even Hume himself have realized. But these further ideas, these new issues, are pretty much left to one side in the present book.

Finally and for the record, I find it difficult to categorize what I shall be doing here in relation to familiar fields or subdisciplines of philosophy. I shall not be doing ethics: I shall be describing human lives, not recommending or prescribing for them, though the descriptions will be at a very general level. Moreover, "philosophy of life" seems to be a somewhat misleading way of characterizing what I shall be attempting in these pages. The philosophy of life is typically thought to involve or center around recommendations about how one should approach life, and thus understood, the philosophy of life or a philosophy of life has ethical implications of a kind that (I have just said) will not be involved in this book project. Max Scheler's idea of a philosophical anthropology also doesn't snugly fit the present approach. My focus will be more on what is true of *human lives* than on what is true of *human beings*, and philosophical anthropology doesn't seem to depend or insist on such a distinction. Perhaps, we should say that I am doing and thinking about a kind of universalized *philosophical biography*. But that is a somewhat awkward neologism, and perhaps we don't need to self-consciously characterize the philosophical field or discipline of the present book in order for the project we are engaged in to be successful, promising, or plausible. We can and should get on with the present project even if we are somewhat stymied as to how to describe what are doing.

Chapter 2
Rethinking the Life Cycle

Abstract Carol Gilligan criticized Erik Erikson's account of the human life cycle for its sexist assumptions, but never offered an alternative general account. This can be done, however, by drawing on recent ideas about balancing career and family. An adult identity is forged through a "choice" of how much to emphasize career (or individual self-fulfillment) and how much to emphasize family (or relationships) in one's life. Erikson skimped on the relationship issues intrinsic to human development, but his work gives us the material we need for a fuller and non-sexist picture of development that treats males and females as facing the same basic developmental issues.

I am not sure why we don't see many discussions of the human life cycle these days. What used to be a hot topic at the humanistic end of (developmental) psychology doesn't seem to be so interesting to psychologists, educationists, and psychoanalysts these days, and I have a feeling that the main reason may have something to do with what has also happened to psychoanalysis. Feminists have criticized psychoanalysis from many different angles, and psychoanalysis is in something of a decline; and I have a feeling that similar forces or influences may have been at work to diminish interest in issues about the life cycle. After all, the most famous work on this topic was done by psychoanalysts, most notably Freud and Erik Erikson, and what these figures said about the life cycle and despite some important differences between them is subject, I think, to devastating feminist critique. In particular, and as Carol Gilligan has stated more forcefully than anyone else, both Freud and, especially, Erikson in his earlier work described the life cycle in terms taken from the experience and development only of males. And presumably we need and want a picture of human development that shows an equal understanding of both men and women. Moreover, when Erikson finally offered an account of the stages of women's development, it treated that development as occurring in an essentially different way from the typical male pattern and contained

sexist assumptions that Gilligan and others have highlighted. But rather than offer a non-sexist and simply human account of how we develop, Gilligan (in *In a Different Voice*) only offers us a feminist picture of female development that has applicability exclusively to females, and I think we can do better or at least more. I think that it is possible to offer—and that many of us would like having—an account of the stages of human development that is not only non-sexist, but that is also equally applicable to males and females. This will be, I want to say, the first truly human picture of human development—even if it is also a picture that couldn't have occurred in the absence of Erikson's earlier sexist and bifurcated account(s) of human development and Gilligan's subsequent objections to it/them.

    I am going to presuppose that most of you have read some of Erikson's work on the life cycle: his "Eight Ages of Man" from *Childhood and Society*, his longer account of the life cycle in *Identity and the Life Cycle*, or one of the other works in which he deals with this notion.[1] Erikson's picture of the human life cycle extends considerably beyond Freud, who spoke of various stages of childhood development, but didn't highlight human development *after childhood* in the way Erikson so notably sought to do. Also, Erikson attempts to stay clear of distinctively Freudian views about unconscious processes. To be sure, when he speaks of the basic issue of trust versus mistrust, he has Freud's ideas about orality definitely in mind. But he doesn't ride those ideas heavily and Freud's metapsychology is not explicitly invoked. Indeed, what he says almost seems like common sense. So let me just very briefly summarize what Erikson tells us about the early and middle stages of human development because that will put us on the same page and make it easier for me to explain Gilligan's feminist criticisms of Freud and of Erikson's views.

    Speaking very roughly, Erikson believes that there is a sequence of early stages of human development each representing a "task" for the child, and he holds that the virtue of any given stage consists in the child's more or less successfully completing that task. Thus the task of the earliest stage is to develop trust in the world (and in one's ability to make one's way successfully in it) based on trust in one's parents for providing one with what one needs (e.g., food and comfort); and if one's parents or the larger environment don't reliably provide one with those things, then a child is likely to become mistrustful rather than trustful. All this presupposes, of course, that one is better off if one has a trustworthy initial environment and is thus able to develop basic trust—that is the import of Erikson's calling it a virtue of the first developmental stage, which he designates the stage of basic trust versus mistrust. And though I have no desire in these pages to question his underlying value judgment here, it is worth noting that the virtue of a given stage isn't entirely up to the child in the way that most ethicists tend to think of an adult's moral virtue as pretty much up to them. If a child doesn't develop basic trust, that can be because their *environment* was untrustworthy, so a lack of the virtue of a given stage clearly doesn't represent any kind of moral criticism of the child as far as Erikson is concerned.

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[1]I shall mainly rely on *Childhood and Society*, NY: Norton, 1950.

Erikson goes on to speak of a stage of autonomy versus shame and doubt that centers around the task of becoming toilet-trained and whose virtue consists in becoming toilet-trained in a way that basically accepts, rather than resents, the need for such training. Erikson describes a sequence of subsequent stages whose successful or virtuous navigation and completion helps the child or later the adolescent or adult to develop (successfully) further. But I won't go into any further details except if and when it is necessary to do so in order to understand Carol Gilligan's critique of Erikson or the larger picture of the human life cycle I am going to sketch and defend here. So it is time to indicate what Gilligan found so objectionable about Erikson's theory.

Gilligan's main target in her ground-breaking book *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* is not Erikson, but Lawrence Kohlberg (all three were or had been associated with one another at Harvard).[2] Kohlberg had worked out an account of moral development in terms of stages, but when it turned out that women tended to advance less far through those stages than men and the inference was drawn that men are on the whole morally superior to women, Gilligan had a devastating retort.[3] Kohlberg's studies of moral development had all been done exclusively on men, and Gilligan argued that if women advanced less far than men through Kohlberg's (male-based) stages, one could only conclude that women's moral development was different from men's, not inferior. That conclusion was the basis for the title Gilligan chose for her book, and it led her to suggest that women conceive morality in different terms from men. Men think in terms of justice, rights, autonomy, and (systems of) rules; women in terms of direct connection to and concern for others. So Kohlberg turned out to be as biased as Freud showed himself to be when he said that women have no sense of justice.[4] Kohlberg was saying much the same thing, and both of them missed the point that justice needn't be the central notion or concern of a morality. Gilligan went on to suggest that women tend to exemplify a morality of caring that doesn't see everything in terms of rules, autonomy, and justice (in later writings, however, she put less stress on the correlation with gender and more on the sheer difference between justice and caring as basic ways to approach moral issues).

All this background is relevant to Gilligan's critique of Erikson and (perhaps more importantly) to the views her book suggested about the nature of female (as opposed to male) development. She takes on Erikson early in her book, and (amazingly enough, at least as I see it) she definitively undercuts his views within

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[2]For Gilligan's critique, see her *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982, esp. pp. 11–15.

[3]For Kohlberg's account of moral development, see, e.g., his "Moral Stages and Moralization: The Cognitive-Developmental Approach" in T. Lickona, ed., *Moral Development and Behavior: Theory, Research and Social Issues*, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

[4]See Freud's "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, London: Hogarth Press, 1961/1925, Vol. XIX, p. 257f.

the space of three pages.[5] She does this in two ways. First, she notes that Erikson's original account in *Childhood and Society* and *Identity and the Life Cycle* focuses on, and is at best only accurate to, typical male development. Erikson says that one goes through and resolves some sort of identity crisis *before* one seeks out and joins a life partner for a long-term intimate relationship. And this was the male pattern in the days before the women's movement and is the male pattern to some extent even nowadays. In any event, it wasn't the women's typical pattern, and after having focused on male development and spoken of the life cycle in terms that only apply to typical males, he eventually acknowledged or claimed that women were different. According to Erikson, rather than, like a man, forge an identity before committing oneself to a lifetime intimate relationship (marriage), women tend to forge their *identity* through their choice of an long-term intimate relationship.[6] Again, of course, this was more true of women in the days before the women's movement than it is now, but that very fact shows a limitation of Erikson's perspective. His original approach simply ignored women, but his eventual view relegates men and women to different developmental fates in a way that clearly reflects sexist or patriarchal assumptions about what is natural or in most instances inevitable for women and for men. Gilligan herself in *In a Different Voice* seeks to emphasize differences between men and women and is more intent on getting equal credit for what women have traditionally done (care for others and invest themselves in relationships) and what men have traditionally received credit for (achievements in the world outside the family) than she is on criticizing the way women have been relegated to doing more of the caring and less of the achieving than men.[7] We shall return to this issue later on, where it will turn out to be crucial to what I take to be a better understanding of what is involved in human development, but for the moment let me press on to what I consider to be the most telling criticism of Erikson Gilligan makes in her book.

Even allowing that boys and men develop differently—have different stages and tasks—from what is appropriate to girls and women, Gilligan points out that Erikson's specific scheme of developmental stages doesn't make good psychological sense *even for boys/men*. She notes Erikson's view that young men are ready for relationships intimacy after they have forged or formed their basic adult (work) identity, but points out that there is precious little in Erikson's description of the young man's previous stages of development that can prepare him for such intimacy. Of the five stages that are supposed to precede the male's "choice" of intimacy over isolation, only one, the very earliest stage of basic trust versus

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[5] See Gilligan, pp. 11–13. Before reading Gilligan's critique, I had long been a devotee of Erikson's views. But Gilligan convinced me that those views are deeply mistaken and left me wondering whether or how one could work out a theory of life's developmental stages in a more plausible way than Erikson had done. In other words, even if Gilligan's critique is by and large correct, one can still hope for a reasonable and less sexist account of human development, and we have to give Erikson credit, I think, for at least making such a hope plausible and understandable.

[6] See Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, NY: W.W. Norton, 1968.

[7] See especially Gilligan, *op. cit.,* Chap. 6.

mistrust, has anything immediately to do with the forming of intimate relationships. All the other stages prior to intimacy are treated by Erikson as increasing the boy's competence or skill as an autonomous individual so that he is subsequently ready to choose an identity that is defined in terms of the selection of particular work or a particular career. This makes it, according to Gilligan, just about impossible to understand how a boy/young man who has developed in this fashion and with these ends implicitly in (someone's) view can possibly be ready for intimacy and mature ("genital") love when Erikson says he is supposed to be ready for them.

I think this criticism of Erikson is very telling, and it suggests that we had better not look at the earlier stages of human or boys' development in the rather one-sided way in which Erikson looks at them. There had better be more emphasis on issues of affection and connection all along, if a life cycle for boys or, for that matter, any different life cycle for girls is to make psychological sense; and we will want to take this issue up again later, when we try to offer some new ideas about how the human life cycle should be understood. For the moment, however, let me just say that I think that any solution for this particular problem of Erikson's approach will have to involve a better sense or picture of what, developmentally speaking, the choice of an adult identity is all about. Once we understand that a bit better, we will be in a better position to make the necessary adjustments to the earlier stages Erikson posited, the adjustments that are going to be necessary if an account of the stages of human life cycle is to be developmentally realistic in a way that, as Gilligan so deftly pointed out, Erikson scheme really isn't. Also, it should be obvious by now that it lacks realism not only for boys but for girls. Girls are supposed to choose intimacy as the basis for their identity, but the earlier stages Erikson describes make it very far from clear how such a strong emphasis on intimacy can emerge, for girls, from stages whose virtues are described mainly in terms of the achievement of certain forms of autonomy and competence.[8] So how are we going to do better for both males and females?

Here is my suggestion or at least part of it. Gilligan describes a course of female development that differs in essentials from what was traditionally thought to be appropriate for males, a course of development in which the (patriarchally-induced) tendency of women to be self-denying and self-abnegating is overcome in and through their becoming able to assert themselves and their own interests. But although Gilligan mentions how important it is for men to learn to become more caring and not leave all the work of caring to women, *In a Different Voice* is too busy stressing the differences between men and women to work out a feminist ethic that applies equally to men and women *or an account of human development that very clearly* doesn't *assume essential or natural differences between males and females*. Gilligan made use of the work of Nancy Chodorow, who had attributed the differences between men and women largely to differences in the way they are raised (or how they typically relate to the person, the mother, who raises them), and Chodorow advocated forms of child-rearing that would do away with those

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[8]Cf. Gilligan, p. 154.

differences.[9] But in *In a Different Voice,* Gilligan is more interested in citing Chodorow in order to show how different men's and women's lives (and morality) are than in using Chodorow's work to support an ethical agenda that would seek to minimize or do away with those differences.[10]

But even assuming that it is possible to do away with those differences and that as a matter of justice or caring or morality, we should try to do so, what does this have to do with (the psychology of) human development? Quite a lot, in fact. Feminism helps us to a certain ethical picture of human life in which men and women are more equal, but once we see that full picture, I think we can be on our way to a better understanding of human development as well.

What does feminism complain about? Among other things, that women are denied career opportunities that men can take for granted and that women, even women with careers, end up doing more of the housework and childcare in families than their spouses do. But apart from this issue of justice or fairness, there is another way to see the choices that surround people's careers and their family life. In the bad old days, men were the sole breadwinners and women did all or most of the emotional work within families. Fathers were typically absent or psychologically distant, and that was accepted. Women had fewer opportunities for creative careers/self-fulfillment and that was accepted too. But feminism tells us that men miss out on something important in patriarchal circumstances. They are taught to care less about personal relationships than about their careers, and as a result they typically miss out in substantial ways on the joys and the good of close, affectionate personal/family relationships. So nowadays, in the wake of the substantial but limited success so far of the women's movement (as it has occurred in the West), we can see more males being more involved with their families, more males being considered sensitive by the women around them and not embarrassed to be thus considered. And of course and more obviously we see women who achieve important career successes and/or get creative self-fulfillment in ways that were almost totally denied to women previously. Nowadays we even have househusbands who choose family relationships over career goals, and there are women who feel they simply don't have time for long-term close personal relationships and/or for motherhood, given their all-encompassing and demanding career goals or creative aspirations.

The fact that all this is possible shows something important. It shows that nowadays (and unlike earlier patriarchal times) both men and women have a choice to make (though sometimes, as we shall see, the choice is made for them by circumstances or their own capacities) between emphasizing career/creative self-fulfillment and emphasizing good intimate or personal relationships. They can choose to balance or "juggle" these goods or they can specialize in one side or the other of such a choice, but the important point is that both men and women are

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[9]See Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, esp. pp. 211–219.

[10]On this point see especially Gilligan, p. 173.

in principle faced with the same choice here (and have more *freedom* of choice than either gender had under patriarchy).[11] And I think that that choice (which doesn't have to occur all at one time and may be to some extent revisable as one moves through adult life) can be thought of as basically determining an individual's long-term (adult) identity and to do so for both men and women.

The choice I have just been describing is a very important one. Not, perhaps, the only important choice every individual must make or even the most important. The choice or non-choice of a religion is arguably just as important—at least from the standpoint of religious people. But the point about the choice between a work-orientation and a relationship-orientation is that normal individuals have to make it whatever they may decide about religion or anything else. And arguably this choice is an aspect of human *development* in a way that (from a secular perspective at least) religious choice doesn't have to be. Indeed, what I want to say is that what defines an individual's identity in developmental terms is how as adults they deal or come to deal with the issue of choosing or allocating their interest between relationships and careers. Freud is supposed to have said or thought that a psychologically healthy individual basically has to be able to love and to work, but although I agree with Freud's presumed assumption here that these capacities are central to human development, I am saying more.[12] I am saying that we can choose to emphasize one side of the equation more than the other or else try to balance fairly equally between them—and that our choice of which way to go on this issue defines our identity in a way that is relevant to and grows out of our human development.[13]

Erikson saw two different pathways to the attainment of adult identity: for men, that process preceded a choice between intimacy with a life partner versus non-intimacy or "isolation"; and for women the attainment of a viable adult identity *involved* the choice of intimacy rather than isolation. And despite her evident commitment to feminism, Gilligan too saw women's development as following its own special "caring" track: as involving, in particular, a girl or woman's growing from purely egoistic self-concern to a caring concern for others that would be

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[11]In my book *The Impossibility of Perfection: Aristotle, Feminism, and the Complexities of Ethics* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), I argue that it is impossible in principle to perfectly or ideally realize both creative/career values and relationship/family values. But all I need to assume here is that in present-day social circumstances the lives of most people have to make the "choices" I have been describing. And in a moment I shall also be giving you some of my reasons for thinking that none of these choices is ever absolutely perfect (in terms of considerations of happiness or well-being) for us humans.

[12]In *Childhood*, p. 264f., Erikson attributes this thought to Freud but doesn't cite any passage in Freud's published writings.

[13]I am assuming that not everything that significantly characterizes an adult individual has to be conceived as part of their adult identity. The aestheticism of an aesthete can be part of their adult identity if it is what they find most fulfillment in in their lives (even if it isn't part of a career). But the mere fact that someone greatly enjoys opera, or rap, doesn't necessarily count as part of their adult *identity*. I should also note that I am not assuming one cannot get self-fulfillment out of raising a family or caring for others.

balanced by a healthy degree of self-assertive concern or caring for oneself (one's own long-term happiness or welfare). But I think the fullest sort of feminism would and today does acknowledge that both interest in creative/career self-fulfillment and a desire for good and deep personal relationships are relevant to both males and females.[14] This involves a rejection of patriarchal or sexist values that assign these goods very unequally or asymmetrically in relation to men and women, and I am proposing that we take this emerging social/cultural understanding of what is *generally* valuable for human beings as the basis for understanding the human life cycle. Ideally, what happens in (the various stages of) childhood prepares us both for intimate relationships with others and for achieving significant things in the world, but every adult life over time represents a kind of choice with respect to these two goods. What emerges in and through adulthood is a person who either emphasizes their personal relationships rather than career/creative self-fulfillment or emphasizes the self-fulfillment over the relationships or seeks a balance between those two goals/interests, and I am saying that that choice constitutes in developmental terms the adult identity of that individual. And there can be failure here too if someone ends up a loner with no outside interests (say, a druggie or alcoholic or, more simply and generally, a person who can't hold a job or maintain any relationship). This is not so much what Erikson called role-diffusion as, again more simply, identity diffusion, and we can use the negative term "diffusion" here because, following Freud's and other psychoanalysts' views on love and work to at least this extent, it is plausible to think of an emerging inability to form close relationships or achieve anything meaningful in the world of work as a *developmental* human failure.

This understanding of what it is to eventually form an adult identity assigns a similar task to both men and women, but it allows some flexibility in how that task is fulfilled. Someone who isn't very good at or interested in relationships, but who is enormously creative in their work (the popular image of Beethoven comes to mind here) has successfully formed an adult identity. But, similarly, the Italian "mamma mia" who everyone loves, who enjoys her life of close but variegated personal relationships, and who has never for a moment thought about any career outside the home (she was married at age seventeen) also counts as having a genuine adult identity. And by the same token the woman or man who struggles to balance a career with family (and/or other personal) commitments and relationships also counts as having and maintaining an adult identity. The assumption here is that all three of these modes (and of the social/psychological/personal interstices between them) represent genuine solutions to the developmental issues or problems that our younger lives set up for us and also tend to prepare us for, but let me just clarify some of the presuppositions of what I am saying here.

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[14]Are they equally relevant? Is there something about women that inevitably and on average makes them more inclined toward relationships and something about men that on average moves them more toward individualistic career/creative achievement/self-fulfillment? The model I am offering doesn't have to commit itself to any particular answers to these questions.

First, I am assuming that the juggling of career and family (alternatively, of work and life) is frustrating enough so that one cannot just assume that every other solution to the choice between career and family is to be ruled out of court as totally or basically unacceptable. In other words, for example, a woman or man who sees that the attempt to juggle career and family would limit to some extent what they can do in their career could decide that they prefer to emphasize career (or work) over family and relationships (or "life") and be able to live with the consequences of that choice. If you say that they would be missing something by making such a choice, you should remember that exactly the same thing can be said about those who juggle career and family/relationships these days. There is something very frustrating and somewhat unsatisfactory about such juggling (one's children will slightly resent one's career involvements and one's career can or will be slightly or more than slightly compromised by all the children's dance recitals and the like that any sort of family commitment can or will lead one to attend). But (and this is the main point) that doesn't mean that the juggling way of life is totally *unsatisfactory* either. It will have both its attractions/satisfactions and its frustrations/dissatisfactions, but it is an adult way to lead one's life, and so I think it represents in developmental terms a form of adult identity. But by the same token the choice to emphasize career at the expense of long-term intimate relationships or family life is an adult one. It involves the adult recognition that one can't expect to have an unfettered career if one takes on family responsibilities together with one's career commitments. The solution is not perfect, but nothing is here (the same things could be said about the mamma mia), but my point, again, is that it is a solution, a choice between or among genuine (adult) values, rather than a rejection of or inability to realize those values.

Second, I am assuming that if we look back at the developmental stages that precede the identity choice I am describing, we can see issues and elements that foreshadow and/or prepare us for that choice. Thus Erikson describes the stage of basic trust versus mistrust as involving both issues of competency and the eventual capacity for achieving things and issues about relationships. If the child's needs are taken care of by the parents, the child will tend to trust both the world and themselves and be confident about what they later may try to achieve in the world; and they will also trust and love their parents and to that extent be open to and able to eventually manage/fulfill intimate relationships more generally. But the next stage of autonomy versus shame and doubt also involves both sorts of issues. The name Erikson chooses for the stage emphasizes the issue of competency that toilet training involves, but Erikson also speaks of the power struggle between parent and child that such training often involves, and one might therefore add to Erikson's account that the good relationship of trust that is or can be established between parent and child in the oral stage of basic trust versus mistrust is tested and either reinforced or attenuated when the issue of toilet training arises and is resolved. So toilet training is not just training for competency, but, depending on how the parents and also the child handle it, is a testing or instancing of the value of relationships for the child. And a less satisfactory outcome in this latter respect might actually predispose the child against relationships as a central element in their later life or at least make them more willing to go fully and exclusively with their careers and less

willing or able to see their life's basic satisfaction as a matter of how good their relationships with others are.

One might also add that how one resolves the issue of toilet training may make a difference in one's relations with one's siblings. If one has been a difficult child, the parents may compare one unfavorably—both in their own minds and in conversations with each other and to one's face—to one's older (or eventually one's younger) siblings, and knowing this may affect how well one gets on with those siblings. One's relationships with both parents and siblings, in other words one's family relationships, can lay down a pattern that affects later intimate relationships, so it should be clear that, despite its achievement-emphasizing name, the stage of autonomy versus shame and doubt represents a stage of development both for one's eventual ability or desire to achieve things in the world and for one's eventual ability or desire to have satisfying personal relationships.[15]

Similarly, although Erikson's nomenclature also emphasizes the autonomy/ achievement aspect of the two stages that follow autonomy versus shame and doubt, those stages in fact pose developmental issues regarding both eventual achievement needs/goals and eventual relationship needs/goals. Taken together, the stage of initiative versus guilt and the stage of industry versus inferiority raise issues about the child's competency to master the basic social and cognitive skills that are requisite to any career/work identity (even Beethoven had to deal with music publishers and performers). But, pace Erikson's treatment of them, those two stages also represent important developmental stages for the ability or desire to have good personal relationships. In school we may (or may not) learn basic cognitive skills and the competencies of navigating a social environment, but to emphasize the competencies in the latter case is to play down the early experiences of (peer) *friendship* that the school (or playground) setting allows for and encourages. The emphasis on skills and competency precisely ignores, downplays, or misinterprets the meaning of childhood relationships both as valuable in themselves and as preparing us not only for some later career choice but also for a later choice or choices (given divorce and the possibility that one's spouse may predecease one) of a life partner.

So there is plenty of material within the life stages that precede the attainment of an adult identity that helps to prepare us for later intimate relationships and a choice between emphasizing or not emphasizing such relationships. Erikson's nomenclature for the stages and his whole way of conceiving them biases the issue in a way that favors the traditional and very one-sided emphasis on the eventual career or

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[15]In *Childhood* (p. 256), Erikson notes that issues of autonomy—and also of initiative—can involve or bring about a contest between siblings for a favored position with a mother (and presumably with a father as well). But the issue is framed in egoistic terms, in terms of what may or may not affect what the developing child gets from his or her parents. The issue of what the child can intrinsically get from having good relations with his or her siblings is totally ignored. On the same page, incidentally, Erikson says that with freedom of locomotion (initiative rather than guilt) can come "pleasurable accomplishment wielding tools and weapons (sic), in manipulating meaningful toys—and in caring for younger children." But once again the emphasis is on the satisfactions of the child rather than on the relationship with the younger children or the non-egoistic concern for such children that such relationships characteristically or ideally involve.

work of a male.[16] But the stages themselves contain enough material—and we are indebted to Erikson for providing some of that material—so that a less sexist view of human development can make use of that material to explain how the way is prepared or not prepared for an eventual choice of identity that needn't be viewed in sexist terms and that can be seen as a basic human choice faced by all humans. Both Erikson's and (to a much lesser extent) Gilligan's approach to the life cycle and its stages separate out male and female development and place these on what we could call different tracks. And it is worth noting at this point that their doing this undercuts the whole idea of a distinctively human life cycle and of distinctively human development.[17] Let me explain.

The term "human" is sometimes used in a limiting way and sometimes in an expansive way. When John Rawls speaks of offering a theory of human justice, he is contrasting his view of justice with the view of justice and of morality more generally that has typically been attributed to Kant and according to which justice and morality have to be valid for all possible rational beings and not just all human beings.[18] So in this context "human" limits our focus, but in other contexts the use of the term has the effect, the necessary effect, of widening the focus of our concern and of what is relevant to discussion. If men and women have different basic developmental paths/tasks—as Erikson assumes and Gilligan never denies—then it is misleading or worse to speak of the *human* life cycle and of the basic pattern of normal or abnormal *human* development. But if we think (in non-patriarchal and feminist terms) of the life cycle as presenting similar issues to both men and women, then we *can* meaningfully and expansively speak of the *human* life cycle and of *human* development. So the picture offered here may make the idea of a truly human life cycle fully available and understandable for the first time. To be sure, Erikson in *Identity and the Life Cycle speaks* of the "human life cycle," but I am saying that his actual account of how women and men develop effectively undercuts the idea of there being such a life cycle.[19]

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[16]For Erikson's tendency to see every aspect of male development as bearing more immediately on work goals/values than on relationships goals/values, see, e.g., *Identity and the Life Cycle,* NY: International Universities Press, 1959, pp. 90, 92, 128, 163n.

[17]In *Motivation and Personality* (NY: Harper and Row, 1954), A.H. Maslow argued for a hierarchy of human needs with the desire for self-actualization at the apex of that hierarchy. But many critics have claimed that in placing self-actualization over, say, the need for love and the need to belong, Maslow was favoring Western-style individualism over the more relationship-oriented view of human life and human needs one finds in many other cultures. And to that extent his account of human needs also seems to favor traditional male goals over traditional females one. Maslow wasn't offering a *developmental* picture of human life in the way Erikson was, but his theory does seem sexist in the way Erikson's is. However, in the final part of this book I will be making positive use of some of the non-sexist aspects of Maslow's theory in an attempt to give a very general or overall picture of what human life and human lives are like.

[18]See John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, pp. 138, 251–257.

[19]See *Identity and the Life Cycle,* p. 1. In *Childhood and Society*, Erikson represents himself (p. 251) as describing the stages of "the growth and the crises of the human person," but, again,

However, I have so far limited our consideration of the factors that determine an individual's ("choice" of a) particular identity to the preferences or predilections of individuals. Some individuals feel more comfortable with a career than with relationships, others have the opposite (pre)disposition, and some, we said, value both sorts of goods in a way that makes them want to juggle or balance them as best they can. But sometimes this is more and sometimes it is less a matter of individual choice. If someone has a hideous appearance, that will make relationships more difficult; if they have low intelligence but are attractive, it may be easier for them to have friends and a spouse than to be successful or creative in some career or line of work. Such factors will influence the identity choice or alignment of individuals for reasons they may not like or may actually resent.

Then there are large social issues. Patriarchal societies shunt females into a relationship-emphasizing identity and males into the achievement/work style of identity, leaving little room for any sort of (non-lopsided) balance between these goods and very little room, more generally, for anyone, male or female, to escape the identity fate, as we might call it, that such societies assign to them. Does this mean that our supposedly human account of identity and of the life cycle doesn't apply in such societies? Not in the least; in fact it confirms our general picture. If certain societies cut off certain human possibilities (as envisaged by a feminism that can claim to be more enlightened about such possibilities than patriarchal societies are), we can say that those societies determine adult identity in a limiting way, but we can still say that what adult identity is, is a matter of how much the individual emphasizes relationships and how much they emphasize creative achievement and work. We can thus distinguish patriarchal societies from our less sexist society today (in the West) by saying that the latter allows more freedom for and individual choice in adult identity formation than does the former. And so, even assuming a feminist perspective, we can still say that the identity of individuals in both patriarchal and non-patriarchal societies is a matter of how much value their lives place on relationships as opposed to (or in balance with) career/self-fulfillment goals and values.

This way of putting things should indicate that my account is not wedded to speaking of individuals' *choosing* to balance or to differentially emphasize relationships and achievement/career. More often than not, individuals are (so to speak) *chosen* (or marked out or selected) for certain emphases by social influences or by irrecusable facts about or factors in themselves. So although my sketched account of the life cycle doesn't deny the reality or individuality of the individual, it doesn't assume that individuals are in total control over their lives or their adult identities.[20]

(Footnote 19 continued)

this characterization is belied by the total focus on male development and the (later) assumption that female development is very different.

[20]To simplify matters here, I have ignored Erikson's evolving views about the later stages of the life cycle. For specific discussion of those views see my *From Enlightenment to Receptivity: Rethinking Our Values*, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 232–239.

But the main point is and has been that a conception of adult identity (formation) that regards it as mainly determined by how one balances or emphasizes relationship values and self-fulfillment or career values avoids the sexism of Erikson's views and the radical incompleteness of Gilligan's and allows us finally to see the life cycle as a *specifically human* phenomenon.[21]

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[21]Erikson deserves credit for being the first person to emphasize identity formation and its problems or challenges within the life cycle. (I believe the term "identity crisis" was his invention.) So we owe a great, great deal to Erikson, but I have argued that we need to conceive things in a non-sexist manner that Erikson, for all his insights and observations, never really saw as necessary.

Chapter 3
Picturing Human Life

Abstract Focusing on recent discussions of psychological egoism and altruism can help us toward a general picture of what human lives are like. Much of human motivation is neither egoistic nor a altruistic, but nonetheless depends on instincts or basic desires that treat other people or things outside us as intrinsically important. The desire for esteem and love from others, the desire for proximity to others, the desire to attain competence and mastery, curiosity or inquisitiveness, and even malice and sadism toward others all illustrate this possibility and can be considered "neutral" as between egoism and altruism. Such neutral motivation pervades human life and basically involves bringing what lies outside us into our lives, a process I call "expansive encompassing." This most general characterization of what human lives are like avoids the pessimism of Freud, Hobbes, and others, but also avoids the excessive optimism about human life and motivation that characterizes care ethics and the Mencian tradition of Chinese thought.

Keywords Altruism · Egoism · Neutral motivation · Expansive encompassing · Pessimism · Optimism · Freud · Hobbes · Noddings · Competence · Curiosity · Malice · Psychopathy · Hume · Sober · Wilson · Stoicism

I am going to begin this final chapter by talking about the *variety* of basic human motives, a variety that in conceptual terms has not, I believe, been fully reckoned with by philosophers or social scientists. We shall see that the variety tells us something important about what human lives or human life on the whole is like, and it will turn out that the variety is underlain by a very significant common feature that allows us to characterize our lives in a unified and unifying way, a way that differs from previous attempts to say what is most fundamental and essential to human life (e.g., Sartre's "man is a futile passion"). Then later, toward the end of our discussion, I will bring in some of the conclusions reached earlier in the second chapter of this book. I will show you how what has been said about adult identity formation can help complete the picture of human life and human lives that I will be attempting to develop and defend in this final chapter of the present book. But first to the issue of variety.

In order to see the variety of our motives, we need to focus initially on the issue of psychological egoism. A lot of ink has been spilled in recent years over the question whether human beings always act in a self-interested fashion, and the long-standing assumption (since Bishop Butler put his mark on this topic) that human beings can be and often are altruistically motivated in their actions has of late come under historically new sorts of challenges. I want to say something—though not as much as I have said elsewhere—about those challenges because I think they mainly rest on conceptual mistakes.[1]

The challenges are not as simple-minded as the idea (which one occasionally hears from students) that in seeking, for example, the welfare of another person, one is always attempting to satisfy one of one's own desires and thus invariably acting in one's own self-interest, egoistically. Rather, the most interesting of them are directed at the view or hypothesis, often defended by citing various empirical studies, that human beings are capable of empathy and that empathy is the source of and sustaining force behind altruistic human behavior. The opponents of this hypothesis typically claim that when empathy leads us to act for the benefit of another person, we are often just trying to avoid the guilt we would incur if we didn't try to help the person, and the conclusion is drawn that our motivation in that case is egoistic rather than altruistic. But even if this isn't as simple-minded as the kind of argument cited just above, it involves conceptual confusion of a kind that philosophers at least have long been aware of. We simply aren't capable of guilt unless something other than our own self-interest is motivating us—e.g., a commitment or desire to help others or a felt obligation to do so. I discuss this issue at much greater length elsewhere, but I hope I have said enough for you to see or take it, for now, as given that the above-mentioned argument presupposes the falsity of psychological egoism rather than supporting its truth.

However, those who have criticized the hypothesis that empathy leads to altruism and questioned the existence of human altruism have supported their view with other sorts of arguments that deserve our more extended attention.[2] More

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[1]The recent challenges are summarized and discussed in Elliott Sober and David Sloan Wilson's *Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003; and also in C.D. Batson's *Altruism in Humans*, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011. My more extended arguments for the incoherence or confusion of some of the recent defenses of egoism occur in my book *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind*, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014, Chap. 4.

[2]I am speaking as if the tie between empathy and altruism is an empirical one, but I think we all have to be careful here. Those who study mirror neurons tell us that empathy with someone's pain is largely a matter of taking in their emotional distress at the pain they are somatically feeling. But just as we can empathically take in our parent's attitude *toward* a given ethnic group, when we empathically take in someone's pain, we take in their distress at or about a given pain, and for us to feel immediate (i.e., in the absence of ulterior motives) distress about or at someone else's pain is *by definition* a form of sympathetic feeling for their plight. Their distress by its very nature as distress can motivate the person (first) feeling the distress to get rid of his or her pain, and why shouldn't the same be true of *our* distress at what they are feeling? Feeling by its very (conceptual) nature is capable of motivating us, so if the negative feelings someone who feels pain has toward his pain motivate him or her to alleviate it, something similar, and on the same conceptual grounds,

specifically, they have said that those who feel empathy and act on behalf of others may simply be seeking to avoid the displeasure or disapproval they would encounter if they didn't act helpfully. And they have held, in addition, that the desire to avoid displeasure or disapproval on the part of other people is a clearly egoistic motive. (Even some defenders of psychological altruism have made this last assumption.) But this further sort of argument for denying or doubting human altruism is also, in its own far from obvious way, conceptually mistaken or confused, and it will be important for our purposes in the present chapter to explain, briefly, why. And that explanation can benefit from what Elliott Sober and David Sloan Wilson have said about the desire for approval and the desire to be liked by others.

Now sometimes we desire to be liked by others because we want to get something of material value from them, e.g., money or sexual favors. However, at other times and quite frequently we want others' approval, want to be liked by them, without any ulterior motive. Being approved or liked is something that we humans tend to want "for its own sake", and Sober and Wilson, unlike those who have spoken of the desire to be liked or approved as introducing an egoistic element into what empathy leads us to do, argue that such desires are too relational to count as genuinely egoistic. If they are right about this, then one cannot show that human beings who help others are acting out of self-interest if they are seeking popularity or approval from others. And the general case for psychological egoism will be correspondingly weakened as a result. But as we are going to see in what follows, the criterion Sober and Wilson use for determining whether a desire or motive is egoistic is not as explanatory or philosophically compelling as one might like. Why

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(Footnote 2 continued)

seems true of the sympathetic negative feeling we have toward someone else's painful plight. Therefore, for conceptual reasons empathically taking in another's distress at their pain may constitute or give us motivation to alleviate it. We may not act on such motivation: that's presumably an empirical matter depending on what other motives are in play. But the motivation itself is altruistic motivation, and many of those who have discussed whether altruistic behavior is possible have ignored the possibility of this kind of conceptual argument. In particular, Batson, *op. cit.,* assumes that the connection between sympathetic/empathetic concern and altruistic motivation is a matter of empirical hypothesis—he calls it the "empathy-altruism hypothesis"— and I am saying that this assumption may be mistaken. If sympathetic feeling has a motivational/dispositional dimension in addition to its phenomenological aspect, then sympathetic feeling can in itself count as or contain altruistic motivation. (Nancy Eisenberg's "Empathy and Sympathy" [in M. Lewis and J.M. Haviland-Jones, eds., *Handbook of Emotion*, 2nd. edit., NY: Guilford Press, 2000, p. 677] simply asserts that sympathy involves altruistic emotion; but if the arguments just given are correct, then what she asserts there is correct, and Batson is on shaky conceptual ground for refusing to make the same claim.)

But then I have to plead guilty myself to a similar charge. Batson treats empathic concern as only empirically relevant to altruistic motivation, but in *From Enlightenment to Receptivity* (OUP 2013, p. 115f.) I claim that associative empathy of the kind involved in feeling someone's pain helps create altruistic motivation, and in saying this, I was implicitly assuming that the connection here is an empirical one. For all the reasons just mentioned, that assumption now seems to me shaky. If someone empathically feels another's pain that seems already to count as altruistic motivation rather than to be something merely contingently related to such motivation.

shouldn't a desire that is relational in regard to others also be egoistic? The desire for fame is relational in this way, but many philosophers—e.g., John Doris and Stephen Stich—have held that such a desire *is* purely egoistic, and at least initially it is not so clear that they are mistaken about this.[3]

So I propose that we try to go into this issue a little bit deeper than Wilson and Sober go. Their discussion is extremely helpful, because it raises questions about the argument for human egoism that cites our desire to be liked or approved. But I think there are deeper reasons why such questions should be raised and will explain my reasons in what follows. When they are not based on some ulterior desire for material or physical/appetitive benefit, the desire to be liked and the desire to be approved are not self-interested, and yet desires like these are in fact pervasive of human life. Moreover, what has just been said about them can be said with even greater emphasis, I think, about the related *desire for love* (i.e., *to be loved*). That desire can in favorable circumstances lead to altruistic motivation, but in situations where a child is abused or damaged, the thwarting and violation of the child's invariable desire/need for love can have negative results and lead to deep-seated vengeful anger and even a hatred of people in general. And what can be said about the non-egoistic character of the desire for revenge can help us toward understanding how and why the desire for love or for approval is also not egoistic.

In sermons given at the Rolls chapel just about three hundred years ago Joseph Butler argued at length against Hobbes's presumed defense of psychological egoism and his presumed rejection of the widespread assumption that human beings often act altruistically. And I think Butler based his argument against egoism to a substantial extent on the examples of malice and revenge precisely because these motives seem far removed from altruism and what we typically think about altruism. Simplifying somewhat, Butler's point about malice and revenge was that these motives seek the unhappiness, ruin, or death of another person for its own sake and often at considerable expense to the seeker's own welfare or happiness. (They very often lead one to "cut off one's nose to spite one's face".) So there intuitively doesn't seem to be anything egoistic about malice and revenge, and, as Butler argued, what applies to them seems equally applicable to the desire to help others.

However, both malice/revenge and the less negative desires for love, approval, or just being liked have something fundamentally in common that we haven't yet mentioned, and that common element will help us make the case against universal psychological egoism in a more intuitive and compelling way than Sober and Wilson's criterion of relationality allows us to do. That common element consists in the fact that all these desires or motives involve our treating other people as very important to us. And, once again, I am speaking of these desires as basic and pervasive in human lives and as not at all necessarily based in ulterior motives. Sure, one can want someone to like one because one thinks that will make it easier for one to sell them a car. But we humans more typically or very typically just want

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[3]See their "Moral Psychology: Empirical Approaches" (Sect. 5.1) in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

to be liked—for its own sake, as we philosophers put it. We feel uncomfortable at the prospect or thought that others may dislike us because we simply don't want to be regarded in that way. And so I want to say that the intrinsic desire to be liked or to be loved or to be approved (or, for that matter, esteemed) involves treating other people as intrinsically important (to one), and there is nothing egoistic about treating or thinking of other people as intrinsically important, far from it. (Of course, the same point also applies to loving other people and to the altruistic desire to help others.) What *is* egoistic is simply using other people for egoistic personal ends like money or appetitive pleasure, but the intrinsic desires to be liked, etc., are not at all like this, and it doesn't in fact make intuitive sense to regard such desires as egoistic. (To be sure, one will get satisfaction from being liked, but as Butler showed us, the fact that successful benevolent action can be satisfying and even pleasurable to the benevolent person doesn't show that benevolence aims primarily at the pleasure it may ultimately bring one. And there is no better reason to think that the desire to be liked, etc., are any different.)

In addition, this emphasis on what people take to be intrinsically important helps us explain why the desire for fame isn't egoistic, in a satisfying way that Sober and Wilson's appeal to the relationality of that desire doesn't really allow for. Someone with the intrinsic desire for fame treats other people as important to them in precisely the way that someone who wants others' approval, love, or esteem does. In most cases, in fact, the desire for fame is simply the desire for esteem over a (relatively) wide swath of the human race—those who want fame typically *don't* want to be *infamous* or widely despised. And that makes it even easier to see how and why the desire for fame isn't egoistic. So we have a criterion of non-egoism here (namely, that one's motivation place intrinsic importance on other people) that takes us further than Sober and Wilson take us, and in fact we shall be seeing below how our intuitive criterion of non-egoism actually moves us toward criticizing some claims Sober and Wilson make about the egoistic character of certain desires we have not yet mentioned.

In any event, we can now see that an egoistic person is someone who doesn't treat or think of other people as intrinsically important (to him), someone who in effect just uses other people for his or her own independent purposes. But if this is true, then both malice and the desire for revenge fail to count as egoistic *for reasons Butler never mentions*. Having those highly negative desires involves treating certain other people as intrinsically important to one; and if one is really egoistic, one isn't going to pay someone who has hurt one the compliment of caring about their unhappiness or destruction.[4] Rather, one will seek one's own happiness, seek good things for oneself, and only bother to hurt a person who has hurt oneself if

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[4]The intrinsic desire to hurt someone more clearly involves treating the other person as important to one than it involves valuing or respecting the other person. Kant thinks that morality involves recognizing the value of others and showing respect for them in one's actions. But treating-as-important seems to be a broader and less morally loaded or committed notion, and that is precisely what makes it, in my estimation, appropriate for understanding those aspects of human life that are morally neutral or run counter to morality.

doing so will on independent grounds help one toward happiness or various specific good things/benefits. To be bent, or hell-bent, on someone's destruction as an end of action rather than simply as a means to having certain independently valued good things is to treat the fate of that other person as having an intrinsic importance (to one), and that is no more egoistic than it is to want, intrinsically want, other people to like one or think well of one or flourish on their own. So we have, in fact, every reason to think that altruistic motives like benevolence and compassion, non-altruistic motives like the desire to be liked or approved of, and punitive desires like malice and revenge are all basically non-egoistic.[5]

More importantly for the purposes of our discussion, we have also just expanded the area or range of non-egoistic and non-altruistic motives—what we can call "neutral" motives—in a way that hasn't previously been suggested in the literature of philosophy and psychology. And to get a better grip on what this involves and why it is important to understanding human life, I think we should now consider the work of the psychologist A.H. Maslow.

In his most well-known book, *Motivation and Personality*, and in various other works published earlier or subsequently, Maslow developed a "hierarchy of needs" view of human psychology that steered between the behaviorism and Freudianism that dominated psychology at the time he was writing.[6] Unlike those other approaches, Maslow saw certain needs, like the need for love or for esteem, as fundamental to human psychology: he didn't think they could be reduced to more basic drives or instincts. But what was arguably most distinctive about his view was its hierarchical character. The human attempt to satisfy a given basic need depends, for Maslow, on the prior satisfaction of needs further down in the hierarchy: we don't, for example, seek love or esteem unless and until our need for security has been satisfied. Maslow also claimed that self-actualization was the highest need in the hierarchy, something people wouldn't want or strive to satisfy until all the other, more basic or lower needs in the hierarchy were already (largely) satisfied.

Now I could go into detail about the nature and structure of this theory, but I don't propose to do that. Despite all that has been written on the subject of self-actualization, I find that notion hard to pin down or to make use of, and Maslow's idea of a hierarchy of needs has been subjected to multiple criticisms by his own followers and others. After all, the poet starving in a garret hasn't satisfied his safety or basic physical needs but still aspires to what everyone would call self-actualization, and Maslow himself in later years made explicit concessions on this and related points, so it is difficult to see his ideas about a hierarchy of needs as having present-day currency or plausibility.[7]

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[5]The desire to thumb one's nose at certain people also treats other people as important to one, a fact that would likely embarrass the nose-thumber if it were brought to their attention. Such a motive isn't particularly negative, but, given our account above, it certainly isn't egoistic.

[6]Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, NY: Harper, 1954.

[7]On the idea that one can be deeply engaged in cultural pursuits while one's "lower" needs are not satisfied, see Andrew Neier, "Maslow's Theory of Motivation: A Critique", *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 31, 1991, pp. 89–112.

What seems to me permanently valid or forceful about Maslow's theory is the idea that certain instincts or needs are basic, not to be seen as explainable in terms of "tissue needs" or derived from primitive drive mechanisms of the sort posited by typical behavioristic learning theory. Such tissue needs or drive mechanisms were viewed by most learning theorists as more basic than so-called higher needs for culture or self-expression, and behavioristic psychologists have often sought to explain the emergence of the latter in terms of the former making use of psychological laws/mechanisms of a hard-nosed scientific sort. (This way of putting things is neutral regarding whether the higher desires eventually become "functionally autonomous" in relation to their psychological sources.) Maslow deliberately takes a stance against such views by claiming that the needs, the instincts, are there all along and have an independent basis and status.

But note one thing. This last claim doesn't entail that the desire/need for esteem or love is non-egoistic. If we assume that these needs derive from and remain forever dependent on lower drives or needs, then, of course, we are seeing them as egoistic. But even if we don't make such an assumption, we can still view the higher needs as egoistic, for we might simply regard them as higher but self-standing forms of egoistic motivation: independent of lower drives, but just as egoistic as the latter. *And Maslow never says anything to contradict such a view of his higher needs*. In other words, the need for love or for the esteem of others may be egoistic, as far as anything said by Maslow would indicate. Maslow tends to assume a dichotomy between egoistic and altruistic motives that seems to ignore the possibility that some of the needs in his hierarchy might fall in between those categories.[8] And the fact that the need for love, the need for esteem, and (another one Maslow mentions) the need to belong are all presupposed by a need for self-actualization that might readily (though, as I shall indicate later, mistakenly) be seen as (in the highest sort of way) self-interested, suggests that Maslow didn't see the point we have argued for earlier in this chapter: that the need/desire for love or for esteem or for belonging involves an attitude that places so much intrinsic importance on other people that it cannot plausibly be viewed as egoistic.

So I propose that we go beyond Maslow's theory and regard some of the basic needs in his hierarchy as non-egoistic and "neutral" as between the egoistic and the altruistic (and also as not particularly related to one another in a hierarchical fashion). As Maslow claimed, the need for love (or to be liked), the need to belong to units larger than oneself, the need for the esteem, or approval, of others may not be reducible to lower needs, and Maslow deserves credit for being the first psychologist (that the literature talks about) who made this kind of claim (in print). But in the light of the considerations mentioned earlier in this chapter, we should go beyond Maslow and claim that those needs or instincts are neutral rather than

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[8]In his "Is Human Nature Basically Selfish?" (in E. Hoffman, ed., *Future Visions: The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow*, London: Sage Publications, 1996, pp. 107–114) Maslow treats selfish and unselfish motives as opposing one another and makes no mention of anything in between. He really doesn't seem to have appreciated the non-egoistic character of the desire for love, etc., that he himself was the first to call psychologists' attention to.

egoistic, and, as we shall be seeing in what follows, this latter claim has very important implications for our understanding of the nature of human lives and human life. Once we see these Maslovian needs or (as we might call them) basic desires as neutral, we can come to recognize other human needs and desires that Maslow didn't focus on as also neutral. And we will also see that some desires that Sober and Wilson's relational criterion for distinguishing the egoistic from the non-egoistic counts as egoistic are not egoistic, but in fact also neutral. The latter category is in fact much, much wider and more various than anyone has suspected, and we shall see how this affects our understanding of what the lives of human beings are basically like.

But first I want to say more about the specific desires Maslow mentioned. There are things we can say or ask about them that Maslow doesn't consider, and their significance may be even greater than Maslow himself believed. (If we don't subordinate them hierarchically to self-actualization, that may actually give them greater significance.)

For example, we may ask how the adult or childhood desire to be liked by one's peers relates to the instinctual or basic desire or need for love that Maslow posited. Do our later efforts and desire to be liked derive from the strong need for parental love or do they have a separate status and existence? Maslow doesn't really answer this question, but I believe it is an interesting question that needs further consideration and empirical investigation. I won't, however, attempt to do any of that here, and I think we can simply be non-committal as to whether an independent desire to be liked has to be added to a list of (basic) neutral motives that already includes the need/desire for love. (Also, I won't consider where the need/desire for friendship or for romantic love stands in relation to various other needs or motives.)

Then there is the need to belong, about which we can and I think should say a bit more than either Maslow or others who have made use of his ideas have said. The basic human desire to belong involves two elements that need to be distinguished more clearly than they have previously been. Our desire to belong to some larger group or community is attended or even shepherded by a sense of what does or doesn't belong, and these two psychological factors work together in ways that we should at least briefly spell out. And I should point out that the notion of community as it is relevant to our sense of what belongs is actually wider than what the term "community" ordinarily connotes. If one lives in a small town, then the river that runs in back of the local high school and through the center of town will be felt to belong where is it, and if the state decides to allow developers to block the river at some point above the town in order to create a reservoir and if this will likely result in the river's running dry and ceasing to be a river at all beyond a certain point, the inhabitants of the town are going to protest. And the protest will express their sense, precisely, that the river belongs where it is. If the project goes through despite all the protests, then the inhabitants of the town are going to feel bereft in something like the way that the same town's inhabitants would feel bereft if the long-time mayor were suddenly to die of a heart attack. Both the mayor and the river belong in the town, and since the river is a physical thing, the word "community" is stretched if we say that it belongs in or to the local community. A community

sounds like a group of people, and the river isn't part of a community in that sense; but a *town* has both a human and a geographical aspect, and so it doesn't stretch our usage if we say that the river belongs in the town–or belongs *with* the town's inhabitants and its general store, etc.[9]

In addition, our sense of belonging extends to larger situations to which the notion of community seems totally inapplicable. At one point in our recent history someone suggested that blowing up the moon with atomic weapons would help us solve some of our environmental problems here on Earth. But think how dazed and bereft we would feel if the moon disappeared. The moon isn't part of the human community, but we can certainly say that it is part of and belongs to our larger overall human *habitat* (the terms "eco-system" and "environment" wouldn't be as helpful in making this point). And so we not only want to belong to larger communities and even habitats, but resist losing what we feel belongs with us in our community or habitat. Of course, the desire to belong, while it often brings people together, can often work to divide one group from another. But, in any event, it should be clear at this point that the desire to belong and to preserve what is felt to belong with us is neutral in the sense defined above and also exercises a wide-ranging and deep influence in individual lives and in overall (collective) human life.

And let me now say a bit more about the neutral desire for the esteem of other people: not just because that desire is important in itself, but also because what we have to say about it will lead us to further areas or dimensions of what I am calling neutral motivation. We do a lot in our lives to win the esteem, praise, and approval of other people (though I am not going to try to distinguish among these three notions any further). Some of this, as I indicated above, at least partially serves other motives: we seek our parents' approval and their (greater) esteem at least in part or sometimes because we want them to love us (more). But the desire for esteem isn't always or even primarily a desire for the esteem of those we love; we want to be esteemed or approved by people in our school or community or profession.

However, we now have to consider an objection that has been made to Maslow's idea that esteem is a basic need or object of desire. Such a view seems to treat the desire for esteem as unrelated to self-esteem and sheer competence or mastery regarding the world we live in. Don't we want and seek the esteem of others primarily because we want to think well of ourselves and because we view the esteem of others as a means to self-esteem? Aren't we more interested in deserving the esteem of others than in simply gaining that esteem (possibly through no desert of our own)?

These are good questions, and I am not sure anyone knows how to answer them. But they also make us aware of the possibility that all three of the desires/needs just

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[9]For the idea that certain non-animate things belong together with us, see Heidegger's "Building Dwelling Thinking" in D.F. Krell, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 217–265.

mentioned—the desire for others' esteem, the desire for self-esteem, and the desire for competence or mastery—may be basic to our psychology. Yes, perhaps we desire self-esteem in addition to the esteem of others; but may we not want the esteem of others independently of how well we think of ourselves? The esteem of others can, after all, be a kind of *consolation* for someone who, despite that esteem, persists in thinking badly about himself. And, yes, perhaps we want to have competence and mastery in addition to having the kind of self-esteem or esteem from others that the competence and mastery can give rise to. But can't and don't we want mastery and competence in relation to our environment independently of what others say or think, just for its own sake? And if we think better of ourselves when we master some task or skill, does that mean we sought that mastery only as a means to thinking better of ourselves? Arguably not. So I think we have no reason to treat the desire for others' esteem as any less basic to human psychology or human life because we also want to think well of ourselves and to be competent in, or attain a mastery of various aspects of, the world around us.[10]

But this allows, even forces, us, I think, to expand the area of neutral motivation that as we have seen already characterizes so much of our lives. (Remember that malice and revenge count as neutral in the sense I specified, even if they are quite obviously *negative* in some quite natural ordinary sense of the term.) That is because I think the desire for competence and mastery are neutral in our sense, but this may not be obvious at first glance. In order to show you why I think such desire is neutral (and I won't rigorously distinguish mastery from competence), I think I have to bring in another desire that it is easier to regard as neutral: curiosity. So I propose to discuss curiosity and the reasons we have for thinking it is neither egoistic nor altruistic as a motive, and then, by pressing an analogy between curiosity and the desire for competence, show you why I think the latter desire or need is also neutral.

Curiosity is obviously related to the "exploratory behavior" of many animals, and since exploratory behavior is likely to be useful to an animal seeking food, a mate, or simply to survive, some psychologists have thought they could explain and have tried to explain curiosity in such basically egoistic terms. But there has been a broad range of dissenters from this view of curiosity, among them, some of the most famous psychological theorists of the twentieth century: e.g., William McDougall and R.W. White.[11] These psychologists have in various ways

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[10]In his earlier work, Maslow focused on the desire for the esteem of others and pretty much ignored the desire or need for self-esteem as based in a sense of one's own competence. In "Maslow Amended" (*Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 38, 1998, pp. 81–92), John Rowan criticizes Maslow for this omission, but in later work Maslow seems to have been willing to acknowledge a need for competence/mastery and for self-esteem earned either on that basis or through various achievements.

[11]See W. McDougall, *Outline of Psychology*, NY: Scribners, 1924; and R.W. White, "Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence" *Psychological Review* 66, 1959, pp. 297–333. In fact, White treats both curiosity and the need for competence as basic. In *Curiosity and Exploratory Behavior* (NY: Macmillan, 1965), Harry Fowler discusses both reductionistic and anti-reductionistic psychological accounts of curiosity. Finally, it is perhaps also worth mentioning

maintained that curiosity, far from being derivable from "tissue needs" or reducible to "primary animal drives" has a status and energy of its own, is an independent and in some sense basic need or instinct. And, of course, outside of psychology, among philosophers and writers, there has been a great deal of praise of curiosity, and that praise has in my opinion expressed an implicit sense that curiosity isn't *merely* a way of satisfying other, less exalted or attractive and purely "animal" needs. Aristotle begins the *Metaphysics* by saying that all men by nature desire to know (and who has ever been more curious than Aristotle?); and the same basic idea also crops up in Cicero, Edmund Burke, and numerous other places.

Now I am not sure whether human curiosity is merely a function of lower needs, though I am inclined to think that it isn't. But regardless of whether I am right about this, there are conceptual issues about curiosity that can be addressed independently of the empirical ones. Butler's arguments against psychological egoism are arguments against certain primarily conceptual or philosophical arguments *for* egoism, and nothing Butler said absolutely precludes the possibility that, despite its making good sense to think of benevolence, etc., as altruistically motivated, there might be empirical reasons for thinking it never is. For example, and to put things as the behaviorists did, if altruism psychologically requires continuing support from the satisfaction of other, more basic and egoistic needs (the satisfaction of hunger needs, for example), then human altruism would turn out to be functionally dependent on the satisfaction of egoistic instincts or needs, and it might turn out that the appearance of genuine altruism, benevolence not supported by ulterior motives or personal gains, was an illusion. But that wouldn't mean that we had to *conceptualize* benevolence as basically egoistic; it would just mean that what it originally made sense to regard as altruistic had turned out not to be so—and if this idea is familiar from the way we sometimes think of a given individual's motivation (even retrospectively of our own motivation) on a particular occasion, then I see no reason in philosophical principle why it couldn't be extended to all instances of supposed human altruism. (In that case we might say either that human benevolence turned out to be egoistic or that, despite appearances and what we normally think about our own motivation, there really wasn't such a thing as human benevolence.)[12]

And I want to say similar things about curiosity (or inquisitiveness). Perhaps someone can empirically derive human curiosity from supposedly more basic and egoistic drives or needs, though, as I have said, I have my doubts. But independently of what turns out empirically to be the case with curiosity, there are conceptual issues that need sorting out, and one of these concerns whether considered just in itself and independently of psychological foundations, we should think of

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(Footnote 11 continued)

that in the article where he originally formulated his idea of a hierarchy of human needs, Maslow somewhat tentatively posited curiosity as a basic human need or instinct. See his "A Theory of Human Motivation", *Psychological Review* 50, 1943, pp. 370–396.

[12]I make several of these points in greater detail in my "An Empirical Basis for Psychological Egoism", *Journal of Philosophy*, 1964.

curiosity (or inquisitiveness) as egoistic: whether a disinterested desire to know new things/facts (or the sheer desire to be exposed to and experience what one hasn't experienced previously, which is a slightly different matter, but which I shall not discuss as a separate matter) should be conceptualized as egoistic apart from any reductive empirical/psychological arguments we might offer for such a conclusion. And here I think the answer must be in the negative—despite the fact, as I shall explain further along, that Sober and Wilson say things that entail that we *should* conceptualize curiosity as egoistic (they never directly talk about curiosity as such). So let me explain why I believe all this to be so and why, in the light of my explanation, I think Sober and Wilson's implicit views about curiosity (and their explicit views about competence or mastery) are fundamentally mistaken.

First, just consider how or what curiosity seems to be on the face of it. If someone is curious about the history of ancient Babylonia, there needn't, on the face of it, be any ulterior motive behind their efforts to find out more about that subject. There needn't be any examination they have to pass on that topic, nor any person they want to impress with their knowledge of Babylonia. And in that case we speak of their curiosity as disinterested, which already implies or seems to imply that it isn't *self-interested*, egoistic, or selfish. That is already a conceptual argument against viewing curiosity as conceptually connected to egoistic motivation and indeed in favor of seeing it as non-egoistic, even if it is non-altruistic as well. But then consider how different curiosity is from the other motives/desires we have classified as neither egoistic nor altruistic, as neutral. Those motives involve someone placing an importance on other people (or possibly animals more generally), and curiosity doesn't have to involve people at all (though it obviously can). Doesn't this difference actually give us an argument for thinking that curiosity (or inquisitiveness) is egoistic *rather than* neutral?

Well, it certainly might seem to, but I in fact believe it would be a mistake to think so because even if curiosity doesn't involve placing importance on other people the way, for example, malice and the desire for love or belonging do, it has something very deeply in common with the latter desires, and that common element gives us, I think, strong reason to think that curiosity is indeed non-egoistic and neutral. Curiosity may not place importance on other people, but, like malice, the desire for love, etc., it does place a certain intrinsic importance on what lies outside the self. To be curious for its own sake is to place importance on finding out about facts or things (possibly in a specific area) that lie outside the self, and doesn't thinking that one simply has to learn more about a given thing precisely invest that thing, something outside and independent of oneself, with a certain intrinsic importance? To have sheer curiosity about Babylonia, for example, is to (want to) reach beyond one's own intimate circle of concerns and desires and be in touch with a reality that is far from one in time and (for most of us) space. It is to place an importance on (part of) history for its own sake, and that very fact indicates an interest that is not, or that doesn't have the appearance of being, egoistic (or altruistic).

Now to have malice toward certain groups of human beings is also to place importance on something beyond the self—even if malicious people might be

surprised to learn that about themselves. Similarly for the need to belong and the other needs/desires we earlier characterized as neutral. And so although one is not egoistically motivated to the extent that one regards other people as intrinsically important to one, it seems intuitively plausible to generalize from that assumption to the larger conclusion that one isn't being egoistic if one is acting from a sense of the intrinsic importance (to oneself) of something—some person or fact or thing— beyond or larger than oneself. And this would mean that we have reason to regard curiosity (apart from empirical issues about its causal origins) as a non-egoistic and neutral motive. What is done under the aegis of curiosity would also then count as neutral: the desire to see the Grand Canyon or to know who won the World Series in 1925 and actions taken in pursuit of those goals would all then count as neutral rather than egoistic. And this whole argument transposes to the motive(s) of mastery and competence.

There are various possible motives for learning French—one can need French to get on better in some location where one has been stationed as a soldier, or to be qualified for a certain high-paying job. But some people are interested in learning French for its own sake. In other words, though more figuratively, just as someone may want to climb a mountain "because it is there", one may wish to learn French because the French language is and has been there as an important factor or element in Western or world history or culture. This is to place an importance on (certain aspects of) history itself, and to that extent what is going on when someone wants to learn French is similar to what goes on when they are simply *curious* about France. In both cases, something beyond oneself, something in effect larger than oneself, is being seen as important in itself and not just as a means to independent or more basic personal satisfactions.

And don't say at this point that curiosity about Babylonia or France and the desire for competence in or even mastery of the French language are egoistic because they typically provide certain satisfactions for the individual with the curiosity or the desire for competence. That is no more plausible than saying that benevolence is egoistic because the benevolent person typically gains satisfactions from acting benevolently. As I mentioned above, even if benevolence gives an agent satisfactions, it isn't obvious that their main motive is to gain such satisfactions, and by the same token, even if a person who wants to master French gains satisfaction(s) from the very fact of doing or having done so, that doesn't mean that the satisfactions are the target or principal target of their desire to master French. (And similarly for curiosity about Babylon or France.) We know all of this, basically, from Butler, and so given the expanded or enlarged criterion of non-egoism offered above, I think we have as much reason to think of the desire for competence/mastery as neutral as to think that way about curiosity. And it similarly follows that what is done *under the aegis* of the intrinsic desire for competence— e.g., working hard to master French—is also neutral.

It follows from this that Sober and Wilson's criterion of when a desire or motive is egoistic is too broad. They say that if a desire isn't relational as between individuals, then it is egoistic, and on that basis they say (p. 227) that the (intrinsic) desire to find a cure for cancer and the (intrinsic) desire to climb Mount Everest are

egoistic. But I think this is mistaken, and our previous discussion should indicate why.[13] The person who wants, for example, to climb Mount Everest for its own sake (and not for the fame or money it will bring them) is treating something out there and independent of themselves as having an intrinsic importance to them. There is something both disinterested and personally enlarging or expansive about such motivation that resembles what we want to say, e.g., about the motive of benevolence, and it just seems gratuitous to use the criterion of relationality to come to the opposite conclusion. The relationality criterion is a formal and linguistic one, and is it really plausible to suppose in advance that such a criterion would correlate with, much less explain, motivational issues? I mentioned earlier that Sober and Wilson's criterion yields the conclusion that the desire for fame isn't egoistic, but that some philosophers (e.g., John Doris and Stephen Stich) hold that that motive is egoistic. And the sheer formality of the Sober/Wilson criterion leaves it without intuitive weight against views like Doris and Stich's. If the desire for fame is non-egoistic, the fact that it is relational vis-à-vis other people doesn't very intuitively explain why, and I think that leaves Doris and Stich's contrary opinion—an opinion they share with others—critically intact.

But I think our criterion of thinking of other people as intrinsically important does have critical and intuitive weight. It is easier to see that fame isn't necessarily an egoistic goal once one sees that it places great importance on other people and what they think about one, sees that it pays other people, in effect, a great ethical compliment. And that is why I earlier argued that this criterion is better than anything offered by Sober and Wilson as a way of distinguishing between the egoistic and the non-egoistic. And that advantage has something to do with the fact that, unlike Sober and Wilson's formal criterion, the just-mentioned criterion involves and operates in terms of psychology. It tells us what it is about the mind and thinking of individuals that makes certain motives like malice, curiosity, or the need for love count as non-egoistic.

But similar points then also apply to what Sober and Wilson say about putative competency motives like the desire to climb Mount Everest as compared with what our now expanded criterion of egoism versus non-egoism says about such motives. (I shall talk about the desire to find a cure for cancer in just a moment.) The fact that the desire to climb Everest doesn't entail any relation to other people doesn't in and of itself seem to explain why such a motive has to count as egoistic—the criterion being applied is just too formal to provide such an intuitive explanation. But the idea that an intrinsic desire for competence and/or mastery involves thinking of something beyond or larger than oneself as important to one does seem intuitively helpful in explaining why such a desire, conceptually or on the face of it (and

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[13]In *Five Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel and a Dissertation Upon the Nature of Virtue* (ed. S. Darwall, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1983, p. 21), Bishop Butler says that men (sic) frequently sacrifice self-interest to inquisitiveness (and love and hatred), so he doesn't make the same mistake about curiosity/inquisitiveness that Sober and Wilson implicitly do. But he doesn't say that the explanation of the non-egoistic character of this motive (and the others) lies in the intrinsic importance it places on something outside the self.

independently of ultimate psychological explanations), may count as non-egoistic. So our expanded criterion not only explains why competency/mastery motives are neutral, but also how and why Sober and Wilson's criterion gets things wrong for the case of Mt. Everest and other practical expressions of the desire for competency/mastery.

However, the desire to find a cure for cancer doesn't seem to be just a desire for mastery or competency—unless, picturesquely, one thinks of it as involving a desire to triumph over and master the disease itself. And, of course, as Sober and Wilson know as well as the rest of us, the desire to find a cancer cure can or could be an expression of humanitarian, altruistic concern for other people. But when Sober and Wilson speak of that desire as egoistic, they are thinking of it as an intrinsic desire, possibly as the desire of a scientist as such in a world where a cure for cancer hasn't yet been discovered. Such a desire isn't exactly a desire for mastery; more intuitively or colloquially it is seems like a desire for a certain kind of *achievement* or *accomplishment*. And we should now consider whether we should classify desires for achievement along with curiosity, the desire for competence, malice, the desire for love, etc., in the category of the neutral.

For at least for some ways of viewing things, the answer to this question is far from obvious or may actually be in the negative. Kant in the *Groundwork* held that all human motives other than the conscientious desire to do one's duty are egoistic, and in particular he believed this to be the case for sympathetic motives like benevolence and compassion and for desires for competence and for achievement. He held that we have a moral duty to develop our talents, improve our skills and knowledge, but (he thought) we gain no moral merit from seeking these things if we don't do so in the name of duty, and he does regard all motives *other* than duty as fundamentally egoistic.

However, our expanded criterion of what is neutral or non-egoistic yields a very different view of the desire for competence or skill, and the reasons we gave for thinking of such motivation as non-egoistic transpose easily, I think, to desires for achievement. (They also readily transpose to the desire to *collect things*, whether it be art, coins, or baseball cards, but I shall leave this neutral desire to one side in what follows.) The desire to climb Everest is equally a desire for mastery and a desire for achievement, and under either rubric it doesn't seem egoistic—for the reasons given earlier. But by the same token the intrinsic desire to find a cure for cancer also seems to be neutral rather than egoistic. The arguments and considerations we have offered for thinking of the desire for mastery as neutral apply with equal force to the desire for achievement, and, again, the fact that achievements bring us pleasure and satisfaction (as well as typically requiring a certain amount of struggle and heartache) no more shows that achievement is an egoistic goal/motive than similar facts about benevolence and the desire to belong (or, for that matter, malice and the desire for revenge) show these motives to be egoistic.

So we need to expand the category of the neutral to include all the different motives we have just been describing, and contrary views don't give us as intuitive a picture of what is happening with these motives as what our expanded criterion of the non-egoistic makes possible. But we are still not done. The category of the

neutral also arguably contains motives/needs/instincts that we haven't yet discussed here and that haven't (as such) been described or categorized by anyone else. There are putative human instincts that play a large, even a major role in our individual human lives and in human life considered collectively or as a whole, but that no philosopher or (to the best of my knowledge) psychologist has ever paid real attention to, much less categorized either as egoistic or as non-egoistic. And I want to bring these instincts to your attention in what follows and explain why I think they too count as neutral rather than as egoistic.

The first desire or instinct I want to talk about is arguably a primitive and a basic one, even if it doesn't get mentioned much in any academic literature I am aware of: the desire for "human contact", i.e., proximity to or with other people. (We may also have a desire for proximity to or with other mammals/animals but I shall simplify). This is a desire or need that Maslow never mentions, but I think it resembles those he does mention, like the desire to belong, the desire for esteem, and the desire for love, in its arguable independence, at least conceptually, from more clearly survival-oriented tissue-based instincts/needs like hunger and thirst. And like the needs Maslow mentions and the other neutral desires/needs we have discussed above (and speaking now a bit more generally), the sheer desire to be near other members of one's species doesn't seem egoistic. That desire may carry a certain survival benefit: flocking together may help individual sheep survive better against the depredations of predators like wolves (though it may create a more visible target for them). But that doesn't mean that the impulse toward proximity takes in increased security or better survival as its internal object or goal, any more than the fact that curiosity can lead to helpful exploratory behavior means that curiosity (e.g., intellectual curiosity) has to in itself aim or be aiming at the curious animal's security or enhanced chances of survival.

In addition, the desire for proximity needn't be a desire or need to touch fellow creatures, and it also varies from species to species as regards how close a spatial proximity is sought. Sheep flock together and stay at a certain non-touching distance from one another, but crocodiles and marine iguanas also sun themselves together with other members of their species, and the distances they keep from one another are presumably not exactly the same or even close to the same as what sheep naturally seek out or realize. In a moment I want to explain how this new and underdiscussed instinct for proximity relates to some of the neutral desires that Maslow was the first person to intellectually focus on. But in order to do that, it will be necessary to bring in another, a further, need/instinct/desire that no one (including Maslow) ever speaks about in the very general way that I am going to talk about it, but that has, as I hope to persuade you, a very central and wide-ranging place in human lives and in collective human life considered on the whole.

This (from my description just now) mysterious further desire or instinct is, in fact, simply the familiar desire to imitate others, but what is arguably not familiar or recognized about this desire is the way it includes or subsumes ordinary largely subliminal empathic processes. We all know that infants imitate the gestures and sounds adults around them make and that such imitation—with increasingly complex or sophisticated targets—continues into later childhood and into adulthood

as well. But when a child makes the same noise they hear an adult make, they typically do so deliberately or at least voluntarily. And when a little girl puts on make-up that she has seen her mother put on, that too involves voluntary and even deliberate (or intentional) behavior. But I want to say that the ordinary receptive/associative empathy that operates both in young children and in adults has an instinctive aspect that has been pretty much ignored by everyone who has spoken of such empathic processes, and I want to claim that receptive empathy expresses a drive toward or need for imitation of or assimilation to the other that is also shown in more deliberate or consciously voluntary acts of bodily imitation.

But this goes against the way people have been thinking about empathy (including my earlier self). The present-day literature on empathy distinguishes projective empathy, which involves deliberately or voluntarily putting oneself into another person's shoes and then imagining how they would feel, think, or act, from associative empathy, which is seen as more receptive and non-voluntary than the projective kind. When, as Bill Clinton described it, one feels another person's pain (or joy or anxiety), this is supposed to happen without the empathizer's consciously willing it to happen. And so associative empathy has been contrasted with the projective kind in a stark or at least dichotomous way. But although I don't want to question or undercut this basic distinction, I do think that associative empathy has an instinctual and *active* or *non-passive* side to it that the description of it as receptive tends to some extent to obscure. (By contrast, I think almost no one would want to deny that the projective empathic act of putting oneself into someone's head involves a kind of active imitation.) When we think of associative empathy as working unconsciously and without active bodily efforts and call it receptive on that basis, I believe we are typically ignoring the readiness and eagerness with which we assimilate to, cause ourselves to resemble, others through processes of associative empathy. Receptivity is consistent with eagerness and, if you think about it, in itself implies something like eagerness. In other words, I am saying that receptive associative empathizing can occur without our consciously willing it (to happen), but that it also expresses an eagerness and an instinctual desire that means it is more than or other than passive.

An analogy with the sense of hearing may help us here. Hearing things can be entirely passive, but *listening* via the sense of hearing is far from passive. In fact, listening is receptive in a way or to a degree that sheer/mere hearing is not, and that is because receptivity involves something different from passivity. However, listening may well not be an instinct (though perhaps it is). My point is just that it is receptive in a way that hearing is not and that that receptivity involves an eagerness or desire to take things in via the sense of hearing. And I think something very similar happens with empathy as a basic instinct or need. When a father takes in his daughter's interest in stamp collecting, when such a parent is, as we say, infected by his daughter's interest in and enthusiasm for stamp collecting, he isn't aware of this happening as it happens, isn't consciously willing it for it to happen. But the father is nonetheless in some sense primed or eager for it to happen, and the receptivity involved in such an attitude or motive has much to do with the love the father bears his daughter. He is or can be eager to share something with her that is important to

her, but as I say, this needn't occur at a conscious level or involve deliberate actions. And when we empathically take in the opinions or cognitive attitudes of those near and dear to us (especially those of our parents), something similar is occurring. But, as I say, we have ignored this aspect of associative empathy, and we need to stop ignoring it if we are to arrive at the fuller picture of empathy and the desire to imitate/assimilate to others that I am going to draw here.

If empathy is to be thought of as part of or instantiating an instinct to assimilate to others that is also exemplified in deliberate acts of imitation and mimicry, then its character as an instinct would seem to be neither altruistic nor egoistic. Being like others may carry its benefits (or not), but an intentionality toward such benefits doesn't seem part of what, at least conceptually and to all appearances, is involved in the human tendency to take on the feelings and even the thoughts or general attitudes of others. Simple or complex bodily acts of imitation or mimicry don't typically aim at any benefit, and if we are more comfortable making ourselves like others than we are otherwise, it is not at all obvious that we gain or intend to gain anything of independent interest to us from doing so. We just *like* to be like others, feel more *comfortable*, in certain areas of life, being that way, and so deliberate imitation seems to be a basic instinct or need that is no more egoistic than the desire for love or for belonging. For like these latter, it clearly places a certain intrinsic importance on the other.

But associative empathy doesn't involve or usually involve voluntary bodily motions, and those who have discussed it have conceptualized it as a psychological "mechanism", a term that at the very least connotes or suggests that people, agents, are passive in relation to processes of associative empathy when and as they occur. Thus in the Confucian *Analects* (12/19), it is said that the virtue of a ruler will spread to and into his subjects without his having to make any efforts to cause this to happen—and although Confucius doesn't specifically mention empathy, what he says at the very least adumbrates Hume's notion that not only feelings, but also opinions and attitudes tend to spread from one person "by contagion" to or into others. But Confucius describes this process of a ruler's influence in terms that clearly imply that the subjects of the ruler are completely passive in regard to that influence. He says that the ruled are like grass blown by the wind in relation to the forceful (empathic) influence of the ruler's virtuousness. Similarly, and as I indicated a moment ago, Hume's description of empathy (he called it sympathy because the term "empathy" didn't yet exist and so used the term "sympathy" in a somewhat ambiguous way) as spreading feeling by contagion from one person to another or others also strongly suggests that the person to whom a feeling or attitude spreads is basically passive in regard to that process. After all, we can be and typically are entirely passive in the process of contracting a contagious disease.

But in regard to this issue I think Hume, the first person ever to describe how empathy works, was in fact wiser than those of us who have subsequently described or theorized about empathy. For in addition to sometimes speaking of empathy as working by contagion (or, elsewhere, "infusion"), Hume also says that we *embrace* the opinions and sentiments of other people, and this active word suggests that empathy is not a completely passive mechanism, but involves, rather, a kind of

eagerness, an eagerness to empathize with or assimilate to others, that the term "receptive" also connotes.[14] However, those who have spoken of associative empathy as involving a kind of receptivity haven't taken this further step that Hume, at least some of the time, seems willing (and eager?) to take.[15] So I want to propose (and this takes us beyond anything Hume says) that associative empathy is an instinct, or at least part of an instinct, of imitation of and assimilation to others that is also exemplified in more conscious or deliberate acts of bodily imitation. This overall and more inclusive instinct is, in ways that I think I may no longer need to spell out for you, neither egoistic nor altruistic. It belongs with the other neutral needs or instincts I have described above, and the question then arises how these various instincts relate to one another.

Well, at a first approximation instincts of imitation and of empathizing seems to presuppose an instinct of proximity.[16] A (lower) animal can't imitate what it doesn't see or perceive; and almost every full-blown discussion of empathy—including both Hume's own discussion and what has been said most recently about empathy by developmental psychologists—points out and indeed stresses the fact that empathy works better when the target of empathy is physically near the empathizer. We are more empathically sensitive, for example, to what we directly perceive than to what we merely know about at second hand (or even to what we see on television), and perception to a large extent depends on spatial proximity. But once a species develops empathy, it has means of social communication and influence not available in the absence of empathy, and if I may now speculate even further, a species cannot exemplify such things as love, belonging, and esteem without the prior existence of empathic tendencies and abilities. Human beings, for example, have a capacity for loving and a need for love, but, as the literature on empathy indicates, love involves having more empathy for another person than ordinary liking and sociability entail. Moreover, we couldn't have the need for love unless we possessed some means or mechanism of ascertaining or registering whether that

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[14]On the points I have been making about Hume, see (e.g.,) the section "Of the love of fame" (Book II, Part I, Sect. xi) in Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*.

[15]I am thinking here of Nel Noddings's discussion of being receptive to the reality of others in *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984; and of my own discussion of receptive empathy in, e.g., *The Ethics of Care and Empathy*, London: Routledge, 2007.

[16]Many psychological studies show that people prefer to do tasks with others rather than alone, and that is evidence that human beings have a need for proximity with one another. And, of course, this idea is supported by anecdotal evidence of a sort that all my readers presumably possess. However, in her *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (NY: Basic Books, 2011) Sherry Turkle considers at length whether human beings need physical/spatial proximity to one another or can, instead, get along well with social networking. She doesn't offer an answer to that question, but if we can get on well in social terms with an exclusive diet of social networking, that would undermine the claim that we have a need for physical proximity. Many people indicate and have said that social networking really doesn't suffice for us humans (emotionally and independently of issues of sexual access), but one has to wonder a bit about this.

need was being met, and I think empathy is that means. In other words, a child who is loved by their parents will empathically feel that parental love, empathically register it, but a child who isn't loved will be able to empathically register *that*. So without saying which, if either, of the capacity for loving and the need for love comes first in evolutionary terms, we can say that both of these human tendencies evolutionarily presuppose receptive and even eager associative empathy.

And I am inclined more generally to think that all the (in my nomenclature "neutral") instincts that Maslow has described depend on the two humanly pervasive instincts that I have just described, but that Maslow never mentions: on the instinct for proximity and the instinct for imitation understood as including an eagerness for empathic assimilation to the psychological states or dispositions of others. So at a first approximation, proximity is primary, imitation/empathy secondary, and the other person-oriented neutral instincts/needs/desires come in thereafter. But then we should ask whether we can't make some useful or interesting distinctions—either in evolutionary terms or conceptually—among the instincts/needs that come in later or last. And here I think anything that might emerge as relevant to evolutionary order might well have to depend on conceptual issues.

What I have in mind is (for example) that an instinct of belonging is more conceptually complex than a need for love. A need for love has to involve an ability to pick up on the (reciprocal) attitude of another being in a way that the sheer desire for proximity does not. So the latter is both evolutionarily presupposed by and also conceptually more primitive than the former. But the desire to belong to something larger is more complex in conceptual terms than the sheer desire to be loved, because belonging involves more than one person's having a sense of belonging. If you want to belong to a group, even a small one, you want to belong to something whose members also want to belong, and if you feel you belong to a group you at least implicitly feel that the other members of the group also feel and welcome such a sense of belonging. If they don't feel as you do, the sense of belonging and of group identity diminishes to the vanishing point, so a sense of belonging and a desire to belong involve having an attitude or attitudes toward other people's attitudes toward members of the group and toward the group as a whole. And the having of attitudes toward a group as a coherent group seems conceptually more complex or sophisticated than having an attitude toward other individuals' attitudes toward you. If your mother loves you and you feel that, you have an attitude toward another individual's attitude toward *another individual, namely, yourself*. But it takes more to have an attitude toward other people's attitude toward something larger like a group, and that is why I say the instinct of belonging is conceptually more complex than the desire to be loved.

Whether that also indicates that the need for love evolutionarily emerges before a sense of group identity is, however, far from obvious. So I am at this point moving from a kind of evolutionary ordering of instincts to something more purely conceptual. But nonetheless it does seem worth bearing in mind that one of the instincts Maslow and I speak about, the need to belong, operates on a more complex conceptual or cognitive level than what is required for a need for love to exist and be

successfully met. (I shall say something below about how the need for esteem/approval relates to the need for love.) So I think it is time, once again, to switch gears. The title of this part of the book was chosen in order to indicate my main purpose in writing it, and that purpose is, of course, the desire to picture, or more clearly understand, human life and human lives. But the present discussion has so far focused on certain instincts and their neutral character without saying how the neutral character and the instincts themselves bear on our general understanding of what human life or human lives are like or are all about. So it is time now to say how our previous discussion bears on this chapter's larger task.

I now need to tell you or tell you more about how the approach we have been taking here leads to a realistic picture of human life. One of the reasons I have spent so much time—both yours and mine—describing what I have called neutral desires/needs/instincts/motives is that I believe we have to take in the sheer extent and variety of those needs and motives in order to take the full measure of what we human beings and our lives are like. First, there is the point, deriving from the work of Bishop Butler, that malice and revenge are neutral, are neither egoistic nor altruistic. But Butler's explanation of why these motives are, as I am calling them, neutral doesn't bring in what I have argued is the deepest explanation of why they count as neutral, the fact that they assign an intrinsic importance and to that extent pay a considerable compliment to (certain) other human beings. And having an explanation on that level helps us to place malice within a general picture of what life is all about that is only barely adumbrated in Butler's writings. Also, even if Butler recognized what we are calling neutral motivation, he didn't appreciate the sheer variety of motives that fall under that description, didn't, therefore, recognize how much of human psychology involves motives that are neither egoistic nor altruistic. So in the end, seeing malice and revenge as involving a sense of and feeling for the importance of others places them alongside, makes them seem in objective terms of a piece with, all the other, less negative neutral motivations we have described here; and to the extent these latter cover a wide range of and in our human lives, malice and revenge are made to seem more human than anything Butler or others have ever suggested.

What also helps to (in some sense) normalize malice and revenge is what we have said about the need for love (and belonging and esteem, which I shall bring in in just a moment). Butler never talks about malice and revenge in relation to the need for love—who ever really appreciated that need before the twentieth century? But we nowadays do appreciate the strength of that need and the commensurate strength of typical human reactions when that need isn't met or is even trampled on. We appreciate that if parents don't love a child, that is a kind of emotional abuse, and that if the parents sexually or physically abuse the child (perhaps one of them does this and the other is complicit and enabling), then a child may lose all capacity to love and care about others and turn out to be a psychopathic con artist or even a serial rapist (or killer). And these eventualities can be seen as deep, enduring, and largely unconscious anger reactions to parental mistreatment. The serial offender is often paying his parents or guardians back for not loving them or sexually abusing them, paying them back in a way that generalizes their anger or hatred into being

against people other than those parents. But I don't think I need to bring in further details. The main point is that the malice of such a serial offender can also be a desire for revenge, and although Butler saw that malice and revenge were connected, he didn't relate that connection to certain very basic cases of that connection in which the connection is driven by the frustration and abuse of a child's need for love.

But the desire to belong and for esteem can also be brought into the mix at this point because if a child is abused by their parents, the parents not only thwart the child's need/desire for love, but also their need/desire to belong and their need/desire for esteem. An abused child can't have a happy sense of belonging to a family whose heads are abusive and unloving toward them, and their desire for esteem will also be frustrated because parental love is the primary way a parent can show esteem for a very young child. If the parent loves the child, the child will feel valued for their own sake, and in that very basic way, then, esteemed by their parents. (To love a child involves regarding the child as wonderful, and surely that is a form of esteem.) But if the parents don't love the child, the child won't feel valued and their desire for esteem will, in a very primitive and strong way, be frustrated. And the frustration of all three of the just-mentioned neutral needs that Maslow was the first to describe will create anger that is perhaps greater than anything the frustration of only one or two would yield (though such a prizing apart of frustrations and needs may not make all that much sense in relation to infancy and early childhood).

However, Maslow never really explores the malign results of not meeting these needs that I have spoken of as neutral. He thinks we have to satisfy them in order for self-actualization to occur, but in fact the situation is much, much worse than that suggests. If the needs for love, esteem, and belonging are left unsatisfied, the result is likely to be not only a failure of self-actualization (however one describes it), but an anti-social personality of a very malignant sort. So if Butler fails to relate malice and revenge to the need for love, this is also true of Maslow (though Butler saw the neutral character of these motives in a way that doesn't seem to have occurred to Maslow). Maslow may have been the first to pinpoint and highlight the need for love in a printed article or book, but he doesn't seem to have appreciated the sheer force and urgency of that need, the fact that its frustration can lead to the most terrible of human results, to people who are filled with hatred and anger and who take out those feelings in grievous ways on many of those around them.[17] And

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[17]By contrast, the "attachment theorist" John Bowlby not only highlights the need for love, but is very explicit about the horrible consequences that can occur when that need isn't met. He thinks psychopathy is likely to result from maternal/parental indifference, neglect, or abuse, and his work discusses studies by various psychologists who come to the same conclusion (and who think psychopathy cannot be "cured"). See, for example, his *Maternal Care and Mental Health*, Geneva: World Health Organization, 1952, esp. pp. 47–50. However, I don't want to deny that genetic and physical factors can and often do play a reinforcing or even an independent role in the development of some people's anti-social or psychopathic tendencies.

Also, my reason for speaking above about what is in print is that Harry Harlow, Maslow's mentor, had spoken of the basic human need for love before Maslow did. But I don't think

what this means is that both Maslow and Butler fail to recognize the place malice and revenge have in lives that are truly and familiarly human (though we may not like thinking about them).

But it is also true that earlier generations haven't been as aware of psychopaths, con artists, serial killers/rapists, and "the antisocial personality" as we have recently come to be. (I am not going to inquire about the causes of this recent development.) So earlier generations had a certain excuse for not relating them to our general humanity, and I don't think the failure to do so can in such cases be laid at the door of our human tendency toward moralism. But I think that something like moralism, namely, a desire to see things in a good and happy light, *has* made us ignore evil-doers and criminals in framing our picture of what human life is like. We have long known about evil-doers and criminals, even if the explanatory categories of psychopathy, etc., have only more recently become available to us. But despite that knowledge, the picture of human life one gets, often by association and innuendo, from (for example) sentimentalist approaches to human nature like what finds in Hume and in care ethics seems to shy away from focusing on the morally malign kinds of people I have been talking about, and I think it is important for me or others to rub our collective noses in the more ethically unsavory and psychologically warped human personalities and people that I have here been describing at such length.

But lest I commit the opposite error of focusing too much on such personalities and people, let me turn to the other kinds of neutral motivation I have been describing with the help of Maslow's work. The reference I made at the beginning of this chapter to the variety of human motives was intended as much as a reference to the variety of motives that are neither egoistic nor altruistic as it was intended as a reference to the variety that our having egoistic, altruistic, *and* neutral motives implies. And as we have seen, the neutral motives not only include motives that place an importance on other people (e.g., the need for love, but also the desire for revenge), but also motives that don't (necessarily) relate us to other individuals but that place an importance on things or facts that lie beyond or outside the self. *All* the neutral desires we have focused on involve this sense that there is something important—whether human or not—beyond the self, and this is obviously also true of altruistic desires like compassion and benevolence and even gratitude.

But this still doesn't take in all our human motives. Egoistic motives arguably treat a person's own pleasure and pain avoidance as very important, and these feelings or states obviously don't lie beyond the self. And even if egoists don't have to be hedonists, it is not at all clear that a purely egoistic personality could or would recognize something beyond the self as intrinsically important (to them). However, this would force us to alter our present emerging picture of human life and human

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(Footnote 17 continued)

anything of his along those lines appeared in print before Maslow's 1943 article "A Theory of Human Motivation" (*Psychological Review*). Likewise, there were mentions of the need for love in some of the psychological literature earlier in the twentieth century (in McDougall, I believe), but nothing as specific and emphatic as what Maslow was later to say.

lives only if one could claim that there are lots of purely egoistic individuals running around in our midst, and this is dubious. At first this assumption might appear to be realistic or plausible because it is relatively easy to think, say, of hardened con artists or sociopaths as people who lack any feeling for others and are simply out for themselves. But if we enquire more deeply, and given present-day social-scientific knowledge, it is difficult to maintain this view of the con artist or psychopath/sociopath. In addition to whatever egoistic motives or impulses such people possess (and the recent literature of psychology indicates that they are often short-sighted and self-thwartingly impulsive in their behavior), their behavior also typically reflects anti-social sentiment: anger at other human beings and a consequent intrinsic desire to do them dirt. These latter are non-egoistic neutral desires/emotions and indicate that the pure human egoist is less easy to find than one might initially have thought.[18]

In fact, I don't think there is any such thing. Everyone has a need to be loved, and that is not an egoistic motive. And when that need is frustrated and anger or

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[18]We also need to consider the motive of conscientiousness, which Kant treated as neutral in our sense because he regarded it as independent of motives like compassion and sympathy. But a sentimentalist like myself will want to argue that pace Kant conscientiousness is psychologically and conceptually impossible in the absence of these feelingful motives (on this see my *Moral Sentimentalism*, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010); and, further, even if it isn't, the respect for the moral law that Kant holds conscientiousness to rest upon brings in something, albeit abstract, beyond the (empirical) self on which the conscientious individual places great importance. So conscientiousness is no exception to what we are and shall be saying about the basic and pervasive non-egoistic human tendency toward expanding and encompassing things beyond the self.

Incidentally, P.J. Ivanhoe has mentioned to me another putative human need (or basic desire) that seems neither egoistic nor altruistic: the need for responsiveness or acknowledgement on the part of others. We haven't mentioned this need previously and it is obviously related to the need for others' esteem (if one is not responded to or acknowledged, one is being "dissed") and to the desire to be liked. And there is the further possibility that human beings may need and seek a kind of mutual presence or togetherness that realizes both a desire to be acknowledged and a desire for proximity: i.e., that we humans have a desire for acknowledgement from and togetherness with a proximate other. Also a desire for all this to occur on a mutual basis, wishing the other to desire acknowledgement from us as nearby and present to *them*.

Let me mention how this might work in a particular instance. There has recently been discussion of the idea that doctors need to empathize with their patients (see Jodi Halpern's *From Detached Concern to Empathy*, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001). And Raul de Velasco in unpublished work has pointed out that things will go better between a physician and a patient if the patient recognizes, empathically feels, their doctor's empathic concern for them. But what I think is also needed for there to be real togetherness between doctor and patient is for the doctor for his/her part to recognize that his or her empathy for the patient is recognized or taken in by the patient and, second, for the patient in turn to recognize that the doctor has recognized that he or she (the patient) has recognized or taken in the doctor's empathy. Such (indefinitely extendible) nested mutual reference is often thought to be involved in systems of convention or linguistic communication, but I think something similar is also necessary to the existence of (a sense of) togetherness. (I am indebted here to discussion with de Velasco.) More needs to be said about how (a sense of) belonging relates to (a sense of) togetherness, and what I am saying and what Ivanhoe was suggesting also have some connection with Martin Buber's ideas about I and Thou (and about dialogue). But I won't go into any of this further here.

disillusion results, one is still thinking of an individual with motives and needs that are far from wholly egoistic. It is that fact, rather than the veins of egoism we find within human personalities, that I think most generally characterizes human lives. Whatever may have happened to us, we tend to end up thinking of other people or other things that lie beyond us as intrinsically important. And we can therefore say that human life or human lives inevitably and/or essentially involve and express an intrinsic desire to *expand* the self toward things that lie beyond it and to *encompass* those things within our lives.[19]

Let me dwell for a moment on what I mean by expansiveness and encompassing. Peter Singer in his book *The Expanding Circle* also speaks of human expansiveness, but the expansiveness he is referring to is strictly moral: he is advocating, as so many before him have, that we expand the circle of our (moral) concern to include people we are not initially concerned about: people in other families, other communities, other countries.[20] But the expansion and expansiveness I am talking about is not specifically moral and involves forms and modes of expansion that actually repel or terrify us. Expansiveness in Singer's sense doesn't characterize human life or human lives in general, but gives us a sense rather of what morally led human lives would involve, which is quite another thing.

The notion of encompassing also occurs elsewhere: most notably in Karl Jaspers's *Philosophy of Existence*.[21] But what Jaspers refers to as "the Encompassing" is a metaphysically transcendent category in which ordinary lives and objects are somehow immersed. The notion refers to what transcends human life, not to what is most true of and within human lives, and so it is very different from what I have been talking about here.

What our picture of human lives as most fundamentally and pervasively involving "expansive encompassing" most immediately or obviously contrasts with are general views about human lives that are deeply pessimistic or much too optimistic. Among the former I would count both Freud (and Erikson to the extent he follows Freud) and Hobbes (and Mandeville). Freud (like Nietzsche) doesn't

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[19]If expansive encompassing involves thinking of things or people outside the self as intrinsically important to one, then it necessarily involves emotional capacities and dispositions. To regard it as important (for oneself) to climb Everest is to have a tendency to be saddened if one is unable to (try to) accomplish this and elated, happy, or joyful if one does succeed in climbing Everest; to want revenge is to have a tendency toward anger if one can't get the revenge and toward elation if one does get it; to want to belong is to be disposed to sadness if one is excluded but then to joy if it turns out that one can, after all, belong. So emotional tendencies are absolutely pervasive of human life as we know it—and clearly aren't confined to our relationships with *other people*. However, I am not saying that all preference or desire necessarily involves emotion. Preference for vanilla over chocolate may not entail any emotion when one has to get chocolate rather than vanilla—I just don't know. But where something is important to one—as in all cases of expansive encompassing—then emotional tendencies do have to be present.

[20]Peter Singer, *The Expanding Circle: Ethics, Evolution, and Moral Progress*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

[21]Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy of Existence*, trans R.F. Grabau, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.

allow for the possibility of genuine human altruism, and this clearly skews his picture of what human life is like. Hobbes is arguably not a strict egoist. He says some things that imply psychological egoism and others that seem to accept the reality of altruism. But the altruism he allows for is very limited, much more limited than anything I have argued for here or than it is realistic to believe in as a human possibility. Yes, many of us, as we are, are capable of only limited and blinkered concern for other people (or animals). But an account of moral education that invokes empathy in a systematic way will want to emphasize techniques of moral education and influences on moral growth that allow strong and broad (though, given the nature of empathy, inevitably somewhat partialistic) concern for other people to develop within individuals. I have given a detailed description of how this is possible in my books *Moral Sentimentalism* and *Education and Human Values*; so unlike the views of Hobbes, the psychological egoist Mandeville, and Freud, the account of human motivation and its development that I am offering or suggesting here cannot properly be described as pessimistic.[22]

But for reasons mentioned earlier it isn't particularly optimistic in the way moral sentimentalists have tended to be. In effect I am saying that a focus on the role and origins of negative motives like malice and a recognition of the vast variety and scope of neutral motives in our lives help us to see how overly optimistic sentimentalist ethical philosophies have been. Nel Noddings (in *Caring*), for example, recognizes that thwarting a child's need for love can have terrible consequences for the child's personality, but she doesn't mention all the ways that a need for love can be frustrated by parents and doesn't mention the important fact that human society is filled with people who haven't been loved (enough), who take out their consequent anger in aggressive anti-social behavior, and who are incapable of genuine caring.

Parents can fail to show sufficient love because they are impoverished and anxious about where their family's next meals are coming from and take out their frustrations and anxieties on their children.[23] They can fail to show a child sufficient love because they favor some other child in the family or are simply too emotionally cold (as a result perhaps of how *they* were treated as children) to show love toward anyone. They can fail to show a child love by abusing the child verbally or physically or sexually. And there are numerous other ways (you can think of them for yourself) in which a lack of parental love can lead to adults who are anti-social

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[22]*Education and Human Values: Reconciling Talent with an Ethics of Care*, London: Routledge, 2012. Incidentally, you don't have to espouse sentimentalism as an overall ethical doctrine in order to see empathy as very helpful and in certain ways crucial to childhood or adult moral development, and there are many psychologists (e.g., Nancy Eisenberg) who are in this position.

[23]In "The strain of living poor: Parenting, social support, and child mental health" (in Aletha Huston, ed. *Children in poverty: Child development and public policy*, NY: CUNY Press, 1991, pp. 105–135), Vonnie McLoyd and Leon Wilson describe in great detail how poverty can lead to less nurturant parenting and consequent anti-social behavior in children. And they cite various other studies and discussions that support that view of the connection between poverty, parental love, and children's personal development.

and immoral toward others, and by ignoring the variety of ways in which this can happen, the frequency with which it does happen, and the effects all of this has on other human beings and on human life generally, a care ethicist like Noddings arrives at an implicit picture of human life that is in my opinion far too rosy or optimistic.[24]

On Noddings's view (see *Caring*, pp. 51, 83) we all have the impulse to care and that impulse is innate or inborn, but whether caring is really innate or not, it can be totally crushed or prevented by things that happen in our lives. Parental abuse or neglect may make it impossible for some of us to genuinely care—*at all*—about the welfare of others: such people are standardly called sociopaths or psychopaths. And, in addition, there is evidence that genetic defects or brain injuries can also put some of us beyond the pale of any caring impulse (much less altruistic *action*). So Noddings is, I think, unrealistic about human moral goodness, but she is not the only sentimentalist who doesn't recognize or fully recognize the seamier side of human life.

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[24]Here is another illustration of the way care ethicists downplay or ignore the less positive side(s) of human life: In her book *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993, pp. xxvi–xxvii), Carol Gilligan stresses the importance of seeing human life in terms of relationship and (particular) relationships, rather than emphasizing people's separateness and autonomy in the fashion of traditional (patriarchal) philosophical thinking. But by relationship(s) she means good relationships, and the bad ones seem the furthest thing from her mind. What I have argued here, however, is that in order to see human life accurately, we need to emphasize the bad relationships as well as the good, and this is something one simply doesn't find in care ethics (until now—I am a care ethicist).

Let me, however, also mention another side to the overly optimistic and overly pessimistic views of human life I am discussing. Such views, however one-sided or mistaken, do implicitly or explicitly take on issues about what human life is like, and that is something one finds only very rarely in the anglophone moral and political philosophy of the last hundred or so years. Recent work has been preoccupied with normative questions at the expense of any seeming interest in describing, even in very general terms, what human life or human lives are like; and here I have in mind quite a range of highly-regarded philosophers, including Sidgwick, Foot, Rawls, Hare, Dworkin, Scanlon, Parfit, Singer, Korsgaard…and the list could go on, though Bernard Williams and Michael Stocker are definitely not on it. In "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" (in his *Moral Obligation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), H.A. Prichard complains that most moral philosophy (including, I suppose, his own) seems remote from the facts of actual life—as compared with what one finds in Shakespeare's plays. And even if there is a need for normative philosophy and normative philosophy doesn't have to be preoccupied with real or actual life, there is still an important place in philosophy as a field of study for such a more disinterested interest in understanding human life/lives (in very general terms). And that interest, that task, has been sorely neglected. People like Erikson and Maslow, of course, do advance that interest and that task, but it is time for philosophers to join in—or join in once again, since Hobbes, Hume, and other earlier philosophers do explicitly or implicitly offer us overall pictures of human life. If philosophers do join in, they will have to pay attention to what social scientists like Erikson and Maslow have to tell them, but their arguably greater conceptual sophistication might well allow them to clarify, disentangle, connect, and generalize ideas and issues in a useful and significant way. (I realize that there are a great number of social scientists I haven't made use of or paid attention to in this essay; but I think what I am saying about expansive encompassing isn't countered by anything in recent social science and would actually be reinforced by an extensive examination of that literature.)

In *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Sect. V, Part II, para. 183), Hume says that every human individual has some concern, however mild, for the welfare of others, has some "propensity to the good of mankind". And this (again) is precisely what one cannot say about psychopaths and others whose relation to love and loving and associative empathy has been destroyed or undercut by abusive or neglectful treatment in childhood (or subsequently). So Hume, like Noddings, is too much of an optimist about what (all) human beings are actually like.[25] And I have been attempting here, rather, to offer a more balanced picture of what we are all about.[26] But the overall picture also sees a certain aspect of that more balanced picture as encapsulating what is most essential and pervasive about human life within itself: the fact that we are beings who seek in our lives to (non-egoistically) expand toward and encompass realities that are beyond or larger than ourselves.[27]

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[25]Similar points can be made about Mencius: see the *Mencius* 2A6, where it is said that all humans have (or can be brought to have) a heart of compassion. And Mencius is also, arguably, a sentimentalist about morality. But there is no reason to assume a sentimentalist has to be overly optimistic in this way. I have here been defending a less rosy picture, based on plausible assumptions about the effects of certain kinds of parental treatment of children, but there is nothing in this picture that goes against the idea that morality is fundamentally a matter of empathic concern for others. In fact, what I have said about the ways in which the abuse or neglect of a child who needs love can undercut the child's capacity for morality seems to fit very well with sentimentalism about *what morality is*.

Finally, let me mention Cicero's view that parental love is the source of all human sympathy. (See his *On Moral Ends*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 84f.) This anticipates what I have been saying here about how benevolence/sympathy develops in children. And, by contrast, Hume has almost nothing to say about how benevolence or sympathy grows or can be strengthened in children. (I think it is remarkable that a Stoic should in this respect have a more modern-day view of the emotions than one finds in the greatest of the sentimentalists.)

[26]I take "what we are like" to be pretty much the same thing as "what we are all about." But the latter phrase is potentially ambiguous. One could think it refers to the (so-called) purpose or meaning of human life, and that is a very different topic from those I have been talking about. To speak of the meaning or purpose of human life at the very least hints at some deeper divine or universal telos underlying human life, and I don't want to assume any such thing here. In fact, if there is a God who has a plan for humans, that would substantially alter or affect the picture of human life I am offering, so what I am doing is definitely based on secular and agnostic—and possibly even atheistic—assumptions. But given such assumptions, one can describe what human life most distinctively and pervasively is like without saying anything about the meaning of life or given lives—though some theologian might conceivably want to *incorporate* what I have been saying here into a larger religious picture of human life and its meaning.

Of course, the subject of *what makes lives meaningful* is less metaphysically loaded than the question of life's meaning as traditionally interpreted, and what has been said here might easily be thought to have implications for this more down-to-earth and putatively quite secular topic. But I am not going to attempt to discuss those potential implications here—except to point out that what I have said in the second chapter of this book, "Rethinking the Life Cycle", about the range of more or less successful adult identities obviously relates to the variety of ways people find meaning in their lives or see their lives as meaningful.

[27]By the way, even people with Asperger's Syndrome have a desire to belong and to fit in with others.

Such a picture also offers us a way to criticize and counter the Stoics' extreme views about human nature.[28] The Stoics thought we could learn to live without love (as we understand it today), and they thought that emotions like love involve a pathetic neediness that we ought to try to get beyond. But our need for love and similar neutral needs take us beyond ourselves and make us in some sense larger, so, far from being pathetic, there is something actually admirable about having those needs and acting on them.[29] The Stoic emphasis on self-sufficiency treats ideally virtuous human beings as emotionally self-contained and self-limiting (and even "hide-bound") in a way that, from the perspective of our intrinsically expansive and encompassing purposes and lives, seems, in fact, relatively unattractive.[30]

The present conception of what life is like also depends heavily on the use of certain results from social science. The idea that human beings are capable of empathy and altruism is to a large extent supported by evidence from the psychology of moral development, and if Nietzsche and Freud (or Erikson) don't allow for human altruism and are unduly pessimistic (as we would see it) about human nature and human life as a result, that is at least in part because they ignored what Hume said about moral psychology and couldn't access our recent psychological

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[28]Stoicism thought of human beings as having (egoistically-based) rational obligations toward others that didn't imply any felt need for the others, but my argument will indicate that this precisely connects us less deeply with others than expansive encompasing does. And I want to say that the lesser or less deep connection with others limits or narrows down human life in what I think we should regard as an unattractive way.

[29]In *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (NY: Macmillan, 1955), Abraham Heschel describes God as needing relationship and as creating and sustaining human beings partly for that reason. I don't know whether every Jewish thinker would agree with this characterization, but Heschel's interpretation of Judaism is certainly very much in keeping with my criticism above of the Stoic view that the need for relationship is pathetic and to be avoided. (I am indebted here and above to discussion with Hans Kleinschmidt and Susan Schept.)

And one further point. Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics didn't consider relationship to be among the highest of ethical ideals (Aristotle said humans need the state, but his God is stateless). And Greek philosophy notoriously plays down kindness, compassion, and caring as compared with the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Judeo-Christian tradition seems to idealize relationship(s), and it is no accident, I think, that it also emphasizes caring etc., and likewise no accident that the Greeks play down both relationship and caring.

[30]But isn't there a risk of pessimism in my own account of what human lives are like, given its emphasis on a pervasive form of motivation as basic to our lives? Motivation entails desire, and according to much Greek and Buddhist (and other Asian) thought, desire, especially the desire connected with bodily appetites, is per se unpleasant. But desire and appetite needn't be thought of as intrinsically unpleasant—far from it. When one looks forward to a great meal with great anticipation, the experience of doing so can be quite pleasant and delicious even if it also includes some appetite, some desire, for the food or wine one is going to enjoy. And this fact has been widely recognized in recent times even if it somehow escaped the attention of earlier thinkers. See, for example, Karl Duncker, "On Pleasure, Emotion, and Striving", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1, 1941, esp. p. 42ff. For some speculation about why desire and appetite were viewed so unfavorably in ancient times, see my *From Enlightenment to Receptivity: Rethinking Our Values,* NY: Oxford University Press, 2013, conclusion.

literature on moral development. (Similar points apply to Sartre and even Heidegger.) Our picture of human life has thus gathered the considerations that stand in its favor from many different sources, but certain classics of social science and particularly psychology have provided a kind of empirical backbone for everything philosophical I have been saying.

Finally, I want to draw the present essay's discussion back toward what was said in the second chapter of this book about the "choice" we all have to make regarding how much to emphasize relationships (family) and how much to emphasize self-fulfillment/personal achievement (usually in some sort of career—but Marcel Proust and Emily Dickinson, e.g., didn't have *careers*). I have spoken of intrinsically-motivated expansive encompassing as an overarching category for understanding human lives, but if you recall, some modes of expansive encompassing are essentially interpersonal: the desire and acting (successfully) on the desire for love, for belonging, for esteem, etc. And others are understandable independently of the intrinsic attempt to relate in various ways to other people. As we saw, the desire to master things and curiosity, the intrinsic desire to know (interesting) things, involve or typically can involve an expansive encompassing not in relation to other people, but in relation, nonetheless, to what is external to or larger than or beyond the self. The interpersonal forms of expansive encompassing pay tribute to the intrinsic importance of other people (to the person who is doing the expansive encompassing); but the other forms of expansion don't (have to) do this, and instead treat things, facts, obstacles, difficulties, historical events beyond the self as of intrinsic important to one.[31]

But if one thinks about it, these two forms or modes of expansive encompassing roughly correspond to the distinction I made in "Rethinking the Life Cycle" (the second chapter of this book) between relationships and self-fulfillment as bases for adult identity. So we may conclude that the forms of life-emphasis that provide the materials or choices for adult human identities correspond to different basic needs, and even instincts, that serve, considered together, to delimit or characterize human life in general. (Caring about others and the desire for revenge against parents may not themselves be basic, but they result from and relate to what life experiences [or neurological handicaps] do to the basic need for love.) The choice of an adult identity allows one to put a greater emphasis on relationships, and in that case one will be expansively encompassing in ways that place intrinsic importance on other people. Or one's identity may emphasize self-fulfillment, and in that case one's expansive encompassing will involve curiosity and a desire for competence and mastery that often treat non-personal facts, challenges, realities, or things beyond the self as inherently important.[32] Or one can juggle both self-fulfillment/career and

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[31]Some forms or instantiations of expansive encompassing involve both the assumed importance of other people and the assumed importance of mastery or knowledge of what lies beyond the self at a given time: e.g., the desire to really *earn* your *father*'s esteem or the (intrinsic) desire to become really good at political persuasion.

[32]Of course, the desire for mastery and curiosity often do involve and place importance on other people. But my main point is that they needn't. So adult identities emphasizing relationships or

relationships/family, in which case both of the two basic forms of expansive encompassing will have a place in one's life and in one's identity.[33]

There is a desirable symmetry in all this. What characterizes human lives most basically and generally, the quality of intrinsically expansive encompassing, is also involved in forming or deciding our individual identities. The dual nature, as we have conceived it, of expansive encompassing as between expressing the importance of other people and expressing the importance of non-personal realities beyond the self also substantially characterizes the dual nature of the choice we have to make in order to have an adult identity. So the modes of expansive encompassing set the limits and define the permutations and combinations of adult human identity, and that is all the more reason to see the expansively encompassing as definitive of what human life and human lives are like.[34]

But we can say more. I have been characterizing human lives and the differences between them in a very general way, but I think we are also now in a position to say more about what distinguishes given human lives from each another. Of course, I

(Footnote 32 continued)

family do have to place importance on other people, but adult identities emphasizing self-fulfillment attained through mastery, competence, and curiosity don't as such have to be like that (though they typically are).

[33]I have been assuming here that curiosity and the desire for competence or mastery of things are fundamental psychological building blocks of individual self-fulfillment and achievement. But it helps to have a bit of imagination/creativity if one hopes to fulfill oneself or achieve something in a given area. Also, I think that it makes more sense to say (e.g.,) that interest in climbing Everest brings that mountain *into one's life* than to say that the mountain thereby also becomes *part of the person* who wants to climb it. I give some of my reasons for saying this in *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind*, Chap. 4.

[34]In *Being and Time* (Sects. 41–42) Heidegger speaks of care as essential to and pervasive of human life (he also refers to Seneca's *Epistle* 124 as a source of this idea). But his discussion appears to deliberately put issues of egoism versus altruism to one side, and so it doesn't focus on much less acknowledge the pervasiveness of neutral motives within human lives. Nor does it make the crucial point that characteristic human life involves our focusing (non-egoistically) on people or things *outside* ourselves. In addition, what we have said about expansive encompassing arises out of a discussion of the variety of basic human motives, and to that extent it is in social-scientific terms more specific and explanatory than what Heidegger says about care.

These same points can also be made about what Harry Frankfurt, in many of his writings, says about care/caring. I don't think I need to enter into all the details, but for an instance where Frankfurt seems to ignore the whole distinction between neutral and egoistic motives, see his "Autonomy, Necessity, and Love" (in *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 134.

Finally, let me point out that neutral motives that involve treating something *outside* the self as intrinsically important to one don't always involve any devotion or commitment to something larger than oneself. The person who lives to take revenge on some enemy is treating something, i.e., someone, outside himself as important, but needn't at all be devoted to anything larger than himself. And by the same token, the person who seeks the esteem or love of a parent needn't be committed to anything larger than herself (like the good of the family). So expansive encompassing as I have described it is much more pervasive of human life and human psychology than devotion to something larger or greater than oneself, however individually or socially desirable the latter may be.

have already said that some choose to emphasize expansive encompassing along lines treating other humans (or animals) as inherently important, while others expansively encompass by focusing more on realities, challenges, or facts beyond the self, and still others live in a way that mixes these forms of expansive encompassing. And the result, respectively, will be lives dedicated to good relationships or lives dedicated to career/self-fulfillment or lives balancing or juggling these goals or values. But this still doesn't individuate lives as fully or thoroughly as we are in a position now to do.

Detectives trying to solve a crime, especially a murder, typically look for the person who had motive, means, and opportunity to commit it. And our discussion so far of what distinguishes particular human lives or adult identities has mainly focused on the different motives that will actuate different lives. But we need to also think about means. Someone who is not particularly intelligent may do better in relationships than in career type work and that can lead them toward an emphasis on relationships in their lives. And, horrible as it is to have to say this, someone who is physically very unattractive may find it easier to be fulfilled through career self-fulfillment than through relationships (perhaps—God help us!—they even repel their own parents). Such people are lacking in means to the goals that certain of their motives would or might be seeking, and (the individual's recognition of) that (fact) can affect their motivation to some, perhaps to a large, extent. And then there is opportunity. Someone alone on a desert island cannot have good relationships, and someone living during a time of economic depression or recession may be unable to find a job that will enable their very considerable skills or talents to flourish.

Of course, the desert island example is very extreme, but it, together with the other things I have just been saying, indicates, I think, that motive, means, and opportunity are all concepts relevant to distinguishing among individual human lives and not just to the solving of crimes (though the commission or solving of a crime is, when you think about it, a part of a somewhat distinctive life). The choice between career and family, and between different modes of expansive encompassing, certainly differentiates human lives into certain large classes or categories, and it does so by reference to certain motives that are essential to the definition or determination of adult identities. But if we want to make further and more individual distinctions among lives, we have to bring in means and opportunity. Two people may choose relationships over career, but do so in very different ways, and although some of the time this will be decided via more specific differences of motive—as when one person chooses to raise a family and the other wishes to remain a life-long bachelor and devote himself to his students—motive by itself can alter or be frustrated in the absence of means and opportunity for its fulfillment. Or different *kinds* of opportunity or of means may shunt the given motive into different channels (of adult identity) in the case of different individuals.

One young medical student wants to specialize in brain-surgery, and it happens that there are lots of residencies available to him in that area. But another with the same ambition or aim (living in a different country or at a different time) finds that there are no slots available in brain-surgery and decides to go into some other area

of surgery where there are residencies available. And these differences of opportunity may affect the motivation too—it is better if one can be contented with the residency that is actually available to one and people often do become more interested in what is available and eventually stop feeling regret for what they couldn't do or have (this needn't involve anything as extreme as sour grapes). And differences of means also make a difference here. If one tests less well for skills relevant to a given medical or other specialty, that can mean one won't get certain opportunities in that specialty and will have to look elsewhere for one's specific career choice.

So what we have said here and previously about human lives allows us to do two basic things. It allows us to characterize what is most basic, essential, and common to all human lives in a very general way—and that is what the talk of expansive encompassing and everything that was said to justify it help us to do. But we now see that the distinctions we can make between different kinds of expansive encompassing and different ways of emphasizing or combining them allow us to differentiate human lives into some very broad patterns: as per the choice of whether to emphasize relationships, whether to emphasize self-fulfillment, or whether to try to balance or juggle (or in some cases integrate) these goals or modes of living. What we said in the previous chapter about the formation of adult identities allows us to make these very broad distinctions among lives, but the further, just-introduced distinction among means, motive, and opportunity allows someone with relevant facts and perspectives to differentiate every particular human life from every other. So the concepts we have invoked and the distinctions we have been making permit us to see, to characterize, individual human lives in a very general, yet (I hope) informative way that shows us what all human lives have in common. But they also enable us, in relation to relevant facts, to say what distinguishes each individual human life from any given other human life and from all other human lives as well. And since we are making those distinctions via ideas about motivation that are needed to characterize adult human identities and via ideas about means and opportunity that help us understand how those motives play out in actual long-term human lives, the distinctions we are thereby drawing or able to draw between each and every individual human life are more informative and *run deeper* than other distinctions we might want to make between and among all human lives.

Thus everyone (forgetting identical twins) has different genes and different fingerprints, but these allow us to distinguish between human lives (as lives) only in a very superficial way. Similarly, we could distinguish all human lives from one another in terms of the exact moment or place of birth or of reaching puberty, but this too wouldn't give us a particularly meaningful or insightful set of distinctions among individual lives. But because of what we have said about identity formation and about the variety of human motives—egoistic, altruistic, and neutral—that actuate adult or developing human beings—and because all of this has to work through or be shunted through different individual opportunities and means—the way I am proposing to characterize differences among all individual lives seems to me to get more to the core or heart of what distinguishes them than the

just-mentioned more superficial criteria would allow. Moreover, although every life (even those of identical twins) is distinguished from every other by the way heredity and environment interact or intersect within it, focusing on heredity and environment in describing lives makes human lives appear much more passive than they really are, whereas to focus on motivation and the way it is channeled by opportunity and means into an eventual life history allows us to see the active aspect(s) of our lives and is much truer to what it is to actually *lead* a human life.[35]

Finally, I want to play off what I have said here about expansive encompassing against a theme I sounded earlier in moving in the direction of that notion.[36] I said that the receptivity involved in empathically taking in the attitudes and feelings of others involves an instinctive and goal-oriented aspect. However subliminally this may occur, when a father takes in or, as we say, is infected by his child's interest in stamp collecting or when we take in or assimilate to our parents' religious or political attitudes, we in some sense and in Hume's language "embrace" the relevant interest or attitudes. In such cases of emotional or associative empathy our receptivity thus has a somewhat non-passive and even eagerly active or willing side to it. *But something similar can also be said about expansive encompassing*. Our non-instrumental and non-egoistic desires to master our environment or some field of knowledge or to do harm or good to specific (groups of) other people all involve a receptivity to things or people outside ourselves and a desire to bring them into our lives. This too is receptivity with an active and purposeful aspect, but unlike the case of empathy it is not merely some aspect or state of another person that we thus bring into our lives, but rather in some sense the other thing(s) or person(s) themselves. This language may be somewhat metaphorical, but I hope and believe you will understand what I am saying, and in any event what we have just said makes it clear that expansive encompassing actually falls under or within the theme of receptivity that I have so greatly relied on in so much of my recent work.[37]

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[35]In saying this I am not taking sides on the debate over whether free will is compatible with determinism (though I am in fact a compatibilist). Compatibilism, stripped to its bare bones, says that we don't need to be motivated toward doing some action in order to count as free with respect to the doing of it. If we have the means, skill, and opportunity to do it, then we are free to do it because if we were to want or decide to do it, we would succeed. By contrast, the bare-bones incompatibilist holds that if there is means, skill, and opportunity to do something, but no desire or inclination at any point to do it, then doing the thing is not in our power. However, both sides on this specific question could, I think, agree that when we act from motives like ambition or benevolence we are to a substantial extent active, rather than passive.

[36]Notice that I haven't spoken of expansive encompassing as *distinctive* of human life. To the extent animals are curious and need love, they too are expansive encompassers. (There are studies showing that rats are often curious about their environment even when food and safety are not an issue, and Harry Harlow showed that rhesus monkeys have a very strong negative reaction if they are not held or shown love by their mothers.)

[37]Some recent work of mine on the philosophy of yin and yang seeks to demonstrate that you can't have receptivity without also having strongly directed purpose, but let me leave discussion of that point to my forthcoming *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang*.