

Shaun Nichols [continued]

IX. Alternative theory: more than minimal mindreading but less than perspective-taking:

- A. "ethical" vs. "mindreading" egocentrism [neither implies the other](50-51)
- B. Blum's "discrepant desire" view [incorrect because children can have altruism while being mindreading egocentrics]

X. Affect and altruistic motivation: is affect required to get from attribution of distress to helping/altruistic action?

- A. What leads from the attributing of distress ("mindreading") to altruistic motivation? (52)
- B. Possibility that affect plays no role. SN rejects this. (52)
- C. Personal distress can not be the required affect: Batson's experiment about helping driven by personal distress v. other-oriented feelings; other-oriented more likely to help in "easy escape" condition.(52-53)
- D. Batson expt: drug causes either personal distress or compassion, so other one is operating (53). So personal distress not only operative emotion
- E. sympathy. Ekman: basic emotion, may have distinctive physiology. Would exclude empathy, since does not involve same feeling as distressed person.(54)
- F. another possibility: Perhaps attribution of distress produces 2nd-order contagious distress (55)
- G. Perhaps *both* sympathy and empathy could be missing affective link (55)

XI. The Concern Mechanism

- A. "concern" includes sympathy and 2nd-order contagious distress; both contagious distress and 2nd order contagious distress are empathetic (56)
- B. The concern mechanism is attribution of distress → affect → altruistic behavior (56-57)
- C. Toddlers are capable of concern in this sense (57)
- D. more on perspective-taking and concern: they are independent. Autistics have concern but not perspective-taking (58). (They are less likely to notice distress but are equally likely as non-autistics to help if they do notice.) Psychopaths have perspective-taking but not concern or empathy or helping (59). [LB: Plausible to take "concern" as the bridge between attribution of distress and altruistic behavior. But 2nd order contagious distress, and contagious distress in general, is not altruistic and should not be included in "concern." Only sympathy and empathy should be included in concern, and then only real empathy, not SN's confused definition of it as having the same affect as the other.]

XII. Evolutionary precursors (60)

- A. If human altruism requires only minimal mindreading, this makes it closer to mechanisms underlying animal altruism (60). Q: What would DeWaal and Singer think about this? Q: children and animals
- B. Animals seem to be able to attribute distress (monkey/pellet experiment {like DW's rat/lever case}: but not clear if this is *concern* or merely *reactive distress* [is latter attribution of distress?]) (61)
- C. But we are not in a position to say what the evolutionary function of the concern mechanism is.

XIII. Sentimental Rules and the Moral Sense

- A. actions that cause suffering are emotionally upsetting in several ways. [SN seems to be suggesting that this is why we have moral norms against causing suffering] (62)
- B. this is different from traditional sentimentalism because the feelings underlying the norms are not themselves a moral sense, a source of moral judgments (as they are in Smith/Hume/Hutcheson view). The feelings in the Concern Mechanism are not judgments; small children who are capable of concern are not yet capable of moral judgment (62-63)
- C. The primitive emotions of reactive distress and concern at distress and suffering lead us to treat harm norms as distinctive. Q: What is the source of the moral norm on SN's "sentimental rules" view? seems it is the prevention of the emotional distress (in its different forms) caused by the distress/harm of others. (See 63: "likely to cause strong negative affect".)

XIV. Conclusion: Have not given a full account of the "psychological mechanisms" of mature adult altruism, only the primitive mindreading and concern mechanisms