

UC Riverside

UC Riverside Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Autism, Allocentrism and the Moral Significance of Manners

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6r77r931>

Author

Shope, David Nathaniel

Publication Date

2021

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Autism, Allocentrism and the Moral Significance of Manners

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Philosophy

by

David Nathaniel Shope

September 2021

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Agnieszka Jaworska, Chairperson

Dr. Coleen Macnamara

Dr. Michael Nelson

The Dissertation of David Nathaniel Shope is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking my family for their support in my endeavor to earn a PhD, especially in their patience and lack of judgment about this long, tenuous and strange path.

Next, I would like to thank Constance Sutter for her constant and patient support as my partner of 8 years. I would not have made it this far without someone so helpful, patient and caring in my corner.

Lastly, I would like to thank the members of my committee. I wish to thank Agnieszka Jaworska and Michael Nelson for their support during the personal crisis that almost had me leave academia, as well as after I disclosed the autism and ADHD diagnoses which I received because of that crisis. Without that support and Agnieszka's encouragement to consider focusing on applied ethics, this dissertation never would have materialized. I further wish to thank Coleen Macnamara for her thoughtful pointers about potentially relevant feminist literature and her patient help keeping me on task. I wouldn't have made it to the finish line otherwise.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Autism, Allocentrism and the Moral Significance of Manners

by

David Nathaniel Shope

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Philosophy
University of California, Riverside, September 2021
Agnieszka Jaworska, Chairperson

Recent philosophical analyses of etiquette argue that systems of etiquette serve crucial moral functions in that they promote a variety of moral goods. This dissertation argues that existing systems of etiquette fall short of meeting these functions in important ways when it comes to autistic people. Autistic people often have difficulty navigating social norms, including etiquette norms. The main argument I make is that these social difficulties are in part caused by the way existing systems of etiquette are constructed to reflect allistic (i.e. non-autistic) psychology, and that this leads existing systems of etiquette to fail in fulfilling their moral functions for both autistic and allistic people. The first chapter begins by arguing against the empathy deficit theory of autism. Autistic social difficulties have predominantly been attributed to empathic deficits in autistic people. I argue against this theory and in favor of the theory that many autistic self-advocates and researchers favor instead which I call the attunement theory. This theory holds that autistic social difficulties are a result of the psychological mismatch between autistic and allistic people. The second chapter considers ways in which systems of

etiquette may contribute to these social difficulties inasmuch as they are built around the psychological features of allistic people. I argue that existing systems of etiquette are allocentric in that they privilege allistic psychological wellbeing, rely on implicit communication, and frequently employ pretense. In the third chapter, I provide an overview of the important moral functions of manners highlighted by recent philosophical analyses and argue that the allocentrism of manners causes systems of etiquette to fail in these moral functions in important ways. I argue that allocentric systems of etiquette fail to promote the expressive goods, self-respect, psychological and social goods that they are supposed to, denying autistics equivalent access to these goods and sometimes depriving allistics of them when interacting with autistics. In the fourth and final chapter, I consider some potential solutions to the allocentrism of manners, such as changes to conventions of etiquette, education and stigma reduction regarding autism, and promoting certain social virtues. I conclude that these solutions are worth further consideration, but that they have important limitations.

Table of Contents

Terminological Preface	viii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter Overview	3
Chapter 1: Autism, Moral Agency and the Double Empathy Problem	6
The Empathy Deficit Theory of Autism	7
The Evidence for the Empathy Deficit Account of Autism	9
Autistic Social Difficulties	10
Metarepresentational Tasks	11
Gaze Tracking.....	14
Mental State Attribution Accuracy.....	16
The Double Empathy Problem and the Attunement Theory.....	18
Lack of Mental State Attribution Task Correlation.....	20
Allistic Deficits in Cognitive Empathy	22
Autistic Attunement.....	25
The Limitations of the Attunement Theory.....	27
Etiquette and the Double Empathy Problem.....	29
Chapter 2 – Allocentrism in Manners.....	30
Some Functions and Domains of Manners	33
Allocentrism and Androcentrism	36
Examples of Allocentrism in Manners.....	38
Psychological Wellbeing	38
Implicit Communication.....	45
Pretense.....	51
Moral Problems with Allocentrism in Etiquette	56
Chapter 3 – Allocentric Manners as a Moral Problem	58
The Moral Significance of Manners.....	59
Enabling Expressive Goods.....	60
Respect.....	64
Promoting Psychological and Social Goods.....	84
Promoting Moral & Social Development in Children.....	93

Addressing Moral Malfunctions.....	97
Chapter 4 – Addressing Allocentrism.....	99
Types of Moral Problems.....	100
Uneven Distribution of Goods.....	100
Uneven Distribution of Burdens.....	101
Epistemic Disablement.....	103
First-Order Solutions.....	105
Self-Identification.....	108
Education and Stigma Reduction.....	110
Promoting Social Virtues.....	115
Humility.....	119
Attentiveness.....	124
Patience.....	127
Consideration.....	130
Trust.....	132
Limitations.....	134
Conclusion – Intersections and Future Paths.....	136
Bibliography.....	139

Terminological Preface

The following dissertation is about autism. Accompanying this topic are some terminological issues that I want to address in this preface, so that the reader will understand why I write about the topic in the way that I do.

I'll begin with the most straightforward: throughout this dissertation, I will be using the term 'allistic' to refer to non-autistic individuals. 'Allistic' is a term I am adopting from some parts of the autistic community to refer to people who are not autistic (it derives from the contrasting Greek roots 'autos' and 'allos'). I am adopting it because it is less awkward than 'non-autistic' and its variants. It is also more precise than the other term typically used in the autistic community, 'neurotypical.' Though 'neurotypical' is often used in the community to refer to non-autistics specifically, it is technically a term that refers to someone without any neurological deviation from the norm rather than specifically non-autistic individuals. Furthermore, unlike 'non-autistic' and 'neurotypical' it is easily morphed into the central adjective of this dissertation: 'allocentric.'

Throughout the dissertation, I will also be using what is called identity-first language. Identity-first language involves placing the relevant descriptive adjective prior to the person-term being modified, such as in 'autistic person' or 'allistic person.' Identity-first language may also sometimes use a plural noun form such as 'autistics' or 'allistics.' This is in contrast to person-first language, which always appends the adjective after a person term, such as in 'person with autism' or 'someone with allism.'

Person-first language has historically been advocated for when talking about disability because it is supposed to avoid certain reductive implications. Referring to someone as ‘a quadriplegic’ is seen as reducing a person to their disability, whereas referring to someone as ‘a person with quadriplegia’ foregrounds their personhood as separable from their disability.

In the case of autism specifically, the general trend among autistics is that they prefer identity-first language over person-first language (Kenny et al., 2016). The reasons for this are complicated, but essentially the use of person-first language in relation to autism has historically been connected to stigmatizing conceptions of autism spread by cure-oriented organizations like Autism Speaks. These organizations have depicted autism as a tragic disease that besets people from the outside. Many autistics have found this characterization of autism objectionable and do not see autism as something as separable from their identity that could or even should be cured. They thus prefer to avoid talking about autism in ways that externalize it. As such, I’ll be using identity-first language so as to best align with the general preferences of the autistic community.

Introduction

Much philosophy written about autism paints a picture of autistics as either completely incapable of empathy, or as so substantially impaired in this capacity that it becomes philosophically puzzling how autistic people should appear to have certain moral qualities. Autism thus becomes a ‘marginal’ case to be deployed as a test of various philosophical theories of these qualities.

In some cases, autistics are taken to have whatever moral quality is under consideration, and the presumed fact that autistics are empathically impaired is deployed to debunk theories of those qualities that require full empathic functioning. One of the most central examples of this is Jeanette Kennett’s argument that we should reject a purely sentimentalist account of morality since this theory would not be able to make sense of the moral concern for others that autistics display (Kennett, 2002). In other cases, the conflict is resolved by positing that autistics are at most capable of mimicry of the moral quality under consideration. A recent example of this is David Shoemaker’s argument that autistics are likely “just mimicking the moral behaviors of those whose own ends and motivations they simply do not understand” (Shoemaker, 2015 p. 170).

The fundamental question of this debate is whether or not autistic people are full members of the human moral community. Answering this question is centered around the question of whether or not empathy is necessary for being a full member of that community as both a moral agent and a moral subject. As an autistic person, I find the entire topic of this debate strange. The salient question does not seem to be whether I, or others like me, are members of the moral community. Partly because the answer is

obvious (we are), but mostly because the most pressing philosophical question to ask seems to be to instead be: what are the ethical problems autistic and allistic people face in living within the same moral community and how can those problems be addressed?

In this dissertation, I consider one dimension of this question. One significant problem that autistic people face is that allistic people frequently judge them to be rude and inconsiderate. For example, many autistics find various forms of social pretense uncomfortable or difficult to engage in, with the result that they may be direct or honest in ways that allistics tend to misinterpret as callous. Similarly, many autistics may also find the sensory and social dynamics of most social gatherings uncomfortable and draining, with the result that they frequently decline to participate in social gatherings in order to conserve their energy or avoid the painful and potentially embarrassing consequences of sensory overwhelm. This may often result in allistics, particularly allistics who are in closer relationships with the autistic person, interpreting the autistic person as cold or uncaring. These social judgments arise because the social norms in allistic society are often incompatible with autistic dispositions and needs.

When these kinds of problems are considered, it becomes apparent that one contributor to the negative social judgments autistic people often face are the social norms themselves. In this dissertation, I focus specifically on the social norms of etiquette. Recently, a number of interesting and well-developed philosophical analyses of manners and etiquette have been published (Buss, 1999; Stohr, 2011; Olberding, 2019). Building on these analyses, I argue that since existing systems of etiquette are built by allistic people and for allistic people, those systems lead to a wide range of problems for

both autistic and allistic people in living together. I then consider ways those problems might be addressed.

Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, I argue that the dominant model of autism, the empathy deficit model, should be rejected. I mainly marshal arguments already made elsewhere that target both the empirical adequacy of this theory as well as its consistency with autistic testimony. The main function of this chapter is to rule out a certain conception of autism that would locate the social and moral challenges autistic people face in intrinsic deficits in empathy and propose an alternative in the form of attunement theory. This theory has been advocated for as a better explanation of autistic social difficulties by autistics themselves, most recently in autistic sociologist Damian Milton's concept of the double empathy problem. The attunement theory explains the social and moral challenges that autistic people face in terms of relational facts about the psychological differences between autistic and allistic people. This will set up for the remaining Chapters, which will focus on how norms of etiquette being built around allistic psychology contribute significantly to the social and moral challenges that autistic people frequently experience.

In Chapter 2, I first establish the meaning of 'allocentrism' by constructing it in parallel to Sandra Bem's concept of 'androcentrism,' and then identify some distinctive characteristics of allocentrism in contrast to androcentrism. Next, I lay out a brief taxonomy of the goods manners have the function of promoting (psychological, social and expressive), and the domains they govern (explicit communication, implicit communication and non-communicative actions). With this taxonomy in place, I argue

that existing systems of etiquette are allocentric in that they privilege allistic psychological vulnerabilities, and frequently involve implicit communication and pretense in ways that autistic people have difficulty navigating.

In Chapter 3, I argue that the allocentrism of manners is a moral problem. The only plausible objection to the claim that it is a moral problem is that manners serve a crucial role in the moral life of human beings and their allocentricity is a part of this function. A number of moral philosophers have recently argued that manners have crucial moral functions and some of their arguments involve defenses of aspects of manners that are allocentric. I argue that the moral functions these philosophers identify (enabling expressive goods, promoting respect, promoting psychological and social goods, and promoting the moral development of children) are all impeded by the presence of allocentric features, thereby demonstrating that the allocentrism of manners is a moral problem relative to the very moral functions systems of etiquette are supposed to fulfill.

In Chapter 4, I consider solutions for remedying the moral problems caused by the allocentrism of manners as well as some of their limitations. I start by briefly categorizing the types of moral problem caused by the allocentrism of manners: uneven distribution of goods, uneven distribution of burdens and epistemic disablement. The solutions I discuss are changes to conventions of etiquette, self-identification as autistic, education and stigma reduction, and the promotion of the social virtues of humility, attentiveness, patience, consideration and trust. I argue that each solution can make significant, albeit limited contribution to solving some the problems of allocentrism. The social virtues I argue are the most robust solution. Drawing on Shannon Spaulding's

work on mind misreading, I highlight the role of humility, attentiveness, and patience in particular in helping bridge the empathy gap between autistics and allistics inasmuch as they involve a more accurate approach to making judgments about people who are psychologically different. I then discuss the role of the virtues of considerateness and trust in handling cases where accurate judgments are difficult.

Lastly, I close by identifying some important ways in which the problems and solutions considered in this dissertation ought to be expanded on. I note the importance of identifying other forms of ableism in etiquette besides allocentrism, potential tensions between addressing allocentrism and other forms of injustice against marginalized groups, and the importance of accounting for the unique problems that may be faced by autistic people who belong to other marginalized groups.

Chapter 1: Autism, Moral Agency and the Double Empathy Problem

One of the distinctive features of many autistic people are social differences from allistic people. Consider Andrew, an autistic child described by autism researcher Simon Baron-Cohen:

Often he would shout out in class the words ‘Why?’ or ‘How do you know?’ whenever the teacher made an assertion of fact. The teacher felt in a dilemma. She could see that Andrew had a natural curiosity that she didn’t want to stifle. On the other hand, she found it was very disruptive to the other pupils and was frustrated that Andrew did not seem to be able to conform to the social norms of not interrupting, or joining in group activities (Baron-Cohen, 2008, p. 6).

Differences in social behavior and difficulties abiding by social norms been a hallmark of diagnosis in the DSM since the publication of the DSM III in 1980, where social deficits were first introduced as a major diagnostic criterion for autism (American Psychiatric Association, 1980, p. 87). In the current edition, the DSM V, the two major diagnostic features of autism are “persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction” and “restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities.” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 50)

The distinctiveness of autistic social differences has driven much theorizing about the nature of autism. The most prominent theory of autism of the past few decades – the empathy deficit theory in its various forms – was developed in order to explain the social differences of autistic people. The empathy deficit theory proposes that autistic people are in some way deficient in their ability to represent the mental states of others. The social differences characteristic of autism are then explained in terms of this incapacity. Andrew’s frequent disruptive interruptions in class are due to his inability to properly empathize with his classmates or teacher and with how his questions are impacting them.

It is this theory of autism and its role in explaining autistic social differences that will be the focus of this chapter. I will argue that the empathy deficit theory of autism is incorrect and its use as a lens to interpret autistic social differences and challenges has obscured the social causes of autistic social difficulties. The analysis of etiquette in the next two chapters will be an unpacking of one major social source of these challenges: allocentric norms of etiquette.

The Empathy Deficit Theory of Autism

The empathy deficit theory of autism has taken a variety of forms. What they all have in common is the attribution of a deficiency in the capacity of cognitive empathy in autistic people. In this section, I will briefly characterize the distinction between cognitive and affective empathy and then give a general characterization of empathy deficit theories of autism.

‘Empathy’ is a term that is used to refer to a wide range of phenomena. Thus, it is important to be precise about what sense of empathy the empathy deficit theory of autism concerns. The autism deficit theory primarily attributes a deficit in what is termed cognitive empathy, or theory of mind, to autistic people. Some versions may also attribute deficiency in affective empathy, but this is a more controversial attribution.

Cognitive empathy, also referred to as ‘theory of mind,’ is generally characterized as the ability to represent, recognize, predict and understand the mental states of others. (Song et al., 2019) Inferring that your housemate does not know where their keys are by seeing them search around their house and muttering about keys is an exercise of cognitive empathy, as is predicting that they will be furious with you if they find out that

you lost their keys. Affective empathy, in contrast, concerns the disposition to feel appropriate emotions in response to the emotions of others. (Song et al., 2019) This can take the form of emotional contagion, such as when you ‘catch’ the cheerfulness of a colleague. It can also take the form of less direct emotional resonance, where an appropriate emotional response is had without necessarily feeling the same emotion. An example of this would be feeling anger at someone when you find out that they have violated the trust of a friend. Your friend may feel hurt or sad rather than angry, but your anger is a form of affective empathy inasmuch as it is an apt response.

It is only a deficit in cognitive empathy that is broadly and consistently attributed to autistic people in the empathy deficit theory. Autistic people, in this theory, are taken to have trouble putting themselves in other people’s shoes, considering perspectives other than their own, or predicting how others might believe or feel. Simon Baron-Cohen, one of the major advocates of the empathy deficit theory, has suggested deficits in affective empathy are also present in autistics. (Baron-Cohen 2009, p. 71) However, the empirical literature does not generally support this position and some evidence suggests that affective empathy is often heightened in autistic people (Song et al., 2005, p. 5). Furthermore, the origins of the empathy deficit theory of autism are in the theory that autistic people lack the capacity for cognitive empathy.

This being the most prominent theory of autistic social differences, it is worth considering the evidence and reasoning that has led many autism researchers to adopt it and for it to have become widely accepted fact. In the next section, I give an overview of some of the main forms of empirical evidence used to support the theory. I will also

identify many of the shortcomings of this body of empirical research. While a clear debunking is far outside of the scope of this chapter, I will argue that there are sufficient problems to raise significant doubt about the truth of the empathy deficit theory of autism.

The Evidence for the Empathy Deficit Account of Autism

The empathy deficit model of autism has its origins in the work of Alan Leslie, Uta Frith and Simon Baron-Cohen in the 1980s. In their 1985 paper “Does the autistic child have a ‘theory of mind’?” they posited a lack of cognitive empathy as the explanation for the observed lack of pretend play in autistic children.¹ While it began as a response to this fairly specific form of developmental difference, the theory was quickly used to explain other developmental differences in children and ultimately intended to be an explanation of the social differences of autistic people.

There is a wide range of evidence given to support the empathy deficit account of autism. In this section, I will characterize some of the primary forms of evidence given in its favor. I will present four broad types of evidence: (1) Autistic social difficulties (2) Autistic performance on metarepresentational tasks (3) Gaze-tracking and (4) Mental state attribution accuracy. I take the overall evidential basis for the empathic deficit theory to be abductive: the best explanation of autistic social difficulties (1) is an empathy deficit inasmuch as an empathy deficit would also explain (2) - (4). In providing counterarguments to this abductive hypothesis, I will provide empirical research and

¹ The term used then was ‘theory of mind.’ For the sake of terminological consistency I will be using ‘cognitive empathy’ in place of ‘theory of mind.’

accompanying arguments showing that the research used to favor the empathy deficit account as the best explanation of (2) – (4) does not favor it.² In the next section, I will go on to suggest an alternative hypothesis for explaining (1) and (4), namely, that autistic-allistic psychological differences best account for autistic social difficulties and for poorer performance on mental state attribution tests.

Autistic Social Difficulties

One of the most important pieces of evidence in favor of the empathy deficit theory of autism are the social difficulties many autistic people experience. Autistic people often have difficulty navigating typical social norms. They may be blunt and direct to the point of violating norms of politeness, they may have difficulty navigating situations where social norms require pretense and deception, and they may not engage in certain prosocial actions typically expected, such as displaying affection or concern in expected or acceptable ways. The theory that autistics have malfunctioning cognitive empathy appears to be a good explanation for these social difficulties. If autistics fail to attribute mental states to others or fail to do so accurately, then this might explain their difficulty navigating social interactions without violating social norms. After all, navigating social interactions well requires not just an awareness of the norms but also an awareness of what the other social actors involved may be thinking or feeling or are disposed to feel or think.

² For a significantly more thorough discussion of the empirical problems with the empathy deficit theory of autism, see Gernsbacher and Yergeau, 2019. I will be drawing heavily on, though not entirely from, their analysis in my discussion of (2) and (3), and for one argument discussing (4).

This on its own is not an especially strong argument for the empathy deficit theory. Many other competing explanations jump to mind. For example, autistic personality traits may simply be more likely to cause social friction, autistic people may have less impulse control making it difficult to adapt to social norms, autistic people may have difficulty navigating implicit social rules because they are implicit, and so on. The specific claim that autistic social challenges are due to an empathy deficit requires significantly more specific evidence. To this end, I will next present the most direct form of evidence for an empathy deficit in autistics: poor performance on metacognitive tasks by autistic children.

Metarepresentational Tasks

The first body of research used to support the empathy deficit theory of autism is research showing that autistic children are substantially delayed in their ability to successfully accomplish metarepresentational tasks. Metarepresentational tasks require attributing the correct representational mental state to another person. Perhaps the most famous and commonly cited example is the Sally-Anne test, an example of a false-belief task. False-belief tasks require participants to predict another person's behavior correctly by representing that the other person has a belief that the participant knows to be false. The Sally-Anne test depicts a situation in which Sally places a ball in a box, then leaves the room. While she is out, Anne enters the room and moves the ball from one box to another. Then Anne leaves and Sally returns. The participant is then asked where Sally will look for the ball. Since Sally is unaware that the ball has moved, the correct answer will require inferring from Sally's false belief that the ball is still in the initial box that

she will look in the initial box. An incorrect answer will predict her looking in the box where the ball has been moved to by Anne. Most autistic children fail this task at the age of seven, while allistic children are typically able to pass it at the age of four (Baron-Cohen, 1996, pp. 71-72).

The idea here is straightforward: this task requires a very basic ability to attribute a simple mental state to another person. The participant will have a different belief about the ball's location from Sally, as the participant observes the ball being moved from where Sally last saw it. That the participant's belief will differ from Sally's ensures that the correct answer will only be given consistently if the participant is aware that Sally will have a false belief. Thus, when most autistic children fail this task at a later age than is typical, it is inferred that autism involves deficits in cognitive empathy, specifically in the form of failures of belief attribution.³

Taken at face value, this seems to be direct and forceful evidence of an empathy deficit in autistic children. It is difficult not to be gripped by the idea that the most obvious explanation for any participant suggesting Sally would look in the ball's new location despite Sally not witnessing its movement is a failure of the participant to realize that Sally's perspective and knowledge may be different from their own. However, closer consideration of false-belief tests and the performance of autistic children on them reveals a serious problem that demonstrates such an inference cannot be so

³ It is important to note that this evidence specifically concerns belief attribution. For example, in *Mindblindness*, Simon Baron-Cohen claims that autistic children have no problems attributing desires and goals to others or understanding the way that those desires and goals may lead to emotional responses when satisfied or frustrated (Baron-Cohen 1996, p. 63). However, this caveat is not normally made when deficits in cognitive empathy are attributed to autism.

straightforwardly made. Namely, it reveals that metarepresentational tasks seem to track capacities other than cognitive empathy.

To begin with, as pointed out by Bloom and German developmentally intact theory of mind is not sufficient for passing false-belief tasks (Bloom & German, 2000). Other capacities such as working memory and verbal comprehension seem to play a significant role. A participant in the Sally-Anne test must use working memory to keep track of the changes in the ball's location as well as Sally's behavior and will need to follow the question being asked, which will generally of necessity involve somewhat complex syntax.

Indeed, there is evidence that performance on false-belief tasks strongly correlates with linguistic ability as documented in Gernsbacher and Frymiere, 2005. Many other studies are documented by Gernsbacher and Yergeau (Gernsbacher and Yergeau, 2019, p. 3). One specific study found that children with language impairments performed worse than autistics at verbal false-belief tasks, but that both groups do not fare worse than their peers on non-linguistic versions of false-belief tasks (Loukusa et al 2014). Furthermore, while both autistic and deaf children perform worse than their peers on verbal false-belief tasks, they do not perform worse – and on some occasions better – on pictorial versions of false-belief tasks (Peterson, 2002). Even on traditional metarepresentational tasks, both autistic children and deaf children do improve in performance over time and exhibit a clear developmental trajectory, albeit one different from typically developing children (Peterson and Wellman, 2018).

Given that autism may often involve significant differences in verbal and non-verbal capabilities which can frequently manifest as impairments in verbal ability, it seems that the poor performance of autistic children on standard false-belief tasks may well be explained more readily by differences in verbal ability than an empathy deficit. A broader consideration of the evidence also suggests a different developmental trajectory is involved as well. For example, some research suggests that autistic people maintain better performance on measures of cognitive empathy in old age in comparison to allistic people (Lever and Geurts, 2016; Yarar et al. 2021). This would be an unlikely result if autistic people lacked or were severely impaired in cognitive empathy. At the very least, it is clear that the worse performance of autistic children on a subset of metarepresentational tasks may have a range of other explanations. However, performance on metarepresentational tasks is not the only form of evidence given to support the empathy deficit theory. Another form of evidence involves social coordination and joint attention: young autistic children do not seem to show an awareness of the attention of others through gaze-tracking.

Gaze Tracking

The second body of evidence concerns social coordination in autistic children. Allistic children start to monitor the gazes of others at around 14 months of age. At approximately the same age, they also start to use gestures such as pointing in conjunction with this gaze monitoring, suggesting that they are trying to guide the attention of others (Baron-Cohen, 1996, p. 48). The idea here is that this shows that children of this age are aware that others have minds in some rudimentary fashion. In

contrast, autistic children are not observed engaging in joint attention behavior, suggesting that autistic children do not develop this awareness and that this failure leads to the delays in passing metarepresentational tasks (Baron-Cohen, 1996, pp. 66-69).

The line of reasoning here is a bit less direct than false-belief tasks, but nonetheless straightforward. One fundamental kind of cognitive empathy is the ability to represent others as attending to various parts of the environment. Joint-attention behavior, such as tracking gaze to identify what the attention of others is on or pointing in order to guide the attention of others, thus involves rudimentary cognitive empathy. If autistic children do not exhibit these behaviors, then this seems like evidence of a deficit in cognitive empathy. This seems like a remarkable behavioral difference: a quintessentially social part of child development that seems tied directly to the ability to represent the perspective of others is absent in autistic children. But like the case of metarepresentational tasks, a closer consideration of the evidence here shows that there is more going on than the empathy deficit interpretation of the evidence suggests.

To begin with, as Gernsbacher and Yergeau point out, there are problems with the replicability of this evidence: specifically, the evidence that allistic infants track attention using gaze (Gernsbacher and Yergeau, 2019, pp. 5-6). One recent study using head-mounted eye-trackers on one-year-old infants found that infants rarely looked at the face of eyes of their parents, and instead coordinated socially by focusing on the toys at the center of both parties' attentions (Yu and Smith, 2013). The view that joint attention is primarily tracked through gaze in allistic children would also need to be replicated across a variety of cultures, where social norms and interaction in child-rearing may be

different. Some preliminary findings suggest that such cultural differences may indeed lead to infants exhibiting different joint attention behaviors (Akhtar and Gernsbacher, 2007, pp. 5-6).

Furthermore, focusing on visual joint attention neglects joint attention involving other modalities. It seems highly implausible that joint attention only occurs through gaze tracking, unless it is going to be suggested that blind children are incapable of joint attention: a proposal not borne out by observations of blind children (Akhtar and Gernsbacher 2007, pp. 4-5). Thus, even if allistic children primarily use gaze tracking for joint attention and autistic children do not, the lack of gaze tracking need not suggest the absence of joint attention.

Under closer consideration, an empathy deficit no longer appears to be the only explanation of a lack of gaze tracking in autistic children. However, as with metarepresentational task performance, it still remains that an empathy deficit is one possible explanation of differences in exhibited joint attention behavior. The one remaining body of evidence might give strong independent reason for thinking an empathy deficit explains autistic differences in both these cases: autistic people often do seem to be worse at understanding other people, both in measurements of performance on tasks involving this as adults and in their own self-reports.

Mental State Attribution Accuracy

The third body of evidence consists in various studies showing that autistics have a lower rate of success at tasks that are presumed to involve proficiency in mental state attribution. Though metarepresentational tasks involve one form of mental state

attribution, these tasks are much broader and involve other types of mental states and more complex tasks. One example of this is the ‘reading the mind in the eyes’ task. In this task, participants must observe a static, black and white photograph of an actor’s eyes, where those eyes are supposed to express a particular emotion. The participant is then supposed to select the correct emotion from a set of options, where the correct answers have been determined in advance by rough agreement from a panel of eight judges. Autistics perform notably worse on this task than their allistic counterparts (Baron-Cohen, et al., 2001, p. 245).

The inference here is that the failures of accuracy are caused by impairments in cognitive empathy, but the precise nature of the impairment is somewhat less specific than problems with metarepresentation or joint attention. This is because the tasks are fairly complex and complexity brings with it more potential confounding factors. For example, autistic self-advocate Mel Baggs remarks on the irony of the ‘Reading the Mind in the Eyes’ testing autistics on their ability to infer emotional states from cropped photos of only people’s eye when many autistic people avoid eye contact because it feels uncomfortable or unnatural (Baggs, 2016).

The empirical research here is much messier with a wide range of tasks. As Gernsbacher and Yergeau’s overview of the literature shows, performance in a variety of mental state attribution tasks lacks any significant correlation. Significant correlation is also absent with performance on other purported measures of cognitive empathy, such as metarepresentational tasks (Gernsbacher and Yergeau, 2019, pp. 8-11). Further complicating the picture for the empathy deficit theory is the fact that some recent

research has shown some evidence that autistic teenagers may be more accurate at judging whether their peers like them than allistic teenagers (Usher et al., 2018). If a generalized deficit in cognitive empathy were the explanation for autistic performance on these tasks, then one would expect correlations among tasks, but significant correlation is not to be found.

Nonetheless, in contrast to research on joint attention and metarepresentational tasks, autistics do seem to have trouble accurately attributing and predicting the mental states of others. Many autistics will themselves attest to this. Notably, though, when autistic people articulate their problems there is often an important qualification that the empathy deficit account overlooks: autistic people often find it difficult to understand what allistic people are thinking. Autistic people often report that the psychology of allistics seems quite alien, such as when Temple Grandin famously remarked that she often feels like an anthropologist on Mars (Sachs, 1996, p. 259). This suggests another possible explanation of autistic social difficulties. Rather than being due to an innate deficiency in cognitive empathy, they may simply be due to significant differences in psychology between autistics and allistics.

The Double Empathy Problem and the Attunement Theory

While the empirical research on metarepresentational tasks and joint attention has significant problems, the research findings on mental state attribution align with a fact that no one denies. Autistic people often have trouble understanding allistic people and this can often lead to social problems rooted in misunderstandings. The need for an explanation of this is what gives the cognitive empathy deficit theory its intuitive force.

In this section, I hope to vacate it of its force by highlighting a relational explanation of the social challenges autistic people experience as well as their difficulties with mental state attribution (when it comes to allistics).

Relational explanations of autistic social challenges have been advanced by autistic people for decades, but the most significant recent form is the Double Empathy Problem, as articulated by autistic scholar Damian Milton (Milton, 2012).⁴ Relational explanations tend to run roughly as follows: the fact that autistics have a distinctive psychological profile means that the challenges they face understanding allistics are just a result of being subject to the quite mundane egocentricity bias that is widespread in human empathizing.⁵ When empathizing, humans frequently make inferences and predictions about the mental states of others on the basis of their own psychological tendencies and profiles, for example, predicting how someone else would feel about a certain event on the basis of how they themselves would feel. Given that autistic and allistic psychological profiles are distinct along quite a few dimensions, it would seem natural that they would tend to be more inaccurate when empathizing with each other as a result of this natural bias. Crucially, relational explanations highlight that this problem is a two-way street: allistic people also face challenges understanding autistics due to their

⁴ In the philosophical literature on autism, the double empathy problem is discussed in McGeer 2001 and Dinishak 2016a. Of these, only Dinishak presents an explanation of the double empathy problem along the lines of Milton, but surprisingly does not cite him. McGeer attributes the double empathy problem to the failure of autistic people to develop social behaviors that make them comprehensible, locating the problem in autistics. Dinishak's argument is specifically focused on the narrow question of whether sensory differences between autistics and allistics may prevent allistics from being able to understand autistics as acting for reasons.

⁵ For a nice overview of the empirical literature supporting this claim, see Goldman, 2006, pp. 165-170. For a discussion of a specific example of egocentricity bias impairing mindreading in the cause of allistic-autistic sensory differences, see Dinishak, 2016a.

psychological differences. Breakdowns in mutual understanding and mismatched expectations are a two-way street.

The Double Empathy Problem is specifically a characterization of the relational dynamic between autistic and allistic people. It is a theory of misattunement. Underlying it is a more basic notion, namely, that empathy is partly a function of the degree of psychological attunement between people. We can call this underlying notion the attunement theory.⁶ As I will highlight, a program of ‘double empathy’ research has developed in recent years, both in connection with the double empathy problem as well as the attunement hypothesis more generally. This program was motivated by decades of testimony by autistics that advanced some version of the double empathy problem and attunement hypothesis. For the remainder of this section, I will argue that the attunement theory is the best explanation for autistic social challenges. Drawing on both testimony and double empathy research, I will argue that the attunement hypothesis is better than the empathy deficit account at explaining each of the following: (1) lack of correlation among autistic performances on mental state attribution tasks; (2) allistic deficits in cognitive empathy in interactions with autistics; (3) social attunement among autistic people.

Lack of Mental State Attribution Task Correlation

As discussed in the previous section, performance on mental state attribution tasks does not correlate significantly for autistics. The empathy deficit account of autism has

⁶ This title is partly inspired by Bolis et al.’s ‘Dialectical Misattunement Hypothesis’ This is a more specific version of the attunement hypothesis that focuses on Bayesian inference. The attunement hypothesis I will present arguments for in the remainder of this chapter is not so committed to a particular account of autism. For details see Bolis et. al, 2017.

trouble explaining this fact, since it posits a central deficit in empathy as characteristic of autism and as the underlying cause of worse autistic performance on these tasks. The attunement theory is in a better position to explain these variations. Before I discuss why, it is important to clarify that I am taking the data on mental state attribution performance in autistics to accurately reflect poorer performance than allistics generally when it comes to attributing mental states to allistics. It is also important to note that these tasks involve both autistic and allistic participants attributing mental states to allistic targets. The attunement theory is consistent with these results, since it would suggest that the psychological differences between autistic participants and the allistic targets would reduce autistic performance relative to allistic participants.

The reason the attunement theory is a more effective explanation of the lack of correlation among these tasks is that the attunement theory does not attribute differences in performance to a single capacity. Autistic people vary widely in their autistic traits. If a variety of psychological traits are implicated in different mental state attribution tasks, then the attunement theory would lead us to expect that while overall psychological differences between autistic participants and allistic targets would reduce the overall accuracy of the former, variation in autistic traits and resultant variations in psychological difference would result in a lack of correlation among tasks implicating different traits. For example, an autistic person who finds eye contact painful and avoids it may have reduced performance on reading the eyes in the mind tasks. But that same autistic person's performance on a test involving a dialogue containing sarcasm may not be worse than a typical allistic's if that autistic person has no trouble with non-literal

language. The reverse would hold for an autistic person who finds sarcasm difficult to understand, but is comfortable with eye contact.

The mechanism proposed by the attunement theory does not center around any specific psychological capacity or trait. As such, it is a much more flexible theory and this makes it more consistent with the research on mental state attribution tasks than the empathy deficit theory.

Allistic Deficits in Cognitive Empathy

Most research on autistic empathy focuses on how well autistic people understand allistic people. Much less research has been done on the reverse. If the attunement theory is correct, then one would expect that allistic people would have just as much difficulty with cognitive empathy when it comes to autistics as the reverse. In contrast, if the empathy deficit hypothesis is true, one would not expect this to hold as there is an essential asymmetry in the relationship. As it turns out, allistics do have difficulties understanding autistic people and frequently misattribute mental states to them. There are two sources of evidence here. The first is testimony from autistic people and the second is a small but growing body of empirical research.

In autistic communities, a common topic of discussion among autistics are the various ways that allistic people misinterpret them. Many examples of these misunderstandings will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. As an illustration, consider Jane Meyerding's remarks on an experience with an allistic friend trying to be helpful:

My friend came over to paint the porch steps outside my house. She thought she was doing something good and nice, and she also thought she was being very considerate about not requiring my presence or attention. In fact, though [...] she was imposing a drain on my system. (Meyerding, 1998, para. 11-13)

Meyerding recounts how her friend would interject with minor questions about where she might find household items to help paint the porch. In her own way, her friend believes she is being unobtrusive. However, as Meyerding goes on to recount her friend does not appreciate how draining her behavior is. Being allistic, she does not experience the task-switching or social vigilance that Meyerding does and fails to predict that her help will ultimately be detrimental. Like many autistic people, Meyerding can find switching between tasks, such as switching from whatever she wants to do on her own time and answering her friend's minor questions, cognitively taxing (Meyerding, 1998, para. 14). Likewise, like many autistic people, Meyerding indicates that she has a strong disposition to be socially 'on' whenever a person is around, however unobtrusive (Meyerding, 1998, para. 17). Her friend hence causes problems for Meyerding due to a failure of cognitive empathy. This type of misunderstanding often snowballs further. Setting clear social boundaries to avoid this kind of misunderstanding can often lead to yet further misinterpretations, such as being interpreted as unfriendly, aloof or shy. Even something as basic as body language may frequently be subject to significant misinterpretation:

A week after my friend returned from her vacation, she asked me if I was depressed. No, I wasn't depressed, I said. "Just grouchy, then," she said, as if she'd figured out the answer to a question. What she was seeing was my "lack of affect." I wasn't responding with appropriate enthusiasm to her or with her. I was failing to get my [allistic] mask on, failing to rev up my [allistic] imitation to its full extent. I wasn't depressed, I was just acting "more autistic" than I usually do when she's around. (Meyerding, 1998, para. 28)

The attunement theory predicts the misunderstandings frequently experienced by autistics. Since such misunderstandings are commonly reported by autistics and are not

predicted by the empathy deficit theory, this is further evidence in favor of the attunement theory.

A small body of empirical research exploring the double empathy problem also corroborates that allistics have trouble understanding autistics. Both Sheppard et al., 2016 and Brewer et al., 2016 show that allistics have difficulties interpreting autistic facial expressions. Another study on the families of autistic children showed that even among family members, allistics were likely to misunderstand autistics (Heasman and Gillespie, 2017). As this body of research grows, it should become clearer to what extent allistic people exhibit the same reduced performance on mental state attribution tasks with autistic targets as the reverse. If similar results are consistently obtained, then this will tend to undermine the empathy deficit theory.

With that said, the empathy deficit theory is not entirely incompatible with the presence of allistic deficits in cognitive empathy. It would be possible to posit a bipartite explanation: autistics tend to misunderstand allistics because of impaired cognitive empathy (and possibly also psychological misattunement), while allistics tend to misunderstand autistics merely because of psychological misattunement. To take this approach, the empathy deficit theorist would need to give a reason for preferring the empathy deficit explanation in the autistic case, and given the shakiness of other evidence for the theory, it does not seem obvious that the bipartite approach is preferable. Furthermore, there is another side to the coin which the empathy deficit theory is incompatible with: attunement among autistic people. I'll now turn to this crucial piece of evidence.

Autistic Attunement

Both autistic and allistic deficits in cognitive empathy involve a form of misattunement. The cognitive deficit theory of autism can only explain one direction of misattunement, but not the other. Its other weakness is that unlike the attunement theory, it cannot explain the experience of attunement among autistic people. The empathy deficit theory has substantial problems explaining why it is common for autistics who discover and participate in autistic social spaces to frequently feel a sense of belonging and similarity that they had not experienced previously. For example, Jim Sinclair in “Being Autistic Together” provides an illustrative quote from an unnamed participant in the first Autreat⁷ about their experience: “I feel as if I’m home, among my own people, for the first time. I never knew what this was until now.” (Sinclair, 2010, para. 42) This is often attributed specifically to psychological similarity, such as in the report of an autistic man named Cornish:

What I’ve found, is that, if I socialize with other [autistics] of pretty much my own functionality, then all of the so-called social impairments simply don’t exist...we share the same operating systems, so there are no impairments (Edmonds and Beardon 2008, p. 158)

Cornish also reports on a frequently remarked on phenomena among autistics, namely discovering that their friends are not uncommonly diagnosed later in life:

Also, a very odd thing has become apparent over the years... People who I’ve totally ‘clicked with’, and who have become my closest friends, have in the past few years had children of their own, who now have either had an [autism] diagnosis or are in the process of getting one, and all of my friends are now taking a closer look at themselves... (Edmonds and Beardon 2008, pp. 158 - 159)

⁷ Autreat was an annual retreat for autistic people to gather with each other.

These reports suggest that autistic people often experience attunement with each other. They are more likely to feel comfortable with each other, form friendships and develop communities. Indeed, after the development of the internet and the emergence of autism as a diagnostic category, a robust autistic community and culture developed from autistic people seeking out others like themselves.⁸

Just as allistic misattunement to autistics is now being subject to research, so is autistic attunement to other autistics. Though the literature is small, it has consistently shown that neurotype matching increases rapport within a group. (Komeda et al., 2015; Morrison et al., 2019; Crompton et al. 2020a) One study also showed that neurotype matching increases performance on an information transfer task wherein groups of autistics, groups of allistics and groups of mixed neurotype conveyed information to each other serially as in a game of telephone. Neurotype matched groups performed better than neurotype mixed groups, suggesting that matching neurotype made it easier to correctly interpret the intended communication (Crompton et al., 2020b).

The empathy deficit theory seems inconsistent with the attunement reported by autistics and evidenced in recent studies. If autism involves intrinsic deficits in cognitive empathy, one would expect magnified levels of misunderstanding and conflict in autistic-autistic socialization. The social deficits that result from empathic deficits should compound, rather than ameliorate. In contrast, the attunement theory is well positioned to explain autistic-autistic attunement. This is a strong reason to reject the empathy deficit theory and adopt the attunement theory.

⁸ See Kapp, 2020 for a thorough account of the development of autistic culture.

The Limitations of the Attunement Theory

Before closing this chapter, I want to make some important clarifications about the attunement theory. First, it is important to note that both the empathy deficit theory of autism and the attunement theory are theories that aim to explain the social challenges that autistic people experience. However, they are not both theories of autism itself. The attunement theory does not specify in precisely what ways autistics tend to be likeminded with each other and unlikeminded with allistics. Instead it should be understood as a competing explanation of the social challenges autistics experience navigating the allistic social world. The attunement theory is largely agnostic as to the nature of the differences that distinguish autistic people from allistic people.

This agnosticism does leave open some significant wiggle room regarding controversies about whether autism is a deficiency or a difference. I have not touched too directly on deficit vs. non-deficit accounts of autism. Roughly speaking, deficit accounts of autism characterize autism as a pathological deviation from the human norm characterized by deficits. Non-deficit accounts treat autism as natural deviation whose characteristic features are not deficits but simply differences. Strictly speaking, it is possible that one could adopt the attunement theory while holding that differences from the allistic norm as deficits, so long as those deficits aren't cognitive empathy deficits (since cognitive empathy deficits would undermine the account's ability to make sense of autistic testimony about attunement). However, this would tend to clash with the autistic testimony that partly motivates the attunement theory, and for this reason, it is not the most promising form of the attunement theory and not the one I will be assuming in this

dissertation. Arguing against deficit theories more broadly is beyond the scope of the dissertation and, ultimately, the contents of the remaining chapters are still relevant to those who hold deficit theories of autism.⁹

Furthermore, the attunement theory does not rule out that empathic differences are characteristic of autism. Autistics may well exercise cognitive empathy differently, manifesting a distinctive empathic style rather than an empathic deficit (Sinclair, 1988; Bev, 2007). Other autistic differences may mask or block the exercise of empathy in certain contexts, such as when an autistic person is in a context where sensory or social stimuli are overwhelming.

Lastly, the attunement theory does not require rejecting that some autistics may have developmental delays when it comes to various dimensions of cognitive empathy. Accurate mental state attribution hinges on the development of a wide array of skills that some autistics may not have the same opportunity to practice, since those skills may depend on reciprocal interactions with caregivers and peers which are less likely to occur

⁹ For a forceful philosophical argument against deficit theories of autism, see Dinishak, 2016b.

for autistic children if their allistic caregivers or peers either lack the understanding or inclination necessary to engage in interactions on the autistic child's terms.^{10,11}

Etiquette and the Double Empathy Problem

In the next two chapters, I will identify ways in which systems of etiquette privilege allistic psychology, and argue that this privileging leads existing systems of etiquette to produce a number of significant moral problems. Among these moral problems are ways in which conventions of etiquette contribute to misunderstandings between autistics and allistics. Though the moral problems produced by the ways systems of etiquette privilege allistics are not exhausted by these misunderstandings, one of the upshots of my arguments in the next two chapters is that etiquette itself is a major contributor to the double empathy problem.

While the arguments of the next two chapters have force even if one accepts the empathy deficit account of autism, the arguments themselves provide some degree of support for adopting a relational account of the empathy deficits experienced by autistics and allistics alike in their interactions with each other.

¹⁰ Due to this, the attunement theory is not entirely hostile to intersubjective developmental accounts such as those of Peter Hobson and Victoria McGeer (Hobson, 2004; McGeer, 2001). That said, it is certainly distinct from them in important respects. One of these is that intersubjective developmental accounts are theories of autism. Take Hobson's account, which aims to identify factors which would "sufficiently disrupt interpersonally coordinated feelings to cause autism" (Hobson, 2004 p. 183). The attunement theory may allow that developmental delays in cognitive empathy are more likely in autistic individuals due to developmental disruptions, but it rejects that developmental disruptions are the cause of autism or that the developmental delays or deficits contingent on the disruptions are aspects of autism itself. On the intersubjective developmental accounts of McGeer and Hobson, empathy deficits are still treated as characteristics inseparable from autism. Intersubjective developmental accounts that jettison this position would be consistent with the attunement theory.

¹¹ For a discussion of the importance of reciprocal interaction, see Gernsbacher, 2006.

Chapter 2 – Allocentrism in Manners

Recently, philosophers such as Sarah Buss, Amy Olberding and Karen Stohr have begun to argue for the moral importance of manners. These philosophers argue that manners have been neglected in contemporary moral philosophy and that manners deserve philosophical treatment inasmuch as they serve several important moral and social functions. One common argumentative thread in this recent literature is that manners provide conventions for the expression of core moral attitudes: we show others our respect or consideration for them by saying ‘please’ and ‘thank you,’ waiting patiently in line, or withholding our laughter when they make a mistake. Manners are thus in part conventions that regulate how we appear to others. When we behave politely and with sincerity, we aim to appear in a manner that projects our moral regard for others. Another common argumentative thread is that manners enable important psychological and social goods. They guide us to behave in ways that are considerate of the feelings of others, promote cooperation, and enrich our social interactions. Identifying and clarifying the moral significance of manners is an important project, and there is much to admire in these philosophers’ work.

However, manners are as much conventional as moral and as such, they are often influenced as much by unjust social hierarchies as moral ideals. While these philosophers acknowledge these inegalitarian shortcomings of manners in practice, they nonetheless hope to identify a moral core that is fundamentally universalistic and egalitarian, such as when Amy Olberding praises manners inasmuch as they (ideally) function as a standard for how to treat someone “in accord with an external standard for treating human beings”

in a one-size-fits-all manner (Olberding, 2019, p. 81). While the treatment of the moral shortcomings of actual systems of manners in the philosophical literature is not dismissive, it is also not the focus. This kind of ideal theory has its value: from a fuller picture of the ideal form of a practice or institution, we gain a clearer view of what to aim for. However, ideal theory has its limitations. Neglecting to attend to the moral failings of our current practices and institutions may mean failing to fully understand in what ways we fall short of the ideal.

In this chapter, I want to explore one particularly serious shortcoming of current systems of manners: they contribute to the pervasive psychological harm and social alienation experienced by autistic people. Many autistic people have difficulty navigating social norms, including those of politeness. In fact, this is a hallmark of autism. For example, many autistic people find various forms of social pretense uncomfortable or difficult to engage in, with the result that they may be direct or honest in ways that allistics tend to misinterpret as callous or arrogant. The judgments that naturally accompany being misinterpreted as rude by the majority of one's peers come along with certain social consequences: social isolation at best, bullying at worst (Orsmond et al., 2013; Hebron et al., 2017). These social consequences come with a serious cost to the wellbeing of autistic people. It is no surprise, then, that many autistic people try to avoid these social consequences by trying to learn to navigate the dominant social norms that they have trouble with. This is called social camouflaging in the scientific literature, and 'masking' in the autistic community. Some do so quite effectively, others less so. But in all cases, the effort required to navigate these norms

comes at a serious psychological cost, often leading to exhaustion, anxiety and depression (Hull et al., 2017). Naturally, this does not have a positive impact on the wellbeing of autistic people who mask. Autistic people have a suicide rate significantly higher than the general population, and one of the main correlates of suicidality in autistic adults is masking (Kirby et al., 2019).

The typical framing of the social harms experienced by autistics is a medicalizing one that locates the source of the harms in their having certain deficits. Given that in the previous Chapter I have argued against a deficit theory of autism, I will not adopt that framing here. Instead, I want to argue for an alternative relational framing of the source of the problem: that the social harms experienced by autistics are partly the result of the allocentrism of manners producing problems in the relationships between autistic and allistic people, individually and collectively. In the next chapter, I will argue that this allocentrism produces a number of significant moral problems that should be addressed if possible.¹² In this Chapter, I will illustrate some of the ways in which manners are allocentric and how this leads to harms to autistic people. In the following Chapter, I will argue that this constitutes a moral problem. In the final Chapter, I will begin to sketch out some of the ways in which the moral problem can be remedied.

The structure of this Chapter is as follows. In the first section, I will lay some necessary philosophical groundwork for my argument by identifying some of the main things manners do (their functions) and some of the main contexts they govern (their

¹² ‘Allocentric’ here derives from ‘allistic.’

domains). In the second section, I will briefly clarify what I mean by ‘allocentric’ by analogy with the concept of ‘androcentrism’ as explicated by Sandra Bem. With this groundwork in place, I will proceed to argue in the third section that norms of etiquette as they are generally practiced are allocentric by providing some concrete examples illustrating their allocentricity with respect to certain functions and domains.

Some Functions and Domains of Manners

The first piece of groundwork I need to lay is identifying some of the aspects of manners that will play a role in articulating the ways in which norms of etiquette are allocentric. The aspects most salient for my argument will be the types of goods that norms of etiquette promote (functions), the types of actions norms of etiquette govern (domains), and the presence of pretense in some norms of etiquette.

Functions

Norms of etiquette may have any number of functions, depending on what type of good a given norm aims to produce or promote. We can separate these goods into three broad types: expressive, social and psychological. The first type, expressive goods, involves the expression or communication of important moral or social attitudes. For example, in the United States, eye contact is a manner of showing attentiveness to a conversational partner, which is a certain kind of minimal regard or respect. This type of good is one emphasized especially by Karen Stohr in *On Manners*, who takes one of the central functions of norms of etiquette to be creating conventions for outwardly expressing important moral attitudes such as respect (Stohr, 2011, p.12). The second type involves goods of social coordination or cooperation. For example, the norm of forming

orderly lines for services creates a convention that enables a certain kind of social good: predictable, manageable and fair access to some kind of service. The third type of norm involves psychological wellbeing. Norms governing when to tell polite lies or refrain from stating unpleasant truths tend to have the function of promoting psychological wellbeing. For example, norms against commenting negatively about someone's appearance when they are wearing unflattering clothing in part serve the function of avoiding causing unnecessary self-consciousness and distress.

Domains

Aside from the functions they serve, norms of etiquette also govern different kinds of domain. We can sort these into three broad types: explicit communication, implicit communication and non-communicative actions. Norms governing explicit communication are norms governing what it is polite or rude to say, write, sign or otherwise explicitly communicate. Communication here need not be of any propositional content. That it is polite to say 'Hello' or provide some form of acknowledgement of someone when they enter a room is a prototypical example of a norm of etiquette governing explicit communication, but greetings do not convey propositional content. Norms governing implicit communication are norms about what it is rude or polite to communicate through non-explicit means. Norms about rude or polite body language are of this type, as are norms involving conversational implicature. Lastly, norms may govern non-communicative behavior. In the context of manners, there is a sense in which all behavior is communicative. For example, take the case of bringing appropriate food or drink to a social gathering. Karen Stohr argues that this behavior communicates

consideration and regard for the efforts of the host by making an effort to contribute (Stohr, 2011, p. 19). In fact, given that politeness is a way of treating another with a certain moral regard and rudeness a way of treating another with a certain moral disregard, it may be that all behaviors within the domain of etiquette are in some sense communicative in that they are going to express this regard or disregard. Nonetheless, we can distinguish behaviors which have a communicative function *independently* of norms of etiquette from those that don't. Saying 'please' and 'thank you' and lying by omission are both acts that, independently of etiquette, communicate something. Bringing a bottle of wine to a party is not essentially a communicative action in this way. Thus, bringing a bottle of wine to a party is an example of a non-communicative action.

Lastly some norms of etiquette governing explicit or implicit communication demand pretense in order to be fulfilled. These types of norms tend to aim at promoting social goods or psychological wellbeing. For example, Amy Olberding argues that norms requiring a pleasant demeanor in social spaces even when one is inwardly experiencing negative emotions serve the function of promoting positive emotion in others through emotional contagion, which also makes cooperation more likely (Olberding, 2019, p. 121). Thus, doing so promotes both psychological wellbeing and the social good of cooperation.

With this rudimentary description of some of the relevant aspects of manners on the table, I will now turn to the task of explaining what I mean by the term 'allocentric.'

Allocentrism and Androcentrism

In order to clarify what I mean by ‘allocentric,’ I will draw on feminist philosopher Sandra Bem’s characterization of androcentrism. Bem characterizes androcentrism as when “males or male experience are treated as the neutral standard or norm for the culture or species as a whole, and females or female experience are treated as sex-specific deviation from that allegedly universal standard.” (Bem, 1993, p. 41) The examples of androcentrism that Bem uses to explicate the concept are drawn from religious and philosophical traditions that are explicitly androcentric: the Biblical depiction of men as created in God’s image, and women created separately as a helper (Bem, 1993, p. 46-47) or Aristotle’s conception of women as ‘mutilated’ men who exist to serve the specific function of reproducing and helping maintain a household (Bem, 1993, p. 54).

In these cases, it is very clear to see the way that androcentrism manifests since the androcentrism is a part of the explicit content of the worldviews described. I’ll call this form androcentrism explicit androcentrism. However, the allocentrism in manners is not like this, so I would like to analogize it to another form of androcentrism: implicit androcentrism. Implicit androcentrism is when men are treated as the norm in a manner that does not involve the explicit conceptualization of them as such. One example of implicit androcentrism is the practice in automobile safety testing of using crash-test dummies that have the anatomical proportions of the average male. In this case, the anatomical proportions of men are being treated as a standard for safety for the species as a whole, to the detriment of women who are significantly more likely to be seriously

injured or die in a car crash (Welsh and Lenard, 2001). Likely, this practice originated from a number of factors: a male-dominated industry, implicit associations of men with driving, and defaulting to using only one standard dummy size for the sake of efficiency and cost-saving. It is unlikely that it was a result of treating men as the norm because of some broader understanding of women as a deficient deviation from men when it comes to crash-testing. For this reason, I think it can be characterized as a kind of implicit androcentrism.¹³

The allocentrism of manners is implicit. Manners have been designed in a way that fails to take autistic people into account, similarly to the way that cars have been designed in a way that does not take women into account. In fact, the allocentrism of manners could not be explicit, since the allocentric features of manners predate the existence of autism as a conceptual category. While there are explicit forms of allocentrism, namely, the usual deficit models dominating scientific, psychiatric and philosophical understandings of autism, the allocentrism of manners is implicit.

Because the allocentrism of manners is not grounded in any pernicious explicit conceptualization of autism as a deviation and because autism is in some sense actually a deviation from the species norm (at a minimum, statistically), the allocentrism of manners will not be obviously morally problematic to many readers in the way that androcentrism is. For this reason, in this Chapter I will only argue that manners are allocentric and highlight (descriptively) some of the negative consequences for autistics

¹³ By this, I do not mean to suggest that it is somehow innocent or able to be entirely disentangled from explicit androcentrism. If crash-testing is male-dominated, this is likely partly a result of the explicit forms of androcentrism that have led to a number of industries and professions being male-dominated.

of this allocentrism. In the next chapter, I will argue that the allocentrism of manners generates moral problems.

Examples of Allocentrism in Manners

The best method for arguing that manners are allocentric is simply to illustrate some of the core ways in which they are allocentric. Since I am not claiming that they are essentially allocentric and since manners are variable, contingent across cultures and often quite messy, there is no way to make a systematic argument for this claim. There are four main respects in which I will argue manners are allocentric. First, norms of etiquette that promote psychological wellbeing are often allocentric inasmuch as they treat allistic emotional dispositions as the species standard. Second, norms of etiquette that govern conversational implicature also often, more indirectly, treat allistic emotional dispositions as species standard. Third, norms of etiquette involving body language treat allistic body language and motor capabilities as the species standard. Lastly, norms of etiquette requiring pretense treat allistic dispositions of trust and interpretation as the species standard.

Psychological Wellbeing

Autistic and allistic psychologies tend¹⁴ to differ in a number of ways that sometimes make for quite different assumptions about what would count as considerate or inconsiderate behavior. For example, allistic people tend to be more self-conscious about how they appear to others. Autistic people, on the other hand, are sometimes less

¹⁴ 'Tend' here is crucial. Autistic people are not all homogenous and neither are allistics. The purpose of the examples I will be presenting is only to identify some illustrative cases, drawing on tendencies that are common among the respective groups, but not meant to be either universally representative or exhaustive.

concerned about how others perceive them in certain respects. Not in the sense that they are indifferent to negative perceptions by others.¹⁵ Rather, autistic people are sometimes indifferent to the forms of social pretense that help keep socially undesirable traits unremarked upon. This can lead to autistic people behaving in a way that most systems of manners would classify as rude. Consider the following example described by Luke Beardon: “An intelligent autistic adult is going to see someone who regards him as a friend. He knocks on the door and is let in. He exclaims ‘You’re looking fat and haggard today,’ and follows this by giving her a hug.”(Beardon, 2017, loc. 473)

The autistic individual in this story clearly acted in a manner that was rude, inasmuch as it was insensitive to the way such negative remarks about someone’s appearance are likely to impact them. The friend later explained that “she knew she was not looking her best that day, so to be told as much only affirmed it and made her feel worse.” (Beardon, 2017, loc. 480) The norms about these kinds of remarks track the emotional dispositions of many allistic people. They are not only likely to feel bad if they are looking far from their best, but they are also likely to feel even worse when others remind them of this. This is not an emotional disposition that the autistic individual in the story shares, as he went on to ask out of puzzlement: “if she already knew, then why would she be upset when someone pointed it out?” (Beardon, 2017, loc. 480) It is very

¹⁵ There is some evidence of reduced sensitivity to social reputation in certain respects, such as charitable giving where autistics do not reduce charitable donations when unobserved, in contrast to allistics (Izuma et al., 2011; Cage et al., 2013; Frith and Frith 2011). However, autistic people are certainly capable of feeling embarrassed, ashamed, and often suffer as a result of the social judgment of their allistic peers. The stereotype of the entirely socially oblivious and indifferent autistic is far from the truth (Jaswal and Akhtar, 2018; Gernsbacher, Stevenson and Dern, 2019). Concern with the perceptions of others is often driven by the practical needs of acceptance, where social survival makes it necessary (Ogawa et al., 2019).

likely that the autistic friend would not feel similarly distressed as a result of a friend acknowledging something he already knew to be true, and this is why he was not able to anticipate the impact of the remark.

The norms in operation here about avoiding open acknowledgment of potentially distressing facts about appearance are built to reflect how allistic, and not autistic people, are likely to react to these facts being openly commented on. Despite the fact that the autistic friend intended his comment along with the subsequent hug to be a way of expressing concern and to check if she was OK, his actions are codified as rude and insensitive because this way of expressing concern to allistics will ultimately cause distress. (Beardon, 2017, loc. 480)

This example illustrates how norms of etiquette track allistic emotional dispositions and aim to promote psychological wellbeing in a way that fits those dispositions. This on its own is not sufficient to show how norms of etiquette treat allistics as the standard when it comes to norms that promote psychological wellbeing. If norms of etiquette also tracked autistic emotional dispositions and were constructed in a way that promoted psychological wellbeing for autistic people, then allocentrism would not be present because allism would not be treated as the default standard.¹⁶ But this is not how norms of etiquette in fact operate. I will provide two examples to illustrate how systems of manners do in fact tend to be one-sided in promoting allistic psychological

¹⁶ Clarifying this point also lets me head off a misunderstanding I'd especially like to avoid. Given that I aim to argue that the allocentrism of manners is unjust, it might seem when I provide an example like this that I will ultimately argue cases like this are examples of injustice, which would lead to the conclusion that it is unjust that it is considered rude to tell a friend that she looks fat and haggard. This is a serious misunderstanding that locates the injustice in local instances of norms of etiquette rather than in the way these norms tend to operate globally. More on this in the relevant section.

wellbeing. The first is when there is an absence of norms that would avoid causing distress in autistic people. The second is when the norms themselves tend to cause emotional distress in autistic people.

Some autistic people can be prone to significant distress at social interactions when those interactions are unexpected or occur in a context that is difficult for the autistic person to socially navigate. Take the case of friendly social phone calls. Here is Cynthia Kim, an autistic writer, remarking on how she feels about the prospect of these: “When someone says ‘I’ll call you,’ my first reaction is, ‘what can I do to make that not happen?’ This is especially true of social calls, the kind that many women think are a pleasant way to connect with a friend.” (Kim, 2014, loc. 593) Kim identifies two sources of her distress at the sources of these phone calls: their unstructured nature and the fact that phone conversation relies heavily on prosody (Kim, 2014, loc. 593). Like many autistic people, Kim does not find unstructured, casual chats come naturally to her and prefers more structured forms of interaction. On top of this, Kim also has difficulty detecting and interpreting prosody. Prosody is the variation in vocal tone and rhythm that often communicates emotion and helps structure conversational turn-taking. Furthermore, Kim herself has flat affect such that her voice lacks the normal variations in prosody that most allistics have (Kim, 2014, loc. 604). Given that phone conversation is purely auditory and relies on prosody heavily for conversational cues (such as when a person is done talking), the result is that Kim dreads phone conversations.

Whereas situations or behavior that might be distressing for allistics are often deterred by norms of etiquette, situations or behavior that are distressing to autistics but

not allistics are not, even when it might not be of any real cost to allistics. That it is normal rather than rude to simply declare to a friend that you will call them, without asking for permission, reflects a failure of norms etiquette to track autistic emotional dispositions.

The absence of norms tracking autistic emotional dispositions is highlighted especially clearly by considering how new norms are constructed to fill the gaps in autistic spaces. For example, many autistic people also often find unprompted in-person social interactions with strangers distressing. At Autscope, an annual conference and convention for autistic people, there is a badge system used to allow participants to express their availability for social interactions. A badge hung around participants necks uses color coding to indicate whether an individual wants no social interaction initiated by others, social interaction initiated by others only by prior invitation, would like to socialize but prefers others to initiate, or would like to socialize and has no difficulty initiating (Autscope 2017). These badges create a set of etiquette norms governing the initiation of social interaction that is responsive to the emotional dispositions of autistic people. Such etiquette norms are clearly absent in society at large.

Other cases of allocentrism involve not just the absence of norms guided by the emotional dispositions of autistics, but the existence of norms that conflict with them. The earlier example from Beardon is of a common type of etiquette norm which involves avoiding explicitly remarking on certain unpleasant facts so as to avoid distress. While these norms help prevent distress in allistic people, they also tend to cause distress to autistic people. Many autistic people have a tendency towards direct and literal

communication and rely on clear and direct communication in order to effectively navigate interactions with others. As a result, many autistic people value honesty particularly highly, especially in their close relationships. When an allistic person avoids unpleasant truths in a close relationship, this can often lead an autistic person to feel deceived and hurt when the truth comes out. Consider the following case:

BOARD GAMES - Lu and Dalilah are roommates and very good friends. Dalilah is autistic, and like many autistic people has something she is especially interested in and passionate about. In her case, it is board games. Like many autistic people, she is also eager to share this interest with those close to her, including Lu. Dalilah frequently suggests playing board games together. Unbeknownst to Dalilah initially, Lu actually finds board games boring. Nonetheless, she tends to agree to play them from time to time because she cares about Dalilah. When asked whether she enjoyed a particular game, Lu does what she takes to be the polite thing: she finds something nice to say and omits expressing her true opinion. One day, when Lu has had an especially stressful week and when Dalilah is a little too pushy about playing a board game, Lu blurts out the truth. Dalilah responds with indignation. Feeling deceived by Lu, she starts to doubt the extent to which she can trust her. Why didn't she just tell her instead of lying?

What Lu sees as just a minor and normal form of relationship compromise navigated by politely avoiding unnecessarily brutal honesty, Dalilah experiences as a deceptive violation of trust. When she asked what Lu thought, she asked because she genuinely wanted to know whether Lu was enjoying herself, since, after all, that was the primary point of engaging in a recreational activity together. Most allistics would likely

find it understandable that Dalilah would be disappointed to learn Lu's distaste for her hobby, but many would nonetheless share Lu's bafflement at the extent to which Dalilah is upset, or even the fact that Dalilah failed to pick up on Lu's polite avoidance of expressing her actual feelings in the first place. The norms that Lu followed are norms that are keyed to allistic emotional dispositions and those norms conflict with autistic emotional dispositions.

The way in which norms of manners treat allistic emotional dispositions as the standard is not just by treating them as the emotional dispositions one should expect in one's interactions with others. They make those emotional dispositions standard in a stronger, normative sense. When norms of etiquette have the function of promoting certain psychological wellbeing, they assign normative weight to the emotional dispositions that they are connected to. Consider the Beardon example. The allistic friend's emotional response is seen as a fitting one that ought to be anticipated, and so the autistic friend's behavior immediately reads as rude and inconsiderate (even if it is not seen as malicious). When the shoe is on the other foot, however, autistic emotional responses are treated as idiosyncrasies at best or irrational overreactions at worst (when not misunderstood entirely). In the case of Lu and Dalilah, Lu's behavior is not likely to be interpreted in the way the autistic friend's was in Beardon's example, and this is reflected in how Dalilah's emotional dispositions are likely to be judged. Dalilah's response is not likely to be seen as a fully fitting reaction to Lu's behavior. Nor is it likely to be seen as a reaction that Lu should have anticipated in the same way that the autistic

friend should have anticipated his allistic friend's response to being told she looked 'fat and haggard.'

Implicit Communication

Norms of etiquette are also allocentric in two respects connected to the domain of implicit communication. First, norms of etiquette frequently prioritize implicit communication over explicit communication and do so by relying heavily on conversational implicature. The conversational implicature in these cases tends to reflect allistic emotional dispositions and not autistic emotional dispositions. Second, norms of etiquette treat allistic body language as standard body language by integrating it into norms of etiquette, and fail to do so with autistic body language.

Many norms of etiquette require the use of implicit communication. Politely declining an invite to a party may require the use of certain scripted responses, such as stating that you are busy, that are intended to reject the invitation without expressing the underlying reason for the rejection explicitly, but while leaving any number of reasons implicitly open ('I am actually busy/I don't like your parties/I don't like you/the company you invite/the music you play'). This is a form of conversational implicature. The implicature involved in these responses is shown in the fact that these responses are often understood not to necessarily be literally true: the party host understands that while it could be that the person invited is busy, it is also possible that they have some other reason for not coming that would be impolite to state explicitly. Thus, if a particular person frequently declines their invitations by claiming, vaguely, that they are busy, they will probably infer that there is actually a lack of interest and stop inviting that person.

The case of Lu and Dalilah is another example: Lu finding something nice to say about playing board games when asked if she enjoys them, but not answering in the affirmative, is a way to not only avoid the pain caused by explicitly communicating that they bore her, but also implicitly communicate that she is not all that enthused about them. This is one reason why she is likely to be baffled at Dalilah feeling deceived by her behavior. If Dalilah asks ‘Did you enjoy it?’ and Lu remarks on something else, like the quality of the components, Lu may expect that Dalilah will pick up that her saying something nice that does not directly answer the question implicitly conveys that her true feelings are negative enough to avoid explicit expression.

Autistic people tend to find conversational implicature difficult to navigate (Pastor-Cerezuela et al., 2018). Aside from many autistics’ disposition towards honesty and literal communication, differing emotional dispositions play an important role here inasmuch as conversational implicature is used to avoid explicit communication that might be upsetting to allistic people. For example many allistic people often look for affirmation when asking questions about things they care about to friends, family and romantic partners. Oftentimes norms of etiquette will require some form of white lie when the affirmation sought can’t be sincerely given, but white lies are not a form of implicit communication since they depend on the other party believing something explicitly communicated even though it is insincere. These cases are usually when there is nothing required of the other party besides the affirmation.

This contrasts with cases like the party invite or Dalilah asking Lu if she enjoyed a board game. In these cases, the other party faces the prospect of being involved in some

further way besides their utterance and so has a legitimate basis for withholding the affirmation if it would commit them in a way they would rather not be committed. It would be unreasonable to expect everyone to accept party invites to spare the host's feelings, so certain forms of rejection are codified as polite ways of navigating the competing interests. 'Sorry, I'm busy that night' walks that middle ground. Similarly, while Lu is comfortable compromising rather than rejecting, avoiding direct answers to Dalilah's questions is supposed to communicate her reservations without expressing the hurtful truth.

In contrast, autistic people are less inclined towards asking questions for the purpose of emotional affirmation and often find this practice baffling.¹⁷ This makes them much less likely to accurately anticipate when allistics are asking questions for this reason. This also leads to misunderstandings where allistic people interpret an autistic person's question as seeking affirmation. When Dalilah asks Lu if she enjoys board games, it is because she wants to know, not because she is seeking emotional validation of her passion for them. As far as she sees it, if she did not want to know the answer even if it is negative, why would she ask? The practice of implicitly communicating reservation through positive but evasive responses depends for its comprehensibility on an emotional disposition that Dalilah simply does not have. Thus, the way the norms of etiquette in these cases involve conversational implicature treat allistic emotional dispositions as the standard.

¹⁷ That doesn't mean they don't enjoy affirmation, of course. It's always pleasant to hear that your haircut is in fact stylish or that you were actually in the right in an argument.

This allocentrism leads to negative consequences for autistics in two ways. The obvious way is that misunderstandings occur, since it is harder for autistics to successfully pick up on the relevant forms of conversational implicature. However, autistics are not entirely incapable of navigating norms governing implicit communication. To continue with the example I've been focusing on, autistic people certainly learn that allistics often ask questions because they want affirmation. But it's one thing to know that other people have a certain emotional disposition and another to make accurate judgments about when that disposition will manifest. If one lacks the emotional disposition to begin with, it is not possible to intuitively judge when it might be manifesting in others through generalization from one's own case. This means that rather than relying on intuition based on psychological resemblance, autistic people must rely on explicit, conscious judgment which is significantly more demanding.

Additionally, it's even more demanding to try and predict when other people are likely to incorrectly judge that the same emotional dispositions are manifesting in oneself. This nested bit of perspective-taking is the one that Dalilah would have had to have pulled off. She would have had to discern that when she asked a question in this case, that Lu would misinterpret her as asking the question because she was seeking affirmation. This highlights the second way that allocentrism in norms involving conversational implicature negatively impacts autistics: by increasing the cognitive load required to successfully navigate these norms.

Another, more straightforward way that norms of etiquette involving implicit communication are allocentric is by treating allistic body language as standard. Consider the following illustration:

GROCERY STORE - John works at a grocery store under the supervision of his Manager, Roberta. John is a recent hire and has just had trouble correctly cleaning up a mess caused by an accident in one of the aisles, so Roberta calls John to her office to go over store procedure for cleanups again. While she is talking to John, he fidgets with a zipper and stares at it and never once makes eye contact. Even when Roberta reminds John that this is important and he should pay attention, he does not appear to get the hint and continues looking away from her. Bothered by John's rude behavior, during the meeting, she assumes he is another disrespectful teenager.

Despite appearances, John did not have any attitude of disrespect towards Roberta. In fact, John's behavior in this case was an indication of his taking the meeting seriously and being interested in ensuring he learned the right procedures. Like many autistic people, John finds making eye contact painful and distracting, so avoiding eye contact is the best way to ensure that he is able to listen without distraction. Similarly, John has a sensitivity to fluorescent lighting shared by many autistic people and fidgeting with his zipper is a form of sensory self-regulation which helps keep him from being overwhelmed by the lighting (often called 'stimming').

The situation with body language is fairly straightforward. As illustrated in the case above, norms of etiquette reflect allistics' capabilities for modulating their own body language. While many autistic people don't make eye contact simply because they have

no natural disposition to do so, many autistic people avoid making eye contact because doing so is actively painful, intense or otherwise interferes with focus (Trevisan et al., 2017). When eye contact is required in certain cultures in order to show respect, this reflects the fact that allistics do not generally have difficulties making eye contact while maintaining attention.

Likewise, many autistics use stimming in order to self-regulate and improve focus (Kapp, 2019). When sitting still is required in order to show attention, this reflects the fact that allistics generally do not have difficulties doing so and do not generally need to fidget in order to improve focus. More broadly, some autistic people may have motor differences that make modulating body language in the way norms require difficult or impossible. For example, autistic people may have difficulty smiling or modulating facial expressions deliberately (Autist Making Way, 2020). Others may have motor stereotypies or problems with motor control, such as dyspraxia, that would interfere with modulating their body language in ways that allistics find straightforward (Whyatt and Craig, 2013; Cassidy et al., 2016).

Similarly, autistic body language is not incorporated into norms of etiquette in the same way allistic body language is. For example, some autistic people flap their hands. This hand flapping can express a number of different emotional states, ranging from positive emotions like excitement and joy, to negative emotions like distress or overwhelm. Some autistic people who hand-flap state that it is a form of body language that they can interpret in other autistics (Bascom, 2012, p. 179; Hillary, 2016). This means that it is not only expressive, but comprehensible (at least to autistics who engage

in this form of body language). It goes without saying that hand-flapping is not incorporated into any etiquette norms as an accepted form of expression, whereas body language that is natural to allistics is. Where politeness requires body language expressing positive affect, a smile will do but flapping hands will not.

The fact that allistic body language is incorporated into norms of etiquette and autistic body language is not shows the allocentricity of norms of etiquette in this respect. This allocentricity leads to negative consequences for autistics expressed in being subject to a kind of double bind: in abiding by the norms that require suppressing autistic body language, autistics may be lose out on whatever goods certain forms of body language promote for them and if they don't suppress that body language, then they will be misinterpreted and subject to erroneous moral judgment. Thus, autistic people like John who find eye contact distressing or distracting must either face being misinterpreted as inattentive and disrespectful, or be unable to focus on what the other person is saying because of the discomfort involved in forcing themselves to make eye contact.

The common thread for both norms involving conversational implicature and body language is that their allocentricity forces autistic people to choose between losing out on certain expressive goods or pay a high cognitive toll trying to make unintuitive social inferences or suppress natural body language.

Pretense

The last aspect of manners that is allocentric is the relatively common requirement to maintain pretense in order to be polite. For our purposes, we can identify two forms of pretense distinguished by their intent: deceptive pretense and appearance

pretense. Deceptive pretense is when pretense is used in order to actually deceive someone else. Since we are talking about polite behavior, this will naturally not be deception with malicious intent. White lies that are intended to genuinely deceive the person being lied to are a good example. Telling someone that you enjoyed their wedding, when in fact you were miserable, for example. Appearance pretense is distinguished from deceptive pretense in that it aims only to create a certain kind of social appearance, but not to deceive. Most commonly, this takes the form of ignoring a social faux pas or other issue in order to help someone else save face, when the faux pas is apparent to everyone involved. The point of ignoring it is not to convince the person who committed the social faux pas that they did not or that no one actually noticed, but simply to avoid the unpleasantness of making the issue explicit. The spouse of a theater actor who tripped and fell on stage may refrain from commenting on the mistake afterwards, acting as if it never happened. But this is not deceptive pretense. It is clear to the actor that everyone in the audience, their spouse included, saw the fall. And it is equally clear to the spouse that the actor knows this, regardless of whether it is commented on.

Between these two forms of pretense lie two types of pretense that are not quite classically deceptive, but are not solely focused on appearance either. One form I will call omissive pretense, which is pretense that may not intend to cause another person to have a false belief, but which does intend not to provide another person with grounds for a certain true belief. Omissive and appearance pretense may often occur in the same circumstances involving face-saving but are distinguished by the pretender's intent and understanding of the epistemic situation. If the actor instead made a subtle mistake in a

line delivery, their spouse might not comment on this in order to avoid causing the actor to believe that some audience members noticed. The other form of pretense between deceptive and appearance pretense I will call bootstrapping pretense. Bootstrapping pretense is pretense that has the intent of making what is pretended true. Forcing a smile may partly involve the intent to convince someone else that you are happy, but it may also have the intent of forcing yourself to have a good time and become happy.

The forms of pretense required by manners are allocentric in some of the ways already discussed: maintaining pretense may require employing body language that is unnatural for autistic people, making it difficult for them to maintain pretense when politeness requires it. When manners require pretense, it is often for the purpose of promoting psychological wellbeing, but as discussed previously, these standards of psychological wellbeing are allocentric and privilege the emotional dispositions of allistic people. The salient emotional disposition here is discomfort with lying. Autistic people frequently report significant discomfort at having to engage in deceptive behavior (Jaarsma, Gelhaus and Wellin, 2012). Norms requiring pretense not only generally aim to spare the feelings of a person who committed a social faux pas, but often enable the pretender to avoid social discomfort as well. Autistic people who would not experience serious discomfort at indicating the presence of a faux pas, but who would experience intense discomfort at trying to pretend no faux pas happened are sacrificing some of their own wellbeing on behalf of the other person. But this is not the extent of the allocentrism. What is distinctive about the allocentrism of pretense requiring norms of etiquette is epistemic. The common use of pretense in allistic social interactions makes those social

interactions reduces their epistemic accessibility to autistic people and also creates more general epistemic disadvantages.

There are two ways in which the prevalence of pretense results in epistemic disadvantages for autistic people. The first involves the way in which appearance pretense can deprive autistic people of valuable social feedback. Inasmuch as manners often involve a wide range of implicit standards based off of allistic psychological dispositions, they do not come naturally to autistic people and autistic people may often be unaware of the existence or nuances of a wide range of social norms. Appearance pretense operates on the assumption that the person who committed a social faux pas likely knows that they have committed one and probably did not do so intentionally or negligently, and so avoiding an unpleasant social confrontation is preferred. However, this does not necessarily hold true for autistic people, who may be unaware that they have just committed the social faux pas. Thus, when appearance pretense is used it often treats the epistemic position of allistic people as the implicit standard.

While the impact of appearance pretense on autistics' epistemic position is primarily social, the use of deceptive and omissive pretense results in more general epistemic disadvantages. Here it will be important to be precise, as the nature of deceptive and omissive pretense is such that when they succeed they create epistemic disadvantage in the target: their goal is create a false belief or avoid creating a true belief respectively. What is distinctive about how autistic people are epistemically disadvantaged results not merely from the fact that these forms of pretense withhold information, but from the fact that allistic people's interest in and expectations about

receiving truthful information tend to differ from autistic people's in a way that leads to autistic people relying on others for the truth in situations where allistics might not. An example may help clarify this subtle issue. Consider the following situation:

FANCY HAIRCUT - Kay has recently gotten a fancy haircut. He asks his friend Minali what she thinks of it. Minali thinks it looks a little goofy, but knows Kay is just looking for some validation, so she tells him it looks great.

Minali understands that Kay is looking for a compliment and not for the truth. The stakes are low, so she sees no reason to tell him what she actually thinks. Crucially, she takes it that Kay is not relying on her to provide reliable information about her opinion of his haircut. This may be because Kay already has fixed beliefs about it (it's snazzy) and is looking for validation, or because he wants to rely on his friend to form certain beliefs independently of their truth. Whether Kay is depending on Minali for his beliefs (depending on whether he is asking from a place of confidence or insecurity), he is not depending on her for the truth. Furthermore, in asking he has an implicit understanding of how manners are likely to lead Minali to express an evaluation that is more positive than her actual evaluation. If he wanted to ensure that he got her actual opinion, he would probably break out of normal social scripts in order to phrase his question in a way that made it clear that he was not looking for validation.

Many autistic people have a tendency to take people's utterances at face value. They also tend to expect other people to take their utterances at face value. Combining this with the fact that many autistic people differ psychologically from allistic people such that they typically don't expect or pursue the same forms of social validation, and

the result is that autistic people find practices of deceptive and omissive pretense alien. Autistic people are more inclined to trust that they can rely on others to provide truthful answers. One of the results of this is that autistic people are significantly more vulnerable to being taken advantage of and abused (Fisher, Moskowitz and Hodapp, 2012). But the important result here is that autistic people frequently have their level of epistemic trust misaligned with the appropriate levels even when it comes to those who have good intentions. If Kay is autistic, it is likely he is asking about and expecting Minali's actual opinion. The result is that autistic Kay will not only rely on Minali to form truth-tracking beliefs about his haircut, but his confidence in Minali as a source of testimony will be too high. Thus, while autistic Kay and allistic Kay both end up with false beliefs about their haircut, allistic Kay's confidence in this belief and confidence in Minali as a source of true beliefs about his hair will more accurately reflect the true epistemic situation.

Moral Problems with Allocentrism in Etiquette

Throughout this chapter, I have identified a variety of ways in which systems of etiquette are allocentric and I have also highlighted some negative impacts this allocentrism has on autistic people. These negative impacts, in and of themselves, appear to be morally problematic. Autistic people face significant harms and disadvantages due to the allocentrism of etiquette.

However, philosophers such as Sarah Buss, Amy Olberding and Karen Stohr have recently made arguments about the deep moral significance of manners, including defenses of the moral importance of allocentric aspects of etiquette, such as the use of pretense. If these philosophers are right, we might ask whether manners must remain

allocentric while retaining this moral significance, and whether the moral significance of manners might simply outweigh any harms brought upon autistics. In the next chapter, I will consider these questions and argue that the important moral functions philosophers have attributed to manners are inconsistent with the allocentrism of manners.

Chapter 3 – Allocentric Manners as a Moral Problem

In this Chapter, I want to make the case that the allocentrism of manners is a moral problem. This amounts to the claim that either there is an obligation to make them less allocentric, or to otherwise minimize the impact the allocentrism of manners has on autistic people. The question of what solutions there are to this moral problem, and whether any of them are feasible, is an issue for the next chapter. If you are skeptical that the allocentrism of manners is a moral problem because you think there is no reasonable solution to it, your concerns will be addressed in the next Chapter.

As I remarked when introducing the concept of androcentrism in Chapter 2, it is not as obvious that allocentrism in manners will be as morally problematic in the same way that androcentrism is. There are, roughly, three reasons for this. First, allocentrism in manners is not based on explicit judgments that autistic people, as a group, are a deviation from some normative standard for human beings. It does not need to involve any normative judgments about autism that would be morally problematic. Second, autism is a statistical deviation, with autistic people constituting somewhere between 1.5% and 3% of the population by current estimates (Maenner, 2020). Inasmuch as the allocentrism of manners only results from the fact that they are a small statistical minority of the population, it seems more morally innocent. Lastly, manners serve morally important functions in allistic societies. In contrast, none of this is true for androcentrism. Androcentrism involves judgments about being a woman being a deviation from a normative standard for human beings, it harms a group that is not a statistical minority and it serves no valuable moral functions.

These first two differences between the allocentrism of manners and androcentrism are morally relevant, but not sufficient to argue that there is no moral problem present. Though I will not argue for this claim, I will be assuming that if a set of practices causes a great deal of harm to even a small statistical minority then however innocent of malice those practices are, there is prima facie a moral problem. The only exception would be if those practices are morally required or warranted. Laws against murder cause a great deal of harm to a small statistical minority (murderers), but most people believe that such laws are not a moral problem since there is a moral justification for those laws and for the enforcement of those laws against those convicted of murder. If manners likewise serve a significant moral function, then some negative impacts might be justifiable costs.

The Moral Significance of Manners

Recently, a number of moral philosophers such as Sarah Buss, Karen Stohr, Nancy Sherman, Cheshire Calhoun and Amy Olberding have appealed to a variety of moral considerations in order to argue that manners are morally significant. In this chapter, I will consider some of these arguments and show how the moral considerations that these philosophers use to argue for the moral significance of manners imply that the allocentric features of manners are indeed moral problems. Where these philosophers defend specifically allocentric aspects of manners by appealing to these moral considerations, such as Stohr's argument that respecting others requires polite pretense, I will argue that those moral considerations are ultimately inconsistent with the allocentric aspects of manners.

I am using the term ‘moral considerations’ to refer broadly to the moral principles and morally significant goods invoked in these recent philosophical defenses of manners. These range from moral principles, such as the Kantian formula of humanity, to moral goods, such as the promotion of psychological wellbeing discussed in Section I of the previous chapter. I will be focusing on four broad types of moral consideration invoked in philosophical defenses of manners: enabling expressive goods, enabling respect, promoting psychological and social goods, and promoting proper moral development.¹⁸

Enabling Expressive Goods

One moral consideration appealed to in a few of the contemporary philosophical defenses of manners are the expressive goods that they enable. Philosophers such as Cheshire Calhoun, Karen Stohr and Amy Olberding all argue that the conventions of manners allow us to express important moral attitudes in ways that we could not reliably express otherwise. Stohr’s treatment of this moral consideration is the most extensive and the arguments all tend to run along the same lines and are fairly straightforward, so I will treat Stohr’s argument as representative of these types of arguments in the literature, bringing in other contributions when they bring something novel to the table.

Perhaps the most straightforward example of the way that the conventions of manners enable expressive behavior are conventions such as standing in a line:

Lines are one way of demonstrating a commitment to the equal standing of other people. The person who cuts in line is expressing a disregard for that

¹⁸ If this seems like an eclectic list, it is because the recent philosophical literature on manners tends to be eclectic. Karen Stohr, for example, invokes Kantian, Humean, utilitarian and virtue theoretic moral theories throughout her book and deliberately and explicitly sets aside their incompatibilities (Stohr 27). My focus will be on those most centrally invoked in defending the moral importance of manners, in contrast to moral considerations that may be involved in other ways (for example, Stohr primarily relies on virtue theory when arguing for the importance of practical wisdom in *practicing* manners).

commitment. Either he doesn't think that he needs to take other people into account at all, or else he thinks that there is something that justifies his being served ahead of other people. (Stohr, 2011, p. 12)

If cutting in line expresses the attitude that one's needs are more important than others, then remaining a line (in cultures that have them) and not cutting "communicates my belief that I am on equal footing with them." (Stohr, 2011, p. 29) Similarly, Stohr points out how other conventions of etiquette such as saying 'please' when making requests (or commands), or the requirement to wear serious clothing at funerals are conventions of communication. The role of all of these conventions is to create behaviors that express certain moral attitudes, such as respect or kindness.

Cheshire Calhoun's analysis of gift-giving in "Common Decency" highlights the ways in which conventions also help avoid the expression of attitudes which aren't present. When providing assistance, a favor or a gift, having established conventions about when, to whom and what kind of assistance, favors or gifts are appropriate narrows the interpretive possibilities regarding the motives behind such acts. Outside the boundaries of these conventions, we may risk giving "the appearance of bribing, currying favor, being paternalistic, taking liberties, showing favoritism, or seducing." (Calhoun, 2003, p. 138) Gift-giving may not in itself express a morally significant attitude, such as giving a gift out of simple fondness, but even in such cases conventions of manners provide guidance for doing so in ways that are less likely to lead to a misunderstanding that one's motives are morally pernicious.

Returning to Stohr's argument, Stohr does not merely set out to describe the ways manners enable expressive goods. She also argues that the conventions of manners are

morally binding because they enable expressive goods: “if social customs serve as the vehicles through which we communicate moral attitudes to others, we cannot single-handedly change the language through which those attitudes are spoken.” (Stohr, 2011, p. 30) It is partly on this basis that Stohr argues that despite the conventional nature of manners, we can appeal to the moral attitudes that manners are supposed to enable the expression of in order to critique social norms that are at odds with this function. The example Stohr presents to make this case draws on Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” where King calls out conventions at the time to withhold honorifics such as ‘Mrs’ from black Americans. While by the conventions of etiquette of the time it would not have been the case that someone withholding such an honorific would be acting rudely, Stohr argues that in judging this convention, we can instead appeal to whether or not “it reflects correct underlying moral principles and attitudes.” (Stohr, 2011, p. 34) By this standard, since the withholding of honorifics is expressive of disrespect, such behavior is to be considered rude and the conventions which in the past dictated otherwise would be considered mistaken.

When norms of etiquette run counter to the expressive function of manners, they may be dismissed. Likewise, Stohr thinks that when they are unnecessary to the expressive function, they may be dismissed. Stohr gives the example that while telling someone to ‘pass the salt you idiot’ is rude in most contexts because it clearly expresses disrespect, it may be acceptable in certain circumstances where different standards of communication mean that it can be said without communicating disrespect, such as when said teasingly to one’s sibling. (Stohr, 2011, p. 31) This has the result that “the fewer

alternative ways we have to communicate our respect to people, the more important standard social conventions become.” (Stohr, 2011, p. 31) Presumably, only when one knows someone else quite well are there typically enough alternative ways to express respect to sidestep polite behavior.

When it comes to autistic-allistic social interactions, manners often run contrary to the function of enabling expressive goods, as should be apparent from the many miscommunications in my illustrations of the allocentrism of manners in the previous Chapter. Lu’s attempt to express kindness by refraining from expressing her true opinion about board games only makes her come across as deceitful to Dalilah. The autistic man who told his friend that she looked ‘fat and haggard’ failed to express concern to his friend, instead expressing callousness.

Furthermore, manners tend to make these miscommunications worse in the circumstances that they are supposed to be most necessary: interactions with strangers. Lu and Dalilah, being roommates, can work out the misunderstanding. But in cases of interaction with acquaintances or strangers these opportunities for alternative communication are less likely to arise. Recall the case of John, who works at a grocery store and is judged to be disrespectful and irresponsible by his manager, Roberta, because he does not make eye contact during their meeting. It is unlikely that John will have an opportunity to explain himself, assuming he is ever made aware of Roberta’s judgment of him or that he is even aware that he is autistic and is able to identify and articulate the source of the issue.

It could be objected here that such interactions occur rarely and that it is relevant that autistics are a small statistical minority of the human population. Conventions require a certain level of generality in order to enable reliable interpretation and expression, and because of this fact it is going to turn out that these conventions may sometimes fail in atypical cases (of which autistic-allistic interactions are an example). This type of objection is really an objection about the feasibility of a solution to the moral problem, rather than about the presence of a moral problem in the first place. If the expressive goods enabled by manners are a core part of the moral value of manners, and a subset of the population is not able to enjoy those goods due to the way those conventions are constructed, then that seems sufficient to establish that there is a moral problem present. Since solutions are not the topic of this chapter, I will set aside this objection and similar objections until the next chapter.

While it is both easy to see how manners enable expressive goods and how the allocentricity of manners can deprive autistics of those same expressive goods, some philosophers make an even stronger claim about the moral function of manners. Both Karen Stohr and Sarah Buss argue that manners are necessary not just for expressing important moral attitudes, but also for possessing those moral attitudes in the first place. Both philosophers focus specifically on the moral attitude of respect, though each takes a different approach to arguing that manners are necessary to properly respect others.

Respect

Both Stohr and Buss argue that being able to express respect via the conventions of manners is important for the existence of the attitude of respect itself. Their precise

approaches partially overlap and partially diverge. They overlap inasmuch as they both argue that it is a consequence of conventions of etiquette to promote the attitude of respect towards ourselves and others. For Buss, this is a result of the way that humans respond to the social attitudes of others: if someone is treated with respect by their peers, then they are more likely to come to see themselves as worthy of respect. For Stohr, conventions of pretense help us maintain our commitments to moral self-improvement and ensure that we feel ourselves among moral peers. When we resist openly airing our moral failings and pretend not to notice the moral failings of others, we create a society conducive to seeing ourselves and others as moral agents striving to maintain our ideals. Where Buss and Stohr diverge most significantly is that Buss also argues that expressing respect through conventions of etiquette does not just promote respect as a consequence, but is actually necessary for treating others respectfully in the first place. For Buss, the communication of respect to others is also partly constitutive of respect itself.

As it is the most distinctive and ambitious, I will start with Buss' argument that expressions of respect are necessary in order to treat others with respect. Buss makes her argument by first distinguishing between two ways of recognizing others as worthy of respect: indirectly and directly. Since Buss is using respect here in a Kantian sense, she has in mind our treatment of others as ends-in-themselves. That is, rational agents who have goals and purposes that we must treat as worthwhile with the result that we see "[their] interests and goals as constraints on our own basic aims." (Buss, 1999, p. 802) Indirect acknowledgement of others as respectable comes from *treating* another person's ends as constraining in this way (Buss, 1999, p. 802). For example, remaining in

my place in line involves me constraining how I act on my own desire to ride the rollercoaster by treating the other queuers' equivalent desires as on a par with my own. In contrast, direct acknowledgement of others as respectable involves communicating to someone that "[they are] worthy of this accommodation." (Buss, 1999, p. 802) It is this direct acknowledgement of others as respectable that manners enable by revealing that one is accommodating their ends with the specific motive of respect. Standing in a line when there is a convention of politeness to do so will also involve direct acknowledgement of another's respectability, as will many other forms of polite behavior.

This might initially sound like a rehash of the appeal to expressive goods discussed previously, but there is an important difference. Buss does claim that the conventions of manners are important for enabling us to acknowledge the respectability of others directly, but she takes things a step further by arguing that this direct acknowledgment is necessary to actually respect others, not merely to express respect.

Buss asserts that the most persuasive argument in favor of her claim that manners are essential to respecting others will involve a thought experiment. She asks us to imagine a world in which every human being infallibly treated others' ends as constraints on their own in the morally required way, thus infallibly indirectly acknowledging others as worthy of respect. She then asks us to imagine whether manners would be unnecessary in this imagined world in order for all those who lived in it to be treated respectfully. She claims that even in these ideal circumstances, manners would still be necessary because

otherwise they could still fail to treat each other with respect and this is because “they would still be capable of hurting one another’s feelings, offending one another’s dignity, treating one another discourteously, inconsiderately, impolitely.” (Buss, 1999, p. 804)

This line of argument is a little perplexing at first, and in parts appears to be circular. She claims that in this pseudo-kingdom-of-ends without manners, disrespect would still occur because it would be possible to be discourteous, inconsiderate or impolite. But these are all just ways to saying it would be possible to act contrary to manners, which is by stipulation a feature of this imaginary world. The real question is whether it would be possible in acting contrary to manners to still respect someone else on the assumption that you nonetheless infallibly indirectly acknowledged them as worthy of respect by treating their ends as worthy of accommodation. The only unambiguously non-circular characterization is the claim that the humans in this imaginary world would still be capable of hurting one another’s feelings and, indeed, this is the particular issue that Buss focuses on as she expands on her argument:

Even if I were confident that everyone in my community respected my right to choose and act “autonomously,” someone could still fail to treat me with respect if she stared off into the middle distance or carefully examined her fingernails, whenever I tried to engage her in conversation... she fails to treat me with respect if she makes no effort to hide her disinterest in, or contempt for, my feelings. (Buss, 1999, p. 804)

When Buss asserts that it would still be possible to hurt the feelings of others in a world where all humans treated each other with indirect respect only, she seems to have in mind a specific way that feelings would be hurt. In working out this thought experiment, she elaborates on the distinction between indirect and direct acknowledgement by claiming that indirect acknowledgement of someone’s worthiness

for respect means “considering how they feel about certain things, people and projects” whereas direct acknowledgement means “considering how they feel about having their feelings ignored.” (Buss, 1999, p. 804) Buss seems to be saying that the problem with the pseudo-kingdom-of-ends is that while first-order feelings are considered (presumably it would be impossible to indirectly treat others as ends otherwise), indirect acknowledgment does not require that these higher-order feelings about having first-order feelings be considered.

As intriguing as Buss’ argument is, it is very unclear and highly compressed. She wants to demonstrate that being respectful of other people requires direct acknowledgement and that indirect acknowledgement is not sufficient. She thus proposes to imagine a world where everyone abides by the categorical imperative by “[enabling] every other citizen to exercise [their] capacity for rational choice.” (Buss, 1999, p. 804) This is the indirect acknowledgement, which, to reiterate requires considering the first-order feelings of other people, to treat their interests and goals as constraints on ours. Then in this hypothetical world, she claims that it is possible to have contempt for the feelings of other people and make no attempt to hide this.

For example, she implies that it would be possible to simply ignore other people in conversation. This behavior simply does not seem to fit with a world where all humans engage in indirect acknowledgement, given the way Buss has defined this term. Someone engaging in conversation has certain interests: in being heard, in hearing what the other person has to say. If one person completely ignores another person in a conversation, they are failing to indirectly acknowledge them because they are failing to treat the interests of

the other conversant as carrying any weight. They are not obligated to engage in conversation, of course, there may be other more important things. But they are obligated by the constraints of indirect acknowledgement to at least excuse themselves from the conversation. Failing to excuse oneself or otherwise indicate disinterest amounts to wasting the other person's time by creating the appearance of availability for conversation. It is difficult to imagine a case where this would be consistent with indirect acknowledgement. Indirect acknowledgement requires taking into account the first-order feelings of others, so it's unclear how it could violate a higher-order desire not to have one's feelings ignored.

Perhaps what makes direct acknowledgement necessary is a specific kind of first-order feeling. On this interpretation, the idea would be that human beings care about having direct acknowledgment of their respect-worthiness. Failing to acknowledge them directly is then to ignore certain feelings that they have, which means that one is not giving them the indirect respect that we are obligated to give them.

This interpretation is somewhat supported by the way Buss considers imagining a kingdom of ends in which nothing counted as polite. She claims that the only way she can imagine such a world is by imagining it occupied by young children, since they "do not take offense as readily as most adults; they say harsh things to each other, or ignore each other, without seeming to notice that there is anything amiss." (Buss, 1999, pp. 804-805) That young children do not take offense or see anything wrong when they are spoken to harshly by other children seems to suggest that they don't have concerns about direct acknowledgment that, on Buss' view, adults have. Of course, as Buss points out,

young children aren't full-blown moral agents, so a world of young children is not an example of a kingdom of ends where nothing counts as polite (Buss, 1999, p. 805).

Nothing may count as polite in the world of children, but it is also not a kingdom of ends.

There are two problems with the argument interpreted in this way. First, if this is her argument then it seems to be a kind of magic trick: the reason why direct acknowledgement is necessary for treating others with respect is because there is an innate desire for humans to have such acknowledgement. This desire must be given its due if we are to indirectly acknowledge others as respect-worthy. Thus, direct acknowledgement is necessary because it is built into our moral psychology to seek it. But unless there is strong independent reason to believe that human beings all have such a desire, this would only be a convenient form of bootstrapping. If we consider whether or not there is a reason to believe that humans have this desire, we run into the second problem.

The second problem is that not only does Buss not establish that a desire for direct acknowledgement is intrinsic to moral agents as such, her discussion of children also seems to provide evidence to the contrary. Unless it is a developmental necessity of some kind, the fact that children don't take offense easily and lack this desire for direct acknowledgment is strong evidence of the contingency of such a desire. If the desire is contingent, then this version of Buss' argument could not establish the necessity of direct acknowledgment for treating others with respect. I am unable to reconstruct Buss' argument that direct acknowledgement is necessary for treating others with respect in a satisfactory manner. This means it is difficult to assess the extent to which allocentrism

may result in a moral problem for this proposed moral function of manners. Fortunately, Buss' argument that expressions of respect in the form of polite direct acknowledgement help promote the attitude of respect is much clearer.

Buss does not focus solely on making the claim that politeness is necessary to be respectful. She further points out that manners also play the role of helping promote self-respect. Buss' argument here is quite straightforward. When we are treated rudely, we are likely to come "to doubt that [our] 'plan of life' is 'worth carrying out' and that [we] have what it takes to carry out any life plan of value." (Buss, 1999, p. 803) If we are treated by those around us as if our projects and concerns do not matter and need not be accommodated, we will be vulnerable to internalizing this and losing our self-respect. In contrast, when we are treated politely, our sense of self-respect is reinforced by those around us and we are more likely to have a healthy sense of the worth of our projects and concerns, as well as our own efficacy in pursuing them.

While rudeness and politeness can respectively inhibit or promote a sense of self-respect in adolescents and adults, this function of manners is especially salient to the moral development of children. According to Buss, small children's impoliteness – endearing as it can be – is an expression of the fact that they "have not yet figured out what they and their comrades are really worth." (Buss 1999, p. 805) As a part of child-rearing, they must be taught how to treat each other with respect and part of this involves teaching them how to be polite to each other. Teaching children to treat each other politely is part of teaching them the worth of others.

Importantly, Buss points out that teaching children to expect polite behavior from others is teaching them the extent of their own self-worth as well. When this polite behavior is not forthcoming, such as when children are bullied or ignored by others, this tends to have a negative impact on their sense of their own self-worth. While not all of this derives from violations of etiquette—bullying is often much more directly disrespectful than failing to be polite—sometimes it does. It can be enough to damage a child’s sense of self-respect to be repeatedly ignored, have their place stolen in line, or subject to rude remarks about their hobbies or appearances.

Here, the allocentrism of manners concerning psychological wellbeing discussed in the prior chapter plays an important role in contributing to a lack of self-respect in autistic people. Because norms of etiquette often fail to codify autistic psychological vulnerabilities, autistic children are taught to engage in a certain kind of self-effacement. Self-respect requires having a healthy sense that one’s own needs ought to be respected by others. However, psychological vulnerabilities that lie outside what are codified by norms of etiquette are often not seen in this way. On top of the fact that norms of etiquette make it more likely for autistic people to experience distress in social interactions, those same norms also make it more likely that the distress of autistic people is given less weight even when it is recognized or anticipated. Norms of etiquette help codify what psychological vulnerabilities are seen as within reasonable bounds such that others are expected to accommodate them. Vulnerabilities falling outside of these norms will tend to be seen as more idiosyncratic and the responsibility for managing them is more likely to fall on the person who has them.

This manifests in the context of teaching children manners in that an autistic child will often face pressure to behave in ways that are considered polite, even at a cost to that child's own wellbeing. One common instance of this in American culture is teaching children to make eye contact. This is a behavior that is, as we have noted, tied to etiquette in that eye contact with a conversant is taken to be a sign of attentiveness and respect. Eye contact has historically been a social behavior focused on in early intensive behavioral interventions for autism, such as ABA. Consider the following anecdote described by Maxfield Sparrow, an autistic writer who lived two blocks from an ABA clinic:

A mother and father came out of the clinic with a little girl, around 7 years old by my best guess. Mother said, "Janie (not the actual name), look at me." Janie didn't look at her mother. The mother said to the father, "you know what to do," and the father took hold of Janie and turned her head toward mother, saying, "look at your mother, Janie." Janie resisted, turning her head away and trying to pull out of her father's hands. [...] Janie began to moan and thrash her body. Father's hands held her body steady as she kicked and flailed. Mother's hands held Janie's head steady. [...] Finally, Janie's entire body went limp with defeat. She apparently made eye contact because Mother and Father began to lavish praise on her (Sparrow, 2016, para. 24-27)

Janie is clearly one of the many autistic people who find making eye contact painful. It is not difficult to guess what kind of impact this would have on a child's self-respect. Janie is taught that even intense physical discomfort is not a reason not to make eye contact, greatly discounting her own needs in the face of the desires of others to receive conventional signs of respect.¹⁹

¹⁹ There are even more damaging impacts that this specific treatment is likely to have, for example, teaching Janie that her body can be forcefully moved by adults without her consent as when her father forcefully turns her head towards her mother. (Sparrow, 2016, para. 30) However, this particular treatment of Janie is more a result of abusive methods of teaching manners and not a result of the allocentrism of the manners themselves.

These effects are not only limited to childhood. Allocentrism in the protection of psychological wellbeing by norms of etiquette extends to adult interactions. No one expects an adult to ‘get over’ their distress at being described as ‘fat and haggard,’ but many autistic adults are expected to ‘get over’ the psychological vulnerabilities that commonly accompany being autistic. For example, an autistic person’s distress at receiving unprompted social calls is likely to be treated as a pathological form of anxiety about social interactions. As an adult, an allistic’s distress at having their appearance negatively remarked on might be seen as something that they might not have if they had an ideally robust degree of confidence. But this is distinct from being treated as pathological or otherwise lacking in legitimacy, which is how the vulnerabilities of autistic adults are frequently perceived. We can see this by considering the social expectations involved. An autistic person is likely to be expected to put up with unprompted social calls at the very least, and possibly encouraged to find ways to overcome the vulnerability. An allistic person who finds negative remarks about their appearance made from concern distressing is not going to be expected to put up with these remarks. Indeed, others are expected to navigate the vulnerability by being polite.

In addition to failing to treat autistic vulnerabilities as worthy of accommodation, the allocentrism of manners also sometimes directly subordinates autistic vulnerabilities to allistic ones. One way of illustrating this is by considering the sensory sensitivities common in autistic people. Many autistic people find sensations in various modalities to be intensely unpleasant. One common form of sensory sensitivity involves texture, which can result in discomfort or pain in wearing certain types of clothes. When autistic sensory

sensitivities come into conflict with norms of etiquette, those sensory sensitivities are often subordinated to the norms. For example, it would be considered by most to be unreasonable to not wear formal attire to a wedding because the textures or other tactile sensations involved cause pain. Part of the pressure to wear formal attire to a wedding derives from the fact that some of those involved in the wedding, such as the couple to be wedded or their family members, are emotionally invested in the aesthetic appearance of the wedding to the extent that it would be distressing to have someone present who was not dressed in alignment with that aesthetic. Typical norms of etiquette make it likely that an autistic person with tactile sensitivities may well be expected to prioritize avoiding distress resulting from a frustration of these aesthetic desires over avoiding the intense discomfort that formal attire might cause them.

This example in isolation does not fully illustrate the extent of the problem. After all, it is common that in order to be polite we need to make sacrifices of our own comfort, especially for loved ones and on special occasions. However, norms of etiquette do not tend to conflict with typical allistic psychological vulnerabilities as pervasively or to the same degree as with autistic psychological vulnerabilities. For one thing, norms of etiquette do not typically require comparably high levels of sacrifice when they require it of allistic people. The level of discomfort most allistic people might experience wearing a suit is not comparable to the level of discomfort an autistic person with tactile sensory sensitivities might experience. For another, these sacrifices are not nearly as ubiquitous. It is not only at special occasions like weddings that the requirements of etiquette may force autistic people to endure significant discomfort or distress. Many typical social

gatherings, such as at bars or large family gatherings, may be overstimulating in a way that is of a significant cost to an autistic person, but the consistent avoidance of which would be perceived as a slight to their colleagues, friends or family. Beyond sensory sensitivities, other forms of vulnerability such as the previously mentioned distress caused by unprompted social calls also conflict with the expectations of etiquette. An autistic person may be forced to choose between enforcing reasonable boundaries about social contact, or letting others run roughshod over them in order not to hurt or alienate friends and family.

The overall impact of this is that autistic people may often form doubts about the extent to which they are worthy of respect due to the failure of norms of etiquette to legitimize their psychological vulnerabilities, both as children and as adults. They may begin to feel ashamed that they have psychological vulnerabilities that others don't have, and which make it more difficult for them to easily participate in the social events and practices required by the norms of etiquette. Here we can see that the function of manners in one area – the promotion of psychological wellbeing – is directly relevant to the function of manners in another: the promotion of self-respect. This is natural given Buss' characterization of respect as consideration for the interests of others. We all have an interest in our psychological wellbeing and in avoiding distress, so the codification of vulnerabilities into norms of etiquette serves as an adjunct to the role etiquette plays in helping us treat the interests of others as worthy of consideration and accommodation.

In distinction to Buss, Stohr's focus is not on respect in the sense of consideration of the interests of others or ourselves, but instead respect in the sense of seeing ourselves

and others as morally striving agents. Stohr argues that certain norms of etiquette involving pretense are necessary for this kind of respect.

Stohr provides two arguments for her claim that polite pretense (henceforth merely pretense) is necessary for respect. The first argues that pretense is necessary for maintaining a commitment to the moral ideals which self-respect requires us to strive for. Stohr argues that while self-respect requires striving to correct our moral failings, respect for humanity in general requires hiding our moral failings, which is a form of pretense. Hiding one's own moral failings through abiding by norms of pretense, such as refraining from public drunkenness or keeping the dirty laundry of a romantic relationship unaired, is a way of showing a commitment to the moral ideals which one ought to fulfill. (Stohr, 2011, pp. 84-85) Showing this commitment helps others, and not just oneself, to remain committed to moral self-improvement as well. Stohr's idea here seems to be that when one fails to hide moral failings, one somehow normalizes moral failures of that kind which will undermine general social commitment to morality. The more people who are openly, publicly drunk the more this behavior is likely to be seen as acceptable. Even if not seen as morally acceptable, it may at the very least be seen as a form of moral failing that is not particularly serious. In contrast, when moral failings are hidden, it creates the appearance that avoiding these failings is feasible and it helps reinforce that they are not acceptable. In this way, failing to hide moral failings would, as Stohr claims, be in conflict with one's obligation to respect one's fellow human beings by enabling them in their striving for moral self-improvement.

Stohr further points out that hiding our flaws in this way depends on others' cooperation when an attempt to abide by our moral obligations falls short in a publicly noticeable way. I may be able to refrain from public drunkenness without much help from others, but other forms of moral failure may be prone to happen accidentally and openly in a way that it is not in my own power to hide. Stohr uses the example of hesitant gratitude to illustrate her point here. If I am obligated to show gratitude, but due to my own personal shortcomings I do so in a manner that reveals my hesitation, then others pretending not to notice and taking my gratitude at face value enables me to "act on my moral commitments despite my own personal moral failings." (Stohr, 2011, p. 87)

It is not entirely clear what Stohr has in mind here, but the idea may be that the pretense here is a way of recognizing the striving of the other party to fulfill a moral commitment, even when they are not successful. While not calling the person out for their failure may be motivated by the pointlessness of expressing blame or criticism when the moral failure is clear to all parties, pretending that they have not even failed adds another layer inasmuch as it actively treats the other party as striving to fulfill their moral commitments and as capable of doing so. Full-on success is less important than striving.

Stohr is also concerned with the negative effects of impolite behavior on our sense of ourselves as equal in moral character. Dropping all pretense leads to significantly more criticism of others, and this criticism can lead to a weakening sense of one's own moral worth. When our failings are publicly exposed, Stohr argues, we become vulnerable to losing the respect as moral equals that we are merited. Pretending not to notice someone's embarrassing mistake or failure is a way of protecting them from

this vulnerability by, presumably, allowing them to see that in spite of the failing, they are still respected. (Stohr, 2011, p. 88) When this pretense is impossible to reasonably sustain, such as when it is completely implausible that no one would have noticed, Stohr suggests that this is when our obligation is instead to make ourselves just as vulnerable by making a sympathetic self-deprecating remark. (Stohr, 2011, p. 89)

There are many aspects of Stohr's arguments that are unclear. For one thing, having one's moral failings be publicly remarked on seems like it would indeed potentially damage our sense that we are morally excellent, but one of Stohr's major concerns is that it undermines "the other's standing as a moral equal." (Stohr, 2011, p. 88) We are not all moral equals in terms of our moral excellence, however. On the other hand, if Stohr has in mind the basic dignity that all rational beings have according to Kant, it's not clear why having a moral failing publicly remarked upon would undermine one's sense of dignity in this sense – one has the dignity regardless of one's moral failings.

Another problem is that it is not entirely clear why hiding one's flaws through pretense is necessary to maintaining a public commitment to our moral ideals. It is understandable that *unapologetic* openness or flaunting of our failings is contrary to such a commitment, such as the example Stohr gives of a newlywed couple who wrote an article in the "Vows" section of the New York Times about their decision to leave their spouses and young children to become married. (Stohr, 2011, p. 73) But not all openness about our moral failings is necessarily unapologetic and it's not clear why it is necessary to hide our mistakes in order to express our shame over them.

Lastly, Stohr also seems concerned with cases where we behave graciously even if we do not feel that way or to “help people whether or not [we] feel like it.” (Stohr, 2011, p. 85) It’s not clear that these cases involve pretense or the deliberate hiding of our emotional failings. There seems to be an active assumption that, for instance, helping someone implies that one feels like helping them and so that if you don’t feel like helping someone, but you do, you are therefore pretending to feel something that you don’t actually feel. As Stohr puts it, your behavior expresses “the attitudes of what we might call [your] ‘better self’” rather than your “actual attitudes.” (Stohr, 2011, p. 86) Given that the attitudes of one’s better self appear to be motivating actual behavior, in what sense are the attitudes non-actual? These questions are left unaddressed, and so the argument itself is unclear.

All that being said, we can grant Stohr’s basic arguments. The broad strokes of Stohr’s argument and the specific norms of etiquette they concern are clear enough. If we do grant that Stohr is correct, there are nonetheless a number of respects in which the allocentricity of manners runs contrary to our obligation to respect each other as ends, especially the very practices of pretense that Stohr argues in favor of.

The first problem concerns the way in which pretense is supposed to promote self-improvement. Stohr herself quotes Kant’s remarks on the importance of feedback from others in striving for self-improvement: “From a moral point of view it is, of course, a duty for one of the friends to point out the other’s faults to him; this is in the other’s best interests and is therefore a duty of love.” (Kant, 1996, p. 262, cited in Stohr 2001, p. 87) This quote comes from a section of *The Metaphysics of Morals* where Kant is

considering the duties of friendship. Stohr primarily draws on the parts of this section where Kant remarks that being exposed to constant criticism of a friend creates a fear that the respect which is supposed to serve as the foundation of that friendship is not present. In the context of the passage, Kant is providing an example of the sorts of internal moral tensions that make a perfect friendship so difficult (Kant, 2007, p. 217). Stohr's emphasis on one side of this tension results in an analysis that underestimates the importance of feedback from others in our own moral self-improvement. Perhaps if we can assume that we are dealing only with cases where I am already aware that I have committed some kind of mistake, the main concern will be avoiding compounding the humiliation. Furthermore, it may well be that when I hide the moral failings that I am already aware of, this is an important part of maintaining my own commitment to moral norms as well as maintaining the force of those norms in public by not flouting them openly. But when someone commits a moral error that they do not realize is a moral error and everyone pretends not to notice, this hinders them in fulfilling their obligation to self-improve. Unfortunately, the allocentrism of manners frequently places autistic people in just such a situation.

As discussed in the section on pretense, norms of etiquette involving pretense put autistic people at an epistemic disadvantage. Due to differing psychological dispositions and discomfort with pretense, autistics are likely to implicitly rely on others for honest feedback when norms of etiquette require pretense that impedes this. This epistemic disadvantage does not just apply to non-moral considerations, such as reliable information about one's appearance, but also moral considerations such as whether or not

one has wronged someone else. Stohr emphasizes the dangers to our relationships with others caused by remarking on their failings, but the dangers to the contrary are just as real. Autistic people may fall out with friends and family over mistakes that they make which they are assumed to be aware of and which therefore those friends and family fail to comment on until it becomes too much and the relationship is damaged (Sparrow, 2013, pp. 126-127). When they are lucky enough to get an explanation rather than dismissive remarks that they already know that they have done wrong, the damage to their relationship and the damage to the self-esteem that pretense is supposed to help enable is already severe and they have been denied opportunities for moral self-knowledge crucial to self-improvement. Stohr treats the epistemic situation as more ideal than it is in reality and fails to grapple with the ways in which pretense in the real world may obscure moral failures in a way that impedes moral self-improvement for autistics.

This is not the only epistemic idealization that reveals how the allocentricity of norms of pretense is morally problematic. Given how much Stohr has drawn on Kant, one might wonder how she handles the fact that pretense and deception often overlap. Stohr devotes a chapter to defending ‘polite lies’ in a manner consistent with roughly Kantian moral principles, mainly by arguing that what we call polite lies are actually non-deceptive forms of pretense and so consistent with Kantian principles (Stohr 2011, pp. 92-114). Kant, as is well known, held that lying was always morally wrong. One Kantian argument against the moral permissibility of lying is on the basis of the value of autonomy. In order for human beings to be autonomous, they must be able to rationally self-govern. To do this, they must have knowledge of the world. Deceiving someone else

aims to deny them this knowledge, impeding their ability to act autonomously. Lying therefore impinges on autonomy, which is morally impermissible according to Kant. Thus, Stohr is careful to argue that it is only appearance and perhaps aspirational pretense that morally significant and required by manners.

Stohr makes this argument along two lines. First, she appeals to conversational implicature to address the ways in which what may appear to be polite ‘lies’ are not lies at all, because they have a mutually understood non-literal meaning. One example she addresses is taken from a letter to Miss Manners, where the letter writer wonders whether replying “Sorry, no” to the question “Can you spare some change?” asked by a person on the street is permissible given that it is usually false that the person cannot spare any change. Stohr draws on Judith Martin’s (Miss Manners) reply to argue that it is in fact not a lie, because conversationally it is understood that “Can you spare some change?” actually means something to the effect of “Will you give me some change?” to which the answer “No, sorry” is not a lie (Stohr, 2011, pp. 104-105). Stohr extends this analysis to the case of ‘white lies’ intended to spare feelings. Stohr argues that if someone is genuinely asking your opinion, politeness requires you to actually give it – in line with the Kantian stance. But Stohr argues that this does not run counter to norms of manners. While it might appear that complimenting a friend on his haircut when he asks our opinion is deceptive when we don’t really like it, she argues that in most cases it is not deceptive because the request for an opinion is a request for validation in disguise. Thus, “when that is the case, I do not deceive my friend by giving her a comforting answer.” (Stohr, 2011, p. 107)

Both of the above examples involve ways that conversational implicature creates the appearance of deception when there is none. Both participants are presumed to be in the know about the relevant conventions governing implicature. Likewise, when Stohr defends the pretense involved in pretending not to notice another person's embarrassing mistake, she depends on the assumption of mutual awareness of pretense to argue that it is not deceptive. Her argument here is that the practice of using pretense to promote respect for each other is fundamentally cooperative, and a practice that we are typically aware is being engaged in. When someone tells us that she did not notice a mistake that we made, but it is apparent that she did, Stohr claims that "her statement that she didn't notice is more like a statement that she is planning to act as if she didn't notice. If so, it is not, strictly speaking, a lie." (Stohr, 2011, p. 111)

Given my arguments in the section on pretense from Chapter 2, it should be apparent what the problem with this line of reasoning is. While Stohr is correct that many cases of polite lies are not intentionally deceptive because of background assumptions about shared social understanding, either involving conversational implicature or pretense, they still frequently undermine the autonomy of autistic people. In a Kantian moral framework, this is a moral problem, even if the fact that there is no intentional deception is morally exculpatory for those engaging in the practice.

Promoting Psychological and Social Goods

The next moral consideration used to argue for the moral importance of manners is more consequentialist in spirit: the role of manners in promoting certain social and psychological goods. Social goods are the focus of much of Amy Olberding's analysis,

while the function of manners in promoting psychological wellbeing is more implicit in the literature than an explicit theme. I will begin with Olberding's discussion of the social goods promoted by manners and then turn to psychological goods. The social goods that Olberding argues manners help promote are social coordination and higher social pleasures. I will briefly present each in turn.

At the heart of Olberding's argument is a Confucius-inspired appeal to the deeply social nature of human beings. Olberding argues that "once we take measure of how radically even our most basic life activities depend on vast histories and systems of collective human effort" it becomes apparent how important it is to ensure that such collective human effort goes on (Olberding, 2019, p. 58). Olberding thinks manners are one tool for doing so. According to Olberding, manners contribute to social coordination on two levels. At the first level, they help enable our coordination of basic, transactional social relationships by create a set of rules that make us predictable and intelligible, "rendering one's intentions motivations and purposes clear" using "ordering mechanisms that others share and therefore find intelligible." (Olberding, 2019, p. 98) This line of argument resembles the appeal to expressive goods enabled by manners, but the expressive goods here are broader (not solely moral) and they play an instrumental role in enabling social coordination. To illustrate, Olberding presents the following example from Fingarette:

I see you on the street; I smile, walk toward you, put out my hand to shake yours. And behold—without any command, stratagem, force, special tricks or tools, without any effort on my part to make you do so, you spontaneously turn toward me, return my smile, raise your hand toward mine. We shake hands—not by my pulling your hand up and down or your pulling mine, but by spontaneous cooperative action. (Fingarette, 1998, p. 9 cited in Olberding, 2019, p. 97)

While shaking hands may seem like a minor convention, it serves to not only coordinate cooperative action in terms of the greeting itself, but it also enables the communication of certain attitudes and intentions that in a given context, may form a part of first steps towards more robust forms of cooperation. The solicitude and respect conveyed by shaken hands may play a role in opening the way to a job, a valuable mentorship, or a productive partnership. Other norms of etiquette, such as standing in line, have a more direct relationship with social coordination. Queue formation helps solve a social coordination problem by creating first-come-first served system represented in physical space by the place each person occupies in the queue. This is possible partly through the way that a queue makes it visible who has what intentions – the people who are in the queue are the ones who intend to avail themselves of what is on the other end. This not only serves to help maintain the queue, but also helps with other forms of social coordination, such as the distribution of open lanes in a grocery store or other forms of queue management.

On top of the role manners play in enabling social coordination, Olberding also argues that they also elevate our social relationships, making them more valuable and worthwhile by making them pleasing. Whereas Olberding uses an analogy to grammar in describing how the rules of etiquette make us comprehensible to each other and thereby enable coordination, she uses an analogy to dance partly to capture the way that “etiquette rules aim at gracious and pleasing effect” on top of the coordination that helps “ensure that one does not tread on the toes of others.” (Olberding, 2019, p. 100) For example, the norms of etiquette that are involved in preparing and enjoying a nice dinner

elevate the act of eating from the mere fulfillment of a biological need to something that is more aesthetically and socially fulfilling (Olberding, 2019, p. 59). Aside from the aesthetic elements involved in preparing a fancy meal and the arrangement of dinnerware, when people gathered for dinner do not chew loudly, politely ask for dishes to be passed, and so on, it makes dining a way to enjoy one another's company as well as to collectively enjoy the meal itself. In the same way, norms of etiquette often enrich our other social interactions and relationships, both by introducing social pleasing elements, and also by making those involved pleasant to be around.

The way in which manners make us more pleasant to be around is also crucial to the psychological goods that Olberding believes manners help enable. While I've previously discussed the role of manners in promoting psychological wellbeing by codifying psychological vulnerabilities, Olberding focuses on one particular way in which manners help manage psychological wellbeing: social contagion. One of Olberding's focuses in *The Wrong of Rudeness* is the importance of regulating our social appearance. Part of what is involved in this is suppressing the expression of certain desires even if we have them. Olberding gives the example of waiting in line for coffee: "stuck in line behind an elderly patron who pays for his coffee by laboriously and slowly writing a check, I may huff with impatience and roll my eyes, shift my weight from foot to foot and conspicuously check my watch." (Olberding, 2019, p. 119) These are the kinds of behavior that politeness tells us to avoid, in addition to waiting in line. When engaging in eye-rolling and other honest expressions of how I may feel "my demeanor and manner announce the heavy cost of my restraint [in waiting in line], how very little I

care for others' needs and interests as these interfere with my own....” (Olberding, 2019, p. 120)

Aside from the disrespect this expresses, showing these kinds of attitudes openly make us unpleasant to be around and is likely to have negative consequences for those around us. Olberding draws on research into the social contagion of emotions in order to argue that when we show unpleasant emotions like these, it is likely that others with whom we interact will ‘catch’ similar emotion. (Olberding, 2019, pp. 121-122). When unpleasant moods and desires are expressed openly, they will tend to propagate to the psychological detriment of others. On the other hand, pleasant moods likewise spread through social contagion, and so maintaining a pleasant demeanor in spite of what storms may be brewing under the surface will psychologically benefit others. On top of these psychological benefits, Olberding points out that unpleasant emotions tend to hinder social cooperation and pleasant emotions tend to promote it. It is easier to get along with others and thereby cooperate with them if they are pleasant to be around and if we ourselves are in a good mood, the latter of which tends to be encouraged by the former.

Given these moral considerations, is the allocentrism of manners morally problematic? They are indeed, for a number of reasons. I will begin by addressing the role manners play in requiring the expression of positive affect, resulting in increased psychological wellbeing through emotional contagion. The allocentrism here is quite straightforward: the ability to adopt a positive affect is not as consistently or readily available to autistic people as allistic people, meaning this requirement of etiquette treats the abilities of allistic people as the norm.

There are two facets of the allocentrism here. The first has to do with the physiological modulation of affect. Many autistic people have flat affect – that is, they do not naturally express emotion in voice or facial expression. Autistic people may also have difficulty deliberately adopting facial expressions – I myself frequently think I am smiling for photos where, despite my conscious and deliberate attempts to smile, I have no actual visible smile. The face of allocentrism here concerns body language: norms of etiquette require certain forms of body language that may be difficult for autistics to deliberately employ and the forms of body language or other expressions of affect autistic people might naturally deploy are not viable alternatives.

The other facet is the requirement of pretense when positive affect is required despite no underlying positive emotion. As previously discussed, many autistic people find pretense uncomfortable and difficult to manage. The allocentrism here manifests both in that it may be more difficult for autistic people to engage in the pretense and also that autistic people are going to be less likely to be able to appreciate it as pretense.

Both these forms of allocentrism lead to problems. As desirable as the contagion of positive emotions may be, the fact that norms of etiquette impose pressure to display positive affect and avoid negative affect creates pressures that force autistic people to choose between engaging in burdensome management of their self-presentation or risk being alienated or perceived as rude. A certain expectation is created, and as one autistic writer remarks: “People find it very offputting when you don’t show happiness [...] the way they are expecting. They get annoyed; they complain about you to others; they

become deeply offended or angry. They make harmful assumptions about your facility for emotion.” (Autist Making Way, 2020, para. 4)

Allocentrism about expressions of positive affect that norms of etiquette require lead to the opposite of positive contagion when people with different natural body language, such as autistics, do not express positive affect in the normal way – even when they actually are happy. This impedes the psychological wellbeing the norms were supposed to promote via emotional contagion and furthermore undermines the social coordination that piggybacks off of that. Allistic people who are annoyed at the seeming indifference of their autistic colleague are less likely to get along and this will undermine social coordination. Lastly, these very norms are more likely to make autistic people themselves feel worse rather than better when autistics do try to abide by them because of the increased burdens in doing so.

This increased burden makes it more likely that autistic people will need to engage in pretense in order to fulfill the norms of etiquette requiring displays of positive affect. Of course, when an autistic person is in a foul mood for other reasons, pretense will be necessary either way. And the requirement to engage in pretense here imposes further emotional burdens, since autistic people are frequently uncomfortable with engaging in it and often find it difficult to do so, even setting aside the necessary modulation of body language. Furthermore, the use of pretense may undermine social coordination when autistic people are involved as they may misjudge apparent positive affect for actual positive affect. Positive affect in the face of a faux pas or other error made by the autistic person may not be interpreted as polite friendliness but as an

indication that no error has been made. This is likely to undermine social coordination on two levels. First, the autistic person and their allistic colleague(s) cannot effectively coordinate when it comes to avoiding or correcting the error. Second, this is liable to produce social friction, with their allistic colleague(s) potentially coming to interpret them having a character flaw: indifference, irresponsibility or some other failing. This too makes it more difficult to cooperate and hence undermines social coordination.

The allocentrism of manners also undermines social coordination and social goods more broadly. In the previous section, I addressed the ways in which the allocentrism of manners undermines their ability to enable certain expressive goods. Olberding's argument about the importance of manners for social coordination depends on the systemic nature of manners enabling certain expressive goods – in this case, having predictable and identifiable mental states of various types. Because of the central role this expressive function of manners plays in her argument, the same issues concerning the specific expression of moral attitudes will apply more generally here and have a negative effect on social coordination between autistics and allistics. Consider the following example from an allistic blogger 'lierduoma':

If a neurotypical asks you, "What game are you playing?" they're not asking you to describe the game. They're asking you if they can play too. If a neurotypical asks you, "What are you watching?" they're not asking you to explain the plot of the movie/tv show to them. They're asking if they can watch it with you. (Lierduoma, 2017, para. 1-4)

The advice given here is perhaps overly generalized, as such questions are certainly sometimes intended literally. But it is true that it is a rule of polite behavior to sometimes ask a question about a thing in order to indirectly flag interest so as to not directly request

to participate or invite oneself to participate. This partly serves the function of coordinating participation in activities. It allows interest to be shown without the undue pressure of a direct request, opening avenues for the host (for lack of a better word) to welcome the inquirer to participate or politely decline by not extending an invitation that was never explicitly asked for.

As can be seen from lierduoma's presentation of this convention of etiquette, autistic people frequently fail to pick up on the expression of interest because of a tendency to take things at face value. Not only is an allistic person's expression of interest unlikely to be picked up on, the autistic person's likely response – answering the question literally – is liable to create the false impression that the autistic person is not interested in the allistic person joining them. This in turn undermines the coordination of social activities, which are instrumental to bonding and the formation of friendships. A commenter on the blog post named 'bonehandledknife' describes an interaction exactly like this where a relationship with a recent acquaintance quickly cooled due to the perceived rejection of a terse and literal answer (Snakedancing, 2017). The allocentrism of manners undermines the expressive function of manners when it comes to autistic/allistic interactions, and so the allocentrism likewise undermines the social coordination function of manners.

Bonehandledknife's (henceforth BHK) experience is not just one of a failure of social coordination. Notably, their acquaintance was not only misled about BHK's interest in spending time with them, their feelings were also hurt. As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the functions of manners is in helping us avoid causing undue

distress. Promoting psychological wellbeing by providing us with conventions that tell us what are likely vulnerabilities and how to avoid them, or what we might do to make others feel supported, is one of the most commonplace functions of systems of etiquette. The allocentrism noted in the previous chapter is that typical allistic vulnerabilities and dispositions get codified into system of etiquette, but autistic ones do not. Manners tell us not to remark bluntly on negative aspects of a person's appearance, but they do not tell us not to call others unprompted, for example.

There is one clear moral problem present here, which is that the allocentrism of manners in this respect produces a lot of emotional pain and suffering in autistics. The fact that autistic psychological vulnerabilities are not codified in norms of etiquette means that autistic people can expect to deal with a significant degree of emotional distress in day-to-day interactions with people who do not already know them well. They are not as effectively insulated as allistic people against this distress because the norms of etiquette guiding the behavior of most of the population will provide no guidance in helping the allistic majority avoid distressing autistic people. This results in a great deal of psychological harm and a clearly unequal distribution of the goods manners are supposed to promote.

Promoting Moral & Social Development in Children

The final moral function I will consider concerns the role that manners play in promoting the moral and social development of children. One aspect of this has already been discussed in the section on self-respect, where I considered the role norms of politeness play in promoting self-respect in child-rearing. In addition to Buss, Amy

Olberding also highlights the importance of norms of etiquette in the development of children. Olberding argues that manners help children develop a number of important moral and social dispositions and capacities. They both help inculcate dispositions to feel morally appropriate emotions and help children learn to be enter into valuable social relationships such as friendship.

For Olberding, teaching children manners helps them promote correct moral attitudes more generally. Inasmuch as children have “yet to develop the emotional competencies that come with awareness of [their] dependence and sociality” it is necessary to teach them to follow rules in order to develop those emotional competencies (Olberding, 2019, p. 98). This comes through a process of internalization, whereby the rulebound behavior which may not be sincere or may not express a spontaneous consideration of others eventually develops an emotional disposition that corresponds. Olberding presents the example of gratitude and the requirement to express it by saying ‘thank you.’ Telling children to always say thank you in the appropriate circumstances not only tells the child how to behave but also “recommend[s] to the child how she ought to *feel* in response to the beneficence of others.” (Olberding, 2019, p. 99)

Though we have only discussed the moral attitude of self-respect, it is clear that inasmuch teaching manners to children helps them calibrate their moral emotional dispositions, allocentrism in manners is likely to result in miscalibration when it comes to autistic children and the allistic children who interact with them. Consider the case of Janie, who is forced to make eye contact with her parents. She is being taught to behave in a certain way in order to inculcate a certain moral disposition: the disposition to attend to

other people in conversation by attending visually to their faces. But there are a number of respects in which this attempt at calibration by her parents is liable to fail. For starters, given how distressing Janie finds making eye contact, learning to make eye contact despite her intense discomfort will not teach her to attend to her conversational partners since making eye contact is incompatible with doing so for her. For another, because of this and because of the extent to which she is coerced into making eye contact, she may develop a disposition of self-preservation or subservience in doing so rather than one of attentiveness.

Surprisingly, the calibration of moral psychology is not what Olberding identifies as “the most significant consequence of training a child to conform to the rules of etiquette.” (Olberding, 2019, p. 100) The most significant consequence is instead that training a child to be polite makes that child more socially acceptable to others, hence enabling the child to develop friendships and other important social relationships. Olberding does not elaborate much on this point, presumably because the basic idea is clear – polite people are more pleasant to be around, are more likely to be considerate of others and therefore more likely to be socially accepted by peers. Olberding is not alone in asserting that social acceptability is an important function of manners, Buss, citing Hume, suggests that “one of the primary objectives of systems of manners is to encourage us to make ourselves *agreeable*.” (Buss, 1999, p. 798)

In a certain sense, the allocentrism of manners perversely contributes to this particular function of manners. The allistics who make up the vast majority of the human population are the people that most autistics will have to make themselves agreeable to if they are to have any friends. This should have us suspicious that the analysis of this function

given by Olberding (and to a lesser extent Buss) is inadequate. The fact that manners serve this function in the case of autistics is not because manners are functioning in a manner that is morally ideal, but because of the power dynamics resulting from population dynamics. And it certainly does not cut both ways: allistic children, when taught manners, are not being taught how to be agreeable to autistic peers to the same extent (there will be some efficacy, of course).

Here, we need to shift our perspective a bit to see what is going on. The first shift we should make is away from considering the issue from the hypothetical perspective of a parent raising a child. From the point of view of a parent, the focus will obviously be on teaching their child to be polite in part so their child will be able to form friendships. This perspective on its own fails to register the impact that teaching children systems of manners in order to make them more agreeable has on entrenching those standards. Of course, someone who is considerate and thoughtful of others, or who shows gratitude for beneficence is going to generally be agreeable. But actual systems of manners are not just generic prescriptions to be considerate. They involve sophisticated behavioral prescriptions. And when children learn that the way to be socially agreeable is to behave in these particular ways, it will not just guide their own behavior, it will also come to color how they perceive and judge others to be agreeable or not.

The impact that systems of manners have on perceptions of agreeability helps reveal the problem with respect to this particular function of manners. When allistic children are taught how to behave in a way that will make them agreeable enough to be friends with, they also learn to perceive children who don't behave in this way as

insufficiently agreeable to become friends with. Children who deviate from this behaviorally, even when the behavior has no intrinsic negative impact, are likely to find themselves lonely at best or bullied at worst. Autistic children who behave according to their natural inclinations are likely to experience these effects, and not just when their natural inclinations might hurt the feelings of other children. ‘Weird’ body language, unusual conversational styles and other behaviors that may be violations of etiquette but are not in themselves harmful are frequently sufficient for exclusion.

Of course, to return to the original function of manners in inculcating agreeableness, autistic children who abide by allocentric systems of manners will experience less alienation. But here we can see the problem more clearly: autistic children are forced to choose between abiding by a system of manners with all the malfunctions we have already discussed, or face alienation from their peers. This forces autistic children to sacrifice participating in their community as participants of full moral standing, worthy of all the goods manners are supposed to provide. Instead, they are pressured into being socially agreeable enough if they are to form social relationships such as friendship that are important for their flourishing.

Addressing Moral Malfunctions

The moral problems of allocentrism in manners are not constrained just to psychological harms to autistic people. They are moral problems from the point of view of manners themselves. On the one hand, if philosophers like Buss, Stohr and Olberding are wrong that manners serve important moral functions, then it is obvious that psychological harms to autistic people are a sufficient reason to make significant changes to manners. If

manners do serve important moral functions, then the allocentrism of manners is a problem that prevents systems of etiquette from fulfilling those functions. Either way, it is clear that if there are ways to address the allocentrism of manners, we should do so. In the next chapter, I will consider some such potential solutions.

Chapter 4 – Addressing Allocentrism

In the previous two chapters, we have seen a variety of ways in which manners are allocentric and identified a variety of moral problems arising from this allocentrism. In this chapter I will discuss ways these moral problems might be addressed. In doing so, I will also address skeptical concerns that these moral problems simply cannot be fixed. Though there are no silver bullets, there are some approaches that could contribute to addressing these moral problems.

Before proceeding, I will note that because systems of etiquette are so varied and complex, the solutions offered here will be somewhat sketchy and general. Providing a detailed and concrete plan is beyond the scope of this chapter, both because it would require a great deal more space and also because it would require the specification of a particular system of etiquette, sociological expertise in the norms of that system, and extensive consultation with autistic people living within that system. Furthermore, while the focus of this dissertation has been on autism and allism, allocentrism is only one form of ableism. Norms of etiquette may be ableist in other ways. While some of the solutions considered in this chapter will be specific to allocentrism, others will be relevant to addressing other forms of ableism in etiquette. Keeping the discussion more general has its own merits in this respect.

I will begin by providing a summary of the types of moral problems identified in Chapter 3 as well as a brief taxonomy of types of solutions. The moral problems can roughly be sorted into three types: uneven distribution of goods, uneven distribution of burdens, and epistemic disablement. I will distinguish between two types of solutions,

first-order solutions which change systems of etiquette themselves, and higher-order solutions which change how we apply norms of etiquette or change important background conditions. After marking this distinction, I will move on to discuss a variety of solutions in more detail, laying out which problem types those solutions are apt to address. Among the solutions I will consider are: first order changes to specific conventions of etiquette, education and stigma reduction, self-identification, and the promotion of virtues of social judgment as a part of etiquette, including humility, attentiveness, patience, consideration and trust.

Types of Moral Problems

There are roughly three types of moral problem produced by the allocentrism of manners. The first is that allocentrism in manners creates an uneven distribution of moral goods. The second is that it creates an uneven distribution of burdens. The third is that it epistemically disables both allistic and autistic people by creating barriers to mutual understanding. In this section, I will give some examples of each type of moral problem drawn from the previous chapter in order to better clarify their general features.

Uneven Distribution of Goods

The first type of moral problem is the uneven distribution of moral goods. This is the most straightforward type and many of the problems identified in Chapter 3 fall under it. This is because part of the function of systems of etiquette is to enable certain important moral goods. As has been argued, allocentrism causes systems of etiquette to malfunction in this particular respect in a variety of ways. For example, systems of etiquette are supposed to promote self-respect by ensuring the social norms for how we

treat each other are reflective of the respect we are owed. However, allocentrism concerning the vulnerabilities codified into systems of etiquette means that those systems fail to demarcate boundaries that would ensure that autistic people have their needs taken into consideration in a manner consistent with respect. This failure to be treated with respect makes it more difficult to develop a healthy sense of self-respect. Hence, self-respect is a good that is unevenly distributed due to the allocentrism of manners.

Similarly, the expressive goods enabled by systems of etiquette are unevenly distributed due to allocentrism. For example, in systems where eye contact is central to expressing respect, autistic people who have difficulty maintaining eye contact are deprived equivalent access to the expressive goods those systems enable for allistics. Of course, autistic people may try and force themselves to make eye contact, thereby expressing their respect in a way that can be understood. But in doing so, they will need to take on special burdens that allistics don't. One further way in which goods can be unevenly distributed is by producing greater burdens for autistics to access them. This brings us to the next category of moral problem: uneven distribution of burdens, a problem often entangled with the uneven distribution of goods.

Uneven Distribution of Burdens

The second type of moral problem involves uneven distribution of burdens. This frequently arises where the specific form of allocentrism involves assuming typical allistic capacities. The previous example of using eye contact to show respect illustrates this nicely. Modulation of eye contact is typically easily managed by allistics, but many autistics have difficulty with it. For autistic people who do, in order to display respect in

systems of etiquette that involve eye contact, an additional burden is imposed not faced by most allistics.

The uneven distribution of burdens need not always involve the issue of capabilities. The fact that typical allistic vulnerabilities are codified by systems of etiquette but typical autistic vulnerabilities are not results in an uneven distribution of burdens of managing behavior to avoid vulnerabilities. Autistic people need to navigate the process of learning social norms that reflect psychological and social dispositions alien to them in order to ensure they do not step on the toes of allistics. Allistic people are not similarly faced with the same task: social norms are much more likely to be reflective of their psychology, imposing a less substantial burden of learning and navigating them. Furthermore, allistic people face no similar burden of learning about typical autistic vulnerabilities and how to modulate their behavior to avoid them. For example, an autistic person who finds themselves easily overwhelmed in crowds and around loud noise may be expected to attend bars with friends despite this. Their allistic friends may feel slighted if the autistic person avoids spending time with them, and so to maintain the friendship the autistic person may find themselves spending time in environments that are especially draining and stressful.

Yet another example of uneven distribution of burdens is epistemic. Autistic people must work much harder to achieve social understanding not only because of the aforementioned reasons, but also because of the frequent incorporation of pretense into systems of etiquette. Where allistics often find it easier to discern polite pretense and act accordingly, autistic people face an uphill battle for reasons elaborated on in the previous

chapter. This increases the cognitive load autistic people typically have to face in social interactions. Even while exerting this additional effort, autistic people may often find themselves misunderstanding pretense. This leads us to the final type of moral problem.

Epistemic Disablement

The role of etiquette in providing conventions for expression means that etiquette can play an important role in forming judgments about the character and intentions of other people. Conventions in systems of etiquette that make polite smiles or eye contact indicators of respect or codify indirect ways to raise issues or criticism rather than more direct forms of communication create communicative conventions. When these conventions are at odds with the dispositions or capabilities of autistic people, such as when eye contact or pretense are involved, the likely result is that social judgments will be formed that are incorrect. An autistic person might mistake a polite expression of disinterest in an activity veiled by another excuse (‘Maybe some other time’) as an expression of interest thwarted by inconvenient circumstance. An allistic person may interpret the flat affect and lack of eye contact of an autistic person as disinterest and or aloofness. When this happens, conventions of etiquette are epistemically disabling²⁰ because they interfere with the ability of autistics and allistics to understand each other.

Epistemic disablement is not entirely restricted to autistic-allistic social interactions. It can occur also in autistic-autistic interactions, when one or both parties are unaware that the other is autistic and apply conventions for interpreting allistic behavior

²⁰ I am adopting the term ‘epistemic disablement’ from Catala, Faucher and Poirier, 2021. Their use is mainly focused on theories of autism and forms of epistemic injustice involving research into autism, though they do touch on ways that epistemic disablement arises from social conventions. It is the latter form of epistemic disablement that is my focus here.

to each other or when one or both adopt an allistic behavioral mask. It does not even take two to tango here: autistic people, especially those who are not diagnosed and who do not identify as such, may interpret their own behavior by allistic standards. This impedes their capacity for self-knowledge, as they may interpret autistic traits as character vices when those traits clash with what norms of etiquette codify as virtues.

With the three types of moral problem outlined, I will now turn to consider solutions. For each solution, I will discuss which problem types it appears suited to address as well as its limitations. The problems produced by allocentrism in etiquette (and by ableism more broadly) are thorny and complex and there is no single way to address them. Instead, approaching the issues from a variety of angles is most likely to be efficacious.

Before I begin considering particular solutions, I will introduce a distinction between two different types of solution. One type of solution that might immediately jump to mind is to directly change the source of the problems: conventions of etiquette themselves. This kind of solution I will call first-order. For example, if it were proposed that the problems of epistemic disablement and uneven distribution of epistemic burdens be addressed by removing all etiquette conventions involving pretense, this would be a first-order solution. The focus of a first-order solution is replacing, removing or fixing specific conventions of etiquette. In contrast, solutions focusing on either how norms of etiquette are applied or on important background conditions relevant to the practice of etiquette I will call higher-order solutions. For example, proposing that we should encourage people to be polite by withholding negative judgments of character based on

body language is a higher-order proposal. It does not propose changing conventions for body language, but it proposes that the way those conventions are used to interpret body language should be adjusted. As we will see, the scope of what can be accomplished with first-order solutions is limited and it is important to step back and consider a range of higher-order solutions.

First-Order Solutions

Perhaps the most direct type of solution is the first-order variety. If a system of etiquette is allocentric, the most straightforward way to address the problem is to change the conventions of that system so that it is no longer allocentric. This kind of approach has the virtue of being pro-active: eliminating problematic conventions prevents the problems they produce from arising to begin with. First-order changes can be made either by eliminating certain conventions or changing certain conventions. It will obviously not be feasible to consider every possibility here, so I will consider a few possibilities in order to identify some of the relevant considerations to implementing first-order solutions. Since the moral problems addressed by this type of solution also vary significantly based on the convention to be changed, I won't specifically discuss which moral problems the solutions considered are most apt to address. As it will turn out, as direct as first-order solutions are they are limited in a few significant respects.

Systems of etiquette that involve the heavy use of pretense and indirectness stand out as especially difficult for autistic people. One potential first-order change that leaps to mind is eliminating conventions that require pretense. At first glance, this seems like a first-order change that would be both viable and valuable. Its viability seems to be

demonstrated by the existence of cultures famous for their directness, such as Dutch culture. It seems valuable because it not only addresses a significant form of allocentrism, it also may have benefits for allistic people in that direct communication is often easier to understand and may make it easier to navigate misunderstandings. This is especially true in contexts of cross-cultural communication, where different conventions of indirectness may lead to misunderstandings.

However, there is reason to doubt that this sort of change is as viable or valuable as it looks. First, it is worth bearing in mind that cultures like the Dutch are the exception. This suggests that pretense is tied to allistic dispositions in a way that might be difficult to overcome. Secondly, it is worth bearing in mind that the proposal here is to change a deeply entrenched part of many cultures. Changing these norms comes at a significant cultural cost. Though norms of etiquette are conventional, these conventions are tied up in human practices that express important values in the cultures that have them. Furthermore, if philosophers like Stohr are to be believed, these conventions are not just entangled with cultural goods but also moral goods. For allistics, they may be an important part of moral agency.

Even if one doubts that the moral goods of pretense outweigh the moral goods of direct and clear communication and even if one holds that the loss of cultural value does not outweigh the moral problems generated by the allocentricity of manners, there is a yet further problem with this proposed first-order change. First-order changes risk reintroducing other forms of centricity and ableism. For example, it may be that with the right cultural upbringing, both allistic and autistic people can do well in a system of

etiquette that involves minimal pretense. However, this system may be much more difficult for people who have psychological vulnerabilities related to negative social judgment, such as people with social anxiety or people with ADHD involving challenges with emotional regulation. Human variation is significant enough that conflicting needs often arise. One problem with first-order changes is that any given convention may end up privileging one set of needs over another.

As a result of these kinds of limitations, the sorts of first-order changes that are likely to be viable solutions are likely to involve fairly specific and narrow issues and a careful consideration of competing needs. As an example, pretense reduction may be possible by eliminating more narrow conventions involving pretense. Small norms, such as the norm that one should always answer ‘How are you?’ positively outside of close relationships might be eliminated, somewhat reducing the amount of pretense that autistic people engage in without radically changing conventions. Similarly, eliminating norms requiring eye contact to express respect is likely viable without introducing conflicting needs. In this case, people who benefit from eye contact can still engage in it, and people who prefer to avoid it can do so. There are more than enough other ways to show respect, so there is unlikely to be a significant loss in expression either.

Some first-order changes to allocentric conditions will be a useful solution to certain manifestations of moral problems that allocentrism generates. But first-order changes aren’t enough on their own considering that sweeping changes are likely to be impractical and may reintroduce new forms of ableism. As a result, I will now turn to consider solutions that don’t involve changing the conventions of etiquette so directly.

Self-Identification

One proposal that may immediately spring to mind to address many of the moral problems caused by the allocentrism of manners is that autistic people could simply indicate that they are autistic and explain the relevant information to their peers, friends and so on. Rather than eliminate conventions involving pretense, autistic people could ask their social peers to avoid using pretense with them. Similarly, it might help prevent misunderstandings about eye contact at work if upon being hired, autistic people disclosed this fact and advised on the differences in body language so that their colleagues knew not to take it personally if eye contact is not made. In certain contexts, this solution is already partly implemented. For example, at universities students can register their disabilities with the relevant administrative office to receive accommodations for their disability, including autism. As the example of disability offices illustrates, this kind of solution has the advantage of not being autism specific and so could potentially be useful in addressing problems generated by other forms of ableism present in systems of etiquette.

Where it is viable, this solution is fairly apt for addressing the uneven distribution of burdens that allocentrism introduces. After self-identifying, it is usually straightforward to specify burdensome aspects of etiquette so that adjustments can be made. One of the examples of uneven distribution of burdens I gave earlier was of an autistic person whose friends liked to hang out at bars. In this sort of situation, the autistic person might explain why spending time at bars is draining and stressful, and propose less frequent visits and alternative venues for hanging out. Similarly, it can help address some forms of epistemic

disablement. In particular, those involving straightforward misunderstandings can be addressed by clarifying differences in body language or requesting more direct communication.

Unfortunately, this solution has significant limitations. To begin with, it is often not viable due to stigma about autism and other disabilities. It can be risky to disclose that one is autistic at the workplace or even to friends when the people disclosed to hold negative conceptions of autism. As a disability that is not immediately visible and which is often associated with socially unacceptable behavior, an attempt to self-identify can often be reacted to in one of two ways. First, the response might be skeptical, interpreting the disclosure as an attempt to get away with being rude or to seek special treatment or attention (Sparrow, 2013, pp. 127-128. If not met with skepticism, the disclosing autistic person may be believed but perceived according to negative stereotypes (Lindsay et al., 2021; Romualdez et al., 2021)

Another limitation is that it places a significant burden on the disclosing individual. It may allow for the uneven distribution of burdens to be addressed in certain respects, such as by eliminating the expectation that eye contact be made in conversation, but introduce an uneven distribution of burdens in another way by requiring disclosure of autism, explanation of how it is relevant, and requests for adjustment or accommodation.

This fact also makes this solution especially limited when it comes to brief interactions with strangers, rather than extended relationships with colleagues, friends, family and so on. Either autistic people do not disclose to strangers, in which case many of the moral problems generated by the allocentrism of manners remain problems in

interactions with strangers, or autistic people disclose, in which case they undertake a burden of constant self-advocacy. In either case, this kind of solution is not clearly satisfactory.

Lastly, self-identification requires a certain instance of self-knowledge: that the autistic person knows they are autistic. This cannot always be taken for granted. Many autistic people only come to realize they are autistic fairly late in life, and many may never realize they are autistic. Furthermore, official diagnosis is often expensive, gated behind obtaining a referral from a relevant authority, and may involve long wait times. This leaves even those who suspect they are autistic in a difficult situation, since they may not themselves be sure they can rightfully self-identify as such and since they will be hard pressed to deal with skeptical responses to disclosure. Of course, those who do not even suspect they are autistic cannot avail themselves of this solution at all.

Despite these limitations, this solution is worth keeping in mind. Some of its limitations may be addressed by other solutions, such as education and stigma reduction regarding autism. It is also helpful as a reactive tool for addressing problems that may fall through the cracks of other solutions since it can be highly individualized and contextualized.

Education and Stigma Reduction

A natural proposal based on some of the limitations of self-identification as a solution is incorporating education about varieties of psychological and behavioral difference into school curricula, with the goal of increasing knowledge about conditions like autism among the general population. As a part of this education, stigma reduction would be a

priority as well, with the goal of eliminating negative stereotypes and introducing useful knowledge about the ways in which people may deviate from various forms of neurotypicality such as allism.

This is a laudable idea and helps address some of the limitations of self-identification as a solution. If stigma can be eliminated, then disclosure becomes a much less risky proposition. Some research suggests that knowledge of autism improves first impressions when autism is disclosed, so there is reason to think this approach will have efficacy in addressing stigma (Sasson and Morrison 2017; Morrison et al., 2019). The general propagation of knowledge itself also helps address the uneven distribution of burdens, the uneven distribution of goods and epistemic disablement. It helps address the uneven distribution of burdens and goods by increasing awareness of autistic vulnerabilities. While it doesn't reach the level of having those vulnerabilities codified into conventions of etiquette in the way allistic vulnerabilities are codified, it does make having those vulnerabilities avoided more likely simply by increasing awareness of them. In turn, this reduces the burdens faced by autistic people having to either advocate for themselves or deal with the psychological costs of having those vulnerabilities activated. Increased knowledge of autistic body language and social differences also helps address epistemic disablement by making it easier for allistic people to identify potential sources of misunderstanding and makes it easier for autistic people to explain themselves when misunderstandings do occur.

Another benefit of increased public knowledge of autism is that it will hopefully reduce some of the epistemic disablement with respect to self-knowledge faced by

autistic people. Autistic people would be less likely to go for long periods with no awareness they are autistic, since they will be more likely to be aware of what autism is, what it may involve, and how that may relate to themselves.

Like the first solution, this solution has many limitations. The benefits from stigma reduction are likely to be the most robust, but there are problems with taking an educational and awareness raising approach. It is important to be cautious about being too optimistic about how easily the knowledge will be retained and applied. To begin with, incorporating education about autism and other forms of neurodiversity into school curricula would need to happen somewhat early in order to address the moral problems present in the way autistic children are often treated by peers and teachers. However, unless this education extends past this early stage it is doubtful that the knowledge taught would be retained in any significant way in adulthood. The relevant curriculum would not just consist of straightforward and easily remembered facts. While certain aspects of autism are relatively straightforward and easy to remember the full range of moral problems that the allocentrism of manners generates involve complicated social dynamics. The ways in which the psychological differences of autism are implicated in those social dynamics are themselves complex. It would require a fairly intense and extended curriculum devoted specifically to autism to generate the sort of knowledge in the general public that would help address the moral problems that allocentrism in etiquette generates. This simply does not seem realistic or reasonable.

For one thing, it would crowd out education regarding other disabilities. Indeed, the range of disabilities and other forms of diversity that it would be valuable to increase

public knowledge of is broad enough that it is doubtful education can carry the full burden in this way. There is simply too much human variation. Since breadth rather than depth would be the only viable and fair approach to education, it is doubtful that much specific knowledge will be retained especially given that knowledge not applied is rarely retained. Knowledge about small subsets of the human population, such as the ~ 1% of people who are autistic, is not likely to be frequently applied.

A further limitation is that knowledge is only so helpful. Previously, I mentioned that parents of autistic children who may be quite knowledgeable about autism not uncommonly overlooked the fact that they are themselves autistic. So, to begin with, knowledge does not always guarantee the relevant identification is made. But even further than that, knowledge is often not sufficient for navigating the moral problems caused by the allocentrism of manners. This is illustrated by the fact that even in long term relationships between self-identified autistic people and their romantic partners, misunderstandings, miscommunication and conflict related to allism are not uncommon. This may occur even in the absence of negative stereotypes or stigma regarding autism. For example, allistic partners may find it difficult to shed the use of indirectness, pretense and non-literal communication that they have been raised to use. They may also find it difficult to suppress immediate emotional responses to behaviors they have been raised to perceive as rude or callous, such as especially blunt or direct communication. They may be well aware of the autistic and allistic differences underlying these problems, but not find it easy to adequately address them. In her autobiography, Cynthia Kim explains that it took decades after her autism diagnosis for her husband to learn how to communicate

directly (Kim, 2014, loc. 847-848). After all, knowledge and the successful application thereof are two different things. If there are difficulties in this regard even in romantic relationships, it is doubtful that knowledge will be sufficient for addressing moral problems in less intimate relationships.²¹

With those limitations identified, I do want to note one important indirect benefit of increased public knowledge of autism and other forms of neurodivergence. Increased awareness about human variation may very well soften the negative social sanctions imposed when etiquette is violated. Knowledge of human variation in psychology and behavior will come with awareness that there are many exceptions to what is typical, as well as increased humility about the extent of our grasp on what is possible. One significant barrier to addressing the moral problems caused by allocentrism and similar forms of ableism is a kneejerk skepticism that others could be so psychologically different from the norm. A significant reduction in this skepticism would have a significant positive impact. Furthermore, people may be less quick to make negative judgments about character if they are aware that there may be other explanations for apparently rude behavior besides moral vices. These indirect benefits suggest a further solution to consider: trying to directly promote virtues such as humility that will encourage people to navigate social interactions more successfully with those who are psychologically different.

²¹ Though in less intimate relationships, the opportunities for moral problems are in some ways more restricted since social interactions are less frequent and more shallow.

Promoting Social Virtues

So far, we have considered a number of solutions. The first of these proposed changing specific conventions of etiquette or first-order changes to etiquette. The other two, self-identification and education, are not directly concerned with etiquette itself. The former is a particular strategy for seeking accommodation and the latter seeks to address background conditions, namely, awareness of and prejudices about autism. The last solution I will consider in this chapter is making higher-order changes to how norms of etiquette are applied in the form of social virtues.

Social virtues are personal dispositions to react in morally appropriate ways in social contexts. One example of a social virtue is considerateness, a disposition to take into account the feelings of others and adjust one's behavior accordingly. Social virtues may sometimes be exhibited in or guided by certain conventions of etiquette, but they can also modulate how those conventions are applied or – in some cases - suspended. I want to suggest in that certain social virtues can help address the moral problems resulting from allocentrism in systems of etiquette.

I have already noted one such virtue in the previous section: humility. People may often be quite confident about the social judgments made about others, leading them to make strong judgments based on first impressions. This is at the heart of situations like that of John the grocery store worker and his boss Roberta. When she discusses his work mistake and he fails to make eye contact, she quickly leaps to an interpretation of his behavior: he is a disrespectful teenager. If Roberta had more humility about her ability to

accurately judge character on the basis of relatively brief interactions and only specific forms of body language, this might have spared John her misinterpretation.

In the previous sections, I mainly presented solutions and then discussed what problems those might address. Here, it is more fruitful to consider the types of problems and then discuss what social virtues might help address that type of problem. A good place to start is the type of problem John faces: epistemic disablement. In John's case, the main problem is the epistemic disablement Roberta experiences. Because of the norms of etiquette, Roberta is unable to make an accurate judgement about John's character. This harms John because his boss forms an inaccurate negative judgment about his character. It also harms Roberta inasmuch as she forms an inaccurate judgment about her employee, which will make it harder for her to be a good boss. In considering how to address this kind of epistemic disablement, it will help to turn to an issue largely ignored in the literature on empathy and mind-reading: what causes errors in our judgments of the mental attributes of others. In doing so, I will draw on the work of Shannon Spaulding who has developed a framework for discussing such errors.

Spaulding distinguishes between two modes of 'mind-reading' (i.e., the exercise of cognitive empathy to ascertain the mental features of another person): mind-reading for efficiency and mind-reading for accuracy. (Spaulding, 2018, p. 45) We may vary between these modes depending on how important it is to err on the side of efficiency or accuracy. Accuracy oriented mind-reading is much more taxing as it involves more attentiveness to particulars and more explicit deliberation. Efficiency-oriented mindreading is much less taxing, but naturally more prone to error. I'll comment shortly

on the connection of etiquette to efficiency-oriented mind-reading, but first I want to introduce the two major strategies for efficiency that Spaulding identifies.

The first strategy is applied when the person to be understood is perceived as similar to us or within a similar in-group. On this approach we use our own mental features as a model and assume that the other person will be relevantly like us (Spaulding, 2018, pp. 45-46). The second strategy is applied when someone is viewed as unlike us, or as a member of an out-group. In this case, Spaulding, drawing on empirical research, argues that we instead draw on our stereotypes about the social group that person belongs to (Spaulding, 2018, p. 46). Each strategy has corresponding errors. Primarily, errors using the projective strategy tend to involve misjudgments about the degree of psychological similarity of the person perceived to belong to our in-group. On the other hand, errors involving the use of stereotypes tend to involve the inapplicability or inaccuracy of those stereotypes (Spaulding, 2018, pp. 46 - 47).

Spaulding does not explore the role of social conventions in enabling efficient forms of mind-reading. However, as the philosophical literature on etiquette reveals, the social conventions of etiquette help with social coordination and the expression of attitudes, thereby greasing the wheels of mind-reading when all goes well. To put this in Spaulding's terms, the role of etiquette here may be in constituting a certain kind of social in-group. Roberta takes it that John belongs to the same 'American etiquette' in-group, such that she can assume his failure to make eye contact would mean the same

thing as Americans such as herself failing to make eye-contact in a similar situation.²² It is worth noting that the process of forming this judgment likely involves a combination of strategies, since Roberta also sees John as belonging to an out-group: being a teenager. Her stereotypical conception of teenagers thus also contributes to the interpretation of his behavior.

The problems experienced by John are partly a result of Roberta interpreting his behavior through specific conventions of etiquette involving eye contact. But the problem is more than this. Her interpretation is guided by heuristics oriented towards efficiency rather than accuracy. These may be more reliable when dealing with other allistic people of the same culture, but it is clear how they are likely to go awry when applied to people who have significant psychological and behavioral differences such as autistic people. The heart of the problem here is that systems of etiquette *enable* this efficiency and this is one of their functions. The expressive goods they enable are a kind of shorthand that enables efficient mind-reading.

The fact that epistemic disablement results from one of the functions of etiquette itself suggests that we might need to adjust our use of etiquette with those malfunctions in mind. Here, social virtues can serve a valuable corrective within etiquette itself. Part of what systems of etiquette do is codify social virtues. We learn that being well-mannered and polite may require being considerate, humble about our achievements, gracious and so on. In the case of addressing the moral problems produced by allocentrism, making

²² Notably, the projection here isn't just about her own psychological features, but her behavioral features as well. This may be implicitly included in Spaulding's conception of the sort of projection involved in efficient mind-reading about a perceived in-group member.

certain social virtues more central to being well-mannered is a higher-order way to address the tendencies for systems of etiquette to malfunction. The first of these virtues that I will discuss is the virtue of humility.

Humility

The forms of humility that would help discourage judgments like Roberta's would concern humility about the aspects of mind-reading via etiquette that can lead to errors in social judgment. Since these judgments arise from efficiency-oriented mindreading, humility would involve an increased awareness of the limitations of the strategies that efficiency-oriented mindreading involves. The most immediately relevant strategy here is the projection of one's own mental features in order to interpret the behavior of someone perceived to be in an in-group. Many misunderstandings arise from this part of the process of efficient-mindreading, and it is obvious why: autistic and allistic people are quite different, so this sort of projective approach is bound to be unreliable. One of the previously mentioned benefits of education about neurodiversity is increasing awareness about psychological variation, which would contribute to humility about projection. The first step in becoming more conscientious of one's own egocentricity bias in projecting is exposure to a wide range of different psychologies, revealing the limitations of projection. Thus, humility could be promoted in part through education. In addition to this, it would be beneficial to more generally teach the importance of recognizing the limits of projection when interpreting the behavior of others.

The use of stereotypes to make judgments about those in perceived outgroups is also relevant here, both in cases like John and in cases where autism is disclosed. In some

respects, the humility relevant here is already one that is considered a virtue of polite behavior: we should hesitate to make judgments based on stereotypes and avoid reducing people to perceived labels. Again, education and awareness raising stand to make significant contributions in promoting these forms of humility, both by directly addressing stigmatizing stereotypes about autism and also by making clear that psychological differences can make people appear to fit a stereotype that is not, in fact, applicable. We can see this in the case of John and Roberta. While John is a teenager, his lack of eye contact and fidgeting are not indicators of disrespect as they might be in an able-bodied teenager.

Lastly, because a major contributor to epistemic disablement is the role conventions of etiquette play in enabling efficiency-oriented strategies, humility should involve awareness of the limitations of conventions. Here, one crucial dimension of humility is the perception of norms of etiquette as conventional. Because conventions of etiquette are often conventions that codify expressions of important moral attitudes, they come along with rationalizing stories that sometimes obscure the conventional nature of those norms. In cultures where punctuality is an important sign of respect, people may remark that people who are not punctual display disrespect because they act as if their time is more important than other people's. By showing up late, they waste the time of others and cause further inconvenience. To someone in such a culture, it may seem transparently obvious that the only way to be respectful is to be punctual. Yet, there are cultures where punctuality is not generally enshrined as a part of etiquette. It is doubtful that these cultures are all unwittingly engaging in widespread disrespect. The norm of

punctuality is clearly conventional, despite the seemingly non-conventional rationalizations given for it. Developing humility about the conventional nature of norms of etiquette partly means learning to see them opaquely (as conventions) rather than transparently (as directly representing non-conventional moral norms). This virtue is often cultivated of necessity among those who frequently interact with other cultures, but not as frequently otherwise.

Especially important to the case of allocentrism is that the scope of this recognition be expanded. Conventions common to a wide range of cultures or conventions that are codified in the sciences as expressions of ‘human nature’ are less likely to be seen as conventions and more likely to be seen as inevitable and universal. It is precisely these conventions that are more likely to involve allocentrism and exclusion of other small social and psychological minorities since they will tend to track what is common to humans with the exception of any such minority.²³ As such, humility about the conventional nature of norms of etiquette needs to run deeper than it frequently does in order to address the epistemic disablement that often results from failures to appreciate the limitations of convention. In this regard, education about neurodiversity again shows itself to be a valuable adjunct to promoting humility. Awareness of psychological diversity is important for rendering conventions which appear to derive from human nature visible as conventions reflecting only the statistically typical.

²³ This can be seen at the theoretical level in the philosophical literature, such as in Stohr’s arguments for the moral importance of pretense, as well as in biases in scientific research about gaze tracking and eye contact noted in Chapter 1.

Of course, the virtue of humility has its constraints. It is not possible or desirable to refrain from making any social judgments. Furthermore, as a virtue it addresses only one side of epistemic disablement: the forming of inaccurate judgments. It does not address the question of what is involved in forming accurate judgments. In terms of efficiency-oriented mindreading, since psychological projection is unreliable, the only tool for forming accurate judgments is through the use of stereotyping. In the case of autism, the best that could be hoped for here is accurate stereotype about autism. However, autistic traits vary widely from individual to individual, limiting the efficacy of this strategy in making accurate judgments. Furthermore, it is not helpful when a person is not explicitly perceived to be autistic. In general, efficiency-oriented mindreading has substantial limitations with bridging the gap between people with significant psychological differences.

We might here turn to Spaulding again to consider accuracy-oriented mindreading, but her characterization of accuracy-oriented mindreading is significantly less detailed than her characterization of efficiency-oriented mindreading. Inasmuch as she does characterize accuracy-oriented mindreading, she does so in terms of information gathering, giving the example of carefully interviewing a prospective nanny. (Spaulding, 2018, p. 45) She notes that accuracy-oriented mindreading is quite taxing, and used sparingly for this reason (Spaulding, 2018, p. 45). She suggests that widespread use of accuracy-oriented reading is an unhelpful corrective to inaccurate mindreading in cases of epistemic injustice, proposing “structural and institutional measures to serve as a check on potential biases.” (Spaulding, 2018, p. 91)

In fact, I think Spaulding may be unduly pessimistic about the cognitive burdens of accuracy-oriented mindreading. To be clear, she may be correct that accuracy-oriented mindreading won't necessarily help with epistemic injustice resulting from bias, since the cognitive processes involved may themselves involve bias. However, I think that in the particular case under consideration here, it is sufficient that virtues conducive to accuracy-oriented mindreading both contribute generally to more accurate judgments of others and are not so cognitively demanding that they cannot be used with more frequency than is currently the case. With respect to the former, it is hard to imagine that a more deliberate approach would make things any worse when it comes to allistics misunderstanding autistics. With respect to the latter, autistic people themselves may provide a basis for thinking that it is possible to use accuracy-oriented mindreading more frequently than is typical.

Autistic people frequently use such an accuracy-oriented approach to mindreading for a number of reasons. Probably the most significant is simply to get by. There is no choice but to navigate the allistic social world, and autistics cannot avail themselves as easily of either projection or the use of conventions when interpreting others. Furthermore, being vividly aware of the impact psychological differences have on judgments about other people, they may be more likely to consciously take this into account in their style of empathizing. Consider autistic self-advocate Jim Sinclair's remarks on precisely this issue:

When I am interacting with someone, that person's perspective is as foreign to me as mine is to the other person. But while I am aware of this difference and can make deliberate efforts to figure out how someone else is experiencing a situation, I generally find that other people do not notice the difference in perspectives and

simply assume that they understand my experience.... While different people vary in how much they examine their assumptions about my experience and take care to communicate their own perspectives in terms I can understand, I have never interacted with anyone who was as careful about these things as I am. (Sinclair, 1988, para. 2)

Of course, in some ways the example of autistic people illustrates Spaulding's claim about the cognitively taxing nature of accuracy-oriented mindreading. Autistic people disproportionately take on the burdens of engaging in this kind of approach and as a result frequently report finding social interaction mentally exhausting. We should not want that all interaction be this taxing, but that does not mean that the frequency with which it is engaged among the typical majority is the reasonable limit.²⁴ Whatever the reasonable limit is, I will propose two virtues that are conducive towards avoiding epistemic disablement by promoting a more accuracy-oriented approach to social judgments: attentiveness and patience.

Attentiveness

The first virtue conducive to more accurate mindreading is attentiveness. Specifically, attentiveness to a broad range of potential signals of mental state and attitude. This virtue corresponds roughly with the information gathering that is important to accuracy-oriented mindreading according to Spaulding. Due to the limitations of projection, stereotype and social convention, it is important that in applying norms of etiquette to form judgments about others we are attentive to other signals. Consider an example from Bev, an autistic woman:

²⁴ If it is, then it is even more deeply unjust that autistic people should be so disproportionately burdened with engaging in it.

I am in the community room at work with Bob and Marge. Sally walks in, says hello, talks to Bob for a couple of minutes, then goes on. I say to Bob, what was wrong with Sally. Nothing he says. Marge says what do you mean. The next day I find out that Sally had just come from the hospital where her mother was very ill. She hadn't mentioned it to anyone[...]. Sally had a smudge of dirt on her shoe. Her shirt was not tucked in. These things are out of the ordinary, she tends to be perfectly neat in her presentation. Marge and Bob did not notice these things; they were focused on Sally's eyes. Apparently, she is good at hiding her feelings. (Bev, 2007, para. 5-11)

Bev here attends not only to Sally's highly regulated facial expressions, but to other indicators of her mood. Crucially, the details that stood out are those that ran counter to her appearance in other respects. The function of attentiveness here is that it can help note relevant information that may run counter to judgments deriving from efficiency-oriented strategies. Consider the example of the autistic man who tells his friend she looks 'fat and haggard.' This remark jumps out immediately as inappropriate and callous. It might seem obvious that he is being insensitive at best, and insulting at worse. But the autistic man did not just say this to his friend: he also hugged her. Attending to all the facets of his behavior suggests that he is certainly not being intentionally or callously insulting, and that he has a particular motive: concern. A person calling someone fat in order to put them down is unlikely to behave in this way. While his motive does not make the remark morally appropriate, it does alter the appropriate judgment to make about his intentions, character and virtues as a friend.

Promoting attentiveness as a part of politeness could help push people towards more accuracy-oriented mind reading. This has a number of benefits aside from potentially helping address allocentrism. Previously I mentioned considerateness, which is a disposition to take the needs of others into account. This is an easier virtue to practice

if one is attentive. Considerateness of Sally's well-hidden distress is only possible if it is detected in the first place.

That said, attentiveness has some limitations as a virtue. First, it may be difficult to know what details are relevant or how to interpret them without appropriate knowledge of a person. This can limit it especially when there are psychological differences which may affect what details appear salient. For example, an attentive allistic person might attend to an autistic person's flat affect and assume this is a significant indicator of mood, when it is in fact just the default affect of the autistic person. Other indicators of mood, such as subtle stims, may be overlooked. Second, in a relatively short interaction, potentially relevant details may not be apparent. A person's general kindness and helpfulness may be important behavioral details for interpreting a social gaffe as a gaffe and not a malicious remark.

In addressing the issue of salience, education again is potentially helpful here. Education can be a useful foundation by increasing awareness of the broad range of potentially relevant details: for example, knowing that autistic people may express social interest in alternative ways such as by sharing interesting facts. However, such knowledge has its limits, both in that it will not be possible to keep all the potentially relevant knowledge in mind and because it does not help when details are personally idiosyncratic. Bev is able to interpret Sally's messy dress because she has learned that Sally is normally a neat dresser. Both the problem of salience and the problem of short-slice interactions can be further addressed by another virtue: patience.

Patience

We can note that Bev interprets Sally's behavior partly in light of what she knows are Sally's general dispositions: to be 'perfectly neat' in her dress. This is knowledge likely obtained through observation of Sally across a period of time. Forming accurate judgments about people often requires this kind of extended exposure. This suggests another virtue, which I will call patience. Patience in this context is the virtue of resisting forming robust judgments about others on the basis of relatively short interactions with them. Patience involves a disposition towards diachronically distributed attentiveness: forming judgments on the basis of attention to relevant details not only at a time, but across time.

The relevance of patience can be clearly seen in if we return to the example of John and Roberta. Roberta lacks patience in the judgment she forms of John as a disrespectful teenager. There may not be any evidence during her meeting with him that would undermine this judgment, but it may quickly be undermined if she attends to his behavior after the meeting. The conventional indicators of eye contact are probably less reliable than non-conventional indicators, which in this case would be signs that he had been paying attention to the feedback she gave about his job performance during the meeting. If Roberta is patient, she may discover that John is following her feedback about procedure to the letter, indicating that despite appearances he was attending carefully to her words.

Patience is not just valuable for gathering more information, it is also valuable for learning how to interpret information. This is what Bev's example illustrates: in coming

to know Sally's typical neatness, Bev comes to see her untidy appearance as an indicator of something anomalous. Patience is valuable in getting to know someone, and getting to know someone is valuable in interpreting their behavior. Furthermore, patience is necessary to construct conventions for interpretation and this is also a part of getting to know someone. We do not just get to know one another passively. As Sinclair remarks: "Establishing communication and understanding between any two people with different experiences and perspectives involves developing a common language." (Sinclair, 1988, para. 7)

Of course, patience is costly in both time and cognitive demand, and it can't always be exercised because many social interactions are brief. The priority of the virtues discussed so far will depend on the extent of the social relationship we have towards someone. In brief interactions with strangers, patience is not relevant and attentiveness may be too taxing to prioritize in all such interactions. Humility is the most easily practiced in such interactions and perhaps all that is necessary. The stakes in brief interactions are typically lower, especially when we are not expecting to meet the person we interact with again. Humility may be enough to block the brief frictions that can come from unwarranted social judgments, frictions which may in isolation not amount to much but which cumulatively can have a significant impact on people likely to be subject to them, in this case, autistic people.

Where the stakes are higher in brief interactions, attentiveness may come to the fore. It is enough in interacting with a cashier to refrain from forming negative judgments that might increase social friction. Politely closing the transaction and moving on is

sufficient. Humility is clearly not sufficient, on the other hand, when it comes to the interactions of authority figures with those they are granted authority over, such as a police officer interacting with a person behaving oddly. While humility is also crucial in such interactions, a lack of attentiveness can lead to overlooking signs of distress that may indicate a person is in need or is at risk of harm if handled inappropriately. Police interactions with autistic people not uncommonly result in the autistic person being injured or harmfully restrained (Copenhaver and Tewksbury, 2019).

We have considered three social virtues relevant to the problem of epistemic disablement. These may not exhaust the list of relevant virtues, but they are a start. In addressing this problem, it would help for these virtues to be promoted as a part of etiquette. If children are raised to see humility, attentiveness and patience as a part of being a polite person, this will help provide checks against some of the ways that conventions of etiquette lead to misunderstanding, miscommunication and other forms of epistemic disablement.

What about the other two types of moral problem resulting from allocentrism? The uneven distribution of expressive goods is intimately linked to epistemic disablement, so this particular problem has largely been addressed. As such, I'll focus first on virtues relevant to addressing the uneven distribution of psychological goods and the related problem of the uneven distribution of self-respect. The uneven distribution of burdens is so entangled with the other problems that addressing those should address the relevant burdens autistics take to either access the relevant goods or avoid epistemic disablement.

The uneven distribution of psychological goods results in large part from the fact that norms of etiquette codify typical allistic vulnerabilities, but not autistic ones. As a downstream impact of this, autistic people are often not treated as if their needs matter, which results in an uneven distribution of self-respect. If it is not reasonable to expect that autistic vulnerabilities can be sufficiently codified, there may be social virtues that will help address these problems. I will argue that the virtues of consideration and trust are especially relevant here. Before discussing consideration and trust, I want to briefly note that the virtues relevant to epistemic disablement are relevant here indirectly, inasmuch as in the absence of conventions codifying autistic needs, some degree of accurate mind-reading will be necessary to discern those needs when they are not communicated directly.

Consideration

Consideration is the virtue of adjusting one's behavior to the needs of others. Examples of behavior exhibiting this virtue include avoiding remarking on sensitive matters, or ensuring that food options at a social event respect the dietary needs and preferences of participants. Consideration is often entangled with norms of etiquette, since those norms codify typical needs. But consideration extends beyond conventions, and involves a responsiveness to needs that are idiosyncratic to individuals or groups that may not be codified.²⁵ The relevance of consideration to the uneven distribution of psychological goods and self-respect is clear.

²⁵ Indeed, considerateness is essential to cross-cultural etiquette since where the vulnerabilities encoded within two given systems may differ, considerateness helps bridge the gap by attending to vulnerabilities not encoded within one's cultural system of etiquette.

While consideration is a virtue already promoted as a part of etiquette, addressing allocentrism requires emphasizing the dimension of consideration that goes beyond conventions of etiquette. There are two respects in which this dimension of consideration might be emphasized. The first builds on the solution of education and awareness raising. Knowledge of a diverse range of psychological needs outside of those codified in conventions enables consideration of those needs. The second concerns the clear contrast between the type of needs actually codified in etiquette and the full range of needs that people actually have. This is similar to the need to emphasize the limits of convention in the cultivation of the virtue of humility as applied to etiquette. Consideration should be understood as a virtue that supplements the conventions of etiquette that codify vulnerabilities rather than primarily oriented towards the vulnerabilities already codified. In this role, it can help address the uneven distribution of psychological goods. It also helps address the uneven distribution of self-respect. Being treated with consideration is, at least in the Kantian sense, to be treated with respect. It is to be treated as an end worth being taken into account and accommodated. Being treated this way makes it easier to conceive of oneself as worthy of respect and so to develop a healthy sense of self-respect.

Consideration, of course, has its limits. Part of the reason that etiquette codifies common vulnerabilities is that it can be demanding to try and track the needs of everyone, and even more demanding to respond to them. Codification helps simplify and streamline, allowing for the anticipation of many common vulnerabilities and leaving room for others to be recognized either through attentiveness or communication. Attentiveness we have already discussed and its application can be especially demanding

(especially when the person attended to is psychologically different from us).

Communication is often tackled through conventions of etiquette as well: the appropriate manner for expressing one's needs to someone else is often established via convention.

This is natural given that it is sometimes more efficient and in other cases necessary for vulnerabilities to be communicated in order to be recognized. However, for such communication to go smoothly, it needs to operate against a background of trust. Trust that often goes out the window when a vulnerability is especially different from what is typical. This brings us to the final virtue and an important adjunct to consideration: trust.

Trust

Even when needs are explicitly codified, many disabled people can relate stories of being treated as untrustworthy sneaks trying to gain some kind of unreasonable advantage. They may be policed about whether they look disabled enough to use a handicap parking space, for example. Professors may chafe at the accommodations required by the disability resource center at their university and worry that the accommodations represent an unjustified coddling of the student. Distrust is often even more likely when there are no official accommodations in place and when a disability is not outwardly visible. In such cases, it is not uncommon to suspect a person expressing an unusual need is making things up for attention or special treatment. This forms a fundamental barrier to consideration: it is difficult to have your needs met if no one will believe you when you express them.

Trust is an important virtue, then, for enabling the full exercise of consideration. Promoting trust as a central virtue of etiquette along with consideration can help address

the uneven distribution of psychological goods and self-respect. As is the pattern, education can bolster the development of trust in a way conducive towards addressing allocentrism and ableism more broadly. Exposure to a wider diversity of human needs will help undercut some of the distrust that derives from incredulity that someone might have a need so different from what is typical. The other major element in distrust of atypical needs involves concerns about unfairness and exploitation.²⁶ When someone expresses an unusual need, they may be perceived as trying to gain an unfair advantage of some kind. This element is a little trickier to address, but I think one way to approach addressing it is to encourage people to be more thoughtful about boundaries and the role rules play in enforcing them.

One of the dangers of etiquette, and systems of rules more generally, is that it is easy to get overly zealous about their enforcement. The same can hold more generally of concerns about fairness. This can lead us to ignore the stakes that are really at hand. We may fail to notice that very little is lost by making an exception, and there might be much to be gained. Consider a work situation, where an autistic employee requests to be able to work with headphones on. This helps them focus by shutting out external noise, such as office chatter, as well as discourage co-workers from interrupting their focus. The boss may very well become suspicious: perhaps they just want to be able to listen to music or podcasts or slack off. It can't be that hard to focus, after all, they aren't even in a cubicle near the break room where most conversation happens. The boss in this case might

²⁶ Yet another element may be laziness. Distrust can be a way to rationalize not having to exert any effort to be considerate. Since this is so obviously a vice, I don't think it deserves its own discussion.

benefit from considering how much is really at stake to be lost and whether distrust in this case is necessary in order to avoid being taken advantage of. A closer consideration reveals there is not much need for vigilance. It is easy for the issue to be renegotiated if there is some kind of significant impact, such as a significant reduction in work quality.

Part of the recalibration of trust, then, should be a shift away from treating exceptional requests (unusual requests or requests for exceptions) as in and of themselves implausible or a sign of an ulterior motive. Trust should extend beyond the bounds of the expected or conventional and, in doing so, it can operate to address some of the shortcomings of social conventions such as those found in systems of etiquette. Distrust is only appropriate when there are more substantive reasons to be concerned about sincerity or reasonable boundaries. Cultivating trust as a disposition that is robust against exceptional requests helps cultivate a form of trust that, in conjunction with considerateness, can help autistic people express their needs and have those needs accounted for.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to promoting social virtues in order to address the allocentrism of manners. While virtues appear to be in some ways the most robust and flexible solution, they are also the most fragile and context dependent. For one thing, social virtues, in being virtues, depend to some extent for their efficacy on each other. There is a reason many virtue theorists have historically held that there is a unity among the virtues. It is difficult to imagine someone being considerate towards others while distrusting them, and a trusting but inconsiderate person would accomplish little.

Furthermore, as has been noted throughout, education is an important adjunct to the effective application of these virtues. Someone who knows little about autism will be unlikely to be attentive in ways that are helpful for understanding an autistic colleague.

Virtues are also highly context sensitive. As mentioned in the discussion of trust, how trusting one should be depends in how significant the risks are in trusting a person. Trust exhibited in an inappropriate context may well turn into gullibility. Other conflicting virtues may also be more salient depending on the situation. In an emergency situation, decisiveness rather than patience is called for.

Due to this context sensitivity, the successful exercise of these virtues relies on good judgment about the situation one is in. Simply due to epistemic limitations, especially in interactions with strangers or colleagues, it may be that the relevant information about the situation is not accessible. This is an important limitation to bear in mind. The exercise of virtues is not so straightforward, and some degree of unreliability and fallibility in their exercise is to be expected.

Conclusion – Intersections and Future Paths

The arguments of this dissertation have been narrowly focused on autism. In closing, I want to briefly remark on how the issues discussed here may intersect in important ways with other moral problems and introduce some final reflections about how further progress might be made in addressing allocentrism in manners and related moral problems.

In Chapter 4, I gestured towards the fact that allocentrism is just one form of ableism. Further philosophical analysis of etiquette should consider the ways in which etiquette may be ableist in other respects. For example, Jake Jackson considers the way in which the expectation of a positive answer to the question ‘How are you?’, especially by strangers, can have a significant negative impact on people experiencing depression. An honest answer simply results in social alienation and an uncomfortable conversational partner. A falsely positive one can result in a sense of isolation (Jackson, 2017, p. 363). Some of the solutions discussed in Chapter 4 may be able to robustly generalize across a variety of forms of ableism, such as education, stigma reduction and the social virtues, but attention to specific problems experienced by people with other forms of disability may reveal other kinds of problems in etiquette and highlight necessary solutions.

Inasmuch as systems of etiquette do play important moral functions, people who violate them may be doing so out of moral vice. This is one of the reasons why rudeness can be a serious matter because it can presage more significant harms. Norms of etiquette that set important boundaries, such as boundaries regarding personal space, can help identify potential bad actors since those who violate them are likely doing so out of

disregard of others or malice.²⁷ Some of the solutions I have considered, especially the social virtues, push in the direction of being less judgmental about violations of etiquette. But it is important to be conscientious of the risks of doing so. This is especially true for marginalized groups for whom boundary violations by bad actors are a significant risk. For example, women are often socialized to be trusting and considerate in ways that can make them more vulnerable to being harmed by men who exploit that tendency. Women who have cultivated a virtue of distrust and increased confidence in their social judgments and use this to set protective boundaries do so out of a need to protect themselves more effectively from patriarchal violence. This is in obvious tension with some of the virtues I advocated for in the previous chapter. In considering virtues such as humility and trust as solutions to allocentrism, it is important to bear in mind the unfortunate realities norms of etiquette sometimes help us navigate and the function those norms can play for people trying to protect themselves. Ultimately, the lesson here is one often noted: it is difficult to address any given injustice in isolation from addressing others.

Lastly, further consideration of how the problems of allocentrism intersect with other forms of social injustice is crucial for adequately addressing them. For example, black children are subject to disciplinary sanctions in school much more frequently than their white peers (Riddle and Sinclair, 2019). Autistic behavior can often appear to teachers to be defiant, disrespectful and rude. Black autistic children are likely to be especially vulnerable to unwarranted disciplinary sanctions as a result of the conjunction

²⁷ Of course, a malicious person can very well be quite polite, but not all malicious people are so polite.

of these two factors. Similar issues arise with black adults. Catina Burkett remarks on how the stereotype of the ‘angry black woman’ combines with her autistic traits in a way that leads her colleagues to make a wide range of unwarranted negative judgments about her character (Burkett, 2020).

In all of these cases, it is crucial to have all hands on deck, so to speak. Those who experience the relevant problems, whether they be other forms of ableism in etiquette, tensions with the solutions to other forms of injustice, or the way allocentrism differentially impacts autistics with other marginalized identities, will be best positioned to articulate those problems and weigh the most helpful and appropriate solutions.

Bibliography

- Akhtar, N., & Gernsbacher, M. A. (2007). Joint Attention and Vocabulary Development: A Critical Look. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 1(3), 195–207.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2007.00014.x>
- Alyssa. (2016, July 22). Yes, That Too: Dear Neurotypicals: What if you use your words? *Yes, That Too*. <https://yesthattoo.blogspot.com/2016/07/dear-neurotypicals-what-if-you-use-your.html>
- American Psychiatric Association. (1980). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (III). American Psychiatric Publishing.
<https://dsm.psychiatryonline.org/doi/pdf/10.1176/appi.books.9780521315289.dsm-iii>
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (V). American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Autist Making Way. (2020, January 5). Autism and Flat Affect. *Medium*.
<https://medium.com/@AutistMakingWay/autism-and-flat-affect-63381d9e>
- Baggs, M. (2016, May 1). Don't ever assume autism researchers know what they're doing. *Ballastexistenz*. <https://ballastexistenz.wordpress.com/2016/05/01/dont-ever-assume-autism-researchers-know-what-theyre-doing/>
- Baron-Cohen, S. (1997). *Mindblindness: An essay on autism and theory of mind*. MIT.
- Baron-Cohen, S., Leslie, A. M., & Frith, U. (1985). Does the autistic child have a “theory of mind”? *Cognition*, 21(1), 37–46. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277\(85\)90022-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277(85)90022-8)
- Baron-Cohen, S., Wheelwright, S., Hill, J., Raste, Y., & Plumb, I. (2001). The “Reading the Mind in the Eyes” Test revised version: A study with normal adults, and adults with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines*, 42(2), 241–251.
- Bascom, J. (2012). *Loud Hands: Autistic People, Speaking*. Autistic Self Advocacy Network.
- Beardon, L. (2017). *Autism and Asperger Syndrome in Adults* (Kindle). John Murray Press.
- Bem, S. L. (1993). *The lenses of gender: Transforming the debate on sexual inequality*. Yale Univ. Press.
- Bev. (2007, March 8). Empathy? *Square 8*.
<http://aspersquare8.blogspot.com/2007/03/white-painting.html>

- Bloom, P., & German, T. P. (2000). Two reasons to abandon the false belief task as a test of theory of mind. *Cognition*, 77(1), B25-31.
- Bolis, D., Balsters, J., Wenderoth, N., Becchio, C., & Schilbach, L. (2017). Beyond Autism: Introducing the Dialectical Misattunement Hypothesis and a Bayesian Account of Intersubjectivity. *Psychopathology*, 50(6), 355–372. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000484353>
- Bollard, M. (2013). Psychopathy, Autism and Questions of Moral Agency. In *Ethics and Neurodiversity* (pp. 238–259). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Brewer, R., Biotti, F., Catmur, C., Press, C., Happé, F., Cook, R., & Bird, G. (2016). Can Neurotypical Individuals Read Autistic Facial Expressions? Atypical Production of Emotional Facial Expressions in Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Autism Research: Official Journal of the International Society for Autism Research*, 9(2), 262–271. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.1508>
- Burkett, C. (2020, 2020). ‘Autistic while black’: How autism amplifies stereotypes. *Spectrum*. <https://www.spectrumnews.org/opinion/viewpoint/autistic-while-black-how-autism-amplifies-stereotypes/>
- Buss, S. (1999). Appearing Respectful: The Moral Significance of Manners. *Ethics*, 109(4), 795–826. <https://doi.org/10.1086/233946>
- Cage, E., Pellicano, E., Shah, P., & Bird, G. (2013). Reputation management: Evidence for ability but reduced propensity in autism. *Autism Research: Official Journal of the International Society for Autism Research*, 6(5), 433–442. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.1313>
- Calhoun, C. (Ed.). (2003). Common Decency. In *Setting the Moral Compass: Essays by Women Philosophers* (1st edition, pp. 128–144). Oxford University Press.
- Cassidy, S., Hannant, P., Tavassoli, T., Allison, C., Smith, P., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2016). Dyspraxia and autistic traits in adults with and without autism spectrum conditions. *Molecular Autism*, 7(1), 48. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-016-0112-x>
- Catala, A., Faucher, L., & Poirier, P. (2021). Autism, epistemic injustice, and epistemic disablement: A relational account of epistemic agency. *Synthese*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-021-03192-7>
- Copenhaver, A., & Tewksbury, R. (2019). Interactions Between Autistic Individuals and Law Enforcement: A Mixed-Methods Exploratory Study. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 44(2), 309–333. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-018-9452-8>

- Crompton, C. J., Ropar, D., Evans-Williams, C. V., Flynn, E. G., & Fletcher-Watson, S. (2020). Autistic peer-to-peer information transfer is highly effective. *Autism*, 24(7), 1704–1712. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361320919286>
- Crompton, C. J., Sharp, M., Axbey, H., Fletcher-Watson, S., Flynn, E. G., & Ropar, D. (2020). Neurotype-Matching, but Not Being Autistic, Influences Self and Observer Ratings of Interpersonal Rapport. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 0. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.586171>
- Dinishak, J. (2016a). *Empathy, Like-mindedness, and Autism* (pp. 113–134). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315676722-8>
- Dinishak, J. (2016b). The Deficit View and Its Critics. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 36(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v36i4.5236>
- Ed. Edmonds, G. (2008). *Asperger Syndrome and Social Change: Adults Speak out about Asperger Syndrome* (1st edition). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Fingarette, H. (1998). *Confucius: The Secular As Sacred*. Waveland Press Inc.
- Fisher, M., Moskowitz, A., & Hodapp, R. (2012). Vulnerability and Experiences Related to Social Victimization Among Individuals With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. *Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 5, 32–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19315864.2011.592239>
- Frith, U., & Frith, C. (2011). Reputation Management: In Autism, Generosity Is Its Own Reward. *Current Biology*, 21(24), R994–R995. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2011.11.001>
- Gernsbacher, M. A. (2006). Toward a Behavior of Reciprocity. *The Journal of Developmental Processes*, 1(1), 139–152.
- Gernsbacher, M. A., & Frymiare, J. L. (2005). Does the Autistic Brain Lack Core Modules? *The Journal of Developmental and Learning Disorders*, 9, 3–16.
- Gernsbacher, M. A., Stevenson, J. L., & Dern, S. (2020). Autistic People Do Enhance Their Selves. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 11(5), 605–615. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619865057>
- Gernsbacher, M. A., & Yergeau, M. (2019). Empirical Failures of the Claim That Autistic People Lack a Theory of Mind. *Archives of Scientific Psychology*, 7(1), 102–118. <https://doi.org/10.1037/arc0000067>

- Heasman, B., & Gillespie, A. (2018). Perspective-taking is two-sided: Misunderstandings between people with Asperger’s syndrome and their family members. *Autism*, 22(6), 740–750. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361317708287>
- Hebron, J., Oldfield, J., & Humphrey, N. (2017). Cumulative risk effects in the bullying of children and young people with autism spectrum conditions. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, 21(3), 291–300. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361316636761>
- Hobson, P. (2004). *The Cradle of Thought: Exploring the Origins of Thinking* (Unabridged edition). Pan MacMillan.
- Hull, L., Levy, L., Lai, M.-C., Petrides, K. V., Baron-Cohen, S., Allison, C., Smith, P., & Mandy, W. (2021). Is social camouflaging associated with anxiety and depression in autistic adults? *Molecular Autism*, 12(1), 13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-021-00421-1>
- Hull, L., Petrides, K. V., Allison, C., Smith, P., Baron-Cohen, S., Lai, M.-C., & Mandy, W. (2017). “Putting on My Best Normal”: Social Camouflaging in Adults with Autism Spectrum Conditions. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47(8), 2519–2534. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3166-5>
- Izuma, K., Matsumoto, K., Camerer, C. F., & Adolphs, R. (2011). Insensitivity to social reputation in autism. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 108(42), 17302–17307. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1107038108>
- Jaarsma, P., Gelhaus, P., & Welin, S. (2012). Living the categorical imperative: Autistic perspectives on lying and truth telling—between Kant and care ethics. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 15(3), 271–277. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-011-9363-7>
- Jackson, J. (2017). Patronizing Depression: Epistemic Injustice, Stigmatizing Attitudes, and the Need for Empathy. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 48(3), 359–376. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12194>
- Jane Meyerding. (1998). *Why Are We So Unfriendly? Or: Hello, Friend, Now Please Go Away*. Planet Autism. <http://www.planetautism.com/jane/unf.html>
- Jaswal, V. K., & Akhtar, N. (2018). Being vs. Appearing Socially Uninterested: Challenging Assumptions about Social Motivation in Autism. *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1–84. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X18001826>
- Jones, S. R. (2013). *No You Don’t: Essays from an Unstrange Mind*. Unstrange Publications.
- Kant, I. (1996). *Kant: The Metaphysics of Morals* (M. J. Gregor, Ed.; 2nd edition). Cambridge University Press.

- Kant, I. (2007). *Kant: The Metaphysics of Morals* (M. J. Gregor, Ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Kapp, S. K. (Ed.). (2020). *Autistic Community and the Neurodiversity Movement: Stories from the Frontline*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8437-0>
- Kapp, S. K., Steward, R., Crane, L., Elliott, D., Elphick, C., Pellicano, E., & Russell, G. (2019). ‘People should be allowed to do what they like’: Autistic adults’ views and experiences of stimming. *Autism*, 23(7), 1782–1792. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361319829628>
- Kennett, J. (2002). Autism, Empathy and Moral Agency. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 52(208), 340–357. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9213.00272>
- Kennett, J. (2011). Imagining Reasons. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 49(s1), 181–192. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2041-6962.2011.00066.x>
- Kenny, L., Hattersley, C., Molins, B., Buckley, C., Povey, C., & Pellicano, E. (2016). Which terms should be used to describe autism? Perspectives from the UK autism community. *Autism*, 20(4), 442–462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361315588200>
- Kim, C. (2014). *Nerdy, Shy, and Socially Inappropriate: A User Guide to an Asperger Life* (Kindle). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Kirby, A. V., Bakian, A. V., Zhang, Y., Bilder, D. A., Keeshin, B. R., & Coon, H. (2019). A 20-year study of suicide death in a statewide autism population. *Autism Research*, 12(4), 658–666. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2076>
- Komeda, H. (2015). Similarity hypothesis: Understanding of others with autism spectrum disorders by individuals with autism spectrum disorders. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 0. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2015.00124>
- lierdumoa. (2017, June). To my friends on the spectrum, let me explain to you an unspoken social rule that possibly nobody has ever explained to you before [Tumblr]. *Lierdumoa*. <https://lierdumoa.tumblr.com/post/161946417797/to-my-friends-on-the-spectrum-let-me-explain-to>
- Lindsay, S., Osten, V., Rezai, M., & Bui, S. (2021). Disclosure and workplace accommodations for people with autism: A systematic review. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 43(5), 597–610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2019.1635658>
- Loukusa, S., Mäkinen, L., Kuusikko-Gauffin, S., Ebeling, H., & Moilanen, I. (2014). Theory of mind and emotion recognition skills in children with specific language impairment, autism spectrum disorder and typical development: Group differences and connection to

knowledge of grammatical morphology, word-finding abilities and verbal working memory. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 49(4), 498–507. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12091>

Maenner, M. J., Shaw, K. A., Baio, J., Washington, A., Patrick, M., DiRienzo, M., Christensen, D. L., Wiggins, L. D., Pettygrove, S., Andrews, J. G., Lopez, M., Hudson, A., Baroud, T., Schwenk, Y., White, T., Rosenberg, C. R., Lee, L.-C., Harrington, R. A., Huston, M., ... Dietz, Patricia M. (2020). Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder Among Children Aged 8 Years—Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 11 Sites, United States, 2016. *MMWR. Surveillance Summaries*, 69, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.ss6904a1>

McGeer, V. (2001). Psycho-practice, psycho-theory and the contrastive case of autism. How practices of mind become second-nature. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8, 109–132.

Milton, D. E. M. (2012). On the ontological status of autism: The ‘double empathy problem.’ *Disability & Society*, 27(6), 883–887. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2012.710008>

Morrison, K. E., DeBrabander, K. M., Faso, D. J., & Sasson, N. J. (2019). Variability in first impressions of autistic adults made by neurotypical raters is driven more by characteristics of the rater than by characteristics of autistic adults. *Autism*, 23(7), 1817–1829. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361318824104>

Morrison, K. E., DeBrabander, K. M., Jones, D. R., Faso, D. J., Ackerman, R. A., & Sasson, N. J. (2020). Outcomes of real-world social interaction for autistic adults paired with autistic compared to typically developing partners. *Autism*, 24(5), 1067–1080. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361319892701>

Ogawa, S., Iriguchi, M., Lee, Y.-A., Yoshikawa, S., & Goto, Y. (2019). Atypical Social Rank Recognition in Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Scientific Reports*, 9(1), 15657. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-52211-8>

Olberding, A. (2019). *The Wrong of Rudeness: Learning Modern Civility from Ancient Chinese Philosophy*. Oxford University Press.

Orsmond, G. I., Shattuck, P. T., Cooper, B. P., Sterzing, P. R., & Anderson, K. A. (2013). Social Participation Among Young Adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 43(11), 2710–2719. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-013-1833-8>

Pastor-Cerezuela, G., Tordera Yllescas, J. C., González-Sala, F., Montagut-Asunción, M., & Fernández-Andrés, M.-I. (2018). Comprehension of Generalized Conversational Implicatures by Children With and Without Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 0. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00272>

- Peterson, C. C. (2002). Drawing Insight from Pictures: The Development of Concepts of False Drawing and False Belief in Children with Deafness, Normal Hearing, and Autism. *Child Development*, 73(5), 1442–1459. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00482>
- Peterson, C. C., & Wellman, H. M. (2019). Longitudinal Theory of Mind (ToM) Development From Preschool to Adolescence With and Without ToM Delay. *Child Development*, 90(6), 1917–1934. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13064>
- Riddle, T., & Sinclair, S. (2019). Racial disparities in school-based disciplinary actions are associated with county-level rates of racial bias. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(17), 8255–8260. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1808307116>
- Rogers, K., Dziobek, I., Hassenstab, J., Wolf, O. T., & Convit, A. (2007). Who Cares? Revisiting Empathy in Asperger Syndrome. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 37(4), 709–715. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-006-0197-8>
- Romualdez, A. M., Heasman, B., Walker, Z., Davies, J., & Remington, A. (2021). “People Might Understand Me Better”: Diagnostic Disclosure Experiences of Autistic Individuals in the Workplace. *Autism in Adulthood*, 3(2), 157–167. <https://doi.org/10.1089/aut.2020.0063>
- Sacks, O. (1996). *An Anthropologist On Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales* (Illustrated edition). Vintage.
- Sasson, N. J., & Morrison, K. E. (2019). First impressions of adults with autism improve with diagnostic disclosure and increased autism knowledge of peers. *Autism*, 23(1), 50–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361317729526>
- Sheppard, E., Pillai, D., Wong, G. T.-L., Ropar, D., & Mitchell, P. (2016). How Easy is it to Read the Minds of People with Autism Spectrum Disorder? *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46(4), 1247–1254. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-015-2662-8>
- Shoemaker, D. (2015). *Responsibility from the Margins* (1st edition). Oxford University Press.
- Sinclair, J. (1988). *Thoughts About Empathy*. <http://web.archive.org/web/20090321213935/http://web.syr.edu/~jisincla/empathy.htm>
- Sinclair, J. (2010). Being Autistic Together. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 30(1). <https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v30i1.1075>
- Snakedancing. (2017, June 20). *To my friends on the spectrum, let me explain to you an unspoken social rule that possibly nobody has ever explained to you before.*

Snakedancing. <https://snakedance.tumblr.com/post/162043121686/to-my-friends-on-the-spectrum-let-me-explain-to>

Song, Y., Nie, T., Shi, W., Zhao, X., & Yang, Y. (2019). Empathy Impairment in Individuals With Autism Spectrum Conditions From a Multidimensional Perspective: A Meta-Analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 1902. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01902>

Sparrow, M. (2016). ABA. *Unstrange Mind*. <http://unstrangemind.com/aba/>

Spaulding, S. (2018). *How We Understand Others: Philosophy and Social Cognition* (1st edition). Routledge.

Stohr, K. (2011). *On Manners* (1 edition). Routledge.

Trevisan, D. A., Roberts, N., Lin, C., & Birmingham, E. (2017). How do adults and teens with self-declared Autism Spectrum Disorder experience eye contact? A qualitative analysis of first-hand accounts. *PLOS ONE, 12*(11), e0188446. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0188446>

Usher, L. V., Burrows, C. A., Messinger, D. S., & Henderson, H. A. (2018). Metaperception in Adolescents With and Without Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 48*(2), 533–548. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3356-1>

Welsh, R., & Lenard, J. (2001). Male and female car drivers—Differences in collision and injury risks. *Annual Proceedings. Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine, 45*, 73–91.

Whyatt, C., & Craig, C. (2013). Sensory-motor problems in Autism. *Frontiers in Integrative Neuroscience, 7*, 51. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnint.2013.00051>

Yu, C., & Smith, L. B. (2013). Joint attention without gaze following: Human infants and their parents coordinate visual attention to objects through eye-hand coordination. *PloS One, 8*(11), e79659. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0079659>