CHAPTER **9**   # Moral Sentiments

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Sentiments, emotions, affects, feelings, and moods have been at the center of a number of influential moral theories in philosophy. They have also figured prominently in many anthropological engagements with morality, although rarely in an explicit effort to articulate a specific moral theory. When anthropologists have focused their attention on the moral side of sentiments they have tended to ethnographically examine the role that particular moral emotions, such as love, compassion, anger, guilt, or shame, play in defining an individual's or a community's ethical life (Rosaldo 1980; Shweder 1997; Lutz 1998). They have also at times emphasized how sentiments can be understood as the direct embodiment of particular moral orders that are significantly culturally defined (Geertz 1973; Csordas 1994; Parish 1994; Robbins 2004). In still other cases, anthropologists have sought to understand what may be deemed morally problematic or ambivalent emotions, passions, and desires as a means to expand or challenge our taken-for-granted assumptions about the various forms of life and the potential range of practices that may have bearing, positive or negative, for moral assessments of our own self-experience and the experience of others (Briggs 1995; Scheper-Hughes 1995; Biehl 2005; Garcia 2010; Zigon 2011).

In this essay, I will seek to advance a perspective on moral sentiments grounded in a cultural phenomenological approach to moral experience that I have been developing over the past few years (Throop 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b). To begin, I will briefly review some of the key moral theories of sentiment in philosophy, as well as some of the major anthropological contributions. While not meant to be comprehensive, this brief review will provide some contextual and historical background from which to critically examine the merits of undertaking a cultural phenomenological approach to moral experience. It is precisely such an approach, I argue, that can generatively shed important light on the place of sentiments in defining distinctive moral modes of being in particular communities of practice.

In outlining my approach, I will, however, shift the emphasis away from the realm of sentiment per se to what I take to be the more expansive category of

sensibility (see also Desjarlais 1992; Geurts 2002; Hirschkind 2006). Such a cultural phenomenological orientation to moral sensibilities provide, I argue, a means to account for the diverse range of embodied experiences that may be implicated in the culturally constituted emplacement of sentiments in the articulation of local moral worlds (Kleinman 2006). Additionally, it foregrounds the complex temporal dynamics of such moral modes of being in the context of concrete everyday engagements in which existential asymmetries, and what Jarrett Zigon (2007) has termed elsewhere moments of "moral breakdown," are necessarily implicated in the cultivation, contestation, and transformation of our moral lives.

Finally, to demonstrate the philosophical and anthropological relevance of such a perspective, I will briefly draw from my longstanding ethnographic research in Yapese communities that has over the years explored a number of topics that coalesce around issues of pain, suffering, and morality. In so doing, I will examine the place of sentiment in Yapese moral life, as well as the place of moral sentiments and sensibilities in the context of a particular ethnographic encounter in which a young girl's pain and suffering evidences a moment of moral breakdown.

MORAL SENTIMENTS AND MORAL SENSE THEORY IN PHILOSOPHY

In the history of moral theory in philosophy, sentiments, emotions, affects, and desires have all too often played a background role in defining moral modes of being. If sentiments or emotions do figure in philosophical moral theories they are often understood to be in direct conflict with moral reasoning and the development of those modes of being that are held to define the good life and right conduct in particular communities. As Martha Nussbaum explains, in the history of philosophy the emotions have all too often been "sidelined in accounts of ethical judgment" (2001: 1). Even despite this striking lacuna, however, there are still a few important exceptions to the rule. Most notably, moral sentiments and emotions do figure prominently in both Aristotelian and classical Stoic accounts of virtue ethics.

For Aristotle, Alasdair MacIntyre instructs, "Virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to feel in particular ways" (2002: 149). To undertake an education of the sentiments, to cultivate certain sentiments over others, to learn to deal with conflicting desires and mutually incompatible goods, to cope with the complexities of our emotions, to work to modulate certain intensities of emotional life, and to make an effort to understand the vulnerabilities and values that give rise to particular emotional experiences are all concerns that are centrally implicated in Aristotle's account of the virtues (Nussbaum 2001). Both the generative source and end of such ethical efforts at cultivating morally appropriate orientations to sentiments were, for Aristotle, also significantly tied to the cultivation of practical wisdom or *phronesis* (Aristotle 1976). Given this Aristotelian emphasis on moral sentiments, it is interesting to note that his virtue ethics has recently influenced a number of prominent anthropological accounts of morality (see Mattingly 1998; Lambek 2010).

An interest in the life of sentiment in relation to virtue was also at the heart of Stoic approaches to morality. A significant question for the Stoics was "How should a human being live?" As Nussbaum explains, the Stoics believed that the "answer to that question is the person's conception of *eudaimonia*, or human flourishing,

a complete human life" (2001: 32). From this perspective, human flourishing was tied directly to the cultivation of certain virtues, which were in turn often directly linked to both particular sentiments and an individual's abilities to refine and control the intensities and qualities of such sentiments.

Next to Aristotelian and Stoic accounts of moral sentiment, it is arguably the work of the Scottish moral sense theorists Lord Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson, as well as the moral theories that owe the greatest debt to them, namely those of David Hume and Adam Smith, who have developed the most explicit moral theories based upon sentiments. While it is true that Plato, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, and numerous others have sought to think through the place of emotions, in particular the emotions of compassion and love, in the cultivation of moral modes of being (see Nussbaum 2001: 482–511), it is the Scottish moral sense theorists who have most explicitly framed their ethical theories around the life of sentiments.

According to the Scottish moral sense theorists, morality was significantly tied to the disinterested operation of a *sensus communis*, or common sensibility, that oriented actors with sympathy toward the needs, trials, pains, and suffering of others. As opposed to self-love and self-preservation, which were advanced as primary motives in the cynical moral theories of Hobbes and Mandelbaum, the moral sense theorists held that individuals, through benevolence, were oriented beyond their own self-centered aims and desires to others' predicaments and concerns. Moral sentiments of sympathy, benevolence, and pity were thus held to be at the center of a moral theory that sought to challenge the assumption that human passions were necessarily self-interested, animalistic, and callously unconcerned with the plight of others. For Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, such a moral sense was thought to be an intrinsic feature of the human mind. It could be cultivated, most certainly. But moral sense was understood as a "natural" aspect of what it means to be human.

Influenced by, and yet still critical of, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, David Hume proposed a view of morality based on the idea that it is the passions that propel reason, and not the other way around. If it is the passions that drive us to act, and if moral judgments are meant to guide our actions, then moral judgments must be oriented to, and concerned with, the passions that motivate action (Hume 2005). Accordingly, Hume argued that "Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judged of" (cited in MacIntyre 1966). By distinguishing between "artificial virtues" which are based solely in conventional rules and expectations, and so-called "natural virtues" which are predicated upon our natural inclinations, Hume attempted to show how both self-enhancing and other-oriented actions could be morally patterned. In particular, he wished to highlight how the intermingling of the passions and the imagination could result in sympathy for others' predicaments and situations. For Hume, the cultivation of sympathy importantly served to balance and correct passions and inclinations based upon self-interest.

Refining Hume's account of sympathy as a basis for moral action, as well as his notion of an "imaginary spectator of our actions, who provides the standard by which they are to be judged" (MacIntyre 1966: 176), Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is arguably one of the most influential contributors to the Scottish school of moral sense philosophy. Smith's account of moral sentiments centers around three core sentiments: pity, compassion, and sympathy. Whereas Smith takes pity and compassion to be specific applications of sympathy as "our fellow-feeling for the

misery of others" (2002: 12), sympathy is taken to be a more general imaginative tendency to experience "fellow-feeling" with any range of passions whatsoever. Seeing sympathy as oriented not only toward the acts and experiences of others, but, also reflexively back toward how those same others view the actions and experiences of the self, Smith views the mutuality of the sympathetic imagination as located at the heart of moral experience. It is also from such mutuality that Smith derives the notion of the ideal impartial spectator. As Haakonssen explains, in the midst of moral conflict (i.e., those moments in which the mutuality of sympathetic alignment breaks down) we "tend to imagine how a spectator would judge us and our behavior if he or she was not limited by prejudice, partiality, ignorance, poor imagination and lack of ordinary good will in the way in which the actual spectators of us, including ourselves, are limited" (2002: xv).

Such a rendering of sympathy critically displaces any simplistic notion of sentiment as a purely individualistic emotional response to moral problems. The intersubjective constitution of such sentiments is also, as we will see, at the basis for the phenomenological approach to ethical modalities of being that I will outline below. Entailing what seems to be a significant intersubjective orientation, Smith's notion of sympathy is thus necessarily a social affair, although one that always expects there to remain important asymmetries of experience between individuals who work to coordinate their actions and reactions with one another through time.

On Being Internally Divided

Quite distinct from the virtue ethical or Scottish traditions, and speaking in quite a different register, Fredrick Nietzsche (1989) is another important contributor to understandings of moral sentiments in philosophy. Shifting the emphasis to the historical sedimentation and genealogy of moral sentiments, Nietzsche radically destabilized the view that moral life flows unproblematically from natural inclinations. The importance of Nietzsche in light of contemporary anthropological orientations to moral sentiments is tied directly to his impact on two very different and influential theoretical orientations to moral experience, namely those of Sigmund Freud (1989) and Michel Foucault (1985, 2005). Nietzsche's significance is also tied, however, to his attempts to complicate our understanding of moral life by focusing on the experience of being internally divided. In this respect, a key problem for Nietzsche concerns the paradoxical fact that the idea of a conscience entails postulating a being that is capable of being voluntarily at odds with itself. How, Nietzsche asks, is it possible for a being to feel painful emotions of guilt, shame, and regret for actions, desires, and wishes that stem from its own inclinations?

The sentiments that Nietzsche is most attuned to in the development of his account of the historical formation of a being who is "voluntarily" at odds with itself are those of suffering, guilt, regret, fear, shame, and pain. Tracing a particular genealogy of moral sentiments to the pains inflicted on those who failed to follow through on their previous promises to repay their debts, Nietzsche outlines the deep history of cruelty that lies at the basis of the historical sedimentation of the "instinct of conscience." According to Nietzsche, the instinct of conscience arises out of the memory and binding power of a promise that is born directly from the fear and threat of pain.

As Nietzsche observes, there is a paradox here inasmuch as the self who promises to repay a given debt must subject itself to the threat of painful punishment before the possibility to claim mastery over what is otherwise servitude to "momentary affect and desire" can arise (Nietzsche 1989: 61). It is this paradoxical subjection of the subject to a power greater than itself as a means to realize power over itself and its world that also serves for Nietzsche as foundational to the development of a view of punishment in which the moral offender "could have acted differently" (63).

Nietzsche's account of the historical crafting of a subject who becomes voluntarily at odds with itself through the internalization of sentiments like guilt and fear played a significant role in shaping later Freudian, psychodynamic, and in turn anthropological accounts of moral sentiments. For Freud (1989), the internalization of social moral norms, while necessary for the functioning of society, is characterized as at odds with individual desires. As such, for Freud, as for Nietzsche, civilization itself is an unavoidable source of our suffering. Echoing Nietzsche, Freud argues that there are multiple forms of subjection and violence that are brought to bear in the formation of a subject who becomes internally dived against itself. It is out of such violence and subjection, Freud theorized, that the subject is decentered through its organization into discrete and at times mutually antagonistic aspects that function according to a pleasure principle (Id), a reality principle (Ego), and an ethical principle (Superego). In this view, the life of sentiment registers the fault lines of conflict between cultural values, social responsibilities, and individual desires.

At the heart of Freud's metapsychology is a postulated antagonistic and deeply ambivalent relationship between individual and society as mediated through desires, drives, and particular moral sentiments like shame, regret, and guilt. And yet, those selfsame moral sentiments are also implicated for Freud in mitigating those forms of social suffering that emplace an individual's fragile existence between the dangers of nature and the potential dangers of the "situation among his fellow men" (Ricoeur 1970: 250; Freud 1989). The fact that the very same emotions that restrict the fulfillment of an individual's desires also provide protection against others' desires makes the life of sentiment a space of ever present moral ambivalence and conflict for Freud and his followers.

Engaging similar Nietzcheian thematics but in a very different voice, Michel Foucault sought to detail the subtle dynamics and histories of power that bring into being particular ethical subjectivities. In contrast to Freud, however, Foucault's genealogical account of historically distinct sedimentations of particular forms of subjectivation and codes of conduct reflects of a view of moral life as arising from disciplined "inclination" (see Asad 1993; Mahmood 2001). Given Foucault's astute analysis of the micro-dynamics of power relations that lie at the base of such formations, it should also be noted, however, that Foucault's "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Ricoeur 1970; see Throop 2012) seriously destabilizes any naive view that the inclinational side of morality is in any way necessarily coterminous with the "good."

In the spirit of Nietzsche, Foucault views the crafting of particular ethical subjectivities as realized through the deployment of particular historically defined technologies and hermeneutics of self that delimit specific realms of self-experience as relevant to moral assessment, concern, and practice. In Foucault's account, historically, particular technologies and hermeneutics of self were necessarily connected to a determination of a particular ethical substance to be cultivated, resisted, or transformed, a reliance

upon particular modes of subjection to moral precepts, as well as a defined moral goal or telos that such practices were held to generatively produce (Foucault 1985: 28; see also Foucault 2005). For contemporary anthropological accounts of moral sentiments Nietzsche's legacy in the form of both Freudian and Foucauldian schools of thought is very much alive and well today.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND MORAL SENTIMENTS

Perhaps due to the fact that the anthropology of moralities has only recently coalesced into a defined field of study, anthropological assessments of ethical understandings and uses of sentiments have seldom resulted in a direct engagement with, critique, or extension of the philosophical accounts of moral sentiments described above (see Howell 1997; Robbins 2004; Zigon 2008; Hertz 2009). That said, there has still been a long, if often underrecognized, ethnographic focus upon moral sentiments in anthropology. Perhaps not surprisingly, when it is read alongside philosophical contributions, what stands out most about anthropological work on moral sentiments is the extent to which such sentiments are shown to be configured by political, economic, historical, linguistic, and cultural concerns (see Fassin 2012).

Anthropological interest in moral sentiments has a long history in the discipline that can be traced back to the Boasian tradition and the configurationalist writings of Ruth Benedict (1989) Margaret Mead, (2001), and Gregory Bateson (1958). Drawing from Gestalt psychology and Boas's neo-Kantian approach to the unconscious habitual configuration of perceptual, emotional, and sensory registers of experience, the configurationalists sought to explore the ways that sentiment and emotion were selected as more or less desired in the ethical and normative frameworks that defined the contours of locally valued ideal "personality" types. Such moral sentiments and emotions were similarly central to the more psychodynamically based theory of basic personality that was advanced by Abram Kardiner (1939), Cora DuBois (1960), and others.

While caricatures of "Apollonian Pueblo Indians" and "Dionysian Plains Indians" have perhaps irrevocably tainted a serious contemporary revisiting of so-called "culture and personality" approaches to moral sentiments, the notion of "ethos" as advanced in some of Gregory Bateson's (1958) early writings is still a potentially generative source for thinking through the significance of moral sentiments from an anthropological frame of reference. In attempting to highlight the "emotional tone" and "feel" of a given community or culture, Bateson set out to position sentiments centrally in anthropologically motivated attempts at understanding the norms, values, and motives patterning those particular cares and concerns that arise in the everyday lives of people who live in a given community.

Highlighting the contemporary relevance of Bateson's ideas, Linda Garro has recently suggested that "As a conceptual tool, ethos provided Bateson with a way of talking about how 'culture standardizes emotional reactions of individuals, and modifies the organization of their sentiments' … and an avenue for exploring the social and cultural mediation of 'specific tones of behavior' in situated and interactive contexts" (2011: 303). In an attempt to foreground the situated and interactive specificities of such culturally patterned sentiments, Garro suggests that Bateson's

insights speak to possibilities not only for defining a generalized ethos that is variously shared within a community, but also for detailing specific "enactments of ethos" for interlocutors who are engaged in particular interactive contexts.

Aside from Bateson, arguably one of the most influential accounts of moral sentiments advanced under the guise of the concept of ethos is found in Clifford Geertz's (1973) discussion of religious perspectives and the moods and motives that serve to define them. Geertz argued that religious systems shape social actors' life-worlds by directly impacting the motivations and moods those social actors habitually take up. Seeing ethos as divided between these two differing affective registers, Geertz characterized motivations as focused, goal-oriented, and discrete dispositions to feel and act in particular ways, according to specific ends, in particular circumstances. Moods, in contrast, were defined by Geertz as diffusely dispersed, objectless, context-defining, and totalistic in their encompassment (see also Throop 2009b). Both forms of sentiment, while existentially distinct, were for Geertz each centrally implicated in the visceral articulation of a particular religious worldview or perspective.

Around the same time that Geertz was first reflecting on the significance of motivations and moods in constituting religious perspectives, two pioneering ethnographic contributions to the anthropology of emotion were being developed. Published in 1970 and 1973 respectively, Jean Briggs's *Never in Anger* and Robert Levy's *Tahitians* each set out to illustrate the central place of emotions in cultural life, while also dealing with the ways that moral concerns are deeply intertwined with the experience and expression of them. The legacy of Briggs's and Levy's insights can be seen in the efflorescence of interest in the emotions that occurred in anthropology in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. This included significant contributions by Edward Schieffelin (1976), Michele Rosaldo (1980), Catherine Lutz (1988), Jane Wellenkamp (1988), Elinor Ochs and Bambi Schieffelin (1989), Douglas Hollan (1992), Renato Rosaldo (1989), and Steven Parish (1994). While they do not always explicitly emphasize the moral side of emotional life, a close reading of each of these works reveals a significant intertwining of moral and emotional experience.

In more recent years, this interest in the moral side of sentiments has been most compellingly articulated in ethnographies that have sought to examine issues of mourning and loss (Seremetakis 1990; Desjarlais 2003), love and attachment (Scheper-Hughes 1992; Garcia 2010), care and suffering (Good 1994; Mattingly 1998; Kleinman 2006, Throop 2010b), empathy (Hollan and Throop 2008; Throop 2010a), as well as those forms of life that arise in the midst of moral struggle and social abandonment (Biehl 2005; E. C. James 2010; Zigon 2010; Fassin 2012). While all of these scholars have contributed much to exploring the moral significance of sentiments, as well as their ideological, political, and economic entailments, they have not always explicitly set out to theorize the place of sentiments in the ongoing flux of moral and ethical life. It is precisely toward such a theoretical framing that I will now turn in outlining a phenomenological approach to moral sentiments.

TOWARD A CULTURAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF MORAL EXPERIENCE

A cultural phenomenological approach to morality is rooted in the basic phenomenologically grounded insight that perception, as Thomas Csordas argues, does not

begin, but rather, "ends in objects" (1990: 9; 1994). That is, social actors are never simply passively registering a predetermined world of experience. Instead, the world individuals experience is, at least in part, shaped by their active engagements with it. In this respect there are always numerous sensory, imaginal, emotional, existential, and embodied processes that underlie the constitution of any given object of experience. Moreover, the specific organization of such multidimensional processes shifts through time. As Edmund Husserl (1962) taught, in the dynamic flux of subjective life individuals are continuously shifting their attention to differing aspects of their lived experience, whether morally articulated or otherwise. In so doing, they take up and attune to particular aspects of what is always a complex and shifting reality that coalesces for moments into discernible objects of attention and interest before yet another aspect of that reality, including their own and others' experience of it, calls forth their attention and captivates them.

In addition to the capacity to alter our modes of attention to differing aspects of experience whether imagined, felt, recollected, or perceived, Husserl further argued that individuals are able to shift between differing "attitudes" – from a "natural attitude" to a "theoretical attitude" for instance – by engaging in acts of phenomenological modification (Husserl 1962; see also Duranti 2009, 2010; Throop 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2010b). Individuals are, in other words, able to step out from the ongoing flow of their everyday habitual engagements to examine their actions and experiences reflexively. For instance, an individual may at times participate in unexamined engagements with other social actors as "beings like me" – as meaning-endowing, feeling, knowing, and willing subjects who may experience suffering and joy the "same" way that he or she does (see also Stein 1989; Husserl 1993; Throop 2010a). Alternatively, he or she may confront the actions and reactions of others that do not make immediate sense, that call forth in their wake a need to reflect upon what might be unique and distinctive about other individuals' particular perspectives on the world. The very same individual may also at times modify his or her attention to those selfsame others by orienting to them as objects, as physical entities, as corporeal bodies that have been divested of such subjective entailments, just as physicians might do in conducting physical examinations of their patients (see Good 1994). There could, of course, be important moral and ethical concerns implicated in each of these various acts of phenomenological modification and the attitudes they are entailed by, and entail.

There have been diverse attempts within phenomenologically oriented anthropology to examine how insights such as these articulate with cultural processes. I have undertaken a more detailed examination of this literature elsewhere (see Throop 2003, 2005, 2008, 2010b; Duranti 2009, 2010; Desjarlais and Throop 2011). One particularly generative contribution to our understanding of this linkage is found in Csordas's notion of "somatic modes of attention." Drawing on Schutz's (1970) and Merleau-Ponty's (1999) phenomenological insights, Csordas defines somatic modes of attention as those "culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others" (1993: 138). By grounding attention directly in the existential structure of our bodily ways of being-in-the-world, Csordas wishes to highlight the various ways that culture can serve to pattern one's attention to bodily sensations in relation to perception, sociality, and motility. Significantly, the cultural patterning of attentional modalities in relation to embodied experience includes the organization of moral sensibilities (Geurts 2002).

From this perspective we can understand moral sensibilities, sentiments, and values as residues of collectively structured modes of selective attention (see W. James 1890). Borrowing from the language of Michel Foucault (1985, 2005), we can say that the organization of attention as mediated through our sensorium can be directly affected by differing hermeneutics and technologies of self. That is, the cultural organization of attention is often implicated in the ethical work "that one performs on oneself, not only in order to bring one's conduct into compliance with a given rule, but to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one's behavior" (Foucault 1985: 27; see also Robbins 2004; Zigon 2010; Faubion 2011).

Possibilities for ethical self-transformation arise not only with the habitual installa-tion of practical embodied dispositions, interpretive tendencies, and sensory attune-ments, however. They also arise in moments where one's taken-for-granted mode of being-in-the world, one's "natural attitude" as Husserl termed it, is challenged (see Throop 2010b). The shift that occurs in one's self-understanding in the face of such destabilization gives rise to possibilities for rearticulating one's orientation to existence, whether such an orientation is deemed practical, theoretical, aesthetic, religious, scientific, or otherwise (see Geertz 1973; Throop 2003, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b; Duranti 2009, 2010). Significantly, such moments of destabilization are also moments that may be definitively marked by the experience of particular sentiments, moods, emotions, and feelings (see also Desjarlais 1992; Geurts 2002; Hirschkind 2006).

In a recent article, Jarrett Zigon (2007) has explored some comparable insights in detailing the significance of a Heideggerian-inspired approach to the problem of morality. Most useful for my purposes in this essay is Zigon's attempt to employ Heideggerian philosophy to distinguish between moral and ethical modalities of existence. Where moral modalities of existence are tied to our practical, embodied, and unrecognized ways of being-in-the-world that are familiar to the point of being taken for granted as natural, ethical modalities of existence arise in contrast at height-ened moments of self-reflection (see also Kleinman 1999). Following Heidegger (and to a somewhat lesser extent Foucault), Zigon points out that such ethical moments of reflection often occur at points in which our taken-for-granted moral engagements with the world are somehow breached, or in Husserlian terms destabilized (see Throop 2010b). It is in the face of such moments of "moral breakdown," as Zigon terms it, that possibilities for reassessing, transforming, and then reclaiming aspects of one's previously unnoticed moral engagements with the world become possible.

In an effort to generatively extend Zigon's insights, I suggest that it is crucial to recall the role that sentiments and sensibilities play in everyday moral experience and in moments of moral breakdown. Potential moments for heightened self-reflexivity and self-transformation afforded through experiences of moral breakdown, as well as the habitual modes of being from which they stem and toward which they aim, are equally mediated by various sensory, emotional, and embodied modalities of being. Moral experiences are, therefore, through and through, sentiment-based affairs. This holds true, although perhaps still in distinctive ways, for both unscrutinized moral experiences and more highly reflective ethical concerns.

From this perspective then, the ways that we are conditioned to move, balance, see, touch, hear, taste, and smell, to feel particular emotions, sentiments, motives, and moods, may all be registers of our existence that are potentially configured by, and configure, particular moral or ethical assumptions (see also Geurts 2002; Howes

2003). And yet, the cultural elaboration of particular varieties and intensities of feeling, emotion, sentiment, and sensibility are not the only ways that such existential registers are articulated with particular moral assumptions and orientations, however. As I have argued in a recent article on empathy, mourning, and loss, such feelings, emotions, sentiments, and sensibilities can also guide our attention to salient aspects of a particular situation or interaction that may then be taken to have relevance for our moral modes of being-in-the-world (2010a). Seeing sentiments and sensibilities as not only the sedimented dispositional results of efforts after moral cultivation, but also active and online modes of attuning our attention to morally salient aspects of our own and others' ways of being, is also implicated in the asymmetries of experience that come to characterize our moral life in time (something we saw as also salient to Smith's early writings on sympathy). Such a sentiment-based organization of attention in response to particular personal, interpersonal, and contextual cues may thus also play an important role in engendering a stance of ethical reflection (Zigon 2007). Again, I would argue that moments of moral breakdown and ensuing moments of ethical reflection are equally prone to being interlaced with, as well as being themselves at times generated by, sensible and affective valences as everyday habitual moral sensibilities are.

MORAL SENSIBILITIES IN YAP

As a means to illustrate the analytic purchase provided by taking up such a phenomenological approach to moral experience, I will now briefly turn to my research on pain, suffering, and morality in Yap. While I do not have the space to discuss the various and complex ways that moral sentiments and sensibilities are centrally implicated in everyday life in Yapese communities (see Throop 2010b), I will provide a brief sketch of two significant moral orientations to sentiments that are at times in tension for particular individuals as they struggle to make sense of their own and others' suffering and pain. Having done that, I will turn to a specific encounter I had with the suffering of another as a means to more concretely ground the temporal dynamics and complexities of how moral sentiments articulate with particular phenomenological modifications, resulting shifts in attitude, and moments of moral breakdown.

   A central dynamic in Yapese understandings of morality concerns the interplay of two sentiments, suffering and compassion. The Yapese term for suffering is *gaafgow* and it is a concept that is pivotal to understanding local configurations of social relationships, personhood, and morality. The term, which is heard repeatedly in everyday conversations and in innumerable different contexts, as one well-respected elder explained to me, is one of the central "teachings of Yap." It is out of suffering, she noted, that a number of other important virtuous qualities of a moral person are cultivated, qualities such as patience (*nuwaen'*), endurance (*athamagil*), temperance (*kadaen'*), respect (*liyoer*), care (*taa fan, ayuw*), and humility (*sobutaen'*). It is never *mere suffering* that is construed to be a virtue in Yap, however. Yapese people, like all people, do not see value in simply suffering for suffering's sake. It is instead *suffering for others* in the form of self-sacrifice that is construed to be a virtue. Suffering for your children, suffering for your family, suffering for your estate, suffering for your

community, or suffering for your chiefs is held to be one of the central virtues underpinning local moral modes of being (see Throop 2008, 2010b). It is precisely in this way that embodied experiences of pain and suffering become linked to other sensory modalities, sentiments, and forms of emotional connection that are deemed central to experiences of social belonging.

The culturally appropriate response to the perception of suffering, or perhaps more accurately endurance in the face of suffering, is to feel compassion, or *runguy*. As a form of compassion, *runguy* is arguably itself a type of suffering, a suffering for the suffering of another (see Levinas 1998). Relations of power are also intimately connected to such sentiments, however, as it is always a higher-status individual who is ideally to feel compassion for a lower-status individual's plight. This is not to say that lower-status individuals (e.g., children, those of low caste, young men, and women) may not feel compassion for a higher-status person who is undergoing difficulties or hardship. It is only to say that directly expressing such a sentiment could, depending upon the circumstance, be deemed as an attempt to humiliate or challenge the authority of the higher-status sufferer. Individuals who express compassion for another's suffering are thus often placed in a position of authority over them. In even the most ideal-typical of cases the flow of power is seldom unidirectional, however. There are also subtle, and on occasion not so subtle, power dynamics implicated in the act of expressing one's suffering to another. The expression of suffering places an ethical demand upon those who witness it. This demand requires individuals to help in whatever way possible to alleviate the conditions producing a given sufferer's pain, hardship, and struggle. In this way a dynamic of power is differentially arrayed between compassionate witnesses and those who voice suffering alike.

The interplay of suffering and sentiment, while always delicately calibrated according to perceived status differentials (as well as attempts to subtly and at times not so subtly alter them) are further complicated by what can be seen as an at times competing moral orientation to sentiments in Yapese communities. Ideally speaking, a socially competent person in Yap is understood to be a person who is able to sacrifice his or her individual desires, wants, wishes, feelings, opinions, and thoughts to family, village, and broader community dictates (see Throop 2010b). The virtues of self-abnegation and self-restraint as realized through careful reflection and deliberation are essential to the cultivation of those qualities that inhere in a virtuous person, a person who acts thoughtfully, with self-control, humility, and concern for others. A person who is not able to cultivate these qualities, who acts impulsively, who transparently expresses his or her personal feelings and emotions, who speaks without thinking or acts without regard to the concerns of others is a person thought to have a "weak mind," not unlike a child. Accordingly, the capacity to master the ability to monitor and selectively share one's emotions, feelings, thoughts, and opinions in the service of wider familial and community goals is one of the essential existential bases of local ethical modalities of being.

The virtue of self-governance is closely tethered to the valuation of privacy, secrecy, and concealment. Not sharing, not expressing, and not acting upon one's "true" feelings, opinions, or thoughts – a pattern also widely noted in the context of other Polynesian and Micronesian cultures (Robbins and Rumsey 2008; Hollan and Throop 2011) – is one of the core cultural values at the basis of Yapese social life. Such a virtuous cultivation of mental opacity ideally emphasizes a fundamental disconnect

between individual expressivity and an individual's inner life. In Yapese communities, an individual's inner states, defined in terms of personal wants, desires, opinions, feelings, emotions, sensations, and thought-objects, are often held to have ideally, in many contexts, a nondirect, nontransparent connection to action and expression. While individuals are morally attuned to the ongoing dynamics of compassion and suffering in everyday encounters, they also recurrently run up against individuals' morally motivated efforts to conceal their subjective life from the scrutiny of others. To better understand the complexities of how such at times competing orientations to moral experience play out in concrete situations, it will be helpful to examine a specific interactional moment in which such moral sentiments and sensibilities are variously at play.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH SUFFERING

On a humid afternoon in the fall of 2002 I had the opportunity to attend, for the first time, a healing session that was being conducted by a local healer specializing in traditional massage and bone-setting. On this particular day the healer, Lani, was treating a young Yapese girl named Tinag. As the session got going Lani applied a bit of coconut oil to her hands, gently took Tinag's arm, and began to feel with her fingers and her thumb the length of her forearm. Trying to conceal her fear and pain, Tinag, only 10 years old, sat still and rigid, all the time looking down at her arm in order to avoid eye contact with the girl. Lani asked Tinag to try turning her arm so that it was flat (i.e., with the palm of the hand directed to the ground). Tinag was in terrible pain and was moving her shoulders and her torso instead of her forearm to try to get her arm in the desired position. Seeing her struggle, Lani gently tried to help turn the arm, while Tinag looked away, grunted, and winced. With the arm in position, Lani began to press up and down Tinag's forearm and asked whenever she moved to a new location on her arm if there was pain (*Baaq amiith?*). She finally centered on the area where the break had occurred, before stopping.

Lani suggested that Tinag's father come and hold her so that they could try resetting the arm. Her father positioned himself behind Tinag and began rubbing her head and back. Lani explained that it was going to be very painful as she tried to put the bones back into position but that once it was all over, the pain would fade quickly and she would feel much better. She pointed out that the reason Tinag was having such a hard time moving her forearm was because the "small bone" in her forearm was misaligned. If they did not reset the bone today, while it was still moving, she cautioned, it would be much harder later as the bone began to heal. Just before the resetting of the arm began, her father whispered in Tinag's ear that there was going to be very strong pain (*Ra yib rib geel amiith*) but that she would persevere (*Maachnea ga ra athamagil*). He also told her that after the bone had been reset the pain would quickly weaken (*Ra waer, ra waer*).

Lani took hold of Tinag's good arm and showed both Tinag and her father what she was going to do. She said that she needed Tinag's father to hold the elbow in place as she pulled the arm toward her and attempted to reset the bones. As Tinag watched, Lani and her father practiced with her good arm. Seeing this, she started to whimper and shake her head. Lani asked her if she didn't want to go through with the

procedure, and Tinag replied that she could not (*Daabiyog*). At this point I noticed that Tinag's father was beginning to tear up (as was I). When Lani noticed this she said to Tinag that her father was old and weak and that was why he was crying but that she was strong and she would be fine. Her father then repeated to Tinag *M'athamagil* ("You endure"). And then, despite her cries and screams, the bone-setting began.

As I sat there witnessing the intensity of Tinag's pain as she screamed, cried, struggled, and pleaded with her father and the healer to stop the procedure, I could not help but embody her suffering in the form of quiet tears. At that moment, watching her father bravely try to comfort his suffering daughter, sitting still, with tear-filled eyes, I had a crisis of faith. What was I doing here? Why should I attempt to document such private suffering and pain? Was my presence not just making things worse for everyone involved? What right did I have to witness such hurt and such fear? Just as these questions were rushing through my mind I noticed Lani, who also had tears in her eyes look over at me. Our eyes met for what could not have been longer than a split second, but apparently it was long enough for her to register my response to the situation.

After the bone was finally reset Lani told Tinag to rest for a minute. Tinag slumped back into her father's lap, who then massaged her head and good arm. Lani wiped the tears from her own eyes and called to her daughter to prepare the medicine. Lani began telling us that she had been treating a boy for the last three weeks who had a much worse break than Tinag and that he was now feeling good enough to be running around without a brace. Lani then added that the boy in question had screamed and cried a lot during the resetting of the bone but that Tinag was strong and barely cried at all. Her father then added with a hint of pride that Tinag did not even cry when she had originally broken her arm after the fall.

As Lani spoke, I could not help but feel uncomfortable and embarrassed, worried that my own tears had been somehow problematic. From what I already knew of Yapese expectations concerning the expression of emotion I knew that I was failing miserably in living up to local ideals of expressive opacity and emotional quietude that are expected of everyone, but especially of men. At the end of the session, however, Lani came over to talk to me. She said softly, "I saw you crying over there," and smiled, tears still fresh in her own eyes. I nodded and may have apologized. She put her hand on my shoulder and told me that I could stop by anytime.

MORAL BREAKDOWN, SENTIMENTS, AND ETHICS OF SUFFERING

As this brief encounter attests, emotions of fear, worry, anxiety, sadness, embarrassment, compassion, and pride are interlaced throughout Tinag's struggles to endure the horrible intensities of pain associated with traditional bone-setting without analgesics. Such sentiments were also intersubjectively distributed between Tinag, Lani, her father, and me. Sentiments, moral and otherwise, were in constant flux and closely tied to ongoing shifting interactional dynamics and anticipated actions. Such sentiments also served to variously pattern our attention to salient aspects of the encounter, including Tinag's attempts to focus away from anticipated pain, her father's gentle attention to comforting his terrified daughter, Lani's struggles to go

on with the procedure despite her distress witnessing Tinag's hurt, and my own moment of moral breakdown, which led me to wonder what right I had to be there at all. That breakdown, a private ethically reflective moment, or at least that is how it seemed to me at the time of its occurrence, was intimately associated with tears, however, that caught Lani's attention and led her to feel a compassionate concern for my own suffering.

Elsewhere I have attempted to argue that a phenomenology of moral experience is generatively enhanced by thinking of how particular phenomenological modifications, shifting attitudes and perspectives, and temporally configured modes of selective attention articulate with Emmanuel Levinas's reflections on ethics and suffering (Throop 2010b). For Levinas, it is possible to situate moral experience in those inter-human spaces in which efforts at typification are stilled, even if only momentarily. Cultivating an openness to the other, working to avoid reducing the plenitude of another's existence to the self-sameness of our own being, is a definitive ethical stance in Levinas's view. The extent to which particular sentiments may potentiate or foreclose such orientations is certainly a topic that needs more careful attention. Given that I do not have the space to consider such questions in much detail in this essay, let me focus specifically on the temporal dynamics of moral sentiments and the phenomenological modifications associated with them, as a means to trace the contours of the intersubjectively generated moment of moral breakdown that I experienced in witnessing Tinag's pain. This breakdown was situated in what was simultaneously a space of existential asymmetry and social attunement.

Again, Levinas is helpful here. From a Levinasian perspective, my present thoughts, feelings, emotions, and moods are held to arise for me in a moment that can only be recognized by *you* in the modality of an after. That is, the expressions you take up as indications of my subjective state are already at that moment retentions or past recollections for *me* of my previously experienced intentions, goals, plans, and desires. My anticipatory horizons, while attentive to your responses, are also feeding forward to the horizons of my own desires, wishes, and hopes for what is to come next. That the synchronization of our two beings in even the most intimate of "we-relationships" (see Schutz 1967) is one of a delayed asymmetry constituting an interhuman time that is neither precisely mine nor yours is, Levinas (1987) argues, a basic fact of human existence revealing the necessary "excess of being."

There is another side to such intersubjective asymmetries that is not captured in Levinas's account, however. It is found instead in Schutz's (1967) discussion of the "we-relationship." According to Schutz, in dynamic moments of face-to-face attunement that characterize the co-presence of a "we-relationship," there are moments of possibility in which another may perceive aspects of my own self-experience that I am not yet aware of myself. In this case, the Levinasian asymmetry is reversed. The dynamic flux of my field of expressions is palpably available to *you* in a way that is not available to *me*. Indeed, it is immediately present for you, while for me it may be made available only through my ability to notice and track your expressive responses to my expressions. As Schutz explains, in the face-to-face situation my

> observations keep pace with each moment of his stream of consciousness as it transpires. The result is that I am incomparably better attuned to him than I am to myself. I may indeed be more aware of my own past … than I am of my partner's. Yet I have never been

face to face with myself as I am with him now; hence I have never caught myself in the act of actually living through an experience. (1967: 169)

Again, a temporal delay, or a space of disjuncture is centrally placed in even the most closely attuned of human encounters. It is within this space of temporal disjuncture that ongoing phenomenological modifications to our own and others' existence are triggered not only by our mutual expressive fields but also by the sentiments that arise within them. As Schutz explains:

> If I know that you and I are in a face-to-face relationship, I also know something about the manner in which each of us is attuned to his conscious experiences, in other words, the "attentional modifications" of each of us. This means that the way we attend to our conscious experiences is actually modified by our relationship to each other. (1967: 171)

In this light, sentiments may not only be considered morally valenced in and of themselves but may also generatively serve to trigger phenomenological modifications that are morally configured. Moments of moral breakdown are, indeed, often sparked by sentiments that make thematic previously unrecognized moral assumptions that arise as we attune to new aspects of our own and others' existential dilemmas, cares, and concerns.

Returning to my own moment of moral breakdown and the sentiments and sensibilities that were associated with it, it was precisely in those moments where I was made to existentially question my own very presence as a witness, to confront my own interests and plans (interests and plans that led me to participate in the suffering of another that could never be my own) that I was faced with the true integrity of Tinag's being – a being that is not assumable to the self-sameness of my own being. The intensity and viscerality of Tinag's pain, her suffering, her cries, tears, and screams compelled a shift in my orientation to her. In those moments, she could no longer ever simply be a subject of my research, a token of a type of person who suffers pain, even if at times virtuously from a Yapese perspective. Tinag's uniqueness, irreplaceability, and singularity would always outstrip my attempts at understanding her, whether in terms of my own theoretical commitments or in terms of our shared interactional history together. My own tears, my own suffering for Tinag's suffering, in short my own experience of sentiment, was also a point of connection, however, with Lani. The tears which I was only vaguely aware of as I sat reflecting upon my positionality and presence in this most painful and vulnerable of moments for Tinag, were noticed by Lani, whose very noticing also then made them thematic for me. My suffering, my sadness, which could never be Lani's suffering or sadness, may have also destabilized, however briefly, the typifications she used in understanding my presence there. At that moment she came to see me as more than a strange outsider, a researcher, an anthropologist, a student, or what have you. I was in that moment uniquely human, vulnerable, and unassumable in my own right.

Conclusion

As I hope to have shown with this brief example, the space of sentiments in a phenomenological account of moral experience is quite differently positioned from the space that is provided for them in the traditional philosophical accounts of moral sentiments

in virtue ethics, moral sense theory, and Nietzschean genealogical perspectives. It is also rather distinct from either strictly Freudian or Foucauldian accounts. Looking at the history of anthropological engagements with moral sentiments, the phenomenological approach I have advocated in this essay certainly relies similarly upon a close attention to the various ways that sentiments, emotions, feelings, and moods are made ethically significant in particular communities of practice and in the lives of particular individuals. It moves beyond these assessments, however, by exploring the ways such sentiments, always locally understood and configured, impact dynamic shifts in our attention, in particular phenomenological modifications, and in traceable transformations in perspective, that are always intersubjectively distributed and temporally arrayed. It is precisely within such dynamic shifts that those aspects of persons, encounters, events, and interactions that are implicated in moving us from less-examined orientations to moral experience to more explicitly thematic and reflexive varieties occur (Zigon 2007, 2010). It is also within this space that particular moral sensibilities are sedimented through time as habitual modes of anticipating, remembering, and attuning to/with such sensibilities occur through time.

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