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The Neglect and Restoration of the Heart

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Abstract: The heart is the moral and affective center of the person, and plays a crucial role in spirituality. I examine the work of Dietrich von Hildebrand on the heart, in particular his call to restore the heart after its millennia-long neglect by Western philosophy. Von Hildebrand accounts for the neglect of the heart in terms of a Stoicism that views it as non-intentional, i.e. as disclosing nothing about reality. Instead of responding to objective values, the heart delivers an internal turbulence that distracts from the intellectual task of cognizing what is truly good. Stoicism reduces affective states to a preliminary sensation (propatheia) and a propositional belief that the intellect must evaluate. There is no disclosive capacity intrinsic to affective states that is untranslatable to intellectual propositions. Stoics stress conformity to an objective teleology of the person rather than feeling, through the cultivation of logic. The Epicurean embraces the opposite extreme, giving internal sensations of pleasure and pain pre-eminence over logic. Feeling pleasure supersedes any conformity to an objective standard. The binary of Stoicism and Epicureanism is a lens to understand the neglect of the heart, and to restore the heart. The heart both generates internal sensations, but also provides an evaluative disclosure of reality that is not translatable to intellectual propositions, and so the heart can unite both the objective and subjective domains emphasized by Stoicism and Epicureanism.

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Introduction:

The Centrality of the Heart

The heart is one's affective and moral center, deeper than the intellect and the will. Dietrich von Hildebrand writes, in his book *The Heart*, that the heart is the "most tender, the most inner, the most secret center in man" (2007, p. 128). We can endorse a proposition intellectually, but have no affective response to it, and so we question whether we truly believe the proposition. We can will something, but lack enthusiasm, and so we question whether we genuinely will.

The heart is a crucial faculty in spirituality. In the gospel of Matthew, for instance, Jesus confronts us with the truth that "where thy treasure is, there is your heart also" (Douay-Rheims, Matthew, 6:21). We show our deepest values, in our hearts. We can discern the real values of a person, by how they spend their time, what causes them anxiety and preoccupation, what occupies their mental energy. One's heart is not really in a marriage, for instance, when one is spending more time talking to someone else, spends money on someone else, and has feelings of anxiety with respect to someone besides one's spouse. We cannot really love without the heart, since a "love" that consists in only intellect, or will, or even both together, without the heart, is more a grudging duty (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 67). The heart, in addition to its subjective motivational importance, reveals objective reality in a deeper way than the rational cognition of the intellect. The heart reveals a landscape of value, connecting things to one's flourishing (*eudaimonia*) that the intellect needs to operate effectively (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 39).

In the Qu'ran, the heart, known as قلب (qalb), is the deepest part of the self through which the self engages with Allah. We align ourselves with Allah, and listen to Him with a "mindful heart," in order to gain eternal

life (Qu'ran 50:37, Qu'ran.com). This attentive obedience to Allah cannot be merely with the intellect, or the will, or even with both faculties together. One cannot fully listen, and fully obey, without an undivided turning of the core of oneself towards Allah. Dietrich von Hildebrand, defines the heart as the center of the "affective sphere" (2007, p.3). We can endorse something with our reason and will, but lack an emotional investment, and so our heart "is not in" the endeavor.

Von Hildebrand wrote his book on the heart to account for the silencing of the heart's in certain trends in spirituality and art. Von Hildebrand defends the heart against the idea that it only produces an irrational background noise of psychic states, rather than generating affective responses to external reality (2007, p. 26). Von Hildebrand rejects a conflation of the heart with hysteria, and the prudish condemnation of heartfelt expressions. This tendency associates intellectual objectivity with emotional neutrality, as if scientists in a laboratory, trying to be as impartial as possible, were the ideal for the spiritual life (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 15). The banning of affectivity in the spiritual life cuts out the core of one's person, since one cannot be fully invested in something without some emotional enthusiasm. Knowing what is good does not guarantee one will do it, since an affective disclosure of the good is also very important. Affectivity is both subjectively important for motivation, and objectively important for an experience, not a mere propositional representation, of value.

Von Hildebrand associates this neglect of the heart with a Stoic commitment to *apatheia*, i.e. which is a state of impassivity in which the intellect has gained control of otherwise deceptive emotional states (Graver, 2007, p. 5). The foil of Stoicism, is Epicureanism, which makes pleasure, rather than moral

worth, the highest good, and which also prioritizes internal sensations over a logical grasp of the external world (Cicero, 2001, I.42). In this paper, I articulate a basis for the neglect of the heart, as well as a vision for its restoration, in terms of the binary of Stoicism and Epicureanism.

In the first section, I account for neglect of the heart in the terms of von Hildebrand. This neglect has to do with a denial of any *intentionality* for the heart (von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 7). The heart, in the caricatured version, does not respond to the texture of external objects, but produces only an interior background noise of feeling. As a merely internal static, superfluous to the cognitive orientation of the intellect and the senses, the heart becomes irrelevant. The key to the restoration of the heart is a restoration of a *sui generis* intentionality, a disclosive capacity that is irreducible to cognition, and the physical senses (Montague, 2015, p. 222). In the second section, I account for the neglect of the heart in terms of the dichotomy between Stoicism and Epicureanism. The Stoic seeks to subordinate affectivity to intellectual judgment, dismissing any emotion that does not accord with the rational structure of the universe (Graver, 2007, p. 5). Zeno believed in the centrality to cosmology of a "designing fire" that instill a seminal structure in all things (Laertius, 2015, VII.136). The Epicurean, on the contrary, makes sensation the principle measure of value, and dismisses any objective teleology in the world (O'Keefe, 2010, 98). The Stoic emphasizes logic's role in discerning an objective order, the Epicurean canon attributes primacy to inner sensations, and so there is a severance between the subjective and objective domains. In the third section, I articulate a restoration of the heart's relevance in terms of a synthesis of Stoicism and Epicureanism. We can synthesize the Epicurean's

recognition of the power of subjective affectivity, with the Stoic emphasis on conformity to an objective order, to generate a notion of the heart that has a *sui generis* intentionality that is irreducible to intellectual propositions, and also provides motivational energy in the form of value-attributions that the intellect cannot generate by logic alone. I follow the thesis of Montague, that emotions contain an evaluative disclosure of objective properties that is complementary, and not reducible to, the evaluations generated by judgment (2015, p. 223). Having rebutted the introversion that makes affectivity a mere internal movement, not a response to reality, we can avoid the dismissal of the heart as a source of vapid sentimentalism.

In spiritual practice, we enter a supernatural domain that exceeds the cognitive capacity of the intellect. We respond with our hearts to a domain that our intellect cannot fully grasp. If we deny a disclosive intentionality to the heart, then spirituality becomes a mere sentimentalism, in which we only entertain feelings that are pleasant, since there can be no intellectual purchase on objects of spirituality. Without an evaluative phenomenology that responds to transcendent and objective value, we will have no criterion to evaluate religious belief, apart from subjective satisfaction. This project of restoring credibility to the heart, is crucial to maintaining the seriousness of spirituality. If the heart merely generates introverted sensations, spirituality becomes vulnerable to reductive explanations. Spirituality is not really an encounter with some transcendent domain, but some sort of psychological coping mechanism, or an invention of one's biological drives (Freud, 1961; Dennet, 2007, p. 137). Also, a spirituality that is fully intellectual, and translates affectivity into propositional claims for belief, cannot lead to happiness. Happiness, in its

fullness, is an affective state we must feel (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 4).

The Introverted Heart

Von Hildebrand wrote the book, *The Heart*, to address an oversight in Western philosophy that he saw as persisting over millennia. [1] Western philosophy has given a secondary place to the heart (Von Hildebrand, 2007, 4), viewing it as at irrelevant or, at worst, a threat to the proper order of one's *psyche*. Von Hildebrand claims that the Western philosophical tradition presents the heart as consisting merely in "passions," and so the heart is the site of whatever is "irrational and nonspiritual" (2007, p. 4). The heart does not partake in the work of the intellect in discerning reality and grasping truth. The heart can only distract the will from its efforts to commit to orthodox principles and virtue. "The entire affective area, and even the heart, has been seen in the light of bodily feelings, emotional states, or passions…" (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 5). This contempt for the heart manifests itself in movements following World War I that saw all emotion in spirituality as "petty subjectivism," inferior to "sound sobriety and the spirit of objectivity" (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 41). A movement in art and architecture as well, known as *Neue Sachlichkeit*, i.e. New Objectivity, was an anti-affective trend that stigmatized the florid romanticism of the nineteenth century (2007, p. 41).

We should not, however, view objectivity, i.e. a revelation about the external world, as necessarily opposed to the heart. The expressions of the heart are not monolithic, but manifest a spectrum of varying qualities. We can make a qualitative distinction between mere

[1] I do not think that Von Hildebrand's characterization of the entire Western tradition is fair. See Robert E. Wood, "Dietrich von Hildebrand on the Heart," *Quaestiones Disputatae*, Vol. 3, no. 2 (2013): 116.

"bodily feelings, emotional states, or passions," and "value-responding joy, a deep love, a noble enthusiasm" (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 5). The key criterion for evaluating the heart's self-expressions has to do with to what extent it is a meaningful response to an external object. Some of the self-expressions of the heart are states of the subject, rather than responses. They are internal tremors that accompany the senses and the intellect. I eat something very spicy. Tears start coming to my eyes and my face reddens. These physiological reactions are not meaningful reactions to external reality—they are not *about* the spice. The spice has merely triggered them. These internal processes are not *responses* to the intelligibility of spice, involving some form of recognition of the nature of spice, but reflexive reactions to stimuli.

Graver, in her analysis of the emotions in Stoicism, distinguishes between a mental impression (*phantasia*), and emotion. The former is an immediate reaction to a change in the environment, involving subjective sensations and physiological changes. These reflexive reactions to stimuli are not disclosures of reality, but merely internal states triggered by something in the environment. The emotion, beyond the mere impression, is a disclosive state that, for the Stoics, contains a propositional judgment about reality. Graver writes, "A person could undergo some verifiable physiological alteration, in the presence of the kinds of stimuli that frequently trigger emotion, and yet not have the emotion, if he or she does not also believe certain things" (2007, p. 87).

The Stoic view on emotion identifies a non-intentional component of emotion, i.e. the initial impression. This Stoic view also delegates the intentionality of the emotion to the intellect. The emotion has intentionality insofar as it contains a belief, in the form of

a proposition. Diogenes Laertius writes, "they [the Stoics] think that *pathē* are judgments" (Laertius, 2015, VII.111). A positive affective response to money, amounts to the claim that money is a fine thing.

But, this intellectualized version of emotion of the Stoic is not exactly what Von Hildebrand has in mind. For him, the heart and its affective states have an *irreducible* intentionality. Affective states disclose reality in ways that are irreducible to intellectual propositions. Sadness at the death of a friend is not a mere internal and reflexive movement of our subjectivity, combined with an intellectual belief. The sadness is informing us about the reality of death, in a *sui generis* way that is complementary to descriptive intellectual propositions about the death (Montague, 2015, p. 221). The heart is capable of "full and deep perception of certain values…" (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 10). The heart discloses value, not descriptive facts.

Our heart, in other words, *experiences* the value of things, rather than merely representing them in propositions (Montague, 2015, p. 219). This *sui generis* intentionality of the heart captures the full range of our experience. We cannot, for instance, reduce our experience of romantic love, to propositions evaluable as true or false. These intellectual propositions are true or false, in virtue of the affective disclosure of them, that show the evaluative texture of a situation. Mere propositions about value, that is, emerge from a deeper experience of value, through emotions. If we feel nothing, in virtue of what can we establish that an experience has some evaluative status? For a robotic subject without emotions, facts graspable by the intellect are ambiguous in terms of their value. A syllogism, without any evaluative premises, cannot generate an evaluative conclusion. Emotions disclose

the evaluative significance of an event from one's perspective, and this provides the context for intellectual recognition of value. The intellect does not generate value by logical proof (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 39). We have an original emotional attunement to a situation, that allows us to generate evaluative intellectual propositions about it. Without this original attunement, we would become evaluatively blind, only able to generate descriptive propositions. Death would not be something sad, but a biological process. Nussbaum writes, "Emotions are…highly complex and messy parts, of this creature's reasoning itself" (2001, p. 3). Emotions provide the evaluative complement, the intangible texture of value, to measurable facts gathered by the intellect. Grief, for instance, does not begin with the neutral proposition that someone is dead, and then derive value from this proposition by logic. Grief, instead, is an emotional upheaval, that discloses the significance of the death, in relation to one's *eudaimonia* (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 45).

Montague insists that we cannot reduce emotions to non-representational sensations like "pain, fatigue, and the feeling of a rapid heartbeat" (2015, p. 224). Emotions are about objects in reality. Nor can we reduce emotions to neutral judgments of the intellect (Montague, 2015, p. 224). Emotions have a rich texture we cannot reduce to factual assertions. Otherwise, why would human beings ever write poetry, which deviates from conventional propositions about facts to capture a deeper texture of reality? Since emotions are disclosive in an irreducible way, they are part of true objectivity. "An affective response is objective when it corresponds to the value of the object…" (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 46).

Von Hildebrand insists that, when we reduce emotions to internal sensations, and deny their capacity for intentional disclosure of reality, we

trivialize the heart. If, for instance, we turn indignation into an introverted sensation, as opposed to a response to an objective injustice, then introverted indignation becomes a perverse enjoyment of emotional power (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 11). Without grounding in an object, emotions are important only insofar as they make us feel good or bad. Without intentionality, we have to accept a standard-less relativism about emotions. If sadness, for instance, does not disclose something real about the death of a friend, then someone who feels happy about the friend's death, is not wrong to feel happy. The responses of the heart to reality, when detached from the object which they disclose in a *sui generis* way, become mere "feelings, deprived of all meaning, a kind of gesticulation in a vacuum" (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 8).

This reduction of affective responses to mere feelings, that pertain to the subjective domain, generates a dichotomy. We can try to move beyond feelings, to govern ourselves completely by the intellect. The intellect is the one faculty that discloses reality, and so it can deliver us from irrational movements of feeling. Through the intellect, we can dispel the false beliefs at the core of feeling, and develop an impassivity that does not flinch during pain (Cicero, 2001, III.42). In this extreme, feeling, since it has no *sui generis* disclosive capacity, must not have motivational primacy.

The other extreme, generated by the reduction of disclosive emotions to mere feelings, would be an embrace of feeling, without concern for the objective order. The highest state is continuous mental and physical pleasure, and the lowest state is continuous mental and physical pain (Cicero, 2001, I.40). We would consider internal satisfaction the highest good, regardless of our objective conformity to reality. The question of whether or not

the objects to which we are responding, *really are* good, becomes irrelevant. Feelings are not about objects, in this extreme caricature. Logical investigation of reality is irrelevant, because internal sensations are the ultimate canon (*kanôn*) of value (Cicero, 2001, I.23).

Von Hildebrand argues that, to avoid these extremes, we must respect the proper sphere of activity of the heart, the intellect, and the will. There can be a "hypertrophy" of every faculty. We can intellectualize the heart, reducing affective states to intellectual propositions. This hypertrophy of the intellect neglects that the heart has a "special form of intuitive knowledge," that discloses the emotional texture of a situation in a way irreducible to intellectual propositions (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 52). Emotions can "hook on" to evaluative properties in the environment, in a way that is richer and more textured than intellectual formulations (Montague, 2015, 225).

There can be a hypertrophy of the will, when we reduce love, or contrition, to a mere movement of the will, without incorporating the heart. This hypertrophy of the will neglects the fact that the will alone is not the center of human motivational structure. Affectivity provides the original enthusiastic, or aversive, response to the environment, that powers the will to exert itself.

There can also be a hypertrophy of the heart, which von Hildebrand calls the "tyrannical heart" (2007, p. 64). The tyrannical heart exaggerates the disclosive intentionality of the heart, such that it replaces the fact-finding role of the intellect. Affectivity becomes the exclusive guide for action, without a grounding in the emotionally neutral facts of reality conducted by the intellect. The tyrannical heart neglects the fact that, though the heart can be disclosive, it does

not disclose non-evaluative facts. The intellect, for example, knows one's friend has died, whereas the heart discloses the evaluative texture of the event, not the fact itself.

In spirituality, the hypertrophy of the intellect, and the exclusion of the disclosive intuitions of the heart, is particularly damaging. If only the intellect is disclosive, then spirituality, which deals with supernatural realities the intellect cannot access, loses its basis in reality. Only the heart, which transcends the propositional knowledge of the intellect, can access transcendent realities. Without this intuitive knowledge of the heart rooting us in supernatural realities, spiritual practice becomes a matter of mere internal feelings with no objective basis.

Stoicism, Epicureanism and the Partial Heart

Stoicism and Epicureanism provide a lens, in virtue of which we can understand the neglect of the heart, and the disproportionate relationship between heart, intellect, and will.

The Stoic-Epicurean binary maps on to a corresponding binary between the subjective and the objective domains. There is a subjective domain of interior feeling, and an objective domain pertaining to objects in the world. Subjective feelings, in themselves, are non-intentional. They are just interior movements that do not disclose the world. These non-disclosive feelings correspond to the *propatheia* of the Stoics, i.e. an initial impulsive reaction to which the intellect has not yet given assent and ratified as a true proposition about the world (Graver, 2007, p. 87). The objective domain pertains to objects generating these feelings. The objective domain inspires skeptical questions about our sensations. Do our sensations really contain propositional content about the world, or are they, in themselves, merely objectively

neutral internal experiences, from which the intellect then extrapolates, to make judgments about the world (O'Keefe, 2010, p. 98)?

We can destroy the heart, by pulling apart, and overemphasizing, the subjective and/or objective domains. If we overemphasize the objective domain of facts in the world, we lose sight of the necessity of affectivity for motivation, and for the full evaluative perception of reality. The intellectual recognition of facts alone does not motivate us, nor can we generate value from entirely neutral factual premises. On the other hand, ff we overemphasize the subjective domain, we neglect the need to make affective states adequate to reality, conforming to the true evaluative significance of things. We value subjective feelings over a conformity to the true value of things. The severance of the subjective and the objective domains of the heart is a false dichotomy understandable in terms of the Stoic-Epicurean binary.

Kant presents the Stoic-Epicurean dichotomy as a dichotomy between virtue and happiness (1996, 5:112). The Stoics uphold virtue, as a conformity to the objective order of the cosmos. The Stoic identifies an order and concordance in nature, and deems alignment of the intellect and the will with this order, the supreme good in life (Cicero, 2001, III.21). The feeling of happiness is secondary to the achievement of this objective alignment. The only good feelings, *eupatheia*, pertain to the virtue of one's character. *Patheia* about objects in the external world contain misguided attributions of value to what are really matters of indifference (Seneca, 1917, 23.4-6).

For the Epicurean, happiness is the highest good. Virtue is a means to achieve happiness, not a good in itself. Epicureans exercise a principle of selection, to make judicious choices that

maximize happiness, and avoids pain, in the long-term (Cicero, 2001, I.33). For the Epicurean, there is no objective teleology in the world. Our universe is one of infinitely many, formed by blindly colliding atoms moving through a void (O'Keefe, 2010, 41). Our principles cannot come from nature, but must come from subjective sensations of pleasure and pain.

The Stoic school, in its emphasis on objective order and the intellectual grasping of it, represents the hypertrophy of the intellect and the will, at the expense of the heart. Emotions, for the Stoic, are in part mere reactive feelings that are non-intentional, and in part an implicit proposition graspable by the intellect. There is a feeling of being afraid—sweating palms, a pounding heart, a lump in one's throat—and then the judgment about the world implied by the this fear (Graver, 2007, p. 5). Emotions lack any evaluative disclosure of the world intrinsic to themselves, and instead are translatable into linguistically formulable propositions graspable by the intellect (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 37). The Stoics take up the deliverances of the heart into the intellect and the will. "…The wise person, although he experiences a brief and superficial response in color and expression, does not 'assent'" to initial impressions of fear that are "false appearances and empty fright" (Gellius, 1927-1928, 19.1).

The heart is a source of illusions and false beliefs for the Stoic. The sage governs himself by the intellect, and guards his will from the intuitive reactions of the heart. "Emotional disturbances…make the lives of the unwise a harsh misery…" (Cicero, 2001, III.35). Emotions are almost a kind of pathology, insofar as they deceive the intellect with misrepresentations of value (Cicero, 2001, III.35). Any value placed on external things implicit in emotion is a dangerous distraction. Virtue is

the only good, and vice is the only evil (Cicero, 2001, III.38).

There is a hypertrophy of the intellect, in Stoicism, insofar as the intellect has the prerogative on intentionality. The intellect discerns value, and the heart must follow the intellect, lest the heart pull the self into illusory valuations. Stoics value "dialectic…a complete method for discerning the essence of each thing" (Cicero, 2021, II.18). Logic is like a fence, guarding the development of the flower of right character from the illusions generated by emotions (Laertius, 2015, VII.39).

The Stoic denies the heart a capacity for disclosure of the objective domain. The intellect, applying logic, discerns the objective essences of things. The intellect distills the emotions in the form of propositions, which it judges to be true or false. The heart lacks its own intrinsic intentionality in Stoicism. Rather than complementing the intellect, in providing an objectively disclosive evaluative phenomenology that is non-propositional, the heart is like a suspect cousin of the intellect in Stoicism. The heart, in addition to its reactive non-intentional impressions, delivers intellectual content, which the intellect proper assesses. Most of what the heart values—other people, property, life, pleasure—are false values. The supreme good lies in the mind's conformity with the rational structure of the universe. 'Any philosopher, of whatever kind, who locates the supreme good in the mind and in virtue, is to be preferred" (Cicero, 2001, III.30).

The external goods the heart values, are merely preferable (*proêgmenon*). What is preferable is not truly good, but a matter of indifference. The heart prefers "health, well-functioning senses, freedom from pain, honor, wealth…" (Cicero, 2001, III.51). These evaluations of the heart do not track what is truly good. Ultimately, the intellect is

indifferent to whatever is independent of moral worth.

In sum, the hypertrophy of the intellect and will in Stoicism consists in a rigid commitment to the dialectic, that discerns the essence of goodness in the character, and so dismisses the entire affective domain that responds to external reality with attraction or aversion. "For external objects the normative human being does not have any response at all, since he or she does not recognize these as either good or evil" (Graver, 2007, p. 87). The Stoic sage forces him/herself to respond affectively only to states of character, and so cuts off a huge range of human experience. This hypertrophy of the intellect and will creates an artificial asymmetry. Human motivation does not begin in the intellect, but in the heart. Affective responses drive the intellect. Demanding that the intellect lead motivation leads to an unsustainable dryness, in which we have to push forward with the intellect alone. But for an affective enthusiasm, we cannot for long force ourselves to focus our intellects and gather knowledge. Our emotions, moreover, reveal the evaluative significance of events, that our intellect cannot deduce by collecting descriptive facts. Nussbaum describes her emotional reaction to the death of her mother, and how these emotions disclose the evaluative reality of the death: "My fear perceived my mother as both tremendously important and threatened; my grief saw her as valuable…" (2001, 27). We cannot reduce these powerful intuitions, of importance and value, to some intellectual descriptive measure of the situation, e.g. the height of the mother, the temperature in the room, the strictly biological processes of death, etc.

Emotions, as Nussbaum asserts, are *eudaimonistic*, i.e. driven towards our flourishing, and so they provide a motivational context of what we basically value, in which the intellect operates as an adjunct (2001, p.

31). The intellect does not deduce the value of one's mother, but accepts this value as a premise born by a powerful emotional disclosure. The Stoic seeks to subordinate the rich emotional texture of the heart to a cold intellectual dialectic, that perceives the death as ultimately *adiaphoron*, i.e. indifferent (Cicero, 2021, 53). The Stoic delegates objectivity to the intellect, removing it from the heart. This generates a "crippled affectivity," characteristic of a prisoner of a "research spell," who makes "every experience and every situation an object of thematic knowledge" and is "incapable of dropping the attitude of intellectual analysis" (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 55).

Epicurean "Tyranny" of the Heart. If Stoics remove the objectivity of the heart, making it secondary to the intellect and leaving to the heart proper only a non-intentional feeling, Epicureans tend in the opposite direction. The highest good for the Epicurean is pleasure, while the only evil is pain. "A thing is rendered right and praiseworthy just to the extent that it is conducive to a life of pleasure" (Cicero, 2001, I.42). The Stoics consider an objective conformity of one's character to nature as the highest good, and downplay feelings of pleasure as offering false propositions. This emphasis on objective conformity over feelings is foreign to the Epicurean. Virtue is only worthwhile, if it produces pleasure, and so the Epicurean places affective states over the judgments of the intellect. "These exquisitely beautiful virtues of yours—who would deem them praiseworthy or desirable if they did not result in pleasure?" (Cicero, 2001, I.42).

In the structure of the faculties, heart, will, and intellect, sensations of the heart are the sure canon for the Epicurean. For the Epicurean, there is no objective *telos* of nature, which we discern using the dialectical method that captures the essence of things. There are no

final causes structuring nature to some ultimate good. "Human beings, and their organs, have no inherent purpose. Our minds were not made in order to think, and our hands were not made to grasp…" (O'Keefe, 2010, p. 112). We should not seek to bring ourselves in alignment with some objective purpose of nature that does not exist. Instead, we pursue *subjective* purposes in an objectively purposeless world, trying to attain satisfaction. Nature consists in atoms whirling in the void, generating infinite (*apeiria*) universes, and destroying them, on a daily basis (Cicero, 2001, I.22).

We do not desire pleasure because it has some objective goodness, insofar as it conforms to a *telos* of nature. Rather, pleasure is good because we desire it (O'Keefe, 2010, p. 113). Sensations of pleasure represent the measure of action, not some conformity to an objective structure. "He [Epicurus] locates judgement about reality in the senses, so that once the senses take something false to be true, he considers that all means of judging truth and falsehood have been removed" (Cicero, 2001, I.22). There is no higher authority than the senses, no dialectic that can measure the sensation against some objective teleology.

Epicureanism maintains a subjectivism of the heart, turning it inward on its own sensations, and a neglect of the intellect, which has no epistemological role to compete with sensations. It is telling how Epicureans deal with skeptical attacks on the senses, to the effect that they do not correspond to external objects generating them (Lucretius, 2007, IV.469-99). The Epicureans adopt the position that *all* sensations are true, even those experienced by dreamers and madmen (Laertius, 2015, X.32). All sensations are true, insofar as we separate the sensation itself from a judgment about the sensation. The sensation is a revelatory datum,

showing either pleasure or pain and constituting a guide for conduct. We err when we make a judgment about the sensation, i.e. when we take it as indicative of some aspect of the world by extrapolation with our intellect. Error in sensation infects the "added opinion" of the intellect, that attributes the sensation to the external world (Epicurus, 1926, 50). The sensation is true, then, with respect to its internal feeling, and can become false only through intellectual application of it to the external world.

This response to skepticism reinforces the theme of subjectivism in Epicureanism. We are to embrace the sensations of our heart as offering a kind of subjective truth, regardless of to what extent they reveal the structure of the external world. Pleasure is the highest good, so even truth should not interfere with our pursuit of pleasure. The embrace of pleasure, above any objective order, implies the embrace of a sybaritic life, characteristic of notorious gourmands (Cicero, 2001, II.70). So long as the individual feels good, it does not matter in what lifestyle the hedonism expresses itself.

In Epicureanism, we see the opposite tendency of Stoicism, which intellectualizes the heart. While the Stoics take emotions as making an intellectual commitment, Epicureans embrace the affective state in isolation from intellectual investigation. There is a hypertrophy of the heart in Epicureanism, that usurps the functions proper to the intellect. The "tyrannical heart" takes the heart as the "only true and trustworthy guide," dismissing the role of the intellect in gathering descriptive facts about a situation (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 64). The intellect gathers *descriptive* facts, e.g. that someone has died, not evaluative facts. The intuitive knowledge of the heart is not meant to disclose, for instance, the fact that one's spouse is in the room, or to

retain the memory of one's spouse's identity. The intuitive knowledge of the heart is an evaluative experience, about the value one's spouse has for one, and not some factual matter. The tyrannical heart indulges in affective states, such that they cloud our perception of what is factually true. Like the madman and the dreamer, as long as we feel good, we are happy, even if our fancies are delusional.

Nussbaum accepts the disclosive power of emotions, but not to the extent that they usurp the intellect. Deep childhood attachments and habits can form evaluative frameworks that go against our better judgment. "Jack may be teaching himself some moral truths, but his deep-seated habits wipe those off the slate at times, and he is again in the grip of his past" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 36). The intellect engages in a healthy interplay with the emotions, by disclosing deeper descriptions of reality to which emotions were originally blind. A lustful man becomes tender, when he recognizes the depths of the personhood of a woman, instead of merely objectifying her. Cognition need not be inert, a mere slave of the emotions, but can withhold assent to the way emotions disclose things (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 38). The intellect does not generate the landscape of value by logical proof, but it can recognize inconsistencies between descriptions of a situation, and the emotional disclosure of value.

But, the heart is non-disclosive for the Epicurean, since it does not address the nature of the objects generating sensation. The non-disclosive heart generates the overreaction of the Stoics, who view the heart as presenting only irrational movements that threaten the revelations of the intellect. Epicurean subjectivism has corrosive effects for spirituality. If inner sensations are the ultimate standard of value, then our spiritual beliefs have value only insofar as they produce pleasure. Whether or not these

beliefs are true does not matter. If the only criterion of spiritual belief is pleasure, we have to accept a relativism that affirms a belief in one context, if it gives pleasure, but denies it in another, if it gives pain.

If spirituality consists in pleasant sensations with no objective anchor, then it becomes vulnerable to reductive psychological explanations. For instance, the Terror Management Theory claims that belief systems arise in response to terror over own death. It is not that we really are immortal, as some religions purport, but that it feels better to believe we are immortal, insofar as this belief relieves terror (Greenberg & Arndt, 2012, p. 398).

The Stoic-Epicurean Synthesis

The Stoic-Epicurean binary, which generates, in its division, an undue hypertrophy of the intellect and the heart, respectively, also points to a synthesis that restores the heart. The issue that drives the division of the binary, and its synthesis, is the disclosive intentionality of the heart. Montague attributes an evaluative disclosure to the emotions, such that emotions reveal an evaluative texture, complementing the factual revelations of the senses and the intellect. The phenomenological disvalue in the experience of sadness, for instance, is an objective attribution to a state of affairs, e.g. the death feels sad, because it *is* sad (2015, p. 230). Both the Stoics and the Epicureans, taken singly, deny this disclosive intentionality of the heart. Emotions are *intellectual* judgments for the Stoics, disclosing reality in propositional form (Laertius, 2015, VII.111). For the Epicureans, the heart is important in terms of how it makes one feel. It is the intellect that extrapolates affectivity to some external object in the world. All sensations are true, insofar as they are revelatory (*alēethēs*) of some internal predilection, not of some external object. Sensations are

real, in the sense that they cause movement, not in the sense of being true of the external world (Laertius, 2015, X.32). If we synthesize the insights of Stoicism and Epicureanism, we can bring together the subjective and objective aspects of the heart, affirming its importance in internal motivation and in disclosing aspects of reality.

From the Epicureans, we can derive the importance of subjective affective states. The Epicurean does not delegate the evaluation of affective states to the intellect and its dialectical process. Instead, the Epicurean embraces affective states as canonical. Through the Epicureans, we can dismiss the caricatures of the hypertrophied intellect, that merely clinically observes a situation with the intellect, without feeling compassion (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 55). This hyper-intellectual clinician lacks the affective states of the heart that would humanize him/her. The emotions play an important role in our ethical formation. We are able to respond appropriately to various situations, partly in virtue of an emotional attunement to the situation that we cannot simply perceive with our senses, nor deduce intellectually. Von Hildebrand describes pride and concupiscence as closing the heart (2007, p. 60). In our pride and concupiscence, we have blunted affective states that render us numb to anything besides our own gratification. Proud people may have a well-functioning intellect, but operate from corrupted evaluative premises. The intellect cannot prove the initial axiomatic values that serve as givens in a situation. The intellect can rationalize and make consistent behavior that is strictly self-centered. A proud and concupiscent person may have perfect intellectual consistency, given the initial premise that only he/she matters.

Emotions, according to Montague, disclose the contours

of value and disvalue (2015, p. 231). This disclosure of value, by the affectivity of the heart, provides a crucial orientation to evaluative dimensions of a situation that constitute guardrails for the intellect and the senses. In a value-neutral world, the intellect can hijack things for inappropriate and perverse uses. Intellectual consistency, and accurate sensory perception, is consistent with many strange responses to a situation. A murderer, who lacks a basic value for human life, viewing it coldly as equivalent to an object, can pursue murders with intellectual consistency and intact senses. The encounter with another person must have an affective dimension, complementary to the intellect and the senses, that prevents us from seeing the other person as equivalent to just another thing. We cannot generate this special status of a human being through senses and intellect alone. Senses perceive a body, and the intellect has only a conceptual grasp of the species and genus of a human being.

Kant claims that the good will is foundational to the moral life. Without a good will, intelligence can become a tool for evil (1996, 4:393). I insist, with the Epicureans, on the importance of a healthy affectivity that undergirds the will. We exert our will, in a background of affective responses that provide motivation. We do not drag ourselves forward with the will, in a state of emotional numbness.

The overly intellectualized Stoic, who channels all emotion through the intellect, creates an artificial asymmetry in motivation. Intellectual recognition of principle by itself does not secure sufficient motivation. Affective states experience value, while the intellect can only coldly register value-neutral facts. The disparity between the affective experience of disvalue, and the intellectual registration of facts generating evaluative

significance, is analogous to the disparity between being at the site of a car accident as someone who knows the victim, and an AI processor of facts about the accident. Montague writes, "Commander Data in Star Trek, who doesn't have any emotions, may be capable of saying what is of value and disvalue…but he cannot experience value or disvalue" (2015, p. 231). I go even further than Montague, in the spirit of the centrality of affectivity in the Epicurean canon. Data cannot even say what is of value and disvalue, without emotions, since emotions provide the axiomatic orientation that are the initial premises of reasoning. We cannot prove every premise, because of the impossibility of an infinite regress. The intellect cannot prove value from the bottom up, but must rely on an original affective attunement to provide the contours of value. In order to deduce that something is good, there must already be an attribution of value in the premises.

Affective states, as Nussbaum makes clear, take individual propositions, and connect them to the goals of a person. Grief is not the mere recognition that so-and-so is dead, but the recognition of the meaning of this death for oneself (2001, p. 41). The affective states provide the contours of value that is the hermeneutic within which we interpret factual propositions.

So, the Epicurean captures the foundational role of affectivity in motivation and in establishing values, which we cannot prove with intellectual argument or merely perceive with our senses. The Epicureans establish the importance of the subjective domain. Yet, the Stoic provides an important corrective to the Epicurean, by insisting on an orientation to the objective domain. Merely feeling good does not validate aberrations from an objectively valuable teleology. The gourmand, who feels good about his/her gluttony, is straying from an objective *telos* of the human person that resists

submission to non-rational drives (Cicero, 2001, II.70).

The Stoic calls the Epicurean to align his/her affectivity to objective reality. Our affective states are not important solely in the way they phenomenologically feel, but insofar as they root us in the objective contours of the world. We can have false affectivity, that is not adequate to the objective contours of a situation. False affectivity may be due to incorrect grasp of facts, but also simply a perverse affective reaction in spite of a full intellectual grasp of the facts. The psychopath, for instance, feels no difference between a person and an object, even though he/she may know all the facts of the situation. We can be emotionally blind, insofar as we do not respond to the true value of a situation.

In the caricature of the tyrannical heart, affectivity does not conform to the facts gathered by the intellect. So, if one feels contrite, one does not verify with his/her intellect that one really is contrite, in a demonstrable way through actions (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 50). The intellect has a prerogative on the role of gathering facts about a situation. The evaluative contours disclosed by affectivity must occupy the real world. Feeling happy about being rich, while in a state of intellectual denial about the facts of one's poverty, is an unhealthy prioritization of the subjective domain (Von Hildebrand, 2007, p. 51).

Yet, we must not only ensure that our affective states are in the real world, by gathering facts with our intellect, but we must also ensure that our affective states map on to objective contours of things in terms of their value. We might have an accurate grasp of the facts with our intellect, but our affective states are illusory in terms of the values they disclose. For instance, we might experience an affective state of delight at the misfortune of another. This *Schadenfreude* could be illusory insofar as it

misses the objective value of the situation, even though we make no factual errors, i.e. the misfortune is not really a good thing.

Nussbaum claims that "emotions link us to items that we regard as important for our wellbeing, but do not fully control. The emotion records that sense of vulnerability…" (2001, p. 43). An emotion like fear, for instance, registers that something is important to us, and precarious. Stoics remind us that these emotions are making objective claims about reality, and they can be more or less adequate to reality. Perhaps the object driving preoccupation is not really as important, or as precarious, as we feel. We might feel fear about our favorite team losing a game, only to realize it is not that important.

Part of spirituality is attaining higher evaluative awareness. The proud man, and the loving man, may occupy the same factual world, but the loving man has a revolutionary emotional disclosure of the value of other people. Stoic objectivity reminds us to bring our evaluative phenomenology in line with some objective order. Is our emotion really revealing something of objective importance, or is it taking something that is really indifferent as important (Cicero, 2001, III.53)? A teenager might feel devastation over a breakup, only to realize later the person was not really right for them. In the spiritual journey, our evaluative landscape evolves, so that what we rejected as evil before, we now embrace as good. We square our heart with objective reality, because it is not merely a source of inner sentiment, but a revelation of significance in line with our *eudaimonia* (Nussbaum, 2001, 47). We gain deeper appreciation of in what our true *eudaimonia* consists, so that we can square what appears good, with what really is good.

So, the heart, through the synthesis of Stoicism and Epicureanism, is bipolar

(Wood, 2013, p. 117). It provides affective states that provide the motivational roadmap without which the intellect has no moorings. But, the heart must also be adequate to external reality. This objective dimension of the heart, in which it makes itself adequate to evaluative dimensions of reality that the intellect cannot grasp, protects spirituality against reductive explanations. The heart really is drawing close to a transcendent domain of value in spiritual practice, rather than just making itself feel good for psychological or biological reasons.

Conclusion

In this paper, I articulated the neglect of the heart, and its restoration, in terms of a binary between Stoicism and Epicureanism. Stoicism subordinates the heart to the intellect, treating the heart as a source of propositions which the intellect assesses. Epicureanism makes the sensations of the heart the ultimate canon of value, neglecting a conformity to an objective *telos*. In the synthesis of Epicureanism and Stoicism, we restore the heart, as providing both crucial motivation, in the form of an evaluative roadmap that the intellect alone cannot provide, and in disclosing an objective teleology in reality that exceeds merely descriptive features of reality graspable by the intellect. This synthesis agrees with von Hildebrand, that the heart has intentionality, and also avoids the caricatures of hypertrophic faculties.

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