Cuteness and Disgust: The Humanizing and Dehumanizing Effects of Emotion

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Abstract

Moral emotions are evolved mechanisms that function in part to optimize social relationships. We discuss two moral emotions—disgust and the "cuteness response"—which modulate social-engagement motives in opposite directions, changing the degree to which the eliciting entity is imbued with mental states (i.e., mentalized). Disgust-inducing entities are hypo-mentalized (i.e., dehumanized); cute entities are hyper-mentalized (i.e., "humanized"). This view of cuteness—which challenges the prevailing view that cuteness is a releaser of parental instincts (Lorenz, 1950/1971)—explains (a) the broad range of affiliative behaviors elicited by cuteness, (b) the marketing of cuteness to children (by toy makers and animators) to elicit play, and (c) the apparent ease and frequency with which cute things are anthropomorphized.

Keywords

anthropomorphism, cuteness, disgust, mentalizing, morality

There is now widespread consensus that morality is shaped profoundly by affectively based responses. There is also an emerging view that moral judgment is not so much about evaluating acts or situations as it is about evaluating people (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, in press). Based on these two insights, there is good reason to believe that many of the foundations of morality are to be found in evolved affective mechanisms for (a) identifying good and bad social partners, and (b) triggering the appropriate kind and degree of social engagement (or disengagement) with them. From an evolutionary perspective, moral concern should be optimized, not maximized.

But from a normative perspective, many moral philosophers and psychologists have argued, implicitly or explicitly, that moral concerns should be maximized. The goal of many moral-education programs and interventions is to foster altruism, caring, and prosocial behavior, particularly toward strangers, and most particularly toward strangers who are in some way victims. You can get a room full of academics to start nodding their heads just by saying the phrase "expand the moral circle" (a reference to Singer, 1981). And because politically liberal academics care a great deal about care, victims, and altruism (Haidt & Graham, 2007), the emotion of compassion (or sympathy, or empathy) has emerged as one of the most valued moral emotions, turning the Dalai Lama into an academic rock star, and drawing a great deal of interest to research programs designed to increase compassion for strangers (e.g., Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007).

Yet compassion is a hothouse flower—easily disrupted by distractions, easily fatigued by repeated appeals. Might there be other emotions that expand the moral circle more reliably? The moral circle refers to those entities—including humans, nonhuman animals, or even inanimate objects—deemed worthy of moral concern and whose distress triggers compassion (Singer, 1981). More generally, an entity is a member of the moral circle if harm to that entity is morally proscribed. Thus, for many, a family pet would qualify, but not a household fly. In this article we describe two emotional states that push the moral circle in opposite directions: disgust and the cuteness response. We first examine the mechanisms by which disgust shrinks the moral circle—particularly by altering motivations for social engagement and cognitive processes related to mentalizing. With disgust as a template, we then present a new theoretical analysis of the cuteness response, showing how it functions analogously to disgust, but in the opposite direction: it expands the moral circle

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by influencing motivations for social engagement and cognitive processes related to mentalizing.

Our argument about cuteness contradicts the leading theory of cuteness: that it is an "innate releaser" of a parental instinct (Lorenz, 1950/1971). Instead, we show that the cuteness response is better understood as a mechanism that "releases" sociality (e.g., play and other affiliative interactions), which sometimes (indirectly) leads to increased care. Our argument about emotions and the moral circle extends an argument by Pizarro, Detweiler-Bedell, and Bloom (2006), who noted the roles of disgust and compassion (which they called "empathy"[1]) in contracting and expanding the moral circle. We extend their analysis primarily by exploring the role of cuteness in this process.

Our analysis advances the agenda of moral foundations theory (Haidt & Graham, 2007), which is to explore the small set of innate and intuitive psychological "foundations" upon which cultures construct various moral systems. Disgust is the main emotion related to the "purity/sanctity" foundation (see also the "ethic of divinity" in Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997). The cuteness response is not yet well understood, but we believe it is an emotional response related to the "care/harm" foundation. For both emotions we take a social functionalist approach (Keltner & Haidt, 1999), showing how appraisal processes trigger preparations for adaptive changes to social interaction. Thinking is for doing, as William James said, and in moral psychology, most of that doing is about managing and adjusting relationships (A. Fiske, 1992).

Mentalizing and Anthropomorphizing

Mentalizing refers to the processes by which we perceive an agent as possessing a mind (Frith & Frith, 2006). This definition of mentalizing aligns with Dennett's (1987) notion of the "intentional stance," in which we make sense of the behavior of other agents in terms of unseen mental properties. Mentalizing includes active, explicit inferences about thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and intentions but it also includes cases where one treats an entity *as if* it has a thinking, intending mind, but would explicitly disavow the notion that the entity (e.g., a self-propelled gadget) *actually* has thoughts or intentions (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007).

Mentalizing processes are triggered by a variety of cues. Most studies have focused on features of the target, such as its appearance (e.g., having a face or otherwise resembling humans, Johnson, Slaughter, & Carey, 1998) or the nature of its movement (e.g., being self-propelled or contingent of the motion of other objects or agents, Heider & Simmel, 1944; occurring at a pace that approximates the speed of human movement, Morewedge, Preston, & Wegner, 2007). Recently however, researchers have begun to examine other factors, such as the motivational state of the perceiver. Epley et al. (2007) and Epley, Akalis, Waytz, and Cacioppo (2008) have focused on a particular form of mentalizing: anthropomorphism (imbuing nonhuman agents or objects with humanlike properties). They propose that people are most likely to anthropomorphize

when they are particularly motivated to reduce unpredictability or otherwise gain a sense of control (*effectance motivation*) and when they are motivated to achieve social connection (*sociality motivation*). For example, chronic loneliness and momentary feelings of social disconnection increase the likelihood of anthropomorphizing gadgets (Epley et al., 2008). We suspect that this effect extends to mentalizing processes more generally; people will tend to attribute rich mental lives to those entities—objects, pets, or people—with which they are motivated to interact socially. Indeed, as Epley et al. (2007) note, mentalizing may be a particularly effective way to strengthen social bonds.

Motivations for social interaction are tied to the perceived social value of the entity. The extent to which social engagement with a particular person would be expected to be psychologically rewarding can be thought of as the *proximate social value* of that person. This proximate social value often tracks evolutionary significance—which can be thought of as *ultimate social value*. We presume that the reason people derive such pleasure from some social interactions and not others is due in part to the fact that for millions of years, individuals who optimized their alliances and relationships left more surviving offspring than did individuals who were less discriminating. The ability to ascribe mental states to other agents—or to reduce such ascriptions to those with less social value—may have been part of that optimization process.

There are at least three particularly valuable kinds of relationship partners: (a) high-quality potential mates, (b) trustworthy exchange partners, and (c) genetically related individuals, especially one's own children. Potential partners in these three categories should be perceived as possessing particular social significance and would be likely targets of augmented mentalizing. We should perceive them as having minds and should readily—and perhaps automatically—make inferences about their thoughts, desires, and intentions. Conversely, those who have a negative social value would be likely targets of dehumanization and reduced mentalizing.

Disgust and the Value of Cutting Off Relationships

Because Pizarro et al. (2006) outlined the role of disgust in shrinking the moral circle, we only consider disgust briefly. The perception of an agent as possessing negative social value, perhaps because it shows signs of (a) disease, (b) being a poor exchange partner, or (c) outgroup membership, should actively inhibit desires for social interaction.

The emotion of disgust has frequently been implicated in this context—it appears to serve as an affective mechanism for tracking instances of negative social value, eliciting revulsion and desires for social distance (Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley, 2008). The anterior insula—also known as the gustatory cortex—is often implicated in studies of disgust as well as in studies of responses to cheaters (Sanfey, Rilling, Aronson, Nystrom, & Cohen, 2003). In terms of its origins, disgust motivates

the avoidance of offensive things. In social contexts (e.g., as a property of individuals), it becomes a mechanism of social avoidance. The Book of Leviticus, for example, includes direct commandments to avoid disgust-inducing individuals, such as lepers and sexual deviants. Cross-culturally, there is widespread use of food taboos to mark who is "in" and who is "out"; those who violate taboos trigger disgust and are avoided (e.g., Meigs, 1984). Likewise, Gottman (1994) and Gottman, Coan, Carrere, and Swanson (1998) found that in marital conflicts, the prevalence of expressions of disgust, and of the related emotion of contempt, predicted divorce, whereas expressions of anger did not. Thus, disgust tracks and predicts social avoidance.

Disgust and Mentalizing

As an affective mechanism for dampening motivations for social interaction, disgust should be expected to interfere with mentalizing. There is accumulating evidence that it does just that, leading to dehumanization—the treatment of individuals as less than human. For example, Harris and Fiske (2006, 2007) conducted several functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies in which participants viewed images of individuals from stigmatized groups typically associated with disgust, such as homeless people and drug addicts. Viewing images of these individuals failed to activate the medial prefrontal cortex—a region frequently implicated in mentalizing and which is almost always activated more strongly by people than by objects (e.g., Mitchell, Heatherton, & Macrae, 2002; for reviews, see Amodio & Frith, 2006; Frith & Frith, 2003, 2006). This suggests that people may be disinclined to make inferences about the mental states of members of disgust-inducing groups. Disgust originally evolved as a response to offensive foods that may have been vectors of disease (Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley, 2008). In this form, it was exclusively about the material world, about detecting offensive things that should be avoided. But disgust follows the law of contagion—contact with disgusting material renders one disgusting. Thus, disgust can easily become applied to people, perhaps leading to the treatment of certain people (e.g., those associated with dirty things) as if they were akin to offensive, contaminating stuff. By inhibiting typical mentalizing processes, disgust may lead to the acceptance of treatment that would normally only be permitted in the case of objects or nonsentient beings (S. T. Fiske, Harris, & Cuddy, 2004).

For disgust to contract the moral circle, it is not necessary that it render the target as having no mind at all. In some cases, disgust will exclude an agent from the moral circle by leading to the perception that it is merely less than human. The active avoidance of outgroup members provides an example of this process. Haslam (2006) and Haslam, Bain, Douge, Lee, and Bastian (2005) have distinguished between two forms of dehumanization—the denial of uniquely human traits (e.g., the products of culture and refinement) and the denial of human nature (e.g., emotionality, personality). Failures to attribute uniquely human traits to an agent (or group) leads to *animalistic* dehumanization in which the target is perceived as crude, savage, and similar to nonhuman animals. This form of dehumanization has clear ties to disgust. Rozin et al. (2008) have proposed that many disgust elicitors (particularly those related to sexuality and death) are disgusting in part because they are reminders that human beings are not different from other animals. This form of dehumanization emerges most often in intergroup contexts (Leyens et al., 2001). Animalistic dehumanization, with the aid of disgust, directly shrinks the moral circle, excluding outgroup members from the realm of moral concern.

Disgust may be both an antecedent and a consequence of dehumanization. Animalistic dehumanization—by highlighting creaturely, base properties of the target—may trigger feelings of disgust and revulsion. Conversely, feelings of disgust—by motivating social distance—may interfere with mentalizing processes, thereby leading to dehumanization. A person or group that is commonly associated with disgusting things or is seen as physically contaminated may fail to trigger standard mentalizing. If social interaction is not desired (or is actively avoided) then there is less need to infer mental states. In short, being deemed disgusting sets in motion a variety of cognitive effects that result in exclusion from the moral circle.

Which Emotions Expand the Moral Circle?

To be deemed "disgusting" and the object of revulsion, therefore, is to be imbued with negative social value, to be denied full mental life, and in extreme cases to be pushed beyond the protection of the moral circle. Is there a positive, affectively mediated trait that confers the opposite effects (i.e., positive social value, a rich mental life, and guaranteed membership in the moral circle)? Pizarro, Detweiler-Bedell, and Bloom (2006) suggested that compassion (or "empathy") is the opposite of disgust, at least in terms of the two emotions' effects on the moral circle. We agree with them that disgust and compassion have these opposing effects, but we would like to suggest that there are several additional candidates for being the opposite of disgust, including love, gratitude (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008), moral elevation (Haidt, 2003a) and the cuteness response. All of these affective states draw others into the moral circle and endow them with extra value. But in terms of their effects on mentalizing and anthropomorphism, we believe that the cuteness response is the most perfect opposite. Like disgust, it is often triggered by animals and inanimate objects, as well as by people. Therefore, like disgust (but unlike compassion, love, gratitude, and elevation), it is often felt toward objects that are not animate. Therefore, like disgust, cuteness is intimately involved with adjusting the way people mentalize objects that are not already highly mentalized.

Pizarro et al. (2006) note that "a child is universally forbidden" as a target of harm. It seems that any child—even one of another race living halfway across the world—is granted automatic membership in the moral circle (at least once attention is drawn to it). If this is true then any affective mechanism related

to the perception of a child (e.g., perception of something as childlike or babyish) would be a candidate for conferring social value, for triggering mentalizing processes, and for expanding the moral circle. Following this rationale, we propose that cuteness expands the moral circle and that it does so by motivating sociality, which in turn activates processes of mind perception (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007). In other words, we propose that the cuteness response should be considered a moral emotion, that is, an emotion "linked to the interests or welfare either of society as a whole or at least of persons other than the judge or agent" (Haidt, 2003b). By this definition, any emotion that expands or contracts the moral circle would qualify as moral. As a moral emotion—though perhaps not one of the most important ones—the cuteness response has been relatively neglected and largely misunderstood.

Rethinking Cuteness: It Causes Social Engagement, Not Care

Lorenz (1950/1971), the father of modern cuteness research, was an ethologist and zoologist who studied fixed action patterns and associated sign stimuli in birds. Fixed action patterns are reflexive behaviors that are set in motion by the sign stimulus (pattern of perceptual input), and then continue until completion, even if the triggering stimulus is no longer present. Lorenz's research focused on infant and maternal behaviors such as imprinting and egg retrieval in geese. Lorenz remarked on the similarity between the behaviors he was studying and the human response to cuteness, leading him to propose that the perceptual pattern known as cuteness (*kindenschema* or *baby-schema*) was a sign stimulus which served as an "innate releaser" of the human caregiving response. This view characterizes the cuteness response as a fixed action pattern consisting exclusively of parental behaviors.

We think this view is incomplete. Cuteness is as much an elicitor of play as it is of care. It is as likely to trigger a childlike state as a parental one. There is almost certainly a relationship between cuteness and care, but we propose that the link is indirect and that the direct effect of cuteness is more general. We propose that the "cuteness response" is an affective mechanism for detecting and responding to the social value of human children. As such, its primary *proximate* function is to motivate

sociality, triggering attempts to engage the child in social interaction. Furthermore, given the relationship between sociality motivation and mentalizing (Epley, Akalis, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2008; Epley et al., 2007) cuteness should activate processes related to the attribution of mental states to agents. As a result, cute entities become objects of moral concern, and members of the moral circle (see Figure 1). This account of cuteness explains a variety of phenomena, including (a) the utilization of cuteness in the areas of toy making, animation, and robotics, and (b) the frequency with which cute objects are anthropomorphized.

In this article, we are concerned only with the *proximate* function of cuteness—the immediate effect that cuteness has on those who perceive it—while leaving aside for now the question of its *ultimate*, evolutionary function (the adaptive advantage that cuteness-triggered behavior might have conferred on the perceiver of cuteness). We are proposing that regardless of whether the cuteness response originally arose to increase the welfare of one's own offspring, it is not best characterized as a direct releaser of caretaking behaviors, but rather as a direct releaser of human sociality. If we succeed in making that case in this article, we hope to address the more difficult question in future articles: what is the adaptive advantage conferred upon adults for engaging socially with "cute" children that are not kin?[2] In the remainder of this article, we present the evidence for our claim.

Perceived Cuteness Tracks Affordances for Social Engagement

To paraphrase Simone de Beauvoir, one is not born cute, one becomes cute. Indeed, there is a distinct delay in the peak of cuteness such that, as a general rule, a newborn is decidedly less cute than, say, a 10-month-old. This has been confirmed by several studies that have used still photographs of children of varying ages to test which age group is the cutest (Hildebrandt & Fitzgerald, 1979; Sanefuji, Ohgami, & Hashiya, 2007; Volk, Lukjanczuk, & Quinsey, 2007). In two studies, the youngest age group (3 months) was judged less cute than slightly older children, with cuteness peaking either at 6 months (Sanefuji et al., 2007) or at approximately 10 months of age (Hildebrandt & Fitzgerald, 1979). After this peak, cuteness remains at a high level for several years (Volk et al., 2007). This pattern is
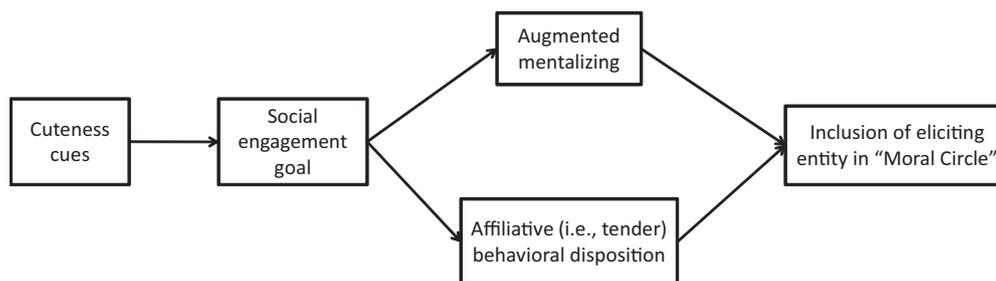

Figure 1. Proposed model of the cuteness response.

noteworthy because cues to helplessness and vulnerability should be highest immediately after birth, during the fragile newborn period in which infant mortality is highest. If the cuteness response was strictly a care-oriented response designed to directly release caretaking, it would likely be particularly tuned to this period. But while affordances for care may be highest during the newborn period, affordances for social interaction are at their lowest point. In this light, it is noteworthy that when cuteness is at peak or near-peak levels (e.g., from 10 months to 3 years) children tend to be more social. Thus, the developmental trajectory of cuteness seems to accord more with the view of cuteness as a "social" stimulus than with the Lorenzian care-oriented view.

Another piece of evidence that cuteness elicits social engagement comes from a study of the influence of facial expressions on perceived cuteness. Hildebrandt (1983) used photographs of infants; each infant was photographed with a variety of facial expressions, which were then categorized by valence (positive, neutral, and negative). Infants were judged as cuter when they were photographed with a positive expression (e.g., happy, excited) and less cute when photographed with a negative expression (e.g., sad, upset). This is important because positive expression such as smiling signal affordances for social interaction; a smiling child invites social engagement and interaction. Notably, this is the exact opposite of what is found for the classic caregiving response of compassion, which is triggered by negative expressions and other cues of distress. Moreover, people tend to attribute warmth to baby-faced individuals (Berry & McArthur, 1985), and to rate cute faces as more sociable (i.e., friendly, cheerful, and likeable) than less cute faces (Karraker & Stern, 1990). Altogether, in the features that amplify cuteness and in the traits that are attributed to those possessing cuteness, social engagement is the recurring theme, more so than caretaking.

The role of cuteness in eliciting social engagement is supported by a close inspection of the sorts of behaviors triggered by cuteness. Rather than trigger a narrow set of caretaking behaviors—as would be expected of something resembling a fixed action pattern—cuteness is known to elicit a wide variety of affiliative behaviors, such as attempts to touch, hold, pet, play with, talk to, or otherwise engage the cute entity (e.g., Spindler, 1961). Among these affiliative behaviors is "baby talk," a classic cuteness-inspired behavior in which an adult approaches an infant and engages in a series high-pitched vocalizations. Baby talk is directly triggered by cuteness (i.e., degree of baby-facedness; Zebrowitz, Brownlow, & Olson, 1992). Research has focused on tonal qualities and whether baby talk actually aids in the acquisition of language. Regardless of its qualities and usefulness, it is noteworthy that cuteness elicits attempts to talk to the child. Approaching a baby and talking to it in a friendly way (e.g., using high-pitch vocalizations) is a social, affiliative response, not a caretaking one. This is consistent with the idea the immediate behaviors triggered by cuteness are attempts to engage the child in social interaction. These attempts for social interaction may involve caretaking behaviors (caretaking is, after all, a form of social interaction),

but they may not. The specific behavior triggered—whether one holds and nuzzles a child or plays with it—will depend on situational and developmental factors that determine the specific opportunities for social interaction.

The role of infants as elicitors of sociality is not limited to humans. Consider the case of "agonistic buffering," a phenomenon observed among several primates species, and which is particularly common among Barbary macaques (Deag & Crook, 1971). Male Barbary macaques tend to take interest in infants and handle them with great care. Interestingly, they often use infants to facilitate friendly interactions with other males. Specifically, two males will sit close together while holding an infant between them. They interact with the baby and then engage in a variety of positive, affiliative behaviors—such as grooming—with each other. Paul, Kuester, and Arnemann (1996) conducted a large-scale study of this behavior among several colonies, finding that this phenomenon is not a function of paternal investment (the infant is rarely related to either male). Nor is it a way of displaying paternal fitness (i.e., willingness to invest in young) so as to gain reproductive access with the infant's mother. Instead, the presence of infants seems to help manage social relationships between males. These encounters generally occur between males of similar social rank and it seems that infants promote general affiliative and friendly tendencies. In fact, the presence of an infant seems to be necessary for certain affiliative behaviors; Paul et al. observed that adult males never groomed each other unless an infant was present. This phenomenon was originally termed agonistic buffering because it was thought to be initiated by lower ranking males so as to inhibit the aggressive impulses of a dominant male. However, Paul et al. found that although these triadic interactions most often took place when tensions were high, they did not generally follow any overt aggression.

The ability of cuteness to trigger sociality and prime affiliative, friendly tendencies is not limited to adults. Children, like adults, show a preference for cuteness (Sanjefuji et al., 2007), a fact which has been exploited by toy makers, video game designers and animators to great success. For example, Gould (1979) described how Mickey Mouse has undergone a physical transformation—in the direction of increasing cuteness—while simultaneously becoming less mischievous and more good-mannered. The "teddy bear" has undergone a similar evolution toward increasing cuteness (Hinde & Barden, 1985). It seems that getting a child to socially engage with (e.g., befriend, play with) an animated or stuffed character is facilitated by making it physically cute. Notably, the use of cuteness in the marketing of children's products is not limited to caretaking contexts, such as the use of "cute" baby dolls to exploit desires to engage in play-mothering.

Cuteness as a Mentalizing Prime

We have presented evidence that cuteness motivates sociality. As a direct motivator of sociality, cuteness should trigger mentalizing (Epley et al., 2007, 2008). If one desires to interact

socially with a given agent, making inferences about its mental state—such as how it feels, what it is thinking, and what its intentions are—can be useful. This is because the answers to these questions can be used to explain the agent's past behavior and predict its future behavior (Dennett, 1987).

In speculating on the cues that trigger anthropomorphism, Horowitz and Bekoff (2007) suggest that *babyschema* (i.e., cuteness) may serve as a physical prompt. Given the lack of empirical studies directly testing the effect of experimentally manipulated cuteness on mentalizing, we have begun to test this hypothesis ourselves. Sherman and Chandler (2011) had participants view a slideshow of either baby animals or adult animals (these slideshows were matched for positivity) and then answer several questions about various anthropomorphic gadgets (e.g., the *scooba*, a robotic floor-scrubbing device). Participants were asked to predict how they might behave toward each gadget if they owned it. Compared to those who viewed the adult animals, those who had viewed the cuter, baby animals were more likely to say that they would anthropomorphize the gadgets (i.e., give them a name, talk to them, and refer to them using gendered pronouns).

This cuteness-triggered mentalizing may serve as a precursor to later compassion. Cuteness may set up social engagement— and the mentalizing that comes with it—so that later on, if the child is suffering or otherwise in need, others will be more likely to feel compassion and to act on the child's behalf. As a result, cuteness may indirectly promote the welfare of the child.

Emotion as Mediator?

An important but unresolved issue is whether the effects of cuteness on social engagement and mentalizing are mediated by emotion. To our knowledge, no studies of cuteness have taken an emotion-centered approach, assessing whether the cuteness response is characterized by coherent changes across multiple bodily systems such as facial expression, autonomic physiology, and phenomenology or whether such changes directly impact social engagement and mentalizing processes. Future research is needed to answer these questions. Nevertheless, whatever the specific role of emotion (and whether that emotion is distinct or consists only of general positive affect) we believe there is ample support for the claim that cuteness is an affective stimulus and that its effects on human cognition and behavior—however achieved—have important implications for morality.

Conclusion

The study of emotion and morality has generally focused on emotions that directly compel *specific* acts, such as moral outrage and its associated compulsion to punish or retaliate, or compassion and its associated compulsion to console and provide aid. But some moral emotions work by triggering broad shifts in behavior (Fredrickson, 2001), such as turning up or down general impulses toward sociality. These emotions do not

solve specific and immediate problems but solve the general issue of managing social ties in adaptive ways. Disgust and the cuteness response—by modulating social impulses in opposing directions—aid in the optimization of social relationships. For those who want to maximize caring, altruism, and prosocial behavior toward strangers and toward animals, it may be more effective to turn up sociality toward these entities first, before trying to get people to care about their suffering directly.

Notes

1   Empathy is not an emotion; it is a metacognitive ability to take another's perspective and then feel what the other feels. Compassion is a better term for being moved by another person's suffering and then wanting to help. See Haidt (2003b).

2   We see several promising approaches, including advertising one's mate value (e.g., parental fitness) and forging relationships with the child's kin. More generally, possessing a potent cuteness response would minimize the likelihood of behaving aggressively or carelessly in the presence of young children, thereby reducing the likelihood of eliciting aggressive, defensive responses from the child's parents/kin.

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