The Emotional Dog Does Learn New Tricks:
A Reply to Pizarro and Bloom (2003)

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D. A. Pizarro and P. Bloom (2003) argued against the social intuitionist model of moral judgment (Haidt, 2001) and for a modified rationalist model. This reply responds to their 2 main arguments by demonstrating that an intuitionist model allows for malleability and flexibility in judgment, and it allows for cases of moral deliberation.

A critique and reply are most productive when the authors on both sides share some areas of agreement and a sense of mutual respect. I am very fortunate that the present exchange seems likely to be productive.

Pizarro, Bloom, and I all agree on the big picture of moral psychology: The field badly needed updating. A field that was a major part of the cognitive revolution needed to be brought forward through the affect revolution of the 1980s and into the age of automaticity and dual process models that began in the 1990s (e.g., Bargh, 1994). We also agree with the insight of Nisbett and Wilson (1977) that people often do not know or cannot explain why they feel what they feel, but they frequently make up explanations anyway. Kohlberg's (1969) method of taking verbal justifications of moral judgments at face value is therefore suspect.

Pizarro and Bloom (2003), however, believe that I went too far in my updating (Haidt, 2001). They have defended a modified rationalist theory in which people have intuitions, but these intuitions merely serve as a "starting point for deliberative reasoning" (p. 194). In other words, it is "the rational dog that wags the emotional tail, not vice versa" (p. 194). Pizarro and Bloom made two major claims in support of this position: (a) Fast and automatic moral intuitions are shaped and informed by prior reasoning, and (b) people actively engage in reasoning when faced with real-world moral dilemmas.

To respond to these claims I would like to correct two common misunderstandings of the social intuitionist model. The first is that intuitionism implies that people are prisoners of their initial intuitions, unable to change their minds once they have taken a position. However, as I show, intuitionism allows for a great deal of malleability and responsiveness to new information and circumstances. In other words, the emotional dog does learn new tricks. The second misunderstanding is that intuitionism means that people do not have times of deep moral reflection.

Educating the Moral Intuitions

Pizarro and Bloom (2003) pointed out that emotions and intuitions depend on cognitive appraisals—on the facts that one believes about the case at hand. They pointed out that changing the facts of a situation (e.g., discovering that a student's absence was due to a death in the family) changes the emotional response and the moral judgment that one makes. The social intuitionist model is built on this insight, and the model is quite explicit that moral judgments change when a situation is suddenly viewed in a new light and new intuitions are triggered. But how does it come about that people experience new cognitive appraisals? Pizarro and Bloom suggested that this is a common occurrence in private deliberative reasoning. I can only refer again to the empirical research on reasoning, which shows that people rarely search on their own for evidence on both sides of an issue (Kuhn, 1991; Perkins, Farady, & Bushey, 1991). Rather, the social intuitionist model stresses the importance of social interaction as the best way to trigger new appraisals: "Ever since Plato wrote his *Dialogues*, philosophers have recognized that moral reasoning naturally occurs in a social setting, between people who can challenge each other's arguments and trigger new intuitions . . . " (Haidt, 2001, p. 820). It is noteworthy that the empirical studies of appraisal change that Pizarro and Bloom cited all involved participants being told by an external agent to take another person's perspective.

A second way in which Pizarro and Bloom (2003) suggested that intuitions are altered by reasoning is by second-order control strategies. Even if people cannot fully control their emotions in the moment of judgment, they can choose (rationally) to give themselves experiences that over the course of months or years will shape their intuitions and change their judgments. Again, I completely agree. The social intuitionist model says that deliberately socializing with people with particular values should over time change one's own values via both the reasoned persuasion link and the social persuasion link (see Haidt, 2001, pp. 819–822).

However, once again I believe that such deliberate efforts to go against moral intuitions are rare in practice. Pizarro and Bloom (2003) made the analogy to cases of conflict between first-order and second-order desires, for example, wanting to not want ice cream or a cigarette. But how often do such conflicts arise in people's moral lives? Does it ever happen that a person has the gut feelings of a liberal but a second-order desire to become a conservative? If so, the person could set out on a several-year program of befriending nice, articulate, and attractive conservatives. But are such cases common enough to support Pizarro and Bloom's modified rationalist approach? I believe such people are rare, and most of us would treat them with suspicion. Pizarro and Bloom dis-

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cussed a study by Rudman, Ashmore, and Gary (2001) in which Yale students who enrolled in a class on racism showed less implicit stereotyping at the end of the course. But how many of these people enrolled in order to exercise second-order control over their implicit stereotypes? I believe a greater attraction was the joy of morally meshing with other people who are outraged by racism. People rarely seek out challenges to their moral world-views, and a course on racism seems like an excellent place to avoid the threat of moral diversity (Haidt, Rosenberg, & Hom, in press). Secondary control strategies may be important in dieting and in smoking cessation, but I do not think they play a significant role in moral development.

The Scope of Moral Reasoning

Finally, Pizarro and Bloom (2003) argued that when we as researchers look outside the lab at people facing real-world moral dilemmas, we see clearer evidence of people using deliberative reasoning. It is certainly true that interviews with people facing gripping dilemmas, such as those conducted by Gilligan (1982) and Coles (1986), reveal people agonizing over a decision and fully aware of arguments on both sides. But what exactly can we infer about psychological processes from such studies? Do we know that the protagonists actively searched for arguments on both sides? Do we know that they made their decision by weighing the strength of the arguments and acting on their logical entailments?

The social intuitionist model easily handles such cases of moral agonizing, but it handles them in a different way from rationalist models. Real-world dilemmas involve real people with real claims on one's loyalties. These people cannot be ignored, and they make it difficult for one to simply endorse one solution and then close the case (as often happens with hypothetical dilemmas). A pregnant woman whose first concern is for her own future may want an abortion, but each time she sees or thinks about other relevant people (her partner, her parents, or babies that make her think of the fetus in her own womb) she may feel strong and conflicting emotions. Such a process is a kind of emotional deliberation, moving back and forth through the claims and perspectives of the parties involved. The social intuitionist model captures this process as repeated cycles through the main loop of the model, with different people triggering different and conflicting intuitions. The model also allows that such cycling can in theory happen in the privacy of one's own head (Link 6, the private reflection link; see Haidt, 2001, p. 819) as one spontaneously takes the perspective of others. But once again, we must ask: How common is this process?

I believe there is not at present evidence that would allow an answer to this question. Until somebody does the relevant beeper study I can only ask the reader to make a mental list of how many times he or she has agonized over a moral issue in the past year and has gone back and forth in his or her judgment. Now compare that with an estimate of the total number of moral judgments the reader has made in the last year while reading the newspaper, participating in gossip, or driving on roads surrounded by drivers less competent than oneself. My prediction is that for most people, the first number is less than one 100th of the second number. And even in cases that felt like deliberative reasoning, Nisbett and Wilson (1977) warned us that we may have just been making up reasons post hoc for the strong and conflicting intuitions that arose within us on both sides.

Conclusion

My article (Haidt, 2001) was written before the events of September 11, 2001. The attacks on the United States and the subsequent war in Afghanistan provided an opportunity to examine reasoning in the presence of strong gut feelings. Americans were faced with an urgent need to understand the motives and methods of terrorists and to reach decisions on a range of moral issues such as ethnic profiling, restrictions on civil rights, and the justifiability of civilian deaths in Afghanistan. How did Americans resolve these questions? Did they seek out evidence on both sides? Did they engage in role taking (Kohlberg, 1969), viewing the attacks from the attackers' perspective? No. For several months afterward, powerful emotions of horror and outrage made many Americans actively hostile toward anyone who engaged in role taking (e.g., the comedian Bill Mahar, who said on his television show *Politically Incorrect* that it was incorrect to call the terrorists cowards). In those difficult months, the social part of the social intuitionist model was very much in evidence as Americans sought to unite with each other in condemning evil, not to understand the real motives and causes of terrorism.

Pizarro and Bloom (2003) were correct that moral intuitions may in theory be a starting point in moral deliberations and that conscious moral reasoning can be used to build on those initial intuitions. I disagree, however, on how often this happens and therefore about whether moral reasoning is best modeled as the dog wagging an emotional tail or as the tail wagged by the emotional dog. I hope that we will work together to update moral psychology, and in the process, figure out how the dog works.

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