Making Values Explicit

On How We Are Moved to Do, Act, Care, and Change

By

Sue Spaid

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For my parents

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Acknowledgements

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Foreword

I first met Sue Spaid in my early twenties in my graduate program at Temple University. We were both there to earn our PhDs in philosophy. Sue, if I am remembering correctly, came into the program a year after me with the purpose of studying aesthetics, for which our department was well-considered at the time because we had faculty who I came to learn were big and important names in the philosophical subfield of aesthetics.

In most environments, I imagine that Sue stands out firstly for her playful sense of style: she can often be found in colorful skirts and tights and flats, sporting a whimsical accessory. Since ours was a program full of aesthetes, this notable characteristic was not what most stood out in our context. What stood out about Sue was not her adornment, but rather her age. Sue was the oldest graduate student in our program at the time—in some cases, older than the faculty who taught us in the program.

I share this not to be ageist, but rather to frame the rather unlikely context of our relationship. While Sue was the oldest person in the program, I was the youngest. Sue is white, I am Black. Sue's on the tall side, I'm on the short side. While Sue was bold and outspoken, I tended toward quiet receptivity in the classroom. While Sue courageously stood her ground on her ideas, I internalized professors' criticisms of my work as commentary on my worth as a philosopher. On top of this, Sue was known for offering unexpected and thought-provoking takes on ideas and life, which amused me. It was through observing her manner—the way she seemed unafraid to inhabit a sense of thrill and curiosity—that I imagine we began as acquaintances. It was not long before we were planning days to match

outfits and outings to see art. Over time, we developed a friendship that has lasted for nearly two decades.

When Sue asked me if I would write the foreword to her book, *Making Values Explicit: On How We Are Moved to Do, Act, Care, and Change*, I told her that I was concerned about being unqualified to write it, since I don't fully understand nor do I feel fully invested in the terms of the philosophical debates therein. While I will leave it up to my classmates to report about their time learning aesthetics at Temple, my main takeaway concerning the philosophical field of aesthetics was that, by and large, it was boring: rather than going about the business of illuminating the beautiful, it seemed mostly concerned with anaesthetizing it.

I learned the most about aesthetics during that time, not from being instructed on Kant's Third Critique or Schleiermacher's hermeneutics in class, but rather from my graduate school friends in Philadelphia: at "First Fridays" and museums and films and concerts and couches and bars, with Eric and Lior and Andy and Nik and Karl and Devon and Vince and Heather and Sunwoo and Joan and Joan and Walter and Greg and Frank....and, of course, with Sue. Through being with them; through following them around here and there; through listening to the experiences that led them to study philosophy and accompanying them in their hobbies and passions; through reading with them; through writing alongside and sharing that writing with them; through hearing the way they dissected the art they consumed; through listening to them order beer and meeting them in areas of the city I had never gone to before; through eating new foods with them at small hole-in-the wall restaurants; through going over to their houses to listen to transit radio and binge watch David Lynch DVDs; through shopping with them at antique and thrift stores, I learned

how to perceive, how to attend to what is considered beautiful, stirring, notable, instructive, and sometimes even ameliorative.

Among these experiences, I remember fondly Sue inviting me to see "Hovering Above," an environmental art exhibition she curated at the Abington Art Center from 2008-2009. Featuring the work of more than half a dozen artists who proposed to make hanging outdoor sculptures, "Hovering Above" was premised in part on the idea that "art's presence helps people develop skills that enable them to experience color relations, notice facial expressions, appreciate nature's details or discern relative distances."[1] As such, these "ascendant structures," all of them positioned within nature and many of them made from organic materials, challenged me to think about art in a new way for the first time. Much like Sue's contention that art can lead us to a reconsideration of our values, I found myself transformed by the experience of being led through outdoor spaces with Sue. What I might have otherwise understood as sticks in a forest suddenly became an opening to a changed understanding of my relationship to the *forest itself*.

In Chapter Seven of *Making Values Explicit* Sue draws the connection between curation and care, noting that "the word curator comes from the Latin verb *curare* (to care)" (149). In ascribing to an aesthetics of care, Sue illustrates how artists, gallerists, and curators alike might perform the role of reciprocal concern with wellbeing. Wellbeing, as defined by Sue, invites us to consider not only how we might mitigate our own precarity, but also how such mitigation must incorporate our communities and our environments. Sue argues throughout the text that values, not emotions (or norms or reason) are what guide beliefs. As such, more attention should be paid to the ways that our doings and beliefs point toward our values and how said pointing toward

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[1] https://www.mutualart.com/Exhibition/Hovering-Above/636CD4603223E390

might motivate us to change our values, and hence our doings and beliefs. This emphasis on values, as Sue notes, contests previous philosophical accounts, which emphasize the converse.

In the years that I have been friends with Sue, she has been my own curator of sorts, allowing me to benefit from her capacious consideration of what art is and what it does and the values it might cause us to reconsider and adopt anew. From introducing me to Duchamp's *Étant donnés: 1. La chute d'eau, 2. Le gaz d'éclairage (Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas)* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art to making sure I catch the Rothko Chapel at the Menil Collection in Houston, Sue embodies to me the connections among wellbeing, values, and identity.

One of the joys of reading *Making Values Explicit* is how Sue positions values as an everyday concern through her descriptive use of examples throughout the book. Sue's interest in values and their impact permeates her history. She writes of working on Wall Street, of teaching undergraduate philosophy students, of one's choice to drink soda at dinner, of the color loden, of visiting the Museum of Disgusting Foods, of her years in the art world in California, of the displeasures of an outing with a hangry loved one. It is clear that Sue is abreast of the relevant scholarship. But she does the reader a service by contextualizing her quotidian analyses within a deep account of the philosophical literature, allowing the reader to materialize the literature in a way that calls her to reflect on her own histories and values.

In developing an account of values, Sue partially relies on the work of sociologist and self-help guru Brené Brown, whose books like *Dare to Lead, Atlas of the Heart, The Gifts of Imperfection,* and *You Are Your Best Thing*, amongst others, have been staples on my bookshelves. Having spent a number of hours reading her books, completing her

worksheets, and listening to her podcast, I am familiar with Brown's call for us to do the work of identifying our own values. Sue shares in the Preface how imploring her students to approach reading and discussion through the lens of their values shifted the pedagogical landscape of her courses. She writes, "Suddenly, they were reading with a purpose. They realized that philosophy could mean something to them" (xxii).

Although Sue confesses that it took her many years to whittle Brown's list of over 100 values down to two, she does not share with us these values. In the way that values illustrate themselves through our beliefs, doings, and actions, Sue exemplifies this stance through her choice not to do so. If a book is an act, a doing, a display of care, then I imagine the reader is left to determine the author's values through the work. Or, perhaps more appropriately, you, reader, might engage in the relational work of asking her yourself.

You might also accept this text as an invitation to reflect upon, determine, and transform your own values.

While my complete list of values still numbers at five[2] (I have more whittling to do!), I close with what I consider to be one of my most important: gratitude.

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[2] The five, for now: awe, humor, integrity, gratitude, curiosity.

Preface

Man does not, cannot, live in a valueless world. —Alain Locke, 1935

No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions. —Aldo Leopold 1949

Sue, where are your values? —Penny Spaid

What one understands is one thing; what one values is something else. —Thomas E. Hill, Jr., 1983

We all do act to protect what we value. —Royston Holmes III, 1996

We have to ask [people] what their values are, what their priorities are, and what could lead people with such values and priorities to act in environmentally benign ways. —David Schmidtz, 2000

As vulnerable, needy subjects, operating in an open world and unable to predetermine much of what will happen, we are necessarily evaluative beings. —Andrew Sayer (2011, 53)

Living into our values means that we do more than profess our values, we practice them. We walk our talk - we are clear about what we believe and hold important, and we take care that our intentions, words, thoughts, and behaviors align with those beliefs. —Brené Brown, 2018.

Philosophy's Resistance to "Values Talk"

Making Values Explicit concerns grasping *how* we are motivated to do, act, care, and change. What motivates us to do anything? How do we discover our values and how do we discover whether our beliefs cohere with our values? Does changing our daily routines require us to first change our beliefs? Do changed beliefs entail new values or do we eventually realize that new beliefs are befitting of old values? How do our values accommodate our changed priorities?

While Robert Brandom's *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* focused on "certain kinds of implicit assessments that become explicit in language" (1994, 26), *Making Values Explicit: How We Are Motivated to Do, Act, Care, and Change* demonstrates how our actions make implicit values explicit. This book explores four kinds of values: 1) the singular noun which indicates worth, 2) the plural noun that refers to values found on Brené Brown's list, 3) evaluative adjectives such as "important," "disconcerting," "interesting," "preferable," or "invaluable," and 4) the verb for conveying the act of valuing something, someone, or someplace.

I worry that the fact/value distinction has led philosophers to ignore the relationship between self-knowledge and values. As Andrew Sayer points out, values are always about something, so values are built on evidence, which hardly makes them subjective (2011, 18). While people appear to select their values, values are not exactly the kinds of things we control. My choosing to be "ambitious" is insufficient to make me ambitious. Rather, we infer from our achievements that ambition must be important. Alternatively, those who find their ambitious pursuits intolerable (ambition stresses them out or it makes them arrogant/obnoxious) might try to tamp it down. The point is that values are based on both reason and evidence, so

they're hardly subjective. But of course, we may discover that our values are false and our resultant actions are contrary.

Philosophers who assume that descriptions are positive, and are thus explanatory, value-free, "world-guided," and objective, tend to dismiss evaluations as normative, and thus judgmental, value-laden, "world-guiding," and subjective (Sayer 2011, 41). Phenomenology arose to avail tools such as "bracketing" that guide us to be as value-free as possible. Sayer reminds us that even "[o]ur moral beliefs are directly or indirectly about matters of fact –the capacities and susceptibilities of our cultivated nature. Those facts about flourishing or suffering are what we seek to establish through moral evaluation" (259). Anticipating Sayer, Alain Locke identified the:

> flight to description and analysis [as] too analogous to science and too committed to scientific objectivism. It is impossible to reach such problems as we have before us effectively in terms of pure positivism, of the prevalent objectivism, or of the typical view that until quite recently has dominated American value theory, the view namely that end-values exist only in so far as values are rationalized and mediated by processes of evaluation and formal value judgments…. Added to this, is our characteristic preoccupation with theories of meaning limited practically to the field of truth and knowledge. (1991, 36-37)

My special insight here is the entanglement of values, personal identity, and wellbeing. As discussed in Chapter Six, actions that reflect our values affirm our personal identity and thus engender wellbeing, as opposed to illbeing. Suffice it to say that wellbeing is some combination of capacities and access that fulfills one's sense of agency. Actions driven by "what we value" affirm some combination of whom we care about, what concerns us, how we devote our efforts, and what keeps us engaged. Our preferences and tastes are

comparatively shallow, yet our values run deep, what Leopold characterized as "internal." As we shall see, an awareness of our values makes change possible.

Although philosophers use values to *evaluate* artworks (aesthetic value, artistic value, cognitive value, and ethical value), environments (conservation value, diversity value, ecological value, economic value, natural value, scientific value, spiritual value, and stability value), events (cultural value, religious value, social value, political value), things (extrinsic value, instrumental value, intrinsic value, personal-identity value), and knowledge (historical value, practical value, scientific value, theoretical value), they have been less than enthusiastic about treating values as the grounds for actions that engender wellbeing/illbeing and shape personal identities.

For example, the entry for "Value Theory" in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* makes no mention of identity, let alone personal identity, and wellbeing occurs only once. The entry's focus is rather "what things are good" and "how good they are" (Schroeder 2024). Having spent several decades as an art critic, I too am interested in evaluation, but what evaluators claim to value about artworks often reveals more about their values, so long as values cloud their perceptions and judgments. Evaluators filter aesthetic experience through their past experiences. Moreover, the entry for "Personal Identity" in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* makes no mention of values, save a passing reference to Peter Unger's book *Identity, Consciousness, and Value* (1990), whose focus is the perseverance of the self over time. Since value is singular, I assume it addresses worth, rather than identity-oriented values. The same goes for the encyclopedia's entries for "self-knowledge" and "action," so philosophers apparently care little about values. This dearth of interest in values persists, despite Locke's having remarked, "No

philosophy, short of the sheerest nominalism or the most colorlessly objective behaviorism, is so neutral that it has not some axiological implications" (1935, 35). He asked, "Do we say anything more other than that values are important and that American philosophy should pay more attention to axiology?" (Locke 1935, 37).

Of course, the notable exception to American philosophy's neglect of values is Helen Longino's feminist epistemology, wherein she argues that values, which she terms "theoretical virtues," underpin science, since they motivate and guide scientists' actions in a manner that is far from neutral, let alone objective. Longino distinguishes "feminist values in inquiry" thusly:

> The virtues I have discussed in this capacity include empirical adequacy, novelty, ontological heterogeneity, complexity or mutuality of interaction, applicability to human needs, and decentralization of power or universal empowerment. While empirical adequacy is held in common by feminist and non-feminist researchers, the remaining five contrast intriguingly with more commonly touted values of consistency with theories in other domains, simplicity, explanatory power and generality, fruitfulness or refutability. (1997, 21)

Not surprisingly, the entry for "Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science" in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* mentions "values" 86 times. "Value" singular appears another 40 times, while "virtue" appears only 30 times.

Values vs. Virtues

Although I defend the significance of values throughout, this book is neither a "self-improvement" book nor a new approach to ethics, say a Values Ethics proposed as an alternative to Virtue Ethics. I would

argue that "values ethics" is a misnomer, since acting on our values hardly ensures ethical action. Whether our actions are ethical is another story that cannot be evaluated in terms of values. What can be evaluated is whether our beliefs align with our values. Someone who claims to value "family," yet steals an iPad to provide their family a better quality of life has acted unethically. Doing something that puts one at risk of going to jail suggests that what they believe is right for their "family" is either a false belief or not what they truly value. Our values do not give us cover for our poor decisions and subsequent misdeeds. However, our not having a handle on our values puts us at risk of making mistakes, such that someone, if not ourselves, will suffer illbeing. Illbeing begs the question, "what went wrong?"

Self-knowledge regarding our core values exemplifies what Quassim Cassam terms *substantial* self-knowledge (2014, vii). Moreover, the process by which we achieve knowledge about our values grants us tools for assessing other people's values, thus giving us knowledge of others. Although Daniel Dennett doesn't mention values, his "intentional stance" such that we use practical reasoning to infer a rational agent's intentions from their beliefs and desires suggests that intentionality too is grounded in values, since values motivate beliefs and desires. To intend something at all rests on a prior value. Dennett describes "mind reading" as follows:

> Here is how it works: first you decide to treat the object whose behavior is to be predicted as a rational agent; then you figure out what beliefs that agent ought to have, given its place in the world and its purpose. Then you figure out what desires it ought to have, on the same considerations, and finally you predict that this rational agent will act to further its goals in the light of its beliefs. A little practical reasoning from the chosen

set of beliefs and desires will in most instances yield a decision
about what the agent ought to do; that is what you predict the
agent will do. (1989, 17)

I would counter that figuring out what desires others ought to have
requires either foreknowledge or some guesstimate of their values.

As noted above, I'm focused on the triangle between personal
identity, values, and wellbeing. Early in our lives, at least two if not
all three variables are unknown. That is, we don't yet know who we
are, what we value, and/or what makes us flourish, though most of us
begin at least with those values our parents instilled in us. How we
see ourselves or want to be seen influences our actions. We begin by
experimenting with whom we might be. We research potential
interests, hang with particular people, wear group-identifying get
ups, and try out various adornments, all for the purpose of
distinguishing ourselves as "me."

Identifying our values isn't so easy. I imagine there's too little "values
talk," since people don't want to come off as appearing too judgy. We
inevitably glean our values by reflecting on our actions. Finally
identifiable, our values are no longer implicit. Like Leopold, I credit
actions with values, so altered doings reflect either altered values
and/or new beliefs about how to apply our values. As we "try
out"/contest various values, we soon figure out how enacting them
makes us feel. Those that fit or feel positive affirm our identity. Sayer
terms this process "secreting values," as if values ooze out of whatever
description we choose. He remarks, "This is not to say that it is always
possible to decide which available way of framing issues is superior
in terms of its explanatory adequacy, but insofar as we can, the values
that it *secretes* [emphasis mine] should be preferred as they make more
sense in terms of human needs and wellbeing" (Sayer 2011, 56). To see
ourselves as y is to act on certain values that not only prove satisfying

to us (wellbeing), but they prompt others to see us as *y* (personal identity).

Wellbeing thus serves as a *metric* that indicates not only that our values and personal identity are aligned, but that our actions convey our values. The ancient Greek philosopher Democritus had a similar view, since he noted that certain actions, such as drinking too much, cause some people's soul atoms to become disordered, resulting in drunkenness. Illbeing indicates that either our personal identity and values don't cohere, or our values are erroneous.

Ever since Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, philosophers have paid far more attention to moral virtues than moral values, yet being virtuous is itself grounded in values, such as the value of "excellence" or the value to: be virtuous, live a virtuous life, exhibit character, have integrity, or be perceived by others as virtuous. One lives a virtuous life because one values doing so. Moreover, the value to live a virtuous life becomes part of one's personal identity, such that one seeks friends who share this value, lest one be steered in the wrong direction. Without the value to be virtuous, it would be impossible to value virtues, let alone attempt to abide by them. These days, one does not feel so pressured to live a virtuous life as I imagine religious people living in the 19th century did. Even students in the Catholic university where I taught Virtue Theory as part of an introductory philosophy course claimed not to know anything about virtues, though some said their grandparents might have mentioned something about it.

If one compares an online list of virtues to that of values, one finds some overlap in name, though not in technique or application. For example, the first ten virtues listed on the "List of 100 Virtues to Live By…" include "courage," "temperance," "liberality," "magnificence," "magnanimity," "ambition," "patience," "friendliness," "truthfulness,"

and "wit," yet only "courage," "patience," and "ambition" occur on Brown's list. One explanation for the lack of overlap is that the virtues list builds upon Aristotle's list. Virtues like "liberality" and "magnificence" feel antiquated, while Brown has reworded others as "generosity," "kindness," "honesty," and "humor."

There is, however, a major technical difference. Aristotle defined moral virtues as the mean between two vices, deficiency and excess, so courage is the mean between fear (cautious behavior) and confidence (rash behavior), thus virtue's metric is the "mean," not wellbeing. Moral virtue "is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and being praised and being successful are both characteristics of virtue" (Aristotle 1987, 38).

Taking a cue from the Buddhist "Noble Eightfold Path's" focus on right action, Aristotle noted, "Anyone can get angry –that is easy –or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for everyone, nor is it easy; wherefore goodness is both rare and laudable and noble" (38). Traits such as unjust, cowardly, voluptuous actions are deficits, whereas means like temperance and courage have neither deficit or excess (39). In Book II.7, Aristotle characterized temperance as lying between insensible and self-indulgence; liberality between prodigality and meanness; magnificence or liberal (small sums) between niggardliness and tastelessness and vulgarity, respectively; pride between "empty vanity" and undue humility; proper pride lies between ambitious and unambitious; whereas good-tempered lies between irascibility and an irascible sort (40-41).

Two millennia later, Immanuel Kant dug a hole in Virtue Theory. He worried that people who lack a "good will" twist their "talents of the

mind" into vices (Kant 1981, 7). In Chapter Nine, I express a similar worry that virtues can become vices.

Reading Philosophy with a Purpose

Tasked with the impossible job of teaching 2500 years of philosophy in one semester to undergraduates, I realized that nothing they were assigned to read resonated with them. To make philosophy come alive, I asked each student to select five values from Brown's online list of values. For their response papers, they had to first summarize the author's basic claim and then explain how this text either affirms or challenges their five values. Suddenly, they were reading with a purpose. They realized that philosophy could mean something to them. In fact, this is how most of us read philosophy. We look for ideas that either affirm/challenge our views or ideas that spark new directions. Interestingly enough, my students told me that they had never really thought about their values before. It was a Catholic university, so most of the students had attended parochial high schools. Values had been drilled into them, but what they were remained obscure. I imagine that this is the case for most of us, which explains why Brown's books and workshops are so popular, especially for large organizations like corporations and churches that assemble diverse groups with competing values. Such pluralist organizations are a far cry from mountain villages where people jointly protect their environment so as to preserve access to what matters most to them collectively.

As the above quote suggests, my mother talked a lot about values, though not about any one value, in particular. "Values talk" was simply her code for "do the right thing," such that we align our actions and thoughts with our beliefs, world-view, and upbringing. She may have naïvely expected me to adopt her values, but it didn't take long for her to figure out that my set naturally diverged from hers. We may

not share other people's values, but we cannot help but respect those whose beliefs, values, and actions cohere. Knowing whether our actions align with our values requires knowledge of our values. Discovering our values is a process all its own. Brown suggests that we select the two (from her list) that form a core part of our identity and thus offer us a "filter" for making decisions. It took me five years to whittle down her list of 117 values to just two.

On Acting Differently

After publishing four books on art and ecology between 2002 and 2015, I thought it might be interesting to work on environmental philosophy. I soon became fascinated by the data showing that climate-deniers have a better understanding of the evidence affirming climate change than climate-acceptors. For me, the fascinating philosophical question soon became what does it take to change people's minds? "How" can it be that knowledge matters so little? The question "why" isn't so interesting, since we assume that people change their minds when they recognize there's a benefit to doing so, such as having beliefs that align with their values. For some, this is more a psychological question than a philosophical question. So long as philosophers aim to influence people's actions, we ought to try to grasp what causes people to do things differently.

Unlike most contemporary philosophers who have spent their lives teaching students, I have spent most of my adult life in art exhibitions; either attempting to grasp unfamiliar artworks, engaging artists in the presentation of their artworks, interacting with curious spectators, or seated at my laptop writing about art. Over the years, I have witnessed a lot of changed attitudes, as particular artworks have prompted audiences to think differently. Artworks have expanded people's awareness of different people's values, across time and space. In light of my having observed art's impact, I felt I must have some insight

into what causes people's views to change, such that they start acting differently. I concur with Leopold that change requires people to modify their affections and convictions, or at least to bring their extant values into view, so that they realize their relevance. Chapter Four expands on this point as it explores how aesthetic values modify utility. Perhaps artworks unlock people's access to their affections and convictions, thus motivating change. I imagine artworks avail values people don't realize they uphold.

Since the millennium, the prevailing view has been that artworks cause people to change by triggering emotions. This view never sat well with me, largely because people definitely feel something, yet the related emotions fade as soon as their attentions are directed elsewhere. This can't be how artworks change people's behaviors. Not only are emotions fickle, but as Chapter Two demonstrates, contemplative viewers appreciate artworks, yet they lack emotional responses. For example, the emotions people feel while experiencing a minimalist sculpture are likely prompted less by the artwork, and more by memories of prior aesthetic experiences, which engenders connection. Familiar artworks tend to trigger more emotions than do unfamiliar artworks. No doubt, emotions *alert* us to what matters, positively and negatively. I attribute the popularity of the Emotion Inducing Theory, discussed in Chapter Ten, to the prevalence of technology available to study people's emotions, in particular efforts to understand which part of the brain particular activities activate. Moreover, the rise in research associated with cognitive science has shed light on the various external factors influencing ordinary perception, one of which is our emotions. For example, cognitive scientists tend to overemphasize the influence of negative moods on aesthetic experience. Luckily, mood doesn't matter at all.

Whatever causes people to change must take root and endure, despite people's shifting attentions. In 2015, I published my first environmental philosophy paper "Biodiversity as a Bio-Indicator for Cultural Diversity" in *Rivista di Estetica*. Looking back over that paper, I realize I was defending a preliminary version of this book's claim that we act on our values because doing so affirms our personal identities. One of that paper's three corollaries is "human beings who value their culture protect their natural environment" (2015, 122). Simply put, protecting our environment avails the natural resources needed to conserve the way of life that makes us "us," which includes our community's diet, language, rituals, and customs.

This adds personal identity to Holmes' view above. Agnes Callard calls this a person's ethical self. She adds, "When I speak of a person making profound changes to herself, I am talking about her changing her values" (Callard 2018, 33). For me, personal identity encompasses our *epistemic* self, not our *ethical* self. Perhaps people who routinely sleep in on Saturday mornings truly value "freedom." No doubt, some of us uphold values that are unethical. Moreover, if one is a value pluralist who expects people to uphold different sets of values, then linking our values to our ethics engenders ethical relativism, which is untenable.

Locke, whose view I discuss in the Afterword, considered values "imperatives of action and norms of preference and choice" (1991, 35). By contrast, Callard's notion of values has more to do with preferences, as in interests, than imperatives to act. For her, values change as our interests change. For me, values don't change so easily. Sometimes we change once we realize that our values extend to more cases than we previously imagined, such that our value for "family" extends to same-sex adoption. Climate change mitigation is largely a battle between those who value "wealth," "being the best," and

"power" and those who value "the environment," "future generations," and "stability," though both parties likely see eye to eye on "security," "health," and "family." Diplomacy, the art of bridging shared values, fosters what Schmidtz calls "environmentally benign" actions.

Chapter One
Actions, Core Values, and Personal Identity

This chapter introduces the Values Approach, which triangulates values, wellbeing, and personal identity. I also discuss the relationship between actions and reasons, beliefs, passions, and emotions; values and self-knowledge; as well as recent research indicating the entanglement of actions, values and personal identity. We may credit ourselves with forming our own values, but actual source inputs are rather vast and are often deceptive.

The Values Approach

This book's primary point is that values, personal identity, and wellbeing form a triad, such that people whose daily actions reflect their values not only bolster their wellbeing, but they take pride in living their personal identities. I begin this chapter by addressing the question of why so few philosophers address values. The simple answer is that values are extremely difficult to identify, pinpoint, measure, and discuss. So long as our values are implicit, we must look to our attitudes, beliefs, and actions, as well as those of other people in order to infer our values. Philosophers tend to focus on propositions, and thus privilege readily articulated intentions, attitudes, and beliefs, and more recently emotions (detected in labs) over values that unwittingly operate on a subconscious level.

Some consider "values talk" more appropriate for religion than philosophy. Moreover, values are personal, not public. Presumably, we know our values, but do we? And if we don't, how can anyone

else? Although our friends cannot know our values any more than they know our thoughts, those who witness our actions and decision-making processes gain a privileged vantage that lends them a special access to our values. From the onset, values talk seems like a muddled mess. But philosophy's project is to make true statements whose generalizability serves to clarify opaque points. In neglecting the role values play, philosophers have overlooked their causal implications and have passed on the chance to figure out how to make values explicit. Even if values can't be made explicit, we should at least be able to say something about our values and explain how they shape us and guide us to impact our world.

In defending values, Andrew Sayer points out, "The view of values as beyond reason is part of a whole series of flawed conceptual distinctions that obstruct our understanding of the evaluative character of everyday life: distinctions such as fact and value, is and ought, reason and emotion, science and ethics, positive and normative, objective and subjective, body and mind, animal and human" (2011, 4). I would add to this the view that even if: people's preferences are meaningless, our reasons don't explain our assessments, some of us lack emotional responses, and we lack access to our beliefs, we can still observe actions, whether our own or those of others. Sayer continues, philosophy "tends to value reasons and discourse over emotion, dispositions and the body, and to focus on individuals as rational, autonomous actors in abstraction from the social circumstances that influence who they are and how they think and act" (8). Our core values are the key to our social circumstances.

By values, I don't mean monetary worth or greatness, but actually the particular values that ground our everyday decision-making processes. For example, if our dining partner surprises us by ordering a sugary cola, rather than wine or water, while dining at a 3-star

restaurant, we might adopt cursory explanations: 1) since soda and water cost the same, one might as well get some "flavor"(and calories) for their buck, 2) it's a habit, 3) our dining partner is neither weight-conscious nor diabetes-prone, 4) our dining partner doesn't drink alcohol, or 5) our dining partner has a religious disapprobation. Of course, there are many more possible explanations than these, but these five do the trick for my purposes here. Not wanting to make rash assumptions about our dining partner's surprising selection, we inquire about it. While they can readily offer reasons that affirm/challenge #s 3), 4) or 5), their explanations for #s 1) and 2) likely occur pre-reflectively. That is, they are unlikely to mention either unless they're conscious that they're frugal or they recall having developed this habit years ago while living on a tropical island where people generally drank refreshing sugary colas on ice with meals while dining out.

Once our dining partner articulates their reasons, can they also identify whatever values drive said reasons? Are reasons readily reducible to values? Perhaps we go the other way around: we offer reasons that support our values. No doubt, whatever reasons our dining partner gives matter deeply to them and reflect something they want us to know about them and are not too embarrassed to share. That something depends on their values, even if they cannot articulate the values in question. On another point, this suggests that reasons are a kind of self-narration. We construct narratives of our choosing in order to frame our actions in light of how we view our actions and how we want others to view them. Consider the following five reasons, each of which renders a different self-image: 1) I am money-conscious, 2) I have unusual preferences, 3) I like to enjoy life, 4) I'm abstentious, or 5) I observe religious taboos. These self-images provide reason enough, but they are not values, though a value from Brené Brown's list (2000) underlies each reason: 1) thrift, 2)

uniqueness, 3) leisure, 4) self-discipline, and 5) spirituality, respectively.

Such values don't just apply to this singular event, the 3-star meal accompanied by a cola. Actors regularly enact their core values, no matter how divergent the activity; whether they're shopping, planning a vacation, carrying out research, hanging with friends, performing professional duties, engaging family members, cleaning their house or their car, etc. Crazier still, our implicit values are no less significant than our explicit ones. So long as we remain unaware of our values, we don't consider their origins, persistent influence, broad applications, or potential harms. As a result, we may be at risk of perpetuating harms. If we remain clueless about what motivates our actions, we are likely to act on false beliefs.

Values, Reasons, and Beliefs

We think we value fairness until someone points out that our actions aren't fair at all. Thanks in part to the influence of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, public health officials reframed fairness for national emergencies such as pandemics, such that the worst-off are guaranteed a fair deal. Previously, "first come first serve" was the norm, but the vulnerability of the elderly and people with co-morbidities necessitates their being given priority. Although fairness is no less a value today than it was before, the belief regarding what fairness entails has changed, enabling more lives to be saved. In light of the finite supply of ventilators, intensive-care beds, and vaccines, first come, first serve was no longer considered fair. Public health thus prioritizes those demographics that are either more in need or more at risk.

Imagine all five values above (thrift, uniqueness, leisure, self-discipline, and spirituality) befitting one person, enabling them to