REVIEW OF *FEELING LIKE IT* BY TAMAR SCHAPIRO

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The sense of *feeling like it* that concerns Tamar Schapiro in this stimulating book is that of inclination: of feeling like a drink, of feeling like giving up, of feeling like staying home on a rainy evening when there is something urgent that needs doing. Her focus is on 'the moment of drama' when we are influenced by such inclinations, and have to choose whether to act on them or not: whether to take the 'high road', where we resist, or the 'low road' where we succumb.

Shapiro characterizes the relevant inclinations by means of three features (p.31):

> (i) inclinations are non-voluntary, at least in terms of immediate control (though you may, over time be able to cultivate which you have);
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> (ii) inclinations give a provisional directive about what to do;
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> (iii) it is easier to go along with this directive than to resist it.

As she sees it, there have been two traditional accounts of these inclinations. One, the 'brute force view', treats them simply as external forces that act upon us. For Schapiro, this position works as a foil, since she thinks that no serious thinker has actually held it. The traditional alternative Schapiro terms the 'practical thinking view'. This is bound to be an inclusive approach, given the wide range of thinkers that Schapiro wants to place in it, but the central idea is that the inclination works through, rather than against, your practical thinking: in some sense the decision to yield to the inclination is the upshot of that reasoning. I wasn't entirely convinced that this class should be as inclusive as Schapiro makes it. For instance, her reason for including Hobbes is that he held that all action must start with the imagination (pp.58–9). But all that Hobbes means by this is that we have a representation of the thing that we desire. Our desires are thus *targeted*, unlike, say, digestion or the circulation of the blood; but shouldn't they be understood as targeted brute forces? There is not much practical *thinking* there. Perhaps the point is largely terminological, but it does put pressure on the issue of quite how we should understand the thinking that is involved in practical thinking.

Schapiro seeks a via media between these two traditional approaches. Or, more accurately, since the account she proposes still involves practical thinking, she seeks a path that denies that practical reasoning is monistic. Instead she wants to distinguish between the deciding mind and the instinctive mind or as she more colourfully characterizes it, between your deciding mind and your 'inner animal'. It is the inner animal that is providing the inclinations.

Of course there are well-known precedents here: in Plato's allegory of the two horses pulling the chariot in the *Phaedrus*, one of which is virtuous, but one of which is wilful and needs to be controlled by the charioteer; and, in much recent popular science, the idea of the lizard brain, itself a simplification of Paul MacLean's idea of the triune brain. Schapiro gives little space to Plato, and her approach is certainly not much influenced by any scientific findings; in fact she denies that science can give the kind of approach that she is after (pp. 20, 42). What is distinctive and interesting about Schapiro's approach is the development of the inner animal view within what she sees as a broadly Kantian perspective. The aim there is to provide 'a guiding conception' of what we are doing. She does not aim, as science does, to 'explain what happens when someone reasons', but rather to gives you 'a conception of what you are doing under which you value doing it'. (pp. 21–2).

What makes these *animal* inclinations? The approach here, following Korsgaard, is resolutely a priori. To a first approximation, animal inclinations — i.e. non-human animal inclinations — involve seeing the world in terms of possible responses: food calls out to be eaten, and so on. The response here is 'intelligent', and not purely automatic: eating the food is not the same as salivating. Readers may be reminded of the idea of an affordance, and there is, later in the book, a footnote to Gibson. But the idea is not quite the same. Schapiro doesn't want these to be simple affordances to action; rather, she wants them to be affordances that fail to distinguish the object that has the affordance, from the affordance itself. The object is seen simply as part and parcel of the affordance. The chocolate cake is not seen as a cake that has 'to-be-eatenness'; all one sees is, as Schapiro puts it, a case of 'chocolatey-to-be-eatenness' (p. 112).

This idea of the disappearing object is striking, but it gets little defence; I worry that it raises more problems than it solves. For a start, it would be good to know if this really is distinctive of non-human animal cognition, but Schapiro disavows any empirical investigation there (p.95). More substantially the idea that the object should be absorbed into the affordance—that the cake becomes simply chocolatey-to-be-eatenness—doesn't seem to allow Schapiro to make much sense of the idea that the same thing might call, at the same time, for contrary responses: that the dead body might be both fascinating and repellent, that it might be both 'body-to-be-ogled' and 'body-to-be-avoided'. When Plato introduces such a case in the person of Leontius, he makes it a struggle between inclination (ogle) and spirit (avoid); but in Shapiro's simpler framework, it looks a struggle between two different animal inclinations: there is, quite immediately, both the fascinated inclination to look, and the disgusted inclination to turn away. Whatever it was that Plato thought about Leontius (that is controversial), it seems as though all this could happen at the level of inclination, without reason getting much of a look in: it is inclination that is simultaneously pushing us in both directions. It is crucial to the nature of such ambivalent animal responses—and they are surely much more commonplace than this extreme example suggests, as seen, for instance in the ambivalence of much sexual desire—that they are contrary responses to *the very same thing*. If, on Schapiro's account, the animal mind does not distinguish the thing

from the response it is hard to see how that can be so. Nor will it help to say that there is a single inclination to look and not look, for, as we saw in the second clause of the initial characterization, it is part of the nature of an inclination that it gives us a provisional directive on *what to do*, and an inclination to look and to turn away does nothing to provide that.

Of course one approach here would be to follow Plato, and to think that there is, so to speak, more than one kind of animal response: inclination and spirit say. It's unclear though whether that would provide a general response to the problem posed by ambivalence: it seems plausible that we might come up with cases of ambivalence *within* the same kind of response. Nevertheless the idea is interesting in itself, and in one of the final sections of the book, Schapiro extends her discussion to cases of weakness of will that do not involve the triumph of inclination over reason, but that should be understood in another way. These cases involve what she calls 'social pressure'. Actually there are several different sorts of cases discussed, though Schapiro tentatively suggests that they might be handled together. The first are cases of automaticity or routine. Schapiro illustrates these with Davidson's example of incontinent tooth brushing: comfortably settled in bed, he raises himself to brush his teeth when he realises he has forgotten to do so, even though he judges that it would be better to skip it this time. That is a rather complicated example of an automatic act—it is exactly because Davidson's routine of brushing his teeth before bed has failed that he needs to raise himself, so it is something like the belief in the importance of the routine, rather than the routine itself, that gets him to move. But there are plenty of other more straightforward cases of routine overcoming reason, as when an agent unthinkingly reaches for the very thing cigarettes they have just resolved to give up.

The second case that Schapiro discusses, elaborating on a passage from Kant, involves the unsatisfactory nature of a naughty schoolboy being simply told to imitate the behaviour of a good one. The third is of Sartre's waiter who, over eager, over solicitous, is 'playing at being a waiter in a café'. The fourth is of 'the banal forms of evil with which Hannah Arendt and Stanley Milgram were centrally concerned'. Clearly there are a wealth of cases here, all of which can be understood as involving something like weakness of will, and Shapiro is not purporting to give a full account of them. They are primarily there, as mentioned, to show that not all cases of weakness of will involve the triumph of inclination over reason. But they raise the worry of what the bounds of inclination are, and of whether it is really a uniform category. Is it obvious that Davidson lacks an inclination to get up to brush his teeth?[1] Is it obvious that Sartre's waiter lacks the inclination to act his part? And within the class of inclinations, are there fundamental divides: should temptation be understood along the same lines as fear? Should addictive temptation be understood along the same lines as more regular cases? Some may be more animal like than others.

[1] Contrary to what Schapiro says, he actually presents his example not as one to show that weakness of will need not involve inclination, but as one that doesn't involve morality: it sits outside 'the moralist's concern that our sense of the conventionally right may be lulled, dulled, or duped by a lively pleasure.'

We might get some way in answering these questions by examining the phenomenology: fear, for instance, is often paralysing in a way that desire is not. However, this is one place where Schapiro's refusal to look at the science feels like a liability. It may be right that science by itself cannot give a guiding conception of how we act, one that characterises our actions in such a way that we value what we do. But it can surely give us some guidance on how to understand the terrain.

The culmination of the book is an account of what it is to give into our inclinations, to take the low road. Clearly these are people moved by their inner animal. But there is much more to Schapiro's account than that. She holds that those who take this road are 'acting without really doing anything' (p152). They do not really do anything because they flee from their freedom into their animality (ibid). Or, at least, this is how the actors think of it; but since it is impossible to truly become a creature of instinct, they are mistaken; more than that, Schapiro insists, they are self-deceived (p.153). Again this has its antecedents in Plato, but in the Plato of the *Protagoras* or the *Meno* rather than the *Phaedrus*.

Why does it have to be this way? The insistence that there is self-deception here could do with some more motivation, at least for those not antecedently convinced of the Kantian position. Once we take seriously the idea of the inner animal, why not think that we can yield to it in full knowledge that that is what we are doing? To fix ideas, suppose your inclination were not an inner animal but an outer one. Suppose indeed that it were another person. The two of you have radically opposed views on what to do. In the end you give in, not because you see something good in what they are proposing, or even something good in conceding, but because you are exhausted, and you simply can't be bothered fighting any more. It is easier to go along with their directive than to resist it. You might well self-deceive: you might rationalize that it does the relationship good to let them have their way sometimes, or something similar. But this is far from essential. You might instead simply resign yourself to the fact that you could have been, should have been, stronger; but you were weak. You took the easier, lower, path.

If this is so with an external animal, why can't it be so with an internal? Why can't we yield to the inner animal, perhaps with a feeling of guilt or shame, but with the full knowledge that that is what we are doing? That is, after all, what people often say when they take the low road: that even as they were doing it, they knew this was the wrong thing to do. Schapiro holds that 'your deciding mind needs the guidance of a form of thinking that your instinctive mind cannot offer' (p. 155); but that is just to repeat the insistence that it can only respond to guidance understood in that way. Of course, to reject this violates the Kantian approach with which Schapiro started. If we knowingly give in to the inner animal in this way, we do not act under a conception of what we are doing under which we value doing it. But so much the worse, one might think, indeed this reviewer tends to think, for that approach. The Kantian approach has its plausibility if our practical reasoning is monistic, but that appeal is much diminished if we posit something like an inner animal. It is part of what is attractive about the inner animal approach that it makes clear-eyed

weakness of will possible, so that we can act without valuing what we are doing. It is a testament to the strength of Schapiro's articulation of the inner animal account that it brings this out so clearly.