

are left for others to explore, perhaps within larger commitments to the nature of emotions more generally.

When Kelly turns to the applied ethical significance of disgust (137), his arguments are short and unlikely to leave the opposition feeling fully engaged. Some have argued that the widespread disgust at the genetic modification of people, or homosexual sex, is a source of legitimate moral insight. Kelly counters that, given the nature of the disgust system as one that is crudely designed to protect us from poisons and parasites, disgust should never be taken seriously in considering the morality of particular behaviors (146–52). Not considered is the possibility that our specifically moral disgust, although socially honed, is wise exactly because of the way in which it has been socially honed. (Our pretheoretical moral beliefs are largely, if not wholly, socially honed. Does that mean we cannot start considering the morality of particular behaviors using those beliefs? Surely not.) Although I think Kelly's conclusion is largely correct, there was room for a deeper engagement.

Yuck! is divided between a longer, empirically driven investigation into the nature and evolutionary history of disgust and a shorter, armchair investigation of the moral significance of the results of the former investigation. I have just been complaining of some of the weaknesses of the latter, but I want to conclude by emphasizing again the virtues of the former. It is a rare experience in philosophy to think that you more or less understand some part of the human mind, only to read a work that undoes your complacency and then provides an utterly satisfying replacement theory. *Yuck!* is the sort of book easily devoured over a long afternoon and digested slowly thereafter as one comes to appreciate its insights more and more. If it leaves a good deal of work left to be done by ethicists who now have a better understanding of disgust, then at least it provides a clear, and perhaps actually correct, starting point for this work.

TIMOTHY SCHROEDER
Ohio State University

Larmore, Charles. *The Practices of the Self*. Translated by Sharon Bowman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Pp. xvii+198. \$35.00 (cloth).

This work is a major contribution to the philosophy of person in a genre going back through Frankfurt and Sartre and other existential thinkers to Fichte, along with the French moralists. As Charles Larmore's title implies, it defends a conception of practical identity (in Christine Korsgaard's sense), in contrast to a self as a preexisting "true" character that only needs to be discovered within, or a "featureless substrate that endures over time" as a pure container for thoughts (172). Instead, a "self" is constituted by a "practical self-relationship" that marks all our beliefs, desires, emotions, and other psychic states (78–79, 130); this is a "fundamental self-relation" that runs through "a chain of thoughts and actions" that are "linked together by the reasons they dispose me to follow" from moment to moment (173). This account is indebted to Paul Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another*, which is discussed in detail, and arguably thereby also to

Heidegger (but Larmore focuses on French sources). Larmore affirms the existential formula that a self "only exists through committing itself and thus projecting itself into the future" and Ricoeur's thesis that this self-constitutive basic loyalty to oneself has a "narrative" structure, although its continuities are usually localized and fragmentary rather than unified by a single "quest" (174–75).

There are also evident similarities between Larmore's account and Korsgaard's analysis of "self-constitution" via the unity of reasons (theoretical and practical) that one acknowledges and maintains. Larmore's book first appeared in French in 2004 and thus was presumably composed around the same time as Korsgaard's *Locke Lectures*—and Larmore's analysis of reasons develops themes already introduced in his *The Morals of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, esp. chap. 5). But Larmore's view is clearly distinguished from Korsgaard's and Sartre's (which is discussed in detail) by his cogent arguments that reasons which hold together a self (92) cannot get their normative force merely from the agent's choice or endorsement (95) but require an authority that comes from the apparent objective worth of their objects. Like Gary Watson, Eleonore Stump, Susan Wolf, and others, he also rightly applies this modification to Harry Frankfurt's account, noting that a second-order desire (or volition) only has the requisite authority if it "embodies an evaluation of the desires to which it refers" (98). Larmore might have clarified this by referring to Charles Taylor's concept of "strong evaluation," but he obscures Taylor's distinction by arguing that all desires involve a normative element. His account is notable for this detailed "Normativist Conception of the Mind" (chap. 4), his related reconstruction of "first person authority" (chap. 5), and his sustained critique and reconstruction of "authenticity" ideals (chaps. 1–3). I begin with brief comments on the narrative account of chapter 7.

Although Larmore's version of narrative identity is plausible, he leaves it unclear how different "strands" of action can form parts of a single life: given that they have distinct goals (175), why do they not form different selves, unless there is an underlying unity of consciousness not constituted by shared ends or reasons? Similarly, while Ricoeur is correct to say that the possibility of my coinciding with a future person depends on whether there is a "series of commitments" that could make sense of a development from my present orientations to this future configuration (174), it seems implausible that I retrace such developments "in a flash" when involuntarily recalling a very different weave of interests, concerns, beliefs, and ways of being that were mine in a far past (176). Larmore is more convincing in his argument that it may be a mistake to try to control the whole course of one's life through a "life plan" since much of value in life depends on surprise (179–81). He raises interesting questions about the value of reflection on the whole course of one's life, given the limits to our agendas and the need for openness to the unexpected (178–85). Yet some perspective on one's life as a whole must be possible if the unity of practical identities over time has a narrative form. Larmore is surely correct that our affinities which interact with perceived objective goods to give us personal reasons "change over the course of our lives" (189), but that is at least partly because of acts of "will" or explicit resolves to follow certain norms (as Larmore admits: 173–74). Without this distinctive type of commitment, arguably we cannot ex-

plain narrative continuity across more dramatic changes in character traits or distinguish between narrative unity of the sort constitutive of selves in general and stronger forms of narrative unity associated with personal autonomy.

However, Larmore usually uses "commitment" in a much broader sense that allegedly applies to all mental states. Beliefs are not images or ideas felt with a certain vivacity, or acts of accepting propositions, but are instead dispositions with practical implications: behavior that expresses the belief "has to be such that the belief would have provided the individual a reason to act this way" (77–78). Similarly, following Scanlon, Larmore holds that "every desire represents its object as something there is a reason to pursue" (78), even if it is easily outweighed. This claim is more troublesome because we experience some appetites without thinking that there is anything that would count in favor of the desire's object before our attraction toward it. Their psychological *dynamics* can also persist even when we believe that the apparent reason to which such desires respond is illusory, as the case of Swann's love shows (182). These brute preferences or inclinations give us at best disjunctive reasons to satisfy them or to eliminate them (Mark Murphy, *Natural Law and Practical Rationality* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 75)—and this weak reason to satisfy them can thus be rejected outright rather than merely outweighed. That is exactly what distinguishes desires and emotions that involve strong evaluations: these motives respond to reasons that appear normative independently of being desired. Even if desires are bound up with beliefs given the wholism of the mental (92, 102), it does not follow that in every desire the "person obligates himself to behave, all else being equal," in ways that accord with "the value accorded to the object of desire" (80)—as if a person who had no other desires but this one would rationally *have* to act according to it.

In fact, Larmore goes further, suggesting that beliefs and desires suffice by themselves to explain action without any "additional act of will . . . to decide to carry out" the prospective act they indicate (103)—as if beliefs and desires also psychologically necessitate actions that express them unless the reasons they embody are overridden by others. On the contrary, many recent thinkers (Kane, Korsgaard, Mele, Pink, etc.) have argued that beliefs and desires do not add up to an actual intention to act: we must instead form an intention to act on them. This much must be conceded, even if we reject multiple recent arguments that intention formation is itself an voluntary process that we control (i.e., a volitional process). On this basis, Larmore could have held that even "surd" wants (as MacIntyre once called them) have normative significance through presenting themselves as motives that could be taken up or embodied in an intention. Intentions clearly involve their own kind of commitment with normative significance (as analyses by Bratman and others have shown)—although this is commitment only in a weak sense since an intention may be coerced, driven by alienated desires (as in compulsive disorders), or just weak-willed. So it is distinct from the higher kind of agentic commitment involved in personally autonomous intentions.

Yet Larmore also suspects the ideal of personal autonomy underlying the constricted view of the mind as a "mirror of the world"; he thinks it encourages the idea that we have to endorse or decide to adopt any "element of good or bad" or criterion found in the world before it can move us (104). But, while

Larmore offers ample reasons to reject this view of the mind as essentially disengaged before its choices or endorsements, neither this disengaged view nor the suspect "specular model" of the mind in general follows from the more modest thesis that decision has a unique role to play in our agency—for decisions may always respond to considerations that are either apprehended as normative or potentially action guiding before we are intentionally committed to them, or to considerations that are dependent on past decisions (to which this same condition applies together with a ban on infinite regresses). Similarly, we should not construe "autonomous" decision or action as completely independent of all prior reasons or even of the community of language speakers in relation to which our thoughts have meaning (105). This is a straw man version of autonomy that goes beyond even Stoic autarky to total solipsism—as if Sartrean arbitrary choice were the only way to explain the concept of self-determination or deep responsibility for one's character. Nor need Kant's conception of autonomy imply that the world or order of reality itself cannot contain any normative facts (107), although it has sometimes been misread that way. Instead it may simply mean that distinctively moral norms are not essentially coercive—that right is not mere might—because they fit our fundamental nature as beings capable of making decisions in response to the other nonmoral normative aspects of reality that Larmore calls a "third ontological order" in addition to physical and psychological facts (126). Kant does not hold that our rational assent to moral norms is optional; it is implicit in what we are. Thus, autonomy does not entail any kind of "constructivism" that Larmore rejects (76, 107). Moreover, a conception of autonomous motivation and intention could be derived from his own rich account of self-reflection in general as an effort to reunify ourselves (83–86) and practical self-reflection "where one sets oneself to making one's commitments one's own" (87), which implies higher-order will. Instead, Larmore interprets this as part of "authenticity" and thus runs these concepts together.

That said, Larmore's chapters 1–3 provide many interesting insights on authenticity, which he regards as an "emblem of the self" or window onto the self-relation that constitutes selves (63)—or what Heidegger would have called a clue to the structure of Dasein as "care" (Larmore notes the similarity: 65 n. 5). He has in mind not the technical sense that "authenticity" has acquired in recent analytic theories of autonomy but the existential sense of authenticity as a kind of originality involved in self-realization or becoming of the distinct individual one was 'meant' to be. He defines this phenomenon to be explained as being "fully or purely oneself" (7) or "fully oneself without taking on the viewpoint of others" (64). Neither of these seems quite adequate as an initial characterization of the *analysandum*, though, because the self that one fully is might be utterly superficial or shallow, while the idea that "the true self" will "forgo all concern about what others would think" may be stronger than the relevant kind of originality requires. Yet it must be more than just thinking critically for oneself too. It is hard to give a useful initial outline of this phenomenon, as distinct from a particular conception or account of it.

Larmore critiques several familiar conceptions of authenticity. He argues that the effort to "become one" with one's "intimate core" is self-defeating because recognition of this state would undo it (8). He also argues that the romantic idea of discovering a "true self" that "one is already" at heart without

influence from others (9) is impossible—not only because such a union with “our inner core” could only be a by-product of other pursuits (17) but also because even our most original inspirations “take shape within a community” (34); we are essentially mimetic beings all the way down (34). Since I cannot do justice to these fascinating arguments here, I will simply register four quick reservations.

First, it is not clear that Larmore’s evidence for mimetism (chap. 2) shows anything more than Charles Taylor or Wittgenstein have argued concerning meaning in general: our efforts to shape a practical identity must employ a shared language (32). That deliberation by reflection “consists in comparing ourselves to someone else” only seems evident if it amounts simply to Mead’s or Habermas’s point that reasons are dialogical or intersubjective (41), which Larmore repeatedly affirms (34). The thesis becomes dubious if instead it means that all persons are primarily motivated by tuitive motives such as envy, desire for status, or comparative advantage or that our achieving reputation in the eyes of others is fundamental to us, as Larmore’s examples often suggest (31, 46). Second, following “models” need not amount to “heteronomy” (35) since all plausible conceptions of personal autonomy admit sources of agentive capacities that influence a child in her upbringing without her choosing them; these are the educative processes that enable self-determination to start. Third, the theory of mimetism that Larmore reconstructs from René Girard seems to make any radical innovation in the history of ideas impossible. How then could the Troubadours have introduced the concept of romantic love (35)? How could cultures grow or develop if nothing is not copied from the past? Fourth, rejecting a latent self that subsists “deep inside us . . . unsullied by all that we have borrowed from others” (37) implies that unreflective emoting and action (or ‘flow’) is not more likely to constitute an experience of “being wholly ourselves” (55). Yet Larmore retains a version of Stendhal’s idea that completely unreflective experience is more “natural” (27) and provides one kind of authenticity since it leaves out the perspective of others that reflection always brings (64). This negative definition does not allow us to distinguish authentic spontaneity from merely careless or thoughtless ways of being that Kierkegaard called “aesthetic” to emphasize their inauthenticity.

Still, Larmore’s critique of Stendhal leads him to argue that there is an authentic form of reflection that reveals the ultimately practical nature of the self-constitutive relation: “at bottom the self relates to itself by way of *committing itself* and not by way of any kind of knowledge” (65). He argues convincingly that “avowals” in which we “resolve to better respect our conception of ourselves” or to act more in accordance with our highest priorities and values are a practical form of self-reflection (111) that does not aim at self-knowledge. Sydney Shoemaker, Richard Moran, Elizabeth Anscombe, and others come close to recognizing this but lapse back into the notion of a special kind of self-knowledge (124–26). Instead, avowals are “attestations” in Ricoeur’s sense, in which I affirm “my commitment to respect the implications of what I declare I believe or desire.” These are not states of knowledge but consist instead in “our taking a stand” (128).

Although this account is promising, I see three problems or issues needing clarification in it. First, while insisting that their function is not cognitive, Lar-

more describes such avowals as “an exercise of practical reflection” (128). This suggests that it is by a kind of thought that someone deliberately commits herself or takes “responsibility for what she is doing” (68). It would be clearer to say that this is a process of will that sets new final ends or shores up motivation to follow intentions already formed. Luther may have performed an act of practical reflection in “expressing his resolution to pursue the path on which he had set out” (63), but the resolution in which he took his stand and set his personal policies was not itself constituted by the reflective expression of them. Larmore’s account misses what I have called the “projective motivation” function of willing that Ricoeur at least implicitly recognizes. He does such a good job of arguing that the constitutive self-relation is not a “cognitive” or knowledge-aimed relationship (131) that he does not draw key distinctions between different practical or “performative” operations of mind (134). However, perhaps the problem is simply that Larmore’s terminology reflects his aversion to any “acts of will” distinct from beliefs and desires, as we saw above. For, in arguing that the object of practical reflecting is “in no way cognitive,” he briefly distinguishes it from *practical reasoning* in which we “conclude that certain actions are obligatory, permissible, or prudent” (70). While practical reasoning is cognitive and aims at objective correctness in judgment, practical reflection instead aims at “an explicit intention to do this or that” (71)—which sounds like Aristotle’s concept of *prohairesis* (usually translated as rational “choice”). Why not then recognize that such an intention-forming process normally mediates between belief-desire sets and the intentions that express them?

Second, what is the relation between practical “reflection” (or decision) and practical reasoning? While no one can choose or avow for me, my reflective avowal must respond to what I take to be reasons, as Larmore’s argument about grounds of commitment contends—and so it cannot “dispense” entirely with reference to others (65). Thus, the authenticity found in practical affirmation or attestation cannot be an experience of complete independence from others (my choice must in principle be intelligible). And so the “irreplaceable nature of each individual life” seen in authentic self-relation (55) cannot be defined negatively as an exclusion of other perspectives: it must instead depend on the energy, effort, or initiative in avowal.

Finally, it remains unclear how the explicit commitment that I compared to *prohairesis* relates to the nonreflective level at which commitment still operates in any particular direction of action, even in “letting oneself go in a flight of passion” (64). As I suggested, it seems that the “commitment” necessarily found in spontaneous or unreflective action or omission is no more than the weak endorsement of some reason implicit in any intention, including those of wautons and unwilling addicts. Arguably then, authenticity in actions involving no explicit practical reflection would depend on their being guided by the deeper kind of commitment formed by explicit avowals, in which the more generic type of commitment is made “one’s own” in the deeper sense.

In sum, this is one of the most important books on selves or the practical side of personhood in the last decade. It is also well written; the particular arguments are virtually always clear, and it is not too hard to keep track of their role within the larger argument of the book. Some portions rise to an almost literary style and provide a rich survey of key ideas in twentieth-century French

philosophy, while others engage quite originally with scholarship in moral psychology and theories of self-knowledge that will be more familiar to analytic readers. This work also complements the more detailed ethical theory on Larmer's other books. Despite its relative inattention to volitional aspects of practical identity, and some questionable moves in the critique of authenticity, then, this work is still highly recommended.

JOHN J. DAVENPORT
Fordham University

Shapiro, Ian. *The Real World of Democratic Theory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011. Pp. 291. \$75.00 (cloth).

Early in his book, Ian Shapiro comments that "its chapters detail elements of a comprehensive democratic account of public institutions" (11). Rather than laying out that comprehensive account in any systematic way, however, Shapiro prefers to illustrate some of its features in eight freestanding chapters on very specific topics. The chapters are refreshingly concrete, packed with information, and yet rather disparate when considered as a whole. The result is a book with remarkable range, but one that may frustrate readers struggling to discern the exact contours of Shapiro's underlying conception of democratic institutions amid the rich detail provided in the individual essays.

The book's overall theoretical orientation, however, is clear enough. Shapiro is determined, in particular, to resist two tendencies that he thinks exert a disturbing influence on contemporary reflection about democratic politics. The first is exemplified by a cluster of liberal and libertarian views that frequently, although according to Shapiro wrongly, claim Locke as their hero. These positions, he complains, fixate on individual consent rather than majority rule as the prime condition for the legitimate exercise of political power. Shapiro links such "liberal" positions with a variety of other views that he thinks of as anti-democratic. One of these is the belief that indulging democratic majoritarianism tends to undermine the wealth-promoting properties of unimpeded market exchange (12). Another is the assumption that "the institutions of civil association—private property, contracts, rules of inheritance—can exist independently of collective action" (62). Shapiro contests all of these claims and appeals to Locke's political theory to support his position.

Locke may seem an odd ally for Shapiro to recruit to this campaign. After all, Locke insists that basic economic entitlements are prior to the institutions of civil society and can be recognized, and legitimately enforced, independently of any organized collective action. Shapiro contends, however, that emphasizing this feature of Locke's theory has led many commentators to ignore its more fundamentally democratic character. Locke, he tells us, grounds the legitimacy of public decisions on "majoritarian rather than individual consent," so that "his defense of individual rights is nested in, and subordinate to, majority rule" (61). On this reading, Locke emerges as a political realist who would have rejected any suggestion that it is an open question whether we should rely on collective

action at all to defend fundamental individual rights (although here readers should ask themselves whether any interesting version of a liberal or libertarian position has ever denied this). The important question for Locke, at least as Shapiro interprets him, is rather which forms of collective action are most likely to prevent domination among free and equal citizens (35). Shapiro's Locke offers majority rule as the best answer to this question.

The other major tendency that Shapiro aims to preempt is the propensity to "reify" (39) the 'will of the people' as the keystone of a genuinely democratic civic order. An important reason to downplay such Rousseauian ideas, according to Shapiro, is that emphasizing them tends to exaggerate the threat posed to ideals of democratic rule by the various 'impossibility theorems' proved by Kenneth Arrow and later theorists of 'social choice'. The case for "democratic competition under conditions of majority rule" (79), in his view, does not depend on Rousseau's claim that democratic self-government requires the identification of a unique, clear 'popular will'. For Shapiro, rather, it depends on the Madisonian insight that open competition among rival interests and political parties is the best way for a society to protect its members from domination at the hands of any particular group (20). On this view, the diversity of political preferences likely in a free society is democracy's saving grace, not the threat to coherent democratic decision making that social choice theorists describe.

The first two chapters explore these Lockean and Madisonian ideas. The first offers a comprehensive interpretation of Locke's political thought and of the status of majority rule within it. The second discusses the implications of Madison's political thought in the light of some recent empirical work on political trust and social capital. With the exception of the final chapter, which replies to critics of Shapiro's earlier work *Democratic Justize*, these opening chapters are the most philosophical in the book. They are both strong essays, but they are too perfunctory (esp. chap. 2) to bear all the weight of defining and defending Shapiro's general view of democratic institutions. I doubt, for example, that questions about the adequacy of that view can ultimately be settled by offering interpretations of historical texts—even ones as perceptive as those penned by Locke and Madison.

The remaining chapters deal with a variety of more empirically embedded topics. Chapters 3 and 4, cowritten with Ellen Lust (both chapters) and Courtney Jung (chap. 3), consider questions about establishing new democratic regimes through coercion or negotiation, with particular reference to recent events in South Africa, Ireland, and the Middle East. Chapter 5 defends 'containment' (the subject of an earlier book by Shapiro) as the best national security policy for nations committed to an ideal of democratic cosmopolitanism to adopt. Chapter 6 (cowritten with Mayling Birney and Michael J. Graetz) addresses the role of public opinion in shaping the behavior of politicians, using the 2001 repeal of the federal estate tax as a case study. In the penultimate chapter, Shapiro turns to constitutional jurisprudence, focusing on recent and ongoing legal controversies over abortion and reproductive rights.

There is much to learn from all of these chapters, but Shapiro leaves readers to figure out for themselves how the arguments they contain flesh out his larger theory of democratic institutions. Given the breadth of topics addressed in the book, this is not easy to do. Although each chapter raises fundamental issues