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Necessity and Desire

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1. The language of *need* is used extensively in the representation of our personal and social lives. Its role in political and moral discourse is especially conspicuous and powerful. People commonly attribute needs to themselves and to others in order to support demands, or to establish entitlements, or to influence the ordering of priorities; and we are often inclined to respond to such attributions with a rather special respect and concern. In particular, an assertion that something is *needed* tends to create an impression of an altogether different quality, and to have a substantially greater moral impact, than an assertion that something is *desired*. Claims based upon what a person needs frequently have a distinctive poignancy. They are likely to arouse a more compelling sense of obligation, and to be treated with greater urgency, than claims based merely upon what someone wants.

Care must be taken, however, to avoid exaggerating the inherent superiority of claims grounded in needs over claims grounded in desires. It is surely not the case that the moral force of needs is unconditionally greater than that of desires in the sense that every need, without exception, is properly to be accorded unqualified priority over any desire. There are many occasions when it makes perfectly good sense for a person to sacrifice something he needs, even something he needs very badly, for the sake of something he desires but for which he has no need at all. For example, it might be quite sensible for a seriously ill person to use his limited financial resources for the pleasure cruise he has long wanted to take than for the surgery he needs in order to prolong his life. Decisions to enjoy life more at the cost of not taking care of ourselves as well as we might — to enhance the quality of life at the expense of its quantity — are neither uncommon nor invariably unjustifiable.

Perhaps this is insufficient to show that a claim based upon desire can ever compete successfully on *moral* grounds against a claim supported by need. In fact, however, needs may be no more compelling than desires

even so far as strictly moral considerations are concerned. Consider a person who feels like completing a crossword puzzle and who is unable to do so without looking things up. He needs a dictionary, but the moral importance of this need is altogether negligible. It would hardly be difficult to find numerous desires with at least as much moral importance.

But now it seems that if a need may be utterly inconsequential, then attributions of need really have no inherent moral weight after all. This result appears to be decisively confirmed, moreover, by elementary theoretical considerations. Nothing is needed except for the sake of an end for which it is indispensable. The moral importance of meeting or of not meeting a need must therefore be wholly derivative from the importance of the end which gives rise to it. Whatever the importance of attaining the end, it will be exactly that important to meet the need. If the moral significance of the need for a dictionary is negligible, it is just because the goal from which the need derives is of no moral consequence. Thus it seems that the satifaction of needs cannot be entitled to any systematic moral priority over the gratification of desires. The mere fact that something is needed, considered in isolation from the value of what it is needed for, has no independent justificatory force.

However, we must be as careful to avoid claiming too little for needs as to avoid claiming too much for them. Even apart from other considerations, the view that there is no special moral significance in the fact that a person needs something is difficult to reconcile with the manifest rhetorical potency of certain loosely manipulative uses to which the language of need is often put. These typically involve blurring the distinction between needing something and wanting it, with the obvious intention of attracting for some desire the same degree of moral consideration that tends to be accorded particularly to needs.[1]

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[1] Jean-Paul Sartre and Fidel Castro collaborate in the following conversation to produce an egregious instance:

"'Man's need is his fundamental right over all others,' said Castro. 'And if they ask you for the moon?' asked Sartre. '. . . it would be because someone needed it,' was Castro's reply." [Quoted by George Lichtheim in *The Concept of Ideology and Other Essays* (New York: 1967), p. 282.]

Now from the fact that someone asks for something it follows at most, of course, that he wants it. This sort of confusion between what is wanted and what is needed is rather common among Marxists. Thus, although it seems obvious that some commodities may satisfy only desires, Marx himself defines a commodity as "a thing that by its properties satisfies human needs of some sort or another." [*Capital* (Moscow, 1961), vol. I, p. 35.] I shall take it for granted that wanting something does not entail needing it, and vice versa: a person may desire to undergo surgery but not actually need an operation, or need surgery without wanting it. This does not entail, by the way, that the concepts of need and of desire are logically independent. They would be logically independent if, and only if,

Maneuvers of this sort would be pointless unless people were widely disposed to accept the proposition that a need for something preempts a desire *for that thing*. This proposition, which I shall call "the Principle of Precedence," attributes to needs only a quite minimal moral superiority over desires. It maintains no more than that when there is a competition between a desire and a need for the same thing, the need starts with a certain moral edge. That is, when A needs something that B wants but does not need, then meeting A's need is *prima facie* morally preferable to satisfying B's desire. If needs do not enjoy at least *this* much precedence over desires, then it must certainly be an error to attribute *any* particular moral significance to them. In any case, the Principle appears to be eminently reasonable. Other things being equal, it seems clearly preferable to allocate a resource to someone who needs it rather than to someone who wants it but who has no need for it at all.

Yet there are exceptions to the Principle of Precedence. Suppose someone undertakes a certain project just on an unreflective whim. The fact that he thereupon needs whatever is indispensable for completing the project has no more justificatory force than a casual or impulsive desire for the same thing would have. The claim of a person who needs a dictionary merely in order to gratify his whim to finish a puzzle is no weightier than the claim of someone who has no specific need for a dictionary but whose desire it is, for no particular reason, to possess one. Giving precedence here to the need would arbitrarily assign greater moral importance to one whim than to another.

The moral significance of a need is not, then, necessarily greater than that of its corresponding desire. Therefore we cannot unequivocally accept the doctrine that it is morally preferable to allocate resources to those who need them rather than to those who only desire them. We must distinguish between the kinds of needs that do merit precedence over the desires that correspond to them, and the kinds of needs that do not.

2. At the heart of the concept of need is the notion that there are things one cannot do without. When something is needed it must therefore always be possible to specify what it is needed *for*, or to explain *what* one cannot do without it. If a person needs surgery in order to survive, then what he cannot do without the surgery is to go on living. All necessities are in this respect conditional: nothing is needed except in virtue of being an indispensable condition for the attainment of a certain end.[2]

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something could be desired without anything being needed and something could be needed without anything being desired. What the example shows is only that someone may have a need without having a desire *for what he needs*, and that he may have a desire without having a need *for what he wants*.

[2] It appears to be implicit in the concept of need that what something is needed for must be other than itself. That is why it is somewhat dissonant to suggest that life and happiness

In many cases, a person needs something because he actively desires a certain end for the attainment of which that thing is indispensable.[3] Thus the person in my example needs a dictionary because he wants to finish a puzzle. In fact he needs the dictionary *only* because he wants to finish the puzzle; he would not need it except for that desire. But of course a person may need certain things for more than one reason, or in more than one way. When something is needed because there is something else that a person *wants*, then to that extent the need depends upon the person's *will*. I shall refer to needs of this kind as "volitional needs."

Having a volitional need is not necessarily a voluntary matter. This is because a person's will is not invariably under his voluntary control. That is, it may not be up to him whether he has the desire upon which his volitional need depends. Many of a person's desires are indeed voluntary, since they derive simply from his own decisions. Someone typically acquires the desire to see a certain movie, for example, just by making up his mind what movie to see. Desires of this sort are not aroused in us; they are formed or constructed by acts of will that we ourselves perform, often quite apart from any emotional or affective state. However, there are also occasions when what a person wants is not up to him at all, but is rather a matter of feelings or inclinations that arise and persist independently of any choice of his own.

Now suppose that with respect to a certain desire it is up to the person whether or not he has it. Then it is also up to him whether or not he has a volitional need for whatever is indispensable for the satisfaction of that desire. On the other hand, if he has no control over what he wants then he also has no control over whether or not he has volitional needs for those things without which the desire in question cannot be satisfied. I shall refer to volitional needs that depend upon voluntary desires as "free," and to those that depend upon involuntary desires as "constrained."

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are among the things people need. Circumstances may occur in which it actually does serve a special purpose for some person to go on living or to be happy; and in cases of that kind it may be appropriate to say that the person needs to live or to be happy. But we do not suppose that the value of life, or of happiness, derives in general from the value of something else.

[3] Joseph Raz has pointed out to me that a person may want something and yet not need certain things that are indispensable for its attainment, because it is clear that he would be unable to attain it even if he got them. If he recognizes that he cannot satisfy any set of sufficient conditions for the attainment of what he wants, then he does not need to satisfy the necessary conditions. Similar considerations apply if for some reason other than unattainability — e.g., very low priority — the person does not expect or intend even to attempt to satisfy his desire. By speaking of what a person "actively desires," I mean to exclude desires that he has no expectation or intention of trying to satisfy. In what follows I shall assume, without explicitly specifying them as such, that the desires upon which needs are said to depend are in this sense active.

Free volitional needs are not, as such, morally interesting in the sense specified by the Principle of Precedence. In other words, they do not merit priority over the desires corresponding to them. From the fact that a person needs M because it is indispensable for E, which he wants, we cannot conclude that the consideration to which his need for M is entitled is greater than the consideration that would be merited by a mere desire for M. There is no reason to think that his claim for M receives more powerful support from his desire for E than another person's claim for M would receive just from that person's desire for M itself. Why should the latter desire convey a lesser claim, after all, than the former? The fact that one person desires M while another person has a free volitional need for it leaves it entirely open which person's claim for M is better.

If free volitional needs are as such morally unimportant, it is not because the desires from which they derive are uniformly of no consequence. The fact that a desire is voluntary implies nothing whatever concerning how significant it is. A person may decide of his own free will not merely that he wants to finish a crossword puzzle, but also far more portentous matters as well: that he wants to become a musician, that he wants to renounce his obligations and devote himself ruthlessly to the pursuit of his material interests, that he wants to die, and so on. The desires upon which a person's free volitional needs depend may make a very considerable difference to his life.

Other things being equal, the desirability of meeting a free volitional need depends wholly upon how desirable it is to satisfy the pertinent voluntary desire. To whatever extent it is desirable to satisfy someone's desire for a certain end, it will be desirable to the same extent to meet the needs generated by that desire. Thus the desirability of a person's end may justify his claim for what he needs in order to attain it. But insofar as his desire for the end is a voluntary one, the desirability of satisfying it cannot endow his claim with the *distinctive* moral quality which is specific to claims warranted by need.

This is because free volitional needs have too little necessity in them. There are two related considerations here, which illuminate the moral precedence over desires that needs of certain kinds enjoy. In the first place, since the desire from which a free volitional need derives may be for anything whatever, it may be neither important nor necessary for the desire to be satisfied; hence, it cannot be assumed that needs of this kind *need to be met*. Secondly, from the fact that the desire that generates a free volitional need is voluntary, it follows that the person who has such a need does not *need to need* what he needs. In order to be morally interesting, on the other hand, a need must be radically distinct from a desire. It must be what

I shall call "categorical" — i.e., characterized by both of the necessities just considered: (1) the need must be one that the person not only wants to meet but needs to meet, and (2) what the person needs must be something that he cannot help needing. I shall discuss these two conditions in turn.

3. The reason free volitional needs do not as such need to be met is that the desires upon which they depend may be for things that are not needed. In such a case the person *wants* his need to be met so that he may enjoy what he desires, but he does not *need* it to be met any more than he needs the desired thing itself. Suppose it should turn out that he cannot meet his free volitional need, and that consequently he cannot have what he wants. Then he may well both be disappointed and have grounds for being resentful. But, given that what he wants is not something he needs, *no harm will have been done*. He will have failed to obtain a benefit of greater or of lesser value, but he will not have been harmed.

It is the linkage to harm that differentiates needs that satisfy the Principle of Precedence, and that are therefore morally interesting, from others. A person's need has moral interest only if it will be a consequence of his failure to meet the need that he incurs or continues to suffer some harm. This condition may be met, of course, even if the person has no desire for the needed object. Insofar as the link to harm does not depend upon a desire, the need is a non-volitional one. Free volitional needs have no inherent moral interest because the mere fact that a person has a certain desire indicates at most that he expects what he desires to be in some way of benefit to him. It does not entail that he will suffer any harm if he does not obtain it.

It is not clear how to distinguish systematically between circumstances in virtue of which a person is harmed and those in virtue of which he merely fails to obtain a benefit; nor is it apparent how to define those special conditions under which someone who fails to obtain a benefit actually does thereby also incur a harm. One way to deal with the latter problem would be to maintain that failing to obtain a benefit is tantamount to incurring a harm just in case the benefit is something the person in question needs. This is plausible, but for obvious reasons not very helpful in the present context. Instead of attempting to formulate a more satisfactory account of the matter, I shall limit myself to three elementary observations pertinent to the relationship between benefits and harms.

First, being harmed has to do with becoming worse off than one was, while failing to obtain a benefit is more a matter of not becoming better off than before. Second, there is sometimes no way to prevent a situation from becoming worse except by making it better. In cases of that kind failure to obtain the pertinent benefit is tantamount to being harmed. Third,

the life of a person whose condition is bad becomes worse and worse as long as his condition does not improve, simply because more of a bad thing is worse than less of it. Someone may be harmed, therefore, even when in a certain sense his condition does not deteriorate. This makes it possible to endorse the common sense judgment that a chronically ill person has a morally relevant need for whatever treatment is essential to the alleviation of his illness. For it implies that even though the state of his health remained very much what it was before, he would not only fail to obtain a valuable benefit if he did not obtain the treatment but would actually be harmed.

These observations suggest why meeting needs merits priority over satisfying desires. It is because making things better is, from a moral point of view, less important (measure for measure) than keeping them from getting worse. We usually expect that when something is entrusted to a person's care, he will make a reasonable effort to protect it from damage or harm; but we do not ordinarily suppose that he has any comparable obligation to enhance its condition. With respect more generally to that part of the world which comes under a person's care — i.e., for which he has responsibility — his obligation to keep it from getting worse is more compelling than his obligation (if any) to improve it. This is why allocating resources to meeting needs takes precedence over allocating them to fulfilling mere desires. The former aims at avoiding harm, while the latter aims only at providing unneeded benefits.

A person's morally interesting needs need to be met, then, because harm will ensue if they are not. But in addition, the link to harm must be of such a nature that whether or not the harm ensues is outside the person's voluntary control. This is the second respect in which free volitional needs have too little necessity in them. Not only do they derive from desires, which means that there may be no harm done even if they fail to be met. But furthermore, the desires from which they derive are voluntary, which means that the person need not have the needs at all.

Suppose it is just in virtue of his own decision concerning what he wants that a person has the desire from which a certain need derives. This hardly puts him in the grip of necessity. The grip in which he is held is merely his own, from which he can free himself as he likes. It is no wonder that needs of this kind do not as such elicit any particular moral concern. Even when the person will in fact suffer some harm if he fails to get the object he needs, this consequence is one which he imposes upon himself and to which he continues to be exposed only as long as he is willing to be exposed to it. He does need the object, since it is indispensable to an end that he desires. But his need for it is his own concoction. The object's

indispensability to the end touches him only insofar as he wants it to do so. It does not affect him unless, by his own free choice, he adopts the pertinent desire.

4. Neither desires nor free volitional needs are inescapably linked to harm. This is why they are morally indistinguishable from each other and why each differs morally from categorical needs. In fact, not only do free volitional needs fail to merit precedence over the desires corresponding to them, but also there is no basis for according them as such any moral interest at all. That is, we cannot even suppose that meeting needs of this sort is inherently desirable or preferable to not meeting them.

Meeting free volitional needs would be inherently desirable only if it were inherently desirable to satisfy desires. Only in that case could the desirability of meeting any given free volitional need be presumed. Now some philosophers do maintain that it is necessarily desirable for a desire to be fulfilled. Thus William James writes:

> Take any demand, however slight, which any creature, however weak, may make. Ought it not, for its own sole sake, to be satisfied? . . . Any desire is imperative to the extent of its amount; it *makes* itself valid by the fact that it exists at all.[4]

James would of course acknowledge that the desirability of satisfying a desire may be overridden by other considerations. But in his opinion the fact that a person wants something is always a reason in itself for preferring that he have it.

In my view, on the other hand, the mere fact that a person wants something provides no support for a claim that his having it is preferable to his not having it. I do not mean to deny that it is better for some of a person's desires to be satisfied than for none to be satisfied. Perhaps, other things being equal, it is necessarily better that a life include some satisfied desires than that all the desires it includes be unsatisfied. But it does not follow from this that, with respect to each of a person's desires, it is better that he have what he wants than that he not have it. What follows is only that a person's having some of the things he wants is better than his having none of them.

So far as I know, the only argument available for the position to which James adheres runs more or less as follows. An unsatisfied desire inevitably involves frustration, which is unpleasant. Hence there is always at least the same consideration in favor of satisfying a given desire as there is in favor of minimizing unpleasantness. Now in fact there is a presumption in favor of minimizing unpleasantness. Therefore, there is always a *prima facie* case for satisfying a given desire in preference to not satisfying it. A

[4] William James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," in *Essays in Pragmatism by William James*, ed. Alburey Castell (New York, 1948), p. 73.

desire is "imperative to the extent of its amount," as James puts it, because the unpleasantness consequent to frustration will be more or less severe, and thus more or less undesirable, according to how strong the frustrated desire is.

However, the most that can validly be inferred from the premises of this argument is that there is a *prima facie* case against the desirability of any state of affairs in which someone has an unsatisfied desire. The only presumption warranted is, in other words, merely that satisfied desires are preferable to frustrated ones.[5] This differs substantially from a presumption in favor of the satisfaction of desire, because a satisfied desire is not the only possible alternative to a frustrated one. After all, a person also avoids frustration when — through being persuaded or in some other way — he gives up or loses his desire without satisfying it. Some of the methods that may be effective in eliminating a person's desires without satisfying them are, to be sure, quite objectionable. But this is equally true of some of the methods by which desires may be satisfied.

James' thesis undermines the conceptual distance between need and desire by linking desire to harm and thus by implying that wanting something entails needing it. If it were inevitable for a desire that is not satisfied to be frustrated, then a person could not avoid unpleasantness unless he got what he wanted. Now it is plausible to suppose that suffering unpleasantness amounts to being harmed and that everyone wants to avoid it, so that everyone both non-volitionally and volitionally needs whatever is indispensable for avoiding unpleasantness. It is precisely because an object of desire may actually *not* be indispensable for someone's achievement of this goal that wanting something does not entail needing it. Since a desire may be given up or lost, a person may be able to avoid frustration without getting what he wants. Thus the satisfaction of a desire is not necessarily necessary for avoiding harm.

5. With respect to some of the things a person wants, however, it may not be possible for him either to bring himself or to be brought to stop wanting them. This is not because the desires in question are especially intense or difficult to control. Even desires that are quite unobtrusive and easily managed may nonetheless be ineradicably persistent. Needs generated by desires of this sort, which must be either satisfied or frustrated, are what I have called "constrained volitional needs." It is clear that they involve more necessity than free volitional needs do. A person whose constrained volitional need is not met will unavoidably, no matter what he voluntarily chooses or does, suffer some harm — viz., frustration. This

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[5] Cp. Gary Watson, "Free Agency," *Journal of Philosophy* 72 (1975): 210-11.

suffices to make such needs categorical and to warrant gratifying them in preference to gratifying the desires that correspond to them.

All constrained volitional needs satisfy the Principle of Precedence. However, some of them appear worthy only of a rather qualified or equivocal concern. What distinguishes these is not that the harms to which they are linked are relatively minor, for the harms may actually be very severe. Rather, it is that the needs seem somehow to be gratuitous or even perverse. For example, suppose a man is seized by the *idée fixe* that his life will be worthless unless he has a certain sports car; and suppose the frustration of his desire for the car would be so deep that it would indeed ruin his life. The man cannot help wanting the car, and he wants it so badly that he will suffer sustained and crippling misery unless he obtains it. Since there is a link here to substantial harm, which is not under the man's voluntary control, his need for the sports car is both categorical and severe. What is the basis, then, for our uneasiness concerning it? Why are we inclined to be less than wholehearted in acknowledging that the claim it makes is truly legitimate?

Our reaction to the man's need for the car is likely to be the outcome of a variety of considerations. The one to which I want to call particular attention has nothing to do with any judgments concerning the paltriness of his ambition or the shallowness of his character. No doubt our respect for the man is significantly impaired by our feeling that the object of his desire is unworthy of the enormous importance it has for him. But our response to his need is also affected by a feature which that need shares with others whose objects are far more worthy of desire and concern than sports cars: namely, the man's need has less to do with the specific characteristics of its object than with the nature of his desire for that object.

It is not directly because of the car's speed or beauty, or even because of its snob value, that the man will suffer if he does not get it. Presumably, it is in virtue of these characteristics that he wants the car; but they do not account for the fact that he needs it. One might even suggest that what he really needs is not the car as such at all, but the gratification of his desire for it. His need is inescapably linked to harm only in virtue of his desire, and not in virtue of the consequences to him that doing without the car would otherwise entail. If he did not want the sports car as he does, he would in fact have no morally significant need for it. In other words, he has no non-volitional need to which his desire for the car corresponds.

The point may be illuminated by distinguishing needs of this kind from needs due to addiction. The latter commonly have constrained volitional needs associated with them, but they are not themselves essentially volitional. The heroin addict does typically have an involuntary desire for

heroin; but it is more likely that this desire arises on account of his need for the drug than that the need derives from the desire. In any event, being addicted to something is not a matter of being unable to avoid wanting it. The characteristic suffering to which heroin addicts are subject is not the pain of frustrated desire. It is a more specific condition, which is caused just by the lack of heroin. It occurs independently of what the addict — who may not know what he is addicted to, or even that there is something to which he is addicted — wants or does not want.

There are two types of situations involving constrained volitional needs. In situations of one type, a person has a non-volitional need as well as a constrained volitional need for a certain object; and he would therefore need the object even if he did not desire it. In situations of the other type, the person's need is exclusively volitional; i.e., he needs a certain object only because he desires it.

Because he has a non-volitional need for heroin, the addict's involuntary desire for the drug serves a useful purpose. It moves him to obtain something that he needs, and that he cannot help needing independently of his desire for it. On the other hand no such purpose is served by the desire (e.g., for a sports car) upon which a person's constrained volitional need depends, when the person has no non-volitional need corresponding to the desire. In that case, there is no need and no liability to harm apart from the desire. The desire does not respond to or reflect a need; it creates one. Now this creation of a liability to harm in no way enhances either the inherent value of the desired object or its availability. Thus it subjects a person to additional burdens and risks without endowing him with any compensatory benefits. It is in this respect that needs of the kind in question are gratuitous or perverse.

6. The range and severity of a person's needs are contingent upon what he wants, upon how he wants it, and upon those non-volitional aspects of his situation that determine what will harm him and what will protect him from harm. This means that needs may be generated, altered or eliminated by changes in the environment and by the natural course of human life. Moreover, needs of each of the three types I have considered may be affected by deliberate or by unintentional human action.

Many social critics maintain that one of the ways in which exploitative societies injure their members is by causing them to incur various needs that the critics characterize as "false" or "inauthentic" or to which they refer in some other manner suggestive of undesirability or defect. One might ask, perhaps, whether it is desirable to have any categorical needs at all. The question hangs upon whether we would be better off if we were not vulnerable to harm or whether it is somehow a good thing for us that

we are in this respect less than omnipotent. In any case those who condemn the creation of false or inauthentic needs do not intend to object against any increase whatever in the burden of need which people bear. Their complaint is against increases of a more particular sort. What they consider objectionable in the creation of a false need is not that an additional need has been created, but that the need that has been created is a false one.

I suggest that a criterion that captures at least an important element of what is objectionable in certain needs — needs that it is plausible to consider "false" — may be grounded in the difference between those constrained volitional needs that coincide with non-volitional needs and those that do not. By this criterion a person's need for a certain object is "true" or "authentic" only if the person needs the object regardless of whether or not he wants it. A need is "false" or "inauthentic," on the other hand, if the person needs the object only because he desires it. Volitional needs are true or authentic, in other words, only insofar as they reflect needs that are non-volitional.

This account cuts across the distinction between needs that are natural and needs that are socially imposed. What makes a need false is not that it has causes of a certain kind. Needs may be authentic or true even when they are not only artificial in the sense of being produced by human contrivance, but when the contrivance is malicious or unjust. The falsity of a need is not a matter of its origination in the machinations or in the negligence of the reactionary or the wicked, but of its being gratuitous or perverse in a way that has already been indicated. False needs are those in which there is no necessity except what is created by desire. Their defect is analogous to that of Protagoras' truths, which — according to the representation of his doctrine in the *Theaetetus* — are created wholly out of beliefs. Just as belief cannot correctly be construed as the measure of truth, so desire cannot properly be regarded as the measure of need.

There is a difference between our response to needs that arise exclusively from constrained volition and our response to needs that are not volitional at all. This difference remains even when, as in a case of self-induced addiction, someone's non-volitional need is the result of his own voluntary behavior. The necessities that nature imposes upon a person (even when it is his doing that brings this about) incline us to a more sympathetic and empathic concern than those that derive immediately from the person's own will (even when he has no control over what he wants). Our feeling that it is incumbent upon us to assist a person in need tends to become somewhat attenuated when the need is essentially derivative from that person's desire.

This may be because the hardening of desire into necessity strikes us as an analogue of "bad faith," so that we suspect the person in question of being unable to control his desire only because he does not really want to do so. In that case we do not regard the need as fully constrained and hence we do not construe it as being genuinely categorical. It is possible that there is another reason as well. In seeking to avoid the harm to which a constrained volitional need exposes him, a person is contending not so much against nature as against himself. Perhaps this diminishes our sense of comradeship with him. If he were struggling against nature, which is our common enemy, our instinct to ally ourselves with him would be more compelling.