

EXPLICATING THE MORAL EXPERIENCE:
A RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE ROLE OF EMOTION
IN MORALITY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the moral experience and finds that moral theories which emphasize one-sidedly that either reason or emotion is central to morality misconstrue the basic nature of moral experience. Two best examples of such theories are, respectively, principled ethics and ethics of caring. These one-sided moral theories are rooted in the bifurcation of reason and emotion.

The first part of the thesis is devoted to an examination of principled ethics and the ethic of caring with the object of showing that they both fail to adequately explain our moral experience. The principled ethic advocates that moral behavior is and should be a function of adherence to principles, and that emotion jeopardizes this ability to impartially deliberate and act in moral situations. This theory fails to recognize that caring is the fundamental moral emotion, even in the case of acting out of principles, and the result is construing moral motivation as an unfeeling calculus. By contrast, a care-based ethic tends to emphasize the role of caring emotion in our moral life by arguing that moral performance is in general motivated by a concern for maintaining caring personal relationships. This theory, however is found lacking because it does not address situations in which no personal relationships exist. An ethic of care falsely assumes that an unconditional caring attitude towards others exists uniformly in all people.

It is argued in this thesis that emotion is not a non-rational phenomenon, and its cultivation can be aided through learning moral

concepts. The thesis concludes by delineating the educational implications of understanding emotion as a rational phenomenon and of its cultivation through concept learning.



For caterpillars who'll be butterflies...
(Pour les chenilles qui deviendront papillons...)
and for my parents, Lawrence and Emily

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Chapter 1: Understanding the Moral Experience

I know only that what is moral
is what you feel good after and
what is immoral is what you
feel bad after.

-Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*

Anyone who ponders the nature of morality might be in agreement with the sentiment that Hemingway expresses. It makes sense to most that one should feel good about acting morally, and bad when acting immorally; morality is pleasing, but immorality is turpitude. As appealing as the idea of such moral 'feelings' is, it is a fundamental feature which seems to be lacking in our moral upbringing. For most of us, and at least to some degree all of us, moral upbringing consists predominantly of learning to follow principles and commandments: share with others, respect others' property, do not kill, do not tell malicious lies, etcetera. Moral character, then, is a measure of how well one obeys the principles. How one feels about his or her behavior is important only as a consequence of how one acts with respect to the moral principles. In other words, one is taught to feel good when one has obeyed a principle, and bad when one has broken it.

Much of moral philosophy rests on this conception of morality which places emphasis on principle-following; principle-based ethics is a time-honored tradition in moral theory. It is an ethic which characterizes

morality as a function of reason. Central to this idea is that emotion is irrelevant or even antithetical to reason. Many have argued that human emotions are too varied and capricious to be the impetus and guide of moral action; therefore, it has no positive role, and likely a negative role in morality. In fact, proponents of a principle-based ethic would argue that cultivating a moral character depends on one's ability to be prudent and judicious in emotional situations. Having the ability to disregard or overcome one's emotions is indeed the hallmark of morality, according to this view. It is not, as Hemingway put it, a matter of feeling good or bad. It is a matter of employing the faculties of reason and controlling our emotions.

Most of our moral education is based on learning and following principles because theoretically this is the way moral behavior has been explained and understood. We believe and teach that as intelligent beings, we should handle our moral problems by thinking them through, and that letting our emotions decide hinders that process. The explanation for poor moral judgment is often something like, "I was too emotional to think straight", "My vision was clouded by my emotions", or "I acted irrationally in a fit of rage/passion." Because moral philosophy has perpetuated this view, the predominant view in moral education is that morality is taught by emphasizing and encouraging rational adherence to principles. But when it comes to making moral decisions, do we and should we place major emphasis on principles? Should we pay as little attention as we have to feeling? In this thesis I wish to examine this question.

On a practical level, I observe that morality involves more than following rules or principles. We are led to think that it is wrong to follow our emotions; however, our moral experiences tell us that emotions are positively involved. Certainly there are times when we feel the moral responsibility to listen to our hearts. A mother who understands the principle of respecting others' property, for example, may be more driven by her love for her hungry child in deciding to steal a leftover sandwich from the deli she works at. A nurse working with terminally ill patients might decide against medical advice to listen to a patient's request to discontinue administration of a life-enhancing drug, despite recognizing the human right to life. A teacher may give a weak student a passing grade if he/she feels that would be best, despite a firm belief in the principle of fairness. These scenarios exemplify decisions that involve the heart. I would like to argue that such decisions are neither irrational, nor immoral. Furthermore, I would argue that it is desirable and necessary that people listen to and act in accordance with these kind of emotional persuasions. I am not, however, advocating the extreme view which places emotion at the center of morality, while excluding reason. I believe that an existing dualism between emotion and reason which has emerged from the rational tradition is, in fact, the reason for such exclusive views. Succinctly, what is at issue in this thesis is that traditional moral theory which emphasizes reason and devalues emotion is at odds with what I observe occurs in the moral domain. Traditional theorists acknowledge emotion as a negative force only, suggesting that all emotions are irrational and therefore often

wrongly persuade people in situations calling for moral decisions. This view is undesirable. I hope to show that traditional moral philosophy has falsely bifurcated reason and emotion, that not all emotions are irrational, and that, moreover, there are moral emotions which are crucial.

1.1 The Confusion

The aforementioned question - how can our moral experiences be explicated with respect to reason and emotion? - has been formulated from what I sense is a confusion about the role of emotion in the moral domain. This confusion results because we have been steeped in a moral tradition that requires us to arrive at moral decisions predominantly through reason while discounting the possibility of moral emotions. We are told to "think things through", suggesting that careful thought and deliberation will lead to moral action. This, in itself, is not problematic, for surely one must think well in order to make correct decisions. The problem, however, arises because of what seems to be discredited, and sometimes even purposely kept at bay: emotion. It is commonly held that emotions taint one's thinking; to base moral decisions on one's feelings would be unreliable and perhaps erroneous. Reason, on the other hand, is considered to be a sober judge in moral deliberations. This type of thinking has resulted in a dichotomization between reason and emotion, and with this, a divided camp in moral philosophy. This dichotomy needs to be examined.

Characteristically human beings are intellectual, emotional creatures. Indeed, even our intellectual pursuits are objects of great passion. Yet, many seem convinced that moral understanding and knowledge is rational and verifiable, and unemotional. This type of thinking has seeped into the moral realm in varying degrees. Crittenden's reference to Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics demonstrates that the measure of rightness historically was believed "to be found in reason and that it [was] realized in general in the situation in which the passions [were] guided by reason."¹ Thus, Aristotle recognized emotion as a faculty of humanity, but saw it as something to be integrated with reason if one was to obtain a moral character. Kant, on the other hand, found no place for emotions in morality, and in fact, assigned reason as the prime factor in establishing the moral imperative.² These ideas have met opposition in contemporary feminist literature by philosophers such as Nel Noddings, who argues that an ethical system which only summons one's reason is too rigid and unloving, and instead, suggests that caring is central to the moral life.³ This dualistic understanding of morality reflects the idea that there is no positive connection between reason and emotion.

Both principled ethics and the ethic of care have contributed to a perception of morality that is, in my view, quite mistaken. For example,

¹P. Crittenden, Learning to be Moral (London: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1990), p. 107.

²J. Kemp, "Kant's examples of the categorical imperative," in Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals with Critical Essays, ed. R. Wolff (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc, 1969), p. 49.

³N. Noddings, A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.

Lawrence Kohlberg has been a proponent of the rational tradition.⁴ He devised the "Heinz dilemma" to exemplify the difficulty faced by moral agents when they feel pulled between principle and personal feelings. In this scenario, Heinz's wife is terminally ill. Heinz knows of an apothecary who has a drug that could cure his wife. Unfortunately, the druggist's price is beyond Heinz's financial means, so Heinz is faced with a dilemma: should he steal the drug in order to help his wife?⁵ Most of us have been raised to respect other people's property; we are taught that stealing is wrong. But why should Heinz feel troubled with his situation? Kohlberg's suggestion is that Heinz's feelings are interfering with what he should do. But the difficulty could be a result of conflicting principles, such as the principles of respecting others' property, helping one's needy spouse, or the primacy of life. From a caring perspective, the problem might be seen to be a result of conflicting concerns for a spouse, and the well-being of a fellow human being. The two theories interpret the situation differently. From a principled perspective such as Kohlberg's, the moral decision hinges on the best application of principle. Contrarily, a position such as one advocated by Carol Gilligan, for example, places importance on the idea of caring within relationships.⁶ The way one decides, according to these two opposing theories, should be a function of reason or emotion.

⁴What I mean by the 'rational tradition' is one that advocates that emotion lies outside the domain of reason, therefore separating the two. Reason is thus favored over emotion in the moral realm

⁵L. Kohlberg, "From Is to Ought: How to Commit the Naturalistic Fallacy and Get Away With It in the Study of Moral Development," in The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 165.

⁶C. Gilligan, In a Different Voice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982)

Both theories disregard each other's central components. Could the dilemma be viewed in another way?

We must ask: to what can we attribute morality? - and find the answer, not within a restrictive paradigm, but within one that overcomes the dualism. When one recalls the experience of making a moral decision, it becomes obvious that morality is not one-dimensional, and that treating it as such is erroneous. I would like to argue for rational emotions and emotional reasons. In chapter four I suggest that there is a rational connection between emotion and reason. At this point, however, I want to establish the claim that morality is not a matter of reason or emotion alone.

An analogy can be given in the area of sport. Winning at Wimbledon, completing a marathon, or claiming an Olympic gold medal are all a matter of skill and strategy combined with heart and the desire to win. The emotional investment athletes put into their game is as important as the skill, and is sometimes even a deciding factor, in victory. No one would suggest that an athlete's victory was a matter of his or her physical ability or desire alone. Clearly, the two are closely linked. I am suggesting that the same is true for morality. Moral action involves thinking and feeling what the best action entails. Reason and emotion are married to each other in the moral domain. What needs to be investigated, therefore, is not whether morality is achieved through reason or emotion, but how the two are counterparts. Seeing this can explain the relationship that reason and emotion have to morality, and help to explain the agony we face because of trying to segregate them.

1.2 Proposed Conceptual Analysis

The prevalent attitude is that admirable moral decisions are the product of reason. Empirically, in fact, people may be more swayed by their emotions, but because emotions are so negatively construed in moral matters, they tend to rationalize their behavior, and deny that emotions have any part to play in their decisions. Consequently, the conceptual picture that has been painted contrasts reason with emotion, and principled ethics with the ethic of care. I would suggest that this picture is unwarranted. I think that moral action involves both reasons which are emotional, and emotions that are reasonable. Reasons and emotion, in fact, are inseparable in the moral realm. Most importantly, therefore, principled and caring ethics are not complete by themselves and cannot address humans as whole moral beings.

When one acts out of care as it is described in moral theories of care, there is a sense in which one is abrogating a certain responsibility to treat all people in a just way. Similarly, following a principled ethic seems to neglect an important moral element that involves caring about other people. The incompleteness of each theory results from a lack of understanding regarding the interplay between reason and emotion. To make this connection, the polarized view of what is essential in moral understanding and behavior must be corrected. Spelling this out begins with a separate analysis of the two ethics involved.

If it is the case that a narrow understanding of both principled and caring action misguides the interpretation of our moral experiences, then the task is to reconsider these elements of our moral lives. My thesis that moral experiences involve both emotion and reason entails a reinterpretation of the understanding of emotion. Examining the cognitive aspect of emotion is fundamental to this thesis.

1.3 Educational Implications

Why is this inquiry important for education? I believe the basic aim of education is to develop students' understanding of themselves and their place in the world so that they grow to be positive and responsible citizens. I believe moral understanding and responsibility is part of this, for how we use the knowledge we have is as important as possessing it. Morality is about acting a certain way towards other people. Teaching about living in harmony is an important part of this.

There seems to be a move towards the "holistic" development of students, but this educational goal is often promoted for the student's "overall" benefit, without any specific focus on morality. Attention paid to students' feelings tends to focus on their self-esteem and identity, when a moral education can have as much to do with children's sense of worth and value, and their understanding of the worth and value of others. If educators focus on principles or rules without educating children about how emotions are involved, then moral education becomes perfunctory. If

we understand that morality involves rational emotions and emotional reasons, then we can properly educate children about morality. Most importantly, we can teach children to account for the uneasiness and difficulty they may face when trying to choose morally appropriate conduct. Educators have the delicate task of encouraging children to embody the essence of Hemingway's quote; it is the teacher's task to help students understand what 'feeling and thinking' moral means.

Chapter 2: Analyzing Principled Ethics

The essence of a pure principled ethic is seen in Plato's *Euthyphro*:

What difference does it make whether the murdered man were a relative or a stranger? The only question that you have to ask is, did the murderer kill justly or not? If justly, you must let him alone; if unjustly, you must indict him for murder, even though he share your hearth and sit at your table.⁷

Plato, *Euthyphro*

Charged with murder, Euthyphro's father faces prosecution by his own son, all in the name of the principle of piety. This is the explanation Euthyphro provides for prosecuting his own father: "I say that piety means prosecuting the unjust individual who has committed murder or sacrilege, or any other such crime, as I am doing now, whether he is your father or your mother or whoever he is..."⁸ Most people would find Euthyphro's attitude morally appalling rather than commendable because it overlooks responsibilities and affections toward family and loved ones. Yet it is precisely this attitude that is embodied in principled morality. The concept of principled ethics as it is traditionally understood by some deontologists is based on rational principles. I hope to show that there are problems with a moral theory that relies almost exclusively on reason, and excludes other factors such as emotion or relatedness. Further, I want to suggest a revised way of understanding principled ethics.

⁷Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito*, trans. F.J. Church (Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1948), p. 5

⁸Ibid

2.1 Principled Ethics as it is Traditionally Understood

Those who argue against the role of emotion in morality do so for a number of reasons. First, emotions are viewed as subjective and therefore unreliable indicators of what is right and wrong for all persons everywhere. How we feel about certain things changes with age and life experiences and so it would be difficult to develop an ethical system based on such a dynamic. Most significantly perhaps, emotions reflect our personal ties and animosities, and may distort our thinking. The key to moral competence then, hinges on one's ability to remain impartial to the situation and the people involved. The best way to ensure this kind of impartiality is to consult a moral principle when making moral decisions.

The deontological theory that most strongly embraces the idea of a principle-based ethic is championed by Immanuel Kant. Kantian ethics focuses on the adherence to a maxim: the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative establishes the conditions for moral action:

Act only according to that maxim through which
you can at the same time will that it should
become universal law.⁹

What exactly does the categorical imperative demand of us? Foremost, it is a principle based on reason. It requires us to choose moral actions which anyone else who is rational and in the same situation would choose. In

⁹I. Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), p. 39.

other words, the only relevant criterion of moral action is rationality, and all other aspects and factors that make individuals different from each other are morally irrelevant. For instance, if murder is immoral, then it is immoral for everyone, and it is everyone's rational moral duty to uphold this principle. Thus, Euthyphro must condemn his own father for murdering another man. Kantian morality is ultimately based on this rational principle only, and nothing external to it. Thus it is not thought to include emotion. It is believed that if one were to take into consideration one's feelings about the persons or circumstances of the moral situation, the result would be inconsistency. In other words, because people do not share the same feelings about all issues, if they base their decisions on feelings, they might all choose different actions. A main feature of Kantian ethics, then, is that moral agents should willingly be impartial in their moral deliberations; that is, that all people are given equal status in moral situations, and no one should be given special priority because of his or her relationship to the moral agent unless the agent is willing to accord equal status to all other similar situations. Kantianism, for instance, would disallow special treatment of one's children. Suppose that two children were in danger of drowning in a swimming pool, and that one of them was my child. Suppose, also, that they were both within my reach, but that I would only be able to rescue one of them in time, and there was no one else to assist me. According to Kantianism, special feelings for one's beloved should not be taken into account. The principle of the right to life is one's concern.

An essential feature of the categorical imperative is the idea of universalizability. Besides putting aside our biases, "the thesis of universalizability requires that if we make any moral judgment about [a] situation, we must be prepared to make it about any of the other precisely similar situations."¹⁰ This means that we must act in such a way that we would want anyone else in that same situation to take the same action.

The perception that principled ethics is emotionless arises from Kant's claim that moral reasoning is *a priori*, arising from a notion of duty. According to Kant, "if there are moral principles in accordance with which men ought to act, knowledge of these principles must be a priori knowledge."¹¹ Most importantly, this knowledge of the principles "cannot be based on sensuous experience."¹² Kant rejects the idea of ethics being grounded in human desire and inclination. Recognizing that our desires do tempt us, Kant argues that our resistance to these temptations is our duty, which is to act out of reason. In Kantian ethics rationality alone works to motivate moral behavior.¹³

¹⁰R. Hare, Moral Thinking: Its Levels Method and Point (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 42

¹¹Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. H. J. Paton (London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964), p. 14.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, p. 39.

2.2 Refuting and Revising the Kantian Construal of Principled Ethics

The implications of the Kantian maxim for moral action have come under fire from philosophers who argue that the categorical imperative requires moral agents to take an impartial stance in their moral actions that is contrary to the social and personal nature of human beings. It is considered to be unfeeling, thus, inhuman. It is worth looking at those arguments, as well as the source of the frustration with principled ethics. The intent is to show that the Kantian description of principled ethics does not reflect what occurs in real moral deliberations, and that, in fact, there is an emotional underpinning even when we apply reason.

Foremost in understanding principled ethics is the idea that moral decisions are made with reference to the principle only. For example, in the Heinz dilemma, what Heinz needs to do according to principle-based ethics, is weigh the appropriate principles. He should consider property rights and the right to life. Understanding that the right to life trumps the right to property, Heinz should decide to help his wife by stealing the drug. But, Heinz, or others in a similar situation, may not feel completely comfortable with the decision because being able to help someone whom he dearly loves puts him in conflict with another principle. This feeling of discomfort should be given some attention. Moreover, because it is Heinz's wife who is involved, it is easy for him to recognize the right to life as being the principle to apply. Suppose, however, that it were Heinz's mother-in-law whom Heinz does not like very much, or a stranger that

Heinz had heard about in the news, and that the druggist is Heinz's brother or dear friend. In this situation, Heinz may be able to reason that the right thing to do is to act in accordance to the principle that claims that the right to life trumps the right to property, but at the same time, experience some discomfort with this decision. Some may argue that a person who does not recognize the priority of life over property is simply immoral, but presented with this hypothetical dilemma, I think most people would feel some discomfort. Making the "right decision", that is, the right one according to the accepted conventional priority calculation of principles, may create a residual uneasiness because one realizes that he or she had to forego the feelings of attachment and love towards another. So, on one hand, to be ethical, one must apply the best principle, which, in this case, would be the right to life. On the other hand, there is something intuitively wrong about disregarding one's familial or friendship ties. Once we give in to listening to the heart, the calculation of which principle takes priority over which other is disabled. This is where the ultimate problem originates. Principled ethics is criticized for being uncaring because it demands impartiality.

In the Kantian idea of impartiality, it is thought that if one is to remain impartial when making ethical decisions, he must distance himself from the people and circumstances that are involved. The objection is that this may cause one to be aloof, which is very alienating.¹⁴ One actually

¹⁴E. Callan, "Impartiality and Virtue," The Journal of Value Inquiry 28 (1994): 406.

becomes alienated in two respects, both from himself and from others. A person may become alienated from others because he must disregard the special relatedness that he (or she) has with some people who are close to him, and he may become alienated from himself because he cannot pay any significant attention to his own needs, goals, or interests. In essence, the impartiality requirement causes a universal treatment of the self because it leaves out what helps to limit and define the way we think about persons.¹⁵ One may say that it is precisely the idea of relationship that is overruled when principled morality is conceived of in this way.

We attach value to ourselves and others because of the personal and professional projects we pursue. To suggest that we can remain impartial to these projects is unreasonable. Without them, our relationship in and to the world becomes vague or questionable. Kantian impartiality is understood as though when one acts impartially, one has used reason to apply a principle, irrespective of any feelings one has for the people involved. Indeed, Kant's idea of impartiality is that principles are applied despite how one feels. This understanding places principle as the motivation behind acting impartially. There is, however, another way to understand impartiality which does not cast a negative light on personal feelings. It may be that when we make an impartial decision, we do so because it means something important to the people or situation we are involved in. For example, as a teacher, I recognize the importance of

¹⁵B. Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," in Moral Luck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 19.

being impartial when grading my students' assignments. My impartiality does not come from not caring about my students' progress. Rather, I see my students as each having an important educational responsibility, and I care that they all succeed at it. Because of this, I cannot arbitrarily assign higher grades to the students I like better, or lower grades to those students whom I do not enjoy an amiable relationship with. The point is, I have a caring attitude about the success of all of them, and this encourages me to be impartial.

Impartiality as understood in the Kantian way seems problematic because it compromises moral agency. Relatedness and relationship are vital components of our lives as moral agents. The motivation for being moral comes from feeling concerned for the well-being of others. Taking an impartial stance without recognizing an emotive component may result in indifference. Thus, it is argued that impartiality takes away one's feeling of agency with regard to principled ethics. So, if being impartial could cause one to be indifferent towards others, then why would anyone subscribe to a moral theory that entails impartiality? Callan's insight is helpful here. He suggests that impartiality is a pervasive feature of moral responses within personal relationships.¹⁶ In other words, acting impartially with those we are involved with emotionally is characteristic of relationships. He explains, however, that there are potential moral pitfalls in personal relationships. Specifically, feelings of attachment could cause a

¹⁶Callan, p. 408.

person to overlook principles for the sake of trying to make another feel happy or secure in that relationship. Or, sometimes our love can make us act in a way that results in immorality, such as feeling possessive or overprotective, or going against moral goodness in order to get something for the person we love. The Heinz dilemma exemplifies this potential problem. It may in fact be best to remain impartial, for strong feelings may blur one's sight of the moral goal. Impartiality is meant to be a safeguard or a corrective lens.

Suppressing one's bias, however, does not mean that one has to suppress one's emotions.¹⁷ It does not mean that one has to be cold or indifferent. In fact, it could mean quite the opposite. For instance, if I were the teacher in my niece's classroom, it would not be right for me to bend the rules on homework assignments or mark her work more leniently. If I want her to succeed in life, I know that the best way to help her is to give her independence and help her to understand the importance of a disciplined and dedicated work ethic. If I always give her extra help, she may never learn this, and I will have denied her an important lesson. But simply because I do not give her special treatment does not mean that I do not love her in a way that is more special than the way I care for the other students in my classroom. Choosing to be impartial is sometimes difficult because loved ones may not immediately understand your motives. From my niece's viewpoint, for example, it may seem that I do not care enough

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 409-410

to help her. But this is what appears on the surface only, and I would suggest that those who argue that impartiality produces aloofness have only scratched the surface of what it really means to be impartial. There is a fixed idea that impartiality is an emotionless principle, but this need not be the case. In fact, being impartial may be indicative of being concerned, and caring that a loved one be given the best treatment. It does not mean one is emotionally detached. Rather, it means, in light of one's attachments to a person, one decides the best action to take for those concerned is an impartial one. It could be argued, however, that in this example, my being impartial is not simply for the sake of my niece, but for the others' sake as well. The objection then, is that I am not really caring for my niece, only for the other students. But it may be in my niece's, as well as her classmates', best interest for me to act impartially.

But what about an instance in which acting impartially would go against the welfare of my niece? Such a dilemma, I believe, clearly proves the point I have made in chapter one that morality is also a matter of feeling, and that it is not based on a single principle. Thus, the dilemma may be best dealt with using something other than impartiality. My argument concerning impartiality here is not that it always be employed in moral situations, but rather, that one is not unemotional when being impartial. Clearly, one does feel something, otherwise one would not recognize impartiality as being the most beneficent move.

Does this mean that it would never be right for me to offer my niece my help? I think not. If after several honest attempts to solve her

problems on her own my niece still encounters difficulty, my moral response should be to help her, rather than let her struggle. If I did not help my niece, she may learn from this that everyone must struggle on his/her own. No sense of fellowship or connectedness would develop in her. Fellowship and concern for others is the *raison d'etre* of morality. Special treatment has its time and place within all kinds of relationships, however. But this does not constitute moral failing. What is needed is a reconciliation of impartiality with close personal relationships.¹⁸

What some impartialists argue is that there is no place for special treatment, even for loved ones. Godwin,¹⁹ for example, is renowned for advocating this position. He argues that we are obligated to promote the general welfare; therefore, we should never give preferential treatment to those who are close to us. As Baron argues, however, those who object to impartiality object to extreme impartiality in unextreme cases. Impartiality is required for what we would call moral dilemmas, and not for day-to-day activities that involve our families and friends.²⁰ Therefore, Baron is suggesting a favorable attitude toward impartiality when it comes to serious moral matters only. It is right and proper for us to have special feelings reserved for those closest to us. I would go further to suggest that employing such an extreme, that is, unfeeling, impartial stance actually rejects, rather than upholds morality. Euthyphro's stance toward his

¹⁸I. Becker, "Impartiality and Ethical Theory," *Ethics* 101 (July, 1991): 699.

¹⁹M. Baron, "Impartiality and Friendship" in *Ethics* 101 (July, 1991): 839.

²⁰*Ibid*

father, for example, constitutes extreme impartiality. I would argue that a person who embraces such an extreme impartiality is immoral in the sense that he or she does not understand the purpose and function of moral principle.

But, is it even possible to remain impartial when we have specific and partial attachments to people and ideas? This is the type of question raised by those who say that there is no such thing as impartiality.²¹ While it is true that self-preference has a part to play in human nature, it does not have to occupy all space.²² There are times when one realizes the need to be impartial. A parent, for instance, understands this need. Parents sometimes wrestle with their biases toward their children. When one's child gets involved in a disagreement with another child, for example, the parent may feel pulled towards his or her child because there is a desire to protect and comfort the son or daughter. In such a case, the parent's impartial stance should be considered a very important moral stance because it demonstrates the parent's ability to empathize with the other child. The point is that a parent understands the need to be impartial, and it is not impossible for him or her to achieve that. The same is possible for others. Two things need to be understood here. First, partiality in certain circumstances is morally important, and on the basis of this, adopting an impartial perspective would result in moral turpitude. Wanting to save one's own child before a stranger's in an emergency situation exemplifies

²¹Baron, p. 845.

²²J. Cottingham, "The Ethics of Self-Concern," *Ethics* 101 (July, 1991): 800.

such a bias. Second, there are times when we should not let personal biases influence our decisions. Nepotism, holding back important truths just to save one's reputation, or letting a traffic violation go because the violator is your friend are such instances where personal feelings obstruct moral action. There is partiality in friendship, but there are times when we should not let this influence our decisions. Sometimes, then, we need to detach ourselves from our particularities long enough to view a matter from a different perspective for more comprehensive understanding.²³ Can we do this? And what is the nature of the impartiality we are trying to achieve?

Let us consider an example. Someone who is in a position to hire an employee must examine each candidate's qualifications. If one of the applicants is a relative, the employer must consider this irrelevant. The argument is that it is impossible to disregard one's attachments, but I contend that that is not the case. Significantly someone who is placed in a hiring position must possess such an ability, for presumably, this is one of the reasons for giving such a responsibility to that person. Acting impartially in this situation does not necessarily imply that one has become careless about a relationship. The kind of impartiality that needs to be applied is accompanied by the understanding that caring is an attitude that must be directed toward all, and not merely toward family and friends. Viewed in this way, I think an impartial stance is possible.

²³Baron, pp. 853-855.

One might argue, however, that the hiring practices of an employer are quite different from the moral conundrums people sometimes face. How is one to respond, for example, to a more personal situation, such as having to decide whether to keep a loved one on life support, knowing that the patient has no chance for recovery? Unequivocally, this is an incredibly difficult decision to make, and one in which I do not think it would be possible for someone to be impartial-*in the way a Kantian would advocate*. That is an important caveat. Kant's idea of impartiality is that it is rational and devoid of emotion. Nevertheless, one could be impartial in the way I am postulating: in a caring way. One could decide that the best decision would be to terminate artificial life support for the reason that the patient's organs might be used charitably to save someone who had a better chance of leading a longer, healthier life. The right to life principle could be weighed in favor of someone other than those we are closely attached to. This is the kind of impartiality that is possible, and one to which we should aspire if our morality is to transcend the boundaries of our personal relationships.

Another criticism of impartiality is that its impact on individuals themselves is problematic. Impartiality requires us to transcend our biases towards others; however, the question is does it not also require a self-transcendence? Is it not the case that our own personal projects, desires, and interests must be overcome if we are to achieve moral character? There is no denying that impartiality applies to ourselves, and not only others, however, the question is, to what degree does it force us to abandon

our own interests? Bernard Williams, as cited in Nagel, argues against principled ethics because of its impersonality. If, in trying to achieve moral character we give up everything that is important to us, we do not then have a life worth living. "Impersonal demands rule out the commitment to personal projects that is a condition for the integrity of one's life, and...undermine the commitment to particular other persons that is a condition of love and friendship."²⁴ This is a problem with impartiality according to a Kantian construal of it.

Our personal projects give our life substance and conviction and compel our allegiance to life itself. Life has to have substance to make sense, morality is part of that. Like Williams, I would argue that without commitment to morality, one would not feel the need to be impartial.²⁵ An argument which implies that impartiality forces us to give up personal pursuits implies that morality is not a personal commitment. To clarify, the issue is that impartiality forces one to give up our other personal pursuits, such as wanting a successful career, or the love of a certain person. If these things come in conflict with impartiality, one must abandon them, as dictated by strict impartiality. But these are the very things that contribute to our character. I would argue, however, that the motivation for impartiality comes from the personal commitments to one's life and one's interests. For example, teaching requires impartial judgment everyday. This fairness is what makes a teacher caring in the students'

²⁴T Nagel, The View From Nowhere (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) p. 191.

²⁵Williams, p. 18

eyes. Morality is not external to one's character. To reiterate an earlier point, there must be personal meaning in morality, or why would anyone bother to try to be impartial? Morality becomes meaningful because it is a function of how we act within our relationships and in the pursuit of our goals, and impartiality oversees these relationships to their better advantage, rather than negating the relationship. This means that impartiality often strengthens, rather than weakens a relationship. Because relationships are a vital part of our lives, so is caring about being impartial when called for.

I would like to argue that the notion of universalizability is equally contestable as a component of principled ethics as it is traditionally understood. In the Kantian sense, universalizability requires the moral agent to do exactly what we would want and expect all others to do in the same situation. Of particular importance then, is that the same moral law be similarly applied. What is arguable about Kantian universalizability is that there seems to be little motivation for universalizing morality outside of the moral laws themselves. Morality seems very impersonal then, and abiding by the principle of universalizability would feel quite meaningless. Universalizability then, is a difficult moral concept to encourage because it lacks the motivation which comes from concern and caring. It is thus unrealistic to expect us to universalize when it comes to dealing with those in whom we feel we have no personal stake.

There is, however, a sense in which universalizability can be understood less stoically. The most common argument against

universalizability is that it is implausible to expect someone to understand the perspective of another. Nagel suggests that the individual has both personal and impersonal goals.²⁶ Maintaining a good relationship with one's mate would be an example of a personal goal, establishing positive interrelationships with the strangers we encounter exemplifies an impersonal goal. What Nagel means by personal and impersonal are those that seem dearest and closest to our hearts, and those that are other-regarding, respectively. This is not to be confused with caring about things for oneself, and not caring for things that do not immediately affect us. There must be a presence of caring or concern involved when dealing with others outside our immediate care. Morality is a social phenomenon: if people were really self-focused, our actions toward others would be irrelevant except insofar as they affect how our personal goals are achieved. This is not the case for most as the desire for harmony with others is quite mutual. Hence, it is plausible that we can expect another person in a similar situation to want to employ the same moral principle. Universalizability, then, seems to embody the idea that there is a foundation of caring beneath our impartial actions.

The idea of universalizability is still problematic, however, if it assumes the equal treatment of situations. But are situations relevantly similar? In a sense, because each person has a different perspective, and since perspectives are understood to be part of the situation, then no two

²⁶T. Nagel, Equality and Partiality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 3-4.

situations are going to be alike as long as different perceptions are involved. There seems to be a misconception built around the idea of universalizability that makes its thesis problematic. This misconception is that in order to apply universalizability, we must look for similarity as the only relevant detail. But we must reconsider what counts as relevant detail. The rationalist account would want to leave out the emotional perspective. I propose that emotion is a relevant detail. Universalizing moral behavior creates discomfort for those who face moral dilemmas which pit loved ones against a neutral or unloved participant. If truth telling is a universalizable moral principle, then it should apply to all cases, for example. Consider Kant's Case of the Inquiring Murderer.²⁷ In this paradigmatic example, you witness someone fleeing from a murderer. When the murderer meets you, he asks where his victim has fled. The Kantian solution would be to tell the truth because lying to protect one's life is not a universalizable principle. But suppose the victim is your mother. Obviously honesty would be a disagreeable choice. Contrarily, if the victim were someone you loathed, honesty may be rather agreeable. The principle of universalizability requires that these situations be treated as identical, morally speaking. But, to assume that they are identical is erroneous. The differences have a lot to do with one's emotional perspective. Universalizability consequently fails to consider how one's emotional state can affect a situation. Furthermore, if one were to follow the universal

²⁷J. Rachels, The Elements of Moral Philosophy, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), pp. 122-123

principle of truth-telling, one would be aiding the murderous act in this example. This would be immoral.

Following from that, if universalizability means that a maxim which applies to one person should apply to all other persons, and there is no room for special circumstances, then universalizability could be criticized for amounting to blind egalitarianism. What universalizability calls for, however, is that we be impartial when applying principles. Impartiality and equality are not the same thing. Callan uses the example of a musical competition to exemplify this point. If one is judging a piano competition, one must apply musical standards impartially. This does not mean that everyone is accorded the same musical merit. The only equality is that the musical standards apply to everyone equally.²⁸ So, according to this analogy, in moral dilemmas, what one is doing is not simply treating people equally, but rather, applying the same moral principle to equal cases. However, there seems to be something inherently different between judging a musical competition, and judging a moral dilemma. The difference results from the fact that although moral principles are invariable, moral situations are not. To universalize one's treatment of others may, in fact, be unethical. Most of us do think of who and what is involved in moral situations. It is rarely the case that someone makes a moral decision without thinking about the circumstances of the situation. One would have to question the moral character of someone who always

²⁸Callan, p. 402

told the truth, regardless of how it might affect someone. I would suggest that we do care about these special circumstances, and this influences our decision.

What has been said about principled ethics so far demonstrates a complexity of universalizability when we consider the motivation behind it and context-sensitive applications. The traditional way of understanding principled ethics is that it relies on the faculties of reason and involves the careful weighing and impartial application of moral principles. How one feels about the people involved in these moral decisions is viewed as a factor which could potentially jeopardize one's moral decisions. The claim of the principle-based ethicists is that if morality is a function of reasoning, then it is a reliable morality, but if it is left to individuals and their emotional ties and preferences, morality will be in jeopardy. Principled ethics, understood in this way, pays little attention to the emotional investment that people put into moral dilemmas. Indeed, Kant's principled ethics requires that one refrain from investing emotion in such circumstances. The problem is, moral dilemmas are rather emotional situations. Indeed, they become dilemmas because they cause personal struggle. The priority that is placed on reasoning as the instrument of morality is too dominant. Consequently, a principle-based ethic is misconstrued as one in which the mind speaks and the heart is silenced.

Why exactly is this problematic? Or, put another way, why do I argue for the inclusion of the heart in moral principles? The answer has to do with the nature of humanity. It is erroneous to treat reason and emotion

as if they are separate entities and mutually exclusive. Even though this dichotomization goes back to Plato, was elaborated by Kant, and seems to prevail in much moral philosophy, it inaccurately reflects what occurs in our moral experiences. Emotions are considered antagonistic to morality precisely because of this dichotomy. If we believe that emotions are unpredictable, and that they misguide the moral agent into satisfying his own desires and inclinations, this paints a bleak picture of human emotions and morality is seen as rigid and unfeeling. Is it not the case that emotions more often than not act as a proper guide to morality? I think what proponents of this kind of exclusive ethic fail to recognize is that in order for one to be principled, one must be motivated to act in that fashion. Where, then, does the motivation to be principled come from? I would suggest that the reason we act principled, impartially, and according to ethical principles, is that we care about the people involved in the moral situation. One does not follow a principle blindly, but rather, follows it because it has ramifications: principles affect people. Thus, principled-ethics have an emotional foundation.

Further, could it be that emotion is not irrational after all? I propose that there is an intricate relationship between reason and emotion within the moral domain. Though it is argued that since moral dilemmas are emotionally charged situations, and that a moral agent will only be lead to choose the action that will assuage his or her desire, I would suggest that a moral person will not simply be ruled by self-serving desires. In fact, knowing in your heart what is the right thing to do involves applying a

moral principle, for one's desire to be compassionate to all people is a principle which is emotional. All moral action involves principle I would suggest. What is different about paying attention to one's heart when applying the moral law is that one is moved to principled ethics by one's heart. Oftentimes, moralizing in this way does not result in the individual being "happy" about the decision, for many moral decisions force one to choose between equally undesirable consequences. What is significant is that a moral choice be made, not a choice that simply aims to keep someone from disappointment or pain.

Hence, although some advocates of impartiality and principled ethics disregard the role of emotions in morality, it makes more sense if principled ethics is viewed in a way that includes them. To deny that one consults the heart while considering the principle when faced with a moral dilemma denies a significant feature of human moral action. And if we can accept that the force of emotion works with the force of reason during moral decision making, then it logically follows that the ethic of care as it is traditionally understood, does not make sense as an exclusive theory either. Precisely, my claim that there is an emotional underpinning in principled thinking implies that there is an intricate involvement of principle when one is acting from a caring perspective. This unique connection needs to be revealed.

Chapter 3: Analyzing the Ethic of Care

Unless someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better
it's not.

Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*

The previous chapter suggested that a Kantian principle-based ethic enjoins one to override human affections and desires toward others and with respect to personal pursuits. Furthermore, understanding a principled ethic in this way not only de-emphasizes human emotion, but assumes that in order for one to be moral, emotions must be kept in check to prevent them from dislocating moral action. Morality is placed under the jurisdiction of reason, and it is reason alone that adjudicates morality. This type of thinking has been challenged by feminist ethics, in particular. Feminist ethicists criticize traditional ethics associated with rule-governed morality for disregarding the role of emotion. More to the point, some argue that an ethic which requires impartiality places unreasonable and perhaps even impossible demands on the moral agent. They maintain, in fact, that being moral means that one's actions emerge from dispositions whose main component is emotion. What has grown out of these criticisms is a moral theory that de-emphasizes moral principles and emphasizes a moral agent's capacity to care for and respond to another within a moral situation. Such is the sentiment expressed in an ethic of care. The way to a

moral society is achieved by encouraging and maintaining caring relationships, rather than adhering to principles which seem to overlook their importance. Caring, not rule-following, is paramount.

The following will examine what is involved in an ethic of care as it is usually understood. Is it enough to care? Does such an exclusive ethic explain the moral experience? Is caring, in fact, the primary consideration when making moral decisions? I hope to show that thinking of an ethic of care as focusing centrally on emotion is as deficient as thinking of a principled ethic as focusing centrally on reason. The best understanding of an ethic of care will include principled action as well.

3.1 The Ethic of Care as it is Traditionally Understood

The ethic of care as a moral philosophy is an idea that goes back to ancient women philosophers, contemporaries of Plato, who supported the idea of "care" being an essential element in the moral life. The works of Phintys of Sparta and Perictione I reflect the idea of the fulfillment and preservation of harmonious relationships.²⁹ Twentieth century philosophers such as Gilligan and Noddings have reincarnated this theory. Gilligan is perhaps most noted for bringing forth the idea of the ethic of care as a gender associated moral theory. Gilligan subscribes to the notion

²⁹M. Waithe, "Twenty-three Hundred Years of Women Philosophers. Toward a Gender Undifferentiated Moral Theory," in Who Cares? Theory, Research, and Educational Implications of the Ethic of Care, ed. M.E. Brabeck (New York: Praeger, 1989), p. 6.

that men and women attend to moral problems using different methods. Her theory is a direct response to Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning. Kohlberg's research seems to indicate that women are morally inferior due to a lack of reasoning power. Gilligan, however, explains the difference in males' and females' responses to moral dilemmas in another way. Males tend to go through a process of rational deliberation with respect to principles or rules.³⁰ She suggests that females approach moral situations from a different perspective, one of caring. This traditional view goes back to Plato, but persists among some philosophers who contend that men formulate moral judgments with respect to justice, whereas women appeal to their emotions and base moral decisions on an ethic of care. The accuracy or fallibility of such a thesis is beyond the purview of this discussion; I will proceed with the assumption that caring is a virtue that transcends gender.

Gender differentiation aside, Gilligan's primary claim is that an ethic of care is at least equal to, but perhaps better than, an ethic based on justice.³¹ An ethic of care is also referred to as "relational ethics" because moral decisions are made with concern for preserving a caring relation. Noddings argues that moral education should be based on an ethic of care because it pays heed to the relations in which we live.³² A morality based

³⁰Gilligan, p. 67

³¹C. Siegfried, "Pragmatism, Feminism, and Sensitivity to Context," in Journal of Moral Education 16 (1987): 67.

³²Noddings, "An Ethic of Care and Its Implications for Instructional Arrangements."

on caring is thought to be non-detached and sensitive to the context of the moral problem.³³ A care-based ethic encourages moral judgments which are formed by responding to one's natural inclination to create and sustain caring relationships, and which consider one's own position and objectives within the moral circumstances.

The ethic of care is appealing because it gives credence to the idea that relationships are integral to our lives. Contrary to principle-based ethics, caring provides a motive for action that makes sense to our communal nature. To clarify, a "principled" moral agent treats individuals according to rights or justice principles. On the other hand, a moral agent acting out of care will treat individuals as objects of care. Understood in this way, the ethic of care coincides with an Einsteinian adage: man is here for the sake of other man.

3.2 Refuting and Revising the Traditional Understanding of the Ethic of Care

Noddings' view of a caring ethic reflects the idea of fellowship quite well, for in her moral theory, caring occurs reciprocally between the "one-caring" and the "cared-for".³⁴ It is this idea of interdependence and the exchange of concern that is allegedly lacking in principled ethics, according

³³O. Flanagan and J. Adler, "Impartiality and Particularity," Social Research 50 (Autumn, 1983): 579-584.

³⁴N. Noddings, Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 58.

to proponents of the ethic of care. It is held by some care ethicists that one cannot be motivated to follow a moral principle, but that it is natural and desirable to care for others in the condition of a relationship. This propensity to care is exemplified by such natural bond phenomena as that between a parent and child.

This notion of caring relationships is contentious, however. Noddings proposes that the ethic of caring is functional in all situations, that "in every human encounter, there arises the possibility of a caring occasion."³⁵ Significantly, Noddings sees a caring ethic as a matter of dealing with all interactions. But let us consider an example that could reasonably be described as a genuine moral dilemma. Imagine that you are shopping for a birthday present and that you decide to buy two items. You approach the cashier's counter, and hand your items to a young clerk. While she is putting your purchase through, she is preoccupied with a fellow employee, trying to arrange her coffee break. When you are paying for the items, you realize that the cashier has forgotten to charge you for the more expensive item. The morally correct action would be to point out the cashier's mistake. If you are a caring moral agent, you would not want this to be overlooked, for it may result in the cashier having to pay for the item out of her own pay cheque. There is an obstacle to caring, however. You may feel that the cashier has provided less than respectable service to you because she appeared to be more concerned about taking a coffee break

³⁵Noddings, "An Ethic of Caring and its Implications for Instructional Arrangements," p. 222.

than serving you. Because of this, the caring connection has been broken, and the moral choice looks less attractive. Noddings might argue that this does not devalue a moral theory based on caring, but rather, suggests that there is something uncaring about the individuals involved. But this is my point. The underlying assumption is that everyone has the disposition to care, and wants to care, but is this the case? In a world where there is much anonymity, it seems it has become too easy not to care about others in a personal way. And if this is the case, it seems that it is simply not enough to rely on the emergence of naturally caring feelings the way that Noddings or other care ethicists proclaim. Noddings attempts to remedy this by distinguishing between "natural" caring and "ethical" caring.³⁶ Natural caring is the kind of caring that comes about by virtue of the feelings we develop by being in relationship with others. For whatever reason, sometimes natural caring is impeded. If natural caring does not occur, ethical caring must be summoned. Ethical caring does not depend on a rule, but, in Noddings' conception, upon the development of the ideal self. The ideal self presumably understands every encounter with another as a relationship of a sort, and one in which there must be a one-caring and a cared-for. Significantly, when one acts out of ethical caring, she is not looking for a justification for her actions, but wants to achieve a sense of completion in the relationship. Completion involves fulfilling the roles of

³⁶Noddings, Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education, pp. 84-95.

one-caring and cared-for. The task of morality is developing this ideal self.

There are two difficulties involved in this dual nature of ethical and natural caring. The first is that it is not clear how one is to be ethically caring when one cannot be naturally caring. If caring is not to be thought of as a product of principled action, then it should be the case that one is naturally motivated to care. But Noddings describes ethical caring as a sort of last resort kind of caring when natural caring fails. The question is, then, how exactly does one become ethically caring when his or her natural caring fails? If caring is itself a motivation, then how does the motivation involved in ethical caring differ from the motivation involved in natural caring? Noddings suggests that an ethic of caring seeks to maintain caring itself.³⁷ Ethical caring seems to involve caring on an impersonal level. To illustrate, suppose I were not naturally caring about the cashier who overlooked the one item. If I cannot naturally care, then I should ethically care. Ethical caring would result in my being honest with her, because failing to do so would imply not caring. In this respect I am not caring about the clerk personally, but I am at least impersonally caring about doing the right thing. But what am I really caring about? It seems that if I am not caring about the person directly, then I am, on principle, doing the right thing. What I care about is, precisely, doing the right thing. This suggests to me, a principled action. This is a critical point because it

³⁷Ibid., p. 107.

implies that an ethic of care, or at least "ethical caring" as Noddings describes, collapses into principled ethics. The kind of ethical caring that Noddings talks about does not occur because one has a personal investment in another, but because one understands the principle of treating others well. Ethical caring is principled.

The kind of caring demonstrated by a nurse is testimony to this kind of caring. Even though he or she has no caring feeling toward the patient on a personal level, being a nurse requires one to perform caring acts. The problem surrounding ethical caring is that situations of ethical caring involve more than merely caring. Though it is possible to possess the kind of moral character which cares for others in a general way, there seems to be some underlying motivation other than care, that makes one feel so. Why would I care about pointing out the cashier's mistake, and why would a nurse perform caring acts for people he or she has no personal investment in?

At this point, a distinction must be made between caring emotion and caring behavior. I think this distinction corresponds with Noddings' natural caring and ethical caring, respectively. To have a caring emotion is to feel a sense of attachment to the person(s) involved, and to aspire to do the morally right thing because of those involved. Caring behavior, however, can be quite different. One can behave in a caring way without feeling any sense of care for the particular people involved. It is much like attending church because one believes this is esteemed behavior within one's community, but not genuinely believing in the event of a mass. So

one can be moved to caring behavior, or to ethically care; however, the motivation for this action seems to be divorced from genuine, or natural caring. This is a differentiation Noddings fails to make, and this is where the problem occurs. If there is no genuine caring, there must be something else which motivates caring behavior. To develop a caring attitude about others with whom one has no direct contact, to desire the proper treatment of one's fellow human beings is intricately linked to the idea of principle. Flat ethical caring is no different from the traditional understanding of principled ethics. Ethical caring is established through principled reasoning.

To reiterate, the problem with ethical caring is that it is motivated by something other than simply care, as Noddings wants to argue. Indeed, ethical caring is the kind of caring that is supposed to compensate for a lack of natural caring. But, if one cannot be motivated by natural caring, how is one to be motivated by ethical caring, unless ethical caring, in fact, is motivated by something else. I have argued that ethical caring is motivated by one's desire to exhibit caring behavior, and this caring behavior emerges from a desire to be principled. Principle makes it possible for one to stretch his or her capacity to care.

The second difficulty is that natural caring comes about freely and easily because we are personally involved with some people. Ethical caring is summoned for those cases in which we cannot naturally care. Whereas the former situation most probably involves spouses, children, other family members or close friends, the latter is characteristic of our interactions

with less significant relations, such as the grocer, the postman, people we pass on the sidewalk, and so on. We would expect that natural caring would be given to our loved ones, and ethical caring be given to those not so close to us, and though ethical caring is quite appropriate for the latter cases, natural caring would be preferable in all circumstances. But what about those rare circumstances in which loving bonds have not been formed between parent and child, siblings, or between husband and wife? Does ethical caring suffice? This seems to be the central issue. Ethical caring is a moral good insofar as it might occasion one to be naturally caring. Noddings would argue that ethical caring would encourage natural caring. She does not account for how the transition from ethical caring to natural caring occurs, nor the possibility of this not occurring. This is an important moral educational consideration, for it is precisely the fact that caring is often limited to natural caring that is problematic. It is not enough simply to encourage children to care, for it is difficult for them to understand the immediate importance of caring for people who are ultimately strangers. Children need an explanation, an understanding, of the importance of caring. To bridge the gap between natural caring and ethical caring, I think, involves the idea of principle. If children can begin to understand the idea that all people should be respected because they are fellow human beings, then their ability to care may expand from a smaller circle of family and friends, to a larger one that includes humankind. We cannot presume that all children will understand this need to care in a larger way, but if we educate them about the importance of respecting others because

they are fellow human beings, then we can help children make the transition from natural caring to ethical caring.

There is a further concern. Certain relationships, such as those shared by family members or spouses, by their very nature, deserve a different kind of caring than other relationships, but does this force one to lead a double moral life? There is a potential problem with a public and private morality developing. I would suggest that not all relationships should share the same amount of care. There ought to be a special feeling of care when it comes to one's beloved. Yet there is something disturbing about the idea of devoting a certain type of caring to our private relations, and a different type to our public ones. What makes this type of moralizing discomfoting is that the moral life seems to embody the idea that all humans are worthy of equal respect, and that our circle of care should surround everyone. At the same time, however, there should be caring that reflects different types of relationships. The way I care about a mate should be different from the way I care for a next door neighbor. Often, however, the degree of caring we exhibit is too differential. This kind of variability with respect to our moral interactions seems problematic. Furthermore, it is the kind of natural caring about those we are close to that often leads to immoral behavior. Religious, civil, and international wars are an example *par excellence* of this. One would not think of bombing one's own country, but yet think of bombing another country.

Responding out of care presumably does not require asking what the right thing to do is.³⁸ In other words, moral performance is supposed to come naturally from one's disposition to care, not from principles or rules. This is a rather limited understanding of caring which I believe paints an incomplete picture of the ethic of care. The assumption is that moral situations are relatively clear, and that caring will result in making the best moral choice. Caring, however, is not a simple solution to convoluted moral dilemmas in which there is competition for one's caring. For instance, suppose my divorced parents are both requesting my presence at Christmas dinner. According to the argument at the outset, responding out of care guides moral action, and eliminates any question about the right thing to do. But in this example, caring, in fact, does not indicate right action, and, in fact, this caring indicates action which creates the dilemma. Caring indicates an action, but the action indicated is a difficult or perhaps impossible one to carry out, given that I am only one person who can only be at one place at one time. How does one find her way out of this moral dilemma? One must first ask: what is the moral action? A caring ethic does not preclude this question. The next required step is some sort of calculation using moral reasoning; principles are called into this.

The ethic of care is thus in need of reconceptualization. As it is traditionally understood, it is set up in opposition to an anaemic view of impartiality, and thus, has come to be understood as an ethic concerned

³⁸I. Blum, "Compassion," in Moral Perception and Particularity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 210.

only with the maintenance of relationships. We cannot assume, however, that the extent of caring is automatically carried over to those we are not naturally close to. Caring, therefore, needs to be developed and extended to the point of not always simply privileging the self over the other, and not fluctuating according to egoistic desires when it comes to moral decisions. There must also be a concern for the general welfare of all which can be developed from the notion of impartiality. What, then, is the nature of the relationship between care and principle?

Caring and principle are interdependent. One who cares about another, cares about treating that person in a way that is good and just, and these ideas are ones that evolve from the idea of principle. The sense of caring that exists between a husband and wife embodies the principles of loyalty, compassion, respect for person, and so on. The kind of caring that exists between an orphan somewhere in Asia and a foster parent in North America embodies similar virtues. In caring about a person, one is concerned about the treatment of that person. Thus, to "care about" someone means that one wants that person to be treated well. Treating another person well implies respecting his or her right to life, property, dignity in life, etcetera. In the final analysis then, caring is related to principle. But what makes one care about the principle? One who cares about another, cares about treating that person in a way that is good and just, and so, one is devoted and committed to this ideal. I think in caring about a person, one is concerned about the treatment of that person. Thus,

to "care about" someone means that one wants that person to have his rights respected. That is a matter of principle.

An important point to be made is that caring action cannot be depended on to lead to moral behavior in instances where caring is not a natural outcome. It is not an automatic response for us to feel compassion or concern for unfortunate people who live across the world. In fact, it is not necessarily an automatic response to care about people within our own community. We are very much confined to our proximal world of relationships. Our moral exemplars, such as Mother Theresa, however, demonstrate that our moral conduct can be extended to those with whom we do not share a direct, personal relationship. But how does this occur? This occurs, I believe, because we have a sense of connection to the principles of life, health, education, provision of basic needs, and so on. Caring that all people have those things in their lives induces us to act in a caring manner. We cannot say that it is our direct caring for those unfortunate people that has brought us to act in a moral way. We can say that principled behavior has helped us extend our circle of care to include those people. This is important because being moral is a matter of how we act towards all people, not simply those we are close to. One who is compassionate with his or her family and friends, but does not feel any sense of compassion for a stranger who is pleading for help is not a moral person. Morality is a global concept. In other words, being moral is important for the treatment of all people, not just those near us. Our

actions, then, must reflect the idea that moral conduct should be directed towards all people.

Principle motivates us to act morally in cases where loved ones are involved as well. For example, impartiality prevents me from giving preferential treatment to the students with whom I share a closer relationship in my classroom. In both examples, though we may think it is our caring nature that causes us to be moral, there is an element of principle which plays an important part. It is misleading to think that morality based on care does not involve principle. To think that way is to disregard much of the moral context. Wanting to do the morally right thing by consulting a principle is indicative of one's caring about morality. Morality then, is a matter of caring about people and principles.

Opponents of the ethic of care disagree with the idea that caring involves principled action because principled action is considered to be the product of rational thinking. Caring, by contrast, is considered to be a derivative of emotion, and thus, not a matter of reason. In fact, this idea has dominated because of the bifurcation of reason and emotion. My claim that our moral experiences involve both reason and emotion depends on a unique relationship that I believe exists between reason and emotion. How we feel about certain things in the world is largely a reflection of what our views of the world are. As Scheffler aptly puts it, "the emotions intimately mesh with all critical appraisals of the environment."³⁹ In Scheffler's

³⁹I. Scheffler, In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 7.

explanation, emotions are not just reactions to the environment, but are part of our understanding of it. Emotions are an evaluative component in the making of judgments. In other words, our emotions operate strongly in our conceptual understanding of the world. This conceptual component of emotion needs to be illuminated.



Chapter 4: The Reason/Emotion Dichotomy

Western philosophy has traditionally construed reason and emotion as bipolar opposites, or, at least in the area of moral philosophy, as entities that do not and cannot work together. It is commonly argued that emotions are the antagonist in moral decisions, working against the protagonist of reason. It is common in philosophy to promote reason as the controller of the passions.⁴⁰ The thinking of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and most prominently, Kant, represents this line of thought. Emotions are thought to be subservient to reason, and in Kant's case, are considered inferior from the moral domain. And though the philosophy of Hume, Rousseau, and contemporary feminist ethics carves out a central place for emotions in morality, the tradition which dichotomizes reason and emotion is difficult to break through.

The previous two chapters have outlined principle-bound ethics and the ethic of care which have grown out of this dichotomy, and I have argued that to understand principled ethics and caring as unrelated or opposed is to misconstrue them. This misconstrual, I believe, is an outcome of misunderstanding emotion and reason as mutually exclusive and opposed, with emotion existing outside the realm of rationality. I want to argue against this dichotomy. My claim is that moral action is a function of reason and emotion, and that reason and emotion share a relationship by

⁴⁰R. Solomon, The Passions: The Myth and Nature of Human Emotion (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1977), p. 11

virtue of emotion having a conceptual component. Moreover, I hope to show that morality is unachievable unless there is an emotional commitment.

4.1 The Arguments Against Emotion

The debate about emotion seems to come from two main concerns. One concern is that emotion itself is an elusive concept, and therefore to talk about it in the realm of morality adds to the enigma. The other is that, even with an understanding of what emotion is, it is not possible to include it in morality because it is understood to be unpredictable, unreliable, and capricious. While I think there is much to be investigated about the nature of emotion, that discussion exceeds the scope of this thesis. Instead, I will forge on using a common understanding of emotion as those experiences of joy, anger, sadness, jealousy, happiness, and so forth. Therefore, the question of "what is an emotion?" will be presupposed. What I wish to investigate is what it is about the emotions that has led philosophers and others to think that they are unreliable, and in fact, detrimental to morality. More to the point, why are emotions considered irrational, and is it accurate to view them in this way?

It is negatively asserted that emotions are "dumb forces beyond our control."⁴¹ The portrayals of Shakespearean characters such as Romeo and Juliet, as well as contemporary literary and film characters are testimony to

⁴¹Ibid , p 251

this assessment of emotion. Quite often, the "emotional" characters meet their demise, whereas the calm, "rational" characters move on to achieve their goals, make the right decisions, and overcome their problems. What is implied is that we cannot be successful in love, business, or personal pursuits unless we use our heads, and unless we consciously try to overcome our emotions. So, while there is no denial of the presence of emotions, there is strong denial that they can play any constructive part in one's decisions. With regard to morality, then, emotions constitute a lack of control and judgment on the moral agent's part. For example, suppose an item had been stolen from the store that I work at, and that I knew the person who took it. If it were my fellow employee who had stolen the item, and this co-worker also happened to be my good friend, my emotional attachment to him, some argue, will cloud my moral vision, and keep me silent. I may exercise poor moral judgment if I pay attention to my emotions, according to this argument.

Associated with this argument is the claim that emotions seem to arise without our knowing or expecting them.⁴² How many times have we heard someone say, "I couldn't help it, I just got so angry", or seen someone lash out at his or her mate in a jealous rage? These scenarios are indicative of the manner in which emotions are said to evolve without our planning them or to take us by surprise. Since we cannot control our emotions, it logically follows that we may not control the behavior that

⁴²A. Vetlesen, Perception, Empathy, and Judgment: An Inquiry into the Preconditions of Moral Performance (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 146.

springs from them. Disagreements between people are a case in point. Sometimes when two people disagree, the disagreement can take them to a point of frustration and anger such that one person ends up throwing an object against a wall or slamming a door, etcetera. In worse situations, this is how battery and homicide are said to occur. In analyzing these situations, the perpetrator is often confused about how he (or she) could have done such a thing, that he (or she) could not even believe he or she could commit such a deed. These situations are described as ones in which we were not thinking, and in which we let our emotions get the best of us.

Another reason why emotions are usually excluded from the moral domain is that we do not choose what we feel.⁴³ Those who argue for the passivity of emotions claim that emotions simply happen to us, that they are reactions to the situations we find ourselves in. On some days, for example, I am able to take my professor's critique with appreciation, but on other days I feel quite hurt and discouraged. Certainly, I would rather and should rather be grateful than grievous, but sometimes this is not possible for me. Even if I tell myself beforehand that I should not feel personally insulted, there seems to be no stopping the negative reaction on some days.

Couples who seek marriage counselling are another case in point. Even after discussing the idea and purpose of openness in counseling sessions, and even after already having heard the cutting remarks of a

⁴³Ibid , p. 215.

spouse, one may feel hurt and humiliated. Since even hurtful comments must come out in these discussions, one might expect people to be prepared to hear them, understand the need for them to be spoken, but not feel insulted by them; however it is often the case that these discussions result in hurt.

The same unexpectedness can be claimed about the experience of emotions such as happiness or satisfaction. Suppose, for example, I had been secretly jealous of my friends' seemingly "perfect" marital relationship. Witnessing them fight or bicker, instead of making me feel bad for them, actually gives me some satisfaction and enjoyment. I may recognize this as an unhealthy way to feel, yet I cannot seem to overcome it. Or, perhaps I notice that my last account balance is showing \$500.00 in my favor. Rather than feeling concerned that an error has been made at the bank's loss, I might feel lucky, and pleased with my stroke of luck.

The inability to choose our feelings is not limited to our interactions with those we are close to. Our encounters with strangers can have this affect as well. For example, though it is morally proper to feel compassion for those in less fortunate situations than ourselves, some may experience the opposite, and, in fact, feel quite disgusted by them. A beggar on the street or a handicapped person might make someone feel uncomfortable rather than compassionate, even though that person recognizes this as a morally inappropriate response. And so, it seems to be the case that we are afflicted with inappropriate emotions, sometimes despite our consciously trying to prevent them.

A further objection to emotion has to do with consistency. I believe a characteristic of a good moral theory is that it results in consistent moral behavior, that is, it avoids moral relativism. The problem with a moral theory which includes emotion, it could be argued, is that not everyone experiences the same emotions, and therefore, responses to moral dilemmas will radically differ. Take the previous example of how we respond to people who are in dire situations. I may be quite affected by a beggar on the street and respond by offering my lunch. On the other hand, someone else may be filled with abhorrence at the sight of someone begging for food or money, and completely ignore the beggar as a result. We are both affected, but not towards the same moral action. Thus, moral relativism results because people's emotional responses differ in kind and consequence.

Whereas it seems morally repugnant to be unaffected by one's fellow human beings, there is also a problem with being too affected or inappropriately affected. Some who argue against the inclusion of emotions in morality do so because they see emotions as causing moral paralysis, particularly in situations in which one is closely affiliated with the persons or objects involved. One's emotional state, and not the situation at hand, may take precedence. A situation of my friend's might help to illuminate this discussion. My friend is the owner of two dogs who do not seem to live together well. After observing their aggressive behavior with each other, she realized that one of the dogs was always the instigator. Unfortunately, this dog did not respond even to her persistent training.

After long and careful deliberation, she concluded that she had two choices. She could give the one dog away to somebody else, hoping that it would live well in solitude. Or she could have the dog put to sleep. Her attachment to the dog was so close that she did not want anyone else to have it, and so she decided it was best to have the dog put down. Clearly, this is an immoral choice, for taking the dog's life cannot be better than giving it away. This exemplifies an emotional situation, however, one in which the potential for one's sense of affiliation interfered with her ability to reason. As Porter explains, it is impossible for one to disengage him or herself from the anguish of the dilemma. In other words, the argument is that emotional engagement jeopardizes moral behavior, as it has in this case.⁴⁴

Perhaps the strongest argument against the emotions is that they are not morally obligatory.⁴⁵ In Kantian philosophy, the moral law is necessary and is followed by all.⁴⁶ According to Kantian ethics, moral action is prescribed by the moral law. One is required to follow the moral principle irrespective of the emotions one is experiencing while following it. Actions are judged according to the principle only; the principle is the moral agent's obligation. What this argument tends to focus on is behavior. How one feels at the time of executing a moral act is considered irrelevant. As long as one is acting morally, one is not obliged to feel a certain way; therefore, emotions are excluded from the central concern of morality.

⁴⁴E. Porter, Women and Moral Identity (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), p. 149.

⁴⁵Vetlesen, p. 215.

⁴⁶H. Acton, Kant's Moral Philosophy (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1970), p. 60.

The aforementioned arguments represent the emotions as unexpected and uncontrollable forces in our lives. Hence, they are considered to be irrational, rather than concepts we can think about and make decisions about.

4.2 The Arguments For Emotion

The above objections to emotion can be refuted, demonstrating that emotions can be understood as having a conceptual base. In this section I will counter the objections to emotion as being relevant to morality. In doing so, the necessary questions include: 1) how can emotions be understood as rational? and 2) how can emotions be thought of as contributing to morality? The Kantian belief that emotions impair judgment has led to the conclusion that "it is the utmost importance that emotion en bloc be kept out of the exercise of judgment..."⁴⁷ This statement presupposes an irrationality of emotions, and the idea that they are forces beyond our understanding and reasonable control. The idea is that when we are emotional, we cannot exercise proper judgment; being emotional precludes being rational. Let us refer again to the scenario I suggested about my fellow employee stealing an item. It is supposedly my friendship with this person that prevents me from upholding morality. Because this person is my friend, I am emotionally tied to him or her, so I act irrationally, and thus, immorally. In this example, I do not think that

⁴⁷Vedlesen, p. 117.

immorality is a result of being swayed by one's affiliations. There is an underlying implication that I would report my co-worker if he or she were a mere acquaintance, or perhaps even somebody whom I disliked. Thus, to keep silent about a friend, but report an acquaintance is to invoke a double standard. I would argue, however, that the double standard is an outcome of perceiving a situation as permissible if it is someone I know, but impermissible if it is someone whom I know but do not have an emotional investment in. The truly moral person recognizes an immoral deed even when it is committed by a friend. In fact, the moral repugnance of an act is magnified by the fact that someone with whom you associate and share a close, personal bond could engage in criminal behavior. If I were to overlook my friend's transgression, this would be a result of having perceived the situation wrongly and unfairly. It would be to understand the situation as involving permission to be immoral. I do not think that it is one's emotions that are irrational in this case, but rather, one's thinking.

Some proponents of the reason/emotion dichotomy tend to separate and distort what it means to reason and what it means to be emotional. There is a tendency to treat emotion as if it is something we experience without thinking about why we are experiencing it, how it is affecting us, and what it is making us do. But I would argue that we can and do think about our emotions. Out of love (or what may seem like love), I may want to protect my friend from prosecution. After thinking about it though, I will realize that even though I feel a certain way about my friend, he or she

has still committed a crime. Indeed this is the stuff moral dilemmas are made of.

We can think about our emotions in retrospect; however, one might argue that thinking about them does not mean that emotions are a part of our rational understanding. Employing our rational powers to think about something does not make that something characteristically rational. A terrorist is able to think about his or her terrorist activities after committing them, and about the euphoric and powerful feeling he or she had from committing the violent act, but being able to identify the feelings does not make them rational. Clearly, in this case, the feelings are irrational. But if there were no rational relationship between emotions and rationality, we would have no access to our emotions whatsoever, meaning, we would not be able to think about the emotions, even in retrospect. It is the case that we analyse and try to understand our emotions, both during and after they are expressed. We can access this understanding through reasoning because emotions have rational content.

This, however, does not explain why emotions sometimes arise as they do. For instance, bouts of anger or depression may strike us seemingly unexpectedly and uncontrollably. The fact that we sometimes cannot control our feelings does not excuse us from being accountable for them, just as we are accountable for the actions that result from them. In an angry moment I may make a caustic remark to my mother. Such an action is disrespectful and unacceptable. It is not sufficient to explain it by saying, "I was angry, I didn't really mean it." Perhaps I did not really

mean the hurtful things I said; however, I must be responsible for saying them. Indeed, it is a moral responsibility. What needs to be recognized is that emotions may induce irrational behavior. How we can educate students about dealing with inappropriate emotions will be discussed in chapter five.

But, if emotions caused us to act irrationally, how can they be described as rational? Behind all emotions are reasons. It is in this sense that emotions are involved in conceptualization. Our emotions are not passively accepted. What I mean is that if I am experiencing anger, or jealousy, there is a conceptual source of these emotions. When we experience emotions, we try not only to understand them, but to justify them as well. Justification requires rationality. This idea parallels Solomon's thesis about perception and judgment. Solomon argues that action is dependent on one's judgments. Judgments themselves are a function of our perception.⁴⁸ In other words, when we perceive a situation, we are already judging what action is called for, and, if there were no intervening deliberation that might override the prejudgment of the perception, we respond based on the perception. Emotions in his thesis are closely linked with perception. So the relationship then looks like this: **emotion** - perception - judgment - action. When we encounter a situation, our judgment of it is ultimately one that is formed with the aid of emotion. Emotions and perceptions are themselves forms of judgment which already contain how the perceiver understands the world. They have an evaluative

⁴⁸Ibid. p. 176

involvement in our conceptual understanding. In order to act morally we must be able to perceive a situation as requiring moral action. Our perceptions are closely linked to how we understand the situation. If, for example, I find that my bank account shows that I have more money than I should, how I feel about that will depend on how I understand the situation, and will determine what I will do about it. If my basic attitude is greed, then I will not correct the error. But if I feel scrupulous, I will point out the error to my bank. The emotions, Solomon explains, are purposive and lead to rationally accountable responses.⁴⁹ Not all emotions, however, have morally acceptable reasons. If, for example, one's view of the world is self-oriented, he or she may not be led to respond morally to situations which involve others. The role that emotions play in our perceptions is one that will be elaborated in the next section.

Admittedly, though, not all emotions are rationally based; that is, not all emotions arise from a rational view of the world. In fact, as I have suggested, emotions may cause us to do irrational things without us even realizing, such as yell profanities at a loved one, slam a door, or drive recklessly. These behaviors are irrational. Nonetheless, through self-evaluation we can come to understand them as such. Does this redeem emotions? If emotions can make us react immorally, what good does it do anyone to recognize that it is the emotions that are the source of "evil?" By analogy, knowing the cause of cancer does not necessarily result in

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 177.

knowing a cure. There is a way, however, to deal with the symptoms and side effects of cancer. Furthermore, there may be a way to prevent it through diet, exercise, and living a less stressed life. The assumption is that emotion forces itself upon us, and there is nothing that can be done about it. But I think emotions are "reason-able." Clearly, we do have some control over emotion; we are not ineluctably irrational because we are emotional. Our emotions have conditions for their arising,⁵⁰ and so we have control over emotion by affecting the conditions. Irrationality involves being unwilling to self-evaluate, or change the conditions which give rise to irrationality. Evaluating our emotions requires deep introspection which many of us are perhaps unwilling or unable to do. When we understand where our emotions are coming from and how they are affecting us, then we are able to alter them and our behavior accordingly. For example, I may react with anger or disgust towards my friends because of their seemingly wonderful relationship. I myself might believe that I am really angry or disgusted, for instance, at the fact that the husband always seems to "give in" to his wife's wishes. Similarly, I might feel angry towards the wife for being excessively demanding. But upon closer examination, what is expressed as anger is in fact rooted in jealousy. Recognizing this, I can work to overcome my jealousy and instead feel glad for my friends' marital bliss. This does not mean, of course, that I will never experience jealousy again when I am around them, but if I am

⁵⁰Blum, p. 212.

consciously aware of the irrationality of feeling jealous, then I can take steps to change that. What this suggests is that we can choose our emotions. Our emotions are psychogenic, just like some illnesses are psychosomatic. I believe we do have rational access to our emotions.⁵¹ The involvement of emotions in our conceptual understanding will be discussed in the next section.

Emotional preparedness, then, seems to have something to do with right behavior. If one is experientially prepared to feel a certain way, one can recognize the reason for that emotion. Take the case of my being insulted by a professor's criticism on my term paper. Having felt discouraged by critique before, I can understand the reason for my feeling that way in future situations. I can avoid that very feeling by reasoning that critique will help me develop a better argument, clarify my ideas, and so on. A possible objection to this point is that there is no guarantee that having experienced an emotion before will leave one adequately prepared to deal with it in another circumstance. This may be the case, and for this reason, I would argue that emotional maturity is part of the equation. One grows and matures through experience. One who inappropriately responds with jealousy, anger, disappointment, etcetera in situations in which he or she realizes that one should not, could be considered emotionally immature.

⁵¹ This argument seems to revert to the original objection to emotion that claims that rationality controls it. By describing emotion as psychogenic, for instance, seems to categorize it as rational. But what I am suggesting is that there is a very tight connection - an interdependence or symbiosis - between thinking and feeling

Overcoming this immaturity requires conscientious effort to locate the reasons behind the emotions that make us act out the way we do.

What can be said about the claim that morality should exclude emotion due to its inconsistency? Why is it that some people will respond lovingly to someone in less fortunate conditions, whereas, others will completely ignore such people? What is responsible for someone not offering his or her lunch to a beggar on the street is not just the presence of an overriding emotion, but, rather, the presence of an overriding inappropriate emotion. Emotions are inconsistent only because some people's capacity to feel for others is more developed than others. Clearly, this marks the difference between being self-oriented and other-regarding. Emotions which cause us to be self-oriented result in immoral behavior; an other-regarding outlook will move us toward moral conduct.

There is a further objection that could be raised, however, and that is that inconsistency occurs not only among individuals, but within themselves as well. For this reason, one may react with compassion toward a handicapped person, but not toward a beggar. Such an individual is not consistently compassionate. The argument, then, is that because emotions are capricious, we cannot rely on them to encourage consistent moral behavior. Our feelings are inconsistent in the same way that our thinking may be. We sometimes make mistakes in our thinking. The cause of the inconsistency is a lack of education. Simply because we have a natural propensity to feel does not mean that this disposition is consistent or accurate. We must cultivate moral emotions, such as compassion, kindness,

and empathy, just as we must learn to walk, speak, solve problems, and so forth. Education and training are necessary. I believe the emotions are educable. This issue will be dealt with in the final chapter.

Another criticism raised against emotions is that one becomes too emotionally affected to act. It is argued that in emotionally taxing moral dilemmas, it is difficult to make choices because of the way those choices will make one feel. The example I used earlier concerned someone who felt pulled between losing a pet to another person, or losing the pet entirely. The problem in this situation is that regardless of what choice the person makes, she must suffer a loss. The answer for someone outside of the situation may seem quite straightforward: it is moral to save a life, but immoral to take one. However, one who is deeply involved may not be able to recognize this moral point. What happens in such cases is that the emotions that are making one act immorally are immoral emotions, such as selfishness. But, by paying attention to moral emotions, we can overcome the temptation to be immoral. One must be able to identify one's emotions as immoral or moral. In this example, having compassion for the dog is morally imperative; it is the particular emotion that demands attention. It is not, in this case, the fact that a loss will be suffered to me. It is necessary to be able to recognize and understand one's emotions. It is one thing to be emotional about a situation, but it is quite another to consider those emotions positive or negative forces in those situations. What must be paid attention to is the particular emotion one is feeling. Emotions anchor us to

such. particulars.⁵² In this example, one should be moved by the idea of saving a life rather than by the selfish feeling of having to give up something involuntarily.

I think there are many cases in which people make proper moral judgments in light of strong emotions. Medical aid workers in third world countries or in emergency situations must work according to a system of triage, despite feeling torn over the possibilities that they will leave some of the weakest to die. These situations are emotionally taxing; however, it is not impossible to put one's emotions in perspective to be able to recognize what is particularly significant.

But what if one is more anchored to his or her own selfish desires, than to the desire to do good for others? My previous comments lend to my argument here. If a person responds by simply satisfying his desires, that person is acting according to morally inappropriate emotions. But if that person examines his emotions with respect to the parties involved in the situation, he or she will be able to recognize whether or not there is commitment to keeping the promise. This, however, requires education about oneself.

One final comment must be made in defence of the involvement of emotions in morality. An earlier objection stated that emotions should be excluded from morality because they are not obligatory. Unlike principles, emotions cannot easily be explicated and formalized; therefore, it is

⁵²Blum, p 218.

difficult, if not impossible to decree a standard emotion. One cannot talk about a minimal or maximal emotion the way one can talk about a categorical imperative as being the measurement for moral behavior. But I think what is fundamentally necessary is a feeling of devotion to morality. This seems to be a minimal emotional standard which is obligatory. To be devoted is to feel devoted, and this is an emotional involvement. The difficulty in detecting or labeling this emotion arises from the fact that we only have access to people's behavior, and people express emotions differently. It seems more substantial to argue in favor of a morality based on pure reason because intellect can interpret a principle and execute it. And this, we are witness to. When someone fails to be moral, we can attribute it to that person's falling short of the moral law. Emotions, on the other hand, are thought to be nebulous and unidentifiable except in their expression. Though we see how emotions are expressed, without an outside authority such as a moral principle to summon them, emotions may be inconstant or unpremeditated. Thus, it is difficult to designate a standard, basic emotion. It does, however, make sense to talk about appropriate and inappropriate emotions, even if we cannot isolate the most appropriate or inappropriate emotion. Love, compassion, empathy, and respect, for instance, are arguably more morally appropriate than greed, jealousy, vengefulness, and disrespect. Moreover, there are certain reasons why we feel the way we do; emotions are not just groundless outbursts. The key is understanding the epistemic and material source of our emotions and the conditions from which they arise.

Understanding the reason for our emotions may seem like a difficult concept to grasp, simply because of the nature of reason and emotion that has traditionally been advocated. Intellect has been understood as being cool and calculated, setting its mark - the moral principle in this case. And, as Kant says, reason recognizes this as obligatory.⁵³ Emotion, on the other hand, doesn't seem to have a target, it all seems to rest in the individual. There does not seem to be an "outside authority". But, I am suggesting that emotions do originate from the individual's epistemic source, and they can be understood as conceptual because of it.

My investigation of emotion concludes the following. Though emotions may seem to emerge without warning or will, in effect, they can be evaluated and justified, which is indicative of their being grounded in rationality. Also, emotions themselves are not inconsistent, but rather, it is the agent's understanding, interpretation, and execution of them that can lead to inconsistency. One must be willing to make appropriate use of emotion. Related to this, emotions do not keep us tenaciously bound to the self, so that it is impossible to vanquish one's desires and recognize the demands of morality. Rather, emotion anchors us to the necessary particulars of the moral situation, making it morally charged. Again, one cannot be too affected by emotion, but, rather, inappropriately affected. Finally, having a responsibility to be moral implies that one must be

⁵³Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, p. 39

committed and devoted to morality. Devotion presupposes emotional engagement.

4.3 Examining the Dichotomy Between Emotion and Reason

In the above I have attempted to defend emotions against charges of impulsiveness, unreliability, and unpredictability. In doing so, I have suggested that emotion and reason are both a fundamental part of morality. Seeing this new relationship between reason and emotion is difficult for two reasons. Because it has been advocated for centuries that emotion should be controlled by reason, it is difficult to escape the type of thinking that has evolved from the dichotomy. Significantly, the priority of reason and rationality is couched in our language and internalized in our actions. For example, when someone is struggling with a moral dilemma, we most often advise that person to "think it through". Similarly, in trying to deal with a moral dilemma, we often need some time to "clear our heads". This use of language is indicative of how deeply engrained the dichotomy is. It is not often that we hear about someone trying to "feel things through." We are not prone to ask people to "feel hard" the way we often ask them to "think hard." It seems that when we do pay attention to our emotions, we do so in order to keep them in line; the attention we give is often in the form of a reprimand.

Further, the inferiority of emotion has been internalized in our actions. We tend to have a high regard for people who display exceptional rationality, and so we glorify and idolize the controlled figure in television, music, and literature. In our daily interactions we make conscious efforts to be rational - we frown upon "emotional outbursts" and scorn those who seem to "weaken" to their hearts' desires. For example, we admire those who can remain calm when insulted by derogatory remarks, and we judge people who participate in public demonstrations as being over-emotional and out of control. I think the quest to be "calm" and "rational" is sometimes pushed too far: we are sometimes calm when what we should be is outraged. It is often the case that cool rationality is encouraged and temperamental emotion is discouraged, and reason is the vehicle by which we learn to control emotional outbursts. By suggesting that powerful emotions can be "reasoned with" it seems that it is reason after all, and not emotion, that is the hallmark of moral judgment. I wish to dedicate this space to elaborating on the question of how emotions can be understood not only as being involved in morality, but also, as having an involvement in our conceptual understanding. Explaining this can help to illuminate the problem that is created by viewing reason and emotion as disparate in the moral domain.

Why is it that when someone commits a moral mistake, we assume that that person has had a cognitive lapse, rather than thinking he or she is emotionally lacking? The answer lies in a misunderstanding of how cognition works; that is, cognition is seen as a cool, detached intellectual

activity. Vetlesen's theory repudiates this common misconception by explaining that there is a triadic relationship between perception, judgment, and action. Vetlesen argues that any action is dependent on a judgment, which in turn is dependent on perception. Perception, as he explains it, is cognitive-emotional because it is a function of the mind to perceive things as this way or that way, or to perceive things at all, and this perception is made possible through emotion, namely, empathy. If we lack this emotional response, our moral perception is compromised. This is tied in with Solomon's claim that action is dependent on one's judgment, which is influenced by perceptions that are linked with our understanding of a situation. Vetlesen claims that "empathy constitutes a prerequisite, among the faculties with which humankind is endowed, for moral perception, in judgment, and action."⁵⁴ Further, "a lack of empathy makes for a moral blindness, as manifested in the not-seeing of the indifferent bystander."⁵⁵ According to Vetlesen, we can only act if we perceive a situation as requiring our action. Empathy is the moral underpinning because it gives us interpretive access to the domain of others' experiences. Someone who does not have the ability to empathize, falls short of the moral ideal. This person may be described as emotionally lacking.

The implications of Vetlesen's theory is that if one can develop the capacity to empathize, one will be able to respond to others' moral situations. This is somewhat problematic. While it is true that being able

⁵⁴Ibid , p. 220

⁵⁵Ibid , p. 217

to take the perspective of others will ultimately result in greater understanding of that person on a cognitive level, there seems to be something missing on the emotional level. For, even though we can view another's situation, it does not mean that we are able to experience similar emotions. Our understanding of the other's circumstances are in fact, subjective. The facts of a situation may affect me differently than they may affect someone else. For example, if I see a blind person come onto a crowded bus, I may perceive the situation as one in which the blind person should be offered my seat. Someone else, however, might perceive the situation as one in which the blind person has to be treated like any other person in order to save him from humiliation, and leave him or her standing. We can, at best, achieve only approximate, if not, superficial understanding because empathy, it seems, is a subjective phenomenon. Does this fact alone discount the importance of empathy to understanding? I think not. Rather, the problem seems to be with Vetlesen's idea of empathy. Vetlesen stresses the role that empathy plays in recognizing the plight of others, but offers no explanation as to how we are to determine whether we are right or wrong in identifying a situation and feeling a certain way about it. Vetlesen seems to treat empathy as if it acts alone, but rationality must be an aspect of it. Rationality plays a part in analyzing the situation; emotion synthesizes a response to it. It is not, therefore, a matter of one imposing his or her own opinion on a situation. Failing to recognize this necessary relationship between emotion and rationality in perception, Vetlesen's theory is left wanting.

Perhaps we can only come to understand the experiences of others by understanding our own. What is criticized as subjectivity in Vetlesen's thesis may in fact be a *sine quo non* for empathy. In other words, only by understanding the "self" can we come to understand the "self" in others. Though some would argue that this detracts from our moral duties because it places emphasis on our own lives, I would disagree. I think one can only begin to understand that others have needs through an understanding of his or her own personal needs. For example, I know that respect is important for others because it is vitally important to me that I am respected. The tendency to want to separate subjectivity from the objectivity of others is an outgrowth of the desire to separate cognition from emotion. It is assumed that being emotional results in focusing on the self, and that being rational will allow us to see others before us. But what I have suggested here is that morality only works when we can see both, simply because better understanding is gained by having firsthand experience.

Scheffler poignantly states that "emotion without cognition is blind, and...cognition without emotion is vacuous."⁵⁶ He argues that emotion undergirds reason, that what we come to internalize as rational has been molded by our emotions. For example, one must possess a love for truth, a contempt for dishonesty, and so forth.⁵⁷ Rather than designating rationality as the force to control emotions, Scheffler regards the emotions themselves as having cognitive force. This is so because judgments of

⁵⁶Scheffler, p 4

⁵⁷Ibid , p 5

fairness and consistency are attached to emotions that are appropriate for these judgments. For example, a rational person would not laugh at a murder scene, for humor is an inappropriate emotion in light of a violent act of murder. Having the appropriate emotions and actions is the hallmark of rationality in Scheffler's view.⁵⁸ One might wonder why Scheffler arbitrarily assigns a positive attribute to the emotions that form part of the life of reason. His theory becomes questionable under the light of morality. If emotions are the foundation of the life of reason, it could be possible that negative or immoral emotions could lay that foundation. One may, for instance, have a love for power or deceit, which could lead one into moral digression. Scheffler's theory accommodates reason and emotion, but there is an assumption that one's judgments are founded on morally appropriate emotions.

Solomon also offers insight into the reason/emotion dichotomy. Essentially, he dispels the dichotomy by arguing that emotions are judgments. "An emotion is an evaluative (or a "normative") judgment, a judgment about my situation and about myself and/or about all other people."⁵⁹ He claims that emotions are not reflex responses to things that happen, but are evaluations of them; these evaluations are judgments. Clearly, Solomon thinks of emotions as active, rather than passive, and by calling them judgments, they are given cognitive description. But if emotions are judgments, why do we not always remember making them? It

⁵⁸Ibid

⁵⁹Solomon, p 249

sometimes seems that they just happen to us. Solomon explains that judgments that are not explicit seem to be spontaneous or impulsive but, in fact, we make many implicit or tacit judgments throughout the day. Turning on the light switch, blowing on hot soup, and thousands of seemingly trivial events constitute such implicit judgments. Emotions, too, can be implicit, and in fact, constitute these implicit judgments.⁶⁰ Solomon does allow for explicit emotions, such as when we ask, "Do I have a right to be angry", and so on, but adds that there is no need to focus on incidences that seem excessively emotionally charged.

A key point in Solomon's idea is that emotions are not consequences of judgments, but are judgments themselves. Does this mean, then, that poor judgments are negative or misplaced emotions? Suppose I were applying for a teaching position at a school. If I were disqualified from the opportunity on the basis of my religion, anger may be an appropriate response. However, if the reason for discriminating against my religion was that my denomination radically contrasted with the doctrines of the school, anger would be inappropriate. Significantly, the facts of the situation are critical. While Solomon does agree that being blind to certain facts may result in irrationality,⁶¹ he does not account for the manner in which one ascertains the pertinence of the facts. His notion of judgment seems to spring from, and rely solely on emotion. In this sense, Solomon does not adequately describe the relationship between reason and emotion.

⁶⁰Ibid , pp 188-190

⁶¹Ibid , p 282

Emphasizing emotion in judgment is an idea shared by Scheler. Scheler postulates the idea of a pure emotion, much like Kant's idea of pure reason. Pure emotion defies the kind of reasoning and explanation that we typically attribute to emotions. Scheler states:

As opposed to intellectual cognition, love defies deduction as well as induction; the moment we try to decompose an act of intentional love, breaking it down into its separate parts or constituents, the act evaporates.⁶²

Significantly, emotions have a logic of their own. For instance, any attempts to give "reasons" for love by making endless references to the features or deeds of the beloved will be a failure. It would seem that emotions have an evidence of their own.⁶³ But what does this evidence look like? Can we have access to this understanding? Perhaps what Scheler is trying to advocate is a visceral understanding of emotions. In this, he fails to account for a source of emotions. Emotions become an abstract concept. Consequently, Scheler's thesis suffers from the same criticism as Kantianism. Just as pure reason is problematic without a source, there is a need to explain where "pure emotion" comes from. Furthermore, Scheler commits the same error of exclusion as Kant did by placing all importance on emotion.

⁶²Netlesen, p 137

⁶³Ibid

Thus, the relationship between emotion and cognition is complicated. One may wonder whether or not it is possible to escape the dualistic framework. I think, in a sense, one cannot help being dualistic because of the way dualism is embedded in the very structure of the language we have to use to counter dualism. We've become accustomed to speaking about emotion and cognition as different ideas. Nonetheless, the attempt here is to try to bridge the gap between them. The answer, I believe, rests in examining something rather basic: the experience of being human.

Reason and emotion are intricately linked by virtue of the human condition. Attempting to excise emotion from the realm of conceptual understanding, and vice versa, is a fundamental mistake. To establish this point, consider what it would be like to exclude the emotions of joy or suffering. If one did not understand what suffering was, there would be no way for that person to make a moral judgment for the avoidance of suffering. Similarly, a person who does not have an understanding of joy could not act morally for the purpose of helping someone experience joy. One could not, for example, save someone from suffering by remaining faithful in a relationship, or give someone joy by doing a favor. For that person suffering and joy are not concepts to be reckoned with.

There seems to be something missing when emotion is excluded. Consider the emotion of love. If my beloved demanded that I list all the reasons why I love him, both I and my beloved would meet disappointment. Even though I could name many reasons for loving this person, it would not be everything. One may get a sense that something has been left out,

something, perhaps unexplainable. That something is the emotion. Even though we can rationally explain something, the explanation is left wanting without the involvement of emotion. If we parallel this to morality, we could list many reasons to understand the right action, but without emotion, the act seems inert.

How are emotions considered to have a conceptual component? Is it the case that emotion and rationality can work together, and if so, how does this relationship work? I would suggest that rationality is an aspect of understanding the world, and emotion is part of that understanding. What occurs is a synthesis between our concepts and emotion. There is never a moment when one does not think. Likewise, there is never a moment when one does not experience an emotion. "For example, just recently I learned about the violent destruction of a Burmese refugee camp housing 10,000 Burmese refugees in Northern Thailand. I react with disgust to this situation because I find this act of terrorism morally appalling. That I find it so is a function of how I conceptualize the world. My belief that we should help others in unfortunate situations is a rational concept which involves an emotional appraisal. What I experience emotionally is also reflected in this concept. Even indifference is an emotion; it expresses the sentiment, "I don't care." I think if we could identify a moment when both thinking and feeling did not occur, then we might have some hope in assigning morality to reason or emotion. In the abstract sense, reason and emotion are distinguishable, but in the human experience, the two occur

simultaneously. So, since it is the human condition to think and feel, such an exclusion is not possible.

Are emotions always appropriate? Not always. If I come upon a bear in the forest and feel fear, is this fear an appropriate emotional response? It is, because I understand the situation as involving potential danger. If I unexpectedly come across my next door neighbor's friendly Siamese cat and feel fear, is this an appropriate response? It is not, because there are no reasons for understanding the situation as constituting danger. The problem is that proponents of the reason/emotion dichotomy, such as Kant, tend to put emphasis on the situations in which one is overwrought with emotion. Since coolness and calmness have been portrayed as the more appealing demeanor, emotionally charged situations are viewed in contrast. And, if an emotionally charged situation is thought to be dominated by emotion, then a calm one is considered a function of reason. The tendency to place importance on calmness has perhaps led to the conclusion that being emotional is tantamount to being irrational, and that emotions are morally inappropriate. I think there are situations in which energetic emotion is, in fact, rationally necessary and appropriate. We should, for example, be irate over racial discrimination, exploitation of the lower class, misappropriation of money, and so on. That we sequester emotion from these morally demanding situations is perhaps part of the problem. My suggestion is that we pay reason its due respect, but that we

give more credit to the efficacy of emotion. As Solomon poignantly states:

To divide the human soul into reason and passion, setting one against the other in a struggle for control, one to be the master, the other the slave, divides us against ourselves, forcing us each to be defensively half a person, instead of a harmonious whole.⁶⁴

Avoiding this is a matter of moral education.

⁶⁴Solomon, p 120

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Moral Educational Implications

What I have argued is that our moral experiences cannot be explained by reason or emotion alone. There is an intricate and inseparable relationship between the two. It is important that we begin to see caring and principle in a revised way, one which I have outlined throughout my previous discussion. This has great implications for the way we approach moral dilemmas, and the way we attempt moral education in our schools.

5.1 Conclusions about Principled Ethics

• As a purely rational ethic, principled ethics has viewed emotion as a negative force. Emotions have been considered to be non-cognitive; thus, they are unruly and impulsive. The only place that emotions have been given in morality, if they have been given one at all, is one which is subordinate to reason. Reason has been seen as the regulator and controller of emotion.

This understanding of principled ethics is too exclusive, and therefore, misleading. Emotion is inherently involved in the following of principles. This is because impartiality in moral dilemmas is not only a difficult perspective to achieve, but an undesirable one, in the way it is usually construed. If we are required to be impartial in a Kantian sense, then what we must do is essentially distance ourselves from the situation and the people involved. This is undesirable because morality is a matter

of acting a certain way toward others. If we excise this element from morality, morality becomes a moot point.

A better way to understand principled ethics is in a way that pays heed to emotion. My claim is that principles themselves are infused with emotion. What really motivates someone toward moral behavior is the commitment and devotion to such principles. Our devotion to moral principles is fundamentally related to the idea that we care about treating others in a principled way. Principles are not followed simply for the sake of following principles, but rather, because we have a caring attitude toward people. Recall my example from chapter four: if I report my friend, my fellow employer, for shoplifting, I would do so because it is a matter of principle that shop owners not be taken advantage of. In this instance, I care about the shop owner and I abide by the principle of honesty because I care, and not simply because I have an unquestioning adherence to principles. My principle following, in other words, is not devoid of emotion. My actions would be considered impartial, but not uncaring.

If this view of impartiality can be accepted, then what is taught about the priority of principle will have to accommodate an emotional component. To act according to principle requires being emotionally committed to it. One does not blindly follow a principle. Unlike Kant, who argued that one's emotional state was irrelevant as long as one followed the principle, I am arguing that following a principle inherently involves a particular emotional state. Also, key in the understanding of

principle is the role that it plays in our caring capacity. Principles motivate and guide one to become caring. Principle is the missing link in Noddings' transformation from natural to ethical caring. Thus, principle is characteristically emotional.

5.2 Conclusions About the Ethic of Care

A caring ethic is a reaction to principled ethics. It contrasts with principle-bound ethics because rather than promoting impartiality and universalizability, it advocates partial, caring treatment of others. The view of caring that has been put forward in contemporary philosophical literature de-emphasizes principle and considers caring to be of paramount importance.

What is contentious about a caring ethic is that it bases the moral life on caring relations.⁶⁵ This results in a rather narrow scope of morality because even though care ethicists such as Noddings claim that every occasion is a caring one,⁶⁶ this delimits morality to those personal encounters when caring arises. What this means is that there may be no impetus for being moral with those with whom we never come in contact. The potential for a moral society, then, is not very expansive. Also, as I have argued, caring is not an automatic reaction coming from a sense of relatedness with others. Sometimes this connection is missing. In these

⁶⁵Noddings, "An Ethic of Caring and Its Implications for Instructional Arrangements," p. 218.

⁶⁶Ibid

instances, it is our caring about the general welfare that leads to moral action. In other words, our attention to a principle of treating others well instigates moral behavior.

5.3 Conclusions About the Reason/Emotion Dichotomy

Principled ethics and the ethic of care have grown out of a centuries-old dichotomy between reason and emotion. This bifurcation has been misleading. Human beings are both thinking and feeling beings, so by virtue of their nature, it does not make sense to say that there is no relationship between reason and emotion. If we try to imagine any thought as being emotionless, this connection, I think, becomes obvious. For example, the concept "baby" has certain emotional connotations. One may love babies, one may not care for babies, one may immediately conjure up images of babies that he or she is familiar with, one may recall an unpleasant experience involving a baby, and so forth.

Moral statements are very closely linked with emotion. The nature of morality is itself full of emotion. To try to exclude it would be to try to suggest that morality is something else. Certain words or phrases incite certain normative images, similar to words like "baby". For example, "right" and "wrong", "good" and "evil", make a person feel a certain way. Furthermore, moral dilemmas are characterized by frustration, agony, confusion, and so on, and these emotions are an integral part of resolving them.

The reason/emotion dichotomy presupposes that emotion is a non-conceptual phenomena. My explication in chapter four has shown this to be inaccurate. Emotions are shown to have a conceptual component because they are tied into our understanding of the world, which is conceptual. That is, the judgments and perceptions that we form have meaning because of how we feel about certain issues. My reference to the anarchist and terrorist activities in the Burmese refugee camps in Thailand in the previous chapter exemplify this. Terrorism is an emotion-laden concept; its denotation carries with it feelings of abomination and condemnation. Morality is similar; the principles of truth-telling or not killing, for example, imply respect for the truth, and love and compassion for others. Reason and emotion are essentially involved in each other.

5.4 Implications of Refuting the Reason/Emotion Dichotomy

If the dichotomy between reason and emotion can be discredited, what does this mean for morality? How does this explain the moral experience? How do we formulate a moral theory that combines reason and emotion rather than separates them?

My point in arguing for the conceptual nature of emotions is to suggest that in our moral experiences, there is a connection between acting on principle and caring for others. This can be demonstrated. Let us recall the incident of the fellow employee who stole from the store. This situation is a prime example of how difficult morality becomes when it is

our loved ones who are in question. The dilemma for me in this situation is that I know theft is wrong, but I also do not want to compromise a friendship. An impartial ethic indicates that I should report my friend. A caring ethic might indicate that I should protect my friend. What actually does occur?

The situation might be handled in two ways. First, one might say that it is my friend who has put a strain on the relationship because he has put me in a compromising position. Being in a relationship implies that those involved care enough to prevent such incidences. I must, however, still care for my friend. I could approach my friend and let him know that I am aware of the theft. I could then leave it up to him to confess. If this person is aware of his moral misgiving, he will likely confess. But what if he does not? Then, I think it is my moral responsibility to be impartial.

What if, however, my friend had a sympathetic case. Perhaps my friend is poor and wanted to have a gift for his mother's birthday. Does this mean I should be compassionate? Obviously, one should be compassionate about others' misfortunes; however, being compassionate does not imply letting someone get away with immoral behavior, when there is another way to handle the situation. I could suggest that my friend establish a savings plan that would leave him money for special occasions. I could also recommend alternatives to material gifts, such as mowing his mother's lawn, cooking her a dinner, or assuming the household chores for a week. Finally, I could offer to lend my friend some money. In any case, I would not condone theft. But where does this leave me with respect to

the principle? In this scenario, caring for my friend is a given, but caring for the shop owner may not be so effortless. Morality, however, implies a global effort; therefore, I need to consider ~~my actions~~ from a much larger perspective than my friend's. Caring for people on a much grander scale is what motivates me to employ a principle. This is something I must do at the risk of angering or humiliating my friend. I think that friendship implies certain responsibilities, and not placing one another in uncomfortable situations is one of them. What I have tried to illustrate is that principles are employed in a caring, rather than uncaring way.

Having spelled out that there is a relationship between reason and emotion in morality, what needs to be explained is how this relationship works. Specifically, which is to come first, reason or emotion? To what do we actually attribute our moral behavior?

When we are placed in a situation, such as having to decide whether to report a fellow co-worker and friend, or let him get away with his theft, we may be pulled between wanting to do the right thing, and wanting to avoid putting a friend in a situation which is in conflict with the law. What is clear is that both emotion and principle are involved in this decision, but what is less clear, is how this relationship occurs. There is an interplay between emotion and reason such that our decision to be principled where loved ones are concerned comes from the fact that we care about others in a general sense. Choosing to follow the principle, and report the friend, is a result of caring about the person whom the friend is stealing from. It is not simply a matter of following a principle. There is a desire to follow

the principle, which is an emotional consideration. If one did not care, there would be no impetus for reasoning that one should be principled.

The relationship has a reciprocal force. For example, consider what happens when one is overwhelmed by emotions. People who work with terminally ill patients, third world citizens, or AIDS victims find themselves in emotionally charged situations. They must realize that their ability to help is limited, and in fact, that sometimes they cannot do anything to help and so must direct their energy elsewhere. As I explained earlier, this is when one must follow a system of triage. But what is it, in these cases, that moves one to make that moral decision to turn their attention from a dying person, to someone else who might have more hope? Why is it that one can act at all, rather than feel like the situation is helpless? Is it emotion, or is it principle? I believe that the kind of caring that motivates one to make good decisions under such difficult circumstances is the kind of caring that is, again, extended toward all of humanity. Caring is not exclusive to those we are naturally close to. It is caring which moves beyond Noddings' sense of ethical caring. In this sense, one can see that the decision is characteristically principled. Importantly, then, there is an element of impartiality contained within this kind of caring. But again, one does not act impartially simply for the sake of being principled; there is a feeling of wanting to act in the most appropriate way. This is an emotional issue.

Therefore, I believe the explanation for what happens in our moral experiences is dependent on the situation. In cases where one does not feel

a sense of attachment naturally, the incentive to act morally must come from a principle of wanting to treat others well. This principled outlook inherently involves caring. At the other extreme, in situations in which one feels a great deal of attachment and feeling to the persons or objects involved, the sense of moral duty must come from the principle of impartiality. It is not possible to separate emotion and reason when they are viewed in the way I have suggested throughout. Moral experiences bear the likeness of a Venn diagram, in which there is an overlap between reason and emotion.

5.5 Implications for Moral Education

If reason and emotion are to be viewed in a novel way as I have suggested here, then there is a need for reconstructing and reconceptualizing our ideas of moral education. Part of that reconceptualization has to do with understanding emotion as having a conceptual component by virtue of the fact that it is involved in judgment. A type of Aristotelian philosophy must be embraced, advocating that morality is not only about acting well, but feeling well also.⁶⁷ What would moral education look like if we conceived of morality in this way?

Clearly, because reason and emotion are part of our moral experience, it is important that children learn about being principled and

⁶⁷I. Kosman, "On Being Properly Affected: Virtues and Feelings in Aristotle's Ethics," in Essays on Aristotle's Ethics, Amelie Rorty ed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 105

being caring. A necessary prerequisite for moral education is learning to view the world in a way that is conducive to caring. I believe that a certain degree of caring is a natural propensity for people. Even young children learn to reciprocate acts of care. What is less natural, perhaps, is being able to extend our acts of care beyond our familial and friendship boundaries. One's ability to care in a global way comes from having a global perspective. If one believes in fellowship, then he or she will likely hold a world view that embodies caring for all people. This conception of caring for others, I would suggest, is emotional and rational. One cares for others because it is a matter of principle; one is devoted to principle because one is concerned about how others are treated. Therefore, the foundation of a good moral educational program must encourage students to develop an understanding of the world that includes a respect for all of humanity. Importantly, I am arguing that learning what are appropriate and inappropriate ways to feel about others is part of this educational endeavor. This means that the ideas of sharing, understanding, acceptance, benevolence, and so on, are critically important, as they are part of, and come from, a particular rational-emotional outlook. The idea is that conceptual meaning is grounded in emotion.

Although there have been some moral educational programs, such as "values clarification" in schools today, I contend that there is something missing from contemporary moral education. The problem, I think, is that the important moral concepts seem to be developed in isolation from, or at least too loosely connected with, emotions. The important component of

moral education seems to focus on and stop at the point of learning about principles. Even as adults, knowing principles of right and wrong conduct does not guarantee that we act accordingly. There are flaws, then, in the type of moral education that focuses on principles. What we need to do in moral education is emotivize principle. Central to that is cultivating moral emotions which will lead one to understand that the need for being principled arises from a caring outlook for the general welfare of others. For children then, this means that we must teach them about sharing, being gentle, and so on because of how it affects people. Isolating the principles from the people will be ineffective.

But we cannot just accept that all emotions play a positive role in morality, for certainly we are aware of cases in which emotions are quite negative. What needs to be cultivated are the appropriate emotions. Furthermore, we need to educate students about how to identify and deal with inappropriate emotions. The pertinent questions are, what emotions are we looking for, and how do we educate young people about the emotions that we are afflicted with?

Various philosophers have tried to pinpoint the central moral emotion. Blum cites compassion as the foundation of ethics, Solomon claims love is the impetus for morality, and Nelkin describes empathy as the emotion that allows us to identify and understand the suffering of others. All of these emotions are relevant and vital to the achievement of moral integrity; it is not possible to isolate one as being more enabling than the others. There is, however, an emotional perspective that embodies

all these: moral devotion. Earlier, I claimed that to be morally devoted is to care that others are treated well. Being devoted to morality implies that one feels sensitive to moral situations, feels love and compassion for fellow human beings, and has the ability to empathize. What needs to be clarified is how devotion and moral sensitivity can be taught.

Devotion is a matter of feeling earnestly involved, responsible, and dedicated to a cause or person. I am dedicated to my academic projects which means that I feel a sense of duty toward doing good work, and feel impassioned about doing it. Academics *qua* intellectual material may appear to be rational only, and not emotional, but clearly, one's academic pursuits are emotionally involved. Furthermore, the belief systems I work with both influence and are influenced by emotions. My desire to develop my philosophical understanding is inspired by a love for wisdom. Philosophical understanding seems rather inert without this emotional component. So then, what is needed in schools is an understanding of concepts in a rational and emotional way. How can this come about?

As a teacher of social studies and literature I find many opportunities for moral discussions; the events in history and the contemporary world, and the subject matter in literature reveal issues that strike close to the heart of issues of humanity, which is what morality's central force is. For example, studying characters in literature often gives insight into moral dilemmas. For example through the character of Atticus in Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird" students are presented with the subject of racism in southern America in the 1930's. Atticus' choice to defend Tom

Robinson, a Negro, demonstrates a moral stance. When approached by his daughter about the reasons for defending Tom considering the disapproving way the community feels about it, Atticus replies:

Tom Robinson's case is something that goes to the essence of a man's conscience... I couldn't go to church and worship God if I didn't try to help that man...before I can live with other folks, I've got to live with myself.⁶⁸

What Atticus demonstrates is that doing the right thing is a matter of reaching into your heart, accepting all people as your equals, and treating them as such. Failing to do this is a moral transgression that Atticus could not accept. I think this novel provides an excellent opportunity for students to identify a moral dilemma. It exemplifies how moral action involves correct perception of a situation. Accurately perceiving a situation is dependent on one's understanding. In this story, there are many people who oppose Atticus' decision to defend a Negro because they misperceive black people as being less than human, but Atticus does not allow peer pressure to interfere with his judgment. Atticus portrays an ideal moral outlook. I would suggest that there are many great books that demonstrate moral and immoral character which can initiate discussion and learning about morality.

To exemplify how a moral educational program may work in my social studies classroom, let us consider the issue of eighteenth century imperialism in Africa. The moral attitudes that students form is developed

⁶⁸H. Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1982), pp.104-105.

in conjunction with the information they learn about the world. Slavery, for example, is an issue related to imperialism, as many colonial powers enslaved - literally and figuratively - the Natives to build a "western" economy. Slavery is an emotionally rich concept, and how students understand it is determined by their outlook on the world. How students view themselves in relation to others is fundamentally important, and will influence whether they find slavery morally repugnant or not. How they feel about slavery is key to this understanding. What is important in this lesson would be what we should feel, in other words, what is morally appropriate. Suppose, for example, a student feels indifferent, or feels that the European powers were justified in enslaving Africans, and that, in fact, because of this, African nations began to industrialize and develop. Certainly these are seen as inappropriate emotions. It would not, however, be enough to tell the student that this is the wrong way to feel. The intent should be to help the student really understand the inappropriateness of indifference, or of favoring slavery. The way to do that is to have him evaluate his world views. Perhaps the student feels that past history is not his concern, or that economics is a more important consideration than human rights. I believe this is immoral because this world view goes counter to the prerogative of morality which, as I mentioned before, is to enable people to live in harmony with each other. Precisely, it must be explained that feelings such as indifference arise from the belief that others don't matter. Helping to shape students' perceptions of how they fit into the world with others is an important part of moral education.

The domains of science and math contain fewer opportunities for moral discourse; however, I would not exclude them entirely, for there are many "moral educational moments" throughout any school day. Other ways in which this attitude of morality may begin to develop, particularly in the early grades, is through small cooperative projects, games, dialogues and discussions. These activities lend themselves to teaching children about getting involved and remaining involved. Of course, it is possible for a student to carry on with a project from its inception to its culmination without feeling any sense of commitment or devotion, much like one can follow moral principles without really believing them. What needs to be taught then, is exactly what commitment involves. It requires one to feel a passion and a voraciousness about something. This begins with finding out students' interests, and unfolds as they learn to develop them. The devotion to their own causes should naturally be extended to include an understanding of other causes and people.

There is an important connectedness between this feeling of devotion to one's projects and devotion to others. I have previously argued that one can only understand and appreciate others' causes by having a sense of one's own. The notion of empathy develops from this.

So, part of acting morally comes from understanding one's world view. It is also important to understand one's emotional perspective. Emotion needs to be aligned with reason; emotion cannot be understood to be something that occurs without warning. There has to be a conscious effort to understand the empirical basis of one's emotions, both in terms of

what emotions are appropriate, and why it is that we experience inappropriate emotions. The appropriate emotions are those which lend themselves to being devoted to morality. Subsumed under this idea are emotions such as compassion and empathy. Significantly, other-regarding virtues will encourage one to feel a sense of devotion to morality, which essentially implies a commitment to treating others in a morally appropriate manner.

Realistically, everyone experiences emotions that dispose him or her to act irrationally. What happens when we are too affected by emotions, and how do we educate students about these emotions that we are afflicted with? Having argued that emotions have a conceptual component, I would suggest that instances in which we experience emotions that cause us to act irrationally stems from a misperception or poor judgment of the occasion. Walking into a store and stealing a book that I really want but cannot afford would be irrational. Such an action would not simply be motivated by greed, but by a view that other people's property does not have to be respected. Examining one's concept of property rights would be necessary.

How do we educate students to deal with cases involving those they are closely affiliated with? For example, suppose a child was keeping silent about his parents' fraudulent business activities. Knowing that fraud is immoral, it may not be easy for that child to speak out against his parents. In this case, one's emotional attachment may cloud his or her moral outlook. This case exemplifies the difficulty in caring for others when it is natural to want to care for a loved one. I think that principle must be

taught, but in the final analysis, a certain feeling of having done the right thing will accompany the employment of principle and reinforce the idea that principle is connected to an emotional concept. The ultimate goal for moral education is to develop students' understanding so that there is a connection between the moral emotion and the moral law.

By encouraging introspection and self-understanding students may be able to learn to understand their emotions. Admittedly, introspection and self-evaluation are difficult processes for some - the idea of reaching in to understand oneself seems foreign, much like reaching out to understand others sometimes is. But, contrarily, I think young children are capable of being introspective and philosophical. It is this characteristic evaluation and questioning that needs to be preserved and honed throughout the student's life.

5.6 The Question Revisited

The question I have been pursuing is 'what occurs in our moral experiences with respect to principles and feelings?' We have been led to think that we should not let our emotions influence our moral decisions and actions, and that we must use reason. But moral emotions are absolutely necessary for the moral life. Those who argue against the merit of emotion misunderstand the relationship between reason and emotion. This misunderstanding comes from arbitrarily and artificially splitting human nature. Praised for our intelligence, we are expected to use that

intelligence to deal with all our encounters. But when we approach morality, our reasoning abilities are emotional. We must learn to understand that reason and emotion are inseparable within the context of morality; they do not exist in some sort of hierarchical separateness.

With a clearer understanding of the moral experience, our moral educational programs can be developed more appropriately. As educators, we recognize that education of the body is as important as education of the mind. Similarly, I believe education of the heart is as critical as education of the head. We value people's psychic harmony, and therefore, it is not enough to solve problems through rationality. We want people to be happy and satisfied with the decisions they make. I consider moral conduct to be connected to happiness because I think the sense of fellowship with others exists in most, and so treating others in a morally appropriate way is the force which strengthens this bond. Moreover, this "human relationship" is an emotional one. The suffering of others, for example, is something we tend to feel, and not merely think is bad. I propose, then, that the head and the heart do work together in morality. As Hemingway expressed, we can "know" our moral responsibilities by feeling good about them.

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