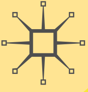

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Between Psychology and Philosophy

East-West Themes and Beyond

Michael Slote

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Preface

First some acknowledgments. This book expands on a set of three lectures I gave in May 2018 at Nankai University in Tianjin, P.R. China. The lectures inaugurated the series Nankai University Lectures in East and West Philosophy, and I want to thank Nankai University for inviting me to deliver the lectures, which were given under the title "Philosophy East and West." I am grateful to the Friends of Soochow and Archie Hwang (Chairman and CEO of Hermes-Epitek Corporation), who generously sponsor the Nankai-Soochow Lectures in East-West Philosophy. I also want to thank Chienkuo Mi, who convinced Nankai University to initiate an unprecedented lecture series devoted to philosophical issues East and West. Mi also kindly persuaded them to invite me to be the first lecturer in the biennial series. The present book is the first in a series involving East-West themes that Palgrave Macmillan will be publishing. I would like to thank Philip Getz for organizing the series and acting as its editor at Palgrave. Chienkuo Mi and I will serve as its academic editors. Now to the book itself.

The three chapters that follow the introduction correspond roughly to the lectures I gave at Nankai University, though Chap. 2 greatly extends what was said in the original first lecture. The three chapters and the lectures they reflect were all on the East-West theme. But I believe they also demonstrated that more attention to issues of psychology is needed if we are to learn the most interesting possible lessons from the philosophical interactions between China, particularly, and the West. However, the chapters in the present book that follow Chap. 4 don't sound any major East-West themes and mainly take the earlier idea of interaction between

psychology and philosophy into new areas. They don't so much continue what was done in my East-West Nankai lectures as place those lectures in a larger philosophical context. The many ways in which philosophy can learn from psychology constitutes that larger context and is the overarching theme of this book as a whole.

I was a joint major in philosophy and psychology as an undergraduate, and the present book certainly continues those earlier interests. But it is not the only place where those earlier interests surface in new philosophical contexts. Most of my 2014 book *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind* also connects philosophy and psychology, and my 2016 book *Human Development and Human Life* does so almost exclusively. You don't have to read the latter book in order to understand what is going on in the present book, but anyone who has read or does read it will recognize the way in which the present book continues the explorations of the interface between psychology and philosophy that were the main business of the 2016 book and in great part of the 2014 book as well.

The reader needs to understand too that the interest in psychology as related to philosophical issues focuses on those areas of psychology that especially concern emotion, empathy, and, more generally, human development. You won't find much discussion of cognitive psychology in any of my recent work, though one theme of Chap. 2 of this book is that cognitive psychologists and analytic philosophers alike fail to realize how essential emotion is to all processes and states of a functioning mind. Some recent researchers like Antonio Damasio relate emotion to ordinary rationality in important ways, but they rely on findings of neuroscience in a way my arguments won't. I think one can give a priori conceptual/philosophical arguments to show that the West is mistaken to think that cognition and reasoning are (metaphysically) possible in the absence of all emotion. In any event, the reader will see that the title chosen for this book is accurate to its overall subject matter.

Finally, the present book has a less immediate purpose that concerns the present state of Chinese and of world philosophy. Right now, Western philosophers pay almost no attention to traditional Chinese thought, and Chinese thinkers are largely divided between two forms of self-regarding philosophical pessimism: one group thinks all philosophical wisdom is embodied in the great Chinese classics and devotes itself to interpreting those classics without allowing that we might still, today, do good work in philosophy. The other group thinks there is nothing philosophically important to be learned from those classics and seeks to do philosophy

after the Western example and in a strictly Western mode. But there is another possibility that from the Chinese standpoint would be far from pessimistic. The possibility involves trying to integrate Chinese and Western philosophy at a foundational level. Doing this would or could revitalize Chinese historical philosophy in a contemporary and (therefore) international mode, but such an effort would also presuppose that Chinese thought has something important to teach Western philosophers and that it still has something important and new to teach the Chinese themselves. Chapter 2 of the present book makes an initial down payment on an attempt to bridge Western and Chinese thought in a way that avoids present-day Chinese philosophical pessimism and that seeks to show Westerners that they have much to learn from the Chinese philosophical tradition. Another work of mine—the book *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang*, which has just been published with side-by-side English and Chinese texts by the Commercial Press in Beijing—attempts this effort at persuasion in a more detailed and synoptic way. However, the *main* purpose and content of the present book concerns the lessons philosophy can learn from psychology, even if my (at this point) long-term attempt to philosophically integrate China and the West functions as a kind of background or introduction to what is being done here.

Coral Gables, FL Michael Slote

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This book begins with questions about the relationship between Chinese and Western philosophy, but its overall emphasis is on the relationship, the essential intellectual relationship, between philosophy and psychology. The three chapters that follow this introduction address such issues within an East-West context, but the discussion then moves on to questions about that relationship that are interesting and important in their own philosophical right even though they don't (with two notable exceptions) make us engage with the relationship between East and West. For the purposes of this book the relationship between East and West is very important, but the relationship between philosophy and psychology is even more important. Thus issues about psychology play an important role in the East-West comparisons of the first part of this book, but in the second part of this book and to a large extent independently of such comparisons, we shall see how an emphasis on ideas from psychology can help us resolve ethical and more generally philosophical questions that have previously not yielded to purely philosophical treatment.

Chapter 5 will outline the way or ways in which the concept of empathy, much explored in the recent literature of psychology, can be of philosophical use to us. Empathy plays a role in the open-mindedness that recent virtue epistemology has treated as a prime epistemic/rational virtue. It also can help us better understand the present-day philosophy potential of ideas that now lie buried in the history of philosophical: most

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particularly, Francis Hutcheson's idea of a moral sense and Thomas Reid's view that testimony has intrinsic rational authority. Most importantly of all, we shall see that empathy plays an important role in speech acts that speech act theory has till now totally ignored. Chapters 6 and 7 will drop the emphasis on empathy but will continue to operate between psychology and philosophy. They will deal respectively with the question whether justice (or moral virtue) pays in egoistic terms and the question whether total psychological egoism is a human possibility that ethicists need to worry about, but will do so in ways that bring in psychology in some unprecedented ways.

The first part of this book deals with philosophical issues that in different ways bridge the gap between Eastern/Chinese and Western thought. Chapter 2 considers the difference between the Western notion of "mind" and the Far Eastern idea of "heart-mind," and it argues that there are good philosophical reasons to discard the former notion in favor of the latter. In Chap. 3, I consider what Chinese philosophers have said about moral self-cultivation and compare and contrast those ideas with what has been said in the West on that topic. It is argued that both the Chinese and Western approaches to cultivating one's own virtue are psychologically unrealistic. Then Chap. 4 discusses weaknesses or deficiencies that differentially affect Chinese and Western philosophical thinking. The West unfortunately tends to play down the importance of psychological sensitivity to the treatment of ethical issues, whereas, by contrast, Chinese philosophy can be criticized for lacking a tradition of precise, analytic thinking that would allow greater clarity into their treatments of philosophical questions. However, in this increasingly internationalized world, it is possible to hope for remedies to both these problems.

As I have indicated, Chap. 5 and following drop the East-West focus and take on in a more general way some philosophical issues that can clarified and perhaps even resolved via a greater reliance on psychological findings. In the last 50 years many studies or experiments done by psychologists have done a great deal to stimulate interest in the topic of empathy, both in philosophy and in the general public. (The ethologist Frans de Waal has published a book called *The Age of Empathy*.) But I shall argue in Chap. 5 that the philosophers, not to mention to psychologists or ethologists, have greatly underestimated the philosophical importance of the concept or phenomenon of empathy. It is widely believed, for example, that empathy puts us directly in touch with the minds or feelings of others, but it can be argued further, and I shall argue this in Chap. 5, that empathy can also put

us in touch with what other people have learned *about the world outside of human consciousness.* I shall further argue that the concept of empathy can provide the basis for the moral sense that Hutcheson spoke of in a way that Francis Hutcheson himself and even Hume (who spoke of empathy in a way Hutcheson never did) did not. Empathy also helps support Thomas Reid's idea that testimony (or assertion) has intrinsic rational authority. But the most important use of empathy in Chap. 5 will concern its role in a wide variety of (or perhaps all) speech acts, something that speech act theorists have never paid any attention to.

Chapters 6 and 7 will leave empathy mainly behind and will speak of other ways in which psychology can be relevant to philosophy. There is a long tradition going back to Plato of attempting to show that justice pays, but we nowadays in the West don't think we have to show that justice pays in order to assure ourselves of the value and validity of being moral or morally virtuous. Chinese thought never made the mistake of assuming that morality or justice must pay in order to have a valid claim on us, and the West, as I just indicated, has finally caught up with such thinking. But it is still interesting for ethics to consider whether justice or virtue does pay in self-interested terms, and Chap. 6, using ideas about our human psychology that ethicists have not previously relied on, argues that it in an important way or ways does. Then Chap. 7 seeks to show that the idea of the purely egoistic or self-interested individual, an idea that has traditionally, in the West, been thought of as a stumbling block to the justification of morality, is deeply confused. No one is purely egoistic and no evolutionarily possible intelligent being *could* be egoistic. So Plato was mistaken to think we have to show that virtue pays in egoistic terms, but he, like so many subsequent others, was also mistaken in assuming that ethics needs to meet some sort of challenge of persuading the pure egoist to be ethical. There are no such people, and, in addition, it is psychologically unrealistic to assume that any deeply immoral being *could* be persuaded by arguments to be ethical. Chapter 8 then closes the main discussion by mentioning ways in which what was said in earlier chapters about the fruitful interaction between psychology and philosophy can be extended in various further directions. The book's conclusion speculates on some of the implications of the present study for possible future philosophizing, and there are also three appendices. One deals with the virtue of open-mindedness in a much more thoroughgoing way—and also in a much more skeptical fashion—than was done in Chap. 4. The second appendix argues that social justice and our sense of justice are (surprisingly!)

grounded in the psychology of empathy (an idea alluded to but not followed through on in footnote in Chap. 8). In making its arguments, the second appendix also expands on and is more specific about what was said in Chap. 4 about the bias male philosophers tend to have against work done by female philosophers. The third appendix expands on what was said in Chap. 7 about the connection between adult identities and yin-yang virtue to consider how that connection might lead us to a psychologically realistic picture of what good human lives involve and are like.

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CHAPTER 2

Yin-Yang, Mind, and Heart-Mind

This chapter and the two to follow focus mainly on philosophical issues about East and West—where East is narrowly understood to mean East Asia and, in some instances as context will indicate, simply China. I think comparisons between East and West can help us in contemporary terms with our general understanding of a number of important philosophical questions. In these early chapters I shall be raising some issues of or about psychology that I believe profoundly affect what it makes most sense for us to say or conclude as philosophers East or West, and this emphasis on psychology will be all the more apparent when in later chapters we move beyond explicitly East-West themes and speak about how psychological issues that haven't previously been explored can and should affect what we want to say about ethics: most specifically about the age-old problem of justifying justice or moral virtue. But I want to begin the present chapter by homing in on a distinction, the distinction between what Westerners call mind and what Easterners call heart-mind.

1

Kant gave us a transcendental argument that sought to show that space, time, causality, and enduring physical objects are necessary conditions of the unity of consciousness. He also thought consciousness was or could be pure: that is, he saw the mind in the typical Western philosophical fashion as capable of pure reason unalloyed with emotion. But in the Far East our

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human psychology isn't thought of in this way. It is assumed that reason(ing) and emotion cannot fundamentally be separated, and the terms *xin* in Chinese, *maum* in Korean, and *kokoro* in Japanese all reflect the latter assumption: that is why it has seemed so natural to translate all these terms into English as "heart-mind," not "mind." The latter word connotes at the very least the possibility of purely rational and non-emotional psychological functioning, and that is what Eastern thought typically doesn't subscribe to.

If we can show that pure reason isn't possible and that "xin" and so on characterize our psychology better than "mind" does, then a major part of Kant's enterprise is undercut and/or seems beside the point. But we may be able to learn something valuable from Kant's method of proceeding even if not from the assumptions he made in proceeding as he did. In this chapter I want first to try to vindicate xin, and so on, over mind, but having done that, I want to offer a kind of transcendental argument vis-à-vis the heart-mind (rather than the mind). I hope to show you that yin-yang is a necessary precondition or presupposition of the heart-mind: more specifically, that the functioning heart-mind necessarily has a yin-yang structure. All this is a tall order to be taking on in one chapter, but it is worth pursuing this line of thought, however incompletely it will be represented here, for at least two reasons.[1] First, what I shall be proposing and arguing for treats Eastern thought as relevant to the field called philosophy of mind in a way that will be surprising to Western philosophers and may even be surprising to Asian ones. From the standpoint of philosophy as it is pursued overall in today's increasingly internationalized world, it will be important if it turns out that the philosophy of mind has to draw on Eastern notions like heart-mind in order to make contemporary progress. Second, if we can show that our psychology is best understood in terms of a heart-mind and if we can then show that heart-mind has to be understood in yin-yang terms, then a *second* Asian and in this case specifically Chinese concept will have been shown to be helpful and perhaps even essential to making progress in the philosophy of mind. Western

[1] I offer a more complete argument in my *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang* (Beijing: the Commercial Press, 2018, with side-by-side English language and Chinese language texts). But by incompleteness I don't mean that I am expecting the readers of this chapter to take anything on faith, anything that cannot be seen as plausible in the absence of further argumentation. The point, rather, is that the book just mentioned offers a more foundational and unifying account of the relevance of yin and yang to philosophical issues, and the discussion here seeks to deal plausibly and on its own with only *one aspect* of yin and yang.

philosophers will have all the more reason to pay attention to Asian thought, and even if they resist doing that, Asian philosophers will be able to make use of their own endogenous concepts/ideas to further enrich their own traditions and take their own philosophies into the future.

I can tell you one probable reason why no one up till now has ever argued with any specificity that yin-yang is the necessary basis for the heart-mind. No one has done this because yin and yang are or were traditionally regarded as mainly physical properties, like cold vs. warm, female vs. male, dark vs. light, and wet vs. dry. Such properties were used to give proto-physical explanations of natural phenomena (on a par perhaps with the kinds of physical/biological explanations the ancient Greeks went in for), and of course even today such thinking has its place in Chinese medicine, feng shui, and macrobiotic dietetics. Many intellectuals in East Asia are suspicious of these applications of yin-yang, and that, together with the mainly physical notions associated historically with yin and yang, has, I think, led philosophers with East Asian roots or citizenship to underestimate the potential of yin and yang. (Of course, Western philosophers would normally see nothing of philosophical interest in yin and yang, either.)

Now don't ask me how this particular Western philosopher came to see yin and yang as philosophically important and as undergirding the correct picture of our psychology as embodied in words like "xin," "kokoro," and "maum." I could tell you, but it would take time away from my main argument. So let me proceed with the philosophy and omit the autobiography (except in a later footnote). I will begin by saying something about maum, and so on, seen as heart-mind. I will argue that heart-mind is a much better way of representing the basis of human psychology than mind is. Then I will show you how an updated notion of yin-yang, one that picks up on certain historical aspects of yin-yang but that also reveals what I think has been deeply buried or impacted *within* traditional Chinese or Eastern thought about yin and yang, waiting to be brought out by *someone*, can explain how our psychology can be and necessarily is a heart-mind psychology rather than a (pure) mind psychology.

2

I say that the West has seen the mind in an overly pure way, but one might object that the West allows emotion into the mind just as the East does. However, there is a difference. For the West, minds can contain emotions but *needn't*. And this means that our minds are not heart-minds, for the

idea of a heart-mind clearly connotes or at least suggests that mind and emotion cannot be separated in the way the West supposes. With the exception of certain German Romantics (e.g., Johann Herder and Max Scheler), Western philosophers suppose that the mind or a mind can function on a purely intellectual basis, with inferences, proofs, intuitions, criticisms, and reasoning—whether valid or invalid—all potentially occurring in the absence of any emotion. This is precisely what talk of kokoro, and so on, doesn't suppose or presuppose. So I want to show you why I think the Western ideas are mistaken on these points about our human or any psychology. (Even the moral sentimentalist David Hume regarded reasoning and cognition as metaphysically independent of all emotion, and so I shall be arguing for a kind of *cognitive sentimentalism* that moral sentimentalism as such isn't committed to.)

From the standpoint of Western analytic philosophy, there are two basic contents or building blocks of the mind: desire and belief. Certain other contents of the mind (e.g., dreams, idle imaginings, drug-induced hallucinations, obsessive thoughts, and mood states like depression and mania) are naturally thought of as irrelevant to the mind as a functioning entity. But those psychological states or operations that we regard as functional all involve desire or belief or both. Thus plans and intentions cannot exist in the absence of desires, but they also necessarily rest on beliefs, and I think we can also say that intellectual operations like reasoning, intuition, and criticism all presuppose the existence of beliefs. So if I can show you that desire and belief both require emotion, the idea that a mind can in principle function without emotion and on a strictly rational or intellectual basis will be shown to be mistaken, and this will then vindicate maum, kokoro, and xin as more realistic ways of seeing and referring to the human psyche. Let me talk about belief first, because that is the hardest nut to crack. How can belief involve emotion? Isn't it purely cognitive?

Well, these are questions I would expect more from Western philosophers than from philosophers with intellectual roots in Eastern thought. The Taiwanese philosopher Hsin-wen Lee once told me how surprised she was when she first heard that Western thinkers think of beliefs as purely cognitive and free of all emotion elements; and the Japanese philosopher Seisuke Hayakawa once told me that when Japanese philosophers first started to translate works by analytic philosophers into Japanese, they had to invent a new word to translate the English word "belief" in order to do justice to the deep Western assumption that belief is purely cognitive and emotionally inert. The Japanese word that had been previously used to

translate "belief" from English simply had too much connotation of something more than inert and intellectual. So I think that Asian scholars won't perhaps press me with the above two questions: How can belief involve emotion? Isn't it purely cognitive? However, Western analytic philosophers will or would press these questions, and (perhaps because I am Western myself) I would like to be able to answer the West in its own terms. That is, I want to offer arguments that will or ought to convince Western thinkers that they are mistaken to think that (their concept of) belief can be walled off from emotion or affect.

What are those arguments? Well, let me give them as succinctly as I can. First, there are linguistic facts that seem to have been totally ignored. When you believe a given hypothesis, you favor it over alternatives, and the same is true of any proposition one believes to be true. One epistemically favors that proposition, or, equivalently, the idea that it is true, over alternatives that have been proposed or that are or can be salient in some other way. We should take this language of favoring seriously, and taken literally, that language implies an emotion, just as when we say of someone that they favor one nephew over another or one political party over another. Why hold that talk of favoring is figurative in the case of hypotheses, assumptions, and so on, but literal in the case of nephews and political parties? We know that people are capable of having emotions vis-à-vis abstract entities: think not just of Plato's attitude toward the Form of the Good, but also of the way we quite naturally say we dislike a certain theory or approach. We are higher beings, and part of that involves a capacity for emotion directed at things other than our immediate surroundings or things we experience via the senses.

Having said this, I think we need to be clear about a distinction. In stating that someone epistemically favors a certain hypothesis or proposition (for inclusion in their overall theoretical picture of the world), we are not claiming that they are happy about its being true. For example, John was not and is still not in favor of his wife's being unfaithful to him, but nevertheless, at a certain point, he may epistemically favor the hypothesis that she has been and on that basis file for a legal separation from her.

There are other linguistic indications that belief in the ordinary sense and in general involves emotion. Why otherwise would we so naturally talk and think about *defending* our beliefs against objections or doubts—as if we regarded them as precious property to be guarded against devaluation or destruction? (On this last point, I am indebted to Hayakawa.) And then there is the relation between belief and confidence. When we say

we believe something we don't automatically commit ourselves to being confident in what we believe: I often believe weather reports but I don't think I am usually confident that they will turn out to be true. (My Random House dictionary describes confidence as a state of "strong belief.") So belief seems to require only a lesser degree of confidence than actual, positive confidence itself does, and in putting belief in with confidence on a single scale in this way, don't we imply that belief involves an epistemic emotion if confidence does? Now everyone holds that confidence (like the even stronger notion of certitude) *is* an epistemic emotion or feeling, so why not hold the same about belief, treating it as merely involving a *less strong (positive) epistemic emotion toward some idea or proposition*?[2]

Let me mention two more points that bring in issues in philosophy of mind. One indicator that belief involves emotion is the way even trivial beliefs can be the subject of strong emotion. I don't have much at stake in believing that the Empire State Building is in New York City, but if someone were suddenly to deny that it is, arguing seriously, for example, that New York is the Empire State, so that of course the Empire State Building has to be in Albany, the capital of the Empire State, I think I would be annoyed and/or upset. I think we are emotionally involved in our beliefs, and I think that is the *simplest* explanation of why the peremptory denial of what we believe arouses such emotional reactions in us.

What also indicates that belief is more than or different from an inert purely cognitive/intellectual state in relation to various propositions is a fact about means-end thinking and action. If I am hungry and want food, but discover there is no food in the house, then (assuming I can't order in) that will lead me, other things being equal, to leave the house in search of food or a food store. But if the belief that there is no food at home is inert and purely intellectual, why shouldn't it just lie in the mind, once acquired, without leading to any action, for example, of leaving the house? Yet *this doesn't happen*. There is something about the belief there is no food in the

[2] But if all belief is emotional or involves emotion, then emotion will exist at every level of human epistemic de dicto rationality, and that goes against the standard Western assumption that emotions can be justified and rational only if they are based in or on epistemic states (like belief) that are entirely free of emotion. However, if one considers confidence, one can see that this widespread assumption is mistaken. Confidence is an epistemic emotion, and one can be rationally confident that one is seeing a chair without that confidence being based on some other de dicto epistemic state (and what would it be?) that is emotion-free and rational. If this works for confidence, why not for the less epistemically strong state of belief?

house that *causes it to engage* with the desire for food, and that something has to be a factor or fact that is not strictly intellectual or inert. We can explain the fact of action in our food case if we suppose that the belief that there is no food in the house isn't just a theoretical entity, but has an emotional side to it. If believing that there is no food there involves favoring the proposition that there is no food there both for theoretical and for practical purposes, then that would help explain why the belief doesn't just lie in our minds inert when the desire for food arises within us, but is applied to that desire in the form of instrumental reasoning and action.

I hope you will join me, then, in believing that belief generally requires some kind of epistemic emotion. So the next question concerns whether desire, the other basic element of our functional minds or psyches, also entails emotion. Well, if I want to be a member of a certain club, I will have a disposition to be disappointed if I am not accepted as a member and happy, even elated, if I am. These are emotions and that means that in such a case desire entails emotion conceived as a disposition to have occurrent emotions. That is the only sense in which I think desire or, for that matter, belief involves emotion, the dispositional sense. But one might question whether every desire involves such an emotional disposition.

Consider mere preferences. I prefer coconut ice cream over cappuccino ice cream, but they are both favorites of mine, and if a given store has only cappuccino I won't be disappointed because I couldn't get coconut, the way I very much might be if I couldn't get *either* flavor. So isn't this a kind of desire that doesn't involve emotion? Well, I think the word "desire" is probably too strong here. That is why I spoke a moment ago of mere preferences. A mere preference doesn't give rise to disappointment or elation the way desires do. But this then raises another issue. If mere preferences don't involve emotion(al dispositions), can I say that every basic element of the or a functioning mind involves emotion?

I think I can. I don't think mere preferences should be considered part of the functioning mind because they don't give rise to plans or even intentions. My own autobiographical phenomenology tells me that I never *plan* or *intend* to get coconut ice cream rather than cappuccino, even though I am at some level aware that I will always choose the coconut if both are available. To that extent, mere preference, like mere wishes, doesn't engage with the rest of the mind's cognitive apparatus the way desires do. So I think it makes sense to conceive it as not being part of the functioning mind, and that means that the two basic elements of any possible functioning mind both involve emotion/emotional dispositions. This goes directly

against the Western idea that the mind can exist and function in purely intellectual, rational, or cognitive terms, without any emotion(al disposition) having to be involved. So it shows that the Western conception of the human psyche and the very term "mind" itself, with its intellectualistic connotations, involve a mistaken view of what we human beings are all about. We need terms like "maum," "kokoro," and "xin" to convey what is essential to the mind, any mind: namely, that cognitive operations cannot be separated from emotion and that emotion is pervasive of any functioning mind. Thus the so-called mind is most accurately conceived as a heart-mind.[3] And we can also put the point by saying that the term "mind" is essentially misleading: there literally cannot be such a thing as a mind as the West has standardly conceived it. But now we have to see how and why any functioning heart-mind necessarily involves yin and yang.

3

The argument for the yin-yang basis of maum, xin, or kokoro rests on two ideas. First, and as we have already shown, on the idea that our psychological functioning necessarily and pervasively involves emotion(s) and so is necessarily a heart-mind and not a (potentially pure) mind. Second, we

[3] I have never heard of any Chinese philosopher's explicitly defending the intrinsic connection between the cognitive and the emotional that I have been very explicitly defending here. Perhaps that is because from a Chinese standpoint that connection seems so natural as to need no defense, but then one has to ask why Chinese thinkers haven't (I believe) made any sort of explicit case *against* the standard Western way of viewing the mind or against the idea of *pure reason*. I fear that the reason may have to do with the deference Chinese thinkers have (needlessly) displayed toward ideas from the West. It is natural, given such deference, to think that Western notions of belief must be very different from anything familiar in Eastern languages (see my first reference above to Seisuke Hayakawa). But I have been disputing this, and I suppose it takes someone like myself, someone brought up speaking English, to question what Western thinkers mainly say about belief and related notions, to maintain that such thinkers misconceive and mistheorize the nature of their own actual concept of belief. I have argued, against the standard Western view of things, that belief as spoken of in English is necessarily tied to emotion, and it is perhaps easier for a native English speaker to plausibly make this point than for any Chinese philosopher to do so. Incidentally, recent attempts by philosophers like Robert Solomon and Martha Nussbaum to show that emotions are nothing more than rational or irrational beliefs or judgments assume that beliefs themselves don't have to be understood in terms of emotions. If they do, then those attempts get things precisely backward. Finally, the rigid dichotomy Hume makes in the *Treatise* between emotions/sentiments and cognition/reason falls apart if the latter cannot be separated from the former. Hume was a moral sentimentalist, but I am suggesting that we should all be cognitive sentimentalists and, more generally, *philosophical sentimentalists*.

need to show that all emotions within a functioning heart-mind have a basic yin-yang structure. But in order now to show this second essential element in my overall argument, I need to talk about how yin and yang are philosophically relevant. I need to show you this, because in fact Chinese and, to my knowledge, Korean and Japanese philosophers have done relatively little philosophically with the notions of yin and yang over the historical millennia and up to the present. Confucius and Mencius don't really bring yin and yang into their ethical thinking and, with certain exceptions during the neo-Confucian period, this has remained true of Chinese philosophy up to the present day. As I said earlier this can be explained in great part by the sheer physicality of the notions of yin and yang as they were applied in ancient China to natural phenomena. But embedded in those notions, as I now aim to show you, is something more purely philosophical that we can use to understand the human psyche. The notions of yin and yang need to be updated, if they are to be relevant to philosophy today, whether Eastern or Western, and historically we have been given at least one clue about how this updating could reasonably and usefully occur.

The notions of yin and yang haven't always been applied exclusively to the purely physical aspects of things. Yes, cold and warm, dark and light, wet and dry are or can seem purely physical, but yin and yang were also originally interpreted as female and male, and the latter concepts *aren't purely physical*. They apply in virtue of psychological differences and not just physical ones. It seems that Dong Zhongshu, who helped promote Confucianism as the official ideology of the imperial Chinese state, was one of the first, if not the first, to pick up on this feature of one aspect of yin and yang and to run with it. Dong applied yin and yang to ethics in a way that it mainly hadn't been previously, and he did so by contrasting female and male in ethical terms: male yang was characterized by him as benevolent, and female yin as mean-spirited. Well, well, well! That is certainly an ethical application, but it seems to partake of the same mean-spiritedness it attributes essentially to women. This shows that mean-spiritedness as a moral property or vice isn't just limited to females, but more importantly and without impugning Dong's thinking any further than I already have, Dong's idea that benevolence is exclusively or essentially the property of men seems wildly out of whack. What about mother love and wifely devotion? But even if Dong was mistaken in particulars, the idea of applying yin and yang in a way that brings in ethically relevant qualities needn't be abandoned altogether. We just have to find a more even-handed way to do that, and I think we can.

Since ancient times, yin and yang have been associated with ethical qualities beyond those Dong brought into the mix. Yang has been conceived as a kind of active strength and the strength has been understood to encompass more than physical strength and to include some sort of psychological strength. Yin has been variously interpreted in ways that seem ethically relevant but that don't imply bad things about women the way Dong did. When "yin" is translated for the English speaker, three different translations have been prominent. Yin can and has been be equated with passivity, with pliability or pliancy, and with receptivity (all of which take us beyond or away from yin understood in terms of physical properties like wetness and darkness, though I know some want to make connections here as well). But I think there is reason to choose receptivity rather than the other two notions as our way of updating the idea of yin in a philosophically useful way that makes deep connection (in a way that has previously gone unnoticed) with what has been implicit or contained in the idea of yin even as far back as the *I Ching*. If yin is to do broad and constructive philosophical work, it has to have broader application than the notion of pliancy, and it has to represent a more clearly positive value than either pliancy or passivity represents or exemplifies. By contrast, receptivity not only has clearly positive connotations but also has a very broad application among things that we value. Receptivity to what others are thinking and feeling involves empathizing with them and being open to their opinions even when they initially disagree with one's own. Receptivity also involves openness about one's future. If someone has to plan everything in advance, that is a sign of irrational anxiety about the future, but if one doesn't plan everything and to some extent takes things as they come, one is receptive to what one's future will or may bring one, and this too we regard as something positive. Also, being receptive to the beauty and richness of the world around one rather than having to control or dominate nature is something even we Westerners have come to positively value.

I therefore want to suggest that receptivity may be broad and valuable enough to do the philosophical work that I think the notion of yin can do for us. Yang, then, needs to be understood as basically complementary to yin (though I know there are some traditions in which yin and yang are conceived as *opposites*, as *contrary*).[4] I just mentioned non-physical active

[4] In choosing to draw on the tradition of conceiving yin and yang as mutually friendly and complementary, rather than as deeply and in temporally alternating fashion opposed to one

strength as to some extent traditionally associated with the idea of yang, but I would like, again, to use a more general notion to capture or expose a sense of yang broad enough to be complementary to (rather than opposing) broadly conceived yin. Let me suggest that that more general notion is the idea of directed active purpose (which is to be thought of as including but not exhausted by strength of purpose). This idea of yang has its roots in the *I Ching* as much as yin conceived as receptivity does. And these two broadly focused complementary notions turn out to be involved in all the functioning mind's or xin's emotional states. Let me give you some examples, starting with compassion.

We say many different things about compassion: that it is a feeling, that it is a virtue, that it is a motive, and also, of course, that it is an emotion. Do we have a fourfold ambiguity here? I don't think so, and the ideas of yin and yang updated in the manner suggested just a moment ago can help us to see why. Compassion works via empathy; if someone helps another out of a sheer sense of duty, this isn't compassion but conscientiousness. Compassion requires an emotional connection with the other and a strong

another, I am favoring one traditional "take" on yin-yang over a prominent other. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If drawing on the one kind of yin-yang allows us to do significant philosophical work, then that is a reason to rely on it. If the oppositional kind of yin and yang can also help us with contemporary philosophical problems and issues, then certainly it should be brought into the mix. But no one has so far done that; and more importantly, perhaps, there is reason in advance to think oppositional yin and yang can't operate in the broad and deep philosophical terms that the idea of friendly and complementary yin and yang arguably allows for. I conceive yin as receptivity and yang as directed active impulsion/purpose and these are very abstract ideas that it makes sense to imagine as potentially applying to many or all of the different areas philosophy has to deal with. I have already given some arguments to this effect, and further arguments will be given in Chap. 8. But oppositional yin and yang *have never been conceptualized in such abstract terms*. Yin and yang have been conceived respectively as stillness and motion, as softness and hardness, as femaleness and maleness, as covetousness and benevolence, as acidity and alkalinity, as coldness and warmth, as contraction and expansion, as wetness and dryness, and as darkness and brightness. But these paired notions are so concrete as to make one wonder how they could help us deal with evaluative issues, e.g., in both epistemology and ethics, and that may well then explain why no one *has* tried to apply oppositional yin and yang in a general way to philosophical issues. However, even if oppositional yin and yang turn out to be able to do significant contemporary philosophical work, that would not undercut what I am saying here and in the book mentioned in footnote 1 about yin and yang. Finally, let me mention that my mutually peaceable yin and yang are *not* the same as any dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Traditionally, yin and yang were never conceived as stages of a historical noncyclical developing (or progressive) process, and on my view they can both be entirely present at any given time.

feeling that is comparable to what the other feels. But when one emotionally empathizes with the distress another person feels at the pain, say, in their arm, one doesn't just share their distress, one shares the intentional object of their distress. Consider a father who is empathically *infected* (as we say) by his daughter's enthusiasm for stamp collecting. What he takes in is not just some unfocused positive feeling, but the daughter's positive feeling as directed toward stamp collecting. If she feels positively about that intentional object, then he begins to feel that way about it too.

Transpose the example to one where what someone takes in empathically is another's distress at the pain they are feeling in their arm. One takes in distress at that pain, not just some overall negative state of displeasure. But think what this means. If a given person is distressed by the pain in their arm, then ex vi terminorum they have some desire, some motivation, to get rid of or alleviate that pain. But in that case, if one empathically takes in the person's distress with the same intentional object that their distress is focused on, then one will feel distress *at their pain*; and again, ex vi terminorum, one will have some motivation to lessen or terminate *that pain*, *their pain*. This is clearly altruistic motivation, and it will lead one to try to help them unless other motives (like sudden danger to oneself from some third party) overwhelm or preempt it.

This picture shows us three of the four sides or aspects of compassion mentioned earlier. When one empathizes with another's distress one feels that distress, just the way Bill Clinton famously claimed to feel other people's pain. So that is compassion considered as a feeling. But it is also compassion considered as an emotion, because distress, whether at one's own pain or at someone else's, is clearly an emotion. We also saw, however, that because of what distress is and what it is to empathize with an emotion as having a given intentional object, the compassionate person will also want to help end or alleviate the other's pain, and that is compassion as a motive. The case mentioned also illustrates compassion as a virtue. When compassion as an emotion-laden empathically derived feeling and compassion as a motive work together in a situation like the one we have described, we have compassion working or acting as a moral virtue. But this still doesn't answer the question whether "compassion" is ambiguous, and we should now turn to that issue.

When someone empathizes with another's distress they are open and receptive to that distress in a rather direct way. Empathy gives us a special form of knowledge by acquaintance of what another is feeling, one that contrasts sharply with the knowledge (by description, in Bertrand Russell's

sense) that we have or would have if, on the basis of a person's behavior and utterances, we merely hypothesized or inferred that they were in pain. So one element in compassion is a kind of receptivity that makes us immediately acquainted with the inner reality of the other, as when we *feel* their distress. But one can't have a feeling of distress without having the emotion of distress, and if one doesn't feel the emotion, one clearly isn't feeling the other's distress or being entirely *receptive* to what they are feeling. In addition, though, and this is the most important point right now, what one is empathically receptive to has to include the intentional object of the other person's feeling(s) or emotion(s). It is the most important point because, as we saw a moment ago, if one is or feels emotionally distressed at the other's emotional distress, one ipso facto has some motivation to do away with or lessen the very pain that the other wants to do away with or lessen. So the full receptivity we are describing here entails and is inseparable from the fact that one is motivated to help the other person in a particular way, and this means that one embodies or exemplifies a kind of directed active purpose in that situation.

Now you may be able to see where I am going. Receptivity is what I am calling yin and directed active purpose or psychological impulse (one is not, for example, asleep) is what I am calling yang, so both yin and yang are exemplified in the situation I have described, the situation where someone has, among other things, the emotion of compassion. Here, therefore, is an emotion that involves both yin and yang, but not just that. Yin and yang are standardly conceived as necessarily complementary to one another (look at the yin-yang symbols illustrated on the Internet), and in the situation just described not only are both yin and yang present, but we have given an argument to show that if the yin of compassionate feeling is there, then the yang of compassionate motivation *also has to be there*. In other words, and as we have seen, if the situation is one in which one is via empathy fully receptive to what is going on in the other person, then one automatically, necessarily, will have actual specific(ally directed) altruistic motivation/purpose. (This is a point that has been missed by every psychologist I know of who has studied the relationship between empathy and altruism.)[5] So the situation's yin side, the receptive and feeling side of

[5] For an example of a leading psychologist who regards the relationship between empathy and altruism (or compassionate motivation) as purely contingent and merely causal, see Martin Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*, NY: Cambridge, 2000. No psychologist seems to have recognized the conceptual argument that

compassion, automatically entails the situation's yang side, the fact that it involves a more than purely latent motivation/purpose/impulse directed toward a specific goal.[6]

Furthermore, the yang side of the situation is unthinkable without the yin side. Compassion as a motive represents the directed yang purposive side of compassion, but such a motive *cannot exist if one is not being or hasn't been receptive to what the other is feeling*. If one isn't thus receptive, then one might feel a conscientious obligation to help the other, but that is not compassion as a motive or a virtue or anything else. Alternatively, if

can be made for seeing empathy as necessarily entailing altruistic motivation, the argument given in the text above. And the same holds true for David Hume. His *Treatise of Human Nature* is the first place where empathy was ever philosophically described, but the connection Book II draws between (greater) emotional empathy and (greater) altruistic motivation is never said to be conceptual rather than causal. (I am indebted here to discussion with Zhang Yan.) For speculative theorizing about how human empathy (as tied to altruism) may have evolved, see my "Empathy as an Instinct" in N. Roughley and T. Schramme, eds., *Forms of Fellow Feeling*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

[6] Our yin-yang analysis of compassion (which would also work for benevolence and other moral sentiments) helps us to see how empathy underlies the relevant motivation to help others. Mencius emphasizes compassion (or ren) but doesn't tell us much how about it works because he doesn't relate compassion explicitly to empathy and doesn't see how yin and yang can help explain the workings of empathy and of compassion, etc. I think my updated notions of yin and yang were implicit in traditional Chinese thinking about yin and yang, but I also think philosophers like Mencius may have been distracted from seeing their relevance to moral motivation by the then standard and practically universal use of yin and yang to explain natural and cosmic phenomena. The same goes for Wang Yangming. He draws a tight connection between knowledge and virtue, but he never recognizes how empathy and, more basically, yin and yang might help explain that tight connection, something our text above seeks to demonstrate. Virtues like compassion and virtuous actions like helping to relieve someone's pain distress involve yin and yang in indissoluble unity, but it is also important to note how vicious traits and actions necessarily demonstrate a lack of both yin and yang. Thus the man (say) who commits adultery because unforeseen lust has made him forget his wife and his marriage vows and what they mean in his life and his wife's is (temporarily) both unreceptive (or insensitive) to these facts or factors in his life and derailed from his (I assume) long-term directed purpose of being faithful to his wife and his marriage vows. The adulterous actions thus demonstrate a lack of both yin and yang, and I think it can be argued that the presence or absence of yin-yang criterially distinguishes and explains/justifies the distinction between moral virtue and vice in morally relevant contexts. Note further that although rage, panic, mania, and depression are not necessarily moral vices, they show a lack of rationality. So I want to say that in other-regarding contexts the absence of yin and yang indicates a lack of moral virtue, but that in other contexts that absence is a sign at least of irrationality. Yin and yang can serve as the dividing line between what is good and what is bad in xin (I almost said mind). But much more needs to be said about this.

one is a psychopath who can't feel what others feel, then if one helps them, it can only be for reasons other than compassion (reasons like self-interest). So the yin and yang sides of compassion arguably depend on each other, and the virtue of compassion can on that basis be said to represent or constitute that necessary codependence. There is no reason, therefore, to say that "compassion" is ambiguous. Rather, we can say that all the different sides of compassion have an equal right to be called compassion because they all entail each other. Compassion is one thing, with different sides that necessarily go together harmoniously, and our use of the term "compassion" to refer freely to all the different sides without our being bothered by worries of ambiguity when we do this, is a kind of implicit recognition that compassion is a single unified phenomenon, one whose parts stand in necessary and inextricable interrelation. But updated yin and yang and yin-yang understood as the indissoluble unity of yin and yang help us see all this about the emotion of compassion. We have our first example, therefore, of an emotion that can be fully understood only in relation to yin and yang as we are understanding them here.

So let's consider another emotion, one not necessarily directed toward other people: namely, fear. Imagine that someone is in a burning building and wants to escape. If the fire represents a danger to them (to their life), then they are likely to feel fear unless the way of escape is a fairly easy one. But let's imagine that it is not. There is only one way out of the building, the fire is strong and coming on fast, and the one and only door that would allow one to escape is difficult to open. Then one is almost certainly going to feel a strong fear of the fire (and a strong desire to get that door opened), and as with compassion I think this emotion of fear necessarily involves an inextricably connected yin side and yang side. The fear is based on (non-empathic) receptivity to what is happening around one, but also involves a desire to do particular things. If one sees the fire coming from a certain direction, one will be motivated to move in a different direction, and if one finds that the only door that would allow escape is hard to open (stuck), one will push extra hard in order to get it open. So one has active motivation that takes one practically in particular directions, but the motivation is responsive to and can change in the light of what one is taking in about one's environment and learning about one's own powers (is one strong enough to push that door open?). We see, therefore, both receptivity and directed active purpose embodied in the fear that arises in this situation, and it is clear that they are inseparable. One won't feel fear unless one is has been and still is receptive to what is going on (yang

entails yin), and if one isn't motivated or even impelled to do certain things to escape, that will only be because one isn't fully receptive to what is happening around one, to the danger one is in (yin entails yang). For example, if one doesn't act in directed fashion, it could be due to one's having been asleep and being too sleepy still to accurately or attentively monitor or measure what is happening around one. So fear involves yin and yang in inextricable relationship. And as I noted earlier, the situation with the fire also involves a strong desire to escape. One doesn't merely prefer to escape as if one were faced with a choice about which of two beloved flavors of ice cream to buy on a given occasion; rather, one *cares* about escaping, places great importance on escaping, and such caring, such a desire, can be considered an emotion (it is certainly *suffused* with emotion). And like the fear, the great emotional concern to escape has a yin side and a yang side that are necessarily connected for the same basic reasons we found this to be true of the fear for one's life that one feels in the situation.

The same thing holds for other desires as well. If one is thirsty and wants to drink, that can only be because one *feels* thirsty: one's throat, for example, will be dry and one is then monitoring one's body in a way that leads one to want to drink. Thirst, then, is based on a certain cognitive receptivity to one's own bodily states, but then, too, it is constituted by a desire to drink liquid, typically water. If someone is dehydrated but doesn't want to drink, that can only be because they aren't taking in or receiving the usual bodily feelings that instigate a desire to drink. (That may be a sign of an unusual illness, even of rabies.) So the absence of yang desire proves the absence of certain cognitive events and this means, contrapositively, that the cognitive events constituting a receptivity to what is going on in one's body are inextricably tied to thirst and to the desire to drink. But thirst, in its turn, cannot exist without the receptive monitoring of or sensitivity to the bodily signals. One can want to drink for reasons other than thirst, but if it is thirst that leads one to drink or want to drink, that can only be because of the bodily cues or signals one's cognitive receptivity is registering. With thirst, then, yin and yang are necessarily both present and mutually dependent.

Finally, let me mention belief as an example of yin-yang. I said earlier that belief involves epistemically favoring a certain proposition or hypothesis over others inconsistent with it, but it doesn't seem that belief involves *anything more than that*. If so, then belief is a kind of emotion directed at a particular kind of object on a particular kind of grounds (intellectual or

evidential ones). So am I prepared to argue that even belief has a yin-yang structure? Yes, I am, and in fact the argument for that conclusion has already, essentially, been given. We have seen that belief cannot be or be considered purely inert or purely intellectual/cognitive if we want to be able to explain the functional role, the usefulness, of beliefs in means-end or instrumental contexts. But belief also involves receptivity, sensitivity, to the world and to one's sensory data, and that is why analytic philosophers often characterize ordinary belief as having a mind-to-world direction of fit. So the belief there is no food in one's house has both a receptive and a directedly purposive or motivated active aspect. It registers what one's senses tell one about one's house and particular objects in it (like cupboards or bread boxes), but it also engages with any desire for food one has in a way that leads/motivates one to act in a particular practical direction (to leave the house). This, again, is yin and yang, and for all the reasons mentioned in connection with our earlier examples, it should be clear too that each of these elements or sides of belief necessitates the other.

So belief can be viewed as a form of emotion, as a cognitive or epistemic emotion, and it is also a yin-yang element or constituent of the functioning heart-mind. Moreover, I think similar reasoning could show you that all the emotions involved in a functioning heart-mind have a yin-yang structure. Of course, this leaves open the possibility that *some* emotions may not exemplify yin and yang. But that is something the present view shouldn't be at all uncomfortable with. Rage (though not anger as such) and panic (though not fear as such) arguably are or involve non-functional emotions, and I think it can be shown that the non-functionality of rage and panic is due to their exemplifying *neither yin nor yang*. Rage and panic are non-functional because they leave us unreceptive to what is actually happening around us and unable to act in a concerted, that is, directed way. Exactly what I have just said about rage and panic also holds for depression, and the manic individual not only fails to be yin receptive to what is happening around them and what is actually needed in their particular situation, but acts in a frenzied hyperactive capricious way that lacks the yang of specifically directed persisting purpose. Again, this is psychologically non-functional.

But all of this is entirely consistent with what I am seeking to show here. The idea that we have heart-minds rather than Western-style minds is proved by the fact that all the elements of a functioning mind or psyche necessarily involve emotion, and we have now seen that such emotion by its very nature involves and is constituted by a yin-yang structure. So if our

philosophical preference for heart-mind over mind is based on the pervasiveness of emotion in our functioning psychology, then it is ultimately based on and more deeply understandable in terms of yin and yang.

That is a surprising result, given the fact that this connection, any strong connection, between heart-mind and yin-yang has never been worked out with any definiteness by Chinese thinkers.[7] But perhaps despite the lack of precedent, the present arguments will persuade Asian philosophers to rethink or reexamine their ideas about the heart-mind. Heart-mind is endogenous to the Far East and so too is yin-yang; so the idea that we can understand ourselves as thinking and feeling creatures on the basis of a distinction or complementarity that is wholly Chinese (no one ever attempts to translate "yin" and "yang" into English) may appeal to our antecedent sense—a sense shared, I hope, among Asian thinkers and also prevalent among *some* Westerners—that the Chinese and East Asian philosophical traditions have much to teach us today. Most Western philosophers don't yet appreciate that, but I hope that the present argument may help make a difference to that attitude. And even if it doesn't, Chinese and other Asian philosophers ought, I think, to go forward in ways *they* think of as philosophically illuminating. I hope I have persuaded you here that yin-yang may provide a significant part of the philosophical illumination that the East can bring to the West and to its own philosophical future.

This way of conceiving Chinese thought and its value contrasts starkly with another view of the relationship between Chinese and Western thought that it may at this point be helpful to mention. In an article called "If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Is" that appeared on May 11, 2016, in the *New York Times* philosophy blog "The Stone," Jay Garfield and Bryan Van Norden argued that most philosophy departments in the English-speaking world are invidiously narrow for their lack of attention to philosophical traditions like those of China, India, and so on. This article has been criticized on many sides, but my main criticism arises out of actual agreement with their conclusion about narrowness. Western and especially analytic philosophers believe on the basis of all they have heard about, for example, Chinese philosophy that Chinese thought is either misguided in certain areas or has nothing new to teach them; and if they are right about this, then analytic philosophy can make a strong

[7] For example, what Zhou Dunyi says about the connection between yin-yang and the (ethical) heart-mind in his Taijitu Shuo (Discussion of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate/ Polarity) is very vague, not nailed down with any relevant philosophical specificity.

objection against the conclusion I just said I share with Garfield and Van Norden. What the latter say against present-day analytic philosophy is inadequate because it doesn't directly and philosophically address the issue of whether the West has anything significant to learn, say, from (the philosophical traditions of) China. To really show that the West is overly narrow, one has to argue philosophically for views that are unique to China or India, and so on. Only then and only if such argument is successful or plausible, can one be said to have shown that the West is overly narrow in its philosophy. Sure, we can always have courses on Indian or Chinese thought, but if they have nothing new or valid to teach us, the failure to provide such courses on the part of many or most American philosophy departments is more than somewhat excusable. So Garfield and Van Norden fail to make the point they seek to make in their article, and the same can be said about the book Van Norden subsequently wrote on this same issue.

But then I also want to say that the present chapter does offer the kind of argument I have just called for. It seeks to show that the West has an overly narrow concept of belief and of psychological functioning and that that fact undercuts the validity of Western talk about and conceptualizations of the so-called mind and pure reason. And it also shows us or begins to show us how useful the ideas of yin and yang can be to our philosophical understanding of how our psychology, our psychological functioning, works. If my arguments above are on the right track, then the West needs to wake up to what it can learn from (at least) Chinese thought and culture; and this really does or would establish the point Garfield and Van Norden fail to establish in and through their work, the point (which we all agree on) that Western philosophy is overly narrow (and may continue to be, depending on how open-minded the West can be).

Let me now and finally enlarge our discussion. I have argued that yin-yang is the basis of xin functioning, but this says nothing or nothing yet about yin-yang in nature outside or ontologically independent of xin. There is no time for me to go deeply into that issue here, but let me briefly say something à propos about the direction in which my thinking is now going. I believe yin-yang understood as we have understood it here has a role or place within nature outside or as existing independently of xin. For example, when iron is oxidized in the process called rusting, oxygen acts as active yang and the iron as receptive yin, and that is why chemistry speaks of a process of oxidizing or oxidation and not of anything that can be called (the) ironizing or ferrizing (of oxygen). Similar examples can be

shown to abound in the physical, chemical, and biological realms and can help show—what should be of interest to philosophers and perhaps even to scientists—that yin and yang pervade the natural realm outside of xin. If so, then yin-yang can underlie and pervade the universe generally, and that will be some vindication of traditional Chinese views about these matters.

Western philosophy is historically given to a dilemma between dualism and skepticism. The dualism is part and parcel of the standard Western religious belief that God is totally separate from and wholly other (totaliter aliter) than the world we humans inhabit.[8] The Western skepticism rejects the religious dualism in favor of a skepticism about human powers to know the world and about (any assurance we might want about) the world's continuing in an orderly and familiar way into its (and our) future. Kant wrote his *Critique of Pure Reason* to counter such skepticism, though he ended up with a dualism of things in themselves vs. things as they appear to us that is very much analogous to and

[8] Western God-world dualism is closely related to traditional Western mind-body dualism. Both see something—God or the human psyche—as separate or separable from any physical embodiment. Today Western analytic philosophers largely reject mind-body dualism, but they retain belief in a core element of mind-body dualism when they persist in viewing cognition/reason as separable from emotion. Emotion is universally seen as involving the body, so it is no wonder that the Chinese, who see emotion as inseparable from cognition/reason, do not widely accept to mind-body dualism and have never believed in a disembodied personal God (or gods) separate from the world. But by the same token we can see why there has been some tendency in the West to believe in mind-body dualism and God-world dualism, given the rigid separation that has been assumed between cognition/reason and emotion. The persisting belief in the latter has been, so to speak, the sole remnant of the original mind-body and God-world dualisms that once ruled but no longer rule in Western thought. The argument given here in this chapter, if successful, removes this last vestige of those original dualisms. In addition, let me suggest that the dualism Plato posits between the Forms and the material universe is also beholden to the idea of pure reason independent of emotion. There is no reason to posit the Forms in all their purity and otherworldliness unless we are capable of a pure rationality that is capable of knowing them. This doesn't, however, preclude the possibility of forms of predicate abstraction or attribution that are consistent with a thoroughgoing this-worldliness and with the yin-yang necessary conjunction of reason and emotion. Chapter 7 of my recently completed book *A Larger Yin-Yang Philosophy: From Mind to Cosmic Harmony* (LYYP) describes just such a possibility. I think we can conclude that the examples of both Plato and Kant and perennial Western views about "the mind" show how far astray paradigmatic Western philosophy has gone and, in the light of what I have been saying here and say at greater length in LYYP, indicate how much Western thought needs the correction of Chinese philosophical ideas.

perhaps ultimately and psychologically derives from the Western religious dualism of God vs. the world.

But there is an alternative to the choice between dualism and skepticism that we can find in traditional Chinese thinking about the cosmos and our place in it. The Chinese have thought that the universe as a whole is harmonious and that our relations with what surrounds us—nature and heaven—are harmonious too. They haven't really argued philosophically for this optimistic view of things, but I have recently been thinking that we can philosophically support belief in such an optimistic harmonious and unified cosmos at least in part via the fact that yin-yang is pervasive of both external nature and xin. There is no time for me to explain further, but if this new direction is plausible and works out, then yin-yang can be used for philosophical purposes that are larger and in some sense more exalted than anything I have suggested in this chapter or will be arguing for later in this book. But making good on that claim is an enterprise for another time and another venue.[9]

[9] This material will eventually be published in the just-mentioned book *A Larger Yin-Yang Philosophy*. I should also explicitly mention that the West's present-day skepticism about our ability to have any assurance about what will happen in the future largely derives from Hume. And now that the argument of this chapter has been given in its entirely, let me return to a question that I think some readers may have been asking and that I earlier put aside in order to get on with the philosophical arguments: the question, namely, of how a Western analytic philosopher came to think yin-yang could give us great help with understanding issues Western philosophy had long been occupied with all on its own. The connection with yin and yang came after I had developed as a moral sentimentalist and as a result of what I eventually came to see was the tight connection between empathy and compassion (or benevolence). I came to understand that that connection was much more conceptual than Hume, recent psychologists working on empathy, and my own earlier self had recognized. Since anyone familiar even at a distance with yin and yang can see that empathy has yin qualities and compassionate motivation yang qualities, once I saw the connection between them as a non-contingent I was struck by the strong resemblance between what I was thinking about empathy and compassion and the traditional Chinese idea that yin and yang are necessarily complementary. Everything I have done with yin and yang since grew out of that initial realization.

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CHAPTER 3

Moral Self-Cultivation East and West: A Critique

The idea that human beings can and should cultivate their own virtue or vice is prevalent both in Western philosophy and in the Confucian ethical tradition, but in this chapter I hope to show you that this idea is in important ways psychologically unrealistic and questionable. I shall first discuss what the Confucian tradition has said about moral self-cultivation and then talk about what Western philosophers—most influentially, Aristotle and Kant—have had to say on the subject of making oneself virtuous or morally vicious. But self-cultivation or self-shaping is just one way one might conceive moral development or moral education, and I would like to begin by saying something briefly about recent theories (in the West) concerning moral development generally.

1

Let's first talk about Lawrence Kohlberg's "cognitive-developmentalism."[1] Kohlberg's approach derives in great part from the work of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, and both Piaget and Kohlberg saw the teaching and learning of morality in neo-Kantian terms as essentially a cognitive process. Following Piaget, Kohlberg saw moral development and reasoning as

[1] See Lawrence Kohlberg, "Moral stages and moralization: The cognitive-developmental approach," in T. Lickona, ed., *Moral Development and Moral Behavior: Theory, Research, and Social Issues*, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, pp. 31–53.

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M. Slote, *Between Psychology and Philosophy*,
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occurring through three basic levels: the pre-conventional, the conventional, and the post-conventional, with attainment of the final level characterized by an ability to think of moral problems in terms of very general or abstract principles like Kant's Categorical Imperative. But Kohlberg's account of how moral *thinking* develop doesn't do much to explain the origins and development of moral *motivation*, the desire actually to do what (more and more advanced) moral injunctions and principles tell us we ought to do. This point has been made by numerous critics, and Kohlberg himself allows that purely cognitive development cannot ensure substantial moral motivation. He even talks about empathy as somehow involved in moving (people) beyond the cognizance of moral norms to reliable moral motivation, but he never nails any of this down, and I shall argue here that empathy gives us our best purchase both on moral motivation and on how moral education most readily occurs.

Nowadays, we English-speakers tend to distinguish empathy from sympathy in a fairly uniform way. Roughly speaking, empathy is what Bill Clinton was self-ascribing when he famously said: I feel your pain. But sympathy involves feeling sorry for someone who is in pain and wanting to do something or see something done about it. Some more mature "feats" of empathy can depend on our possession of certain concepts and on cognitive maturation/learning more generally: as when we empathize with some whole group of people we have never met, for example, the starving or oppressed people of a certain country. Most importantly for present purposes, many contemporary psychologists hold that our altruistic and general moral tendencies depend on and are strengthened by our being empathic. And let me now say something more specific about how they view these matters.

The first step toward understanding the role of empathy in moral development was made, I believe, by the psychologist Martin Hoffman.[2] Hoffman holds that the development of altruistic moral motivation and behavior requires the intervention of parents and others making use of what he calls "inductive discipline" or often just "induction." Induction contrasts with the "power-asserting" attempt to discipline, train, or influence a child through sheer threats (carried out if the child doesn't comply) and with attempts to inculcate moral thought, motivation, and behavior (merely) by citing or admonishing with explicit moral precepts or

[2] Martin Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

injunctions. Inductive training depends, rather, on the child's initial capacity for empathy with others and involves (say) a parent's noticing when their child hurts others and then (in a non-threatening but firm manner) making the child vividly aware of the harm that he or she has done—most notably by getting the child to focus on and feel how things must feel for the child whom they have hurt. This leads the normal child with a good relationship with his or her parents to feel bad—a kind of rudimentary guilt—about what s/he has done.

Hoffman believes that if such training is applied consistently over time, the child will come to associate bad feelings (guilt) with situations in which the harm s/he can do is not yet done, an association that is functionally autonomous of parents' or others' actual intervention and constitutes or supports altruistic motivation. And he also holds that this process helps to support the motivational efficacy of moral rules and moral injunctions when these are (eventually) directed at the child. In addition, he says that educative techniques similar to induction can reinforce or strengthen children's empathy with and concern for other people generally. Both parents and schools can expose children to literature, films, or television programs that make the troubles and tragedies of distant or otherwise-unknown (groups of) people vivid to them—and they can encourage their empathic sensitivity to such people by asking students/children to imagine how they or some family member would feel if such things were happening to them or if *they themselves* had caused such things to happen to others.

But empathy plays another role in induction and in moral education more generally that Hoffman never mentions. When parents use induction, they demonstrate an empathic concern for the (say) child who has been hurt by their own child, and there is in fact no reason why a child can't take in such an attitude or such motivation directly from their parent.[3] Hume (in *A Treatise of Human Nature* and elsewhere) held that people's basic feelings can spread to others by contagion or infusion, but he also believed that moral opinions and attitudes can spread in that way. So in most cases induction will not only involve a parent's deliberately making their child more empathically sensitive to the welfare or feelings of others, but also the child's directly taking in, by a kind of empathic osmosis, the parent's own empathic concern for others. (The parents function as a model for the child, but the child may not be consciously aware that this is happening.) And the taking in of parental attitudes or dispositions

[3] See Nancy Eisenberg, *The Caring Child*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

will presumably not be limited to occasions where induction is employed, but will occur or be occurring at other times when the child notices how empathically altruistic their parent is. So there are at least two important and understandable ways—induction and modeling—in which empathic concern for other people can be strengthened and the aim(s) of moral education furthered, but notice that neither of these processes involves deliberate or conscious self-cultivation or self-shaping on the part of the child.

However, we now need to consider what the Aristotelian tradition has to say about how moral education occurs. Aristotelianism (along with the largely American school of "character education" that takes itself as in certain ways derivative from Aristotelianism) regards the moral education of any given individual as typically involving quite a lot of input from other people. But the Aristotelian emphasis is on habituation, on repetitive and habitual activity. According to Aristotle, parents can accustom their children to doing the right thing in various situations, and developing rational insight will then (somehow) work together with good habits in facilitating and motivating right actions after the child is no longer under parental tutelage.

The habituation or repetition that parents impose seems, however, to be more a matter of power assertion than of any other motivating factor, and as is well known, power assertion is much less effective than empathically-grounded induction in developing or enhancing altruistic concern for others.[4] I am saying, therefore, that Aristotle and Aristotelianism emphasize repetition and habituation, but don't offer us a satisfactory explanation of the role these play in the process of moral education. The Aristotelian methodology of or for moral education seems much less likely to create morally altruistic individuals than methods that rely explicitly and deeply on factors relating to empathy. But this is just the beginning of what I shall be saying here about the problems and prospects of Aristotelian moral education. When I discuss Aristotle's views about the voluntariness of moral character further along in this chapter, I will return to the issue of habituation and discuss it in a somewhat fuller way. But I think we have already seen enough to make us suspicious about the Aristotelian picture of moral education, and I think it is now time to see how the previous discussion bears on the question whether moral self-cultivation makes realistic and plausible sense in the terms in which the Chinese traditions have described and advocated it.

[4] See Eisenberg, op. cit.

2

The idea of (deliberate) moral self-cultivation entails a process that an individual can take charge of and accomplish largely through his or her own efforts. When we talk of self-education in specific school subjects, we mean that an individual learns more and more geography or mathematics largely (though not necessarily entirely) on his or her own, and the same is true across a quite wide range of reflexive verbs. Chinese thinkers often say or imply that individuals can at some point undertake their own moral self-cultivation and become more virtuous through what are basically (though they don't have to be exclusively) their own efforts, but I have doubts about this.

Modeling and induction don't give us good examples of deliberate moral self-cultivation, but let us spread our net more widely and consider a case where, unlike standard cases of modeling and induction, the individual who improves morally has to engage in a certain amount of (*self-*)*reflection*. Imagine, for instance, a factory owner who has always been quite insensitive to the feelings of his workers; he has been haughty with them and hard on them, and the employees for their part have always kept their feelings about their employer pretty well hidden. One day, however, he is in the factory and acting in his usual haughty manner, and (for some unexplained reason) he turns around suddenly to where no one has expected him to be looking. When he does so, he notices a look of fear and distaste on the face of one of the workers, and the factory owner immediately also sees that that face represents a response to the way he, the owner, has just been acting. This shakes him out of his usual mood and manner and makes him leave the factory immediately; and once he does, he starts reflecting on the meaning of what he has just seen. He soon (or eventually) realizes that what he has seen is just the tip of the iceberg. He was acting no differently today from the way he has always acted, but this time, by a kind of moral luck, he saw the reaction he caused in a given worker; and he is now able to generalize this, to recognize that he has hurt the feelings of a lot of people in the factory and not just on one occasion but over many years.

Such reflection will quite possibly lead the factory owner to become more sensitive to the feelings of his employees and of others as well. The result might be quite similar to what induction is supposed to bring about in children: namely, a greater empathic sensitivity to the feelings of others and a (greater) reluctance to do certain kinds of things that hurt or harm

people. But although the case of the factory owner doesn't involve anyone else teaching him a deliberate moral lesson and does involve a certain amount of self-reflection (reflection, e.g., on the meaning of the given worker's hurt look), I don't think we yet have an example of moral self-cultivation. Moral self-cultivation is something one deliberately sets out to do, and this factory owner had no intention of becoming a better person as a result of his trip to his own factory on a given morning. Yet this is what happened, and it happened because of external factors (that look!) that had totally unanticipated *effect* on both his feelings and his life. Therefore, if moral learning or education can occur through a process of moral self-cultivation, we need some other kind of example to demonstrate that possibility, and although I believe it is possible to find such examples, I think they are fairly rare, fairly difficult to come by. And as I hope to show you in what follows, that very rareness gives us reason to wonder about the overall usefulness and feasibility of the kind of overall or large-scale moral self-cultivation Chinese thought has emphasized the need for and desirability of. No Chinese thinker has ever said that successful moral development cannot occur in the absence of educative help from others, but I hope that by the time you reach the end of this chapter you will agree with me that such moral development is psychologically impossible. To develop morally we very much need the help or influence of others. (I have been shaping my discussion here to take account of suggestions that have been made by Huang Yong.)

However, I am absolutely not denying that moral self-cultivation ever occurs. In certain circumstances it can occur in a somewhat limited way. Consider, for example, a Caucasian American man married to a very Americanized Korean-American woman. The woman has introduced him to her very traditional family, and although the Caucasian man tries to keep his reactions to himself, he doesn't entirely succeed. He finds the family weird and unattractive, and it turns out that his brother-in-law has noticed this fact about him. The man finds this out through his wife's telling him so, and he immediately feels very bad about what has been happening. His wife is very understanding, very forgiving, about it all, but the man himself feels he hasn't tried hard enough to understand and warm to his in-laws, and upon reflection he decides to do something very specific to make things better. He decides to read a lot of Korean history and literature in order to become more sympathetic with that culture and with his own new family (also for the sake of future children), and if he carries out this resolution, it will be an example of very deliberate moral self-

cultivation. In fact, the educative process he has deliberately chosen may end up making him more sensitive to the Korean culture and to Korean people and to some extent, therefore, a better person.

But notice two things about this example. It depends, in the first instance, on the intervention or input of others. He doesn't think to cultivate his empathic sensitivity to Korean people all on his own, but decides to do that in response to what he wife tells him. Second, this is a very unusual example. Maybe people *should* go around reading series of books in order to become more empathic with others, but it doesn't often happen, and it isn't realistic to expect it to start happening very often. And the reason why is that the event that led the Caucasian who has married a Korean-American to undertake a course of readings in Korean history and literature is a fairly rare and unpredictable one. To be sure, such events do happen to people, but it doesn't seem reasonable to expect such events to occur often enough to help everyone become more (and more) sensitive and altruistic. If we want altruism and moral virtue, we need to use the techniques of moral education I spoke about earlier. But this assumes that the example of moral self-cultivation I have just described is basically the only kind of example one can realistically find, and I believe this goes against the entire tradition of Confucian moral teaching(s). So I propose now to consider what some of the main figures of Chinese Confucian ethical thought have to say on the topic of moral self-cultivation.

3

Let's begin our discussion with Kongzi (Confucius). The *Analects* contains a good deal of wisdom about moral education/learning and other topics. But I want to confine my comments to what Kongzi says about moral self-cultivation. Kongzi believed that people could or can fundamentally transform or shape themselves in moral terms, and he speaks of rituals or rites as helpful in effecting moral (self-)transformation. Many of his followers lay similar stress on rites or rituals as helpful to moral learning or education. But I wonder how many rituals actually help to make people better as people.

Take ritualized or institutionalized athletic contests. Kongzi seems to have thought that such contests take aggressive energy away from more destructive or divisive activities, and he may have been right about this.[5]

[5] *Analects* (any edition) 3.7.

But does an interest in and devotion to athletic contests do anything more than make people temporarily less aggressive? Does it transform them in such a way that they later become less aggressive and *less in need* of athletic contexts to draw off their aggressive energies? I see no reason to think so, though we would need to appeal to social science (or the science of biology?) to help us with this question.

Consider other kinds of ritualized behavior, cases where the term "ritual" actually seems more apt than it does in reference to most athletic contests. Imagine, for example, that there are certain ceremonies that parents take their children to and that require the children to sit still for a while and to take in certain aspects or elements of their own religious or ethical culture. Kongzi and his followers seem to have thought that such rituals were/are likely to curb children's bad habits, make them more patient, more willing to cooperate in social institutions and enterprises. But I don't know. If the children are made to sit through the rituals, perhaps they will resent what they have to do or go through, and perhaps they will "itch" not to have to do what they are being required by their parents to do. Maybe they will try to avoid such rituals whenever they can get away with it, and maybe the rituals, rather than increasing their patience, will make them less patient with what life requires of them. Who knows? The Confucians assume that the rituals will have various good effects on the character of those who participate in them, but with children at least the participation is typically not voluntary. The parents exert various forms of power assertion in order to get their children to attend church or regularly go through traditional and institutionalized social ceremonies, and the literature of psychology suggests that power assertion *isn't* very effective in making people more caring and altruistic—and may actually tend to have the opposite effect (children can *resent* their parents or the priests who force them to sit through, go through, various potentially tedious ceremonies). Of course, if children love their parents, they may empathically pick up on their parents' positive attitudes toward given rituals, but it is still unclear how any of that could make them become more moral or altruistic, and in any event this would not involve anything properly described as moral self-cultivation.

But let's now consider what Mengzi (Mencius) says about moral self-cultivation.[6] Mengzi thinks human nature is fundamentally good, but also holds that even if we are to some extent already good, we can become

[6] See the *Mencius* (any edition).

much better. Yet even if we are innately good in the sense of having inborn benevolent impulses, it doesn't automatically follow that we will desire to become *better* people and deliberately take (effective) steps to do so, and Mengzi's picture of moral self-improvement is, therefore, radically incomplete. Nor does it really help to bring in the idea of (deliberately) extending our benevolence beyond a narrower circle to ever larger ones. Mengzi mentions this possibility or opportunity.[7] And the idea of such extension is often relied on in later Confucian (and neo-Confucian, etc.) discussions of moral self-cultivation. But a plausible account of why one would *want* to extend one's benevolence is never really offered, and, in addition, we are never really told how, in understandable psychological terms, the process of (deliberate) extension actually occurs. (Other people can get us to be more morally consistent in our emotional concerns, but it is a mistake to view this as involving moral *self*-cultivation.[8])

Now later Confucianism often regarded the knowledge of the Confucian classics as a basis for moral (self-)improvement, but from everything I have read, those who have recommended such a course of study as a means to moral self-improvement don't tell us how the improvement actually, psychologically, occurs. And, frankly, I don't believe that this can at all easily be done. Reading certain works of literature that immerse the reader in the sorrows of certain other people (*Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a good example) can make and, we know, has made a great difference to how sensitive those readers are to other people's sufferings. And if the idea is that the Confucian classics can do this sort of thing for us, well, then, what is being said makes a lot of sense to me (though I don't know enough to judge whether those classics contain anything like the intense empathic moral lessons of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). But even if we can assume that the Chinese classics contain stories and examples that can help sensitize us morally, what is the motive for actually reading them? If the idea is that one is assigned these books in school or university, then there is an element of power assertion that can make one wonder just how much the student really will learn. And in any case even if one assumes that the student can learn moral lessons in such cases, the learning will certainly not count as an instance of moral *self*-cultivation or *self*-education. But perhaps the idea is that everyone wants

[7] *Mencius* 1A7, 7A15.

[8] I believe Bryan Van Norden makes this mistake in his *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism in Early Chinese Philosophy*, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 234–246.

to improve morally, so that if one realizes that the classics can improve one in that way, one has an obvious motive to immerse oneself in them.

However, for reasons explained earlier, I just don't get this. After one has hurt someone and had that fact placed very vividly before one, one may well feel bad and want to be better in certain specific ways (having to do with the hurt or harm one has brought about). But the general desire to be a morally better person: where is that supposed to come from? The desire for moral improvement and/or self-improvement can't simply be taken for granted. It needs to be psychologically explained in clear and convincing terms.

Now in fact the Confucian tradition seems to have such an explanation. It can say and has said that the desire for moral self-improvement may come from our admiration for certain traits and for certain individuals who seem to us to exemplify those traits (e.g., *Analects* 4.17, 7.22, and 7.24). So let's explore this new and final way in which one might try to defend Confucian ideas about moral self-cultivation.

First, admirable exemplars (or the admirable traits they exemplify) have to be brought to our attention, and it doesn't make sense to suppose that people go around looking for exemplars to emulate. If they did, and if they then proceeded to emulate those exemplars, that would be a process of self-cultivation in the fullest sense. But as I indicated, this is not how actual people learn whatever they learn from exemplars. I think, therefore, that the real question is whether, once one encounters or is shown an exemplar, a process of deliberate emulation can understandably take place along lines that can be reasonably described as moral self-cultivation. If acquaintance with the model or exemplar influences someone via the kind of unconscious or non-deliberate osmosis (of empathic concern) I described earlier, then the process isn't sufficiently deliberate or self-initiated to count as self-cultivation or self-shaping, so the Confucian who thinks the emulation of a moral model can be pursued in a deliberate and self-conscious way has to come up with a psychologically realistic way to explain how this latter can (frequently) happen.

Nor is it good enough, in this connection, simply to say that one's admiration for the exemplar is what gets one to emulate them in a deliberate way. We need to understand better *how* admiration can lead to emulation. After all, I may morally admire the person who gives one of their kidneys to a total stranger, but if I am as much attached (sorry!) to my own kidneys as most people are, I wouldn't want to be or become such a person. My present prudential self-concern would undercut any desire to

be like such a person. More generally, why should someone who is, say, already fairly altruistic (and empathic) want to embody the greater altruism (and empathic tendency) of some highly admirable exemplar? (Richard McCarty first brought this question to my attention many years ago.)

It is not enough to say that we will naturally want to become more like the highly moral exemplar because we realize that we will be better off, have a better life, if we do that. There are many reasons for doubting whether the person who is morally better than others will usually have a better life than those others (though see Chap. 6). But one also needs to ask how a desire to become morally better as a means to having a better life can actually lead to being morally better. If one's primary motive is and continues to be the ostensibly egoistic desire for a better life for oneself, then how can that represent, embody, or launch a *morally improved* state of personal character? It is just not clear how the primary desire for a better life for oneself will eventually yield to (or turn into?) the kind of intrinsic desire to help people and treat them fairly that we almost all think is essential to being a moral person.

But all right, then. Let's assume that admiration in itself gives one *some motive* to emulate a moral exemplar, a motive that needn't be egoistic, but that may be counteracted in cases like that of the kidney donation where the prudential risks of moral improvement can be considered too great. One will still have to ask how such a motive can initiate a process of moral self-improvement, and it is not easy to see how to answer this question. Wanting to be more like an admired moral model, do I simply perform actions like those I know the model has performed, actions presumably motivated by a desire to emulate that the model himself or herself wasn't motivated by? And how does this process lead me—and what reason do I really have to think it will lead me—to eventually develop the admired motives that the admired model originally acted from? Perhaps, then, I reason that if I read the Confucian classics that the model himself read, that will make me more like him—but I will also have to recognize that many people have read those classics without becoming like the model, and surely that should make me wonder whether reading those classics is the best way to go about improving myself morally. Similar thoughts are applicable to any attempt to improve oneself via rituals.

Up till now, I believe Confucian views about moral self-cultivation or overall self-shaping have been left pretty much without a realistic psychological foothold within the overall enterprise of (better) understanding how moral education and moral development more generally can and

actually do occur. Influential contemporary Confucians or Confucian scholars seem to believe in the promise and possibilities of moral self-cultivation just as much as the early Confucians did.[9] But my conclusions from everything that has been said here are, first, that present-day Confucian and other ethicists should *stop* being so preoccupied with moral *self*-cultivation and focus more of their attention on moral education *in general*; and, second, that discussions of moral self-cultivation from a Confucian perspective ought to be more skeptical than they have been.

But this still leaves the door open to Western ideas about self-cultivation and self-shaping that, as I have suggested, don't find any parallel within the Confucian or (as far as I know) within any other Eastern philosophical/ethical tradition. (Note that I am not and shall not be assuming that deliberate and radical moral self-improvement cannot involve substantial help from others.) So I think we now need to turn our attention to the somewhat different considerations and factors that Aristotle, Kant, and others in the West have emphasized as the basis for shaping ourselves overall into morally virtuous individuals.

4

Let me begin with Aristotle. Our previous discussion focused mainly on Aristotle's views about how children morally learn from their parents, and we didn't discuss the further issue of whether someone acting on their own can make themselves into an ethically better or worse person and thereby be or become responsible for their own moral character. But the latter topic has at least this much in common with the former: what Aristotle says about the moral training of children and what he says about our responsibility for our own eventual moral character both depend crucially on the idea of the repetition of desirable actions, on habituation.

In Book III (especially Chap. 5) of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE), Aristotle directly discusses the question of (moral) responsibility for states of virtue and vice and for actions arising out of such states of character. He says that when we make voluntary choices, we are responsible for what we have done, can be praised or blamed for the actions we have chosen to perform, and he goes on to claim that the repeated choice, say, of unjust

[9] See, for example, Tu Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought*, Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1979; and P. J. Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2000.

actions will turn someone into an unjust person, someone with a settled disposition or habit of acting unjustly. He adds that ignorance of this last fact is the mark of a "thoroughly senseless person." In other words, every intelligent person knows that if they act in a certain way all the time (or on many occasions and without ever acting in a contrary fashion), they will develop into a person with the habit of acting that way. So Aristotle holds that when someone has made themselves unjust in this kind of way and with this kind of antecedent knowledge, their resultant unjustness is voluntary and can therefore be blamed.

Now I argued earlier that if someone's parents use power assertion to make them, say, attend church every Sunday, this may well not result in a settled habit that will survive once they no longer are under their parents' control. (In fact, they may itch to stop going to church as soon as they can get away with it.) But one could claim that what one does under parental control or supervision is not really or entirely voluntary, and it would be possible then to claim, on behalf of what Aristotle says in Book III, Chap. 5, of the NE, that what is true of involuntary choices needn't at all hold for voluntary ones. Even if choices made under strict parental supervision arguably don't lay down a settled habit, that may be because the choices aren't voluntary, and in that case, since the choices Aristotle in Book III speaks of as laying down or causing a habit are entirely voluntary, they may establish a habit even if less voluntary choices do not.

But is Aristotle right to say this sort of thing? He says that every sensible person knows that their voluntary choices will eventually turn into something settled and perhaps even unchangeable, but does every such person really know this? I tend to doubt it. In *The Methods of Ethics* Henry Sidgwick says that someone who believes they are free, will sometimes rationalize themselves into yielding to a certain kind of temptation (that they wish to be no longer subject to) on the grounds that they can *just as easily* start acting differently the next time they are tempted.[10] Now you can say with Aristotle that such people aren't sensible or intelligent, but so many of us fall under this description that I think one should hesitate to agree with Aristotle about the obviousness of his claim that free choices lay down firm habits.

That claim, moreover, is not only not obvious but actually, and from a certain social-scientific standpoint, quite questionable. In the twentieth century, psychology as a field worked very hard on and with what is stan-

[10] 7th edition, London: Macmillan, 1907, p. 67n.

dardly called the "law of effect," according to which behavior that is rewarded in a given circumstance is more likely to repeat itself in similar circumstances in the future than it was likely to occur before it had ever been rewarded. The behaviorists relied on this idea (of course, it is vague because of the vagueness attaching to the notion of similarity and also, perhaps, to the idea of a reward). But the law of effect can certainly make sense apart from the (other) assumptions of behaviorism, and it is in any event clear that Aristotle's argument about the results of voluntary actions doesn't appeal to this law. He doesn't say that certain voluntary actions become more likely to repeat themselves if they are rewarded. Rather, and in a more blanket fashion, he says that they are more likely to occur and become a strong habit once enough of that kind of voluntary action (on the part of the given agent) has occurred.

This idea corresponds, not to the law of effect, but to another "law" that behaviorists and others have spoken and written about, the so-called law of exercise. According to this law, behavior that wasn't particularly likely to occur in a given kind of circumstance c becomes more likely to occur in similar circumstances in the future (simply) as a result of having occurred once (or perhaps several times) in c. This is very close to what Aristotle is saying and what he says every sensible person knows, but in fact psychologists have never plumped firmly in favor of the law of exercise in the way they pretty much have done in regard to the law of effect. The fact is that it is very difficult to be sure, either on experimental grounds or on commonsense grounds, that voluntary (or involuntary) choices tend to propel themselves forward into the future as habits or dispositions to act and to do so independently of being rewarded.

This has three theoretical consequences. One doesn't, to begin with, have to be silly or unintelligent to doubt the law of exercise or to doubt what Aristotle says about sheer action tending to become habit. Aristotle says you do, but he seems mistaken about this. But then second, and more significantly for present purposes, even if (unrewarded) voluntary actions do tend to yield habits, the habit thus arrived at won't have to count as voluntary on Aristotelian grounds to the extent the person who develops that habit had no idea, no clear notion, that his voluntary actions *were going to yield a habit*. Then, third and finally, there is reason to doubt that the voluntary actions will yield a habit unbeknownst to those to perform those actions (or even when they think that what they are doing will cause a habit to form). So Aristotle's argument for the voluntariness and consequent blameworthiness or praiseworthiness, respectively, of habits of or

tendencies toward injustice or toward justice just won't fly. He has given us no good reason to think that we ever do substantially shape or make our own overall moral character in this way.

Nor can one help Aristotle out here, as some present-day Aristotelians have sought to do, by comparing the acquisition of moral virtue with the acquisition of a skill.[11] When I practice the piano and become more adept at playing, my nervous system cooperates, but no change of motivation need occur; however, if I copy the actions of some moral exemplar, I can become like them only if some motivational change occurs within me as a result of such "practice." And it is difficult in psychological terms to see how the practice or repetition can serve to implement this kind of change. But now on to Kant.

5

Kant deals with the issue of self-shaping in ways that are, well, distinctively Kant-like. For example, he is very interested in strength of will as a path to the overcoming of temptations, and Aristotle emphasizes this aspect of the moral life much less than Kant does. Also there is no assumption in Aristotle that we have a duty to shape ourselves into better people, whereas for Kant this is one of our most important (imperfect) duties. Now I don't want to dwell on this last issue because it isn't essential to the present argument. The question we need to address is whether we are capable of shaping ourselves into better people, not whether we have a duty to do so—though if we find that we cannot shape ourselves morally in any overall substantial way, then on Kantian assumptions we don't have any duty to do so and Kant will have been mistaken to think we do.

According to Kant, each time we exercise willpower to repress or inhibit impulses or desires that run contrary to our moral duty, we weaken the future force of those impulses/desires and make it easier for ourselves to resist them in the future.[12] So someone who understands this and who seeks (to fulfill his duty) to improve himself morally can do so by resisting given temptations (Kant is thinking especially of appetitive temptations). But can someone deliberately and effectively go about shaping themselves in this way?

[11] See, for example, Daniel Russell, "Aristotle on Cultivating Virtue," in N. Snow, ed., *Cultivating Virtue: Perspectives from Philosophy, Theology, and Psychology*, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015.

[12] See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. L. W. Beck, NY: Macmillan, 1985, p. 195; and Paul Guyer, *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom: Selected Essays*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005, pp. 136ff.

It all depends on the empirical assumption that resisting temptation on a given occasion makes it easier to do so subsequently, an assumption that Kant may have believed plausible, but that recent psychology casts a great deal of doubt on. Recent studies of willpower tend to show that it is vulnerable to all sorts of negative influences (fatigue and low blood sugar can decrease willpower) and that one's willpower can be depleted, at least in the short term, by one's having exercised it on a particular occasion. This last point works to some degree against Kant's assumptions about the consequences of exerting willpower, but of course the Kantian can reply that even if exercising willpower depletes it in the short term, it strengthens it in the long term or at least attenuates the desires against which the willpower has been exercised, in the longer run. But unfortunately there seems to be little or no empirical evidence even for this weaker assumption.

I was recently in email correspondence with Roy Baumeister, the co-author, with John Tierney, of a book called *Willpower: Rediscovering the greatest human strength*, that deals in more specific psychological terms with the phenomenon of willpower than Kant, Aristotle, or any other philosopher ever has.[13] And I asked him directly whether he thought willpower could be increased over time and the strength of tempting desires/impulses diminished over time by resisting temptations. His answer was that immediate temptations don't seem to lose their power as a result of earlier exercises of willpower, but that we can diminish our tendencies to give in to temptations by keeping them at a distance, that is, finding ways to avoid "occasions of sin" where a given temptation can exert an immediate influence over us.

In addition to talking of the ways in which the exercise of willpower can diminish our reserves of willpower in the short term and of the physical effects of fatigue, anger, and what have you on the efficacy or strength of our willpower, the book *Willpower* spends a great deal of time talking about how one can avoid tempting situations—e.g., staying away from streets with candy or ice cream shops whose allure one's sweet tooth finds hard to resist. And the book is far from alone in making this kind of point. David Watson and Roland Tharp's *Self-directed Behavior: Self-modification for Personal Adjustment* goes in great and admirable detail into the ways, for example, in which someone fighting the temptations of drugs, alcohol, gambling, overeating, or betting can "externalize" their problem in order

[13] See Roy Baumeister and John Tierney, *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*, NY: Penguin Press, 2011.

to deal with it.[14] If I tell everyone I know that I intend to lose weight, I have a motive to stay away from tempting shops or aisles in the supermarket that is additional to the reasons I initially had to try to lose weight: namely, the desire not to lose face with my friends and family. That motive can help tip the scale toward resisting temptations, even immediate temptations, but that doesn't mean that the (felt) strength of those immediate temptations has been in any way diminished by one's previous or recent good behavior. Rather, another factor or item has been put in the scales weighing against one's strong temptation toward overeating.

Similarly, someone who wants to stop taking a certain drug can sign up with a company dedicated to helping people overcome their drug habits in a way that also puts a strong factor or item in the scales against continued drug use. They can give the company a large sum of money and sign a contract with them that allows the company to confiscate that money if they test positive (or refuse to take a drug test) at the end of six or twelve months. The psychology literature in this area is full of excellent suggestions about how a person who wishes to change bad habits can do so. But none of that literature subscribes to the thesis Kant assumed to be true, the thesis that we can weaken the future strength of temptations/impulses by refusing to act on them.

However, the Kantian might then reply "So what? If we can learn to indirectly avoid giving in to the impulses that lead us morally astray, isn't that good enough, and doesn't that count as a form of self-shaping for the morally better?" Well, not so fast. Let's carefully examine what these indirect techniques for dealing with tempting impulses actually imply for the possibility of moral self-cultivation or self-shaping. It will help us to do this if we choose an illustrative (probably not entirely fictional) example of someone who wants and wants badly to change his habit, say, of gambling. Imagine that he has gambled in the past and, because he has lost money in doing so, has deprived his family of some of what they need for their comfort and safety. He has felt bad about this, but not bad enough to make him resolve to change his ways (he'd rather fight with his wife about the way he spends money than actually try to change the way he does).

Let us imagine, however, that at a certain point he loses a great sum of money, enough to actually impoverish his family, and seeing in particular what this means for his children, he feels much guiltier than he has ever previously felt: guilty enough, disgusted enough with himself, that he now

[14] 9th edition, Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007.

and finally resolves to take steps to prevent himself from gambling in the future. Announcements to his friends might not be very effective here, but imagine that he thinks of a way in which he can ensure that his paycheck goes entirely to his wife and that all the places where he has bet or could bet have been put on notice that he is not to be given any credit for gambling purposes. Even if all this might not, as a matter of fact, be enough to prevent him from gambling again, let's just assume, in order to illustrate the relevant philosophical point, that it *is* enough or that he takes other measures that can effectively prevent him from ever gambling (e.g., making it impossible for himself to ever again possess a credit card). The potential dire results of his gambling are now painfully clear to him in a way that was never true or obvious before, and the shock and pain (to him) turn out to be enough to make him do things that render it impossible for him ever to gamble.

So the first question to ask is: has this man improved morally? And the answer is, at least on the surface, far from obvious. Isn't the only difference between the present situation and what had been the case previously the fact that he hadn't earlier done anything so terrible to his family? And how can a difference in consequences make a difference to his moral character, given especially that he presumably all along had the capacity for guilt that he is displaying as a result of what he has now done to his family?

Well, we have to be careful. His general capacity to feel guilt may well have been something he was born with, but guilt or guilty feeling can accumulate over time, and when it does or has, a given person may be primed to feel guilty for later misdeeds in a way he or she wasn't primed previously. In our example, it was assumed that the man had felt bad earlier for the (say) inconveniences his gambling had caused his family. And arguably (and plausibly) the earlier guilt primed him to feel even more guilty when he subsequently impoverishes his family (the family home has to be forfeited) than he would have felt if he hadn't earlier done things that made him feel somewhat guilty. Guilt can accumulate over time and as a result of a string of misdeeds, so we shouldn't assume, as we did above, that his capacity for guilt has always been the same. True, his basic capacity for guilt, his capacity, therefore, in one sense, hasn't changed; but if by capacity for guilt one means the man's actual(ized) *tendency* to feel guilt, then in that respect he has changed. The man will have a stronger tendency to feel guilt for gambling than he had originally and/or he will have a tendency to feel stronger guilt for a given act of gambling than he

had before his gambling started having dire effects on his family. All this is in fact relevant to the question whether he changes morally for the better.

To show you why, however, I need to bring in a simpler or more primitive case of inductive discipline to illustrate the same basic point. Martin Hoffman says that a single use of induction may not make a child resist all future (unprovoked) aggression against other children, but that if induction is used a few times, the child will eventually stop himself from aggressing against other children before the aggression can actually occur. Rather than just feel bad after the fact for aggressing, the accumulation of such bad feeling over a number and variety of instances can inhibit aggression before it occurs. In other words, the repeated instances of induction cause a build-up or increase of *motivational resistance* to aggressive action, and the child who goes through this process therefore emerges as less aggressive than they were previously. To that extent the child is a morally better individual than they were beforehand—induction is, after all, a form of moral *education*. And we can apply what has just been said about the moral education of children to the case of the man whose gambling has impoverished his family.

The man's earlier guilt in relation to the less harmful effects of his gambling paves the way toward the strong reaction he has when his gambling finally impoverishes his family. In parallel with cases of inductive discipline, the earlier bad feeling or guilt may not cause him to change his ways, stop gambling, but there may be a build-up of guilt nonetheless as a result of the earlier misdeeds, an increased resistance in the man to acts of gambling that reaches its full fruition when he impoverishes his family. The earlier bouts of guilt may well have softened him up for the incredibly strong guilt reaction he has when his gambling finally has utterly dire consequences. In other words and to reemphasize something I said earlier, there may have been an accumulated sense of guilt, a build-up of guilt, that causes the guilt reaction he has when he impoverishes his family to be much stronger than it would have been if this had been the first and only time he had gambled to ill effect, and we are supposing that that greater strength is what leads him, finally, to institute the changes in how he lives his life that make it impossible for him to gamble again. As in the case of the child who learns or comes to inhibit aggression through inductive discipline working on her or his natural empathic tendencies, the man who institutes such changes is plausibly regarded as a changed man, a better man than he was previously.

But doesn't he bring about this moral change himself—by bringing about the changes in himself and his environment that will prevent him from gambling again? If that is so, then we have an example of moral self-shaping, though its character will be quite different from what Kant imagined. The man won't have shaped himself into a person whose aberrant desires are less strong than they were: that would be moral self-improvement, but we have seen no reason to believe that he has improved himself in this way. Rather, and as we are now imagining things, he has, in reaction to the enormous guilt he felt (and continued to feel) when his gambling impoverished his family, shaped himself into a morally better person by deliberately making changes in the world and his power to affect the world that will prevent him from ever again gambling away his family's wealth and welfare. But is this the right way to view things? Does it make moral and conceptual sense? I think not.

Again, consider the case of induction. The child builds up more and more resistance to hurting or harming other children (or others more generally) till they reach the point where they no longer do aggressive things to other children. But when, we may ask, does the moral improvement occur? At the moment where, tempted as he might have been previously to hit another child, he inhibits that sort of action. Does that action *make* him into a better child or is it rather the *sign* of his moral improvement? Surely it must be the latter. The moral improvement occurs in stages as his resistance to hitting, say, builds up in response to repeated use by one parent or adult or another of inductive discipline that occurs on occasions when he actually has hurt someone and that focuses the child on the pain or harm he has (deliberately or thoughtlessly) caused to the other child/person. The actual inhibitory act is just a sign, is it not?, is just a sign or evidence that the process of changing the child's motivation vis-à-vis others has been (relatively and in one respect) successful. You don't have to be a virtue ethicist to see that the moral change occurs before the child acts, that is, refrains from acting aggressively. (Kantians might well agree.)

But then when we transpose these ideas back to the case of the gambler, we see that it is far from clear that the man we are imagining makes himself into a better person by (deliberately) instituting changes in the world and in his own power to affect the world that make it impossible for him to gamble. The motivational change, in parallel with the case of a child subjected to inductive discipline, occurs before the man actually initiated the changes necessary to undercut his possibilities of gambling. Indeed, it is

the motivational change in him that *causes* him to institute those changes. And it seems much more plausible to imagine that the motivational change constitutes, in his case, the moral change for the better that occurs in or for him, than to say, as we originally put it, that the moral change occurs through the actions that he initiates as a result of that motivational change.

Of course, the actions he initiates are under his control, and if the moral change occurs through those actions, it occurs as a result of his own choosing and counts as an instance of self-shaping. But if the moral change occurs through the accumulated strengthening of inhibitory guilt, then it is not something he deliberately caused, and he can't be said to have shaped himself morally into a better person. The guilt, rather, *shaped him*. And in that case we have still not found a plausible Kantian-type example of someone's deliberately or even non-deliberately shaping or making themselves into a morally better, much less a morally good, person. The idea of overall moral-self cultivation is less psychologically realistic and, consequently, less morally useful or relevant than the historic traditions of Eastern and Western thought have largely believed. Our moral development mainly depends on the intervention of others and on external factors that are largely beyond our own control. Philosophers East and West ought to start recognizing that.

Here too, then, we have another example of how difficult it is to think of our psychology in a realistic (or sober) way. The present chapter shows the unrealism and wishfully thinking quality of much that has been said about the human capacity for large-scale or overall moral self-cultivation. But in Chap. 2 we saw that Western philosophers, unlike the philosophers of China, have misunderstood how any psychology has to work. With Kant and Aristotle as prime examples, they have thought that it is possible for us to think or reason in the absence of all emotion and this is a ground-floor mistake about our psychology or any psychology and about what it is in most general terms to be an intelligent being, human or otherwise. And it is worth mentioning Kant and Aristotle in this connection because, as we saw in the present chapter, they also have inflated ideas about the human capacity for moral self-education and self-transformation. Whether the two errors are related is a very interesting question, one that invites further consideration on my own part and, I hope, yours. (I don't now see any easy way to answer it.) But I should also mention what Chap. 2 says about the error psychologists make when they *underestimate* the strength of the connection between empathy and altruism, which contrasts, of course, with the way so many philosophers have *overestimated* our capacity

for moral self-transformation. I don't think psychologists have been particularly prone to the same error. The most famous recent psychologist of moral education, Lawrence Kohlberg, speaks of stages of moral development but never suggests that the developing individual can take control of this process. And the same is also true of Martin Hoffman, who pioneered work in psychology on empathy and moral development.

So we have seen quite a sampling of errors of psychological unrealism or conceptual confusion in regard to the topics we have explored in our last two chapters here. In our next chapter, I shall be talking about various kinds of weaknesses or deficiencies in philosophical thought, and again some of these, perhaps even most of these, will involve problems having to do with psychology, though in most cases the intellectual fault will not lie with psychology or psychologists but with the way philosophers have shied away from and/or shown insensitivity to issues about human psychology that bear directly on the questions they address and seek to answer as philosophers.

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CHAPTER 4

Philosophical Deficiencies East and West

As previously, "East" here mainly means China and not Asia generally. My reasons for this restriction are the same as they have always been. First, I have never been interested enough in Indian philosophy to learn its details, and Japanese philosophy, when it isn't deriving inspiration from German philosophy, gets much of its material and method from Chinese thought. So the limitation here is clearly of my own doing or lack of doing, but even thus limited I think there is much I can say about the major contrasts between Chinese and Western thought. Second, I hope that the contrasts I shall draw between Chinese and Western thought will allow me to propose a short general scheme of what is necessary and advisable for contemporary philosophizing (even in India and Japan), a scheme that I believe takes in a greater variety of philosophical options than has been mentioned much less systematized by other philosophers. Let's see how all that might work.

1

Some years back, in the appendix to my book *The Impossibility of Perfection: Aristotle, Feminism, and the Complexities of Ethics* (OUP, 2011), I wrote about some cognitive problems with the way philosophers do philosophy. The appendix was titled "Men's Philosophy, Women's Philosophy," and it sought to show or perhaps just point out some different *weaknesses* or

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deficiencies in the way women and the way men have (often or typically) dealt with philosophical issues. Care ethicists, for example, are predominantly women, and care ethicists typically pay a great deal of attention to issues of moral psychology: for example, issues about how caringness is learned or instilled and about how (via empathy) particular caring actions are engendered and undertaken. Similar attention to issues of actual psychology is paid by virtue ethicists, and most virtue ethicists are also women. Male ethicists in the Kantian tradition show much less interest in such issues, and even when they do, I think they show a much less delicate sensitivity to psychological aspects of the moral life than is shown by the care ethicists and the virtue ethicists. (I know that there are a lot of women Kantians too.)

Now someone might object that both Thomas Nagel and T. M. Scanlon do moral psychology in a robust way, and they do, they do. But Nagel in *The Possibility of Altruism* (in my opinion his strongest and best book) is more interested in the a priori necessary structure of practical reason(s) than in empirical/sensitive/introspectively-grounded moral psychology.[1] And although Scanlon's attention to the moral life does bring in moral-psychological elements in a central way, I think his views are dictated more by a priori ethical (and also epistemological) considerations than by actual attention to how we live and experience our lives. Scanlon notably claims that we experience the appearance of reasons, when we act on the basis of practical reasons, and for the life of me I don't think I have ever experienced what Scanlon says is occurring all the time.[2] When I put the clock back in the fall, I have and know I have a reason to do so, but does that reason enter my consciousness as a kind of appearance? Things can appear red to me, things can appear congruent to me, things can appear messy to me, but I don't think I have ever experienced something that can be called an apparent reason to act or the appearance of such a reason. And things are even worse for Scanlon because he regards reasons as non-natural phenomena, and this raises the familiar problem of explaining how something outside of nature—like a number or, in Scanlon's case, a reason for action—can causally affect something in nature, a human mind, in the form of an appearance of a given reason. No one has ever figured out how to make sense of this kind of causality, so this complicates even further what Scanlon wants to say about our moral psychology.

[1] Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

[2] Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

I think I know what has gone wrong here with Scanlon. Aside from its frequent but arguably incoherent invocation and application of the idea of non-natural phenomena, ethical rationalism is uncomfortable with the idea of using desire, emotion, or empathy to explain why we act or act rationally in a given situation. But Scanlon thinks there has to be something (else) mental or psychological that we can know about and that gears us up toward acting rationally or irrationally, and the idea of an appearance of a reason seems to serve that purpose once all other psychological explanations have been ruled out. However, I think this idea of an appearance of a reason is just something invented to fill a gap in rationalistic theory rather than something that derives from a sensitive appreciation of what the moral life or life in general is like from the inside.

More generally, I think male philosophers are less sensitive, on the whole, to psychological nuance than women philosophers have been, but, as the appendix in my book argued, we need a high level of psychological sensitivity in order to do full justice to morality and the moral life. Of course, if Kantian rationalism is true, that may not be so, but having myself argued for a non-Kantian approach to ethics {my earlier Chap. 2 offers a very negative "critique of pure reason"}, I think I can say that conditional on the validity of such a different approach, philosophers need to be sensitive rather than obtuse about matters of moral and human psychology. Let me give you another example of how obtuse male analytic philosophers can be about issues involving sensitivity to others or sensitive introspection of one's own psychology.

In recent years, there has been a lot of talk about open-mindedness among epistemologists, especially virtue epistemologists.[3] Open-mindedness is said to be an epistemic virtue, alongside intellectual courage, thoroughness, and so on. But one fact about open-mindedness has been neglected by the philosophers who speak of it. Open-mindedness of the fullest kind involves an ability and willingness to see things from the point of view of those who disagree with one about particular issues, but other philosophers focusing on open-mindedness have never pointed this out. Well, all right, what is the problem? One points it out, the literature on open-mindedness takes it into account, and the discussion and exploration continue. But not so fast!

[3] See, for example, Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

When I point out the connection between open-mindedness and seeing or attempting to see things from the point of view of others (within limits—you don't need to do this with a woman who thinks she is Napoleon), philosophers don't go along with this as an interesting insight. Rather, they object, and the objectors have all been males. I am told that open-mindedness only requires that one make judgments impartially or fairly with respect to available evidence, and the connection with seeing things from the standpoint of others is staunchly denied? (Some of you readers may be denying it right now.) What is going on here?

My diagnosis is very critical of those who don't see the point I was trying to make. Natch! But look, let's think about the relevant issues! To begin with, the emphasis placed on fairly dealing with evidence suggests to me that the philosophers who have objected to what I have said about open-mindedness are confusing open-mindedness with fair-mindedness and so are not being sensitive to linguistic nuance here. Fairness and openness are different concepts, and think, then, what we must mean when we use the notion of openness or open-mindedness. What are we supposing that the open-minded person is open *to*? Now some philosophers who speak of open-mindedness have emphasized the epistemic importance of being willing to think in new ways and accommodate new realities in one's thinking, and that is certainly a kind of openness that doesn't as such make any reference to those who do or might disagree with one. But if someone were open to new facts and theories only when no one else held them and they didn't contradict anything one currently believed, would we really call them completely or ideally open-minded? I don't think so. I think the openness involved in open-mindedness involves, at least ideally, being willing to really listen to what others who disagree with one are saying and arguing; and when a wife tells her husband that he is not really listening (to her or to what she is saying), she surely means that he should make more of an effort to see or understand where she is coming from. And to see where someone is coming *from* is to see things *from* that person's point of view. QED.

What has gone wrong here? Why do male philosophers have such a difficult time understanding the point about open-mindedness and seeing things from the other's point of view (a form of empathy)? I spoke a moment ago about a failure of linguistic sensitivity, but I think more is in play here than linguistic insensitivity. On the whole, male philosophers in the Western analytic tradition are more comfortable arguing rationally or analytically than looking inside themselves for clues about philosophical

issues. But we should also consider what might happen if and when they *did* look. I wonder whether the male philosophers who deny the connection with seeing things from the other's point of view have ever had, or remember ever having, that particular experience. It is an experience I remember having myself, as, for example, I think or have thought my way into one of the chief reasons or motives for being an ethical rationalist, the desire for morality to be objectively valid, rather than merely expressive or subjective/relative. Recent expressivists and emotivists typically defend their views without regretting or even noting the way those views go against an antecedent desire to preserve morality as something with a right to command us, with objective force or validity. Perhaps the recent expressivists and emotivists simply don't share that desire, but they ought in any case to show themselves more aware of the force it has for others and to try to argue, somehow, against such force or validity. Which they typically don't do.

But to get back to those who deny any connection between open-mindedness and seeing things from the point of view of someone who disagrees with one, we might do well to consider the possibility that these philosophers just don't go through the effort of seeing things from the standpoint of others. They may lack that kind of motivation and their failure to recognize it in themselves may be due to the fact of its absence there. Then their failure to recognize it in others may be in some measure traceable to the absence of such motivation in themselves, though possibly also to their lack of sensitivity to the psychology of others. (In this case, it would be a lack of empathy for the empathy others exercise when they put themselves or receptively find themselves in others' intellectual shoes.) In the absence of all that, they say that open-mindedness is just a matter of being impartial and fair with regard to evidence, and that is my tentative explanation of why the male philosophers I am speaking of seem to see no reason whatever to connect open-mindedness with seeing things from the standpoint of others.

But let me return to the issue of whether or how male philosophers are deficient in relation to female philosophers. Yes, we have shown (I believe) that they are on the whole less sensitive to psychological nuance than women philosophers and especially care ethicists tend to be. (I am not talking about Michael Stocker and Bernard Williams.) But in addition, and this is a quite new point, male philosophers tend to be prejudiced against female philosophizing in some very unfortunate ways. In Appendix B I shall say something more specific about one of the main ways this has happened. But it is worth noting that such philosophical prejudice is part of a wider or deeper phenomenon. In *In a Different Voice: Psychological*

Theory and Women's Development (Harvard U. P., 1993/1982), Carol Gilligan points out that under the historical conditions of patriarchy, people tend not to pay attention to what women and girls say—by comparison with what is said by men and boys. And, sadly, this is often as true of the attention paid by women as of the attention paid by men. Gilligan brilliantly speculates that these factors frequently lead women to lack confidence in their own ideas and aspirations and to be selfless in regard to the needs of others. Such treatment also constitutes (as I have argued in many places) a failure to respect women and girls, and the second appendix of the present book concludes what it has to say positively about social justice in relation to empathy by arguing that the lack of attention male neo-Kantian ethicists (most notably, Derek Parfit, Thomas Nagel, Ronald Dworkin, and T. M. Scanlon) pay to the ideas of care ethics shows, at the academic level, a similar failure or refusal to really listen to women's voices of the kind Gilligan initially made us (theoretically) aware of.

2

To get back to the explicit comparison of how well male and female philosophers do philosophy, my main point above has been that male analytic philosophers have been somewhat obtuse about issues of psychology involving nuance, introspection, or empathy—at least by comparison with female philosophers. This is a major philosophical deficiency or weakness, even if it is unevenly distributed between the (traditional) human genders. But the appendix of my book *The Impossibility of Perfection* wasn't as one-sided as the just-offered critique might be thought to be. The book also spoke of a major intellectual or philosophical deficiency that affects or has affected women more than men. Male philosophers in the analytic tradition (and many female philosophers too) place a great emphasis on precise argumentation based on fine analytic distinction-making, and one finds much less of this among women, especially, care ethicists. My appendix noted how problematic this is or can be. Some female feminist philosophers have pointed out to me that when some male or female at a conference or a meeting devoted to care ethics makes a sharp analytic objection to some point in care ethics, they are frequently met with the criticism that they are being too analytic and, sometimes, with the further criticism that what they are saying and the way they are saying it works against feminist goals and aspirations. Their criticisms are treated almost automatically as some kind of sexism.

This is too bad. The fact that those who have emphasized reason and argumentation so much in the past have also opposed care ethics and perhaps even feminism is no reason why women shouldn't employ the same powerful tools *in favor* of feminism and/or care ethics (or virtue ethics or anything else in philosophy). When I was about to publish my book *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* (Routledge, 2007), Carol Gilligan treated it as a major event in care ethics because here was an analytic philosopher using familiar forms of analytic argument *to defend care ethics*, something that previous care ethics had not really done so much of. (If you don't believe me, look at the blurb she wrote for that book.) And I am taking up Gilligan's point or point of view here. Care ethicists and women philosophers generally shouldn't shy from analytic argument and precision. This doesn't threaten their views and can even be helpful to their views as long as those views continue to show the sensitivity to psychological realities that has typically been their hallmark. But as of right now care ethics has been less interested in engaging, analytically and argumentationally, with other ethical views than I think it should be.

This relates to another problem with the way care ethics has been done. Female care ethicists have largely shied away from issues of moral semantics and from attempts to connect care ethics with issues in other areas of philosophy. None has so far published any sort of full-bodied account of what terms like "right" and "good" mean, and none, to my knowledge, has shown any interest in questions about the implications of care ethics for general issues that border the philosophy of mind such as the nature of epistemic rationality. It is as if, given the back of the hand that mainstream philosophy has given care ethics, the care ethicists are repaying the compliment by paying little or no attention to standard philosophical issues outside care ethics considered strictly in normative terms. But to consider traditional or standard philosophical questions is not—*not!*—to be committed to giving familiar philosophical answers. Care ethicists or those who favor care ethics need really to open up a bit in their philosophical interests. Care ethics can compete with other views in general philosophical terms if only it will let itself do that. *If* (*as is so often said*) *men connect less well or willingly with other human beings than women do, women for their part may be less willing or able than men to connect the ideas they like with other or further ideas.* So if men need to be more psychologically sensitive, women may need to think in more systematic terms than has been typical with them.

In any event, the failure to take advantage of and become steeped in analytic argumentation and distinction-making *does* in my opinion represent an important cognitive/philosophical deficiency or inadequacy on the part of many of the women philosophers who have been so excellent at moral psychology. Why can't philosophy go forward in theoretical and even synoptic fashion without the typical male failure to respond or react sensitively to psychological realities and without the frequent female failure to master and exercise the arts of analytic thinking? Why not indeed?

However, my last complaint, the complaint about the lack of analytic thinking typical of much female philosophical thinking or at least the thinking of care ethicists, reaches out beyond the distinction between males and females. In recent years I have been exploring the connections between Western virtue ethics and Confucianism, and I believe and have already argued earlier in this book that (we) Westerners have a great great deal to learn from the traditions of Chinese thought. But just as I have claimed for the case of women and care ethicists in particular, I think that Chinese philosophy as a whole would do well or better to place more emphasis on the development of analytic skills than it previously has. That may well mean many Chinese philosophers' acquiring a better knowledge of Anglophone Western philosophy and sending more of their undergraduate students for graduate training in American, British, Australian, and so on, philosophy departments, which latter is in fact happening more and more these days. But one has to hope that the Chinese students who get trained in analytically oriented departments aren't also trained into believing that their own traditions are irrelevant to present-day philosophical issues and concerns. As I say and have argued earlier, we have a great deal to learn from China, and I hope that Chinese students will be able to appreciate that even after they have got their doctorates from Western universities. Still, what I have said classes traditional Chinese thought with female-dominated care ethics in one respect—as typically failing to show some of the analytic skills and precise thinking that are needed for the fully satisfactory doing of philosophy. But I am not yet done with the philosophical deficiencies of philosophers.

3

Philosophers typically take up some approach or position early in their careers and continue to defend it (and elaborate it) for the rest of their careers. What Kantian ethicist has ever renounced Kantianism for Aristotelian virtue ethics or care ethics, and what Aristotelian or care ethi-

cist has later given up their view in favor of a Kantian approach to ethics? Similarly, what free-will compatibilist has ever become convinced of libertarianism or vice versa? I don't know of any examples here, and these are fields I have long been familiar with; and even if some cases have escaped my notice or yours, the lack of basic change I am ascribing to philosophers as a class is a rather noteworthy fact about them—even if it is something that, as far as I know, has escaped everyone's attention and never been focused on in the philosophical literature. (Even if someone has noticed or mentioned this, it has not been broadly brought to the attention of philosophers.)

Unfortunately, I think there is a ready and all-too-obvious explanation of why this is the case with philosophers. Virtue epistemologists are always talking about the importance of open-mindedness as an epistemic virtue, but in fact philosophers (like a lot of other academics) don't show much sign of actually *being* open-minded in regard to views they initially disagree with. This is another besetting intellectual deficiency or defect of philosophers, and though I know this is a hard pill to swallow, I am hereby inviting philosophers to swallow it. Think about it! Are we really open-minded about other people's disagreeing views once we have committed ourselves or find ourselves committed to some particular philosophical tradition or approach? In graduate school we often have to read everyone's views on particular topics, but once we have our doctorates and have sided with a particular tradition, do we really take the time to read and seriously engage with other traditions? How many care ethicists read the most recent important book in or on Kantian ethics, and how many Kantians bother to read seriously in the literature of care ethics? Very, very few![4]

The practitioners of philosophy are not open-minded; they lack that widely regarded intellectual/epistemic virtue, though those who proclaim the virtue status of that trait don't seem to realize how lacking they and all of us are in that valuable trait. (I expand on this theme in the first Appendix to this book.) So this is another sin or intellectual weakness of philosophers, but not necessarily, as far as anything I have so far argued, a problem with philosophy itself. Ideally, philosophers would think analytically

[4] Bertrand Russell and Hilary Putnam are notable exceptions to my claim that philosophers choose a basic position and then stick with it throughout their careers. But to change basic positions as often as Russell and Putnam did seems to be flighty rather than open-minded, so what I am saying in the main text can stand (qualified as I have just qualified it).

and with psychological and linguistic sensitivity about philosophical issues while at the while being open-minded toward views they initially disagree with. But perhaps we human philosophers aren't really capable of doing all that philosophy itself, if I may put things that way, would ask of us.

4

A major objection to what I have been saying may at this point have occurred to readers. I have spoken of rigid closed-mindedness as a problem generally for philosophers, but is it as much a problem for Chinese philosophers as it is for Western (especially analytic) philosophers? I think not.

To be open-minded is to be receptive to the ideas of others even if they initially disagree with one's own, and in my book *From Enlightenment to Receptivity: Rethinking Our Values* (OUP, 2013) I argued that Western philosophy has largely either ignored or been hostile to the idea, the value, of receptivity.[5] The book also made the point that Chinese thought is not like that. Let me illustrate this difference by reference to two roughly contemporaneous philosophers in China and the West.

Mencius in the *Mencius* (4B28) tells us something very interesting, important, and (judging by my own reaction) *striking* about how we should react when someone hurts or harms us. Rather than retaliate or immediately feel anger and indignation/resentment, Mengzi tells us that we should first ask ourselves what we might have done to provoke the person who has hurt us and/or how we may have hurt them previously. To recommend such a reaction is to recommend in effect that we be receptive to the other's point of view even when they have hurt or harmed us. Mengzi doesn't use a word for receptivity, but his example shows the value he places on receptivity and a kind of open-mindedness. We could also call it intellectual humility, and he also indicates the high value he places on intellectual humility (2A8) when he praises the delight one can and should take when one's mistakes are corrected by another person. (Similarly, Confucius/Kongzi's "where three men are together, I can learn from one of them.")

[5] Oddly, there is no word for receptivity in the Chinese language, but in the West, where receptivity isn't as valued, we do at least have the word. The Chinese may not have the word, but their philosophizing and cultural practices demonstrate the value they place on receptivity, as per the striking example to be mentioned in the main text.

By contrast, consider what Aristotle says about the virtuous individual. For Aristotle, such a person always acts rightly and knows what is right. So Aristotle never recommends, for example, that the virtuous person listen to those who disagree with him (it was always a him), that he learn from them, or that he happily admit ethical mistakes. He already, for Aristotle, knows everything he needs to know. Let's put it this way. For Mengzi (and Kongzi) ethical action requires us to take into account the (differing) point of view of others; but Aristotle never once says or implies this sort of thing about the virtuous individual—and of course and in consequence open-mindedness is not a virtue in Aristotle's intellectual armamentarium the way it is for present-day (supposedly) neo-Aristotelian virtue epistemologists. (Aristotle speaks of a virtue of pride, but never recommends intellectual or moral humility of the kind Mengzi clearly advocates.) In general, then, Chinese philosophy demonstrates more open-mindedness and a greater respect for open-mindedness than one finds in historical Western thought.

To summarize, I am saying that we philosophers should move into a future of internationalized or global philosophy with great attention to analytic distinction-making, with sensitivity to linguistic and psychological nuance, with an open-mindedness vis-à-vis those who disagree with us, but also and finally with confidence in and a large sense of the importance and powers of philosophy itself. Can we manage to do all this? I don't know, but I certainly hope we can. (The first appendix, however, may give us reason for skepticism about the open-mindedness part of the practical advice I have just offered.) But now it is time to move on to questions involving the relationship between psychology and philosophy, philosophical questions, that is, that more attention to certain aspects of psychology can help us clarify and even resolve. For the most part our discussion won't bring in comparisons between East and West, but will focus directly and persistently on purely philosophical issues—except those issues turn out to be not so pure because psychology is so relevant to our understanding of what they involve and to our ability to deal successfully with them. I will begin, in our next chapter, by speaking of the relevance of empathy to a whole host of philosophical issues. Empathy already played an important role in the discussion of moral sentiment and of its yin-yang basis in Chap. 2, but we are about to see that empathy is relevant to a much wider range of philosophical tasks or problems than Chap. 2 ever indicated.

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CHAPTER 5

The Many Roles of Empathy

Empathy has become a hot topic in philosophy, but I think empathy is much more philosophically important than its recent advocates, myself included, have realized. During the last few decades many philosophers—though perhaps not a majority—have come to think that empathy has an important role in moral motivation, that compassion, for example, is often or always psychologically powered by empathy with someone's miserable condition. Chapter 2 above argued for this specific point and took the more general view that sentimental virtues like compassion and benevolence are best understood in relation to empathy. Now this last is a claim of normative ethics, but some philosophers think that empathy plays a role in our concepts and judgments of right and wrong, and in that case empathy is important not just to ethics but to metaethics as well.[1] It is also widely recognized that empathy helps to put us cognitively in touch with what others are feeling and does so much more directly than by any form of argument or inference. This gives empathy an epistemological role outside of ethics, but I want to show you that that role has been totally underestimated. I want to show you how empathy plays a role in our *general knowledge* of the world outside of us and also hope to show you that empathy plays a cognitive or epistemic role in moral knowledge than has

[1] This is Hume's view in the *Treatise of Human Nature*, and it can also be found in my recent book *Moral Sentimentalism* (which I shall be speaking further about in what follows).

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M. Slote, *Between Psychology and Philosophy*,
Palgrave Studies in Comparative East-West Philosophy,
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ever been appreciated. Empathy turns out to be the moral sense that Francis Hutcheson spoke of but never really nailed down for philosophers; and Hume, for all his deep thinking about empathy (he called it "sympathy"), never saw that it could be the moral sense that his mentor Hutcheson had been looking for and/or talking about. I shall explain why in what follows, but that is not the end of empathy's unexamined, unexplored, philosophically significant roles. Empathy is essential to speech acts in a way that speech act theorists have totally ignored. I shall here try to make good on all these points.

1

First, let me talk about a very specific epistemic role for/of empathy that the recent literature of epistemology has ignored. Epistemologists and, especially, virtue epistemologists have spoken of open-mindedness as an important epistemic virtue, an important element in epistemic rationality. And some mention has been made of the virtue of receptivity in this connection. An open-minded person has to be at least somewhat receptive to new ideas and to views that at least initially they disagree with. But what no one has pointed out is that this kind of *epistemic* receptivity (one can also be receptive to people's suggestions about what one should do) depends on empathy, involves being willing and able to see things from the point of view of another person or persons who disagree with one. However, this point, once it is made, seems fairly obvious (and is to some extent anticipated by what was said about open-mindedness in Chap. 4). Let me now turn to some deeper aspects of empathy's significance for the theory of knowledge.

The kind of empathy that takes in the feelings, attitudes, and so on, of others (what is sometimes called associative or receptive empathy) clearly allows us to pick up on, to recognize, what others are feeling, and to do so without any belabored form of inductive or abductive inference. (I shall for the moment play down the distinction between being aware of how someone is feeling and being aware *that* they are feeling a certain way.) So empathy is a direct, non-inferential way of knowing about other minds, and the literature on empathy frequently emphasizes that fact. (Mirror neurons are obviously relevant here.) But I think empathy has a far greater cognitive or epistemic significance than the one we have just mentioned. To be sure, it helps us recognize what others are thinking or feeling, but, much more importantly or at least much more broadly, it helps us learn

facts about the world that as facts or realities lie beyond and/or are independent of the other minds (or rather xins) we empathize with. And this fact about the epistemic usefulness and value of empathy hasn't, I think, been recognized in the literature, both philosophical and otherwise, on empathy. Let me explain.

If your parents fear bears, you, as a child, can empathically pick up on or (osmotically) take in that fear and learn thereby how your parents feel about bears. But their attitude about bears is presumably based on what they have learned about the world (perhaps it was picked up from their parents, but this sort of process has to originate, I think, in perceptually learning about the world in ways that don't involve empathy). *And by empathically taking in their attitude toward bears, the child can acquire knowledge of how the world beyond his parents actually is, can learn, and/or have reason to believe that bears are dangerous or to be feared.* Similarly, if the child feels their parents' trusting attitude toward Aunt Tilly, they can learn what their parents have already learned earlier on: that Aunt Tilly is someone they can rely on. And so on and so forth for a large variety of other cognitive cases. Therefore, empathy with others is also a way of learning about the world beyond those others that the others have, let us assume, learned about through typically non-empathic modes of learning like perception, memory, induction, abduction. This kind of empathic learning may be parasitic on the latter types, but one person's parasitism is another's second-order status. Just as memory beliefs can be second order in relation to perceptual beliefs because they involve memories or a memory of how things perceptually seemed to us in the past, so too can empathic learning about the world be second order or higher order in the way it depends on empathy with other people and on what those one is empathizing with have learned via or believe as a result of perception or memory or abduction, and so on (or even empathy), in the past. (Also most empathy involves us in actually seeing someone, but in order to simplify the discussion, I shall ignore this fact in what follows.) Somehow the fact that we can learn about the world through empathizing with other people's attitudes or views about the world has escaped the attention of epistemologists.

But one shouldn't be too extreme about all this. Just as memory and perception can sometimes serve us badly, empathy can serve us badly too. If one's parents are bigots who think all Jews are out to do people dirt (or worse), then one is going to pick up an epistemic attitude that is far from justified (paranoia epistemically distorts someone's reality) and that isn't

likely to serve one well in one's life. So empathy isn't fully reliable, perhaps isn't as reliable as memory and perception typically are. And that very fact may help account for the neglect of empathy in discussions of the modes and bases of justified human knowledge and cognition. However, the fact that perceptual beliefs are sometimes mistaken doesn't undercut the idea that most perceptual beliefs are justified, and by the same token the fact that empathy sometimes takes in beliefs that are based in paranoia and totally unjustified doesn't mean that in most cases what we empathically take in from others about the world *isn't* justified and doesn't count as knowledge.

But empathy not only plays a greater role than anyone has imagined in the acquisition of empirical knowledge or justified beliefs about the world, but also undergirds certain forms of moral knowledge in ways that have not been recognized. Almost everyone knows that empathy can (often) help us identify those who need our help more immediately or quickly than other modes of cognition, and this clearly makes empathy epistemically relevant to the moral life. But empathy also can help us recognize the virtue or vice of those we come into contact with (or read about). In fact, I think it is our primary mode of access to (the) moral attributes (of individuals or groups).

2

In the eighteenth century Francis Hutcheson argued that human beings have a moral sense that enables them in something like a perceptual way to detect the moral goodness/virtue or moral badness/vice of other human individuals. But to subsequent generations of philosophers the idea of a moral sense has seemed like nothing but a metaphor, and Hutcheson's most famous student or mentee, David Hume, was unwilling to countenance the idea of a literal moral sense. In fact, many of the ethics-theoretical tasks that Hutcheson attempted to accomplish using the idea of a moral sense were addressed by Hume using the concept of empathy. (He used the word "sympathy" in describing the tasks because the word "empathy" hadn't been invented yet, but it is pretty clear to most scholars that Hume was referring to empathy on many of the occasions on which he spoke of "sympathy.") But I am not going to review all the things or even the most important things Hume says about empathy/sympathy because, as far as I know, Hume never said that the operating of empathy gives us a way of perceiving and knowing the moral goodness or badness of individuals or groups of individuals.

However, in the area of moral philosophy I am in large part a follower of Hume, a sentimentalist in regard both to normative morality and to metaethics or moral semantics. And the account of moral semantics that I have offered more fully in my *Moral Sentimentalism* (OUP, 2010) allows us (in a way that that book doesn't take full advantage of) to see empathy as providing us with a way to perceive the moral virtue or vice of people around us. In order to show all this, I am going to have to describe, as briefly as I can, what that book says about moral semantics; and the justification for doing that will lie, as I have suggested, in the way such a semantics, a sentimentalist semantics, allows for the perception and knowledge of people's moral traits via empathy.

We are sometimes warmed by the warmth another person demonstrates or exemplifies toward some third party, for example, toward a friend. And in *Moral Sentimentalism* (henceforth MS) I argued that when we are thus warmed by another, we are, in a most basic way, morally approving of them or of what they are trying to do. But by the same token we can be chilled by the cold-heartedness someone displays in their attitude or actions toward some third party, and MS argued that this constitutes a basic kind of disapproval of that cold-hearted person. (The phrase "the chill of disapproval" is some indication that we think of disapproval as cold or chilly in this way.) MS and some later work of mine replying to critics of and commentators on that book offered numerous arguments for conceiving moral approval and disapproval in this specific sentimentalist way, and it is perhaps already clear to you that when I speak of being warmed by warmth or chilled by cold-heartedness (or heartlessness), I am speaking of an empathic process. Just as we can empathically register the pain of another in the way we describe when we say "I feel your pain," we can register the moral goodness or badness of someone's actions or attitude by empathically taking in the warmth or coldness that person is displaying in their actions. Or, at least, we can do this if moral goodness/vice consists of being a warm-hearted or caring person and moral badness/vice consists in lacking warm-hearted concern for others and/or being cold-hearted toward them. (Both indifference to the welfare of others and actual malignity toward them constitute ways of being cold-hearted toward other people or animals—more on this in Chap. 6.)

Now ethical rationalists will say that moral goodness requires more than warm-hearted concern for others, that it requires, for example, that one honor certain deontological constraints on action even when the violation of those constraints might actually be helpful to other people (or more helpful

than it would be to honor the constraints). If I am a surgeon and can save the lives of four car accident victims by secretly cutting up some stranger, then it might seem that the saving of a greater number of lives would be dictated by a general warm-heartedness toward humanity, and this would then show that warm-heartedness isn't sufficient for moral goodness either in given instances or more generally. If we assume, as I assume, that it would be wrong to cut up one innocent healthy person in order to save or preserve a greater number of lives, then moral goodness seems to involve more than, or something different from, overall warm-heartedness.

But in MS I argued that warm-heartedness toward others requires and is based in empathy toward others and argued further that empathy registers and is sensitive to the causal distinction between doing and allowing in a way analogous to the way it is also sensitive to the distinction between (potential) suffering we are immediately aware of and (potential) suffering we only indirectly *know about*. Other things being equal, it is morally worse to ignore the distress or suffering of someone whose distress or suffering one is immediately and perceptually aware of than to ignore distress or suffering one only knows about, and, MS argued, this reflects the fact that empathy is more sensitive to perceived distress than to known-about distress. MS also sought to show that empathy tends to be more sensitive to the causing of harm than to the allowing of harm and that this conclusion supports deontology. But of course such an argument assumes, what MS sought to show, that empathy enters into our moral concepts of right and wrong, virtue and vice. And let me say just a bit now about how that is or was supposed to work.

I above described states of empathically registered warmth as states of moral approval and states of empathically registered chill or coldness as states of moral disapproval. But MS went on from those assumptions to show how moral goodness and badness, virtue and vice, can be understood on that basis *and making use of the phenomenon and of the concept of empathy*. I argued in a way that borrowed to some extent from Saul Kripke's views in *Naming and Necessity* that the empathic warmth we feel in viewing or learning about the warm caringness of others (a caringness that itself reflects the capacity for and reality of empathy on the part of those others) fixes the reference of moral goodness/virtue for us.[2] Moral

[2] *Naming and Necessity*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980. Incidentally, the account of moral meaning that MS offers is naturalistic (and a form of realism) inasmuch as it (for example) identifies moral goodness very roughly with empathic caringness. But that

virtue, in other words, is that property of other individuals or their attitudes or actions that is (in the absence of perceptual/cognitive error) empathically registered in us as a feeling of being warmed. And the only property of others that can (veridically) be *empathically* registered as warmth is warm caringness on their part. Similar arguments then also apply to moral vice or badness, with our chill reactions paradigmatically fixing the reference, for us, of the concept of moral badness. Now on Kripke's view the reference fixing is not in any way analytic or definitional with respect to the natural kind terms ("tiger," "red," and "gold," for example) that he was interested in helping us understand. It is not analytic or even metaphysically necessary that the red experiences that fix the reference of "(objectively) red" are caused by red objects. In another world, Kripke argues, green objects might cause the experiences we now typically have when we see red objects in good light. However, MS argued for a partial disanalogy between what Kripke said about natural kind terms and what it wanted to say about moral vocabulary. If moral goodness is whatever is (in veridical circumstances) the cause of our being warmed by another's attitude or actions, if it is whatever is the cause of moral approval

doesn't mean that it can't account for the normativity (motivating and reason-giving force) of moral claims. Sharon Street (in "Reply to Copp: Naturalism, Normativity, and the Varieties of Realism Worth Worrying About," *Philosophical Issues* 18, 2008, pp. 207–228) has argued that the naturalism David Copp has defended cannot account for moral normativity, but the naturalistic account of moral meaning I have offered does allow for this because empathy neatly straddles the supposed divide between fact and motive. In empathizing with the distress of another person, we both cognitively register that mental state and identify with it in a way that constitutes motivation to help them. (This follows from what I said in Chap. 2 about the necessary connection between associative empathy and sympathy/altruism.) Similarly, it can be shown that emotion-based prudential reasons can empathically transfer to observers and give them reason to help someone who needs their help. (I argue for this at length in my *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang*.) So metaethical naturalism of a sentimentalist kind can account for the objectivity of moral judgments at the same time that it helps explain their normative force. And this fact also helps the sentimentalist answer the challenge to realist theories of value mounted by Street in her earlier "A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value," *Philosophical Review* 115, 2006, pp. 109–166. Even if evolution has shaped our moral capacities and moral language, what we say with that language may be guaranteed as true if naturalism about moral meaning holds. This leaves open the evolutionary possibility of humans or other intelligent creatures with evaluative notions different from those we actually have. But we already know that there are tribes and cultures that seem to lack our moral notions, and should we be any more uncomfortable with the possibility of creatures evolving with evaluative notions very different from our own? I am not sure that we should be, but this is an issue best left for discussion elsewhere.

understood as the state or process of being empathically warmed by another's warmth, then it follows that moral goodness consists in a kind of warmth or warm-heartedness toward others, and of course no one can count as warm-hearted unless they have certain dispositions to help others or not harm them. So it is at the very least a priori and necessary that moral goodness consists of being generally warm-hearted, or, as we may prefer to say, caring, toward other people (or sentient beings generally). Moral vice or viciousness then consists in the opposite or contrary trait or disposition of cold-heartedness toward others.

All of this, of course, assumes that we can properly and automatically describe a caring or sympathetic individual as warm-hearted, and a number of other assumptions also have to be brought into the mix for the above picture of moral goodness and vice to emerge as a plausible account, given in sentimentalist terms, of moral properties. But I don't propose to give any more of the argument here.[3] Rather, I would like to show, on the basis of

[3] Or let me put just a few more points in footnote here. Some writers on empathy (e.g. Jesse Prinz and Paul Bloom) question its moral value on the grounds that empathy can lead someone morally astray. That is absolutely correct, but there is a difference between ordinary, limited, blinkered empathy and the larger fully empathic caringness that I think is the touchstone of our moral concepts. What is morally good (and warms us when we are properly informed) is not what shows some degree of empathy and caringness, but what represents a *fully* empathic and caring response to a situation of moral choice. If I have empathy for family members but not for others, then I am not a caring person, am not a fully caring individual (my overall empathic dispositions will be chilling to others who find out about them). And I argued in *Moral Sentimentalism* that we need moral education, the broadening of empathic horizons, if we are to be fully moral individuals. That book dealt with all kinds of cases where this stricter criterion gives us the right moral answers even if a blunt appeal to empathy does not. And I should finally mention that in other work (e.g., *Education and Human Values*, NY: Routledge, 2012) I have attempted to show that Prinz and Bloom's common assumption that moral motivation can be based in reason is very dubious. There is very little evidence that sheer reason can motivate moral action in the way that empathy and caring can: the example of psychopaths can help one make the sentimentalist case here. It is also worth pointing out in this connection that when a mother takes her frightened protesting sick child to the doctor despite her empathy for what the child is feeling, we don't have a case where empathy is trumped by non-empathic rationality. Any normal mother will be vividly aware of what will happen to her child if they aren't taken to the doctor, and this represents an enlarged form of empathic sensitivity that can psychologically outweigh the narrower and more immediate empathic distress she may feel at seeing her child's fear. A person is lacking in empathy and concern for others if their empathy and caring can't extend beyond the immediate and present, and any mother who allowed her empathic distress to prevent her from taking her very sick child to the doctor would actually show a lack of empathy for her child. (We may also want to say there is something rationally defective about her.)

what I have just been saying (and what MS has already said), how empathy enables us to perceive the goodness or badness of other people or their actions or attitudes. (In what follows I am very much indebted to discussion with Nancy Snow.) The fact that we empathically register the warmth or cold-heartedness of others in and through feelings of warmth or chill in ourselves can be seen, as I have just argued, as the basis of our *concepts* of moral goodness and moral badness (wrongness enters the picture via badness). But given those concepts and how they apply (namely, that goodness is a kind of caringness, etc.), when we empathically register the moral goodness of someone's attitude, actions, or overall moral character, we are in effect perceiving that goodness. And that, arguably, allows us to say that empathy is the special moral sense that Hutcheson was talking about or reaching toward. (Note that the frequently made objection that, unlike the familiar five senses, there is no physical basis for a moral sense is undercut if empathy as the moral sense is underlain by certain functionings of mirror neurons.) More specifically, empathy is sensitive to *degrees* of caringness or its absence, and that sensitivity is realized in states of warmth or chill that *vary* with the caringness of people we become aware of. So there seems to be every reason to say that when we are empathically warmed by another person's warmth or warm-heartedness we are *perceiving* that warm-heartedness. And since on the theory being developed warm-heartedness in various degrees (and on a priori grounds) just *is* moral goodness in various degrees, our perception of warm-heartedness just is a perception of (greater or lesser) moral goodness (in acts, attitudes or overall character).[4]

[4] Degrees of warm-heartedness or warmth aren't measured or registered via some simple quantitative metric that is built into empathy; rather our sense of what is warm or warmer is the complex and vectorized product of the way we empathically register or perceive various interacting empathy-inducing and empathy-displaying factors. Empathy is more aroused by perceptual acquaintance (as opposed to knowledge about), by direct causal connection to some harm or good, by contemporaneity (rather than probable or even certain predictability for the future), and by lines of family consanguinity and connections of personal intimacy. But we are also capable of being empathically sensitive to what is distant or future, and sheer numbers also affect our empathic reactions. In fact, fully-developed empathy is subtle. We can make as many distinctions with empathy as we are supposed to be able to make via practical reason operating in the moral sphere, and once we vectorize relevant empathic factors as instantiated in a given situation (is the person being sensitive to their degree of causal involvement with the goods or evils that are at stake? is the person being sensitive to what they perceive and don't just know *about*?), we can have a subliminally empathic and then a more self-conscious sense of how (empathically) warm and caring someone's behavior or

Buying into the sentimentalist moral semantics (with accompanying normative views) that I sketched above and elaborated at great length in MS allows one, therefore, to see another epistemic use or usefulness in our capacity for empathy. We can not only empathically register, and in that measure perceive, what others are feeling or thinking; we can not only, through such registration, immediately learn things about the world that others have had to learn through extended and sometimes painful experience but also perceive the moral virtue and vice of others or their actions via empathy. And the analogy with the five senses works all the better if one remembers that just as those five senses work directly and without inferences, empathy often puts us in touch with what people believe and know about the world without resting on any sort of inference.

In addition, and again as with ordinary visual or auditory perception, the perception of virtue and vice needn't amount to any knowledge-that. A child can perceive or see a piano without knowing that it is a piano and without knowing what pianos are. And similarly I believe that a person, say, a child, can be warmed or chilled by the attitude of another human being in a way that constitutes perceiving virtue or vice, without yet having the concept of moral goodness, and (thus) without being able to say or think that the person in question is morally good or bad. In this respect too, then, the analogy between what empathic sensitivity gives us and what ordinary perceptual sensitivity gives us makes the idea of empathy as a mode of moral perception and even of moral knowledge (though the knowledge will be knowledge by acquaintance, not by description) seem all the more plausible and attractive.[5]

attitude in that situation is. (All this presupposes that facts aren't being hidden or obscured in the given situation and that we are talking about the empathic perceptions of a morally sensitive individual.)

[5] The child who doesn't yet grasp the concept of moral goodness may empathically perceive or feel someone's goodness, but once they have that concept they will be able, presumably, to empathically perceive that a given person is morally good. That is analogous to what we find with ordinary sense perception, where we can perceive a material object without knowing its nature but can also perceive *that* some material object has a given property. This corresponds to the distinction between extensional and intensional perceptual contexts, a distinction that is as relevant to empathic moral perception as it is to ordinary sensory perception. The same sort of distinction also applies to empathic perception of something one's parents have learned about the world. A child can empathically sense or perceive the dangerousness of bears through empathy with their parents fears and even while lacking the concept of danger. But later on one's empathy with one's parents or others can allow one to empathically perceive *that* bears are dangerous. Incidentally, I have been somewhat evasive about

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I am far from done. Empathy also has a (variegated) major or even universal role to play in speech act theory that has long gone unrecognized or unappreciated. That role relates both to what empathy tells us about the people we empathize with and to what it tells us about the things those people know or justifiably believe about the world, but it involves those just-described facets of empathy in a quite distinctive way. However, I want to introduce these further uses or roles of empathy by focusing first on the way it tells us about other people.

When I empathically register another's pain or joy, I have a direct way of knowing about their state of mind. Even if people are sometimes faking their emotions and can be very good actors, the fact we can be fooled in such circumstances doesn't show we aren't directly justified in believing they are in the psychological state we think they are in and likewise doesn't show we can't in other circumstances actually know that they are feeling one or another attitude (and remember on the view defended in Chap. 2, belief is a kind of favoring attitude). After all, the epistemology of perception offers similar problematic cases, and we philosophers want to say that perception can, nonetheless, often be a source of knowledge and epistemic rational justification.

However, when we think of the ways we can empathically pick up the feelings of others, we typically aren't thinking of ways in which what they say or assert helps us empathize with their mental states. We are thinking of cases where their non-verbal behavior leads us to empathically register what they are feeling. But what people say can also causally bring about the empathic registration of what others are thinking, wanting, or feeling, and ordinary speech acts constitute a prime example of how this can happen. Speech act theory has ignored the ways in which this can happen, but when we closely examine some of those ways, I think we will be able to see that various standard forms of speech act work to a substantial extent *via empathic processes.*

whether a child who receptively picks up beliefs or attitudes from her parents is epistemically justified in having those beliefs or attitudes even when the parents aren't. But I would like to think (though this needs further discussion) that the receptivity involved at the child's end gives them a justification even if the parents lack such justification. One could say that receptivity operates as an epistemic virtue only when it operates on what is itself justified via receptivity and/or other factors, but it is at least simpler to hold that when a child is receptive to their parents' (unbeknownst to themselves, unjustified) beliefs, they at least are justified as a result of the receptivity they are manifesting (and their parents presumably are not). I am inclined to go in this direction, but if you give me a good argument against this way of seeing things, I might be persuaded to think otherwise.

Now I am not going to expound speech act theory or theories in any detail. Rather, I propose to describe some characteristic claims of such theory in regard to certain particular speech acts, recognizing too that the literature on speech acts has spawned a great number and variety of putative or generally acknowledged counterexamples to (some of) the particular formulations of speech act theory that have been offered. But the counterexamples don't point to any need to bring empathy into the discussion; they have led speech act theorists to more and more complex or ingenious formulations of the conditions of particular speech acts without suggesting to anyone so far that empathy could be useful to their whole enterprise. My point is that even if the counterexamples could be got rid of via sufficiently clever or complex reformulations of the conditions offered concerning various speech acts, there would be a problem of completeness with the resultant theory because it would still be focusing too narrowly on the factors at play when someone performs the speech act of assertion or asking a question, and so on. Moreover, the factors I shall point out aren't like physical factors that speech acts theory doesn't mention but that have to be operating in our physical universe in order for speech acts to occur and be successfully brought off. The physical factors are at the wrong theoretical level to be relevant to what the speech acts theorist wants to say: the physics of sound and moving bodies (vocal cords and lips) doesn't seem relevant to speech acts as speech acts. But I think the reader will see that the empathic factors and processes I am going to mention *are* relevant to speech acts as speech acts and to the success or felicity of speech acts as speech acts.

Let me begin by mentioning and discussing a well-known account of the meaning or force of speech acts, that of H. P. Grice in various articles and books.[6] Again, as I just indicated, what Grice said was subject to

[6] See, inter alia, Grice's "Meaning," *Philosophical Review* 66, 1957, pp. 377–388; and his "Utterer's Meaning and Intentions," *Philosophical Review* 78, 1969, pp. 147–177. Grice elsewhere introduces his highly influential notions of conversational and conventional implicatures/implications. These are important factors in speech acts, and they engage empathy and even emotion in ways there is no time to fully enter into here. Let me just mention, however, my own attempt to understand the emotive meaning of value judgments in terms of Gricean implicatures. In Chap. 5 of *Moral Sentimentalism* (OUP, 2010) and in some much earlier work as well, I argue that the emotive meaning of a statement like "Joan was a good Catholic" is its cancelable Gricean implication that the utterer has a good opinion of Joan. In that case, when that implication hasn't been canceled, the statement expresses an emotion toward Joan that the hearer can empathize with. This idea is present in the work of Charles Stevenson cited below—but Stevenson's view that value judgments are primarily

counterexamples, but can nonetheless illustrate the need to bring in factors of empathy that aren't even so much as alluded to in his account of various speech acts. So, roughly, Grice holds that to assert to someone that something is the case (or, in speaking to someone, to *mean* that something is the case) is to signify or indicate one's intention that they should believe what one is asserting because of their recognition of that very intention (on one's part). Similarly, to ask someone a question is to indicate that one intends that they should give one the or an answer to that question on the basis of their recognition of that very intention.

But, one may ask, how does the recognition of the speaker's (or writer's) intention actually cause someone in the one case to actually believe what the person has asserted and in the other case to try to answer that question? Well, in the former case this may depend on what the hearer knows or believes about the speaker or, possibly, on how the hearer is related to the speaker. If the hearer believes that the speaker is honest and also believes that they are a reliable judge of truth and falsehood in various areas of their (the speaker's) life, they may have an inductive or even abductive argument in favor of believing what the speaker has asserted. But according to some theories (e.g., Thomas Reid's), one may have reason to believe what speakers or writers assert even in in the absence of any inductive/abductive argument for the reliability or honesty of those particular speakers/writers.[7]

emotive is very much called into question when one thinks their emotive meaning is cancelable and thereby allows that value judgments can in the strictest sense be true or false.

[7] Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970, esp. pp. 234ff. I am assuming here that when the child takes in the parental fear of bears, they don't do it via an argument or inference from the reliability of their parents. But Reid argues that God has implanted a tendency to speak truth and a tendency to believe what one is told in all human beings (even and especially children), and he therefore holds that "testimony" has an intrinsic authority among us humans irrespective of any argument based on the belief that a given person is generally reliable in what they say. I shall say more about Reid's views about the way assertions work below, but he clearly thinks belief in what one is told occurs in a direct manner, and so his take on assertion treats it as working in *something like* the direct and non-inferential way that I shall argue empathy works in the context of assertions. In addition, although reliability is a familiar abductive/inductive matter, the authority of testimony is a less familiar issue, and one can wonder whether there really is such a thing. (Hume's discussion of miracles makes it pretty clear that he didn't believe testimony had any authority beyond its reliability, and Reid's views about testimony were an attempt to answer Humean skepticism on this point.) Or perhaps I had better say that I wonder whether what Reid called the authority of testimony wasn't just a misnomer for what he was actually recognizing about the way testimony works. Perhaps, just perhaps, he not only noticed that

With questions, of course, things are substantially different. There is no issue of believing what someone has asserted and no issue therefore of how epistemically reliable they are. If they are in a position of authority over one, that will affect whether or how one answers their question, but the issue will not specifically or usually be one of their having any *epistemic* authority. Whether one answers a question doesn't depend on whether the person asking it is some kind of epistemic authority, and in fact, and quite to the contrary, if they are authorities of that kind, then, unless one is in circumstances where one realizes that one's own knowledge is being legitimately tested, one may feel less need to answer their question: one may find it harder to believe that they really don't already know the answer to it. But authority of some other kind is not the most generally relevant feature of a situation in which one is asked a question. One answers the question because one recognizes that the person wants one to answer it—and the switch from talk of intention here to talk of what someone wants has bearing on the main thesis I want to defend, the thesis that factors of empathy standardly play a substantial role in the working of speech acts.

When we think of nice people, we think of people who, within limits, are or want to be helpful to others. And one standard way of being helpful to others is to help those who want and say they want your help. But notice how odd it would be to put such a point in terms of intentions. If I recognize that someone *intends* for me to help them, that may raise my hackles, because it seems to leave the choice of whether to help less in my hands. And this isn't or isn't to the same extent the case if someone simply makes it known that they want my help. When someone asks me a question they standardly indicate that they want or need my help in the form of an answer to that question; and if I know the answer I can oblige them at little cost to myself. So anyone who is nice, who likes most others and

we often believe what others assert without having any argument from reliability to support that belief, but also, defender of common sense that he was, felt he had to offer an epistemic principle of the authority of testimony, based on theological assumptions, in order to explain how such beliefs could be justified in the absence of reliability arguments. But there is another possibility he may just have missed out on, a possibility very Humean in its way and thus, perhaps, something Reid might have been kept away from by its association (sic!) with Humean skepticism: the possibility that the so-called authority of testimony is not a separate epistemic principle of justification, but actually works in non-inferential justificatory terms *via direct empathy with what others believe or know when they assert things to us.* But since Hume was no sentimentalist about epistemology, there is no reason to think that what I am saying here about the empathy that Hume was the first person (at least in the West) to write about is something Hume himself would have agreed with. More on all this below.

is well-intentioned toward them, will want to answer a question that they are in a position to easily answer. Believing what someone asserts seems to depend on thinking them reliable, but answering someone's question depends, typically, on how well-disposed one is toward them. This is an important difference, but I think it only makes a difference to how empathy enters into the functioning of assertion and asking a question as speech acts, not to whether it does. And since we have started with the speech act of asking a question, let me spell out the role of empathy there before discussing the substantially different role it plays in assertion. (Later I will say something about the role or roles it plays in other speech acts.)

Just above, I stressed the way in which a questioner indicates that they want or need the answer to a given question and the way in which an answerer may help or want to help the questioner by answering the question they have asked. (Of course, there are many different *kinds* of questions, and some of them, rhetorical questions, are asked in circumstances where it is clear that the questioner doesn't want the hearer to answer their question; and test questions are asked in circumstances where the questioner already knows the answer and is merely testing to see whether the hearer does. Still, the account I am about to give you is relevant to a wide range of questions in a wide variety of circumstances. Indeed, it is relevant to what it is natural to consider the most basic way in which questions are asked.) But notice that this way of putting things suggests that the asking and answering of questions raises moral issues. The hearer can be helpful to the questioner but may choose not to be, and, depending on their relation to the questioner and the past behavior of both the questioner and the hearer, it can be morally better or worse or, in some cases, outright wrong, if the hearer refuses to answer or gives a false or misleading answer. So the felicity and success of a speech act of questioning may depend on moral issues, on moral relationships, and John Searle's classical discussion of the speech act of questioning in his book *Speech Acts* doesn't mention this aspect of the matter. And neither, to the best of my knowledge, do other speech act theorists. (Notice that assertion doesn't raise this kind of moral issue because it doesn't call for the hearer to actively do anything for the speaker.)[8]

But the moral dimension is important and it makes empathy relevant here too. Empathy with others makes us want to help them, and answering their questions is one example of the potential effects of empathy on

[8] Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp. 64ff.

what we do and want to do on behalf of others. Most psychologists and philosophers who write about empathy assume there is a substantial connection between receptive/emotional empathy and motivation to help (I argued in fact for a very tight connection in Chap. 2), and if you will allow me to apply that assumption to the issue of asking questions, we can say that if a person who asks a question thinks it at all important to get an answer, the hearer who empathizes with them will be motivated to give them an answer. (This doesn't mean that they will answer or, in the case of pain, that an empathizer actually or automatically will help a person in pain. In both kinds of cases, it depends on the strength of the person's other motives at the time, but even when they don't help, the empathizer, in both kinds of cases, will still have some definite altruistic helping motivation vis-à-vis the person who needs or seems to need their help.)

I want to say, then, that the speech act of asking a question quite typically works via empathic processes. To be sure, if someone asks me a question, I might infer that they want me to give them an answer on an inductive or abductive basis. But I think it is more likely that I will simply register the fact that they attach some importance to getting an answer to that question: I will feel their felt need to have an answer more directly than via some sort of inference. And the questioning look on their face or their tone of voice can help make this happen: one can empathize with that look or face the way we empathize with a sad or fearful face or voice. When, in particular, one asks a question with a questioning look, one's face softens in an almost submissive manner, and that is presumably no accident. One is likely to get what one wants from someone if one doesn't demand it and if one shows them that one depends on them in the given circumstance. The submissive, questioning, softer look helps arouse the sympathy of the person asked for the person asking, makes it easier for them to empathically feel the need of the person asking the question, and the latter typically knows all this. They know that they have to soften their face (and their tone of voice) if they want to maximize the chances of having their question answered, *and that is a significant and central part of how the speech act of questioning typically works or works well.* (This is the kind of social knowledge Erving Goffman discusses in his magnificent *Relations in Public*.)[9] In other words, questioners know how to appeal to

[9] *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*, NY: Basic Books, 1971. In discussing the ways we navigate our public interactions with others, Goffman mentions facial expressions and bodily gestures that we (unconsciously?) use to smooth or facilitate these interac-

the empathy and sympathy of those they ask questions to and know that they need to do this, even if speech act theorists show no sign of recognizing this essential part of the typical questioning act or process. And the fact that everyone already knows all this in their practical life, even if not as theorists about that life, is partly shown by the fact that men are more reluctant to ask for directions than women. Men are typically less willing to be submissive to or show their dependency on others, and so their reluctance to ask strangers directions is some evidence for the empathy-invoking account of the speech act of questioning that I am sketching here. (One can't, in this connection, so readily point to the rising voice that occurs at the end of questions as a sign of submissiveness and softening because the rising voice occurs at the end of yes/no questions but not at the end of questions beginning with "who," "when," and the like.)

The practice (if that is the right word) of asking questions rests to a substantial extent on our capacity for empathy and on processes of empathy, and these facts need to be brought into the picture if we are to fully understand (central cases of) questioning as a speech act. And let me at this point make a comparison that may help strengthen the case for the involvement of empathy in speech acts like asking questions. Doing someone a favor is not usually compared to asking questions, but with respect to empathy there is an interesting similarity that it is worth our while to bring out. If someone does me a favor out of the goodness of their heart, I may infer that they have good intentions toward me, but I may also feel those intentions, empathically register their benign attitude toward me (the look on their face), and my thanking them may be a response to that benign attitude as manifested in the favor they do me. This response is not the response, of course, to a question, but in calling it a response, I think we implicitly recognize the similarity between someone's doing something for me and someone's asking me a question. In both cases, what the person does calls for a response and in both cases, very typically, that response is mediated by empathy with the psychological state of the other person: in the one case empathy with their benign motivation toward myself, in the other case empathy with their greater or lesser emotional investment in and motivation toward getting me to give them the answer they want

tions, for example, the fact that we smile when we accidentally trip over someone in order to indicate that our intentions are benign. But this is of a piece with the typically unself-conscious facial softening that helps facilitate the successful asking of questions. Goffman's ideas are relevant to speech act theory in a way that hasn't previously been recognized.

or think they need. Moreover, this works not only with benign actions and motives but with unfriendly ones too. If someone deliberately hurts me, my empathic sense of their hostility, as manifested in what they do, can call for what we think of as a negative response. (More on this in later chapters.)

So there is, inherently, an emotional side to asking questions, and speech act theory should stop ignoring that fact and should incorporate that aspect of questioning into their overall account of that particular speech act. When we ask a question we may intend to get someone to answer our question by recognizing that intention. But we also convey our greater or lesser emotional investment in getting or having an answer and this is no accident. When we ask a question, we typically want the other person to see that we place a certain importance on their answering the question, and we may also be at some level aware that the way in which we ask the question may affect whether or how well it is answered. In asking the question, therefore, we make a kind of emotional appeal in the sense that we appeal to the person addressed via the emotion, not overwhelming emotion but definite emotion nonetheless, that we deliberately express and show the potential respondent in the very act of asking our question.

Now those who have applied speech act theory specifically to questions—e.g. John Searle in his book *Speech Acts*—don't fail to recognize that questions characteristically express the wish/desire of the questioner to receive a correct answer to that question from the hearer. The speech act theorist can say that if I deliberately ask a question, the hearer will recognize my intention to get him or her to give me an answer to the question and will also recognize that I intend him or her to do so as a result of recognizing my intention to get him or her to answer the question. But none of this can occur unless the questioner wants to have the question answered and expresses the desire to have an answer from the hearer when he or she asks the question. For the hearer's recognition of the questioner's intention is arguably based on or in the recognition that the questioner is expressing a desire for him or her to give an answer. So at the deepest level it is the expressive aspect of questions that constitutes the ultimate basis of and facilitator for the successful bringing off of a speech act like questioning. Those, like Searle, who see questions as expressive of desire don't see that this level of analysis or understanding is the *most basic* in the context of asking questions, that is, with respect to that particular kind of speech act. And, of course, and as I argued earlier, they also don't see the moral issue that the basic expression of desire raises.

To that extent, then, we need an expressively based approach to speech acts like questioning rather than the familiar, standard intentionally based approach to them. The standard analysis of question asking in terms of intentions (and various more complex or accurate analyses that avoid known counterexamples to the original analysis) needs *in some measure* to be retained (intention is an awfully strong attitude), but I think it should be folded into an analysis that makes more of the expressive, empathic, and moral dimension of the speech act of asking a question. Because of what the speech act of asking a question typically is, it raises moral issues that speech act theory has simply ignored and that it needs to incorporate into the speech act approach to questions. More generally, too, I think speech act theory as a whole needs to take more account of the way empathy works in various expressive speech acts; and I think we can support this more general conclusion by considering the crucial role empathy plays in one of the most important or central kinds of speech act, assertions.

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Assertions express desires and not just intentions. On the original unqualified speech act view, they express the intention that the hearer should believe what they have asserted on the basis of recognizing the speaker's intention to produce that result.[10] As with questions, I don't want to deny that something like this is true in regard to assertions.[11] But as with speech

[10] This takes Grice's original analysis of (non-naturally) meaning something and uses it to give an analogous account of assertion. I am indebted here to Peter Pagin, who makes just this sort of move in his account of Grice-type assertion in his article "Assertion" in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. He also mentions the counterexamples Searle offers to such an approach to assertion in his book *Speech Acts* and other problems that have arisen with Grice-type approaches to assertion and other speech acts. For very useful further discussion of the variety of counterexamples to Grice's account of meaning that started appearing in the years after Grice published his first article on the subject, see Wayne Davis's "Speaker Meaning" in *Linguistics and Philosophy* 15, 1992, pp. 223–253. Notice that even those (like Pagin) who recognize that assertion may well expresses the speaker's certitude and not just mere belief, don't make the further move of thinking the speaker may be attempting to get the hearer to have similar confidence and not just belief. This further possibility makes problems for standard speech act theoretical ways of dealing with assertion beyond the usual counterexamples—as the text above argues.

[11] In his article on "Speech Acts" in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Mitchell Green suggests that loudness is not a relevant aspect of speech acts, but on the view being presented here, tone of voice and even loudness can be very relevant. The rising tone typical of certain questions tends to undercut the making of assertions, for example, causing the

acts of asking questions, the asserting of something also expresses a *desire* for the hearer to believe something. Now I don't want to bring in morality at this point because I don't think it applies to assertion the way it applies to questions (and possibly commands and requests more generally). When we ask a question, we are requesting something of the hearer by way of an intentional action, and what someone does or doesn't do, whether in response to a question or more generally, can constitute a moral issue. But the asserter doesn't ask the listener to perform any intentional action; they just ask them to believe something, and what one does or does not believe may not raise moral issues as directly as issues about what one intentionally does or refrains from doing.

So I won't focus on moral issues with respect to assertion, and will focus more on epistemic questions. This will mean that the involvement of empathy in situations in which assertion occurs will more directly bear on epistemological issues than what we have just been saying about the speech act of asking a question. Of course, I haven't yet told you what I think the involvement of empathy in speech acts of assertion is, but it will help us to see how empathy is involved in assertion and to see how that bears on epistemological questions if we notice *the weak way* in which standard speech act theories speak of the intentions of those who make assertions. It is said that it is intended that the hearer believe what the speaker asserts, but in fact one can put things more strongly than this because assertion itself is more than the expression of a belief. As is becoming increasingly known in philosophy of language circles (though there are some dissenters), when you assert something you represent yourself as knowing and being sure of the truth of the proposition asserted, and both of these are stronger than belief. There are things we believe but aren't sure or certain about (for a time in the 1970s, I believed, was convinced, that Nixon had broken the law, but wasn't certain, wasn't sure that he had). And if we merely believe something and don't believe we know it, we don't (in good faith) assert it. We say something less bold like: I believe this or this, I believe, is true. When I take a plane to a very distant place I believe I will

speaker to seem less than confident about what they are saying and empathically conveying that lack of confidence to the hearer. And a certain level of loudness—but not shouting—may actually serve to convey confidence (in both senses of "convey") and thereby make a speech act of assertion more effective in its purpose. (Women tend to speak more softly than men, and this raises some interesting moral and linguistic issues.) If empathy is relevant to speech act theory for all the other reasons I have mentioned, then tone of voice and actual loudness can certainly be relevant to (the felicity or success conditions of) speech acts.

arrive safely, but don't believe I know that I will and am not, in fact, certain that I will. And that is why one doesn't just assert that one's plane will arrive safely at the distant destination. (There is also the point that when someone disputes an assertion I have made, they can idiomatically ask "How do you know that…?" in regard to what I have stated.)

So when someone asserts that p, and not just that they believe that p, do they merely intend the other person to believe the proposition that p or do they intend that the other person share their great confidence in the truth of "p"? Perhaps the latter, and that fact, if it is one, can help us see how important empathy is as a factor in speech acts of assertion. (Incidentally, you can say something without asserting it, and I am not speaking of the speech act of saying.) Let's say someone believes that p and indicates, via assertion, that they believe that p. Once the hearer recognizes that the speaker has a certain belief, they can base their own belief in the same thing on the previous reliability and honesty of the speaker (or on the prima facie authority of testimony à la Thomas Reid), and this seems unproblematic *because it doesn't require the hearer to be certain that p*. It is one thing to come to share someone's belief, but it seems different and more problematic if someone comes to share an asserter's certainty that p on the mere basis of the asserter's having, in the speech act of assertion, represented himself or herself as certain that p. In terms of inductive or abductive arguments, one can see someone's being willing, on the basis of a speaker's previous reliability, to believe what they believe and want you to believe, but unwilling to be confident or certain about p the way the speaker is. (As I mentioned in Chap. 2, my dictionary says confidence is a state of *strong* belief.)

When a speaker makes an assertion, they represent themselves as knowing and being certain and confident, and they also intend or wish for the hearer to accompany them beyond mere belief. But if the hearer's going with them that far depends on their having a good argument from reliability for being certain of what the reliable speaker is saying, such an argument, as we have said, isn't likely to be forthcoming. So how can the speaker expect the hearer to have the degree of confidence that he, the speaker, wants and intends for the hearer to have? How can this be realistic? How can a speech act that intends to produce more than mere belief really be appropriate and felicitous in the way we think assertion typically or often is?

The answer, I think, lies in the operation of empathy and in ordinary people who make assertions being implicitly aware of how empathy can work in the context of assertion. If empathy is at work when assertions are

(felicitously and successfully) made, then the hearer may be able to take in the certainty of the speaker in the unconscious way in which empathy works in other cases. The father who is infected empathically by his daughter's enthusiasm for stamp collecting doesn't know that that is happening to him (though he may figure out later that it *has* happened to him), and when an asserter makes their assertion, the hearer may take in the confidence and certitude that lies behind the assertion and become as confident or almost as confident as the asserter. They may thus arrive at something more than, stronger than, (mere) belief even if some kind of reliability argument would only justify belief. And this fact, this strength beyond what an argument from reliability could justify, is not necessarily an epistemically unfortunate development. On the contrary, if the speaker is appropriately confident about what they assert or claim, if they personally have overwhelming evidence for it, then the empathic taking in of a similar state of confidence will be epistemically useful to the hearer. When something hangs on a given question, it can be better to know and be confident of the answer to that question, than to merely believe in a given answer to that question. So if it is an epistemic advantage to the speaker, the asserter, to be confident about and not merely to believe a given proposition, then it can also be an advantage to the hearer to empathically take in that confidence or certitude. (Notice too that when we assert a fact to someone, we assure them of its truth, and the obvious conceptual connection between assuring and being sure indicates that our ordinary thinking about assertions implicitly assumes that assertions can make people sure. How else can this occur except via empathy?)

All this helps make sense of our common practice of assertion in a way that standard speech act theory does not. The latter allows us to understand how belief can result from assertions and how the asserter can believe that it will. But it doesn't explain how certitude or genuine confidence can arise from assertions and how a speaker can be relying on that fact in the most common cases of making assertions. An account of the speech act of assertion that relies on empathy *can*, however, explain these facts. It can hold not only that people can empathically take in the epistemic confidence of those whose assertions they hear (or read), but also that those who make assertions are more or less implicitly aware of the way the sheer force of asserting (as opposed to qualifying things with "I believe") can *get to* the hearer, can influence the hearer. And in standard cases of assertion (I am not talking about cases where one asserts something knowing full well that the hearer will not grant what one is saying, cases where one just

wants to be heard and wants the truth to be strongly expressed) the speaker is relying on the fact that assertion has a certain force that as a force will influence the hearer. That force is the force of strong feeling, and the asserter typically feels or understands that he can or may be able to get the hearer to believe as strongly as he does if he makes a peremptory assertion of a certain claim. A loud (but not too loud, not shouting, which can actually indicate a lack of confidence and so of sincerity) voice can also be used by the speaker for that purpose, and the speaker may actually come spatially closer to the hearer in making the assertion, based on an implicit knowledge that feeling and attitude are more strongly and surely conveyed over a short distance than over a great distance.[12] (As Hume told us, empathy works better when distances are small.) But none of this comes out under the standard interpretation of the nature of the speech act of asserting, and that gives us a reason to bring empathy into a fuller, more accurate account of that speech act.

Now one might argue back here that what I have said doesn't account for the hearer of an assertion's being *justified* in the kind of confidence that is often empathically conveyed via assertion. Perhaps asserters rely on the irrationality of those they make assertions to, when they expect their confidence to pass along to those they make their assertions to. But I don't think they can plausibly be thought to be relying on any such assumption. After all, today's asserter is tomorrow or yesterday's hearer of an assertion, and those who make assertions and hope for their confidence

[12] One can take in one's parents' attitude to bears or to Aunt Tilly without their ever asserting or telling one that bears are dangerous or Aunt Tilly trustworthy: one may (and children are good at this) simply feel, empathically feel, what one's parents think or feel about bears and Aunt Tilly. But such cases are actually closer to cases of assertion than one might think. Confidence may be empathically conveyed or infused via an assertion, and assertion as a speech act is (among other things) fundamentally characterizable as a conventional way to get people to take in our confidence on some subject matter. So assertion facilitates and makes socially available what can happen without express speech acts in the family: the empathic transmission of belief and confidence. And no argument from reliability need operate in the mind of someone who takes in beliefs in this way. The child doesn't need it, and neither, in parallel, does the person who hears an assertion. Since the usual speech act theories of what happens with assertions *do* at least implicitly rely on the idea that the hearer of an assertion needs to make some sort of argument in their own mind in order for the speech act of assertion and the speaker intentions that lie behind it to come off successfully, this shows you how far speech act theory has been from actually capturing what is involved in assertion as a speech act, from capturing what happens when assertion works the way the asserter typically assumes or hopes it will work.

to empathically convey itself to a hearer are not so obtuse and unaware as not to realize that they too are influenced into confidence by assertions made by others. Are we to suppose that the ordinary asserter really thinks that s/he and everyone else is being cognitive irrational during the standard and familiar processes of conveying confidence, even great confidence, via assertion? On commonsense grounds, rather, I think we should consider the strong possibility that what is conveyed directly via empathy can as such be justified. The child's belief that bears are dangerous is conveyed to them via empathy and without any particular *argument* having to occur to the child, and non-inferential or direct justification arguably also occurs with respect to our memory and perceptual beliefs. In other words, I want to argue (and have done this at length in Chap. 4 of the book referred to in footnote 1 Chap. 2) that we don't need to base (all or most) cognitive or epistemic justification on inferences and that the epistemic *receptivity* exemplified in the confidence we show in what our senses, our memory, or our empathy tells is an epistemic *virtue* that grounds the epistemic *justifications* we have in these areas. (More needs to be said, but, as I just indicated, that more is said elsewhere.)

However, we shouldn't overestimate the force or role of empathy here. Assertions typically or normally work in the way I have been describing, but if someone has strong evidence, perhaps of a perceptual nature, against what someone is asserting, a countervailing epistemic and psychological force will operate to weaken or blunt the force of the empathic transmission of what the asserter is asserting and believes herself to know. Similarly, in the kind of case discussed earlier, if one empathically picks up on a child's fear of worms but has independent reason to doubt the dangerousness of worms, that may undercut the acquisition of any knowledge of or reasonable belief about what the world is like on the basis of the transmission of the child's fear of worms. What I have described as the epistemic and linguistic role of empathy operates only when there are no strong countervailing epistemic factors (again, this holds for perceptual beliefs as well). But speech act theory has left this role entirely out of the picture. Now to a bit of history.

When Thomas Reid spoke of the authority of testimony, he wasn't talking about sympathy/empathy in Hume's sense. However, what we have been saying here represents a kind of vindication of Reid's views, though in a more sentimentalist direction than he presumably would have welcomed (but who can be sure?). Reid said that what people attest to or assert has authority with the hearer, that the hearer has reason to believe it

(or be confident) independently of having any inductive argument for the reliability of the given speaker or of speakers generally. But what we have said about empathy can fit (i.e., fill) this bill. Authority in its paradigmatic examples has both de facto and de jure force or power, and our account of how empathy works and works in the context of assertions allows it to have both those features. Empathy has de facto force in this context because as a causal matter we tend, through empathic osmosis, to take in the confidence of someone who assertorically tells us something. And it has de jure force too if we allow that (empathic) receptivity can epistemically justify. We said earlier in this chapter that a child can gain information about the world through taking in their parents' or a given parent's attitude (not necessarily asserted) toward certain things, people, or situations in the world, and what applies to parents can just as easily apply to what happens in the context of assertions. The same receptivity that makes us take in, without doubt or hesitation, what our parents think about bears or Aunt Tilly can make a listener take in what a speaker asserts in the same unhesitating and confident way. And don't say the cases are different because parents are, after all, parents. My argument earlier in no way relied on that fact, but just relied on the justificatory force of receptivity through empathy, but in that case when someone asserts something to our face, their empathic influence may be very strong too. Hume tells us that "sympathy" works via the principles of association and that proximity and similarity increase its force. So there is no reason why assertion shouldn't have a similar influence on a stranger when the asserter is right near the stranger. And even if what one reads in a book may be less causally effective in this spatial way, books allow their own form of causal immediacy: when one reads one is in a kind of causal isolation booth with the author, and that can allow the force of an author's opinions to in some sense directly influence the reader. (This intimacy and influence are one reason why we like to read books.) In keeping with this, we can say, too, that the oral or written asserter knows all of this implicitly, and makes use, so to speak, of the realities of receptivity to empathic transmission when they make an assertion and expect to influence the hearer to share their strong opinion.

Now Hume thought we tend to be influenced by the opinions and attitudes of anyone near us (see the famous section "Of the love of fame" in the *Treatise of Hume Nature*). But Hume was also no sentimentalist about cognition or epistemic rationality. And once one allows that the mechanisms that Hume viewed independently of issues of justification can do justificatory work through the epistemic virtue of receptivity (a virtue

Hume never for a moment recognized), we can see that the speech act of assertion can justify believers in having confidence: not always but certainly often. This then comes close to what Thomas Reid said about authority. Yes, assertions and testimony have authority, as Reid held. But that authority is a function of receptivity and empathy in a way Reid never suggested but we are suggesting here—and it in no way depends, as Reid held, on God's instilling veracity and/or credulity in us humans. Reid may have been dimly aware of empathy, and his talk about the direct non-inferential way we believe what people tell us may derive (further) theoretical justification from what we have been saying about empathy and receptivity in these pages. (We might even say that the authority of testimony he spoke of turns out to be nothing other than empathy and its receptivity functioning in the context of testimony/assertion.)

Thus the empathy-emphasizing epistemological approach taken here comes closer to Reid's somewhat rationalistic views than to the epistemological views of Hume the empathy-empathizing moral sentimentalist. Which is odd, to be sure, but I think undeniable. Hume believed in empathic/sympathetic influence, but he didn't think such influence *justified* us in believing what people tell us and held, rather, that we need evidence of a speaker's reliability before we have reason to believe her or him. Hume was very far, in other words, from the kind of epistemological sentimentalism I am advocating here and that, as I have argued, Reid adumbrates in what he says about the (non-inferential) authority of testimony. Just as a final point, I should also mention that Reid underscores the similarity between perceptual belief and belief in testimony, in assertions. He holds that both operate and justify without arguments, and I am tempted to say—let me just say—that what we have done here may help vindicate this comparison. Reid may not have spoken of receptivity, but if the view of the present book is on the right track, then receptivity operates both in and for perception and in and for confident belief in what is asserted to one (also in and for memory), and this, yet again, gives further, non-theological support to the comparison between perception and belief in testimony that Reid drew in his *Inquiry*.

The present chapter has sought to give support both to what Hutcheson said about the moral sense and to what Reid said about the authority of testimony, and so it argues in favor of a somewhat anti-Humean view of these matters; for Hume didn't believe in the authority of testimony and didn't believe that there was anything that could accurately be called a moral sense. So, again ironically, it is by relying on the notion of empathic

contagion that Hume was the first person to describe in any detail that we end up, in the present book, with such anti-Humean epistemological views.

And now I would like to do a little more history in order to place what I have just been saying in a somewhat larger philosophical context. The idea that certain speech acts of assertion can and do rely on processes of empathic transmission is not entirely original to me. It can be found in the work of Charles Stevenson and most specifically in his "The Emotive Meaning of Moral Judgments," *but in application only to value judgments.*[13] Stevenson says that the feelings of someone who makes an evaluative claim can spread by contagion to the person who hears the claim being made, and though he doesn't use the term "empathy" he is clearly referring to what Hume called sympathy (sometimes using the term "contagion") and what we nowadays call empathy. Of course, given the time at which he was writing, Stevenson doesn't talk of speech acts nor home in on assertion as a special kind of speech act, but the cases he describes are in fact cases where the speech act of assertion is occurring, where the empathic transmission of feeling occurs or is likely to occur, and where the utterer implicitly knows and makes use of the fact that such transmission can take place.

So Stevenson is in effect describing a particular instance of what I am saying more generally about the making of assertions. His view was applied only to value judgments and the feelings they express, but I am saying that every assertion expresses feeling or feelings that can be transmitted empathically to a hearer and that the speaker wishes to be transmitted in that way.[14] In fact, more strongly, an intelligent asserter *relies* on the fact of emotional contagion as a means of achieving the goal of their assertion, a certain epistemic state of the hearer, and this fact is essential to the way the speech act of assertion works (among humans). (Everyone knows practically about empathic transmission even if they don't have the technical vocabulary to describe it. Someone two hundred years ago could have said that he was infected by his daughter's enthusiasm for coin collecting, even if he didn't explicitly know that there was such a thing as empathy and even though the term "empathy" hadn't yet been invented.) So it

[13] "The Emotive Meaning of Moral Judgments," *Mind* 46, 1937, pp. 14–31.

[14] Footnote 6 above makes the further point that Stevenson exaggerates the empathy-arousing emotive force of value judgments by not recognizing that that force is (at least in many cases and sometimes even in advance) cancelable. But the important point, in any event, is that all assertions express an emotion of confidence that can be empathized with.

would seem that empathy and knowledge of empathy are essential to assertion as a speech act and need to be brought into speech act theory in a substantial way.

At this point, however, we also need to recognize the twofold character of the feelings that an act of assertion empathically conveys. An assertion empathically conveys the (feeling of) confidence the speaker has in some proposition, and as we have seen, this can cause the hearer to be similarly confident. But assertion can also convey the speaker's desire or eagerness that the listener share his or her confidence in the proposition asserted. I am not sure what epistemic role this second kind of empathic transmission can play, but it perhaps plays a (larger) human role, inasmuch as the eagerness to share a view may represent a kind of basic or partial desire for some kind of epistemic community or solidarity with the hearer. This may indeed bring the moral into our account of assertion, but I am not really clear about this, not nearly as clear as I am that the asking of a question brings moral issues in its train.

5

I said earlier that I would say something about other speech acts in the light of what I was going to say about the role of empathy in asserting and asking questions. But I hope the reader won't mind if I am fairly brief about this. Searle takes up the speech acts of warning and thanking in his book *Speech Acts*, and these seem far enough from assertion and questioning to allow us to see how empathy might be relevant to all forms of speech acts. Allow us to see, that is, if thanking and warning as speech acts can be shown to rely on empathy. Let's begin with thanking.

First, why do we thank someone? Isn't it because the person has done something for us for which it is appropriate to show gratitude? Now in the most standard cases gratitude is a state arrived at empathically. We often feeling the good will or generosity behind an act for which we owe thanks, and gratitude typically reflects that good will or generosity. We empathize with the generosity, we feel the good will, and such feeling powers our own feelings of gratitude. Since thanking is standardly an expression of gratitude and is less appropriate or felicitous if we don't feel gratitude, we can see that empathy necessarily lies in the background of the speech act of thanking someone—even if this point is missed by Searle and others who have spoken about this speech act. But one can say more. Thanking *expresses* gratitude on the part of the thanker to the person who has given

one something or done something for one, and this is central to the speech act of thanking. So thanking represents good will reciprocated, good will as a response to good will, and what, then, is likely to happen as a result of that second instance of good will? Well, the original giver is going to recognize the good will they have elicited from the person they have done something for, is going to feel that second-occurring good will, and the results is likely to be reinforced good will, more good will, on the part of the original giver. And how is that further or reinforced good will likely to be expressed? By a "you're welcome!". But Searle and others seem to ignore this further, concluding dimension of the speech act of thanking. When we thank someone sincerely, we expect them to reciprocate by saying "you're welcome!" and that is part of the human meaning of the speech act of thanking. (I will have more to say about gratitude and reciprocity in Chap. 8.) Here there is obviously a moral dimension because if the other can but doesn't say that the person benefited is welcome, they are less gracious, less nice to the benefited person, than they should be. It's as if they weren't fully following through on their original good intentions or motives, and that is a moral deficiency. (If the benefactor didn't originally have good intentions toward the beneficiary of their action, the beneficiary's "thank you" may somehow [I think] be felicitous, but any "you're welcome" in the part of the benefactor will be hollow and misleading, and there will then be something infelicitous about the whole sequence. But the infelicity will be different from that which occurs when the originally beneficent benefactor insouciantly *fails to say* "you're welcome.") Thus thanking as a speech act standardly comes about as a result of an act of someone else's good will and standardly causes a further act of good willing (on the part of that someone else) in the form of a "you're welcome". (This is obviously partly conventional; in some contexts a bow acknowledging thanks will do just as well.)

Thus if we regard thanking in its full timeline as a speech act, we need to bring in empathy in order to explain what standardly or typically happens (and what is presupposed by and/or necessary to felicity or success) when we engage in that speech act. And the same goes, I think, for warning. To warn someone is standardly to indicate that that the person you are warning is in some danger and standardly also indicates that one cares about what happens to the person one is warning. This can make both a moral and an epistemic difference. If one warns someone, the fear on behalf of the person that one typically expresses can convey itself to the person who is warned in much the same way that the fear of bears can be

conveyed from parents to a child who empathizes with their fear. In both cases there is epistemic advantage to be had out of the direct transmission of the fear. And warning makes a moral difference because it standardly conveys, empathically conveys, a sense of solidarity, on the part of the warner, with the person being warned, a kind of shared interest in the warned person's not being harmed. And of course, too, if the person warned takes heed of the warning, they will typically be grateful to the person who warns them. Gratitude is expectable after the speech act of warning, and that fact also essentially characterizes what it is for someone to warn another person. So just as thanking as a total speech act only makes sense when one brings in the front-end condition of a favor done and the back-end condition of the thanked person's saying "you're welcome," warning only makes sense as a total speech act if one includes the front-end condition of concern or fear for another person and the back-end condition of gratitude and at least minimal solidarity (or community). Finally, and perhaps most obviously, warning standardly involves assertion. When one warns someone, one is likely to empathically convey one's fear for the other person but also (and as involved with or in the fear) one's confidence that there is something to be fearful of. Thus all the features of empathy and emotion that attach to assertion also attach to typical warnings. (Notice that the person who warns conveys the fact that they epistemically favor a certain hypothesis about the future at the same time that they convey their unhappiness with the possible or likely future that that hypothesis describes.)

In the light of all that I have been saying, I think that we or someone needs to go through all of speech act theory revising it in a direction that takes into account both empathy and the front-end and back-end conditions that at least some speech acts involve.[15] As we have said and seen, this

[15] Above I mentioned thanking and warning as two prime examples of temporally extended speech acts with front and back ends that speech act theory needs to take more account of. Let me mention another example, one that, like the other two, involves gratitude, but whose full felicity doesn't involve any direct expression of thanks. If a student asks to work with a given professor and the professor tells them "Yes, I will accept you as my student," the student may tell the professor that they feel honored to have been accepted by someone so distinguished, and so on. But this rather oblique expression of gratitude can be met, at the professor's end, by the latter saying: well, I feel honored by the fact that you feel honored by my accepting you as my student. Such a (clever) response seems quite natural, and in its absence one might think the professor was being less gracious than they could or should be. If the professor does express a sense of being honored by what the student has said, this is not really a "you're welcome." But it completes that communicative exchange in a rather

requires us to recognize that empathy plays a number of epistemic and moral roles that have somehow been neglected in moral philosophy, in epistemology, and in speech act theory.[16] When we ascribe empathy we are making a psychological claim or attribution, but such attributions are relevant to philosophy in many areas and in ways that have not previously been suspected.

nice way, and that is why I think it has much in common with the examples of warning and of thanking. The temporally extended speech act here is the act of vocally accepting someone as one's student, and I think we can see that that act involves both back end and front end (the student has to have applied to the professor in some verbal way) felicity conditions.

[16] The earliest developments in speech act theory occurred during a period when empathy was little known about in the academy, so there is some excuse for practitioners like J. L. Austin, H. P. Grice, and perhaps even John Searle not to have noticed the considerable role empathy plays in successful speech acts. But there is no such excuse today, and it is high time for speech act theorists to take empathy into account.

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CHAPTER 6

How Justice Pays

In this chapter and the one to follow I want once again to make connections between (humanistic) psychology and philosophy. But I will move away from questions of epistemology and concentrate exclusively on what might be called the philosophical intersection between moral psychology and ethics. The issues I want to deal with are ancient ones, though they continue to exercise ethicists and moral psychologists. They concern in some broad sense the justification of morality, of moral virtue or acting justly, and they fall roughly into two categories: questions about whether justice or virtue pays in egoistic terms and questions about the kind of challenge psychological egoism may be thought to present to moral philosophy/ethics. I shall make some previously unexplored connections between psychology and ethics in both chapters, but I want to begin in the present chapter with questions about the justification of justice. In our next chapter I shall bring out issues concerning the nature and moral implications of psychological egoism that lie just below the surface of what we are going to be speaking about in the present chapter. Our main question right now is whether justice pays, with the issue of how justice pays then emerging from the discussion of this first question. However, in order to deal properly with either question, I need to give you a fair bit of background.

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The question whether justice pays originated, as far as we know in ancient Greek philosophy. (The Greek term for justice "dikaosune" can also be translated as righteousness or as moral virtue.) It originated against a certain background, the background assumption or view that we today call eudaimonism. On one modern understanding eudaimonism is the view that virtue in order to be genuine (or genuinely valid) virtue has to pay, in self-interested terms, for the virtuous person. It was then also assumed or argued that vice or injustice doesn't pay in such terms. Eudaimonism dominated the thinking of ancient Greek ethics. To be sure, there were Greek ethical skeptics and even Greek nihilists about ethics, but among those who promulgated positive ethical doctrines or theories, eudaimonism was always assumed. Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Epicureans all assumed eudaimonism in one form or another. Thus the most famous of ancient (Western) books of philosophy, Plato's *Republic*, centers around the assumption of eudaimonism. It attempts to show that justice or moral righteousness pays in self-interested terms because it assumes that that conclusion is necessary to any justification of justice as a virtue.

To be sure, there is a moment in the *Republic* where Plato seems to deny eudaimonism. He says that the philosopher will and should be willing to abandon his or her preferred life of philosophizing in order to help govern the State. Individual preference and happiness have to yield, in other words, to the larger interests of the State. This sound like the idea of self-sacrifice, a notion otherwise absent from ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, and for a moment, then, at least, a Greek philosopher seems to be assuming that it can be a valid demand of virtue and of justice that one give up one's own greater good—which would mean that eudaimonism doesn't hold as a general thesis. But this interpretation of Plato is controversial, and the main point is or should be that Greek philosophy in general and Plato in particular seem (otherwise) committed to eudaimonism. In the *Republic* Plato seems committed to showing two young Greek men, Glaucon and Adeimantus, that (contrary to what Thrasymachus says in the dialogue) justice is no sham because it can be shown to pay, in self-interested terms, for those who are just.

Today in the West we think we know better. Our modern philosophical ethics, whether in Kantian, in Intuitionist, or in Utilitarian form, assumes that the question what our duties are can be asked independently of asking or considering whether acting in accordance with duty is in our own best

interests. Indeed philosophers like H. A. Prichard in "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" (*Mind*, 1912) want to insist very explicitly that it is a mistake to think in the manner of eudaimonism that we have to show that morality pays in self-interested terms if we want to show that morality is justified and valid for us. Similarly, Kant makes it quite clear that our moral duties can be justified independently of our felt need to assume (in what he calls "practical postulates") that there is an afterlife in which God rewards the virtuous and punishes the morally vicious. Most philosophers today would agree with this dissociation of virtue and personal profit, but it took the West a long time to recognize that valid morality needn't pay in self-interested terms.

However, Chinese thinkers have implicitly known this from the start. Confucius, Mencius, and the other great Chinese ethicists never assumed eudaimonism. Indeed, there seems to be relatively little effort in China to show that moral virtue can help one to have a better or happier life (as Li Jialian has pointed out to me, the *Yizhuan* is something of an exception); and the assumption that we need to show that virtue pays for the individual in order to assure the validity of virtue was never accepted much less considered in ancient China. Nor, as far as I know, was it accepted or considered during the much later period of neo-Confucianism. Somehow, the Chinese implicitly saw what was far from obvious to the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers: that a valid morality doesn't have to be tightly tied to the self-interest or happiness of moral agents. This is something it took the West more than 2000 more years to recognize. Today we think that a really and seriously moral person will not and should not question their commitment or devotion to morality if an issue like eudaimonism is raised with them. This is Prichard's explicit point in the article mentioned above (Kant is much less explicit about this issue), but then it would seem that such moral seriousness, such moral commitment/devotion, was present in China long before it emerged in the modern West. Chinese philosophy was admirably there long before Western philosophy got there.

2

But now the reader may ask why I am going to attempt to show here that morality in some sense pays if we already agree that we don't need to show such a thing in order to validate morality or our own moral seriousness. We may have learned this more slowly in the West than it was at least implicitly understood in China, but now, at least, we are all or almost all

(there are a few ethical egoists around even today) on the same page about the necessity or importance of vindicating morality in self-interested, that is, completely egoistic terms. We understand that morality grants a limited but large space to self-interest, but we all or almost all are now clear that morality can validly go well beyond self-interested motivation or results. So is there any reason for us to continue on with the ancient Greek project at this point?

This very question, however, betrays a misunderstanding of what is at issue, ethically at issue, here. From the presumed fact that morality doesn't require vindication in egoistic terms it simply doesn't follow that there is no philosophical or human interest in determining whether morality pays in such terms. My teacher Philippa Foot accepted a form of eudaimonism in her early article "Moral Beliefs," but she subsequently dropped that assumption while at the same time, and for many years, relentlessly pursuing the question whether virtue or justice pays. I say relentlessly because for some decades she produced different versions of an article—or were they different articles?—linking virtue with the happiness of the virtuous, and then after all those intellectual struggles, the book that finally emerged, *Natural Goodness*, essentially gave up on the original project, offering no clear-cut or univocal vindication of morality in self-interested terms.[1] In any event, though, Foot never seems to have given up on *wanting* to connect virtue and happiness or a good life for the virtuous individual. Even while conceding an ambiguity or unclarity regarding the arguments that can be given for and against the tie-in between virtue and happiness, her language in *Natural Goodness* shows a great deal of frustration at her inability to say more by way of making the long-sought (long sought by her and of course much longer sought by Western ethicists) connection between virtue and happiness.

But now the reader will want to ask *why* she should have been so interested in making that connection and why I too am interested in doing so, given the rejection of eudaimonism. May it not just be a student following a teacher over a cliff? Well, I cannot speak for Foot and she is no longer with us to be consulted on this issue, but I can speak for myself and relate my motivations in this area to considerations that more generally support the idea of linking virtue and happiness in what we could call a non-eudaimonistic world. A lot of philosophers are interested, still interested,

[1] See "Moral Beliefs" in Foot's *Virtues and Vices*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1978; and her *Natural Goodness*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001.

in understanding whether and/or how virtue and self-interest can be related, and I think I can explain to you why such an interest, and my own exemplification of that interest, doesn't have to be connected with any acceptance of eudaimonism.

Think about it! Why shouldn't a philosopher who understands how moral seriousness involves a lack of commitment to eudaimonism and who lacks such a commitment herself or himself not simply be interested, philosophically curious, about whether morality pays in self-interested terms. Their moral seriousness may well mean that they won't give up on morality (whatever that may mean—see Chap. 7 below) if it turns out that it requires a good deal of self-sacrifice, but people and philosophers as people do have an interest, at least somewhat independent of morality, in having a good or happy life, so won't those who are serious about morality be interested in the conditions of their own happiness? And won't at least the philosophers among them be interested in finding out whether these two things they are interested in and take seriously—their own happiness and morality—are closely related? Won't they want to know, most particularly, whether both these objects of their profound interest can or are likely to occur together in their lives? The answers are yes, yes, and yes, to the three just-concatenated questions. In effect, then, I am arguing that any morally serious philosopher with a modicum of self-concern could raise and be interested in answering the question whether morality/virtue/justice pays in self-interested terms, that is, whether it is likely to make one happier or better off in life than being immoral would.

But now we need to be frank about another matter. We are interested in our own welfare, but that doesn't prevent us from being interested in the welfare of others. (More on this in Chap. 7.) However, we do tend to resent those "anti-social" individuals who seem to lack any concern for others and who inflict a good deal of pain and suffering on other people. If it turns out that such immoral individuals are likely to have less good lives than those of us who are serious about morality and therefore concerned about the welfare of other human beings (and about keeping their promises, etc.), that fact is likely to please us. We think it would be unfair for them to benefit from their wrongdoings or overall have good lives, and would be pleased to learn that this isn't likely to happen. All the more reason, then, for us or those of us who are philosophers to try to find out whether what we would like to happen in this respect is in fact likely to occur. The desire to see certain people not benefit from their moral crimes against others is perfectly consistent both with normal self-interest (though

as Chap. 7 will make clearer that desire is itself not a self-interested one) and with ordinary moral willingness to make sacrifices. If I can show that highly immoral people don't have good lives, that will be a fact of interest and with pleasing implications for ordinary people, for philosophers, and, of course, for me. There is all the more reason, then, to attempt to demonstrate, as I shall attempt here, that psychology gives us reason to believe that the morally worst people (I will explain this specific idea in what follows) don't have good or happy lives. Our interest in these issues doesn't at all depend on assuming eudaimonism.

The idea that an appeal to psychology can help us show that justice/virtue pays is, of course, not a new one. Plato made various important appeals to psychology in arguing as he did in the *Republic* that justice pays. By justice or righteousness Plato meant that the parts of the soul or psyche were kept in order or ruled over by the part of the soul he called reason; and he got this conception of individual virtue or justice from an analogy with justice in the state. That analogy is strained, to say the very least, but using his notion of individual justice Plato argues (very roughly) that an unjust soul not ruled by reason will have insatiable appetites and end up frustrated and unhappy. This is certainly an appeal to psychology and it has a certain plausibility. If one is extremely immoderate in one's appetites, if one's appetites know no limits, one is unlikely to be very satisfied with or in one's life.

However, it is one thing to show that an immoderate insatiable person will not be very happy, quite another to show that someone who is unjust in the most ordinary ways, someone who steals, rapes, cheats, and murders is invariably immoderate and incapable of keeping their appetites within rational bounds. Hume's "sensible knave" (as per his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*) might, for anything Plato shows, be both unjust and moderate in their appetites/desires, and Plato offers us no argument to show that such a person is impossible or incapable of happiness. So there is reason to be unsatisfied (sic) with Plato's attempt to show in psychological terms that justice pays. Still, we might look elsewhere in psychology to make the connection Plato sought to make. I propose to do just that, but the history of philosophy (and it is only philosophers who attempt to show that justice pays [in this life]) doesn't give us much to base any new psychological account on.

Some of those who have argued that justice pays (Foot among them) have spoken of the difficulty of escaping detection if one acts in an anti-social fashion and of the consequent ostracism or punishment an immorally

acting individual is likely to face. This familiar line is closer to sociology than to psychology, and it rings true *to a certain extent*. Even though some criminals and cruel people have escaped detection or have risen to such power that detection doesn't undermine their position or the good things they enjoy, still the chance of getting away with such lifelong immorality is relatively small, and that is one reason to think that the worst kinds of immorality don't pay. That still doesn't tell us whether the virtuous individual is likely to do well in life or better than the immoralist, but it is something worth knowing and telling. Still, I would like to be able to say more, and in order to do that I am going to have to go in a psychological direction that is novel in relation to the issue of whether justice pays. This new direction requires, further, that I limit my aspirations to showing that the worse kind of immorality tends to rob such individuals of happiness or contentment. I won't have any separate and positive argument to show that the virtuous are likely to do better in life than the morally worst individuals, but *if we can show that the worst individuals are likely to be unhappy, then in the total absence of any parallel argument in relation to the virtuous or just, there will be reason to think that the latter are likely to do better in life than the most immoral individuals are*. That, at any rate, is as close as I will get to arguing or showing that justice pays, and it is good in any event to have a reason, additional to those previously offered by philosophers, for thinking that the morally worst individuals are unlikely to be happy in or with their lives.

3

So what are the new psychological considerations I want to bring to bear on the (roughly conceived) issue of whether justice pays? And do these considerations help us to see *how* justice pays, or, more accurately, *how* total immorality is likely to deprive someone of real happiness? Before we seek to answer those questions, however, we need to consider with some care what it is for someone to be totally immoral, to be among the morally worst of human beings, and to that end it will help if we can come up with some sort of typology, not of general human types, but of moral types. Here the moral typologist par excellence can be of help to us. James Martineau's *Types of Ethical Theory* (Oxford, 1895) not only gives us a typology of ethical theories but also offers its own take on the different moral types of individuals. It does so somewhat obliquely, but for our purposes here, what Martineau offers is a commonsensically, intuitively,

plausible take on what kind of person is morally best and what kind of person is morally worst.

According to Martineau, the best kind of person (understood in secular terms) is someone who is compassionate and benevolent or, as we say in today's vernacular, caring. The worst kind of motivation, according to Martineau, is malice, and it is not much of a jump from that idea to the conclusion that the malicious person is the morally worst kind of individual. I don't know of anywhere else in the literature of ethics where these "moral endpoints" are so definitively stated and marked. However, with these endpoints as given, one can wonder whether there is any such thing as a moral mid-point, and Martineau gives us absolutely no help with that issue. And it is an interesting issue because it turns out to be interestingly ambiguous.

One would be inclined to think of the midpoint in a plausible moral typology as something or someone who is morally neutral, but the notion of neutrality here can be given two very different interpretations or explanations. Malice (or maliciousness or malignity) aims at harming other people and benevolence, compassion, caring (concern for others) aim at helping them, so neutrality might then naturally seem to be a state of mind or motivation that has neither of these aims. We have a word for such an attitude, for such motivation: we call it *indifference* to others (other people or animals), and in purely conceptual terms it makes a certain sense to see indifference as poised or placed halfway between malevolence and benevolence. However, if we do this we must recognize that we have *strayed away* from neutrality in a very definite different sense because indifference to others is far from being morally neutral. What are we to make of all this?

Well, I am inclined to say that indifference is indeed at the halfway point between malice and benevolence, but that that halfway point is not one of moral neutrality. Being neutral as between malice and benevolence is a definite state of mind and that state of mind is not a morally neutral one. To put it clearly but paradoxically, being neutral vis-à-vis the welfare or ill-fare of others is not a morally neutral attitude. Rather, it is an attitude we can morally criticize, even condemn, but we also of course and consistently with this point have to recognize that, commonsensically speaking, neutrality in the form of indifference to others is less morally bad than malice and morally worse than attitudes/motives of benevolence and compassion. So there is an ordering of morally better and worse among the three motives of benevolence, indifference to others, and malice, but

this ordering is asymmetric because what is arguably the midpoint among these motives is morally bad, so that we end up with two basic bad categories and one good one. In this abstract sense or way, it is harder to count as morally good than to count as morally bad.

I don't believe these points have appeared elsewhere in the literature of ethics, but I should immediately add that they are far from giving us a full moral typology. For one thing, what we have said doesn't tell us about the moral status of self-interestedness or of character traits that relate to the interaction between compassion and benevolence, on the one hand, and justice and deontological restrictions (on pursuing the good), on the other. We need to talk about these further issues now, and let's start with self-interestedness.

Self-interestedness is compatible with benevolence or compassionate concern for certain others and so is not the same thing as indifference to others. Nor, and for the same reason, does it involve being exclusively concerned with one's own self-interest/welfare. We shall see in the next chapter that total self-interest, that is, psychological egoism in the traditional sense, is not possible for us humans or even, probably, for any possible intelligent being. But leaving that point aside, it is important to realize that self-interestedness is not the same thing as *total and exclusive* self-interestedness, and, because self-interestedness simpliciter leaves much room for concern about the welfare of others and by no means entails malice toward others, self-interestedness really is morally neutral in a way that indifference to others is not. To that extent we can say that self-interest is a morally better motive than is indifference to others. (Obviously too, self-interestedness is not the same thing as selfishness.) What about justice and deontology? How much difference do they make to our typology as expounded in terms of four different moral types so far?

Let's start with what I think is the easiest case or pair of cases, the case of someone who kills one person to save three and the contrasting case of someone who refuses to do that, and let everything else be equal. Here deontology and consequentialism definitely disagree about what it is morally best or obligatory to do, and let's start with the perspective of consequentialism. The consequentialist will see the person who kills one to save three as falling within the basic category of caringness or benevolence and will thus regard such a person as potentially of the highest moral type. They will likely, on the other hand, criticize the person who refuses to kill in such circumstances as a rule worshipper (I am talking about act-consequentialism here). By contrast, the deontologist will criticize the

person who kills and treat the person who refuses to as potentially of the highest moral type. So it would seem that deontologists and consequentialists will advocate different moral typologies where this is conceived as involving a hierarchy of morally better and worse moral types. But I think they can both agree that when issues of deontology are not in question, benevolence is the best motive, and I think they could further agree that malice is the worst of motives, for even the deontologist could agree (and if they are enlightened and morally sensitive I think they would agree) that malice is worse than breaking the deontological restriction on killing in order to save a greater number of lives. For all we have seen, then, the status of malice as the morally worst of motives and of the malicious person as the morally worst kind of person can be maintained without much reason for philosophical or ethical dissent, and that is the main or a main point we need to rely on in the arguments I propose to offer in what follows.

However, to make those arguments we also need to become clearer about what malice actually (or necessarily) is. I want to argue that malice involves certain psychological underpinnings and cannot exist simply and utterly on its own. If it could, any connection between being malicious and being unhappy or discontent could probably not be made, but if we consider the psychological underpinnings or bases of malice, we will be in a position to recognize the possibility, and I shall argue the actuality, of a strong connection between malice and the unhappiness (or general discontent or dissatisfaction) of the malicious, malevolent, or malign person.

4

It is tempting or has been tempting to think of malice as something that can exist all on its own. For one example, in his classic literary study *Shakespearean Tragedy* A.C. Bradley spoke of Iago's "motiveless malignity" toward Othello, but I have doubts about whether this really makes good sense and whether it even makes sense in relation to the character Iago in Shakespeare's *Othello*. The play itself makes very clear that Iago's malice/malignity toward Othello is at least partially explained by the fact that he had previously been passed over for promotion by Othello. His malice may be disproportionate to the wrong or injury he had thus received at Othello's hands, but it is one thing to conceive a given instance of malice as disproportionate to a received injury (and here, to anticipate our later discussion, factors like paranoia can sometimes enter the picture) and it is quite another to suppose that someone's malice is motiveless, that

is, that there is absolutely no imagined or believed in reason for someone's malice. It is the latter that I want to suggest is impossible, but to make the case for that conclusion I think we need to refer to and make use of another sort of example, one ultimately derivable from the work of G. E.M. (Elizabeth) Anscombe.

In her 1957 book *Intention*, Anscombe pointed out that certain putative desires don't make intelligible sense and could never exist. Her clever but deep example was the desire for a saucer of mud. One could want saucer-shaped mud in order to give oneself a facial, that is clear. But Anscombe argued that no one could want a saucer of mud for no further reason beyond that very desire. A basic desire for a saucer of mud makes no sense and cannot be clearly imagined to exist.

I hope the reader gets the point of what Anscombe was saying here, and it is my belief that the point transposes to malice. Revenge by its very definition doesn't stand alone as a desire but is based on something a person wants to take revenge for, but malice doesn't wear its conceptual incapacity for standing alone on its face. One has to do some thinking and arguing before one can see the connection (assuming there is one) between what Anscombe said about the desire for a saucer of mud and malice conceived as a desire to cause (certain) others pain or harm (death being the worst of harms, presumably). There are potential objections to the idea that malice cannot stand alone, objections for which there are parallel objections to the idea that there cannot be a basic desire for a saucer of mud, and we need to consider these.

Perhaps the most forceful or forceful-seeming objection comes from scientific thinking about the causes of behavior. We know that human beings have certain built-in behavioral tendencies: the knee jerk is a good example. But there is no further psychological reason why one's knee jerks when it is struck in a certain way by the doctor. The knee jerk is a kind of automatism, and one might wonder why there couldn't be a malice automatism built into certain people. Now this sort of possibility can be fairly quickly countered via the consideration that a knee-jerk reaction doesn't require anything we can naturally call motivation on the part of the person whose knee jerks. It is not as if (we think) there is any desire there, much less some sort of basic desire, to move one's leg when one's knee is struck in a certain way. In fact, we wouldn't call the reflex voluntary or therefore treat it as an automatic kind of *action* on the part of the individual whose knee is struck. Malice and even motiveless malice is supposed to represent or constitute a desire to do, voluntarily do, harm to people, so this is a far cry from a mere reflex and clearly cannot be understood in terms of the idea of a reflex.

But the rejection of the example of a reflex can move us toward other cases that would seem to offer more of a challenge to the idea that malice and the desire for a saucer of mud cannot be basic desires. What if (certain) people were built in such a way that they always wanted to harm others, always sought ways to do that, and always performed such actions when circumstances allowed. We might speak, not of a reflex, but of a basic instinct to harm (certain) others, an instinct, moreover and as we are conceiving it, that was independent of means-end rationality: one is not trying to hurt others in order to procure some good for oneself or loved ones, but simply, and without further reason(ing), has an instinct for harming the way we are supposed to have, say, an instinct for survival? Why isn't such a thing possible, and if it is, doesn't that show that there could be such a thing as motiveless malignity or a motiveless, that is, basic, desire for a saucer of mud or saucers of mud?

But would such a putative instinct really be malice, a basic and strong desire to hurt people. I don't think so. The example as described hasn't built enough into itself to make it count as a case of basic human malice? All we have with this example is an individual that always tries to hurt others and takes all available means to doing so, unless she/he is threatened with danger to himself or herself, and so on. This doesn't show that the person or individual has malice toward those others or really wants to harm them, because it doesn't tell us anything about the emotions surrounding the supposed desire to hurt others. Usually, when we strongly want to do something, we feel hopeful or fearful about whether we will be able to accomplish what we want to accomplish. Further, we will be disappointed and even unhappy if we fail to achieve our end, but glad or happy if we do achieve it. But none of those emotions has been built into the description of the supposed example showing that motiveless malignity is possible. (Similarly for any parallel argument and example relating to the supposed desire for a saucer of mud.)

Indeed, as far as the example has so far been constructed, no emotions are being thought of as attached to the supposed instinct for harming people. It is simply supposed that if the individual with the instinct fails to harm someone at one time, they will renew their efforts to do so or redirect them toward someone or someones else. The ordinary but entirely conceptual connection between desire and emotion is left out of the picture or is somehow assumed away, but we have no right to do that if we are to soberly and accurately consider what is conceptually possible here. The example of an instinct to hurt or harm others that is supposed to

show us malice as a basic instinct doesn't show us malice, is much too thin in its psychological accoutrements to allow for that. In fact, the example as constructed treats instinctual malice and malice itself therefore as a kind of automatism. Not to be sure a mere reflex kind of automatism, but an automatism nonetheless because the example is devoid of the emotional dispositions that characterize desire as desire: an automatism, in other words, because the example fails to give us an example of desire, of malice as a desire, and leaves us only with some kind of mechanism, psychological or otherwise, that ensures attempts to harm or behavior that harms others, without bringing in what is most characteristic of human action or behavior: its basis in desires that centrally involve emotional dispositions. People and even philosophers can *say* that there can be basic malice, malice based on nothing deeper or further that the malicious person thinks or feels, but I don't think it is actually possible to construct or conceive an example where such a thing is fully realized. Basic malice really seems to be impossible.

But then we have to ask what sorts of things, or reasons or whatever, malice does depend on, and at least part of the answer is already staring us in the face. Iago's malice toward Othello constitutes or is based in a desire for revenge against Othello for having passed him over for promotion, and indeed the clearest cases of malice do in obvious ways involve a desire for revenge. In that connection, though, it is interesting to consider what Bishop Butler in his *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel* says and also doesn't say about the connection between malice and (the desire for) revenge. Butler argues (brilliantly and to my mind convincingly) that both revenge and malice, involving as they often do cutting off one's own nose to spite one's face, are non-egoistic motives. This idea has been challenged, but I hope to show you in Chap. 7 that Butler was correct on this point.

However, Butler never says that malice has to be based in revenge. He takes no stand on that issue and, more generally, on the question whether malice can be self-standing or basic to an individual's psychology. But I want to say and in effect have argued that if we take our lessons from Anscombe, we have reason to think a basic desire to harm others is no more possible than a basic desire for saucers of mud. The questions we now have to consider, therefore, are whether malice has any other source or basis than a desire for revenge and, if doesn't, whether the desires for revenge experienced by the morally worst individuals are inevitably or usually tied to certain forms of unhappiness.

5

We are finally ready to bring in the psychology that, as I think and shall argue, is relevant to the question whether the worst people, the most malicious people, are not happy in their lives. I am not going to bring in the actual literature of recent psychology because I don't believe any of the literature directly addresses the main psychological issue that faces us here, the question of whether in terms of a realistic understanding of human psychology, one can argue that malicious people are unhappy. What I hope to show or at least give you reason to believe is that there are two basic and intuitively realistic models of what lies behind malice. Both involve revenge, but the revenge involved is differently related to human emotion in the two basic cases.

And I shall make another assumption in order to facilitate the argument and in order, too, to engage realistically with the immorality I am going to be talking about. There are different degrees or levels of malice and revenge, and the revenge my older brother takes against a schoolmate of mine who has bloodied my nose is not comparable in moral seriousness and in degree of malice with the more extreme versions of malice that characterize the people we think are most morally bad or vicious. If my brother merely bloodies the nose of the boy (or girl?) who has bloodied my nose, that is revenge and embodies (at least temporary) malice to the extent, as it is realistic to suppose, that my brother thinks the person who bloodied my nose *deserves* similar treatment. He wants that person to suffer not as a means to some further good for himself (my brother) or me, but because, as he thinks, the person deserves to suffer, and that counts as malice even if it is also somewhat excusable or understandable or, on certain views (an eye for an eye and a nose for a nose), justified. But all this, as we can say, is *minor malice*, and I think we can assume that the morally worst people engage in malicious actions of a much more serious kind and on a much larger scale. They hurt other people, they kill other people, they rape or torture other people, and take pleasure in doing so apart from and independently of any (other) benefits they derive or may hope to derive from doing so. We are talking, in other words, about (serial) killers, about (serial) rapists, and about serial torturers who take sadistic pleasure in torturing their victims, and actually all of these categories involve some kind of sadism commonsensically understood. This is even, though in a more minor and temporary way, true of my brother's attitude and actions toward the person who has bloodied my nose. Malice, revenge, and sadism

are arguably part of one package, but this assumes that malice not only cannot be free-standing but also always depends on some sort of desire for revenge.

In what follows, I shall describe and discuss further the kinds of individuals I think and I believe most of you think belong to the category of the morally worst type of human (or other) individual. I think these individuals fall into two classes based on the somewhat different etiology of their malice and malicious actions, but in both cases revenge will play a role, and I think we have no clear or realistic conception of any other kind of individual whose extreme moral viciousness is constituted by malice based in something independent of the desire for revenge. But, as I say, the two basic kinds of immoral revenge-malice have somewhat different etiologies and the difference in etiology is related to their emotional life. Some malice embodies a desire for revenge based in or on fear and some embodies a desire for revenge based in or on anger rather than fear.

When we think of the morally worst individuals we know of or read/hear about, they are people who kill or torture, and so on, mercilessly. In other words, we are talking, roughly and as I indicated earlier, of serial killers and rapists and the like. But before we proceed any further with describing such people and their underlying psychologies (and how these latter indicate or make for unhappiness), I think there is a moral issue we have to face in connection with the kind of malicious person I have been very roughly describing. I have said that such people are the morally worst people we know of, but aren't they in many or most instances also psychopaths, and can we consider psychopaths morally responsible for being the way they are? (Sociopathy is either the same thing as psychopathy or a milder version of psychopathy. In either case, we don't have to talk about sociopathy any further here.)

If psychopaths are not responsible or thus blameworthy for their malicious tendencies and actions, then there may be a problem with our assumption that the serial killers and rapists are the morally worst kind of people, since, arguably, many of them are psychopaths. But then again there may not be as much of a problem as might initially appear. First of all, it is possible that psychopaths can validly be held responsible for their terrible actions—many courts of law treat them just that way. Second, even if they are not responsible or blameworthy for being the way they are and doing what they do, we may still feel strongly that what they do is wrong, horribly wrong. It is wrong to serially rape young boys and the person who does this is a kind of moral monster, the worst kind or one of

the worst kinds of people we know of. That is a judgment that we most of us strongly want to make, and in that case we may want to say that such people are morally vicious in the worst way (we know of—there may be unknown unknowns here) *even if* we cannot say they are blameworthy for being as they are. As we shall see at greater length in what follows, some serial killers have suffered horrible kinds of childhood abuse; and that fact may make us hesitate or more than hesitate to blame them for being as they are, if we think the early abuse *turned them into moral monsters without their having much say in or control over the matter*. So perhaps such people are not morally blameworthy for what they are, but we may still want to say that what they do and are is morally terrible or bad in the worst way we know of. There is a long tradition of distinguishing moral and ethical judgments of wrongness and badness or viciousness from judgments of blameworthiness. But I don't propose to go into that literature here in part because there is an equally long literature taking issue with that way of seeing things and (conceptually) tying moral criticism and badness to blameworthiness in a strong way. But I don't think we need to enter into or cite either literature here because I think it is fairly clear what we need to say at this point independently of who is right on the issue just mentioned. Perhaps, despite the childhood abuse certain psychopaths are properly held responsible for their deeds and viewed as blameworthy for what they have done. Perhaps they are not blameworthy because of serious abuse they suffered as children. Either way, we can still maintain that what they do is wrong, horribly wrong. It can be wrong despite the fact that they can't be blamed for being the kind of person who does such horribly wrong things, or it can be wrong compatibly with seeing them as adults who as adults are responsible for what they intentionally and maliciously do as adults independently of how they were treated as children.

To that extent, the issue of psychopathy may be a red herring. Even if the most malicious individuals are psychopaths, they still can count and seem to most of us to count as the morally worst type of individual, and therefore our present project needn't consider or further consider the issue of the moral blameworthiness of psychopaths or, for that matter, the question of how many malicious anti-social individuals actually count as psychopaths. So let us move on.

6

The main question we now face concerns the psychological character of totally malicious individuals, the sort of individuals who kill, rape, torture and seemingly just like doing so. From what I think most of us know about our society and about the varieties of people there are in the world, I think we can see or come to see that the totally malicious come in two main categories. Roughly, they include, on the one hand, paranoid individuals who fear that the people around them are out to get them and, on the other, people who are taking a kind of revenge for what they suffered earlier in their lives. Both these types are motivated by malice, but in the former case that needs some showing.

Some might say that the paranoid individual who fears the people around them (irrespective of who those people are and what they are actually like) is acting egoistically when they act against those feared individuals. If I fear your intentions, then even if that fear is paranoid and unwarranted, what I do to prevent you from hurting me is an instance of self-interested motivation. By contrast, and as Butler told us three centuries ago, malice involves wanting to hurt or harm others even if that is not necessary to one's self-defense or to gaining other goods just for oneself. Malice thus (properly) understood seeks to harm someone independently of any ulterior or practical motive beyond the doing of harm—and revenge is very much like this. But what we have said about those who kill out of paranoid fear of others seems to fall under the category of egoistic self-interest and therefore not to involve malice as we understand the notion.

In fact, though, that appearance is misleading. Yes, there can be an egoistic aspect or dimension to the killing of those we think are out to kill us. We thereby really do seek to prevent them from killing us and thereby satisfy or attempt to satisfy the presumably egoistic desire to go on living. But when the paranoid individual kills or harms those they think are out to kill or harm them, the motivation involved is standardly far from being exclusively egoistic. Just think for a moment about ordinary human psychology. If I learn that someone has tried unsuccessfully to hurt me and is no longer even capable of doing me any harm, don't I nonetheless have some tendency, perhaps a strong tendency, to want to do them some harm, and isn't that desire for revenge, one's malice toward that person, independent of any harm one has actually suffered and connected, rather, to what the other individual has *sought* to do to us?

With paranoid individuals the case is relevantly similar. Yes, they want to eliminate a perceived or imagined threat to their lives or their welfare, but that is not the end of the story. The paranoid person who fears others around him and thinks they are plotting to hurt him and/or actually making efforts to do so will also want to revenge himself on those people for what they are trying or have tried to do. He will think they deserve to be punished for what they intend to do to him in all his self-imagined innocence and will want to be the one to mete out the punishment, thinking that it is entirely appropriate and fitting that he should be the one to make them suffer. So I think revenge is basic both to paranoia-based malice and malice based in anger and indignation at what others have made one suffer (as a child). In both cases there is anger and action based on anger, and the main difference between them is that in the paranoid cases fear is a major element, whereas in the other cases it seemingly is not. But now I want to describe these two kinds of malice/revenge in a bit more detail and use the detail and the basic points we have made so far to tie malice of both kinds to unhappiness. Let us start with malice based in the horrendous mistreatment of a child.

Not every child who is cruelly mistreated turns into a moral monster. Sometimes, though it has not been univocally clear to psychologists how this happens, a child who has suffered develops a strong empathic sensitivity to the sufferings of others, especially children. But that is not the usual case, not by a longshot, so let's talk about what more usually happens. If a male child has been repeatedly raped by a family member during their childhood, they can become a serial rapist themselves, as adults seeking to do to other children what was done to themselves. This is an instance of what psychologists sometimes call identification with the aggressor and what in popular speech is sometimes called Stockholm syndrome. The American public is perhaps most vividly aware of this syndrome in the instance of heiress Patty Hearst, who decades ago was abducted by the Symbionese Liberation Army and notoriously became a loyal gang member.

But I think revenge for childhood abuse more typically or famously takes the form of displaced aggression against those who abused the child. If the mother abused the child, then the child can become a serial rapist or murderer of women who roughly resemble the mother as she was when the abuse was meted out. (If the mother lets her brother or a stepfather rape her son, it may still be she and not the uncle or stepfather who becomes the symbolic target of later aggressions.) So much, then roughly, for etiology, but now we must consider how the child who identifies with

the aggressor or later seeks out symbolic targets that resemble their former abuser feels about what is happening or has happened to them.

Imagine yourself there, at the mercy of some adult, as a child needing and wanting love and affection, but receiving physical or sexual punishment/abuse instead. What a horrible situation and how horribly you are going to feel about it! Such children suffer and suffer greatly at the hands of those who are supposed to take care of them, and do you think such misery is easily forgotten or papered over once the abuse stops (later in childhood or in adolescence as the child becomes an adult)? It may not be pleasant to have to say it, but children are like other people, like adults. Although they may not have the adult vocabulary in which resentment can later on be morally expressed, they may still resent what is being done to them or has been done to them. And resent is too weak a word. They can be furious about what has happened to them, in an unappeasable rage at their suffering and mistreatment, and that unappeasability may come out later in the form of revenge, revenge against those who resemble the people who abused them or, twisted by identification with the aggressor, revenge against children who resemble their own abused selves. But the whole basis for this is the extreme misery of the child, and if the child becomes an adult who, finally, can take some sort of revenge, can the extreme misery have simply vanished from their mind? Isn't it more plausible to say that such misery has finally found an outlet, and if the misery needs, still needs, an outlet, then surely it has *not* vanished from the mind (or xin). How can such a person be deemed contented, happy, or pleased with their life?

So, you see, (a major portion of) the morally worst people we know of, the serial killers and rapists and the worst kinds of sadists, cannot be regarded as well-off in their lives. People who are not like that may die young or be subject to crippling diseases—their lives may also not be good ones. But those who are not afflicted in those ways and who are not full of vengefulness stemming from childhood abuse can have decent or good lives, and that constitutes an answer to our narrowly focused question as to whether justice or virtue pays. Now I haven't specifically been talking about the paranoid type of vengefulness, but what I have just been saying applies equally, I think, to them.

Abraham Maslow tells us that people want to be liked, esteemed, even loved. I shall say more about this in Chap. 7, but for the moment the point to take from his ideas is that someone who thinks everyone is plotting against them cannot be very happy about that fact. And then, as I indicated

earlier, such a person will be angry and vengeful toward those they think are plotting or have acted against them. But when you think of it, living in or with anger is not a pleasant way to be or to live. So again and on these further grounds we can say that the paranoid killer—someone, for example, like Stalin who (via "show trials") kills off imagined enemies using their dictatorial powers—is not living a pleasant or contented or happy life. These people are further denizens of the category of morally worst people. But all the people of this category I am aware of lead less than happy lives. They are too angry, too unhappy with what is being or has been done to them, to lead a life we can think of as well worth having and living.[2] However, that doesn't mean that the vengeful and malicious morally worst type is aware of how miserable or lacking in happiness and contentment they are. They may not be aware of how morally bad they are (paranoid individuals always feel justified), and by the same token, given our arguments, they may not be aware of how unfortunate their lives are.[3]

[2] Here I am assuming the obvious fact that the vengefulness of the worst people cannot fully slake itself through some single act of rape or murder. That is all the more reason to think that those people cannot, except perhaps temporarily, forget what has made and will continue to make them unhappy.

[3] I think it is worth noting the parallels between what I have been saying about very malicious very vengeful people and some more familiar and less unpleasant phenomena. If someone loses a valuable ring, looks everywhere for it, and eventually finds it, they will be relieved to find the ring and may idiomatically describe themselves as happy to have found it. But no one would wish to temporarily lose a ring in order to have the pleasure of finding it, and Plato says something similar about itches. It may be a relief or pleasant to scratch an itch, but no one would want to have an itch in order to experience the pleasure of scratching it. By analogy, one might grant that vengeful people feel a certain pleasure and perhaps glee at taking revenge and even at the thought of taking revenge, but a life of being mistreated and pleasurably taking revenge is no more good or pleasant *on the whole* than is the total experience of losing and finding or of itching and scratching. The ancient Greeks and Buddhists have gone on, however, to argue for a general pessimism based on the supposed unpleasantness of all desire. If desire is unpleasant, then even if one takes pleasure in satisfying it, one's total experience is, according to this all-too-familiar view, unpleasant on the whole. Since human life is shot through with desire, the conclusion the Greeks and Buddhists drew (or, in the case of the latter, draw today) is that human life is on the whole unpleasant. But nowadays I think we are more savvy about desire and realize that not all desire is unpleasant. When one looks forward to a great meal, one presumably has some sort of appetite for food, but the total experience of such anticipation may be pleasant and even delicious, rather than unpleasant or painful. Similarly, in many other areas of human life. On this point see Kark Duncker's "On Pleasure, Emotion, and Striving," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1, 1941, esp. pp. 420–425. Life, human life, can be much better than the Buddhists (with their goal of nirvana) and the ancient Greeks (with their "soma sema," i.e. the body is a

We have made this point, moreover, without bringing in a consideration that many ethicists would want to insist on, namely, that the worst people are incapable of the personal goods of friendship and love and so are lacking in happiness for such reasons. That might be true, but, then again, it might not be. Are malicious people incapable of having friends, are psychopaths incapable of friendship (e.g., as between psychopaths)? Was Stalin incapable of loving his mother or his daughter, Svetlana? Well, we don't have to investigate or pass judgment on such questions in order to make the points we are trying to make in this chapter. If the worst people are incapable of love and friendship, that adds fuel to the fire of our present argument that justice pays (more accurately, that the worst immorality doesn't pay). But whether they are or aren't, we still have the arguments that have been offered here, and I think they have some force toward showing, at long last and along psychological lines that have not previously been philosophically explored, that virtue and justice really do pay in self-interested terms.[4]

prison) realized; and it is worth noting that even when Buddhism was having its greatest influence on Chinese thought and culture, the Chinese were never convinced by this sort of pessimistic philosophy.

[4] There are two ways of interpreting the idea that justice pays. The first is that just people are likely to have better lives than the morally worst kind(s) of individual; and that is how we have been understanding the idea that justice pays here in this chapter. But the idea could be interpreted more strongly to mean that being unjust or being the worst kind of person *causes* one to have a worse life. This is clearly what Plato thought, but we haven't argued here that it is the immorality of serial killers and the like that causes their unhappiness. On the present account, rather, their unhappiness in some ways sets in first and leads them to be the kind of people they end up being. So it is only the first and weaker idea that conveys my intended thesis that justice pays and that indicates *how* I believe justice pays.

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CHAPTER 7

The Impossibility of Egoism

The title of this chapter will remind some of you of—and stands in marked contrast with—the title of Thomas Nagel's *The Possibility of Altruism* (OUP, 1970). But Nagel was talking mainly of ethical or moral altruism, the idea that we have motive-entailing *reason* to help others, whereas I will be primarily concentrating not on ethical egoism but on psychological egoism, the idea that we always act in a self-interested way. Philosophers who have sought to defend moral altruism or morality in general have assumed that there are egoistic immoralists around and that a good enough philosophical argument might persuade them to be less immoral or even virtuous. I think Plato was making some such assumptions in the *Republic*, and those who have subsequently tried to philosophically explain why we should be moral have, I believe, accepted those same two basic assumptions. But I think both of them are mistaken, and though that still leaves plenty of challenges for moral philosophy and for moral individuals, those challenges will look quite different if it turns out that there are no total egoists and that philosophical argument cannot work on any person to the extent they are egoistic. In order to see why there cannot be any psychological egoists, we must first come to a clear or clearer understanding of what (psychological) egoism involves, and that will be the task that occupies us initially in what follows.

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When philosophers talk of egoism, they mainly have in mind a contrast between egoistic and altruistic motives, but I don't think we can fully understand, conceptually understand, what psychological egoism is or involves unless we see that the contrast between egoistic and altruistic motives doesn't cover, doesn't even begin to cover, the full range of (basic) human motives. Moreover, the term "altruism" is itself ambiguous, and we need to sort out that ambiguity before proceeding any further. Someone who thinks it is his duty to help others and who accordingly does just that acts conscientiously, and since their conscience is directing them to help others, they lack any egoistic or ulterior motive for what they do on behalf of other people. In some sense one can call such behavior and such motivation altruistic, but there is a narrower and, I think, more accurate sense of the term in which it is not. In the strictest or most accurate sense a person's motivation is altruistic if and only if their primary motive is to help others or some particular other, and when such helping is dictated and supported by a sense of obligation, it is not altruistic in the basic and colloquial sense that I am talking about. I shall use the term "altruistic" only of motivation that is basically altruistic—not based on conscience and not based on ulterior motives.

Of course, some philosophers, in fact many philosophers, have questioned whether there can be or actually is such a thing as altruistic human motivation in the above sense. Many of us have thought that Bishop Butler in his sermons settled that issue over three centuries ago, but in recent decades there has been a flurry of interest in the question of whether human altruism exists and many have thought they could show that it likely never does exist. I am not going to go through the entire philosophical thicket of such arguments here. I have done that in two recent books, *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind* (OUP, 2014) and *Human Development and Human Life* (Springerbriefs, 2016), and I don't really think it would be advisable (or even perhaps possible) to review those very lengthy discussions right here. Rather, I shall try to review what I take to be the philosophical import of those discussions by homing in on the highlights of what I just described as a philosophical thicket. I use that term advisedly or at least deliberately because I think much of the recent discussion muddies the waters and misses the main conceptual points of Butler's earlier arguments. But then it turns out that Butler himself conceived things more narrowly than I think we have reason to, and what I

have to say on these topics will then lead us toward an explanation of why altruism is impossible. Let us proceed step by step.

I want first to consider a new way of arguing for psychological egoism that has been offered in recent decades (specific references can be found in the two books mentioned above). When people do favors for other people, they usually know that others will learn about what they have done, so some recent psychologists and philosophers have speculated that when one helps another person, it is very possible that one does so in order to avoid the criticisms or bad opinion of those who might find out if one didn't help. But such motivation, it is argued, is egoistic, and, it is further argued, it is very difficult to show that we ever help others without such background motives. This then, according to the argument, places the psychological possibility of altruism in serious doubt.

In my estimation, this sort of thinking goes wrong not only in the way it moves toward denying the possibility or likelihood of human altruism, but also and most importantly for our immediate purposes in the way it conceives psychological egoism. It treats the desire for the good opinion of others as an egoistic motive and that is in my opinion a deep mistake. I agree that it is possible to view the desire for the esteem or approval of others as a widespread human motive, even as a basic motive in human psychology. That is precisely A. H. Maslow's view in his famous *Motivation and Personality* (Harper and Row, 1954), but the fact that such a motive is basic or widespread doesn't entail that it is egoistic any more than it entails that it is altruistic. The desire for others' approval or esteem (and these are not quite the same thing) isn't altruistic because it involves no intrinsic desire to help others. Rather, it looks for what it can get *from* others, not for what it can do *for* others; and those who have argued that the desire to help others can be based (solely) in the desire for their approval (or non-disapproval) and that it in such cases is not altruistic are certainly right to that extent. But it is a mistake to suppose that this way of looking at or thinking about human attempts to help others tends to support psychological egoism. That is because the basic desire for others' approval is definitely not egoistic.

Let me contrast two cases of the desire for approval/esteem. In the first case one knows that one won't get a promotion and a higher salary unless one is popular or at least not disliked in one's company/firm. One then very cautiously and self-interestedly acts to ensure that one isn't disliked and/or that people in the company/firm think well of one, and if such is the case, one's motivation, one's desire for the esteem of others, is clearly

self-interested/egoistic. But, as Maslow amply indicated and commonsense also suggests, the desire for the esteem of others is very often (perhaps in the majority of cases) *not like this*. The desire for the esteem of others has nothing to do with gaining (further) benefits for oneself like a higher salary or a corner office; rather, one just doesn't want people to dislike one or to think poorly of one. This is what Maslow meant by saying we have a basic desire to be esteemed (or approved or liked) by others. In our psychology this motive simply isn't necessarily or even usually tied to further goals or ulterior motives in the way involved in the case of the person who wants a promotion and more money; and when it isn't, there is nothing egoistic about the motive. Wanting more money is (in most cases) egoistic, and when the desire for others to like or approve of one is grounded (solely) in that motive, it is certainly operating under the aegis of egoism and is not merely non-altruistic. But an intrinsic desire to be liked will not count as egoistic in this way, and in fact there is nothing egoistic at all about it.

Now a natural counterargument can be given at this point. It can be said that in the case of the so-called intrinsic or basic desire for others to like or esteem one, one will be pleased if one gains their esteem and at least somewhat unhappy if one does not. Doesn't that involve an egoistic element or psychological grounding? Certainly not. The compassionate person gains pleasure from helping others, but needn't be helping others simply in order to get that pleasure. As Butler essentially taught us, one only gets the pleasure in such cases if one independently wants to see others happy or happier. The attainment of that more basic goal gives one pleasure—one is gaining what one wants (for another person), but one's desire to help the other person or to see them helped is psychologically fundamental in supposed cases of altruistic compassion, and the fact that one is pleased when that goal is attained or unhappy if it is not, only shows how much one cares and cares altruistically about the other person or persons. The pleasure of helping isn't the goal in such cases but only the result, even the anticipated result, of one's fundamental desire to help, and even if one can wonder whether humans are ever motivated by such fundamental altruism, there is no reason to hold that the pleasure received by any such altruistic person when they succeed in helping others really shows them as egoistic.

But the same considerations transpose to the case of wanting others to like or esteem one. The pleasure someone feels when they know or believe they are liked or esteemed arguably only shows how much independent importance they place on being liked or esteemed. It does nothing to

show that such a motive is egoistic. Butler saw all this centuries ago, and we shouldn't forget the points that he was the first to make and that I have just been summarizing. The arguments just given tend toward the conclusion, then, that the desire to be liked (or esteemed or approved or, for that matter, loved) *is neither altruistic nor egoistic*. For convenience, let's call such motives *neutral motives*. Butler was the first to see the possibility of such motives, but he didn't invoke the idea of neutral motives as a separate category of human motivation because he didn't see the large and variegated place such motives have in our overall human psychology. He recognized certain motives, like malice, revenge, and curiosity/inquisitiveness, as neither egoistic nor altruistic, but seems to have seen this category as somewhat exceptional within human psychology, and I hope to show you that a wide range of human motives, perhaps even most human motivation, is neutral rather than either egoistic or altruistic.

Butler most famously argued that malice and revenge are not egoistic (obviously they are not altruistic), and in order to do so he mentioned some of the considerations or arguments I have brought out above. But malice and revenge are in an important sense negative—they seek the suffering or death of others, and the fact of this negativity may have been part of what prevented him from calling such motives neutral. Still, his point that people acting from the motive of revenge will seek the suffering or destruction of others even at a considerable cost to themselves (cutting off their nose to spite their face) played an important part in his attempt to persuade people that malice and revenge are not egoistic. He then compared the motivational structure of compassion and benevolence with that of malice and revenge in order to show that the former too are not egoistic and *can* be considered altruistic in a way the latter obviously are not.

Butler also saw that at least one other human motive is neither altruistic nor egoistic: inquisitiveness or curiosity (we needn't distinguish them). But he gives no explanation of why it isn't egoistic, he just says it isn't; and I think we ought to focus more than Butler did on curiosity if we want a complete or more complete picture of why both revenge/malice and the desire to be liked/esteemed/approved are not egoistic motives and, for obvious reasons, therefore, neither egoistic nor altruistic. Understanding curiosity or inquisitiveness better will help us see how widely and deeply and variously neutral motivation occurs in human lives.

Curiosity can serve the purpose or purposes of human or animal survival. But there have been studies showing that animals can be curious independently of their desire for food or survival. Exploratory behavior

serves egoistic purposes, but doesn't have to, and human curiosity runs more deeply or more broadly than such purposes. A child can be curious about the moon or about ancient Egypt having seen pictures of the pyramids, and adults can be similarly curious, but none of this has to be in the service of other (more basic) needs or desires. As Aristotle tells us in the *Metaphysics*, man (sic) by nature desires to know. Curiosity is built into our human framework and built in in a way that doesn't require direct psychological connection to survival needs and the like. This much is common sense. But think what it implies. If I want to learn about my surroundings because I think I need to do so in order to survive, then my desire to know is egoistic. But if I want to know about things out of sheer or basic curiosity, ulterior motives are out of the picture and, as Butler saw, there is no reason to characterize the motivation involved as egoistic.

Indeed, I think we can offer a deeper explanation of why such motivation isn't egoistic than anything Butler gives us. When I want to know about ancient Egypt or the moon for its own sake, I place a certain importance on finding out about Egypt or the moon. We can even say that I thereby place a certain intrinsic importance on, say, the moon. It becomes important to me independently of whether it can provide me with good things other than the sheer knowing more about it. I would say that this fact of attributed importance is basic and essential to the non-egoistic character of the curiosity about the moon or of curiosity more generally. A motive isn't egoistic if it involves one in placing intrinsic importance (to oneself) on something outside of oneself (or larger than oneself). To be curious for survival purposes places curiosity in the service of the self and places no intrinsic or independent (of oneself) importance on learning what one seeks to learn. But ordinary curiosity is not instrumental like that and counts as non-egoistic on that basis.

The same considerations apply to revenge. Although the vengeful person might not like and would be surprised perhaps to hear this, their desire for revenge ascribes a certain intrinsic importance in their life to the person they want to take revenge against. If one were really egoistic, one wouldn't *care* about (what happens to) a person one hates: one would act against them if that would serve one's other purposes, but one wouldn't care for its own sake that they should suffer or be destroyed. Yet this latter is part of the psychology of revenge and that shows the non-egoistic character of ordinary revenge. It places too great an intrinsic importance on what happens to another person to count as egoistic—the egoistic person intrinsically cares only about what happens to her- or himself.

I am saying, then, that a motive counts as egoistic if and only if it doesn't place intrinsic importance on things or persons outside of oneself. Butler never mentions this general criterion, but it subsumes what he does say while at the same time offering what I believe to be a deeper explanation of what he was arguing for. (We will see the full extent of this later in the chapter.) We have reason, then, now to regard the desire for esteem, etc., malice and revenge, curiosity, and compassion as non-egoistic, even if it is only the last mentioned that can be accounted altruistic. It is time now to see just how broadly the category of neutral motives extends—this will be relevant to our main question concerning the possibility of egoism.

2

Malice/revenge, inquisitiveness, and the desire for others' esteem, and so on, can all be conceptualized as neutral motives, but only the last of these is specifically spoken of in the work of A. H. Maslow. Maslow thinks the desire for esteem and the desire for love are basic to us humans, but he doesn't seem worried about the issues surrounding psychological egoism and so he never says that these basic desires are not egoistic (indeed he seems to imply that they are egoistic in some of his later writings). But we can, I hope, agree that these desires are neither egoistic nor altruistic. Given the intrinsic importance it places on what is outside the self, we can see this with the desire for esteem or being liked, and the same considerations also extend to the desire for love. However, this may be less obvious in this last case because the desire for love can easily be confused with the capacity for love, and the latter may seem altruistic. But there is an ambiguity here. The capacity for love might refer to the desire for love or to one's capacity for loving others, and it is far from conceptually or humanly clear that someone who desires the love of others will necessarily be capable or desirous of loving them back.

Children need and want their parents' love and become angry and even anti-social if they are not loved. But the love of one's parents may not be there from the start and may depend on whether the parents start a cycle of love by first loving the child. There is a lot of evidence around that children will not love their parents if their parents show them no love, so the desire for love and the capacity for and actuality of loving others are separable phenomena. This means, I think, that it makes sense to see loving others as altruistic but the desire for others' love as non-altruistic, but, more importantly, also as non-egoistic. Children or even babies who

want their mother's or their parents' love place a great importance on their mother or their parents, and this is arguably not importance based on egoistic considerations. Even if a child is given every material or physical comfort, they will be angry and likely become anti-social if this was done in an emotionally antiseptic way. The need for love then shows the importance of the other to us, and this is not egoistic. So I hope we can go forward recognizing both the desire for esteem and the desire for love, desires Maslow thinks of as basic to humanity, as non-egoistic and neutral.

But Maslow mentions other desires as also basic and at least one of them, the desire to belong, also seems to be neutral in our sense. The desire to belong is or involves the desire to be accepted, and the latter also and obviously counts as non-egoistic if the desire for esteem is. Maslow also and perhaps most famously talks of a desire for self-actualization that he considers to be the highest of all human motives. However, I don't want to consider the hierarchical aspects of Maslow's view of this motive and prefer to bring his discussion down to earth a bit by speaking not of the desire for self-actualization, but of the desire for competence and/or mastery. Such a desire or range of desires is arguably basic to human beings: we want to be competent in and about the world, to master certain skills or tasks, somewhat independently of survival needs or our physical appetites. One sees the independent or basic desire for competence and mastery, for example, in babies and young children: consider, for example, the child who doesn't want his mother to feed him anymore and who strongly and vehemently prefers to (learn to) feed himself.

But the range of neutral motives extends well beyond any motives described or suggested by Maslow. Human beings, like many animals and even some reptiles, like to be around conspecifics. This isn't egoistic, even if it carries benefits, because, again, the craving for human company places an importance on others (sometimes any old others) independently of anything (else) they can do for one. Then, too, there is the desire to be like others, to imitate them. Again, one sees that in children, even in babies, and the desire to imitate places an importance on other people, so in our terms and for the reasons that have been offered here, this desire is not egoistic but, rather, neutral.

Everything I have said so far leaves intact the idea that certain basic human desires are egoistic rather than neutral or altruistic. Appetitive desires are egoistic, for example, though one has to be careful in saying this because some philosophers might want to say that a desire isn't egoistic unless it specifically and consciously aims and solely aims at the welfare

of the person whose desire it is. But in conceptual and historical terms this is a much too demanding criterion of egoistic status. Since children and animals often grab food without thinking in high-falutin' terms about their own welfare or well-being, such a criterion would much too easily undercut the thesis of universal psychological egoism. A motive can be altruistic even if it doesn't self-consciously aim at the other person's well-being: as, for example, when one seeks to relieve pain without having the thought that it is good for someone to have their pain relieved. By the same token the desire for food or sex or (a new egoistic motive) comfort is egoistic (in standard cases) even if it isn't accompanied by or based on any thinking about what would make one's life go better. But things are about to become more interesting.

We standardly think of egoism as associated with and based on desires that bring pleasure or satisfaction, for example, desires for food, drink, or sex—and let us assume that we are not making the mistake of thinking of the desire for knowledge as egoistic because the person who desires such knowledge will get some pleasure from its attainment. We think that the desire for food is egoistic because it involves and is based on a desire for one's own pleasure or reduced discomfort or pain. But arguably that is not the whole story, and when the whole or a larger story is told, we will see that neutral motivation is in surprising ways involved in those very desires that philosophers commonly regard as strictly or purely and obviously egoistic. Let us approach these issues through Bishop Butler and his critics. In his *Fifteen Sermons*, Butler says that "…all particular appetites and passions are directed towards *external things themselves*, distinct from *the pleasure arising from them*…."[1] However, in their recent review and critique of Butler's moral psychology, Elliott Sober and David Sloan Wilson take issue with this idea. Butler's idea is supposed to contradict and work against psychological hedonism, but Sober and Wilson argue that Butler's idea is mistaken if we (standardly) want food only in order to get pleasure from eating it. Even if the desire for pleasure requires a desire for something other than pleasure, they think the latter may function as a (mere) means to the pleasure, and this would preserve hedonism against what Butler has to say against it.

[1] Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons upon Human Nature*, reprinted in L. A. Selby-Bigge, ed., *British Moralists: Being Selections from Writers Principally of the Eighteenth Century*, NY: Dover Books, 1965, vol. 1, see especially p. 227.

But there is much more to Butler's anti-hedonistic viewpoint than Sober and Wilson recognize, even if Butler himself doesn't present things in a way that clearly counteracts what Sober and Wilson say in defense of psychological hedonism. Sober and Wilson state: "[h]edonism says that people want food *because* they want pleasure (and believe that food will bring them pleasure). Butler … concludes that this causal claim is false, but for no good reason."[2] And they are right to claim as they do that Butler never specifically argues against that causal claim. Rather, his view seems in some way simply to assume that it is false. But I am inclined to think Butler is actually right in this matter. He hasn't, however, stated his case as well as he might have, and I propose to bring out the strengths in Butler's position more fully and/or intuitively than he himself does. The idea or conclusion quoted from Butler above embodies an insight that has eluded Sober and Wilson (and a lot of others including my earlier self), so let me expatiate on what I take that insight to be.

Astronauts have sometimes criticized the food that is provided for them in space. In particular, they have complained that what is squeezed out of a tube, even if it has beef or chicken flavor, doesn't allow for ordinary chewing, and their complaint suggests or more than suggests that we want more than flavor out of food, that we want to chew our food. We are not just accustomed to chewing but like to chew and miss chewing when we can't do it. (There are all kinds of things we are accustomed to but don't at all miss when they no longer occur.) All this would mean that chewing and the fact that it is food that is being chewed has an importance for us independently of flavor, that we want to be in a certain (variable but ongoing) relation to food and have less pleasure when this isn't occurring. And don't say that this merely shows that we want the pleasure of chewing, not the chewing itself. That is no more plausible or forceful as an objection than the idea that when we seek knowledge, it is the pleasure of knowing rather than the knowing that is our primary goal. We have already seen what is wrong with that idea and Butler presumably sees that it would be a mistake to make a similar objection to what he says about our desires for external things like food. The desire to chew food (which Butler never mentions) is a desire for an external thing not based on any hedonistic desire for pleasure even if the chewing brings pleasure; and though I don't want to consider Butler's very general claim, as expressed above, about

[2] See their *Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 276–281.

what we always want, that claim is nicely and persuasively illustrated in the instance of food and the pleasure of eating (and chewing). Moreover, eating comes as close as it is possible to come to a desire that is purely egoistic, so if even here there is something other than egoism operating in our minds, the case for universal psychological egoism will be undermined on what is normally considered its most favorable terrain.

However, I have not yet directly addressed the issue of egoism with respect to the particular example of eating and chewing. I have supported Butler in his contention that we are after more than pleasure in such instances, but this only undercuts hedonism, and there are forms of egoism that are compatible with the denial of hedonism: forms, for example, that specify other things than pleasure as basically good for us and that claim that we are (ultimately) always and only seeking one or another kind of thing that is good for us. In fact, Butler doesn't seem to regard his refutation of hedonism as likewise a refutation of psychological egoism, but I think that in fact it is or leads to both of these things. To treat food and the chewing of it as important is to treat something outside ourselves as important to us. We may want the pleasure of eating and that is certainly internal to us and allows for an egoistic motivational interpretation. But if we also want food because only with food can we have the pleasure of chewing the food, then we are well on our way to the denial of egoism.

Now someone might object that as I have just put the matter, the desire for food is a desire for a certain internal pleasure, the pleasure of chewing it; and this might be taken to mean that we still have no objection here and at the core of supposedly egoistic motivation to the general thesis of egoism. But it all depends, in fact, on *how we understand or explain the pleasure of chewing*. Certain tastes, like the taste of pretzels or of ice cream, are inherently pleasurable to most of us. These things taste good, but chewing doesn't provide its own distinctive good taste or tastes. Instead, it is the *act* of chewing (food) that gives us pleasure, rather than some pleasure like a good taste that we can independently associate with chewing. We get pleasure from chewing rather than chewing in order to attain some independently specifiable good. The analogy with the pleasure one gets from satisfying curiosity or helping others seems strong enough to suggest, therefore, that the desire for food and for chewing food (and this is just one prime example) are not so much desires for some state of oneself as desires to be in a certain intrinsically valued relation to something outside oneself. Butler may not have seen that the desire to eat solid food is not purely egoistic, but he did see that we have desires for external things at

least somewhat independently of (that are not entirely based in) our desires for pleasure, and this insight leads in the way indicated in our arguments here toward the conclusion that psychological egoism is false and false in regard to that area of human life, the appetites, that is traditionally thought to provide the paradigm of egoistic motivation.

We can go further. We have already seen that curiosity and exploration in its name are not egoistic because they place an importance on something outside the self. Well, it seems to me that the desire to chew is somewhat akin to curiosity and the desire to explore. The example may be mundane or prosaic, but when we chew, we are in effect exploring the insides of the food we are eating, and I don't think that the connection is purely accidental or gratuitous. When we eat we are finding out, for example, about the consistency of some item of food we are taking into our mouth, and I think it makes a certain sense to suppose that when the astronauts (explorers that they are) complain about being unable to chew, they aren't just complaining because they aren't accustomed to the kind of eating they must do in space. There is a certain *relation* to their food that is absent in space and that they miss having, even if what they are given through a tube is full of flavor. This gives normal food itself a certain intrinsic importance for them, and I think that importance at least partly relates to (a perhaps prosaic kind of) non-egoistic curiosity and a non-egoistic desire to explore that are, after all, qualities we paradigmatically associate with astronauts.

What has just been said about eating can be said perhaps more forcefully about other examples of supposedly egoistic activities and pleasures, *and perhaps some readers will need to brace themselves before reading what I say next.* Making love brings its distinctive pleasures, but fellatio and cunnilingus are enjoyable in part because they allow of a certain non-egoistic exploration of and new forms of acquaintance with the male or female genitals and with a human body more generally.[3] The list could go on, but

[3] According to Kant in his *Lectures on Ethics* (and many others), sexual desire is just a matter of egoistically wanting to use another's body for purposes of one's own pleasure. But following up on what Butler says about wanting things in the world, it seems to me that sexual desire involves much more than that. For purposes of comparison, let's consider the desire for revenge. That desire pays a certain unwitting compliment to the person one wants to take revenge on, treats them as important to one in a way the revenge taker might find it embarrassing to have to acknowledge; and such attributed importance to something outside of oneself takes us beyond sheer egoism. I think sexual attraction pays a similar compliment to another person's body (as suffused by their personality). It treats their (beautiful or mysterious) looks or the (graceful or sensuous) way they move as important to one in a way that

what we have been seeing here is how neutral motivation not only has a wide variety of instances in ordinary life, but also invades or pervades areas that are normally considered purely egoistic. And talk of variety in fact understates the matter. When you consider that the desire for love/esteem, curiosity, the desire for competence/mastery, the desire for revenge, the desire to belong, the desire to be around others, and the desire to be like others are all neutral, you can see that neutral motivation *pervades* all our lives.[4] Psychological egoism is true of far less human motivation than even

makes one want to take one's sexual pleasure with them and not, say, with someone one is less attracted to. Indeed, the attraction makes it easier to obtain greater pleasure with that particular person and so involves more than the sheer egoistic desire for pleasure. One doesn't want their body or find it attractive because (one thinks) it will be easier to get pleasure with it, but rather it is easier to get pleasure with that body (and that person) because one wants and is attracted to it (and them). This is parallel with what we find with compassion. The compassionate person gets pleasure from helping those in need because they want to help them, rather than helping them because they want to obtain the pleasure of doing so; and this gives us a basis for arguing that compassion is non-egoistic. We have just seen that the same distinction holds for sexual attraction and therefore indicates that sexual desire/appetite involves a substantially non-egoistic aspect or component. (I'll bet Butler knew all of this, but, given his role in the Anglican Church and the times he lived in, couldn't say it directly, having to confine his discussion to the vaguer idea of wanting "*external things themselves*.") Now what I have just said about sexual appetite and attraction goes beyond the ideas about non-egoistic *sexual exploration* that were defended in the main text, but I cannot forbear mentioning here, finally, that what I said above about sex and the desire to explore is anticipated in a non-philosophical way in John Donne's poem "To His Mistress Going to Bed." In it he speaks tenderly of her beauty and then apostrophizes it with the words "O my America! My new-found-land…."

[4] Neutral motivation attributes intrinsic importance (though not necessarily positive value) to things and/or people outside ourselves, and this is also true of altruistic motivation and, to a surprising extent, of our appetites. But this may mean that bringing things and people outside ourselves into our lives and doing so for non-egoistic reasons is what is most characteristic of human life considered as a whole. (For a full-scale discussion, see my *Human Development and Human Life*, Springerbriefs, 2016, Chap. 3.) This is a highly abstract overall characterization of human life or lives, and I have had colleagues wonder about whether doing this sort of thing is really philosophy. But Aristotle, Hobbes, Heidegger, and Sartre all sought in their different ways to characterize human life on the whole, and even if analytic philosophers haven't gone in for this sort of thing, it is still a long-standing enterprise within philosophy. I have just been trying to do the same thing as these others but on a basis that takes more account of what psychology as a discipline has recently taught us than, obviously, these other philosophers were able to do. I therefore hope that the broad picture of human life I have just (so briefly) described here is more realistic and accurate than what others have suggested in the past. Finally, let me suggest that our pervasive human tendency to reach out to things beyond ourselves and bring them into our lives may be further characterizable in terms of yin and yang. But exploring this possibility will have to wait for another occasion.

defenders of altruism (like Butler, but also like Sober and Wilson) have recognized. (Sober and Wilson's criterion of egoistic motivation commits them to treating curiosity about the moon as egoistic.) We now need to see how these presumed facts bear on the possibility of totally egoistic people.

3

How *does* what we have been saying relate to the possibility of total psychological egoism on the part of some or many individuals? Well, the plethora of neutral motives raises questions about such a possibility that could not or would not be raised if we ignored or were ignorant of them. If the issue is just psychological egoism vs. psychological altruism (and Maslow seems to have seen things that way even if Butler clearly did not), then since altruism is somewhat infrequently attributable to human motives, one might well think that if there were a few more bad eggs among humanity, everyone would just be totally egoistic. It is much much more difficult to speculate in that direction if the thesis of possible egoism requires one to assume that a whole range of actual human motives, the neutral ones, would have to be otherwise if psychological egoism were to be realized as a possibility (either for one person or for people more generally). But let me now be more specific. Are there neutral motives that cannot fail to exist among human beings? If there are, then psychological egoism will be impossible for us and perhaps for any possible intelligent beings. But what do I have in mind here?

Well, a world of egoists or a single egoist requires the absence of any need/desire to belong, any desire to be loved or esteemed, any desire to be like or be with others, any desire for sheer competence, any desire to chew food rather than simply experience its flavor (or taste?). Such a world would be very different from our own, and it is difficult to believe that a race of humans or other creatures could have evolved in the absence of all such neutral motives. The cohesiveness of society depends on such motives and it doesn't seem possible for evolution to occur independently of social groupings. But still perhaps single individuals could exist in the absence of the above neutral motives even if the societies or groups they are part of or come from could not.

However, I don't actually think this would be possible. In my list of neutral motives above I omitted the neutral motive of inquisitiveness/curiosity, and I did that for a reason. I don't think societies or given individuals can

exist without that motive, and if that is so, then total egoism is impossible both at the social (or species) level and at the individual level. But why should curiosity be so necessary? Why is intelligent human life unthinkable without the presence of curiosity? This requires some explaining.

The best way to approach this issue involves us in paying attention to the phenomenon of paying attention, involves us in focusing on the phenomenon of focusing. Sometimes when we focus on or pay attention to some object or event, we do so for instrumental, means-end reasons. We are looking for a scissors and are told there is one in the right hand corner of the kitchen counter, so we focus our attention on that right hand corner and, if our information is correct, find the scissors we need. But much more frequently we pay attention and/or focus without having some specific ulterior purpose for or in doing so. We hear a small noise to our left and focus our attention, our eyes in particular, in that direction because we are curious as to what made the noise. This kind of attention or focusing is going on practically all the time in any human being of almost any age. Neonates may not focus in this way, but maturational processes fairly quickly lead to such focusing, and for the very young and for adults this kind of focusing or paying attention is a mark of curiosity. Of course, when I pay (more) attention to a color that flashes across my field of vision, my paying of attention, my focusing on the color, say, is something that happens fairly automatically. And I may not know or at least think that I am paying attention or focusing, but still it is natural and colloquial to speak in this connection of the/an act of focusing or paying attention because at whatever level of non-self-consciousness, the focusing is something we want and choose to do.

This sort of thing is going on all the time: for example, I want to know what is happening over there to my left and I focus in that direction. And this wanting to know is in such frequent or constant instances a form of curiosity, a motive or motivation that is leading us to focus and pay attention in all kinds of ways all the time (not, of course, at *every* waking instant or while we are sleeping or going to sleep). We normally think of curiosity as a motive that leads us to find out specific things about specific areas of our environment or about facts of history, geography, or astronomy; and such curiosity is typically self-aware and expressed or manifested in very conscious and deliberate actions: like subscribing to or reading *National Geographic*. But my point is that the less self-conscious kind of attention paying is happening all the time and

manifests our curiosity just as much but also much more deeply than what we do when we read an article about ancient Egypt or about modern Borneo.

If we didn't have a kind of basic and non-instrumental focusing curiosity, we would learn much less, perhaps very little, about the world. In the absence of focus and attention, the world would remain a blur, a "blooming, buzzing confusion" (in William James's famous words). And ordinary life would be impossible for us because ordinary life requires us to know all kinds of things that can be known only by focusing and/or paying attention and by doing so independently of specific instrumental purposes beyond the desire to know. Similar points also hold for one item on our original list of neutral motives (as given just above), the desire for competence. A baby is not going to learn about the world or learn to make their way successfully in their childhood world without some primal curiosity, but by the same token they won't be able to do what they need to do unless they have a desire for competence or mastery, a desire, for example and as I mentioned earlier, to eat on their own. The young child doesn't reason "my mother isn't going to feed me indefinitely so I had better learn to eat on my own if I want to survive and do well." And even if they did, that wouldn't lead them, as happens is most cases, to want to master eating on their own before their mother or care-giver *shows any sign* of wanting the child to do things on their own. No, the desire for competence is intrinsic to children rather than a matter of instrumental thinking. So more generally a child is not going to learn about the world or learn to make their way in the world without some primal curiosity and some primal desire for competence or mastery in the/their world, and these motivational tendencies need to continue in some force into later life if an individual is to meet their life's later instrumental/practical and epistemic challenges. Since both curiosity and the desire for competence are non-egoistic neutral motives, we can see that individuals cannot survive or thrive on egoistic motives (as it were, on bread) alone; and that is my reason for saying that psychological egoism is actually impossible for any individual. The psychopathic egoist actually needs to have some neutral motivation in order to survive and thrive in the world and in that case is *not* a psychological egoist. This gives the sense, adumbrated by the title of this chapter, in which egoism is impossible.

Moreover, and quite obviously, if all this is so then it makes no sense to try to argue some supposed (total) egoist out of their egoistic motivation. There is no such possible person to make that argument *to*. But still there are such things as egoistic motives, even if total egoism is impossible, and some people not only are more egoistically motivated than others but also

are led by such motivation to do immoral things that others would not do. Doesn't it at least make sense to try to show such people that they would likely be better off if they were *less* egoistic, and if it does, isn't the main purpose of a book like the *Republic* or of articles on why we should be moral preserved as meaningful and worth pursuing? I don't necessarily think so.

The idea that one can persuade someone via argument to change their motivational ways is fraught with conceptual peril and let me say some things about this. The idea that such persuasion can be successful means that some largely egoistical people will change in motivation as a result of hearing/reading and being persuaded by certain arguments against egoism. But those arguments are typically of one of two kinds (sometimes these are combined). They either seek to show that egoism doesn't pay in self-interested terms or they seek to show that egoism fails of some other purpose that most people have, for example, the desire to be self-consistent or to be justified in one's behavior/actions. In the latter case one might try to persuade some egoist that although their egoism was mainly to their advantage, it left them self-inconsistent and subject to a charge of irrationality in a way they would be embarrassed to have to acknowledge. Or one might argue that their egoism simply left them unjustified in many of their actions and thereby subject to a charge of irrationality that they would not wish to be subject to. Let's examine these last two possibilities, starting with the idea of self-inconsistency.

It might be thought in particular that Kant's criticisms of immorality and egoism can draw on the idea that immoralists are self-inconsistent in order to offer an argument that might or ought to persuade immoral egoists to think and act differently. But that would be a mistake. Many people interpret Kant as saying that immorality involves a kind of inconsistency, but Kant never says that there is any inconsistency in (the will of) immoral people whose maxims of action don't accord with the Categorical Imperative. Rather, he says that if the maxim of one's action is to be morally acceptable, then willing it to be a universal law must be consistent with the having of that maxim. For example, it is immoral to be unwilling to help others in need because someone whose maxim involves such unwillingness cannot in all consistency *at the same time also will that his maxim should be a universal law governing how people act*. What is inconsistent for Kant, therefore, is not the will of an immoralist, but the combination of such a will with their willing the maxim of their will to become a universal law. So Kantian means cannot so readily be used to persuade

the immoralist that they are inconsistent in their willing in a way that they would not want to be. Even granting that people want to think of themselves as not irrationally inconsistent, the Kantian argument doesn't effectively work against egoism in the terms just indicated.

This still leaves open the possibility that one might show the egoist that they are irrational in some other way, irrational, for example, because they are in some sense not justified in acting immorally. But even if one wants to be and think of oneself as being justified in one's actions, an argument against the immoralist might well fail of its purpose if it merely showed them that their actions are often unjustified. If it were still maintained that their actions served their egoistic interests better than always acting morally would, they might prefer to be unjustified all the way to the bank rather than become justified at the cost of giving up some of their happiness-enhancing egoistic interests or desires. The matter is a delicate one, but our way of stating it might convince us that it is best to confront the egoist "head on." Rather than try to show them that they are irrational or unjustified, one might try to show them that their irrationality or lack of justification doesn't pay off in the egoistic terms—and we are thinking of people with a lot of egoistic motivation—that are obviously so important to them as the egoists that they are. Cutting to the chase in this way brings us back to the line of anti-egoism one finds in Plato and in the writings of many other subsequent philosophers stretching from his time to the present.

However, if we move in this direction, we have to face up to a major problem that was already discussed in Chap. 3. Motivational change is not an easy thing for or in a human being, and motivations, like beliefs, are typically beyond our ability to control them. If someone offers me a million dollars if I can believe, really believe, that there is no such place as Chicago, then I am not going to be able to collect on that offer even if I know and believe that it will be to my advantage if I can somehow come to believe there is no such place as Chicago. Belief isn't subject to our will in such cases and issues of egoistic benefit don't affect that fact. But all this is true not only of beliefs but also of emotions. If I am offered a million dollars if I can start loving, really loving, Charles Manson, then, again, I am not going to be able to collect.

Well, being moral and being egoistic are also matters of motivation, and Chap. 3 pointed out how problematic it would be to suppose that one could make someone morally virtuous if one could persuade them that they would be better off or happier if they were virtuous. Even if one were persuaded of this and, as a relatively egoistic person, wanted to become

moral or more moral, the way forward with such a desire is totally unclear. Knowing or believing that one will be better off in self-interested terms if one is (more) virtuous, how does the selfish person, the relatively egoistic person, turn that desire into a reality? What can they do to make themselves into the kind of person they now, as a result of a philosophical argument, want to be? There are no pills one can take to transform one into a moral or caring person, and, as Chap. 3 mentioned, the idea of simply imitating some acknowledged moral exemplar doesn't indicate any sure or even likely path toward motivationally resembling that person. The desire to imitate and to become moral might motivate one's imitation of the actions of the virtuous person, but that motivation is very different from the motivation of the person one is imitating, a person who isn't trying via imitation to become moral but already is moral, a person who has characteristically caring motivations that we are assuming are now absent in the person who wants on egoistic grounds to become moral. The so-called law of exercise (spoken of in Chap. 3) might allow us to explain such a motivational change, but psychologists have been very reluctant to accept that law, and I am inclined to conclude, therefore, that philosophical arguments are not going to be very helping toward converting the largely egoistic person into a virtuous person, even arguments appealing to their desire for their own good. Chapter 3 noted ways in which motivational change *can* be brought about in people, ways in which people can be made or led to be more caring or, more generally, virtuous, but none of those ways involved the giving of a philosophical argument, and I am inclined to conclude that the attempt to persuade the largely egoistic individual to mend their ways is a lost cause. It may be true and true for the reasons offered in Chap. 6 that being totally immoral involves not being contented or happy in or with one's life. But this doesn't translate into any ability to effect moral change that philosophical argument would distinctively and helpfully possess.

One might think that there is some consolation here in the fact that at least there are no total egoists needing conversion to morality, but that would be a mistake. There are no total egoists because everyone, even the totally immoral moral monster, needs neutral motives like curiosity and the desire for competence, but those very motives ensure that the malicious person will develop the skills necessary to deliver on their malicious intentions. If anything, the fact that moral monsters are likely to have the skills that enable them to do great harm to others gives one all the more reason to wish that there was some way of philosophically persuading

them to change. And this is all the more true, perhaps, because psychologists generally think there is no other less intellectual or therapeutic way to change such people for the morally better. So the fact that egoism is impossible and the reasons that lie behind that impossibility give no encouragement in the end to the philosophical enterprise of Plato's *Republic* and to other such efforts. We cannot change the totally immoral, cannot persuade them via philosophical arguments to become or be virtuous, and the only consolation we actually have, therefore, is the consolation, the bitter and perhaps mean-spirited consolation that we have described in Chap. 6: the consolation that the totally and unconvertible immoral are likely to have much less good lives than (we) ordinary people have.

But we need to move on. All the chapters of this book have mentioned and discussed important ways in which attention to psychological issues can help us to a better understanding of important philosophical issues. But one can draw out significant further implications of our previous discussion(s) for the connection between psychology and philosophy, and I want to do that in our next chapter.

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CHAPTER 8

Further Connections

Our previous chapters have drawn numerous connections between psychology and philosophy. They have in a variety of ways made use of psychological ideas to illuminate (I hope) a number of important philosophical issues or questions. In this chapter I would like to draw out some further implications of what was said in previous chapters. I will refer to particular chapters and in the case of each chapter I refer to I will attempt to make further connections between philosophy and psychology based on what the given chapter has already said on that topic. The further connections will in many cases, however, be far from obvious, and that is the main reason, apart from the value of the connections in intellectual terms, for being specific and explicit here about those further connections. I will start with Chap. 2 and then move on to later chapters.

1

In this first section I want to talk about some further implications of Chap. 2 and then go on to connect those implications with further implications that derive from our previous chapter (Chap. 7). Chapter 2 focused on human psychology and argued that the Chinese ideas of yin and yang, interpreted in one way that these ideas of been understood within Chinese tradition, can help us understand not only why that psychology is based in a heart-mind or xin rather than in what Westerners call the or a mind, but

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also help us to explain how sentimental virtues like compassion and benevolence work as moral virtues. Compassion, as we saw, has yin and yang aspects, and the way these necessarily work together constitutes the virtuousness or moral goodness of compassion.

I would like here to say more about the yin-yang implications of what was said in Chap. 2, but before I do that, I would like to draw some links between what Chap. 2 said about the heart-mind and larger issues of ethics that take us beyond individual moral sentiments like compassion and benevolence. The argument against mind and in favor of heart-mind was based on an attempt to show that emotion is necessarily involved in all psychological functioning; and Chap. 2 pointed out that this conclusion, if plausible, undercuts the whole idea of pure reason. And it is not just Kant but contemporary analytic philosophers too who believe that reason in the form of rational belief and rational action doesn't require emotion. All this, I have argued, is a huge mistake, one that has skewed or biased Western thought in a way that hasn't been true of Chinese philosophy. But the implications of what was said in Chap. 2 for ethics as a whole were not fully drawn out or even described in Chap. 2, and I want to do some of that now.

If there is no such thing as pure reason, if all rationality involves emotion, then ethical rationalism in particular is not, or is no longer, a viable project. We are left with some form of sentimentalism as the only game in town, and this will or would be a surprising conclusion not just for ethical rationalists in the analytic tradition (people like Thomas Nagel, Derek Parfit, and T. M. Scanlon), but also for analytic philosophers generally. I remember how startled and derisive a job candidate at the University of Maryland once was when, in answering his query as to my own interests as an ethicist, I told him I was interested in justice and emotion. That was certainly not a tactful reaction for someone to manifest toward what someone interviewing him for a job (I was in fact the department chair) was telling him, but it indicated a deep truth. The idea of a deep connection between justice and emotion has seemed or would seem too strange and even wild to analytic philosophers, but what was said in Chap. 2 of this book might hopefully and eventually counter such a reaction. Among analytic philosophers justice is itself typically regarded as having a rational basis, so if it turns out that reason is based in emotion, the idea that justice in society is a matter of emotion or emotional dispositions between and among the different members of a society will no longer be or seem be far-fetched. Emotion grounds and pervades not only individual moral sentiments like

benevolence, but also larger-scale ethical issues including, most notably, questions about social justice. I have spelled out a sentimentalist theory of justice and of other central moral concepts in my book *Moral Sentimentalism* (OUP, 2010), and Appendix B will have a good deal to tell us in particular about sentimentally understood social justice and human rights. But for the moment suffice it to say that our present Chap. 2 *all on its own* tells us why emotion has to be regarded as basic within the entire sphere of ethics.[1]

Chapter 2, of course, also made great use of yin and yang to understand certain important aspects of what we are now calling the heart-mind, or xin. But I would like now to show you how yin and yang can help us understand human psychology or xin in a more general or overall way. Yin and yang illustrate or illuminate the emotion character of all psychological functioning or functionality, and Chap. 2 made this point very explicitly. But yin and yang can tell us more than Chap. 2 told us about what a xin necessarily *is*. Chapter 2 made much of the (argued for) fact that belief and desire are the basic (emotional) building blocks of our functioning xin, and it sought to show that both belief and desire can be analyzed in yin-yang terms. But I believe we are also in a position to make a further and stronger claim about yin and yang in relation to xin. I think we can say that belief is the yin and desire is the yang of the heart-mind or xin. How can

[1] It is worth noting the difference between what *Moral Sentimentalism* (MS) sought to accomplish and what Chap. 2 of the present book enables us to do. The former develops and defends a sentimentalist moral view that it claims is superior to any form of ethical rationalism, but it doesn't seek to refute rationalism directly or outright. The idea rather is that sentimentalism in a certain new incarnation is superior to ethical rationalism and offers us reason to reject rationalism on that basis. Chapter 2 of the present book, by contrast, offers a direct refutation of ethical rationalism. What follows, as I have said above, is that some form of sentimentalism (perhaps one at certain points appealing to practical reason(s) but recognizing that every form of reason is based on emotional elements) has to be the right way to understanding ethics. But no particular version of sentimentalism follows out of the present Chap. 2, so its discussion needs to be supplemented in a large way by a book like MS if one is to argue for the form of sentimentalism I favor, one based in empathy (as Hutcheson's and Mengzi's sentimentalisms are not) and ultimately leading toward a yin-yang basis for all morality. (Yes, even for social justice, but then it has to be shown how the unfamiliar idea of empathic caring demonstrated at the social/political/legal level can be modeled on the more familiar idea of individual empathic caring. Much of this occurs in Chap. 9 of MS, but for a somewhat fuller and updated discussion see the second appendix of this book.) Going further, Chap. 2 above then effectively shows us how the whole individual-social empathic value package can be grounded in yin and yang, and the conclusion of *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang* explains how abstractly understood and updated yin and yang are appropriate for the grounding of human values.

this be, though, if each of belief and desire (already) contains yin and yang elements in inextricable connection with each other?

Here we need to distinguish between belief and the concept of belief and between desire and the concept of desire. Beliefs and desires contain both yin and yang elements, but our concept of belief foregrounds the yin aspects of beliefs, and our concept of desire foregrounds the yang aspects of desires. For example, Chap. 2 argues that beliefs have to involve emotion and in particular involve a desire for (or favorable attitude toward) making use of the proposition believed for instrumental purposes as relevant desires arise or exist within one. To believe the cupboard is bare (in the eighteenth century) is to favor using the idea or proposition that it is bare in conjunction with any desire for food that may arise, thus leading one to go out in search of food if and when that desire arises. So belief involves desire and/or motivation, and we think of desire and motivation as yang and actively purposive; but when we invoke the concept of belief, when we speak of beliefs, we are mainly focusing on the receptive or yin side of beliefs, the side or aspect that takes in the world rather than acting on the world. Similarly, desires like thirst involve both a desire to drink and a sensitivity to a certain dehydrated and uncomfortable physical state of one's throat or body, but when we talk of thirst and think of it, as we often do, as a certain kind of desire to drink, the yang aspect of the desire is highlighted. We are thinking of it more as an active impulsion toward drinking and less as a mode of being receptive to the state of one's body. So the idea or concept of thirst as a desire to drink highlights or foregrounds the yang and purposively active side of that desire.

But if belief is the yin of xin and desire is the yang of xin and if belief and desire are the basic ingredients, so to speak, of a functioning xin, then we can also and most generally conclude that *the functioning heart-mind is a yin-yang thing or entity*. However, we are not yet finished with the yin-yang philosophical implications that arise out of the earlier discussions of this book. What was said in Chap. 7 about curiosity/inquisitiveness can help us to see the role yin-yang can play in understanding issues in epistemology.

Epistemology over the modern period in the West has flowed in two main streams: foundationalism and coherentism. Foundationalism as originating in Descartes maintains that our beliefs and our knowledge require firm epistemological foundations (in our immediate experience); and by contrast coherentism as originating mainly in Hegelian-type objective idealism tells us that foundations in the Cartesian sense are unnecessary to the

epistemic/theoretical justification of beliefs or supposed items of knowledge: a belief is justified if it coheres with the rest of one's beliefs and even if one has not provided and does not possess anything like epistemological foundations or bases for its acceptance. More recently, a new school of epistemological thought has arisen (or revived, because Aristotle's approach to theoretical knowledge has been the prime inspiration for this new school). The new school is called virtue epistemology, and it claims, roughly, that our beliefs are rational and justified to the extent they manifest epistemic/theoretical/cognitive virtues. Such virtues include open-mindedness, intellectual courage, carefulness in weighing evidence, and, one might add, intellectual curiosity—or just plain inquisitiveness. I want to show you or, more accurately, sketch for you a way in which the last of these epistemic virtues, inquisitiveness, can be seen to play a role in the rational/epistemic justification of many of our ordinary beliefs. We shall then see how this ties in with yin and yang. (What I shall be saying in summary is expounded at full length in Chap. 4 of my *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang*.)

Think about what is required in order for someone to have a justified specific belief about some object or event in the world. In order to know that the table in front of one is oblong, one has to pay attention—one can't just let impressions swim by in a "blooming, buzzing confusion." But as Chap. 7 sought to teach us, paying attention and focusing standardly express our curiosity to know about the world around us. So inquisitiveness and curiosity are part and parcel of the process whereby we come to learn about the world around us. In order to have justified beliefs about the world we need to have a certain amount of curiosity and our justification with regard to particular beliefs obviously requires particular instances or manifestations of such curiosity.

But curiosity is an active motive, and when one out of curiosity focuses on what is happening, for example, to one's left, the curiosity acts in a particular direction. This is obviously a yang characteristic within the mind or xin, an example of directed (subliminal or unself-conscious) purpose. So our curiosity can be considered a yang epistemic virtue because it is essential to and part of the process of justifying particular perceptual beliefs. Where, though, is the yin in all this? Well, if you think about it, it is already hiding in plain sight within the foregoing discussion. When one is curious about what is happening or exists to one's left and looks there, one may learn through one's sense perceptions and one's knowledge of the relevant concepts that there is an oblong table to one's left. One's learning this, one's coming to justifiably believe this, depends on curiosity

as expressed in focusing and paying closer attention, but it also depends on one's taking in what one's senses, and especially one's sense of vision, tell one about the object to one's left, and such perceptual and doxastic (belief-involving) taking in is a form of receptivity. We have previously identified yin with receptivity, and the epistemological receptivity involved in believing on the basis of what one's senses seem to indicate, what one's senses, as we say, tell us, is an epistemological virtue.

That virtue was already to some extent in evidence in what Chap. 2 said about the role of empathy in compassion. The compassionate person empathizes with the pain distress, say, of another person, and that empathy, if you think about it, is a way of being cognitively in touch with what the other is feeling. So receptive yin empathy has a cognitive or epistemic role we are already aware of. But I am saying now that yin receptivity is also involved in ordinary perceptual knowledge of objects in the world around us. It plays a role in our cognitive acquaintance with what others are feeling but also in what we learn or are justified in believing about the non-human world around us. Remember too what Chap. 5 says about the way empathy helps us to know objects or things beyond the minds or heart-minds of those we empathize with: we can know that bears are dangerous via receptive yin empathizing with our parents' fear of bears. So yin receptivity has a major role to play in the justification of beliefs both about other people and about the physical world around one, and the yang of actively focusing or paying attention in a directed way has a similar role to play in helping us to attain rational or justified beliefs about the world.

Moreover, in the process of learning about oblong tables and the like, the yin perceptual receptivity and yang curiosity are inseparable. If one isn't curious to know about the world and/or some particular thing in the world, then one isn't receptive to those things, and by the same token if one isn't cognitively yin receptive one isn't going to yang pay any real attention to anything. I could say more, but at this point I think it would be more interesting if we spoke of some of the other implications of our previous discussion in regard to the usefulness of psychology to our doing of philosophy

2

Chapter 3 criticized the assumption, made both East and West, that people can be primarily responsible for making themselves morally virtuous or morally vicious. I argued that our moral character depends much more on what we learn or receive from others than on what we deliberately and

effortfully do for or to ourselves. Empathy was brought in at various points to underscore this last point and/or to give instances where moral education can and does occur through the help or influence of others: modeling and inductive discipline were mentioned in this connection. But part or parts of moral development don't involve anything that would naturally be called moral education, and Chap. 3 didn't talk of these other ways that we can be empathically influenced toward being morally better people. In fact empathy plays a role in extra-educational or what we might better call pre-educational moral development, and let me begin by mentioning one important way that this can occur.

Sibling rivalry comes naturally to children, but some people and some thinkers disagree. They say that it is entirely natural for children to love their siblings and downplay any role that sibling rivalry plays in family life or the life of given individuals growing up in a family environment. But we know that siblings tend to love each other, and so sibling rivalry can't be the whole story of the relationships that exist among brothers and sisters. If we cannot otherwise explain how siblings come to love or already love one another, we may have to agree—and what a pleasure or relief it will be to be able to do so!—that siblings do instinctually come to love one another once they recognize and experience their (normal) relationship with their sibling or siblings. But I think we can in fact explain inter-sibling love and can do so in terms of empathy. Yes, sibling rivalry is a basic fact about family life: when a new baby is born, a previous only child will naturally resent all the attention they get, attention that presumably was previously heaped on themselves. Children want to be loved and the birth of a sibling can seem to threaten the quantity or quality of the love one has been receiving from parents. This occurs with first-born children when a second child is born, but, perhaps to a lesser extent because they are already used to having rivals, also occurs with children other than a first-born when later siblings are born.

All right, then, so there is such a thing as sibling rivalry, but there is a force that works against the negative feelings such rivalry embodies or gives rise to, and that force is empathy and most particularly empathy with the love one's parents bear to one's (new) sibling or siblings. If a father, as per Chap. 2, can be empathically infected by his daughter's enthusiasm for stamp collecting, a child can be empathically infected by their parents' love for some new or not new sibling. In effect, as we say, they identify with their parents' point of view on or attitude toward the sibling and ipso facto therefore feel some degree of love toward that sibling. Such an account of

the love of one's siblings makes sense and doesn't blink the fact of sibling rivalry the way accounts of sibling love that posit a fundamental instinct to love family members tend to do. And learning to love one's siblings in this way is arguably a form of moral development, even if it doesn't occur as part of any process that we would normally label moral *education*. But let us now consider how or whether any of this transposes to other sorts of morally desirable love within the family. Does it help us understand how a child loves or comes to love her or his mother?

I don't think so. Because there is no one more basic in most children's lives than their mother that can serve as the basis for an empathic transfer of love to the mother. This might work with a father, in which case we are saying that empathy with the mother's love of her spouse can yield love for the spouse in much the same way empathy with parental love for one's siblings can make one love the siblings. But love for the mother is plausibly seen as more primordial than that. In that case, once again, one might posit that love of one's mother comes instinctually to most children, but that assumption comes up hard against the fact that many children come to hate their parents. As we saw in Chap. 6, children who are abused by parental figures often come to resent and hate those figures and to displace that resentment and/or hatred later on onto people who resemble them. If there really is an instinct of loving one's parents or one's mother, one would expect it to be hardier than love of one's parents often is. (I realize that in saying this I am taking issue with traditional Chinese thinking about these matters: as with Mengzi's claim in the *Mencius* 7A15 that all children naturally love and continue to love their parents.) Parental abuse and mistreatment often entail that the child doesn't love their parents, and I think we would do best if we can come up with an explanation of that fact that also explains how love of one's parents can develop in the first place. Such an explanation to be most plausible must explain how love of one's parents can develop and how, with certain modes of treatment, a child can fail to develop a love of their parents. And I think such an explanation will make crucial use of the concept or phenomenon of empathy.

In accordance with what Chap. 7 told us about the basic need for love, we can assume that children have a very deep and strong need or desire to be loved by their parents. If the child isn't born with a love for (those they learn are) their parents, then the parental thwarting of the child's need for love will make the child angry or resentful toward their parent, and this anger and resentment will presumably be all the stronger if the parents actively abuse the child sexually, physically, or emotionally (rather than just

withholding love). Such resultant hatred will effectively block the path to loving one's parents, but when parents do show love toward their child (and do provide adequate material benefits to the child), empathy will help the child develop a love for their parents or their mother in particular. If the child empathically feels how much their mother, say, loves them, they will tend to reciprocate that love. But the tendency to reciprocate isn't a fact so much about empathy as about the tendency of the mind or xin to give back what it receives from outside.

If someone feels, empathically feels, that they are hated or viewed indifferently, they will tend in turn to feel hatred or at least indifference to those who have regarded them that way and have behaved toward them accordingly. Chapter 6 already makes this clear, but we can add that this reciprocity of feeling partly depends on empathy. Children empathically know when they are hated or viewed as objects of indifference; they can feel such attitudes as they come toward them from those around them. There is no reason to think things operate any differently when a child is the object of friendly or loving feelings/attitudes and relevant resultant actions. So the fact that a child is loved can explain, in terms of xin's tendency to operate in a reciprocal way, why the child loves back, why the child loves the mother or parents who love them. There is no need, therefore, to posit a basic instinct of loving one's parents in order to explain how and why children typically love their parents, and our same fundamental explanation also helps us understand how and why an abused child will typically return the negativity of attitude and action that they empathically feel in those around them—and thus fail to develop any love for those people, parents or otherwise. There is no reason, then, to posit a basic instinct of loving parents, but our ability to avoid doing so does depend on the assumption, which we have made much use of, that the mind or xin works in a reciprocal fashion.[2] We see evidence of this all

[2] It would be a mistake at this point (or any other) to say that we can explain the love of one's mother on the basis of the sheer fact of instinctual human empathy. There is evidence, to be sure, that well-loved children will start having compassionate empathy for people suffering or in trouble around them from a very early age (some studies indicate that this can happen when or even before a child is two years old). But empathic concern for someone in trouble lies far short of loving them, so we cannot explain the love of one's mother as due to maturationally developing empathy's simply focusing on the person who is most around one. Given how badly some children react to not being loved, we also cannot say that the love of one's mother can be explained in terms of one's sheer need for her love. The explanation offered in the main text above seems the best way forward. Of course, that explanation takes

around us but it would be nice if we could say more. The reciprocity is not a sheer function of empathy though empathy plays a role in its occurrence. Can anything more be said by way of helping us to understand this phenomenon?

In psychology there are terms "afferent" and "efferent" that refer, respectively, to what comes into the mind or xin and to what comes out of or leaves the mind or xin. Reciprocity as we have described it involves both efference and afference. The mother's love, say, comes into and is empathically registered in the child's xin or mind and the child then directs a similar love toward a mother outside his or her mind. In this case, there seems to be a *similarity* and almost an *equality* between what comes into the mind from a given source and what goes out of the mind in the direction of that original source. Does this remind you of anything?

Well, it reminds me of Newton's third law of motion, according to which for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. That law is supposed to hold for physical bodies and events, but one might wonder whether something similar governs human or other beings' psychology. What happens with the return of parental love by the child and with the return of parental indifference or worse by the child would then seem a

maternal love as a given, and one can wonder whether we can simply say that maternal love is an instinct. We can't say that if an instinct has to manifest itself in every instance, since we know some women don't feel love for their children. But instincts can be interfered with or fail to develop as a result of other factors, and I see no reason to deny that there is such a thing as a maternal (perhaps there is even a paternal) instinct. Mother crocodiles are very protective of their babies and provide them with water during their first weeks of life. Human mothers are similarly protective of their offspring and are also, of course, concerned with feeding them. We know that chemical changes in the body of a pregnant woman prepare her for such a role and those changes may graft onto her empathically loving feelings about her own previous family as based, presumably, on the factors I described in the main text above. (This means that if she is a psychopath incapable of empathy, she may not be able to genuinely love her child.) Phylogenetic evolution based on survival value can make ontogenetic sense of there being a typically automatic development of maternal feeling once a woman has given birth or before. And let me finally just make two points. First, maternal love seems implicitly to involve maternal esteem: the loved child is ipso facto viewed as *wonderful*. So maternal or parental love can simultaneously fulfill a child's desire for parental love and their desire for parental esteem. Second, the fact that children need love so much would suggest that when they get what they need, it us understandable that they should then feel gratitude for what they have been given. I think we can say that when the child feels the mother's love and reciprocates, the love that ensues arguably also constitutes a kind of gratitude for what they have received from her. I have assumed as much in the main text, and all of this ties in quite well with what was said about gratitude vis-à-vis thanking in Chap. 5.

kind of psychological instance of Newton's third law, with the outward-directed reaction of the child constituting, in the first place, a reaction *opposite* to what come into their mind (or xin) from the parent and with the reaction also being *equal* to what caused it inasmuch as it strongly resembles what caused it: love in the one case and some negative attitude in the other. I am inclined to think that an analogue of Newton's third law governs the relation between afferent and efferent phenomena, with the example of love and negative attitudes representing just one instance of its psychological application or instantiation.

Let me suggest that a further possible instance is already right under our nose. We have seen that empathy takes in the distress of others in a way that necessitates motivation to help—yin receptivity in that way being bound to yang directed purpose. But the example of pain distress mentioned in Chap. 2 not only illustrates yin and yang, but also exemplifies something like the kind of afferent-efferent relationship we have seen illustrated with attitudes of love and hatred. What empathy takes in, in the case I described, is another person's distress at the pain in their arm, which is equivalent, as we argued, to that other person's desiring to get rid of or diminish that pain. Well, and as we also saw, the empathy yields a corresponding compassionate motive/desire in the empathizer to get rid of that pain. What is taken in by way of motivation yields an outgoing motivation that matches the motivation that was empathically taken in. This too, then, seems like an example of Newton's third law as applying to afferent-efferent psychological phenomena, but there is no time for me here to explore this possibility further or to extend its application to further instances. What I have just been saying helps make sense of what happens when love for parents either develops or fails to develop in children and it also seems to work for central cases of compassion.

Going further, we might also say that the efferent-afferent phenomena of reciprocity can be subsumed under yin and yang. We already saw this with compassion in Chap. 2, but it seems to me that something similar can be said, for example, about the "pure" reciprocity that occurs when a child gratefully returns the love that their mother, say, has shown toward them. For a child not to love back shows or would show them to be empathically insensitive to all that their mother is showing and doing for them, and would be an example, therefore, of the absence of yang motivation/emotion necessarily involving the absence of yin receptivity. But by the same token, the child can't yang feel loving gratitude *toward* their mother if they don't yin receptively feel love *from* their mother, so we seem to have

another example here of yin and yang and in particular of yin and yang subsuming the psychological reciprocity we have been describing.[3] More needs to be said, but it is time we moved on to some related further points.

We spoke in Chap. 6 of the tendency of hatred or anger to displace itself from its original and perhaps appropriate target to other targets that are far less appropriate: as when a man who is angry with his boss comes home and kicks the dog or yells at his spouse. The good side of this tendency would involve love for others tending to displace itself from its original target to or toward others who may resemble the original object of the love. Love of one's parents or one's siblings might have some tendency to displace itself onto children or people who are outside one's family, and the possibility of loving people outside one's family will presumably be empathically reinforced (via the force of reciprocity) if and when such people take a liking to oneself. There is a lot of love and friendly feeling around in our society, but also a lot of hatred, distaste, and resentment, and I think empathy together with Newton-like afferent-efferent reciprocity can explain a lot of this.[4] If we think there is a moral obligation

[3] In Chap. 2 I spoke of two ways of thinking of yin and yang. One involves seeing them as mutually complementary and consistent, the other sees them as contraries and mutually opposed. I have chosen the former way of understanding yin-yang, but one might wonder whether this is compatible with invoking Newton's third law with regard to either physical or psychological phenomena. If one yang presses a rubber ball with one's fingers, the ball yin receives the pressure and yang presses back against the fingers, which in turn yin register or receive that back-pressure. The forces involved here move in opposite *directions* just as the third law says, but they are in no way mutually incompatible and rather exist in a certain kind of balance. The (aspect of the Chinese) tradition that sees yin and yang as contraries holds that they cannot fully exist at the same place and time—as when yin is viewed as softness, stillness, femaleness, acidity, or coldness and yang as hardness, activity, maleness, alkalinity, or warmth. But the opposite directionality of forces Newton speaks of involves forces that at one and the same time fully exist in a kind of balance, and this means that, understood in the yin-yang terms I have been employing, the yin of the ball's receiving pressure and the yang of its exerting pressure are fully realized at the same time and place. So although the forces we are speaking of work in opposite directions, their yin and yang are realized together at one and the same time and are as compatible as one could wish. The same points apply to yin-yang psychological afference and efference.

[4] Our love of one person tends not only to spread toward resembling others, but also to spread over the entire world. We say that everybody loves a lover, and I think that is in great part because someone in love tends to act and feel lovingly or warmly toward people generally, toward, as we say, the whole world. But hatred also tends to spread this way, and with some serial killers we can with some good reason say that they hate the whole world. In the Chinese tradition there is a difference of opinion as to whether human beings are basically good: with Mengzi holding that they are, Xunzi holding they are basically bad, and Kongzi

to care for or about others, such an obligation can be psychologically backed by the psychological tendencies we have described here and in earlier chapters, but that suggestion opens out onto wide topics and issues that are best left to another philosophical occasion. It is time for us here and now to consider what other chapters of this book can help us to see about the connection between psychological knowledge or speculation and important philosophical issues.

3

I am not going to speak here of the implications of Chap. 4 because what Chap. 4 says, rather briefly, about open-mindedness can and should be expanded in a very large way. I have devoted the first appendix of this book to what can be said beyond the limited discussion of Chap. 4 about the virtue of open-mindedness, and the reader will or can see that the great deal that can be said further about open-mindedness is both surprising and somewhat dispiriting. So instead of speaking here in this chapter about what I take to be the most important consequences of thinking further about issues raised (about open-mindedness) in Chap. 4, let me focus now on some implications of the discussion of Chap. 5.

Chapter 5 dealt with a lot of different topics relating to empathy: hence its title, "The Many Roles of Empathy." It devoted much of its time to speech act theory and how empathy can enrich our understanding of speech acts, and I want to begin now with some reviewing and then some

remaining neutral. Mengzi's view dominates within the subsequent Confucian tradition, and of course in the West there seems to be the opposite tendency, with religious Christianity holding that we are born sinful and Kant saying that human beings are basically infected with radical evil. (Judaism doesn't say this sort of thing, however.) I think that the fact that both hatred and love tend to spread or displace themselves is a reason not to say that human beings are basically good nor to say that they are basically evil. What confirms me in that Kongzian neutrality are two further psychological facts: on the positive side, the fact (as per footnote 2) that in the absence of any explicit moral teaching, even very young children are capable of empathic concern for people in trouble around them, but, on the negative side, the fact that young children are so self-centered that they can hurt another child but pay no attention to the pain they have caused unless an adult, using the method of inductive discipline described in Chap. 3, deliberately gets them to focus what they caused to happen. Notice too that Kongzian neutrality fits in quite well with the overall characterization or picture of human life briefly described in footnote 3 of Chap. 7. Both the morally negative motive of displaced vengefulness and positive motives like empathic concern illustrate the basic human tendency to take things or people outside themselves into their lives.

further implications of what was said there about speech acts. But Chap. 5 also had a number of things to say about moral concepts and moral knowledge as based in empathy, and after we say more about speech acts, I want to consider some further implications of Chap. 5 for our understanding of moral-psychological phenomena.

Chapter 5 pointed to a role empathy typically plays in getting the hearer of an assertion to share the confidence of the asserter in some proposition or idea they have asserted. It also talks about the fact that the asserter *wants* the hearer to share their confidence. But the main focus was on the way the hearer empathically takes in epistemic confidence rather than on the way, as it seems plausible to assume, that a hearer will also empathically take in the asserter's *desire* that the hearer become confident in what they are asserting. When someone asserts something to someone, they typically or frequently are assuring the person who hears them of what they are asserting, and the term "assure" already implies that they seek to convey (in both senses) confidence. But the hearer knows that asserting is a way of assuring hearers of something, that asserters want hearers to share their confidence, and when someone hear an assertion they naturally take in that desire in an empathic way. So then consider what happens when assertion has been successful from the standpoint of the asserter. The asserter will have empathically imparted their confidence to the hearer and that is what they wanted to do in making the assertion they made, but won't they also want to know whether their speech act has been successful in that way? Usually we assure someone of something because we want or need them to be confident of it for some purpose of our own, and the asserter will therefore to some degree be left on practical tenterhooks even if he has made the hearer confident, if he cannot determine whether he or she has succeeded in doing so.

However, it is often possible to see whether someone is or has been made confident of some fact, and sometimes, perhaps even often, such knowledge is conveyed via empathy. If empathy can tell us that someone wants our help or that, in negative cases, someone is unwilling to offer us any help, it can also tell us whether someone is confident about some matter, and this will be true in the case where someone has tried to make someone confident in the truth of some proposition but also, and more generally, about people's confidence in matters or issues we have not tried to influence them on. Imagine, then, that I have made you confident via your empathy with my confidence and am interested to see whether my attempt to make you confident, my assurance as to some matter, has been successful. Won't a speech act of assertion seem less than fully successful to

an asserter if they empathically register a lack of consequent confidence on the part of the hearer, and won't it seem more of a success, both to the asserter but also from the standpoint of someone evaluating the success of a given speech act in a more impartial way, if the asserter is able to empathically pick up or otherwise learn that the hearer has come to share their confidence or even their certitude about the proposition that they have asserted? And won't the empathy with the hearer in the most favorable instances make the original asserter be confident that their addressee has become confident. Indeed, because the hearer typically knows that the asserter wants to impart their confidence, the cooperative hearer may deliberately give the asserter some sign that they are now confident about what has been asserted. But this may not be necessary if the asserter can empathically recognize (and the hearer knows that they can recognize) that the hearer is now confident about what has been asserted.

All of this means that in the most felicitous instances of the speech act of assertion confidence doubles back toward and into the asserter. As Jane Statlander-Slote has pointed out to me, this can more accurately or fully be put as showing that in fully successful assertions the first-order confidence in some proposition spreads empathically to a hearer whose first-order confidence in what has been asserted then doubles back toward and to the asserter in the form of second-order confidence, confidence that the hearer addressee has acquired first-order confidence in what one has asserted. We can also say that in such cases there is a bidirectional empathic resonance between speaker and addressee, and I believe that we could show that similar resonances can occur with other speech acts and that they bind people together in socially significant ways.

However, before discussing the resonances that occur with other speech acts, let me first point to the implications of what we have just been saying about and with the notion of assuring. The fact that we in ordinary speech and in many or most contexts equate asserting with assuring indicates how widely it is believed that successful assertion conveys more than belief to the hearer or addressee. It also indicates, though more implicitly, our common belief that there is nothing linguistically or epistemically improper in this happening. But for this not to be improper, empathy must be able to justify and convey knowledge or justification about the world (and not just about people's psychological states) independently of rational inferences; and although we already drew that conclusion in Chap. 5, I hope it is reinforced by what I have been saying here about the way we ordinarily think and talk about assuring and assurance.

We have also just seen that empathy, which we already know can lead toward socially useful compassion and benevolence, helps cement social relationships via its connection with the speech act of assertion. Let us now see how that might work with other speech acts. (In what follows I shall both recapitulate and extend things I said in Chap. 5.)

In the case of thanking, for example, the person who thanks has registered the good will or good intentions of the other and offers thanks that gratefully express good will and good intentions toward the person who has done the favor. But then the person who is thanked will in the most felicitous cases thank the thanker in that minimal but significant way in which saying "you're welcome!" expresses minor gratitude, gratitude for the fact that the other person is grateful. There is a lot of mirroring going on in such cases, probably more than what occurs in the most felicitous cases of assertion. But the reciprocity of good intentions that successful thanking involves and the reciprocity of feelings of confidence that occurs in the most felicitous ordinary cases of assertion both seem capable of building a (small) sense of community or caring between a speaker and a hearer or addressee, and if (as I suggested or hinted at above) there are moral imperatives regarding the creation and maintenance of a sense of community among interacting individuals, then ordinary speech acts can play a moral role that we have for the most part been unaware of. It is often said that there is a moral imperative to be honest in what one says to others, but this doesn't tell us how moral community can be *strengthened* or how speech acts can *further the moral goals* of community. This is a dimension of speech acts that has not, to my knowledge, been previously explored, but because I think satisfying further exploration of this topic would probably require a very lengthy discussion, even an entire book, I shall drop this topic and move on now to some other implications of what was said in Chap. 5.

Chapter 5 spoke of the moral and metaethical importance of empathy from the sentimentalist point of view, and since Chap. 2 tells us that there cannot be such a thing as pure reason, moral sentimentalism is starting to seem more and more like the only game in town. In Chap. 5 I was fairly brief in discussing the metaethics of a present-day moral sentimentalism (my own version) that emphasizes empathy. Empathy with others that leads one to help them is first-order empathy, empathy with the suffering or distress of others, but there is also such a thing as second-order empathy, empathy with someone's empathy or lack of empathy, and in Chap. 5 I mentioned that my metaethical account of the meaning of moral terms,

as most completely spelled out in my book *Moral Sentimentalism* (MS), relies on (the concept of) second-order empathy. Chapter 5 sketched how being warmed by some agent's warmth toward some third party constitutes a kind of approval or ur-approval of that agent or her actions/attitude toward the third party and indicated that a feeling of chill at someone's unempathic attitude or actions constitutes disapproval or ur-disapproval of them. I then explained briefly that my semantic account of terms like "morally wrong" and "morally good" was based on this second-order kind of empathy.[5] But now and in the spirit of reviving at least briefly the

[5] When a child empathically takes in the empathy their parent has toward one of their siblings, this is empathy psychologically based on or in (another person's) empathy, but it is not the second-order empathy with empathy that my sentimentalist metaethics equates with (a primitive form of) approval and uses as the reference-fixing basis of our moral concepts/language. With second-order empathy so called, the object or focus of one's empathy is the other person's warmth or empathy toward some third party. But when one takes in one's parents' love, say, of one's little sister, one takes in their love (or altruistic concern) for that sister in a way that ensures one will love (be altruistically concerned about) her too. The little sister in that case has become the object or focus of one's empathic concern. By contrast, when one is warmed by someone's warmth toward a third party, one doesn't have to acquire that person's concern for or focus on the third party. One feels their warmth toward the third party without necessarily sharing their warm feelings toward the third party. In other words, the second-order empathy with empathy that I say constitutes ur-approval picks up on the empathic warmth of some agent without one's having to acquire any focus on the object of that agent's warm concern, without oneself being or having to be concerned about the welfare of that third party. It is like what is called pure contagion, as for example when one is in an angry crowd and picks up or is infected by the angry mood without knowing at all what the crowd is angry *about*. There is an important distinction that needs be made between empathy that is warmly concerned with the welfare of some person and empathy that contagiously registers just the warmth that an agent feels toward some third party and that doesn't necessarily/immediately involve any warm concern for the third party's welfare. It might seem ironic that it should be the latter kind of second-order and welfare-unconcerned empathy that on my view provides the reference-fixing basis for a concept of moral goodness that characterizes some agent *only if they have warm concern for (the welfare of) others*. That implication of my view might initially strike some readers as odd or problematic, but in that case they should consider the possibility that one cannot be contagiously warmed by someone's warmth toward a third party unless one is capable of empathy more generally or more basically. Yes, a child Claudia who sees her parent help some lame child might be empathically warmed by her parent's actions, and this might, I am arguing, be independent of Claudia's having any immediate concern for the other child and also, in fact, of Claudia's applying any explicit moral concepts in the given situation. But even so, this kind of empathy would be impossible if the child Claudia were incapable of herself feeling empathy for the suffering of others. To be warmed by what one's parent does one has to understand what one's parent is trying/wanting to do, but one cannot understand that unless one has some kind of idea of

spirit of East-West philosophical interaction that animates the early chapters of this book, let me mention an interesting difference between Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy.

Western ethical theory has been dominated by ethical rationalism, but Chinese philosophy never has been, and there are in fact no ethical rationalists in the Western sense anywhere in the history of Chinese thought. Chinese thought has tilted more toward sentimentalism, but in the light of that fact it will be surprising for some of you to hear that Chinese philosophy nowhere talks of feeling warmed by the warm-heartedness of other agents or of being chilled by the cold-heartedness of others. By contrast, at least Hume in the *Treatise* speaks of how we can be warmed by the warmth a friend who helps his friend displays in doing so, and that can make one wonder whether the total absence of such talk within the main texts of Chinese philosophy indicates that the Chinese have different moral concepts from ours. If my account of such concepts in terms of second-order empathic warmth and chill is accurate to Western thinking

what it is to be motivated the way one's parent is, and someone incapable of empathizing with another person's suffering, someone who never has experienced that kind of empathy, *will not understand what their empathic parent is trying to do*. First-order empathy is therefore ontogenetically presupposed by the second-order kind that fixes the reference of moral terms even if it doesn't have to occur when that second-order kind occurs. And I want to claim that this is, via the argument just given, a conceptual truth. (On this view a psychopath doesn't understand what empathic caring is—since they have presumably never experienced it.) So on the theory I am proposing there is a necessary connection between approval as a second-order phenomenon and first-order concern for others, and even if the connection is one of necessary (unidirectional) presupposition rather than a matter of necessary simultaneous co-instantiation, that sort of connection seems strong enough and deep enough to allow second-order empathy to play a role in our semantic understanding of concepts or terms like "morally good" that are instantiated only on the basis of someone's possessing first-order empathy. Incidentally, too, this theory of how approval occurs can be further supported by considering how naturally we tend to see the standpoint of a moral judge or (dis)approver as very different from the standpoint of the moral agent. That distinction can be explained if the approver of helping a third party doesn't have to be involved, as an agent, in wanting to help the third party. So the idea that in moral approval we are warmed by someone's beneficent actions toward some third party without having to be simultaneously interested in similarly benefiting that third party helps make sense of the common and intuitive philosophical distinction between the third-person standpoint of the moral judge and the first-person standpoint of the moral agent. What might at first seem implausible about the overall view I have defended ends up contributing to its moral-theoretical strength. For more on these distinctions, see my reply to Antti Kauppinen in *Philosophia* 45, 2017. (I am indebted here to discussion with Zhang Yan, whose queries made me clarify some distinctions I was already implicitly making.)

and if the Chinese never think in such terms, we might well wonder whether the Chinese terms for what we take to be moral concepts actually convey concepts quite different from our own.

However, this worry can be short-lived if and once one realizes that ordinary Chinese people frequently and comfortably speak of being chilled by someone's attitude toward some third party. And also of warmth in both its first-order and second-order incarnations. We must remember too that Western philosophers in their rationalism rarely if ever bring in warmth or coldness. (Even Hume, who speaks of warmth at warmth never invokes the parallel idea of chill at cold-heartedness.) But if ordinary folk are comfortable with such language and concepts, that may just show that in their eagerness to insist on the importance or prerogatives of reason, Western ethicists have simply ignored what is staring them or ordinary folk right in the face. So what was said in MS about the semantics of moral language may hold water even if Western rationalists don't or wouldn't agree with sentimentalist moral semantics and even if the Chinese, who have never really engaged in metaethics, don't mention the phenomena of chill and warmth in their philosophical works.

4

I have spoken of moral development in the present chapter and in various other chapters of this book (most notably Chaps. 3, 6, and 7). But moral development is part of overall human development, and I will like to conclude this chapter and this book by saying something about this larger issue. Philosophers usually don't occupy themselves with the idea of human development, but my book *Human Development and Human Life* (HDHL) does take up that issue and does so in a rather systematic way, and what I said there illustrates and I hope illuminates the possibilities of fruitful interaction between psychology and philosophy in a way that immediately bears on the principal topic of the present book. It seems fitting as a capstone, therefore, to a book like the present one to bring in, if only briefly, some of the ideas of HDHL as they illustrate how philosophy and psychology can work fruitfully work together.

The most influential work on human development has been done by Erik Erikson in *Childhood and Society* (Norton, 1950, 2nd edition, 1963) and a number of other books. Erikson spoke of a human life cycle divided into stages, with each stage representing a challenge of or to human development. The earliest stage, which is supposed to set the stage for all the

others, involves the issue of whether the child or baby is going to develop trust in the world around them. Later stages include issues about toilet training, about successfully navigating school life, and, most importantly as far as Erikson was concerned, about the kind of identity one will forge or attain as an adult. The attaining of an adult identify is often fraught with challenges and difficulties, and in that connection Erikson coined the now familiar term "identity crisis." But Erikson conceived adult identity in a very particular way, and here a bit of philosophy needs to come in as relevant to Erikson's views about what it is to have an identity.

Erikson originally spoke only of male identity and identity crises, and he treated identity formation as a precursor to developing long-term relationships with the other sex. He didn't really talk about homosexuality or transgenderism, and the long-term relationships he envisaged as occurring after identity is fixed or achieved were implicitly viewed as relationships with females. When people objected that he hadn't said anything about female identity formation, Erikson responded by claiming that female identity is different from male identity. Male identity is formed *before* a long-term or lifetime relationship with a female is entered into; female identity, by contrast, is formed by *entering* a long-term or lifetime relationship with a male.

Well, feminists were quick or fairly quick to respond to what they considered the sexism of this view of human development. Erikson treated women as lacking any capacity or need to have a career independently of their marriage, whereas such independence was assumed to be essential to acceptable or desirable male development. If it is morally wrong or unjust to deny women careers, then Erikson's view simply goes along with that injustice and can be faulted for having a psychologically distorted picture of women's capacities and aspirations, a picture distorted through the presence of objectionably sexist ethical views in Erikson's thinking about human development, human identity formation, and the human life cycle. We cannot perhaps totally evade the making of ethical commitments when we seek to offer a meaningful picture of the human life cycle and of human development. The word "cycle" and the word "development" both at least implicitly involve ideas of what is better and worse: it is better to develop than to fail to develop and the idea of a life cycle assumes that in later stages of a human life development ceases and there is a kind of regression to earlier development stages, as with the idea of a second childhood.

As a student of Erikson's thought I have long sought a way to reconcile his insightful notions of a life cycle and of an adult identity (though he rarely if ever uses the qualifier "adult") with feminist values, and the second chapter of my book HDHL sought to do precisely that. What I argued there was that both career and family relationships are or can be fundamental concerns for both men and women. One's adult identity then is the (possibly revisable) choice a man or woman eventually makes as to how much to emphasize career self-fulfillment and how to emphasis family or, more generally, close relationships in one's ongoing adult life. Some identities will emphasize one of these goals or interests more than or even to the exclusion of the other, but there is no sexism if one is allowing a male identity to involve being a stay-at-home husband and a female identity to involve a total involvement with career at the expense of long-term intimate or personal relationships.

In this case considerations of ethics and of feminist philosophy in particular interact or intersect with psychological considerations concerning human growth and development to allow us to theorize a conception of adult identity and of childhood development toward such an identity that cannot be accused of sexism and that seems at the same time psychologically realistic. The picture arrived at did leave out any account of identity and development as relevant to LGTBQ concerns, but I believe its rejection of sexism offers a clear blueprint for those who might want to talk about adult identity, human development, and the human life cycle in a way that takes in these other important life options. All in all, then, HDHL illustrates the possibilities of fruitful interaction between philosophy and psychology in way that the present book in a much larger way does too.

Finally, and with relevance to the three lectures at Nankai University that form the original basis for this book and that can be found in expanded form in the three chapters that follow the introduction here, let me mention an important connection between what we have just been saying about adult identities and yin-yang. In Chap. 2 we saw how yin-yang might help us understand the foundations of moral virtue, but I think what we have just been saying about adult identity can also receive yin-yang backing. A career-based identity can only succeed if the person is not only directedly active within their field but also open and receptive to the traditions of that field and to the ideas of their contemporaries: this is clearly an instance of yin-yang (and it is far from excluding creativity). Similarly, a stay-at-home father or mother can do well in their choice of adult identity only if they are both receptive to the needs of their children

and their household and also active in response to those needs. Again, a matter of yin-yang. I have written at some length about the connection between yin-yang and adult identities in Chap. 1 of *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang*, but it seems appropriate to conclude this chapter on the present note because it so clearly brings together the overall title theme of this book, the usefulness of psychology to philosophy, with the East-West theme of the three Nankai University lectures that were the propagating seed for the present volume. (For more on yin-yang ethics in relation to developmental psychology, see Appendix C of this book. There I speak about the connection between yin-yang adult identity and the having of a good life in a way that goes beyond anything in my previous work.)

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CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

Our previous chapter, Chap. 8, offered something like a conclusion to the previous chapters in the way it showed how the previous chapters can each be extended to further illustrate the importance of the connection between psychology and philosophy. But, of course, other philosophers have stressed such a connection inasmuch as they have brought cognitive psychology to bear on issues of epistemology, philosophy of mind, and even metaphysics. The present book uses psychology in a very different way or, perhaps one should say, it uses a very different kind of psychology, psychology as concerned with human emotion and human development moral and otherwise. One could say that the kind of psychology evident in these pages is a kind of humanistic psychology or that it is an instance of personality psychology, but call it what you will, it is and has been very different from the kind of psychology analytic philosophers tend to draw on for philosophical purposes.

In general, analytic philosophers are quite uncomfortable with too much digging around in or with emotion, and I expect many of them will or would be uncomfortable with the methods and many of the conclusions of the present study. The earliest chapters of this book bring together Chinese and Western philosophy in a way that sees more importance in Chinese thought than analytic philosophers have ever been willing to grant. (Except, of course, that my philosophical training was analytic and that training shows in the way I argue for my philosophical views.) But if

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analytic philosophers read and can somehow bring themselves to take seriously what I say in Chaps. 2 and 4 of this book, they may begin to recognize that they can learn from Chinese thought and that they can learn as philosophers from exploring phenomena like emotion and emotional empathy that have been given very little place in previous analytic philosophy. We are all living in a larger world today. There is and will be increasing pressure on analytic philosophers and Western philosophers more generally to pay attention to philosophical ideas coming from China. That sociological fact has to do with the political and economic realities of China's increasing power in the world. China now has the ability and the will to *fund* philosophical exchanges and conferences in a way that is increasingly unavailable in the West. There will be that sort of reason, then, for future philosophers East and West to pay more attention to Chinese thought than has been paid previously by analytic philosophers and by Westernizing Chinese philosophers. But there are abundant philosophical reasons as well. The arguments of the present book's Chap. 2 are intended, in part, to show skeptics about Chinese thought that such thought has in fact a great deal to teach philosophers. My *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang* and the now-completed extension of that work entitled *A Larger Yin-Yang Philosophy: From Mind to Cosmic Harmony* both seek to show this on a much larger scale. But the present book offers a substantial initial installment on such an effort of persuasion, and its multifaceted attempt to bring philosophy into connection with empathy-and-emotion-focused psychology will also, I hope, convince philosophers to pay more attention to this vivid and relatively rare way of bringing psychology and philosophy together.

Finally let me put aside this book's specific attempt to bring together psychology and philosophy and address in very general terms the question of how we should be doing philosophy in present-day circumstances. (I am indebted here to stimulating discussion with Zhang Hanzhou.) I have just said that the West needs to pay more attention to traditional Chinese philosophical ideas and concepts. But I would also like to say something directly and very pointedly to Chinese thinkers. Right now and over the recent past, Chinese philosophical thought has largely been divided between two groups: on the one hand, those who want to use Western models and techniques of philosophy rather than make any appeal to the traditions of Chinese philosophical thought in their doing of philosophy; on the other, those who think intellectual integrity and/or loyalty to Chinese tradition means avoiding all the Westernizing and all attempts at

contemporary philosophizing in favor of historical scholarship concerning the great Chinese philosophical classics. But the latter group ignore the fact that those great classics, for example, the works of Mengzi and Wang Yangming, actually do philosophy and don't limit themselves to or engage mainly in historical scholarship. The other, Westernizing group in effect abandon any attempt to revive or revitalize the Chinese philosophical tradition; they in effect give up on Chinese philosophy and cede the field to Western philosophy.

But if Mengzi and Wang Yangming were doing something worthwhile, then it makes sense to hold that it is worthwhile doing philosophy in the present age—unless one holds that all possible or relevant philosophical insight and understanding was exhausted by the earlier philosophizing. To think that we must limit ourselves to historical and comparative scholarship is to treat the earlier classics like sacred religious texts and to regard present-day thinkers as incapable of doing anything nearly as philosophically interesting or important as what the earlier thinkers did. Such self-reflecting pessimism seems totally unwarranted, a matter of mostly negative faith that denies the possibility of our being inspired by philosophers like Mengzi and Wang Yangming to produce comparable forward-looking work for our time. (This form of pessimism also, very implausibly, denies the relevance of our greater present-day knowledge of psychology to issues in philosophy.) On the other hand, those Chinese thinkers who don't think they should draw on Chinese traditions but rather look to the West for philosophical inspiration, also pessimistically give up on any attempt to revitalize their own traditional philosophizing and make it relevant to the present.

However, Chap. 2 of the present book and the two large books on yin and yang that I have written suggest a third path, a middle path between the two pessimistic extremes just described. Both extremes tell us in their different ways to give up on Chinese philosophy as philosophy, but my work indicates how much we can learn from traditional Chinese ideas and represents as a whole an argument for integrating Chinese and Western philosophy in a foundational way: that is, in a way that goes beyond historical scholarship and philosophical comparisons toward a real philosophy or mode of philosophizing that bridges Chinese and Western thought on a wide range of fundamental and current issues. I recommend this project to both Chinese and Western thinkers as a much better option than the alternative forms of pessimism embodied in the exclusive interest in Chinese historical scholarship and in the abandonment of China for

Western philosophical models that between them now predominate on the intellectual scene in China. It is time for a change.

If philosophers take up this project, then it will at one and the same time serve as a major corrective to Western thought and a revitalization of Chinese thought. If what I have said in this book and elsewhere is on the right track, then Western thought with its obsessive foundational emphasis on pure reason—an emphasis to be found in Plato, Kant, and the entrenched idea of "the mind" as separable from emotion—has gone philosophically far astray. The Chinese tradition offers a superior alternative if only the West will listen, and if the West does listen it will move, have to move, toward Chinese thought. If one accepts that, then one already recognizes the value of Chinese thought for today and for the future, and that fact, that point of view, will make it clear and obvious that there is a better alternative available to the opposed pessimisms that pervade current Chinese philosophical thinking. Both Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy need to be wrenched from their accustomed assumptions and brought together in a deeper, more synoptic, and more interesting way than either tradition has anticipated. I believe this constitutes an unprecedented opportunity not only for Chinese and Western thought but for philosophy itself.

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Appendix A: Philosophy's Dirty Secret: What Philosophy of Science and Virtue Epistemology Need to Learn About Human Irrationality

In this appendix I want to expand on some themes about open-mindedness that were briefly explored in Chap. 4. As we enlarge the area of our concern, we will also delve deeper into the psychology of open-mindedness in relation to general human nature. The result will be for many of us (philosophers) a most unwelcome negative picture of our psychology as knowers, but I believe the arguments to be given here point univocally and powerfully in that direction. We may have to learn to live with the negativity and pessimism—even while trying to do the best we can in the articles and books we write and publish.

I want to begin by letting you in on a dirty secret of our profession—and by our profession here, I mean in the first instance professional philosophy. But the secret also applies to science considered as a profession and to academic life generally, and the secret has to do with open-mindedness. Scientists, philosophers, and other academics are not particularly open-minded; in fact, we are on the whole quite closed-minded. That presumed fact or assumption has significant implications for how we understand the language of science and of philosophy. It also has important implications for virtue epistemology. Virtue epistemologists (like myself) have been too sanguine about human epistemic rationality in something like the way in which (situationists think that) virtue ethicists (like myself) are too sanguine or optimistic about the human capacity for virtue. But this won't undermine virtue epistemology—I shall argue that it should simply leave us sadder and wiser. We shall have to proceed by stages with these different developments.

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1

Let me begin by describing some views in the philosophy of science concerning the meaning of scientific terms. P. K. Feyerabend and Thomas Kuhn have famously argued (roughly) that as science grows, develops, and/or changes, new theories are accepted that are incommensurable with those they replace. (It will not be important for our purposes here for me to try to distinguish their views.) An older theory may use the same term or terms as a newer one, but the terms will in fact refer to different phenomena, even to different "worlds," and terms like "electricity" and "force" that have one meaning within a given set of scientific/theoretical assumptions no longer have that specific meaning when some new, replacement theory is adopted that still makes use of the terms in question.[1] In this connection, Kuhn emphasizes how difficult, if not impossible, it is for the advocates of a new theory to get the long-time adherents of some older view to change their minds and adopt the new theory. And the idea that the older and young scientists live in different scientific worlds might be thought to account for this. Such scientists are not likely to be philosophers of science, and as a result (one might think, but Kuhn and Feyerabend never explicitly say this) both the older and the younger scientists may not recognize the shift of meaning and reference that occurs or has occurred when a new theory keeps using some of the same terms as an older theory; and this may explain the confusion and failure to communicate, much less come to agreement, that characterizes the relationship between different theories and/or their adherents. (The problem would presumably be even worse if one were speaking of the adherents of some ancient theory, like Ptolemy's, in relation to much later theories like Einstein's.)

Now this way of viewing the history of science has not gone unopposed, far from it. Hilary Putnam has perhaps mounted the most serious and sustained critique of incommensurability views, and his arguments, which I am not going to repeat here, seem to me to have a great deal of force.[2] Putnam goes into some detail explaining how (he thinks) a term like "electricity" can keep its reference even when there are large shifts in

[1] See P. K. Feyerabend, *Against Method*, London: Verso, 1975/88; and Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962/1970. These ideas occur in many others of Kuhn's and Feyerabend's writings.

[2] See Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, esp. p. 114f.; also his "Explanation and Reference," in G. Pearce and P. Maynard, eds., *Conceptual Change*, Dordrecht: Reidel, 1973, pp. 199–221.

how scientists theorize and think about electricity. But there is one problem Putnam never addresses, and it is, in effect, the core problem, the core historical insight, that animates Kuhn's philosophy and also Feyerabend's: the fact of persisting disagreement among adherents of different scientific schools or traditions (of theorizing). If adherents of a new theory, a theory that eventually wins the day among scientists as an older generation dies out, are referring to the same phenomena as the older scientists were, if they weren't inhabiting different scientific worlds, and if, despite common terminology, they weren't making use of concepts that fail to fit one another, why should the young scientists have had such a hard or impossible time convincing the older scientists?

You can say (and there is some tendency at least in both Feyerabend and Kuhn to say) that newer scientific theories aren't more accurate, aren't closer to the truth, than the older theories, and that might explain why the older scientists aren't ever convinced, but then one wouldn't have explained why the newer scientists found it necessary to go in a new direction while the older ones did not. (Scientific anomaly and crisis would present themselves to both groups, surely.) Despite Kuhn and Feyerabend's skepticism about the idea of new scientific theories coming closer to the truth than earlier ones, this is not an idea that most of us nowadays are willing to relinquish. But if we are right not to relinquish it, then Putnam's views about the persistence of meaning and reference through changes of scientific perspective do in fact leave open the large question I raised above, the question of why older scientists so typically refuse to go along with what, we can (I hope) assume, are new scientific insights and real scientific progress.

I would like to offer my own answer to this question here. It is an answer that I believe has a great deal going for it intellectually, but, as you will see, it also raises problems for scientists, philosophers, academics and researchers generally, that ought to bother and perplex us. The problems will be more ethical or personal than purely theoretical, but they nonetheless, or perhaps for that very reason, will give us a good deal, as philosophers, to think about. I think the refusal of older scientists to go along with eventually-accepted new theories (and here, not being a historian of science myself, I am relying on what others have said about the history of scientific theories) can be attributed to a lack of open-mindedness, and I also think, and will say more about this below, that the same problem exists for philosophers or within philosophy as well. There is reason to treat open-mindedness as an epistemic virtue (with certain ethical and/or

personal implications), and so I am going to speculate that scientists, philosophers, and others are generally more closed-minded and epistemically irrational than we have ever imagined or admitted to ourselves. This will have implications for the debate between Putnam and those he criticizes.

2

I want to begin the discussion by talking about open-mindedness, by which I shall mean a certain openness to ideas that disagree with one's own and to ideas that are entirely new to one. This presumptive epistemic/cognitive virtue wasn't much spoken of by epistemologists till fairly recently. For all his talk of theoretical virtue and virtues, Aristotle didn't highlight open-mindedness and didn't himself show much theoretical open-mindedness in his writings. (Aristotle spoke of educated minds in the *Metaphysics*, but that is a somewhat different matter.) As I mentioned in Chap. 4 of this book, Aristotle's virtuous individual would always know they were right and didn't need to worry about or remain open and receptive to the ethical ideas or values of those who might disagree with them. And I think Aristotle himself was less respectful toward hedonism and atomism than he probably should have been.

During the modern period, epistemology was dominated by foundationalism and coherentism, but neither of these traditions emphasizes open-mindedness the way the newest large approach to epistemology does. That new approach is virtue epistemology, and (as I have already mentioned earlier in this book) virtue epistemology till now has come in two main flavors: responsibilism and reliabilism. The reliabilists conceive epistemic justification and knowledge as resulting from truth-reliable cognitive mechanisms, and they haven't emphasized open-mindedness nearly as much as responsibilists have. Responsibilists conceive epistemic virtue as related to and explicable in terms of moral or ethical virtue, and given the seeming connection between open-mindedness as a desirable cognitive trait and open-mindedness as a desirable ethical trait of individuals (we all get along better if we are open-minded about others' opinions and attitudes), you can see why they treat open-mindedness as an epistemic virtue.[3]

[3] Open-mindedness is especially emphasized in the work of the responsibilist Linda Zagzebski. See her *Virtues of the Mind: An Enquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, Part II.

However, despite the frequent mention of and emphasis on open-mindedness within much of the recent literature of virtue epistemology, one point seems to have been missed. No one has pointed out that open-mindedness toward those who disagree with one ideally involves a willingness and ability to see things from their point of view.[4] Since seeing things from the point of view of another is a form of empathy, we can also say that being completely open-minded calls on our capacities for and dispositions toward empathy. Now when I empathically take in the beliefs of others (as with my parents' political opinions when I was a child), that empathy has led me to believe something. But when we empathize with another person's point of view, we don't necessarily have to actually believe what they believe. An open-minded person can take in someone's opinion or point of view in a more tentative or experimental way than occurs when we, for example, find ourselves (as a result of a process that needn't be conscious) simply believing what our parents believe about politics or religion. What we next have to consider are the factors that make for more or less empathy and open-mindedness.

3

To believe something is to epistemically favor it for inclusion and use (e.g., deductively, inductively, or abductively) in one's theorizing about the nature of the world and also for practical purposes outside the theoretical, as when knowledge about the world gets us to take certain means to our ends, to the fulfillment of our desires. (All this was argued for in Chap. 2.) But just because we favor something epistemically doesn't mean we have to always continue doing so. Evidence that comes in can lead us in a new direction and can upend our earlier beliefs in favor (sic) of new ones, just as things can occur to change our attitudes toward friends or acquaintances. But even if an open-minded person is open to changing their beliefs, they aren't willing or even able to change them at the drop of a hat: if someone abruptly denies what we believe, we are likely to be annoyed or upset with the denier. (Surprise is also relevant here, but there is no need to go into the details.) By contrast, if someone approaches a given issue in a gingerly, respectful way, we may pay respectful and open-

[4] Or I should perhaps say that no one other than myself has pointed this out, but this occurred very recently. See my *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind*, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014, esp. pp. 14ff.

minded attention to what they say, even if they are arguing against something we believe. But this will depend on whether we are really open-minded (in a given area), and that will often, even most of the time, not be the case. Why so?

I think there are emotions that work against epistemic open-mindedness and that can help us explain why people are so typically closed-minded about all sort of matters. But it will be easier to make the case for this if we first talk a bit about moral emotion. It is a commonplace of folk psychology (borne out in the psychological literature on empathy) that anger and fear tend to interfere with empathy for the plight or needs of other people. I see a blind man hesitating to cross a busy street and my heart goes out to him. I empathize with his fearfulness and perhaps too with his evident desire to cross that street. But at that very moment a madman approaches me with knife raised in a threatening gesture toward me and I forget all about the blind man. His fear as empathically registered *in* myself is replaced by fear *for* myself and my life. Such fear can drive out or terminate/sharply diminish empathy with the plight of another, and anger can have a similar effect. If I empathize with the distress felt by another person I don't recognize, but then later do recognize the person as someone who has done great harm to my family or to me, the subsequent recognition will tend to undercut any empathically-based sympathy I initially have for the person in question. Anger makes empathy more difficult or less likely with the person one is angry with (and even more generally); and it thereby tends to interfere with or undercut the concern one has for some other person. So emotions (the same points would hold for disgust) make a difference to the kind of empathic concern for others we think of as *morally* good or praiseworthy, and I want now to show you that emotions can also make a difference to empathy as it relates to our epistemic capacity for open-mindedness.

Here, I am not just talking about cases, exactly parallel to those just mentioned, where fear or anger might interfere with the exercise of open-mindedness. If someone attacks me with a knife, I won't be able to concentrate on some just-raised intellectual issue that calls for open-minded consideration; if someone has harmed my family, I may simply be unwilling to listen to what they have to say. But in neither of these instances do we think that the person who feels the fear that leads to self-defense or the anger that makes them unwilling to listen to an enemy of the family has given signs of being closed-minded. In such circumstances it is perfectly consistent with open-mindedness that one should pay no empathic atten-

tion to what someone has claimed in contradiction to one's own views. But in other cases, emotion can show that one is lacking in intellectual empathy and that one is not really or fully open-minded (in a certain area of belief).

Consider first a non-epistemic case. A rumor is being spread about me and I want to prevent it from spreading further. The rumor may attribute to me some unsavory past action that I don't want people to think I have done, and I will have some fear that the rumor may spread further (and will feel dismay that it has already spread at all). But if something we desire is very important to us, we will tend to feel fear to the extent it is uncertain or unlikely that we will get what we want. (Of course, that fear will probably be mixed with hope, but let's concentrate on fear.)

Now reputation is in fact very important to us, and we are likely to feel considerable fear or anxiety if our reputation is threatened in a serious way. It has even been held that the esteem of other people is one of the most basic desires people have. As I mentioned earlier in this book, Abraham Maslow in his influential *Motivation and Personality* argued that the desire to be liked or loved and the desire to be esteemed are important to just about every human life, and this idea makes a lot of sense.[5] So I shall make use of it in what follows, and we can immediately see that it applies to the issue of academic/scientific closed-mindedness.

The fact that we tend to react with anger or upset when someone, out of the blue, attacks what we believe shows that we have, automatically have, something like an emotional investment in what we believe. (Presumably, the stronger the belief, the stronger such investment will be.) But scientists who cling to an older theory despite its problems, and who continue to do so even when some new theory emerges that solves those problems, show themselves to be even more deeply invested in the older theory than sheer belief, belief all on its own, necessitates. And the further emotional investment consists, I think, in their (concern for their) reputation. If the older view they contributed to has to be acknowledged to be mistaken, then the solidity and/or insightfulness of their contribution will be less than they and others initially thought it to be, and their reputation will suffer accordingly. No one wants this to happen and the fear that it may happen can lead someone to try to think up reasons why it won't or can't happen. So the belief that some new theory is or has to be mistaken represents or can represent a kind of wishful thinking that palliates

[5] NY: Harper and Row, 1954.

the fear/anxiety that one may indeed have theorized incorrectly. To admit one has been mistaken is to face up to the fact that one's reputation will suffer, and no one wants to face up to such a fact. One fears its truth because one very much wants one's scientific or academic reputation to be preserved intact, a desire ultimately traceable, I believe, to the desire for the esteem of others that Maslow regarded as basic to human life and human psychology.[6] (I won't go into the relationship between self-esteem and the esteem of others. We don't need to do that for present purposes.)

So I think a certain kind of academic or intellectual *vanity* lies behind the strong reluctance of older scientists to accept some new theory, and because nothing remotely similar can be said about younger scientists, we can see why those working on a new theory are more ready to accept it than the older generation is. If anything, it is the idea of helping to bring about a major shift in scientific theorizing, rather than any desire to preserve what has previously been done, that will appeal to the vanity of younger scientists. And I mention vanity, a quality we don't think well of, because unlike the cases of self-defense and family resentment mentioned earlier, what scientists do, when they cling to some older theory despite evidence and arguments that favor some new one, seems cognitively undesirable and criticizable. It shows them, rather, as lacking open-mindedness for certain reasons of vanity. (We could perhaps say that these are instances of *false* pride.)

But we are all vain in this way. The lack of open-mindedness scientists show once their reputations are invested in a certain theory or approach can also be found in philosophy and in other academic fields (and outside academia, certainly, too). Typically and as I mentioned in Chap. 4, philosophers adopt some theory or approach early in their careers and spend the rest of their careers bolstering or expatiating on it.

Take Kantians (and no Don Rickles jokes about this!). Over the past few decades Kantian ethicists have shown a certain open-mindedness toward recently revived Aristotelian virtue ethics. They have recognized that such ethics has more in common with their Kantianism than, say, utilitarianism does, and this recognition has given neo-Aristotelian ethics a certain "lift" in comparison with what has recently been happening in philosophical discussions of utilitarianism. But all that hasn't led to any

[6] My argument here has benefited from Seisuke Hayakawa's "The Virtue of Receptivity and Practical Rationality" in C. Mi, M. Slote, and E. Sosa, eds., *Moral and Intellectual Virtues in Western and Chinese Philosophy*, NY: Routledge, 2016.

Kantian giving up their Kantian approach to ethics in favor of the neo-Aristotelianism; and if I am wrong about this, if in some rare instance or instances such a switch or change has occurred, the very fact that it is (isn't it?) hard to name names here helps make my case. Can anyone think of or name someone who has made the transition I have just been talking about? And what staunch anti-Kantian has ever been converted? Do you know of anyone? I don't.

The situation is no better, I think, in other areas or with respect to other theories in philosophy. Has any committed Libertarian ever eventually become convinced of free-will Compatibilism (of the compatibility of free will and determinism)? I can't think of anyone and this is an area I have worked in over several decades (since the 1960s in fact). And the reverse change of direction is also something I have never seen.

What is happening here? Shouldn't we as philosophers be embarrassed by the inflexibility we show with respect to our opinions. Philosophers are supposed to be less prejudiced, less strait-jacketed in their thinking than ordinary people and even fellow academics. We are the ones who more than anyone else emphasize the importance of rationality to human life (man is a rational animal), and with respect to issue after issue (e.g., God's existence or the moral permissibility of homosexuality) many of us consider ourselves to be more cogent and rational than other people. But at the heart of our profession, with respect to our philosophical beliefs and theorizing, I think we show ourselves to be less than epistemically or cognitively rational through our closed-mindedness vis-à-vis the differing opinions or research programs of others in our field. This is a dirty secret of our philosophical profession, and for all the reasons just mentioned the secret bespeaks a much greater irony and a much greater source of potential embarrassment than anything that relates to what happens in science. And, of course, we philosophers have all the reasons for refusing to admit our irrationality that I spoke of in connection with the vanity and defensiveness of scientists. To admit that we are as irrational as I am saying would be to admit that we are not as rationally special or excellent as we have long and typically imagined, and so there are reasons of vanity (or false pride) not to make an admission like the one I am arguing for that would risk and more than risk our reputation in the world at large. We philosophers are no more open-minded than the scientists, and if—as most of us philosophers, ironically, think—open-mindedness is an intellectual/cognitive/epistemic virtue, then as philosophers we have some-

thing to be more than a bit ashamed about.[7] (I know all this sounds a bit like the Hebrew prophets.)[8]

Now I earlier mentioned Putnam's view that meaning and reference are preserved through many scientific revolutions or changes of doctrine. Philosophers such as Kuhn but including many many others often claim, to the contrary, that changes in scientific belief involve changes in the meaning of terms used before and after the change or changes occur. But the other side of this is that deep synchronous philosophical disagreements also involve differences in meaning, and such a view is in fact contrary to what ethicists at least believe about disagreements in their own field. Ethicists almost all agree that when the Kantian and utilitarian disagree about the normative criteria of right action, there is no linguistic ambiguity underlying that disagreement. They may have different conceptions of rightness, but they rely on the same concept of rightness, the same meaning of the term "right," in their theorizing and in their (rather rare) debates with one another.[9]

So it is a bit odd that philosophers on the whole are frequently willing to attribute ambiguity to scientific terms but typically *not* to terms used in ethical theory. (Like the terms of ethical theory, the terms science uses, terms like "electricity," "energy" and "force," are also used in daily life.) The fact that we are so sure there is no rampant ambiguity in ethical terminology is an argument in favor of seeing scientific change as not based in ambiguity or meaning change, but rather, as I have been urging, in the epistemic irrationality, the epistemic vices, of scientists. And when we posit

[7] In his *Caractères*, the seventeenth-century French moralist Jean de la Bruyère tells us that "The pleasure we feel in criticizing robs us of being moved by very beautiful things." This quotation speaks of closed-mindedness in its own distinctive way, and it applies as much to academic disciplines, literature, and music as it does to art narrowly conceived.

[8] Otávio Bueno has pointed out to me that Bertrand Russell and Hilary Putnam himself seem to be exceptions to what I have been saying about the inability or unwillingness of philosophers to give up one basic philosophical approach in favor of another. They have held radically different positions over time. But do these philosophers demonstrate open-mindedness or are they examples, rather, of a certain intellectual flightiness. (Among British philosophers the saying used to be: si Russell savait, si Moore pouvait [if Russell only knew, if Moore only could].) Even allowing that this intellectual flightiness may be or seem exaggerated in the light of other philosophers' tendency toward closed-mindedness, there does seem to be something like a too-quick willingness to throw everything over in favor of something new. This is very rare in philosophy, but the fact of it does somewhat complicate—though it is far from undercutting—the picture I have been painting.

[9] John Rawls in *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971) makes much of this distinction, but it is commonplace in the present literature of ethics.

the pervasive occurrence of the vice of closed-mindedness in science, we help explain how and why older scientists are unwilling to admit their errors and adopt some totally new theory in a way Putnam's sheer insistence on univocity does not. Our exposing, our exposé, of the irrational closed-mindedness of scientists helps secure Putnam's thesis about univocity by explaining the one fact that Putnam's arguments ignored and Kuhn (especially) relied on, the difficulty of persuading scientists, older scientists, of the merit of views that turn out to replace and (we think) rightfully replace older theories. The argument against Kuhn and Feyerabend needs to take the highly uncomfortable fact of scientists' irrational closed-mindedness into account if it is really to be successful, and I have sought to add this element to that argument in this appendix. The cost, of course, is a blow to our egos, but *that is not an epistemic or theoretical or philosophical cost*. So in theoretical or philosophical terms I hope we now have more reason to doubt Kuhn and Feyerabend than we had before.[10] Rather than hold, with Kuhn, that the resistance to new theories that occurs within science is a function of different linguistic meanings, of linguistic ambiguity, I have claimed that the resistance is due to fear of the loss of reputation or esteem. The explanation is not to be made in terms of language but in terms of the psychology of ordinary human emotion(s).

4

But now we need to consider a possible objection to the argument given above, and to do that we have to back up just a bit. In a way, open-mindedness is the philosophical creature of the ever-more-influential vir-

[10] Interestingly, Kuhn at certain points in *Structure* hints at some of the points I have been making here. He speaks (p. 64) of the rigidity of attitude that accompanies the professionalization of a given scientific paradigm, and he also refers (p. 67f.) to the "pronounced professional insecurity" that can set in when a given paradigm accumulates problems. These statements suggest or more than suggest that scientists aren't entirely open-minded and are fearful in the face of certain theoretical results (his use of the term "crisis" also has such implications); but Kuhn never sees these ideas as furnishing materials for an *alternative* to his own way of explaining or understanding the history of science, an alternative like the one offered here that avoids positing meaning change and "different worlds" and that does its explaining entirely in terms of concepts like fear and reputation and closed-mindedness.

tue epistemology movement. As I suggested earlier, other approaches to epistemology have had little or nothing to say about or in favor of open-mindedness, and even Aristotle, who has as in various ways provided inspiration for what current virtue epistemologists have been saying, doesn't highlight open-mindedness in his own arguably virtue-epistemological approach to issues of cognition/knowledge. No, it is the contemporary virtue epistemologists who have emphasized open-mindedness more than anyone else ever has in the theory of knowledge, and then there is the further point that virtue epistemology has to a considerable extent modeled itself on virtue ethics.

Virtue ethics, moribund since the seventeenth century, started reviving with the 1958 publication of Elizabeth Anscombe's "Modern Moral Philosophy," and virtue epistemology, which had also been moribund since the seventeenth century, started reviving in 1980 with the publication of Ernest Sosa's "The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence vs. Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge."[11] (Here I assume that Aristotle was a virtue epistemologist and that the centuries-long period of "modern philosophy" in which the Cartesian "subjective turn" dominated epistemological [and philosophical] discussion didn't offer much room for what we think of today as virtue epistemology. Particular intellectual virtues were often discussed, but that doesn't entail that people were doing virtue epistemology.) And from the very start, for example, in Sosa's essay, the comparison with reviving virtue ethics was explicit and was used to provide some intellectual support for the newer contemporary enterprise of virtue epistemology.

I mention all this because, just as virtue epistemology has benefited in a certain way from the revival of virtue ethics, it may also inherit problems, criticisms, that have been directed at virtue ethics, though I don't think this point or what I am about to say about a particular potential criticism of virtue epistemology has been discussed previously in the literature of or surrounding that field. The criticism of virtue ethics I have in mind, the criticism that I believe can also be deployed against virtue epistemology, comes from a present-day group of philosophers called "situationists." Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethicists say or imply that we should look at the moral life via our understanding of the moral or ethical virtues as traits of character that involve both cognitive and motivational excellence. Such

[11] Anscombe's article appeared in *Philosophy* 33, 1958, pp. 1–19; Sosa's piece was published in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5, 1980, pp. 3–25. Both articles have been reprinted elsewhere.

virtue ethics typically tells us how (the) different individual virtues are or should be integrated in an overall virtuous human life, but there is also a great deal of emphasis on the individual virtues themselves: on how they are inculcated or develop and on how they operate once they have been inculcated or have developed. In the neo-Aristotelian literature, the individual virtues are, more particularly, viewed as hardy/stable and as broadly effective traits of character. It is assumed that it is not easy for someone to lose a particular virtue once they possess it and that the full possession of any virtue involves a disposition to act in accordance with it across a broad spectrum of cases that call for that virtue, cases in which it is appropriate for the virtuous individual to exemplify a given virtue.

However, the situationists are skeptical about all of this.[12] Typically citing various empirical studies, they argue that situational circumstances make more of a difference to how we act than facts about inner character. For example, and this is just one example, the supposedly hardy and broadly effective trait of benevolence is very much influenced by seemingly irrelevant factors of the situation the supposedly benevolent person is in: if one has just found a small amount of money in a phone booth, one is more likely to be generous to others than if one hasn't found any money. Numerous other cases are also cited, with documentation, to show that, for reasons having to do with seemingly extraneous situational factors, individual traits like honesty or benevolence often aren't exemplified in situations in which they are called for or relevant. Acting honestly or benevolently will then seem to depend much more on an individual's circumstances than on anything inside the individual, and, according to the situationists, this means that virtue ethics gives an unrealistic and distorted picture of what the moral life is like for us humans. Normal and ordinary people just don't manifest virtue or particular virtues in the broadly trans-situational way in which virtue ethicists have said virtues as such need to be and are manifested.

It seems to me that, at least partly in the light of what I have said above about the closed-mindedness of scientists and philosophers, a somewhat similar criticism or set of criticisms could be mounted against virtue epistemology *and its reliance on the rational desirability and requiredness of individual cognitive traits like open-mindedness*. Open-mindedness is pre-

[12] For prominent examples of situationism, see, e.g., G. Harman's "Moral Philosophy Meets Moral Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* XCIX, Part 3, 1999; and John Doris's *Lack of Character*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

sumably a condition or trait of full epistemic rationality across a wide spectrum of situations and intellectual challenges. And perhaps most people are open-minded with respect to issues they don't have any personal stake in—e.g., for most of us, about who won the World Series in 1954. Someone who doesn't follow the history of baseball very intently might think that the Dodgers won or that the Cleveland Indians won, but if they are not fans of the Dodgers or the Indians, they might easily be open to persuasion that it was in fact the New York Giants who won the World Series that year. (Perhaps one also has to assume they don't hate the San Francisco Giants.) And there are lots and lots of other mistaken beliefs that the people who have them can treat in an open-minded fashion, readily accepting correction from those better acquainted with the facts and able to make a good case for such correction. To be sure, none of us, or almost none of us, likes having been mistaken about some fact and being called out or corrected on our error. But if it is a minor fact, something not important to our lives, then we will typically be open to admitting error. However, the very fact that this willingness to change one's belief occurs in a context where the exact truth isn't of much importance to one shows that *it doesn't require all that much open-mindedness*. A genuinely open-minded person (as we typically conceive the matter) has to be open-minded about issues and in situations where there is some temptation or tendency *not* to be open-minded, just as one doesn't count as a compassionate or generous person if one is only willing to give things to others when the cost to oneself is very small. Going further, I think we might even say that a truly open-minded person will be *grateful* rather than resistant and resentful when someone shows them to have been mistaken in one of their beliefs.

The fact that almost all of us will change our minds when no major issue of pride or vanity is at stake (even though, in general, we don't very much like being wrong and being corrected) doesn't justify us in claiming that most people are open-minded or even *somewhat* open-minded. And in the case of philosophers and scientists and the beliefs or theories they subscribe to, the reaction to counter-evidence or alternative possibilities is mainly and typically resistance and denial. So in matters that greatly concern them, philosophers and scientists are generally not open-minded, and the same holds true in other research/academic areas and in ordinary human life more generally. Ronald Reagan in his mature years changed from being a Democrat and liberal to being a conservative Republican (under the influence of his wife Nancy); and (the subsequent) Cardinal

Newman eventually decided that the Roman Church had a more valid claim to his allegiance than the Anglican Church in which he had been raised and educated. But this sort of thing is very, very rare. A younger person may rebel against the religion or political views they were brought up in, but older people just don't change their views in these areas to any radical or considerable extent. That is the way people are in their lives, and it is very much like what we have been saying goes on in philosophy and science in particular. Closed-mindedness seems to be a besetting sin or fault of almost all human beings. (I say "almost" because I don't think that there exists any persuasive proof that *all* human beings are or have to be closed-minded.)

Now virtue ethics is supposed to recommend itself by giving us a more realistic picture than Kantian or utilitarian ethics does of our human moral life, and if virtue epistemologists want to say something similar about their approach in relation to coherentism and foundationalism, then one may be able to make the same kind of criticisms of virtue epistemology that situationists have made against virtue ethics. The situationist argues that traits like generosity and honesty are more subject to the negative or undermining influence of situational factors than the Aristotelian virtue ethicists have realized. (Though such criticisms haven't been launched against sentimentalist/Humean forms of virtue ethics, I believe they could be reconfigured so as to apply to the latter.) And can't one also say that traits like open-mindedness are less well or fully exemplified in ordinary human or academic lives than any virtue epistemologist has acknowledged? If open-mindedness is supposed to be so important, how come there is so little of it in almost all our lives almost all of the time? (Remember that being open-minded where one has little or no personal-reputational stake in an issue shows only a tiny amount of open-mindedness.)

But, of course, it might be replied on behalf of the virtue epistemologist (and here I am mainly speaking of responsibilists rather than of reliabilists) that open-mindedness is just one, single trait of character. What holds for one trait may not apply to most epistemic/cognitive traits, and in that case the analogy with what the situationist says about virtue ethics may not hold for virtue epistemology. The situationist speaks about all or almost all the individual traits that Aristotelian virtue ethics thinks highly of, and it is argued that all of those traits are subject to the interruption or interference of situational factors in a way not accounted for or treated as acceptable by standard virtue ethics. So if what we have been saying here applies only to open-mindedness, there is no parallel to the situationist

critique of virtue ethics that can be directed at virtue epistemology. This would leave my earlier criticisms of scientists and philosophers largely intact. They might not exemplify open-mindedness, and that fact might better account for the history of scientific change than any hypothesis about the ambiguity of scientific terms. But since the other epistemic virtues emphasized by virtue epistemologists would not have been shown to lack exemplification in science and philosophy or elsewhere, what I have said would not be subject to criticisms as (presumably) strong as those the situationist directs against Aristotelian virtue ethics.

But is open-mindedness unrelated to other epistemic traits/virtues and are the other epistemic virtues, or most of them, reliably ensconced in scientific and philosophical practices in a way that I have argued open-mindedness is not? I don't think the answer to either of these questions will be in the affirmative. First of all, the epistemic/cognitive virtues that virtue epistemologists most frequently mention include, in addition to open-mindedness, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, and intellectual thoroughness/carefulness, and all three of the latter traits are deeply connected with or involved in open-mindedness. Courage is a matter of mastering fear, and I mentioned the connection between fear and closed-mindedness above. If one is or refuses to be open-minded on a certain issue, that is typically due to fears about one's reputation, and surely it shows intellectual courage if, despite the fears one has about one's reputation as a scientist or philosopher, one open-mindedly considers the facts relevant to the truth or falsity of some (important) opinion one holds. But then, and by the same token, one shows a lack of courage, of intellectual courage, if one *isn't* willing to consider the possibility of one's being mistaken in an open-minded way.

Similarly, for intellectual humility. To be humble is to not raise oneself over others, and if one is closed-minded vis-à-vis the opinions of those one initially disagrees with, one precisely *is* raising oneself, in intellectual terms, above one's intellectual colleagues or peers. And is one being careful and thorough in one's intellectual pursuits if one doesn't give full and attentive consideration to the arguments and ideas of those who disagree with one? Again, I think not, and so open-mindedness has conceptual connections with all the traits we have just been discussing and with others it doesn't seem necessary, at this point, to mention. If scientists and philosophers aren't open-minded, then they aren't as intellectually courageous, thorough, or humble as virtue epistemology tells us we in all rationality should be. In that case, the fact that open-mindedness is so seemingly central to

epistemic virtue, so multiply connected with the other intellectual virtues, tells us that we cannot evade a critique of virtue epistemology analogous to that which the situationist directs at virtue ethics, by treating open-mindedness as an isolated instance of epistemic vice or irrationality within scientific or philosophical practices.[13] And in propria persona I want to say that human scientists and philosophers are quite irrational in some sense overall, and despite their tendency to believe that they themselves are quite rational and that human beings, and most especially philosophically-minded human beings, are on the whole intellectually rational creatures. (Those who hold humans to be practically irrational because of the various ways we give in to anger and desire against our better judgment don't usually make a similar claim about human *cognitive* irrationality. But here and elsewhere, I am prescinding from the work of Kahneman and Tversky.)

The question that remains before us, then, is whether the situationist critique of virtue ethics can provide us with a model or template for criticizing what I have said about the very general cognitive/epistemic irrationality of scientists, philosophers, and others. The situationist thinks that the way our ordinary lives demonstrate a lack or absence of the virtues Aristotelians talk about (and as they talk about them) shows that we shouldn't think of human morality in Aristotelian virtue-ethical terms, and assuming that intellectual vice or irrationality is as deep and widespread as I have claimed it is, why can't one say that the ideas about intellectual virtue I relied on in speaking about open-mindedness as a virtue, ideas

[13] Let me also say something here about the relationship between the epistemic virtue of open-mindedness and the epistemically virtuous trait of thinking for oneself rather than relying on one sole source of opinions like one's parents or the Church. The person who relies heavily on others isn't receptive to the full range of evidential facts that come or could come their way and to that extent displays a kind of closed-mindedness vis-à-vis their general knowledge of the world, but this closed-mindedness seems to be more a matter of how they *come to* opinions than of their willingness or ability to *change* their opinions. (I am indebted here to discussion with Fu Changzhen.) We often describe the person who thinks for themselves as capable of thinking (and deciding things) autonomously, and the connection between such autonomy and what philosophers call respect for autonomy seems to me to depend on the fact that a child is more likely to become capable of autonomous thinking if their parents have shown some respect for their independently arrived at opinions when they were young, which means a kind of respect for the child's autonomy as a thinking being. Thus children whose parents deride or dismiss their doubts about religion (saying things like "you can't really be so wicked a child as to doubt/deny all the things that God, or Allah, has done for you") are less likely to think for themselves as an adult: either becoming totally submissive to the religious doctrines and sources of doctrines they have been exposed to or else becoming rebellious knee-jerk deniers of everything they have been told.

that by my own acknowledgment or admission are taken to a large extent from present-day virtue epistemology, are mistaken or likely to be mistaken? Such a conclusion would undermine what I have said against the hypothesis that scientific change involves changes in linguistic meaning, what I have said in support, rather, of Hilary Putnam's views. But do I in fact have to make all these concessions? This will be necessary only if there is reason to accept the situationist critique of virtue ethics, and I believe that that critique is in fact seriously flawed.

5

Defenders of virtue ethics have made a number of different replies to the situationists, but one particular kind of reply has been especially prominent, and even perhaps predominant. The defenders of virtue ethics have been to a considerable extent willing to grant that Aristotelian approaches have overestimated normal human tendencies or dispositions toward virtuous actions.[14] Situational factors can distract us or tempt us from doing the virtuous thing, the action called for by a particular virtue, in ways that virtue ethics as originally formulated failed to take into account. According to this typical or frequent reply to the situationists, what virtue ethics says about the hardiness and broadness of virtuous traits of character doesn't apply to many or most actual people, and to that extent, yes, virtue ethics hasn't been all that realistic, has assumed more virtue in more people than there actually is. But the assumption that people are more virtuous than they turn out to be isn't essential, the argument goes, to virtue ethics as a theory of good character and of right and wrong. Even if more people act wrongly and show a lack of good character (traits) than we have supposed, we can still understand the wrongness of their actions and the fact that they to some extent lack good character in terms of the ideas about the connection between rightness, virtue, and motivation that virtue ethics subscribes to and that are not to be found in normative approaches like Kantian ethics and consequentialism.

[14] For two examples of the kind of reply to situationism I am exploring and advocating here, see Nafsika Athanassoulis's "A Response to Harman: Virtue Ethics and Character Traits," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 100, 2000, pp. 215–221; and Micah Lott's "Situationism, Skill, and the Rarity of Virtue," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 48, 2014, pp. 387–401. But several others have made the same sort of reply.

I agree with this critique of the situationist critique of Aristotelian virtue ethics (though for other reasons, I prefer sentimentalist neo-Humean virtue ethics to neo-Aristotelian virtue-ethical rationalism). The rarity of virtue or of particular moral virtues is no argument against virtue ethics and neither, then, is the rarity of open-mindedness and of epistemic traits closely connected with it any sort of argument against the kind of virtue epistemology that lies in the background of the arguments I have made in this appendix. So I think our conclusions here are pretty safe.[15] There is reason to think of philosophical disagreement and of the typical path of scientific change (there are dominant theories in science, but this hasn't happened for a long time in philosophy) as due to closed-mindedness and a lack of intellectual humility, and so on, that are powered by fear for one's reputation (or the fear of losing the esteem of others), rather than as due to linguistic ambiguity. This is a dispiriting, a disheartening result, but I

[15] But how safe are they if the very factors that make us closed-minded about our ideas in science and philosophy will tend to make readers resist the idea that we in fact *are* closed-minded in these and other areas? Doesn't the typical reader of a philosophy chapter or appendix have reputation to lose if they admit that they have been closed-minded in doing science or philosophy? Well, it all depends. There may be safety in numbers here, and if the admission of one's own irrecusable closed-mindedness allows one to direct a *tu quoque* toward everyone else, perhaps the individual admission won't have to be so daunting, distasteful, or demeaning. I don't know. Still, no one likes to think they are closed-minded (or foolish or weak), so there is likely to be resistance to what I have been saying here. But that resistance is no *argument* against what I have said, and the conclusions drawn here may therefore be (rationally?) safe in the sense intended in the main text. (By the way, the resistance, among scientists and philosophers, to what I have been saying about closed-mindedness may turn out to be stronger or fiercer than the resistance ethicists feel or express against situationism, because we academics and researchers seem somehow to pride ourselves more on our intellectual powers than on our moral character.) One further point. Felipe Moreira has suggested that open-mindedness resembles compassion or concern for others inasmuch as both involve empathy for the point of view or aspirations of the other. If, as he suggests, we assume further that left-wing political views involve greater empathy with the worst-off in society than right-wing views do, then the contrast between open-minded and closed-minded pursuit of some academic discipline is analogous to the contrast between left-wing and right-wing politics. So academic open-mindedness is or would be in some sense a left-leaning academic orientation and academic closed-mindedness can then be seen, by analogy and somewhat metaphorically, as a right-wing phenomenon. Moreira takes these ideas further in his University of Miami doctoral dissertation; but from the standpoint of this appendix the question then naturally arises as to why there is so much left-wing politics in the academy but so little left-wing academic thinking and research. Are human beings more caring than they are cognitively rational? I won't pursue this question further here.

think all of us should try to muster the intellectual courage and, yes, the open-mindedness to admit it may possibly be true.[16]

Finally, I think virtue epistemologists should be more aware than they have been of how rare certain epistemic virtues and overall epistemic virtue are.[17] That is not a reason to give up on virtue epistemology any more,

[16] But, someone may object, how can anyone really do science or philosophy in a forward-looking or creative way without being committed to the value and validity of what they are doing? Surely, it might be said, this is part of *what it is* to pursue work in these fields, and what typically happens in them cannot, therefore, be a matter of being closed-minded. Now in response I am not going to tell you that philosophers and scientists should pursue theories and in some sense accept them without actually believing them to be true. That is the view some philosophers take about these matters, but it is a minority view and not one that I care to rest my case on. (Here I am indebted to discussion with Otávio Bueno.) Rather, my response to what has just been suggested is to point out again what I have said earlier in this appendix: that belief in something may involve a certain amount of emotional/intellectual investment but doesn't require one to be closed-minded about what one believes. One can be open (consider the word) to certain possibilities even while pursuing and believing in a particular different possibility. When Kantians or care ethicists pursue some idea in their respective areas, they can believe in what they are doing and in the results they arrive at. But this doesn't mean that they can't pay attention to the most important results that are coming out of other schools of thought. Yet we find that the care ethicists don't pay genuine attention to work in Kantian ethics and vice versa, and surely an open-minded philosopher/thinker would pay serious and thoughtful attention—really *listen*—to views that contradict their own: if only to figure out whether or how they can answer them. But we find that this doesn't happen, and that is a strong sign of closed-mindedness. You can believe in your own view and pursue attempts to defend or elaborate it *while being alive to other views and to the possibility that one may be moving in the wrong direction*. Belief is compatible with a sincere admission of possibly being deeply mistaken and with efforts to understand things from the standpoint of those who disagree with one, but I don't think philosophical practitioners have much of a sense of this. Lip-service may be paid to fallibilism, but no one takes it seriously enough in practical terms to pay attention to possible sources of error on one's own part as revealed in the possible insights or arguments of another tradition. I maintain that all of this bespeaks a great deal of closed-mindedness.

[17] Let me suggest another dimension to the issues we have been discussing that there is no space here to dissect at any great length. The expression "it takes one to know one" is often used in derogatory fashion to tell someone they are as guilty of a certain fault as the person they are accusing of that fault. However, it contains or suggests an epistemological truth that goes beyond what we have been saying here about open-mindedness, but also applies to open-mindedness as one instance. I think it is easier to see one's way toward accusing someone of closed-mindedness than to understand how open-minded someone is. Closed-minded people can see closed-mindedness in others more easily than in themselves (as with Jesus's point about how readily one sees the mote in another's eye but fails to recognize the beam in one's own). But there is absolutely no reason why an open-minded person couldn't see, *accurately* see, closed-mindedness in others. By contrast, it seems difficult to imagine that anyone but an open-minded person could ever recognize open-mindedness in others. With regard to that property, it seemingly takes or would take one to know one, and there are

as I have argued, than the fact of the rareness of moral virtue(s) renders virtue ethics unsatisfactory as an overall approach to ethics. But it may mean that as virtue epistemologists we should go forward a little more soberly and humbly than we have previously. Our blithe virtue-epistemological talk about open-mindedness as an intellectual virtue masks the unpleasant reality that we who talk that way lack that very virtue. We haven't ever admitted that, but it is high time now for us to do so; and if philosophers can see that point before those in other professions or academic areas do, then in this one instance at least philosophy will have justified its long-standing claim to be uniquely rational and wise.[18]

other instances of the same thing that relate to the doing of philosophy. In Chap. 4 I spoke of psychological sensitivity, but left it unsaid that it takes psychological sensitivity to recognize it in others. This creates a problem for the doing of philosophy because if, as Chap. 4 argued, good work, say, in ethics requires psychological sensitivity, only those who are themselves sensitive in that way will likely be able to recognize that good quality in others. So the idea that we can learn to do philosophy better by recognizing psychological sensitivity in certain philosophers (Bernard Williams, Michael Stocker) may not be as helpful as one might like. Further, the appendix of my *The Impossibility of Perfection* argues that some people have better intuitions (and to that extent better philosophical *judgment*) than others. But it takes good intuitions (or judgment) to recognize that capacity or talent or intellectual virtue in others, and those lacking this quality won't be able to recognize their own lack of it or be able somehow (and one can be skeptical about this possibility in something like the way Chap. 3 offered reasons to be skeptical about the effort to improve oneself morally) to do something about it. (As la Rochefoucauld tells us, everyone complains about their memory, but no one complains about their [lack of] judgment.) These points work against the optimism expressed in the conclusion of this book about how (younger?) philosophers can and should try to bring together the best of Chinese and Western philosophy in the future. Yes, that is a good idea, but whatever we do to bridge East and West as philosophers of the future will have to come up against the reality of most philosophers' deficiency in certain philosophy-helpful intellectual traits and their/our lack of self-knowledge about that deficiency.

[18] The resemblance of what I am saying to (standard understandings of) Socrates's *docta ignorantia* should be fairly obvious at this point. In addition, the view defended here seems the antithesis of certain theses of post-modernism. Many post-modernists deny there is such a thing as truth or reason, whereas the present account of open-mindedness (tacitly) assumes there are such things as truth and reason, but argues that most of us are simply, or not so simply, *irrational about finding the truth*. What I have been saying here also bears important relations to "therapeutic positivism" and the "new mysterianism," but I won't discuss these further comparisons here. Finally, I should mention that closed-mindedness blends with partiality and bias in many different areas. Our love for our child can make us not only reluctant to believe bad things about them but closed-minded to the point of being unwilling (or unable) to believe such things. Our prejudice against an ethnic group can likewise make us unwilling to acknowledge, and thus closed-minded with regard to, the group's good traits or accomplishments.

Appendix B: Care Ethics, Empathy, and Liberalism

1

If care ethics is to represent a systematic alternative to rationalist/traditionalist approaches to morality, it has to speak and speak persuasively about political issues. Yet in that area it seems to have a marked disadvantage vis-à-vis liberal Kantian or Rawlsian views about rights (and justice to the extent it involves the honoring of rights), because of the way or ways we typically think and speak about political or human rights. Not just rationalist/liberal philosophers but ordinary Americans too think we have a fundamental and/or self-evident right to various civil liberties: for example, to freedom of speech and freedom of religious worship. And because this intuitive or at least familiar way of conceiving political morality seems far from anything care ethics would want or be able to say, care ethics has a problem. One way out of the problem would be and in effect has been simply to grant that liberalism is right and says all the right things about political/legal issues, thus treating care ethics as mainly an approach to the ethics of personal or private relationships. That has—with certain important qualifications—been the approach taken by Virginia Held and certain other care ethicists (Held 2006).[1] But this way of pursuing care ethics is problematic on a number of theoretical grounds.

[1] Held holds that even if valid (liberal) political morality is in important ways independent of caring, it has to be situated within a larger context that embodies the values of caring. But

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M. Slote, *Between Psychology and Philosophy*,
Palgrave Studies in Comparative East-West Philosophy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22503-2

First, it concedes that the original impulse or motivation behind care ethics—the idea of connection with and caring about others as ethically basic—can't adequately deal with political issues, and since Kantian ethics and various other forms of rationalism can and do claim to cover the whole of ethics, both private and political morality, care ethics will seem less comprehensive and less adequate if it has to borrow from other views to fill out what it says otherwise about morality or ethics. Care ethics will then be a kind of hybrid, and it will be understandable in ordinary philosophical terms if more uniform and systematic approaches like Kantianism and consequentialism are preferred to what is merely partial and in need of supplementation *by one of those other approaches.*

But there is another problem too with the proposal to limit the ethics of care to the private sphere. Even if we grant the personal isn't *entirely* the political, it is obvious nowadays that these two spheres or aspects of morality intersect and interact in very important ways. So how can care ethics keep its approach to individual/personal morality clear of implications for political morality, rights, and justice? And there is more to be said. I have argued in my *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* (Slote 2007) that the basic philosophical/moral ideas behind care ethics are actually inconsistent with liberal political/legal views (that was my main purpose in writing this book). Care ethics from its inception in the 1980s has put great stress on connection with others, and the kind of liberalism we are focusing on here emphasizes autonomy (rights) in a way that insists on the moral separateness of individuals. It is difficult to believe that this difference, this *opposition*, wouldn't lead to different moral judgments about specific ranges of political/legal cases, and that is just what we in effect do find. In what follows, I shall mention some important areas where there is a normative conflict between what liberalism says and what care ethics, if at all true to its founding theoretical/moral motivations, will want to say, and I think two things follow. First, that we had better not try to harness care ethics to or with political liberalism because that leads to forms of inconsistency we should surely wish to avoid. But, second, it follows that if care ethics wants to speak about political issues, it needs to speak with its own distinctive voice and thus to cover the full range of issues and cases—both personal and political or mixed between them—that Kantianism, and so on,

that doesn't, I think, affect the points I am making in the main text. Also, I hope it is clear that the political liberalism I am speaking of here is the Kantian/Rawlsian variety of liberalism, not Millian (or more generally utilitarian) liberalism.

seek to deal with. And this, as I mentioned above, creates problems for care ethics because it deals with political questions in terms of empathy, caring, and connection rather than speaking of basic and independently intuited political rights in the way that comes so naturally or easily to thoughtful Americans and American political thinkers.

So the question then arises whether there is any way for the care ethicist to persuade people that we shouldn't think of political rights and justice in the traditional terms, but should reformulate or reconceptualize our thinking about rights in the less familiar coinage of empathic concern and sensitivity. I think there is, and the present essay is going to be my attempt to make a persuasive or strong case for making the change-over, for reconceiving our political ideals along care-ethical lines. Certain other care ethicists have already made efforts to theorize about political values in basically care-ethical terms, but they haven't, I believe, taken on the task I shall be undertaking here. Even if they have been critical of liberalism, they haven't reckoned with how easy it is for Americans to conceive political morality along liberal philosophical lines. They have not tried to show that the familiarity and naturalness, at least for Americans, of thinking of political rights as having a rational and/or intuitive status that doesn't intersect with or depend on empathy, emotion, and caring—they have not specifically attempted to show how and why this familiar and traditional approach is normatively inadequate and simply cannot work.[2] And that is what I will be seeking to do here.

I am going to begin by focusing on issues from political life where care ethics and liberalism needn't disagree. However, in order to see how and why this can be so, it will be helpful to clarify some terms or concepts that care ethics needs to rely on not only in dealing with political examples but in its "home territory" of personal moral issues. And then we will proceed to the types of cases where care ethics and liberalism disagree, again making use of concepts that care ethics distinctively needs, but now attempting to show how and why this allows care ethics to frame political issues in ways that are superior to anything liberalism can provide. And the most important concept for us to start talking about is empathy.

The word "empathy" didn't exist till the twentieth century, and in fact Hume used the term "sympathy" to refer both to what we would now call sympathy and to what we nowadays think of as empathy. And just to make

[2] Here I am most specifically thinking about what Nel Noddings says about and against liberalism in her *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy* (Noddings 2002).

sure we are all on the same page, let me say, briefly, that the difference between empathy and sympathy is approximately the difference between Bill Clinton's feeling someone's pain and someone's feeling bad that someone else is in pain and wanting to help them or see them helped. "Empathy" has a broader use than this suggests—e.g., one can take in or absorb another's attitudes or opinions via a kind of empathic osmosis that Hume talks a great deal about. But in any event empathy is important for our purposes here because it is natural to suppose and there is a lot of psychological evidence in favor of the view that caring about others depends on the development of empathy in individuals. (There is some controversy about this idea, too, but I propose to put the controversy to one side for purposes of this appendix.)[3]

Now it is true that we tend to feel more empathy for suffering we witness than for suffering we merely know about at a distance and more empathy for the suffering of those we know and care about than for the suffering of strangers or people we know less well. And these facts of partiality can make us wonder how or whether we can derive plausible views about rights and justice from considerations concerning empathy and empathic concern for others. However, as the literature on empathy and moral development makes fairly clear, it is possible for mature individuals and even adolescents to feel substantial empathy with and concern for large groups of individuals they don't know personally, and this gives care ethics an entry point for talking about issues of social (or international) justice in terms of empathy and without having to bring in rationalist/liberal notions (or utilitarian or libertarian views) to supplement what it has to say about individual moral obligations and actions. Moreover, even if empathy is inevitably and irrecusably partial, empathy can be cultivated and widened via processes of moral education that the literature on moral development has described in some detail. So let's not too quickly assume that empathy and caring based in empathy are incapable of the task I am setting for them and that, if I am correct, care ethics itself sets for them.

But can a care ethics grounded in empathy really deal plausibly with all the different aspects of social or international or legal justice? Some have argued that it cannot and have mentioned the issue of tolerance as a good example of why we need something other than sheer feeling and motiva-

[3] See, e.g., C. D. Batson's *Altruism in Humans* (Batson 2011). Chapter 2 above argues in effect that the doubts that have been raised recently about the role of empathy in producing or sustaining altruism are largely misconceived.

tion based in feeling in order to deal with people's rights to religious freedom. It is often held, for example, that religious liberties need to be rationally grounded in autonomy rights because sheer feeling will sometimes lead people not to tolerate religious practices that they find abhorrent or disgusting. And a typical liberal conclusion, then, is that we should fully respect the emotion-independent rights of free worship of those whose religion we strongly dislike and that we show such respect if we tolerate views and practices we dislike out of a conviction or intuition that people have a basic right to have those views and participate in those practices.

But this whole picture is morally distorted. Someone who allows others to worship freely even though they have nothing but disdain for those others or their views *doesn't* show full, genuine respect toward or for those others. It would be much more respectful if one tried, in an open-minded fashion, to see things from their perspective, if one could muster some empathy for that perspective, and didn't allow oneself simply to hate or contemn what the others think or do. (This needn't lead one to ultimately agree with those one initially disagrees with.) Liberals and ethical rationalists believe that justice and rights are tied to respect, but as we have just seen, that assumption, far from supporting rationalism and liberalism, actually works against their political ideals/vision and in favor of the care-ethical emphasis on empathy and emotion. A care ethics that stresses empathy will say that there is something wrong with or limited about the liberal/rationalist notion of respect because what the liberal conceives as full respect isn't the fullest kind of respect: liberalism doesn't recognize the importance of trying to empathize with those one disagrees with as a basis for the fullest kind of respect.

I am not, however, saying that everyone has a moral obligation to try to empathize, in open-minded fashion, with those they disagree with. That seems over-demanding. But it isn't too demanding to morally require that one not persecute people for their religious beliefs and not force them to give up their rituals and observances if one hasn't made a genuine effort to see things from their perspective. And this is precisely what historically hasn't happened. All the persecutions that have occurred throughout history appear to have occurred in the absence of any attempt to see things from the point of view of those being persecuted. However somewhat apart from the issue of empathy, there is also the issue of sheer caring. Could persecution and torture in the name of one's religion count as a form of caring and thus pass the moral muster of any plausible care ethics?

Consider the Spanish Inquisition, for example. Apologists for the Inquisition both then and since have sometimes said that heretics and non-believers were tortured out of a (caring) concern for the welfare of those being tortured (the good of their immortal souls). But as John Locke wisely and wittily pointed out in his *Second Treatise of Government* (Locke 1960), the "dry eyes" of those who tortured heretics give the lie to the claim that the inquisitors were concerned with the welfare of those they tortured. But then, you say, couldn't someone with tearful eyes be genuinely seeking the well-being or happiness of those to whom they were denying religious freedom and possibly even torturing. Dan Engster has suggested to me that St. Augustine might have been such a person, someone who would have been genuinely upset about the use force on unbelievers, but who would have counted as genuinely caring in doing what he did or advocated doing. But I am not so sure.

Someone doesn't demonstrate caring motivation in a given instance if they say they want to help a given person, but don't do the relevant homework about how best to help that person. One has to want to learn how to help someone if one is to count as genuinely caring about them. But then consider Augustine. He was no doubt a great mind, a great philosopher, but (though we don't often say this) he was also a fanatic. He favored persecuting or excommunicating the Pelagians (whose supposed doctrinal sin was that they thought human beings could become morally better through their own unaided efforts), and more generally he wasn't open-minded vis-à-vis those who religiously disagreed with him. But if you are genuinely trying to help someone, you have to be open-minded about issues that are relevant to the question of how to help that person. And, by contrast, St. Augustine was in effect saying to those who disagreed with him: I know the truth and you don't and so I know what is best for you without having to consult with you about what would in fact be good for you. If this is supposed to justify forcing people to worship differently for the sake of their immortal souls, such a justification simply doesn't work in care-ethical terms. St. Augustine's lack of open-mindedness, his unwillingness to see things from the point of view of those he disagreed with and was willing to use force on, counts as a form of egotism; and to pursue another's well-being in an egotistical closed-minded manner is to be less than full concerned about their welfare.

Indeed, Augustine's lack of religious toleration in fact greatly resembles what we deplore about many stage mothers or fathers. The stage mother who, for example, tells their child they have to practice ballet six hours a

day and who, despite all the protests of their child, tells the child that they are forcing them to do this for the child's own good is closed-minded and egotistical vis-à-vis their child, and neither such a parent nor Augustine in his mode of intolerance and persecution can really constitute a good instance of caring. So just as carelessness or laziness about obtaining relevant information can undercut someone's claim to have acted in a caring manner, so too does acting at the behest of egotistical (non-open-minded) fanaticism count as less than fully or genuinely caring; and I believe, therefore, that an ethics of care can tell us why religious intolerance/persecution is unjustified in moral terms. But liberalism can tell its own story of why these things aren't allowed, so my main point here is that (perhaps surprisingly) an ethics of care that emphasizes empathy (and empathic open-mindedness) can rule out religious intolerance and persecution just as definitively as liberalism can. But then one should also add that (as I mentioned earlier) there are aspects of (the fullest) respect for other people's religious or other views that care ethics can capture through the idea of empathy and that liberalism has totally ignored. However, as we shall see, this isn't the strongest argument care ethics can mount against liberalism, and before we get to the stronger or strongest case against liberalism, I think it would help the case of political care ethics if I pointed out some other areas where it can account for our received or intuitive moral/political opinions just as easily as liberalism can.

Consider, for example, issues of justice and rights that concern the welfare or wealth of members of society. Liberalism assumes (as libertarianism does not) that justice needs to be connected with some degree of welfarist equality or at least with improving the lot of those who are worst-off in society. But care ethics has similar things to say about this issue because of the emphasis it places on empathy. I mentioned earlier that empathy is partial to what is perceived as opposed to what is merely known about, but empathy is also partial to sheer badness. Someone's awful lot in life engages our empathy much more strongly than someone's being in a fairly good or mediocre position that allows for substantial improvement. And this is another way of saying that empathy favors *compassion* over *sheer benevolence*. So a care ethics of justice can say that justice requires greater help or aid for those whose welfare condition is bad than for (groups of) those whose condition is simply not wonderful, and this leveling implication sits well with what liberals say and most of us feel about social (and international) justice.

Finally, care ethics also favors democracy over other forms of government for reasons having to do with empathy and the kind of full respect that requires a willingness and ability to empathize with others. Rulers/leaders in the Far East often say that there is no reason for their states/societies to be governed democratically. Westerners may place a great value on democracy and self-government, but, they say, there are different "Asian values" that actuate people in their own countries. There is, they claim, a natural Asian deference to authority that makes democracy much less relevant in the East than it is thought to be by those Westerners who seek to impose their values throughout the world (see Bell 2000).

Doesn't this remind you of what used to be said about women? It used to be said that women are naturally deferent to men and that that is why it is inappropriate to give them the vote. And this kind of argument works no better for or with Asians than it does for or with women. It is true that after being beaten down by patriarchal/sexist social mores or their own parents over a period of years ("you don't really want to be a doctor, dear, or to go to university; you'd be much happier as a nurse or full-time homemaker"), a girl or woman may end up not thinking for herself and mainly deferring to others. But if their aspirations and ideas are actually listened to, little girls don't become the deferential "angels in the house" that some of them were praised for being during the Victorian era. And there really is no reason to think things are or would be any different with East Asians. (Think about what has been happening in recent years in rural Thailand.) Once again, empathic respect for what the other wants is the key to justice and if people know about the possibility of democracy and aren't browbeaten into denying or devaluing their own desires and aspirations, they will want democracy. And a full empathic concern for them will seek to gratify or fulfill that very understandable human desire. So here, as with various other areas of justice and political thinking, a care-ethical approach is or can easily be consistent with what liberals think and what most of us antecedently believe about what is required by justice and/or our rights as human beings.

But of course in the United States at least, issues of justice are typically framed in terms of rights in a way that seems to have no reference to empathy or caring and that seems to reach out for some kind of rationalistic justification. The American "Declaration of Independence" declares that various truths about human rights are self-evident, and this is or is normally seen as an appeal to sheer rational intuition. (Can anything be self-evident to empathy?) So a care-ethical approach to justice has to say

that this normal (American) understanding of justice gets things wrong, puts things on the wrong basis. It has to say that the real source of what is just or unjust (and of corresponding rights) lies in a relation to human empathy. It has to say that such empathy picks out what is appealing about justice in more humane terms than any understanding of rights and justice that relies on (abstract considerations of) reason and is entirely independent of all feeling can allow.

Part of the argument for this conclusion we have already given: we have seen that ideal or complete respect, far from being a matter of honoring abstract rights independently of how we feel, depends on our genuinely empathizing with how others see and feel about things. But there is another reason too for thinking that justice cannot be as ethical rationalists/liberals conceive it. If the rationalists and liberals actually come to mistaken views about particular ranges of practical cases, then the considerations on which they base what they say about those cases cannot be the basic foundational considerations that underlie properly-conceived justice (or rights). And I shall now argue, therefore, that care ethics gives us a better practical/normative answer than liberalism does to certain important political issues and, for that reason, a better account of the foundations of justice, as well.

2

Most liberals who have recently spoken of the right of free speech have invoked the roughly Kantian notion of autonomy (e.g., autonomous self-expression) as the basis of that right. And for most cases this seems plausible enough. But liberals use the same notion of autonomy to defend hate speech as a form of free speech, and this leads to controversial results. An example that often comes up in the literature concerns the march and subsequent speech-making that neo-Nazis sought permission for in the 1970s in the town of Skokie, Illinois. Important academic liberals like Ronald Dworkin, Thomas Nagel, and T. M. Scanlon have argued that the autonomy rights that underlie and justify freedom of speech also justify allowing the neo-Nazis to march and speechify in Skokie (something they never in fact did).[4] But the neo-Nazis chose Skokie for a reason: it was a town with a large population of Jewish Holocaust survivors, and empathy

[4] For references to the work of Dworkin et al. and a much more extensive discussion of this case, see my *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* (Slote 2007: Chap. 5).

with those survivors might make us hesitate and more than hesitate to allow the neo-Nazis to march, demonstrate, speechify, and so on, in such close and immediate proximity to the survivors.

But the academic liberals, knowing about the Holocaust survivors, nonetheless favored allowing the march, and so on, on grounds of (the importance of) rational autonomy. However, these same liberals also tended to see the situation in Skokie in a way that downplays or ignores the effects of the march, and so on, on the survivors. Many of us—including care ethicists—would defend free speech that is merely offensive or frustrating to those who hear it; but what the neo-Nazis were proposing to do was likely to do more than offend and frustrate. The sheer knowledge that something like this was going on at such close quarters in their country of supposed refuge from the Holocaust (and the survivors were likely not just to know about the near-by march but to hear some of what was going on with their own ears) would very probably have had a (re) traumatizing effect on some or many of the Holocaust survivors, and this amounts to psychological damage, not mere frustration and offended feelings. But the liberals never mentioned this possibility, and I think this showed a certain lack of empathic sensitivity in their intellectual position. Sure, if the effects would just be offense and frustration, then autonomy considerations would have sufficient force to justify allowing the march. But when actual harm is at issue—and it is important to realize that not all harm is physical—then the weight of empathic and humane considerations seems to me—and has seemed to many feminists and care ethicists—to favor a refusal to let the neo-Nazis march in Skokie rather than somewhere else.[5] The frustration of the neo-Nazis is nothing as compared with the

[5] But couldn't a homophobe claim they were injured by having a gay rights parade go near their house, and couldn't a racist make a similar claim about civil rights activism occurring near their home? Well, they could make such claims, but we have to judge for ourselves whether such claims are plausible, and I think most of the readers of this appendix would agree that the claims are rationalizations and pretexts rather than reality-based. Of course, a racist judge might buy such claims and it is sometimes difficult to know when psychological irritation ends and genuine psychological damage begins. So there are certainly slippery slope issues that arise in principle (and without anyone being prejudiced and rationalizing their prejudice), and this certainly bears practically on how courts can and should function regarding these kinds of cases. But the main point here is that it in fact would be just not to allow the neo-Nazis to march and speechify in circumstances like those that obtained in Skokie, something that care ethics argues for but liberalism does not. Finally, even if a racist is psychologically damaged by the accumulation of the events of black progress, that damage, supposing it really to exist, reflects their immoral (in both liberal and care-ethical terms)

retraumatization of Holocaust survivors. And in that case the liberal/rationalist "autonomy defense" of free hate speech in the Skokie case seems misguided.

Moreover, the wrong answer about the Skokie case seems to come from putting too much emphasis on rational autonomy and not enough on (sensitivity to) human feeling, its causes and effects. So this case (and it really is a range of cases) suggests that justice is better grounded in such feeling than in purely rationalist considerations. And let me now mention another case (or range of cases) that points toward the same conclusion.

In the past and in many jurisdictions even today, judges are reluctant (and the law doesn't readily allow them) to issue restraining orders against husbands or boyfriends who their wives or girlfriends say have threatened them with violence or have already done violent things to them. Often further judicial/legal process is or has been required, and this has often meant that women are (further) injured or even killed before the further process has taken its course. But why has there been so much reluctance to issue the restraining orders (or have the women guarded through additional police patrols, etc.)? In large part it is out of a sense of the importance of autonomy rights of freedom of movement (and assembly). But this means that until very recently (and only in certain jurisdictions at that), the legal/judicial emphasis has been on autonomy rights rather than the welfare (rights) of women, and I think most of us nowadays—and not just feminists and women—would say that the law has erred in placing so much emphasis on autonomy rights and so little on dangers to women (and children).

But the liberal has precious little room to renavigate these waters. To do so is to place more emphasis on welfare than on civil liberties and the committed liberal (e.g., Rawls, as we shall see in just a moment) is likely to be very uncomfortable with doing so. However, if one thinks the basis of morality and justice doesn't lie in abstractly, rationally considered or intuited rights like autonomy and sees these things, rather, in relation to our own human empathic sensitivities to issues and realities of human welfare, one will once again favor welfare over autonomy. And this is what we nowadays feel is appropriate. We feel that restraining orders and police patrols or bodyguards can be justified much earlier or much more broadly

moral beliefs and dispositions, and the damage that would have been sustained by the Holocaust survivors doesn't reflect any immorality on their part (only on Hitler's). That is also morally relevant to distinguishing these cases.

than traditional political thinking allows, and in the light of its ability to deliver a morally more plausible view of what is called for in cases of threatened or actual abuse, the care-ethical way of grounding its view of such cases and all others is further supported.[6] So even if most Americans think in terms of rationalistic bases for their own intuitions about justice and rights, a care-ethical account of what is foundationally involved in justice and rights delivers more plausible and acceptable normative judgments about various ranges of practical legal cases. I know of no comparable advantages of the rationalistic approach over the care-ethical in regard to other cases, and all this, therefore, constitutes a reason to accept a generalized empathy-emphasizing care-ethical theory of rights and justice—and to abandon the traditional liberal way of conceiving these matters.

And let's be clear about the difference here. Rawls's liberal theory of justice, as applied to developed societies, gives basic civil liberties a lexical priority in relation to (what can be seen as proxies for) considerations of welfare, and on any plausible reading of what he says, this means that the neo-Nazis should have been allowed to march and give speeches even if that would have brought a cost of human welfare to the Holocaust survivors in Skokie. It also means that the law and the courts should hesitate or more than hesitate to interfere with the autonomy rights of free movement of accused husbands who have not yet been allowed or subjected to any legal proceeding or trial.[7] Liberalism in some important contemporary

[6] But what if the wife is lying about her husband's having abused or even threatened her? Won't it then be unfair to the husband if the restraining order is issued on her say-so? In that particular instance an injustice will, I agree, have been done, but the issue is one of just administrative or judicial *policy*, and if the lying wife has no previous record of lying to or misleading officials, then the just policy—for reasons having to do with generally ensuring women's safety—will dictate taking her at her word and issuing the (temporary) restraining order. In certain jurisdictions the law allows dogs "one free bite": even if they bark and growl menacingly, they can't be legally sent to the pound, etc., until and unless they have actually bitten someone. And surely we can and should accord this much scope or leeway to complaining women: one free lie, as it were. In the kinds of cases I am talking about, the interests at stake for wives are more serious than those at risk for husbands, and the care-ethical approach would therefore argue that in all fairness they should trump the (full exercise of the) liberty rights of husbands. The possibility that a wife may be lying for the first time in a judicial proceeding doesn't alter that basic non-equation. However, I am also assuming that any temporary restraining order against the husband won't go on his permanent public record. To make the point I want to make, our case has to be one in which the well-being of the woman is just pitted against the husband's temporary freedom of movement.

[7] On the lexical priority of liberty, see *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls 1971: Sects. 11, 26, 39, and 82). Rawls never dealt with the Skokie case directly or, as far as I know, with issues of spousal abuse. But what he says about freedom of speech in *Political Liberalism* (Rawls 1993: 295f.) supports the present interpretation of his views.

instances really does seem to yield the wrong answers to the sorts of questions we have been discussing, and that in itself gives us reason to question its rationalistic emphasis on autonomy (as traditionally conceived) and its whole way of seeing political issues of morality. Our whole country may buy into that way of seeing things, but if that yields normatively unacceptable results, we have to start theorizing about things differently, and I am

Note too that although American liberals (unlike libertarians) typically favor strict or stricter gun control, it seems difficult to reconcile such a view with belief in the priority of the basic liberties (in what Rawls [*Political Liberalism*: 297] calls "reasonably favorable conditions"). If liberals are inconsistent on this point and could come to recognize this, then perhaps the sheer moral weight of what favors gun control could lead them away from liberalism and in the care-ethical direction I have been arguing for here. And I might add that the issue of liberalism's possible internal inconsistency also arises out of issues concerning free speech. Slander is forbidden free speech, and so too are false advertising and yelling "fire!" in a crowded theater. Can liberalism consistently defend its view of the rights of the neo-Nazis in Skokie and of husbands accused of threatening violence and at the same time accept, as it seems to, the limits on free speech just mentioned? I am inclined to wonder about this because it seems to me, for example, that any argument against "freedom of slander (or libel)" invokes considerations of (non-physical) damage or harm that the liberals downplay in regard to Skokie and spousal abuse.

It is better, rather, to place empathy with harm or damage more centrally in our understanding of human rights. Yes, we have a right to speak freely, but that right can be derived from the fact that it shows a lack of empathic concern for people and what they want in life if one denies them the right to speak freely in most circumstances. And limitations on that right, as with Skokie, can once again be derived from the sensitivity of empathy to what would likely result if the neo-Nazis were allowed to march and speechify there. As with justice, I think our most morally adequate and deep understanding of how we think and feel about (autonomy) rights conforms to care-ethical sentimentalist ideas and not to liberalism or ethical rationalism more generally.

Finally, let me mention Jonathan Haidt's 2012 book *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. This book became quite well known among the educated public when it first appeared, though it aroused less interest among academic moral philosophers. Its assertion that ethical thinking is divided into separate modules in our minds, so that thinking about justice and rights is pretty much isolated from thinking about compassion and benevolence and from thinking about ritual purity and sacredness contradicts almost all philosophers' views of these matters, for utilitarians, Kantians, Aristotelians, care ethicists, intuitionists, and sentimentalist virtue ethicists all agree that morality has a single source and simply disagree about what that source is. The fact that we so naturally qualify the right to free speech in the light of the human damage it would do if someone yelled "fire" in a crowded theater or publicly slandered an enemy shows how far Haidt's view is from the non-modular way people actually think about ethical issues; and in fact Haidt himself demonstrates a curious inconsistency when the title of his book uses "good people" in a non-modular general ethical way despite the clear modularity of his official view of ethics.

arguing that care ethics gives us a way of doing so that yields the right normative answers across a wide range of political issues.[8]

Of course, the defender of liberalism might at this point try to find cases that care ethics can't handle and that liberalism can. But that is something I myself have been unable to do, and if the liberal can't do any better, then they should at the very least start worrying about their own views and pay some serious attention to what care ethics can and does say about political morality. And there is another, possibly deeper reason why rationalist/Kantian liberals should worry about their own views, a reason based on what Carol Gilligan (Gilligan 1982), following psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow (Chodorow 1978), has said about the differing childhood experiences of girls and boys.

Both girls and boys have traditionally been raised by their mothers much more than by their fathers, and this has an asymmetric impact on their development. To meet social or family expectations, boys have had to distance themselves from their mothers in a way that girls traditionally have not, and boys have therefore typically ended up emphasizing and valuing autonomy and separateness and systems of rules of the kind that exist outside the home much more or much more frequently than girls have. But liberalism à la Rawls and Scanlon places its main emphasis on autonomy and systems of rules or principles, and to that extent it reflects or at least corresponds to a typical male, rather than a typical female, upbringing.

This ought to give the Kantian/rationalist liberal pause, but never has. There is no sign in the literature of ethics and political philosophy that liberal philosophers like Rawls and Scanlon (or ethicists like Derek Parfit who

[8] If we Americans think of our political morality as based in rationally-intuited rights of autonomy that trump other ethical considerations, but at the same time are moving or have moved to normative views about hate speech and violence against women that are inconsistent with such a basis for morality, that shows us not to understand or to have understood ourselves very well. What we have taken to be paramount (for us) turns out not to be morally paramount (for us) in ways that can only by and large be quite surprising. So the implications of care ethics are eye-opening, but that is only because we have misapprehended, misunderstood what morality, our own morality, is all about. And, if I may say, I think this ignorance is partly of our own doing. Emotion and thinking about emotion makes many or most of us uneasy and even anxious, so the idea that morality is based in an empathy-rooted emotion like caring is a deeply unsettling and uncomfortable one. But it is time, I think, for us to face these realities, and all the recent focus both on empathy and on caring in our culture and our society (HMOs advertise themselves as, e.g., "the caring folks.") makes it somewhat more likely that we will do so.

also place great emphasis on public systems of rules) have taken notice of what Gilligan and Chodorow say about the difference between typical male and typical female upbringings, and if they did, the fact that their philosophical views correspond so closely to what happens in typical male (but not female) development should make them wonder (but would it?) whether their views are more determined by their upbringing(s) as males than by cogent arguments.[9] Of course, even after wondering about this, they might still try to offer good philosophical arguments for liberalism and against care ethics and other normative views. But to proceed, as these philosophers have, as if the issue of the influence of upbringing (raised by Chodorow and Gilligan) didn't exist seems to me to be wrongheaded or else oblivious in a way that one might well describe as academically/intellectually negligent and perhaps even as academically/intellectually arrogant. (Remember our relevant discussion of such issues in Chap. 4.) Alternatively, and using Gilligan's terminology, one could describe this lack of reaction from liberal philosophers as a rather new and distinctively academic instance of men *not listening to the voice of women*. Now care ethicists may face a similar problem, given what Chodorow and Gilligan say about the relation of care thinking (and its refusal to make rule systems fundamental to ethical thought and action) to typical traditional female upbringing. But the care ethicists have all at least read Gilligan, and so they know about the statistical relation between different kinds of upbringing and different moral orientations; whereas the male philosophers I have just mentioned haven't even got that far with the perplexing issue of how upbringing affects or should affect theoretical moral views.[10] So as I see it, and primarily on the basis of the arguments I offered earlier, there is reason to favor care ethics over liberalism as an approach to political issues of morality.

Now and finally let me remind the reader where this appendix is supposed to fit in this book. In the first place, it nails down what was said in Chap. 4 about the failure of rationalist male philosophers to really listen to

[9] See, e.g., John Rawls (1971); T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (1998); and Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (1984) and *On What Matters* (2011). All these philosophers (even Parfit in *On What Matters*) are influenced by Kant, but it is worth noting that recent female neo-Kantians—e.g., Onora O'Neill, Barbara Herman, Marcia Baron, and Christine Korsgaard—don't place the same emphasis on systems of rules that male neo-Kantians do. Again, this is something that seems fairly predictable, so I think we all should pay more attention to and worry about issues of psychological origin.

[10] The idea that a view's origins can be relevant to assessing our reasons for believing it is a familiar theme in the work of Bernard Williams and has also been advocated by Alison Jaggar, by me, and by other feminists.

(or show respect for) what the proponents of care ethics have had to say. The only place I know of where care ethics is at any length critically engaged by an ethical rationalist is in *Sex and Social Justice* (OUP, 2000, ch. 2); and the author, Martha Nussbaum is, of course, a woman. (I think Nussbaum's criticisms of Noddings are sometimes wildly unfair to Nodding's actual views as expressed in her writings.) However, the philosophically more important purpose of this appendix has been to deliver on a promissory note issued in Chap. 8 about the overall justificatory structure of the work I have been doing in recent years. Chapter 2 tells us how an empathy-emphasizing ethics of care can be grounded in yin-yang, but apart from the present appendix nothing in the present book indicates how ideas about political and legal justice can be understood plausibly in terms of empathy and thus, ultimately, in yin-yang terms. Given the argument in PYY for the fundamental value of yin and yang and yin-yang as an indissoluble unity and given the arguments in MS (not repeated here, though referred to in Chap. 5) about how respect, autonomy, deontology, and moral semantics can be understood in empathic sentimentalist terms, the foundational project is completed via the present appendix. Remember too, however, and as Chap. 2 indicated, that this extremely ambitious project is actually part of an even larger project that takes on epistemology, aesthetics, and metaphysics in yin-yang terms. This is the subject of my forthcoming book *A Larger Yin-Yang Philosophy: From Mind to Cosmic Harmony* (now being translated and eventually to be published with side-by-side English and Chinese texts). If I am right, then yin-yang can be basic to large swaths of philosophy even if it takes analytic philosophizing to make good on that philosophical conclusion.

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Appendix C: Yin-Yang, Adult Identity, and the Good Life

Earlier I this book I have offered some reasons for thinking that virtue is best understood in terms of somewhat purified traditional notions of yin and yang. But I have never previously sought to show how yin-yang virtue relates to the having of a good life. Chinese thought tended to be optimistic about that relationship (as one sees explicitly brought out, for example, in the *Yizhuan*), but I don't believe that anyone in China ever sought to spell out the overall condition or conditions of human well-being in the way that is so familiar from Western philosophy. Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Epicureans all theorized in general philosophical terms about the nature of the good life, and in modern times there has been much speculation and argumentation in the West about what a good life overall involves, but all this thinking hasn't yet led to any agreed-on basic conclusions about the good life, and I think it is time for Chinese thought to make its contribution to what the West has been so preoccupied with for all this time.

In this appendix I shall draw on such thought making especial use of yin and yang, but I shall also draw on some of the West's psychological theorizing about the nature of adult living. This will lead to a conception of the or a good life that has much more in common with Ruism/Confucianism than with Daoism, but that, more significantly, brings together Western academic psychology with Chinese ideas about yin and yang that can ground our thinking about human virtue. The West has long struggled with the question of how human virtue is related to good human living

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(this was the main focus of Plato's *Republic*), but I shall try to bring these notions together here in a new way, one that, as I have just indicated, draws both on developmental psychology in the West and on yin-yang. But in order to get started here I want to first remind you of how yin and yang are supposed to be understood for our present purposes. Next I shall briefly recall Chap. 8's discussion of what the West has had to say about developing and having an adult identity, and we shall see how Ruism fits in with such ideas much better than Daoism does. Then the final argument will show how Ruism-friendly yin-yang thinking about human virtue leads to and fits snugly with a Ruism-friendly yin-yang conception of the good life as involving a certain kind of developed adult identity.

1

The traditions of Chinese thought involve two somewhat distinct emphases in thinking philosophically about yin and yang, one based on the supposed alternating opposition of yin and yang, the other based on yin and yang as mutually peaceable and necessarily complementary. In this book I have been making use of the latter conception of yin-yang, and we have in particular understood yin as receptivity and yang as directed purpose or impulse. We have also seen how yin and yang thus understood necessitate each other, as with the example described in Chap. 2 of inextricably connected yin empathy and yang motivation to help. I shall continue to use yin and yang along these lines in order to offer you a picture of what a good life can or must involve. But for present purposes I think the best way to connect yin and yang to having a good life is via the idea of adult living and adult identities. To do this I shall have to draw on the work of Erik Erikson in a somewhat fuller way than I did in Chap. 8.

In his famous book *Childhood and Society* (Norton, 1950), Erikson argued that children develop toward adulthood via various psycho-social stages. One such stage, for example, is toilet training, and Erikson held that the task of being or becoming toilet trained is an important part of a child's development toward adulthood. In fact, Erikson held that there are several stages to be passed through successfully on the way to living as an adult, but I don't think we need to dwell here on what those stages are and how Erikson theorized what counts as success or as failure with respect to them. More relevantly, we ought to concentrate on his views about what it is to be an adult and, more particularly, what he took to be essential to developing an adult "identity."

According to Erikson's original thinking, an adult identity is forged, after a period of uncertainty Erikson dubbed "identity crisis," by the choice of a career. When Erikson was reminded that women traditionally don't have careers, he said that a woman's identity is forged through her forming an intimate and ongoing relationship with some man who has a career. Well, you can imagine what feminists made of such a distinction. Today we think women and men can both have careers or occupations outside the home, and we also think they are both capable of forming and sustaining long-term relationships. It makes more sense, therefore, to see both men's and women's adult identities as involving some sort of choice or commitment re both relationships and career occupations. I have elsewhere defended this non-sexist feminism-friendly view of adult identity formation, but the fullest realization of such a view also requires us to see that not every (educated) adult seeks to balance or "juggle" career and family; some put most of their adult emphasis on career-building and some put it on relationship-building, so the best formula for understanding adult identity, one that applies equally to (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and transgendered) men and women, would involve saying that a choice of adult identity involves a choice or commitment about *how much* emphasis to put on family or other relationships and *how much* emphasis to put on career self-fulfillment in one's life.

Having said this, we are now in a position to see how yin and yang can help us understand adult living, i.e., living based on one or another choice of adult identity. For whichever way one chooses to live or is committed to living as an adult, yin and yang will help define what it is to be fully adult in that given way. On the surface, for example, someone who has and has chosen a career seems to exemplify yang directed purpose much much more than yin receptivity, but when you think about it, you can see that this is mistaken. If one is really serious and "adult" about taking on and having a career, one has to be very receptive to the traditions of one's chosen field and to what others in the same field or profession are thinking and doing. Not to do this is to be half-hearted and even, one can say, immature in the way one is going about the career. One is not doing things in a full adult way, and similar points apply to those, male or female, who choose to be stay-at-home parents and homemakers rather than pursue a career.

Again at first glance one might think that the stay-at-home male or female is primarily and predominantly yin and receptive in their orientation to their family and the world. A good mother or father has to be

empathic with their children if they are going to care properly for them and help them develop toward their own adulthood, and empathy, as we have said, is a form of receptivity. But too much emphasis on receptivity ignores what the good parent, the adult parent, has to *do* for their child or children. Yes, they have to be receptive to their child's needs and understand, for example, when their child need medical or even psychiatric attention. They have to be able, again receptively, to see where their child's talents lie if they are to be good and adult-like parents, but all of these things involve practical reactivity or responsiveness. The parent who sees a need in their child has to be or should be active in helping the child meet that specific need, and this is yang purposiveness at work in the family context. If the parent doesn't act, vigorously, on behalf of their child and his or her specific needs, they are slacking at the job of parenting, are, again, not acting like adults. A parent to be a good parent has to act in an adult or, we can say, parental way toward their children, and analogous points apply to home-making.

All in all, then, one needs a healthy dose of both yin and yang qualities in order to function as an adult, and these qualities work together and inextricably within adult lives. If someone who has chosen a career doesn't bother to find out what others are doing in their field, they are neither receptive nor purposeful in that career. Indeed, one can say that their half-heartedness shows them to have not really made the serious choice of career that is or can constitutes the relevant kind of adult identity. Similar points apply to the relationship end of adult identity, and it is fair to say, therefore, that adult identity is constituted by virtuous yin receptivity and yang directedness as applied to how one lives overall rather than, say, how one treats some stranger who needs one's help.

2

This way of conceiving adulthood as falling under the concepts of yin and yang has implications for the long-standing disagreement or conflict between the Confucian tradition (Ruism) and Daoism. Adult living and adult identities involve commitments, involvements, habits, and virtues, and Daoism as standardly interpreted doesn't place much value on such things. The whole idea of adult identity and adult living as I have described it would be anathema to the Daoist, but most of what I have said will resonate well, I think, with Ruism. Of course, Ruism has never delved into childhood development in a psychologically oriented way. The main empha-

sis has been on moral development rather than on development or maturation more generally, so it is no wonder that the Ruists rarely if ever focus on what it is to be an adult rather than a child. The distinction, for example, between a xiaoren (mean-spirited individual) and a shengren (sage) or junzi (man of honor) is a moral distinction, not a generally developmental one, but the picture of adult human life that emerges from what I have said above seems particularly Confucian if one emphasizes and is mindful of the distinction *between* Ruism and Daoism. Daoism rejects the imprisonment of Confucian habits, duties, involvements, commitments, and virtues, but what I have said about adulthood subscribes in its own distinctive way to habits, duties, involvements, commitments, and virtues and to that extent clearly resembles Ruism and diverges starkly from Daoism.[1]

But even Confucianism doesn't put the same kind of emphasis on yin and yang as I have been doing here. The earliest Confucians—Kongzi, Mengzi, and Xunzi—don't apply yin and yang to ethical issues, but the neo-Confucian Zhou Dunyi did do that even if neo-Confucians like Wang Yangming did not. But Zhou used an oppositional notion of yin and yang; yin was rest and yang motion, and he tried (literally) to bring these ideas down to earth by speaking of yin as softness and yang as hardness. Moral virtue was then supposed to involve some kind of oppositional blending or balancing of softness and hardness, but his discussion is more programmatic than it is specific. Ren or benevolence, for example, was said to be soft, but if softness is the earthly equivalent of heavenly restfulness, it is far from clear that benevolence constitutes a kind of rest or restfulness. The ren person, after all acts, and has to act in order to count as having that virtue. The non-oppositional complementarity yin-yang view of virtue seems to have a lot more to say and to say more specifically about virtue than Zhou's brief discussion encompasses or even suggests.[2] But still, and

[1] I list both commitments and involvements here because they are not the same thing. Philosophers are always talking about commitments in regard to love and friendship, but unless one is talking about formal marriage, that term implies something more deliberate and self-conscious than is necessary to ordinary love and friendship. It in fact implies some kind of overt *act* of commitment. The notion of involvement doesn't have these connotations: one can be emotionally involved with or tied to someone without having performed some act of tying. The latter would indicate commitment, but in most cases involvement is the more accurate concept.

[2] There is a lack of fit between what Zhou says about cosmology and what he says about ethics that is arguably due to a lack of fit between traditional Chinese metaphysics (e.g., the *I Ching*) and early non-metaphysical Confucian ideas about moral virtue. I am indebted on this point to discussion with Yang Guorong.

this may be the most important point, neo-Confucianism saw value in both yin and yang, and this is something one doesn't find in Daoism.

Moreover, the idea of yin and yang as mutually inextricable sits much better with neo-Confucianism than with Daoism. Wang Yangming may not have relied explicitly on yin and yang in his discussions of virtue, but what he does explicitly say *lends itself* to being conceptualized in terms of mutually and inextricably complementary yin and yang. Wang famously argued that virtue is knowledge, which is to say that if one doesn't act virtuously, that can only be because one doesn't fully take in the realities of one's circumstances. In a way that can remind one of Socrates, Wang held that if one knows things as they really are, one inevitably will act virtuously, and put in my terms of yin and yang, one can say that this means that if one is epistemically yin receptive to the facts around one, one will yang be automatically motivated to act in the specific way that the situation calls for and that constitutes acting virtuously in that situation.

This sort of tight connection between receptivity and action would not, I think, be allowed for in the Daoist tradition. For the Daoist nothing makes one act; one acts naturally and goes with the flow, and the idea that if one sees a situation accurately, one has to act in a certain responsive way goes against the whole Daoist idea of spontaneous natural action or wu wei. So by deploying yin and yang in a way that sees them as mutually necessitating I move far away from Daoism and toward Wang Yangming. Even if Wang didn't understand the connection between understanding or knowledge and motivation to act in terms of yin and yang, the present conceptualization of yin and yang is not only compatible with what Wang said but also, and as I have argued elsewhere, helps give philosophical and ethical foundations to what he says about virtue and knowledge. We have seen how, in the case of ren or compassion/benevolence, the yin of empathic receptivity necessitates the yang of motivation to help, so in that case and a wide range of others, the tight connection between yin and yang can help explain and even justify Wang's and perhaps also Socrates's idea of a tight connection between knowledge and virtue. But now we have to see how all the philosophical ideas described here prepare us for a better understanding of what is involved in leading or having a good life.

3

Roughly, I want to argue that a good life is one that fulfills the goals or aspirations that are endemic to adult identities understood as involving yin and yang in inextricable (and virtuous) relationship. Whether one chooses to primarily emphasize (family) relationships or to primarily emphasize one's career or to try to balance the two, one has certain goals and aspirations. The person who chooses to be the primary caregiver in a family not only wants continuing pleasant and active relationships with their children, but wants their children to grow up and flourish as adults. The person who mainly emphasizes a chosen career wants or aspires to achieve certain goals, and of course the person who balances or juggles has both these sorts of goals.

But things don't always go well with regard to such goals or aspirations or desires. One can die young, one's career can be blocked or cut short in various ways, one's children can die or become addicted to drugs in ways that lead them to live miserable lives and to reject their relationship with you, the parent. Aristotle held that such unfortunate happenings cannot prevent us from living virtuously in the face of life's challenges, and he also held that if one lives long enough, one's virtuous response to life's challenges constitutes the having of a good (though not necessarily a blessed) life. Most of us, however, disagree with this picture, and what I have been saying above fits this common assumption or point of view. If enough of one's adult aspirations are not fulfilled, then one's life, however virtuously lived and however much such virtuous living can be understood in yin-yang terms, is not or has not been a good life. So my rather commonsensical idea is that living a good life means leading a yin and yang adult life that is fairly successful in terms of its yin and yang aspirations or goals.

This has some interesting implications. It implies that a life cannot be good if one doesn't get enough of what one wanted in and for one's life. It also implies that one can have a good life even if one is crippled with disease or paralysis as long as one's basic career or relationship goals are mainly being fulfilled. Of course, the idea of being mainly fulfilled is somewhat vague, but I think that at this point it is not a bad thing if one has to be somewhat vague about this matter. In *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard, 1971), John Rawls talks of various liberties and also talks about the moral imperative to equally maximize everyone's set or package of liberties. But this doesn't tell us how liberties are to be weighed against one another, and I think and Rawls seemingly believed that there was no harm in that

and that one could leave till later some kind of working out of what liberties are more important and what packages are in terms of liberty worth more than others. I say the same thing about the idea of having enough of one's aspirations being fulfilled or of having one's aspirations mainly or to a large extent fulfilled.

The conception of a good life briefly offered here has other interesting and arguably attractive features in relation to other views on the subject. There has been, for example, a division of opinion in the West over whether the good life has to involve action and activity. Hedonism about the good life holds that if one's life is mainly pleasurable, it will count as a good one, and having pleasure doesn't as such involve much of anything in the way of activity. But others and most notably Aristotle think of a good life as mainly a life of activity, virtuous activity, and my proffered theory or picture of the good life represents a kind of compromise or, perhaps better, a kind of balancing between active and non-active factors. An adult identity involves action, but whether it succeeds in terms of its goals or aspirations lies to a considerable extent beyond the actions of a given adult. Whether one will be killed or one's children will be killed by some unforeseeable accident is not a matter of how one acts but, rather, of what fate or the world dishes out to one in ways beyond one's control.

Moreover, the emphasis on adult goals accommodates another feature of our thinking, and Aristotle's thinking, about good lives. They cannot be cut short of adulthood and still be good lives. But then too, and as I have claimed contrary to Aristotle, they also have to achieve a goodly portion or proportion of one's adult goals or, perhaps more accurately, the goals one has as part of one's adult identity. An adult can like to watch baseball or old movies and can like vodka and mangos more than beer and broccoli, but these will presumably not constitute any part of the goals that flow from or determine their adult identities. This means that according to my conception, if a person is told by their doctor that their excitement at watching baseball or their consumption of vodka isn't good for their health and if they reluctantly swear off those things, their life can still be a good one if the basic goals of their adult identity are being met. Again, and taking things in a holistic way, I think such an implication makes sense. (What I have just said also implies that any totally spontaneous

person who fulfills the Daoist ideal doesn't count as leading a good overall life.)[3]

More, much more, needs to be said by way of completing and also justifying the picture of the good life I have just been sketching. But the theory I have offered does have some attractive features and in these last paragraphs I have described some of them. Also, it is good to have a yin and yang account of the good life that can go along with yin and yang thinking about human virtue and rationality. The way I have incorporated yin and yang into that account also relies on ideas about human development and adult identity that haven't featured in previous discussions East or West of the good life. This in effect opens up the discussion of the good life toward ideas in developmental psychology and makes our approach perhaps count as more psychologically realistic than what has been said previously by philosophers. Interestingly too, those like Erikson who have discussed adult identity and the human "life cycle" have never really or fully engaged with the philosophical/ethical task of describing what a good life consists in. But what Erikson does say pushes us, I think, in the general direction of the present view, and we can think of what has been presented here, therefore, as a way of integrating yin-yang and developmental psychology into a picture of human flourishing or good lives that goes well beyond what either of the subject areas thus integrated has to say on its own.

[3] There is also a major issue over whether this kind of total spontaneity is possible for any human being. If we all need love, then that already undermines the idea of a totally spontaneous wu wei "psychology." The Daoist might want to claim that we can overcome that need through a correct understanding of their philosophy, but I believe this is wishful thinking, and in any event one doesn't exemplify spontaneity or wu wei if one acts out of a desire to exemplify, or the conviction that one should try to exemplify, the Daoist ideal of wu wei. (Compare the final section of *Being and Nothingness* where Sartre points out that to value escaping bad faith is to exemplify bad faith.) Finally, I should mention that the kinds of malefactors described in Chap. 6 are so full of rage, fear and the desire for revenge that they have arguably become incapable of forging a truly adult identity and of having, according to the present view, good lives. Their miserable childhoods in effect swamp the rest of their lives and leave them without the capacity to form the kind of adult identity that involves leaving childhood decisively behind.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

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