

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

MASTER THESIS

**WHERE DOES MORALITY COME FROM? HOW CAN
PSYCHOLOGY HELP ANSWER THE QUESTION:
IS MORALITY INNATE OR ACQUIRED?**

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**THESIS SUPERVISOR
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ISTANBUL, 2022

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by

NADIA GAALOUL

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts in Philosophy**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR
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ISTANBUL, 2022

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZ

AHLAKIN KÖKENİ NEDİR? PSİKOLOJİ "AHLAK DOĞUŞTAN MI?"
SORUSUNU CEVAPLAMAYA NASIL YARDIMCI OLABİLİR?

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Bu araştırmada iki şey yapmaya çalışıyorum, ilki ahlakın doğuştan mı yoksa sonradan mı kazanıldığı sorusuna felsefe ve psikoloji yoluyla cevap vermek. İkincisi, hangi felsefi etik kuramın gerçekçi olarak en doğru olduğunu keşfetmektir. Aristoteles, ahlakın, pratik bilgelik ve alışkanlık yoluyla elde edilebilecek erdemli bir karakterden geldiğini savunur, ahlakın kazanıldığına inanır. Kant, ahlakın akla dayalı kategorik zorunluluklardan türetildiğini iddia ederken, doğuştan gelen dürtülerimize güvenemeyeceğimiz, çünkü bunların bizi radikal kötülüğe götüreceği görüşündedir. Mill ayrıca ahlakın akıldan geldiğine inanır, ancak bu aklın ahlaki bir eylemi ürettiği haz ve iyiliğin miktarına göre yargılayan fayda ilkesine dayandığını iddia eder. Psikologlarla ilgili olarak, iki argüman var. Ahlakın kazanıldığına inananlar, onun kültürel olarak koşullu olduğunu savunurlar ve Kant ve Mill gibi, doğuştan gelen duygularımıza ve içgüdülerimize güvenemeyeceğimize inanırlar, çünkü bunlar bizi yoldan çıkarır, bu doğuştan gelen duyguların bir kısmı empatidir, ki bu duygularımıza ahlaki konularda rehberlik etmesine güvenilmez. Ahlakın doğuştan geldiğine inananlar, onun evrimin bir ürünü olduğunu ve kısmen doğuştan geldiğini, bizi ahlaki davranmaya ve ahlak yasalarını ve kurallarını kültürümüzden öğrenmeye motive eden empatiyi içeren doğuştan gelen mekanizmalara sahip olduğumuzu söylerler. Ahlak kısmen doğuştan gelse de, bilişsel yapılarımız sınırlı olduğundan ve her ahlaki ipucunu düşünmek ve bunlara dikkat etmek zorunda kalırsak zihinsel yorgunluğa neden olacağından ahlaki alışkanlıklar yaratma sorumluluğumuz vardır. Ampirik bulguların

çoęu, Aristoteles'in teorisinin en yakın olduęuna iřaret ediyor, ahlakın tamamen kazanıldıęı fikri dıřında iddia ettięi řeyde haklı gzkmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ahlak, Akıl, Doęuřtan, Empati.



ABSTRACT

WHERE DOES MORALITY COME FROM? HOW CAN PSYCHOLOGY HELP ANSWER THE QUESTION: IS MORALITY INNATE?

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In this research, I attempt to do two things. I will first answer whether morality is innate or acquired through philosophy and psychology. Second, I will uncover which philosophical, ethical theory is the most realistically accurate. Aristotle maintains that morality comes from a virtuous character that can be attained through practical wisdom and habituation. He believes that morality is acquired. Kant claims that morality is derived from categorical imperatives that are based on reason. He has the view that we cannot trust our innate impulses because they will lead us to radical evil. Mill also believes that morality comes from reason, yet he sees that this reason is based on the principle of utility, which judges a moral action based on the amount of pleasure and goodness it produces. Regarding Psychologists, there are two arguments. Thinkers that believe that morality is acquired argue that it is culturally conditioned and, like Kant and Mill, believe that we cannot trust our innate feelings and instincts as they will lead us astray. Part of those innate feelings is empathy, which cannot be trusted to guide our morality. Those that believe morality is innate see that it is a product of evolution and that it is partially innate, that we have innate mechanisms, that include empathy, that motivate us to act morally and learn moral laws and rules from our culture. Even though morality is partially innate, we are still responsible for creating moral habits since our cognitive structures are limited and will cause us mental fatigue if we have to think about and attend to every moral cue.

Most empirical findings point to Aristotle's theory being the closest. He was right in what he claimed, except for the idea that morality is fully acquired.

Keywords: Empathy, Innate, Morality, Reason.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Where does morality come from? There are two possible answers to this question. The first possible answer is that it is innate, inherently present in us from before we had the chance to learn it from our environment. Or the second possible answer is that it could be acquired, learned or picked up from those around us, like our family and culture. This topic is within the domain of the nature vs nurture debate that has been ongoing for decades; what's stronger, our genes or our environment? Is morality inherited or learned? If morality is innate could mean many things; it could refer to moral reasoning, moral sensing, moral knowledge, or moral action/practice. Is it the innateness of virtues or the application of morality? If morality is innate, to what extent does it influence our actions and character? And if it is acquired, why do we feel certain immediate feelings in response to hearing about a slaughter of an innocent person? These questions lead to many other questions that need to be answered to reach a conclusion. These are questions I will be answering in my research.

In this research, I will be looking into what philosophers have to say about the question of where morality comes from. I will focus on three philosophers and their ethical theories: Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's deontological ethics, and Mill's utilitarian ethics. I will also go beyond what philosophy says about the issue to seek answers in applied real life. In doing so, I will discover which philosopher's ethical theory is the most realistically applicable. My method for doing this is to explore various psychological research. Thus, my aim is to discover two things; 1) how do philosophy and psychology answer the question of where morality comes from, and (2) which philosopher's claims are the closest to what empirical findings reveal. I will start by defining innateness and the innateness of morality. In the first section, I will mention the philosopher's ethical theories and where they think morality comes from. The following section will be the psychology section, starting with those who

believe morality is acquired, not innate. After this, I will briefly go over the traditional psychological accounts of morality being innate. Then I will delve into all the psychologists arguing that morality is innate. In this section, I will mention the importance of empathy for morality, how the innateness of morality might influence our ethical behaviour, and why we still need to cultivate moral habits for moral action. I will conclude by answering the question of whether morality is innate or acquired through the findings of psychology. Finally, I will discuss which philosopher's theory is the closest to empirical evidence.

1.1. What Is Innateness?

To answer the question of whether morality is innate or acquired, we must first understand the concept of 'innateness'. Do we possess innate traits that are unalterable, thus determining who we are for eternity? Is Behaviourism correct in assuming that humans can be controlled under specific conditions? Or do we have innate traits that are more like tendencies, capable of being modified and developed, giving us the ability to choose who we are?

"Why is the concept of 'innateness' important for this research? If morality is innate and innateness means a predetermined character/actions, then without even trying, we will be moral. This makes understanding the concept of 'innateness' crucial for this research." If it is the case that morality is not innate, then it means no matter what we do, we will always have to struggle against ourselves to be moral. Yet, if it is the case that morality is innate and that innateness acts as a tendency that can be worked on and developed, then it means that we have the capability to be moral, and if we decide to work on that morality and act upon it, we will end up becoming moral people. And the same can be said if we are not innately moral.

In psychology and philosophy, the term 'innate' usually refers to traits that are fixed. This idea that we have traits in us that cannot be changed has sparked a huge debate about nature versus nurture over centuries. The idea of traits that are innate and traits that are acquired and what makes us who we are. The traits that are 'innate' in us or the environment we grow up in and learn in? The origin of this debate was Darwin, who put forth the idea that we develop what is instinctive to us through years of

environmental adaptation to argue against theological nativists claiming that our instincts were given to us by God and, for that reason, cannot be changed by learning. Darwin also acknowledged that we are capable of acquiring habits by repeating behaviours until the behaviour becomes automatic. Thus, he believed that both natural selection and inherited habits play a role in the development of instinct. This sparked the interest of psychologists in the following decades, who decided to take on the debate (Griffiths & Linn, 2022).

William James proposed a theory that went against the theological nativist's claim that instincts are unmodifiable. James believed that humans have a large number of instincts, and he said:

“Most instincts are implanted for the sake of giving rise to habits and... this purpose, once accomplished, the instincts themselves, as such, have no *raison d'être* in the psychological economy, and consequently fade away” (James, 1887).

For James, instinctive behaviour was a basic behaviour with no previous experience. He believed that this basic behaviour could be modified through using learning, reason and habits. His theory was then altered built upon by psychologists in the next years, one of whom was McDougall, who argued that instincts are:

“an inherited or innate psycho-physical disposition which determines its possessor to perceive, and to pay attention to, objects of a certain class, to experience an emotional excitement of a particular quality upon perceiving such an object, and to act in regard to it in a particular manner, or, at least, to experience an impulse to such action.” (McDougall, 1921-1922).

Later in the 20th century, Noam Chomsky offered a new explanation of language acquisition to counter behaviourists' radical deterministic claims about human nature. He put forward the idea that the capacity to learn language is innate. He argued that children must have an innate mechanism in their minds that enables them to reliably learn the grammar of their native language, given the 'poverty of stimulus' argument (children are not exposed to enough linguistic stimulus for them to pick up on every feature of their language). The reason why this model was

important during this time was that it created a consensus in psychology that there are innate traits present in the mind before adequate exposure to the environment that explains patterns of childhood development. It is important to distinguish between the definition of innateness in a biological and inherited sense and in a psychological sense.

Here the definition of innateness that I will be referring to is the one used by the APA Dictionary of Psychology:

“Denoting a capability or characteristic existing in an organism from birth, belonging to the original or essential constitution of the body or mind. Innate processes should be distinguished from those that develop later in infancy and childhood under maturational control.” (Psychology, 2023).

Innateness here functions in a similar manner to traits; they have the tendency to appear in certain situations and motivate and direct behaviour in a certain direction but are in no way deterministic of how behaviour will be. Meaning an innate intuition or impulse may arise, and the actor decides whether or not to foster this impulse. It can be modified, developed or worked on by learning or habituation.

1.2. Innateness of Morality

Here whether morality is innate could denote many kinds of moral knowledge; it could mean moral reasoning, which is the ability to understand why something is wrong or right, moral sensing or feeling, which is the feeling that gives rise to the inclination of whether something is right or wrong, moral judging or evaluation which involves various high-order functions such as being able to identify when and where people are responsible for their actions, the mental states involved in people's actions and the recognition that bad behaviour requires punishment and good behaviour warrants reward (moral retribution) as well as the idea that when someone does something wrong, they need to make it right (moral restitution) or moral practice, the actual behaviour that results from moral cognition, it could also mean moral knowledge in the sense of knowing moral rules, norms and principles which involve more of the rational faculty. A few questions arise here: if morality is innate,

which does it refer to? And how does it contribute to moral action or moral character? Does the innateness of morality mean we are innately good, and so we don't have to put in as much effort?

In this thesis, I will refer to all these kinds of moral knowledge to see which, if not all, are innate and in what way they contribute to moral action and moral character. I will also attempt to answer the other questions I mentioned here to see the implications of the innateness of morality.



CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS INTO THE NATURE OF MORALITY

2.1. Virtue Ethics: Aristotle's Ethics

Virtue ethics focuses on moral character and virtue rather than duty (deontological) or consequences (utilitarianism). A virtue is a trait of character that is of excellence. An inherent quality that cannot be seen when an action is carried out, similar to intentions. For instance, if someone does not lie and is honest because they fear being caught or believe it is the most beneficial for them (out of fear of consequences), then it cannot be said that this person has the virtue of honesty. One possesses the virtue of honesty when one decides to be honest in order to say the truth and not a lie, but this has to be the reason each time the person acts. So, in this manner, this sense of virtue is what Aristotle calls 'natural virtue' (Hurthouse & Pettigrove, 2018) (Athanassoulis, n.d.).

However, this, for Aristotle, is acquired and not innately present in us. It is present in us before we reach full virtue. He believed that when we (as children) first begin to behave morally, we pick it up from those around us, mainly our parents and elders in society. Through constant imitation of these virtuous actions, they eventually become second nature to us (Kalliney, 1996).

Full moral virtue is 'a unified psychological disposition involving full character virtue and practical wisdom that results from successful habituation.' Full or perfect virtue is when one can act virtuously in a smooth manner, without having to struggle with opposing temptations or desires, and continence. This is where one maintains the will power or control over opposing desires to still do what they should (Leunissen, 2017).

- Eudaimonism (Happiness, Contentment, Fulfilment)

Aristotle believes that actions have goals, and the main goal in life is to reach this state of happiness (eudaimonia). His argument is a teleological one in which he sees that the purpose or function of humans is reason. He adds that what differentiates humans from other beings is their ability to reason; thus, their function in life is to use this reason to reach the ultimate truth and cultivate virtues rather than giving in to their desires (like animals do). Therefore, to be a person of virtue, you must use this reason to guide your actions and repeat those actions until you reach the excellence of character. One can only reach eudaimonia by fulfilling our purpose, and in order to fulfil our human purpose, one must acquire an excellent character or virtues in order to be good to others and use reason to be good.

- Practical Wisdom

If one presupposes that people are motivated only by emotion or propensity, then they may fall into the mistake of thinking that behaving virtuously all the time, too much, is always a good thing. However, although we contain emotion and will be influenced by it to act or by our natural tendencies, we also possess rationality and have the capacity to decide. Since there is such a thing as too much of a good thing, it can lead an originally virtuous act to become an immoral one. This can be seen when children act on virtue yet end up messing things up. Therefore, what is needed is something Aristotle calls 'practical wisdom'. As the name suggests, it is the knowledge and wisdom of how to apply these virtuous. Practical wisdom can come about with time and experience or by being able to identify which factors of a situation are relevant, more important than others. Aristotle claims that through repetition, virtues are formed, like the formation of habits. He believes that one's character comes from habits. However, he distinguishes between the kind of habits one may slip into unconsciously and without making any active effort and the kind of habits that come from one's conscious decision and controlled repetitive efforts. He maintains that an ethical character comes from these voluntary and controlled actions. Furthermore, he clarifies that being virtuous means acting in a virtuous manner; knowing virtue is not enough if one does not act on it. In this sense, he

believes that moral virtues are not innate since they can be learned by repetitive practice.

"It is by doing just acts that a just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man" (Athanasoulis, n.d.)

- The Golden Mean of Virtue

Qualities of character all have opposite sides; a good virtue has an opposite side that is bad. For instance, honesty and generosity are seen as good virtues, yet, if one is always honest, it may lead to them becoming brutally honest and hurting others. The same can be said for generosity; too much generosity may lead someone to have nothing for themselves. Thus, Aristotle says that there is always a middle point that can be reached, and to develop what he sees as a good character, people should always aim for the middle point. So, one must find the midpoint between brutal honesty and failing to see what must be said and the middle point between being stingy and giving too much. Aristotle says that some people have excess or deficiencies in traits, and for those people, it would be best to attempt to behave in the opposite ways they tend to behave. For instance, if one has a deficiency in being honest and tends to hold back too often, Aristotle advises this person to be honest in times they would feel like holding back. In doing so, he believes that people with deficiencies or excess will reach the middle-balanced point. The way to do this is through deliberately behaving in the right way at the right time repetitively until it becomes habitual and requires less effort over time.

2.2. Deontological Ethics: Kant's Ethics

Like Aristotle, Kant believes that what differentiates us humans from other beings is our ability to reflect and use reason, and in order to be moral, we must use reason. He sees that morality is based on duty and has to be a constant, and is universal. He claims that morality follows what he called "categorical imperatives" (Hanson) which are moral obligations derived from reason that you must follow regardless of your desires and wants. In addition to this, he claims that there are formulations to this, mainly the universality principle and the humanity principle. The universality

principle holds that moral rules must be fair and applicable to all in order for them to be fair. To illustrate, in any action you will carry out, you must think of the maxim behind it (the governing law) and think about the consequence of what would happen if everybody did it; you cannot give yourself exceptions. For instance, if everybody stole, then the world would end up not having any possessions, and it would lead to corruption of the value of money, and so on. Therefore, stealing is immoral (Hanson).

As for the principle of humanity, Kant's idea was that we must not treat others as a means to an end. This is because human beings in themselves are an end, and by treating them as such, we are acknowledging their humanity; we have free will and are self-governed, and we can set goals and reach them. To further illustrate, we should not lie or deceive others as they will end up making a decision based on wrong information; this deprives them of their self-autonomy to make the right decision, and it means that we are treating them as a means to an end. Thus, we must treat others fairly and morally.

Regardless, Kant also believes that we have a universal and innate propensity towards evil and in trying to perfect ourselves, we will always struggle against our innate tendency; we will be in a constant fight with ourselves to be ethical (Hanson).

Here, when Kant uses the term propensity, he means by it that it is an innate feature of people that may be used as a motivating feature in human life. He sees that human character is made up of predispositions which we do not have control over, paired with our propensities to behave in a certain way. This way can be either in compliance with moral law or against it. Yet it is the responsibility of the person to form their character in a way that complies with them. He claims that humans have a natural inclination to forgo moral law due to our desires. However, he does mention that if one makes the moral law his governing law for all choices, then and only then can one be morally good. Yet, if one chooses an alternative egoistic law, then moral law becomes subordinate to this law. So, in essence, either one chooses an all-governing moral law or moral law will be subjected to another maxim, and when this happens, it leads to what Kant calls "radical evil" (Hanson). Additionally, there are basic predispositions that we maintain that may be considered good under the

condition that they are subordinate and in compliance with moral law. For Kant, there are three basic dispositions; these are 1) animality, (2) personality, and (3) humanity. He claims that animality is not the source of radical evil as it is necessary for survival,

(Religion 6:35): “For not only do [the natural inclinations] bear no direct relation to evil . . . we also cannot presume ourselves responsible for their existence (we cannot because as connatural to us, natural inclinations do not have us for their author).”

Our predisposition to personality also cannot be the source of radical evil as it contains the rationality that is necessary to understand moral law. Thus, humanity seems to be the only predisposition left that may be the source of radical evil. Kant says humanity contains the practical element of life that allows us to calculate the pros and cons of life as well as understand equality and happiness. He claims that it is egocentric, yet not evil in nature; it only possesses the possibility for radical evil as it possesses values such as egoistic self-love and self-conceit. These values in themselves are not evil, yet if they become extreme, they have the potential for radical evil.

- Kant on Moral Feelings

Kant believes that moral feelings do play a role in providing motivation for moral action. For him, moral feelings are innate and perceived through ‘inner senses’. He used the word synonymously with ‘sensibility’. However, he ascertains that rational law is what gives rise to moral feeling. Pure reason is the only thing that moral law can come from, not empirical and psychological concepts of moral feeling. Such concepts lack the required universality and reliability for moral law.

“Feelings are not capable of providing a uniform measure of good and evil” (Zhouhuang, 2017).

For Kant, obligation, duty, and morality go before feelings. He does acknowledge that innate moral feelings do exist in human nature, but he asserts that it arises from common sense and reason and calls this moral sense that is different from moral

reason. He criticises moral feelings because he believes that they are inconsistent. Further, he adds that we have free will and should act based on our own legislation, that we should consciously decide how we want to act and be rather than be subjected to our innate moral feelings that are themselves subjected to external stimulation. In this sense, we can see that Kant believes innate moral feelings, or sensibility, is a passive faculty that is determined, and reasoning is a more active faculty that provides moral law. He believes that moral feelings act as an incentive to behave in accordance with moral law as it helps us by making us feel good when we are practising moral law and bad when we are not. Thus, we are ‘dignified sensitive-rational beings’ (Zhouhuang, 2017).

“in order to handle the reins provisionally, until reason has achieved the necessary strength; that is to say, for the purpose of enlivening us, nature has added the incentive of pathological (sensible) impulse to the moral incentives for the good, as a temporary surrogate of reason” (Zhouhuang, 2017).

Hence, while acknowledging the role that moral feelings play in the motivation of our moral action, Kant argues that morality cannot rely on emotions and our innate ‘moral feelings’ because they will drive us astray and because they are inconsistent and lack universality, whereas reason is more reliable. And when morality is based on feelings rather than duty, then people will not be motivated to behave morally. He is for the case of impartiality when being moral. Therefore, reason and moral feeling are enough for us to behave in a consistently moral way.

2.3. Utilitarianism: Mill’s Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism that judges actions based on the consequences it produces. Meaning an action is morally right if and only if it maximises the good; the good outweighs the bad in a specific situation. As opposed to Kant, they claim that hedonism produces pleasure and it is the only intrinsic good because it is the only thing that is an end goal in itself. Utilitarianists' main slogan is “the greatest happiness for the greatest number” (Mill, 1863). Sometimes it means sacrificing a bit for the greater good. We should make our decisions from the

perspective of a benevolent, disinterested spectator in order to yield a fair and unbiased result (Mill, 1863).

Mill is a utilitarian who sees that the only desirable thing in life is happiness, which can be achieved through pleasure. Pleasure is the only thing that is a goal in itself, so he focuses on the consequences of actions rather than rights, duties or ethical sentiments. He does recognise that there are other motives for moral action, as well as the idea that some pleasures are more valuable than others due to their higher qualities, such as those that use 'higher faculties' like ones that employ intellect and imagination and moral judgement. Unlike Kant, Mill maintains that morality comes from social rules, and so he regards morality as a social practice rather than something emerging from one's own reason and self-determination. He believes that society needs to create moral law in accordance with the principles of utility.

What are the motives for obeying morality? Where does its binding force come from?

"I feel that I am bound not to rob or murder, betray or deceive but why am I bound to promote the general happiness? If my own happiness lies in something else, why may I not give that the preference?" (Mill, 1863).

Mill claims that the principle of utility has the same motivations as any other system of morality, there are those that are external such as seeking the approval of others and fearing the disapproval or displeasure of disapproval, and there are those that are internal. Thus, because humans seek happiness, they will behave with others in the manner they believe will increase their own happiness.

Further, he ascertains that moral feelings are acquired and not innate. Yet even though it is not innate, it does occur spontaneously to a small degree, and it can be developed and worked on. However, he believes that because it is acquired, that could mean that negative moral principles could also be taught that produce the same strong sense of moral feelings. Yet he does mention that these 'artificial' moral feelings eventually dissipate under the scrutiny of analysis. Utilitarianism produces moral principles that do not crumble under scrutiny; he claims it has a strong basis.

Thus, it will produce a ‘natural sentiment’ that will incentivise moral practice under utilitarian principles.

2.4. Empiricists: Locke and Hume

- Locke

Locke originally argued that all ideas come to us from experience and that there are no innate ideas. He does not believe that moral principles are innate. In most of his writings, he argues against the idea of innate moral principles. However, he does admit that there are some moral principles that are irrefutably innate.

Since we are beings of reason, it follows that we will feel obliged to follow moral law; reward and punishment are necessary for moral laws to motivate humans to abide. Although in other texts, he asserts that solely reason should motivate us to abide by moral laws. (Walsh, Locke: Ethics, n.d.).

- Hume

Hume is the only philosopher from those mentioned that opposes the view of moral rationalism; he argues that we do not use rationality alone for moral reasoning, evaluation and judging. He asserts that feeling and sentiment play a significant role. Reason alone is not enough; emotions are also needed. He sees that morality arises from us innately and guides us, similar to our taste buds, which are a natural human faculty. He further argues that we also use empathy (he calls it sympathy but defines it in the same way as empathy) to guide our morality.

It is important to note that although Hume rejects moral rationalism, he does not reject the use of rationale in morality; rather, he ascertains that along with feeling, rationality is necessary to reach an accurate judgement of the situation and person being evaluated (Pollock, n.d.).

2.5. Islamic Thinkers: Mu'tazilites and Asharites

In Islamic tradition, Muslims, concerning morality, do not agree on where morality comes from, whether it comes from revelation (acquired) or whether it is innate.

- Mu'tazilites

Mu'tazila thinkers base their idea of morality on core principles that God is just and that God has created us with free will to act on what we choose. God had decreed that those who do good receive reward in the hereafter, and those who do wrong will be eternally punished in the hereafter. Since God is just and cannot be unjust, it follows that God has predetermined that humans are capable of being moral, and thus, we are innately moral independent of holy scripture. It also follows from the principle that God does not burden a person with what he cannot bear, so if he has decreed that we must abide by moral rules, it must mean that we are inherently capable of following them (Valiuddin, 2018).

- Al-Asharites

However, the Ash'arites, on the other hand, believe that we cannot be moral unless God and revelation guide humans. This thinking comes from their 'kasb; iktisab' theory, the word 'kasb' means acquired. Thus, they believe that morality is not innate and is acquired (Wolfson, 1976).

Al-Ghazali is an Asharite philosopher who believes that humans strive to reach the idea and that the mental and bodily functions that we have as humans are there to help us reach the ideal. However, knowledge is what ensures that we use those inherent qualities correctly (Umaruddin, 1996).

CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGISTS REFUTING THE INNATENESS OF MORALITY

3.1. Prinz

For Prinz, morality is the judgement of what is right and wrong. Prinz believes that morality is not innate; rather, he believes that it is a culturally conditioned response. He claims that the evidence so far that supposedly proves the innateness of morality is insufficient and that there is more evidence supporting the claim that children learn moral competence through experience. He claims that to verify if morality is innate, it would help to find universal moral rules – the same across all cultures. This argument has been used to develop the case for linguistic nativism (universal grammar) developed by Noam Chomsky. However, Prinz finds that, in fact, the claim for universal rules has not been well substantiated, and thus he dismisses it. He also refers to the poverty of stimulus argument that is used to prove linguistic nativism; this argument states that children are not exposed to enough instances from their environment that will allow them to pick up on every feature of language. He argues that it has not been proven to be the case for morality (Prinz J. , 2008).

For a long time, philosophers thought that reason allowed us to reach conclusions about what is right and wrong. Now psychologists and neuroscientists, including David Hume, have found that emotions are at the centre of this. Many experiments have shown this to be true, including Prinz, who induced emotions in one experiment, such as disgust, irritation, repulsion, and cheerfulness. Participants were then asked about morality; it was found that emotions affected peoples' morality. For instance, people who had just felt repulsion or disgust were more likely to think cannibalism is wrong if absolutely necessary. It affects the cognitive framing within which people evaluate. When people try to decide whether something is right or wrong, they see how they feel about what they do with food. Emotions are deeply

embodied. To know how you're feeling is to know how your body is reacting. He claims that morality is a side product of certain mental faculties that have evolved for other purposes. For him, moral norms come from moral emotions; they are "sentimental norms" (Prinz J. , Is Morality Innate?, 2008). These moral emotions go into two categories, and these are moral praise and moral blame. Moral praise emotions are those of gratitude, esteem and righteousness, and emotions of blame are those of anger, contempt, disgust, resentment and indignation, as well as guilt and shame. The evidence he provides for this claim is first through an experiment by Wheatley and Haidt (2005), who created a mental association between the feeling of disgust and the word 'often', a neutral word. Participants were then asked to judge stories they heard about people. Participants who had been hypnotised to feel disgusted gave more negative judgements than those in the control group. Further evidence that has been provided is the fact that those who have any emotional deficits, like psychopaths, have moral blindness as they do not feel moral emotions and are unable to understand moral rules (Prinz J. , 2009).

Some neuroscience evidence supports this; reason often occurs after the fact in the prefrontal cortex, whereas emotion occurs in the limbic system, the amygdala, in the more primitive brain regions which are more connected to the physical body. Every neuroimaging study that has been done on morality has shown emotions again and again as a common denominator. It does not mean cognition is not part of the story, but it does come after the fact.

Furthermore, Prinz sees that we use 'nonmoral emotions', which we innately have, to create behavioural norms. If you take a nonmoral emotion that might arise in a context that has nothing to do with morality, like disgust, then apply it to a moral context, which will eventually become a norm. For instance, if every time one feels a negative nonmoral emotion as a response to the suffering of others, educators use this to create harmful norms. To further illustrate, we do not like rotting flesh because it makes us sick (Prinz J. , 2012). Apply that to a social context, say a victim of a brutal murder. People will respond with disgust as it is an innate response to the destruction of the body. Nevertheless, now it is a moral context. So, a person will start having a disgust response to a brutal murder, so it has been transferred from something very biological to something much more social in nature. He believes that

once you see that, you can see that morality is not innate; it is borrowed from a more rudimentary emotional capacity and then transferred into the social domain. Hence, nonmoral emotion can be seen as a foundation of morality.

Prinz claims that throughout history, the majority of people who thought emotions were at the core of morality thought it was innate. However, recently, there is evidence that many of those emotions and the conditions under which we have them are heavily informed by culture. There is a large amount of variability in what is regarded as moral amongst different cultures. Prinz explains this tremendous variability by arguing that our emotional reactions are learned through our interaction with culture and socialisation. For instance, a young child who has not yet formed his opinions on political issues that sees his parents expressing their opinions on political debates on TV would pick up on his parents' emotional reactions to what they see as right or wrong. This emotional conditioning is a very central feature of our social environment from very early on in life. He further claims that religious socialisation is similar to moral socialisation.

On top of this, he has a negative view towards empathy as being a motive or a precursor for moral judgement. He argues that it is not a necessary cause, and that can lead us astray as it will make us more biased and cause more harm than good. Instead of using empathy, it would be better to use moral emotions as a guide for morality. Concern, would be less prone to bias and better than empathy; he sees it as a 'cure for heartlessness', the 'opposite of mathematical indifference' (Prinz J. , *Against Empathy*, 2011).

He adds that in order to assess morality, the best approach would be to step outside the emotional framework and think about implications and consequences (Prinz J. , 2012). What are the social consequences of having one set of moral rules as opposed to another set of moral rules? The belief that it is innate does not help that effort. If you think of morality as a tool, you can improve and perfect it. We need to think of morality as a tool we can constantly reconstruct.

3.2. Against Empathy – Paul Bloom

Bloom (Bloom, 2016) sees that empathy is a ‘poor moral guide’. Here he refers to empathy as feeling what the other feels. He says that empathy is different from being compassionate and kind, good and moral and that we are better off without it. He has a rather radical stance towards empathy, believing that it should be completely eradicated or “ejected”. Instead of empathy, we should use compassion that is more distant and diffused and allows us to use reason; rational empathy. If we use rationality and reason to “override, deflect, and overrule our passions” (Bloom, 2016), we will be saved from committing the mistakes empathy will lead us to. He essentially makes a case for the use of rationality to be good and moral rather than empathy or emotions, similar to the rational approach of Kant and Mill. He argues that although our emotions play a large role in our lives and that even though it has been proven by psychology that we are often not rational beings, we are still able to use rationality in our lives, as we please, as a tool. We still maintain the capacity to be rational. However, emotions are not reliable and may lead us astray. He argues that when we use empathy for morality, we end up only being moral to only those we empathise with. It makes us biased, racist, and unable to make decisions that are good in the long term.

Bloom is a consequentialist, like Mill. He sees that a way in which one can make sure they are being moral is to think about the consequences of one’s actions; it is the idea that focuses on ensuring maximum good results. He asserts that rather than using empathy for morality, self-control, intelligence, and compassion would be much better moral guides.

As for the reasons why he claims empathy can have negative consequences, Bloom argues that empathy works like a spotlight allowing attention to focus on specific people. However, this focus becomes quite limited and may lead a person to help only those empathised with and disregard those not, as well as making it possible to make a decision that may lead to more suffering in the future. People with very high empathy tend to get too tied up in it and end up unable to make decisions that are actually beneficial for people in the long run because it is sometimes necessary to inflict some temporary pain that would actually be much more helpful in the long

run. He essentially sees that emotions blind us from being able to use our rational thinking. It is also easier to empathise with those in our vicinity and those that we perceive to be similar to us, whereas those far from us could be undergoing the same suffering as our neighbours or those who live in our countries or even continents. For instance, a white person on an intellectual level may know that black lives matter just as much as white lives, yet would empathise more with white people; thus, prejudice and bias distort our empathy. He adds that in a situation where one person is getting harmed by something that is helping the larger majority, feeling empathy would make you empathise with the individual that is getting harmed while ignoring the majority that is benefitting. Whereas if you use your reason over empathy, you will ignore the empathic feeling notifying you that you should do something about that person getting harmed as it could potentially result in the harm of the many over the few.

CHAPTER IV

TRADITIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON INNATE MORAL PRINCIPLES : A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

4.1. Mapping the Terrain: An Introduction to Traditional Psychological Accounts

4.1.1. Piagetian Constructivism

Before Piaget came along, Freud and Durkheim believed that children were passive learners. Piaget saw that through a child's interaction with his environment, an adequate understanding is constructed and reconstructed gradually; they are active participants in their moral development (Piaget, 1932).

Kohlberg saw that children gradually form abstract and universal moral principles in their minds as a result of using perspective-taking to understand the values of different rules that are given their value by authority figures and society. For him, moral judgement arises from moral reasoning.

Both Piaget and Kohlberg saw that empathy played an important role in the internalisation of moral rules; they believed that empathy is the only thing that's innate and that acquiring moral knowledge came through experiencing perspective-taking.

4.1.2. Connectionism – Churchland

Gradual generation of a hierarchy of moral prototypes from examples. Moral competence is seen as a set of skills cultivated gradually by practice. Role models and stories help along the way. This view, like Aristotle, does not mention anything about innateness but does imply that there is no first draft, no innateness.

However, the lack of innateness suggests that children could very easily learn to value and utilise any potentially artificial moral rules that adults create for them. Therefore, it seems that children begin with a sort of first draft or innateness of morality that enables them to prefer fairness and dislike harm (Churchland, 1996).

4.1.3. Relational Models – Alan Fiske

Fiske claims that there are three models that have been found to be innate in humans and other primates, and then a fourth model that has been found only in humans, which is unclear whether it is innate or not. These models are (1) what people have in common (communal sharing), which is the ability to see those in groups as being all the same, (2) ordered differences (authority ranking), which is a hierarchal mechanism that enables us to order people in ranks such as authorities, (3) additive imbalances (equality matching), this is keeping things in balance and (4) ratios (market pricing) which is a more calculative process humans use when they coordinate actions in consideration of proportions or rates. Fiske claims that these models are innate cognitive structures that shape how we tend to perceive the social world; these tendencies later on, through development, become edited and used differently in different cultures around the world (Fiske A. P., 1991) (Fiske A. P., *The Four Elementary Forms of Sociality: Framework for a United Theory of Social Relations*, 1992).

4.1.4. Massive Modularity

Minimalist view: Fodor, 1983, mental functions related to sense perception and language are innate. Only very few modules are innate; those related to reasoning and moral judgement are considered part of higher-order tasks that are not innate. Fodor explained that for something to be considered an innate module; it must be fast, informationally encapsulated and a functionally specialised computational mechanism.

Maximalist view – evolutionary psychologists: view that we have a large number of modules in our brains that have evolved through natural selection and are innate; for instance, children's preference for sweet over bitter is innate, and this preference of

things is true in all domains. However, applying this massive modularity principle to morality poses difficulties as the subject of sweet preference over bitter is different to the subject of morality. One of the problems with using this model for morality is that many of the reactions are low-level; they are more stimulus-response. Another issue that arises is that moral judgements are influenced and modified with the presence of new facts, whereas many of the phenomena, like illusions, for example, are not influenced by factual knowledge.

4.1.5. “Teeming” Modularity – Carruthers

The middle ground between nonmodular conceptions and massively modular ones. Sperber, an anthropologist, attempted to understand the parts of culture that are stable and the parts that are diverse. Modularity for Sperber diverges from the Fodorian conception of modules. He sees that there is a small set of innate modules which can be seen as templates or ‘learning instincts’ that allow for the brain to already know the qualities of a domain within a certain culture. For instance, it will pick up on culturally relevant rule violations that may not exist in other cultures. He found that there is innateness to how we learn morality. (Haidt & Joseph, 2008)

4.2. Traditional Psychology's Prominent Perspectives on the Innateness of Morality

4.2.1. Piaget’s Theory of Moral Development

Piaget sees that a child constructs moral concepts in their mind through action and thought; he was interested in children’s moral reasoning. He found that children’s ideas about rules and their moral judgement changed with age, and thus he developed what he viewed to be universal stages of moral development. In his study, he told children stories with a moral theme and asked them what they thought. He would ask them questions about whom they would think is ‘naughty’ in the story and who they think is ‘good’, and he found that children were able to identify actions with good intentions that could lead to the wrong consequences out of carelessness and actions with bad intentions, their judgement of naughtiness was based on the consequence; whether there was a punishment or not. Through this, he developed a two-stage developmental theory of moral reasoning.

The first stage he named heteronomous morality (moral realism), which claims that children see morality as obeying rules that cannot be changed by some authority figure, such as parents or teachers and that breaking these rules would lead to punishment. They understood that the more severe the punishment, the more severe the bad action. Here children focus on retribution when wrong-doing is committed, and they focus on the idea of punishment.

In Piaget's second phase of moral development, autonomous morality (moral relativism), older children begin to see that rules are more flexible and can change; they develop the ability to understand moral rules from other's perspectives, here they begin to base their judgement of morality on the intention of the actor rather than the consequences like in the previous phase. They also begin to make their own rules as they begin to apprehend that there is no absolute right or wrong and that these rules actually come from people themselves who change rules if and when the situation calls for it. Also, since they become capable of recognising the intentions behind an action, they also become capable of recognising that if someone says something that is not necessarily true, it might not be because they are lying but because of ignorance, a difference in opinion, or a simple mistake. Here they focus on restitution, making things right, rather than just punishment, rather than punishment only for the sake of making the person feel bad and suffer for their wrong-doing. Older children here understand that punishments can also be used to give the wrong-doer a chance to understand what they did and to reflect on their behaviour, as well as to not make a mistake/wrong-doing again. Further, older children understand that in real life, bad people get away with what they do, and sometimes, victims will not get justice or be treated fairly.

Criticism: it is unclear whether Piaget is testing what he claims to be testing

4.3. Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Reasoning

Kohlberg was inspired by Piaget's idea that children acquire morality and that they develop through stages (McLeod, 2013). He built his theory on Piaget's and went further. Kohlberg's experiments on moral psychology focused on the moral reasoning behind the subject's conclusions rather than the conclusions themselves, as

he saw that subjects could arrive at the same conclusion but go down a completely different cognitive process before arriving at a conclusion. His method was to interview people of varying ages, from childhood to adulthood and from varying cultures, about moral dilemmas in which they had to make a choice. By doing this, he wanted to see how children's moral reasoning may change as the children develop. From this, he discovered that as children develop on a cognitive level, they move through stages of moral reasoning. These stages are: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional.

- Level 1: Pre-conventional morality

This stage ends at age 9. In this stage, children believe that moral decisions and rules come from authority figures, namely, adults and schools. Children also consider something to be moral based on its consequence; if it leads to punishment, it is bad, and if it leads to reward, it is good. Therefore, during this stage, children behave in a good manner in hopes of avoiding punishment.

- Level 2: Conventional morality

This stage is during adolescence and adulthood. It includes internalising moral rules that come from role models in authority, usually parents. In this stage, moral reasoning comes from these accepted norms and rules, and the child attempts to show good behaviour in order to be accepted by others and seen as a good person.

- Level 3: Postconventional morality

This stage involves the grasping of universal ethical principles, which are more abstract and include concepts such as dignity, justice and rights. Usually, the principles at this stage are chosen by the individual; however, Kohlberg asserts that most people are not capable of the abstract thinking required to be able to think of which ethical principles one may want to take on; most people inherit moral principles from their society or those around them.

4.3.1. Criticism of Kohlberg

Given that Kohlberg highlighted the importance of perspective-taking, a few problems arise with his methodology. The first is that the storylines he used with the children did not allow for children to use perspective-taking and therefore lacked ecological validity. They included stories about married couples asking whether “Heinz” should steal medicine for his sick wife. The children in the studies were too young to be able to relate and put themselves in Heinz’s place in order to know what to do in that situation. They would not know what it is like to be married and what that entails. Also, these are hypothetical dilemmas; people have been proven to be poor self-reporters (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977), meaning they are not aware of the reasons that lead them to make certain actions or decisions. Therefore there is no guarantee that children’s responses would correlate with their actions in real life. Also, when faced with a situation in the immediate present, many people find themselves doing things differently from what they previously assumed when thinking about it hypothetically.

In summary, connectionism and constructivism believe that there is no innateness and that moral competence is acquired with experience. These accounts include Kohlberg’s and Piaget’s. However, it could be argued that if we acquire morality without any sense of what is right and wrong, fair or just, we could acquire any sense of artificial morality without knowing what is right and what is not. An example of this attempt is that of the communes and Kibbutzim, who tried to teach their people to overrule their innate preference of sharing material goods with their close family and kin (Haidt & Joseph, 2008).

In the next section, I will discuss the psychology research that will answer the question of where morality comes from.

CHAPTER V

MORALITY IS INNATE

In this section, I will delve into the ways in which psychology researchers attempt to prove that morality is innate through empirical studies. I have found that researchers refer to three kinds of evidence; based on these, I have divided this section into three subsections:

Subsection 1: researchers who refer to morality in infants. Here researchers claim morality is innate due to its presence in some form or another in very young infants. Researchers carry out various experiments and variations of those experiments.

Subsection 2: researchers who find the presence of innate cognitive mechanisms. In this subsection, researchers base their claims that morality is innate on the idea that, as a result of evolution, our minds have developed some sort of cognitive structure that enhances our ability to learn and uphold moral norms. The idea is that the presence of these innate cognitive mechanisms or frameworks is evidence that morality is somewhat innate.

Subsection 3: researchers who refer to the presence of empathy as evidence.

5.1. Morality in Infants

5.1.1. Are Our Brains Wired for Morality?

Research from psychology and neuroscience have both concluded that moral reasoning (knowing what is right and wrong) comes from evolution (Decety & Cowell, 2016). Humans are social beings, meaning we depend on social groups for survival. Consequently, it is vital that we cooperate and interact. Decety & Cowell believe that morality has evolved to help the prosocial nature of humans as well as the selfish tendencies; thus, it enhances the social aspect and helps to inhibit the

selfish aspect. However, the researchers assert that it is not purely the result of evolution but also the society and culture people live in. This can be seen in the fact that there is a lot of variety in what is seen as morally acceptable. Thus, our morality has evolved over the years and comes from both genes and culture. Research has also shown that infants show the building blocks of morality before socialisation. These include: understanding fairness, empathic feelings, understanding which actions are helpful and harmful and so forth. Furthermore, there are regions in the brain that have been found to be related to moral reasoning and moral behaviour; damage to these regions has resulted in deficiencies in morality. Decety & Cowell use three kinds of evidence to support their claim that 'our brains are wired for morality'. The first line of evidence is that animals have shown the building blocks of morality. Various empirical evidence has revealed that primates and rodents display prosocial behaviours. For instance, rats have engaged in helping behaviours towards other rats in distress before securing their reward. There are even monkeys that exhibit negative reactions to other monkeys who get treated unfairly. Chimpanzees have been shown to console others through grooming, hugging and kissing, which does have the effect of decreasing the distress of the victim. This evidence shows that empathy is an evolutionary trait present both in animals and humans and that this innate trait has evolved for the purpose of cooperative survival and motivates prosocial action.

The second line of evidence these researchers refer to is that very young infants show moral capacities that are also innate. Young babies that are 18 months old have attempted to console and comfort their mothers when they exhibit signs of pain, and they attempt to do this by hugging, sharing toys and patting. The more they grow, the more they understand the consequences of actions. The researchers here refer to a lot of evidence that I have mentioned in the following chapters (Wynn, Hamlin, Haidt & Joseph). They conclude that there is a large amount of evidence showing that young infants have a good understanding of what is considered to be moral; these tendencies are evidence of how morality is innate in infants.

The third line of evidence that is referred to is neurological evidence that the brain plays an important role in moral judgements, and those areas of the brain are beginning to be discovered. In one experiment, brain imaging (MRI scanners and

EEG) was used on participants while they were engaging in moral tasks such as moral reasoning and decision-making. Findings revealed that there are various areas in the brain that light up and interact when making moral decisions; these regions are responsible for planning, problem-solving, understanding others' mental states, and social behaviours. Further, there is an area of the brain (ventromedial prefrontal cortex, which plays an important role in caring behaviours, the combination of emotional and cognitive processes that help guide social behaviours), which, if damaged before the age of 5, would lead a person to become more likely to not follow moral conduct and inflict harm on others. Also, when this area is removed or damaged in patients, it decreases their empathy, embarrassment, and guilt levels. Showing that the ventromedial prefrontal cortex plays a vital role in morality in humans.

These researchers provide sufficient evidence for the idea that empathy is an innate mechanism resulting from evolution that has helped our ancestors survive and still helps us survive. They have referred to the many experiments performed by developmental psychologists showing how young infants show the building blocks of morality. They also argue that even though our sense of morality has resulted from evolution, it is not deterministic and unchangeable and that our morality is also influenced by the culture we live in, they use the example of how smoking used to be considered normal a couple of decades ago and now it is considered morally wrong. They add that reason is what enables us to widen our lens of empathy to those outside our relatives and our kin (outside the domain it was originally, evolutionarily, meant for).

5.1.2. Proof of Moral Innateness in Infants

To have moral thought, one must be able to judge some acts as positive “good” and others as negative “bad”. (Wynn, 2008) found evidence that infants were able to give this valence of either good or bad to helping and hindering acts, suggesting that there is innateness about the cognition of morality in children. Evolutionary theory in psychology has played a role in the explanation of these inherent moral attributive capacities of children claiming that they are hardwired in us for the sake of cooperation and exchange and eventually evolved as adaptive behaviours. There has

been a large body of research suggesting that infants inherently understand actions that are good or bad, as well as contain the capacity to feel empathy in their first year of life and later be able to show it. Wynn furthers her investigation with another experiment in which six- and ten-month-old infants are shown helping and hindering behaviours. Results showed that these infants interpreted these events in the same manner as adults. Wynn has consistently found these same results with all the experiments she conducted on infants; however, she does not fully assert that we are innately moral, as she believes that moral cognition involves a much more complex cognitive process of understanding abstract concepts of fairness and justice, reward and punishment and so forth. Rather, she claims that these findings show that infants contain the foundations that lead to the development of moral cognition in later years.

5.1.3. Moral Judgement and Action in Preverbal Infants and Toddlers

Through Hamlin's research (Hamlin, 2013), he is able to show that morality is innate. Past theories have said that it is learned; that infants are not born with a moral sense; they are either immoral or amoral due to their deficient cognitive abilities. As they mature and become more prosocial and other-focused, their morality matures with them. This view supports the variability in moral sense across different cultures as it can claim that parents teach them different ideas of moral actions; what is obligatory, permissible and forbidden. In his research, he shows through various studies with various conditions that infants have the capacities required for moral judgment.

The evolutionary perspective postulates that morality is a result of cooperative systems: groups living together successfully, but to do that, three capacities are necessary: a) moral goodness, arising from empathic concern, (b) moral evaluation: being able to analyse social settings to know when someone is not showing the cooperation of signs or helpfulness, and (c) moral retribution: showing support to the punishment of those not following the rules.

Research shows that infants as early as birth have the first requirement: moral goodness showing empathic concern; when infants reach the end of their first year,

they comprehend that people need to cooperate, as is shown through various experiments (Hamlin & Wynn, 2011; Hamlin, Wynn, & Bloom, 2007, 2010) where children identify helping behaviours as positive and hindering behaviour as negative. In these studies, children watched several scenarios of 'morality plays' in which a puppet attempted to achieve a goal and failed. After this, they watched a helper who tried to help the puppet's goal and then a hinderer who made it difficult for the puppet to reach its goal. Results showed that the moment infants could physically reach for objects which were 4.5 months, 75% - 100% of the infants showed a preference for the helper over the hinderer. These studies were replicated for different ages, three months old and six months old, both of which showed the same results. They took further measures to ensure that the infants did not merely prefer the helper because they preferred the puppet itself, they repeated these experiments with an inanimate claw, and again the infants showed preference towards the helper.

Being able to evaluate the intentions (mental states) of an agent is important in understanding whether someone will be cooperative in the future because prosocial and antisocial behaviours look the same on the outside. Piaget originally found that infants fail to do this, which led him to conclude that it is from their immaturity. The researchers implemented another study to find out whether infants have the capacity to infer mental states. In this study, the puppet (P) showed a clear preference for one of two toys by repeatedly trying to grab for it; while doing this, there were two additional puppets watching P, showing that they knew its preference. P then was unable to access the toys; one puppet (the helper) lifted a door to allow P to access his preferred toy, and the other puppet (hinderer) lifted a door to allow P to reach the toy he did not prefer. Again, the infants showed preference towards the helper puppet. To make sure that children were attributing mental states and not just showing preference to the puppet that showed helping behaviour, they added more conditions; in one additional condition, the puppets were not present on the stage when P showed his preference to the toy, in this condition the infants showed equal preference to both puppets showing that they understand that ignorance can play a role. These results illustrate that infants are capable of evaluating other's mental states when performing a seemingly moral action; this is the same capacity that adults have.

- Moral Retribution

Hamlin, Wynn, Bloom & Mahajan, 2011 found that toddlers younger than the age of two exhibit antisocial behaviours towards people who have hindered another person. In another experiment, infants who are not yet capable of speaking have shown the same preference for people who harm hinderers as for those who help hinderers. This has also been found in newborn infants and in 5-month-olds. A possible explanation for these preferences could be that they believe the hinderers require punishment; this means that infants have the retributive element of moral judgement that shows support to those not following the rules of the cooperative system.

Hamlin 2013 concludes that infants from early on in life have shown that their sense of morality is innate; they have shown that they have morally relevant motivations and evaluations that are exhibited early on in life before socialisation is possible. Rather, an infant's moral sense has been found to be quite instinctual and even on the same level as adults' moral sense.

5.2. Innate Cognitive Mechanisms and Structures

5.2.1. How Morality Is Innate and Acquired: Innateness and Modification Processes That Create the Moral Mind

Haidt & Joseph base their theory on virtue ethics due to the large body of modern research that has proven its validity (Haidt & Joseph, 2008). They believe that morality is partially innate in the sense that as a result of evolution, our minds have a preprepared structure that enables our minds to be more perceptually sensitive to 5 concerns/foundations and associate them with emotions and motivations as we are developing. They assert that virtue ethics focuses on 'shaping emotions and intuitions' than the rational approach that dictates rules and principles.

"Whereas the Greeks focused on character and asked what kind of person we should become, modern ethics focuses on actions, trying to determine which ones we should do." (Hurthouse & Pettigrove, 2018).

Haidt & Joseph assert that when the definition of morality focuses on the rights, justice and welfare of people, it limits the psychological study of morality to the study of judgements of justice, rights and welfare rather than the psychology of morality. They see that morality might be much deeper than originally assumed. These researchers found that Western societies distinguish between moral rules (those related to justice, welfare and rights, such as do not harm another) and social rules (those related to tradition, such as rules about clothes, gender roles and how people should be addressed), whereas in other societies, this differentiation does not make sense, and social rules are regarded as moral rules. Haidt et al. (1993) found that norm violations that did not cause harm were considered to be immoral within certain groups; for other groups (elite American college population), moral issues concerning harm, rights and justice were considered to be within the moral domain. For Haidt & Joseph, this broader definition of morality meant that they must rediscover whether morality is innate. The definition of innate that is referred to here is the same definition that I refer to, which is something that exists prior to experience.

Haidt & Joseph claim that moral cognition gives rise to moral intuition that influences how we perceive the world and connects the information to some sort of evaluation or even moral emotion. “They are fast, domain-specific bits of mental structure that strongly influence moral judgment” (Haidt, 2001). They have found that when people are asked about taboo topics, they have these fast, immediate responses, and when asked why they feel that way about it, they claim that they do not know, but ‘it just feels wrong’. (Haidt, 2001). These researchers searched for and identified five innate foundations for intuitive ethics that are tied to one or more moral emotions and motivations. These foundations can be thought of as a certain type of preparedness resulting from evolution that makes it easier to associate social appraisal with emotional and motivational reactions; these are harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, in-group/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity. This set can be considered to be a set of adaptive challenges that our ancestors had to resolve in order to survive. To do this, we would have to pick up on patterns in the social world referring to each module and respond to them. There is a *proper domain* (Sperber, 1994) which refers to the objects each module is designed to pick up on. For example, the harm/care module is designed to pick up on suffering, distress or

threat to our loved ones/kin, and the appropriate adaptive response would be to feel compassion and to protect and care for them. However, there is an *actual domain* which is the actual environment we live in, which may not always correspond to the proper domain and may result in false positives or false negatives. For instance, with the harm/care example, an actual domain in our modern world could be seeing cartoon characters or baby animals. This could result in false negatives or positives because it would trigger that module and, in essence, make us feel compassion and care. For humans, we have changed our environment to such a large degree that our actual domain, most of the time, does not correspond to our proper domain. ,

Haidt & Joseph compare these five foundations to the functioning of the five receptors we have on our tongue for taste buds, claiming that the same way these receptors take in a chemical pattern from food and turn it into an affective experience, positive or negative, telling us something about how our ancestors live, the five foundations also suggest something about the survival of our ancestors. The ‘taste buds’ of our moral sensing take in data that is more abstract and conceptual, and this data guides our interactions.

Recently philosophers and cognitive psychologists have been debating whether learning moral rules or principles (moral knowledge) is enough to acquire the virtues that enable you to act on the learned moral knowledge (the debate between virtue theory advocates and those who view that rationality should guide morality; deontological and utilitarianists). However, it seems to be the case that the mind, over experience and training, gradually becomes better at identifying relevant information and acting upon it. These researchers firmly believe in the soundness of virtue theory as it aligns with how evolutionary and cultural psychologists see moral functioning, as stated in the previous chapter. They found that there is an innateness to the preparedness of the mind to perceive the five modules (care/harm, for example) from a very early age, and the other parts of moral development are learned; when the child is developing their moral knowledge, they are essentially learning skills of social perception and reaction. Thus, what they found is compatible with Sperber’s ‘teeming modularity’, suggesting that virtues are not internally innate but acquired with the help of innate modules.

- Cognition of Virtue Ethics

To have a virtue means you have a certain kind of perceptual sensitivity, meaning you are more sensitive and receptive to information pertaining to the relevant domain of the virtue. The way in which you can come to possess a certain virtue is by seeing the virtue being applied in real life multiple times. Each time one is exposed to an example in a specific context, there is information relevant to that situation, like the motives of the actor, the state they are in, and what the result of the action is; this information gets stored in the relevant category for that virtue in the mind. Then over time, through repeated exposure, the learner starts to quickly identify relevant information (May, Friedman, & Clark, 1996). This is what creates a morally mature person. On top of this, it is important for the learner to also learn to use reason when faced with a problematic, more complex situation that involves ambiguous cues and information. Unlike the other moral theories, virtue theory not only assesses the situation but how the situation is perceived, its motivations and moral competence. Therefore, virtue theory tries to see how well one's character can function in a 'sphere of existence'; this is similar to what evolutionary and cultural psychologists see as moral functioning; since this sphere of existence involves cognitive, social and cultural structures as well as adaptive environmental challenges.

Additionally, there are two different ways of thinking; a narrative mode that involves a good story and a more logical, coherent argument kind, these different ways of thinking result in different ways of organising experience. "Arguments convince one of their truth, stories of their lifelikeness" (Bruner, 1986, p. 11). Haidt & Joseph claim that moral thinking uses narrative thinking as the natural way people tend to think about it (outside of philosophy). Examples of narratives can be found in religious teachings, such as hadiths in Islam and stories about the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and Jesus' teachings in the Testament for the West. Without narratives, it would be difficult to integrate the five foundations into actions. The importance of narratives is the idea that narrative thinking is innate. They conclude that "The first draft of the moral mind has diverse moral content that was specified in advance of experience, but this innately given content gets revised and greatly extended during the course of development as children actively construct their moral

knowledge within a cultural context that uses a narrative to shape and guide the development of specific virtues.”. (Haidt & Joseph, 2008).

5.2.2. Cognitive Architecture of Morality

A theory put forth by Sripada and Stich (Sripada & Stich, 2006) proposes that we receive information about moral norms from the people in our surroundings and are able to internalise it through the innate mechanisms that we have. These mechanisms also give us the motivation to comply with these norms and to punish those who do not comply with them.

S&S claim that norms are behaviour-regulating social rules that are inherently culturally determined. “a rule or principle that specifies actions which are required, permissible or forbidden independently of any legal or social institution.” (Sripada & Stich, 2006).

They also claim that when norms are internalised, they produce their own motivation to comply with it that is different from normal motivation; they add that this motivation does not come from the person’s beliefs about what will happen if they do not comply with the social norms, rather they are intrinsically motivated. S&S put forth that you can immediately infer from this information that there exist innate mechanisms in people’s cognitions that enable people to locate, internalise and act upon these norms. The way in which this mechanism functions is through the following;

The brain recognises normative rules when looking at certain behavioural cues; it then is able to infer the content of the rule and then pass it on to the cognitive functions responsible for storage and motivation generation (utilisation of the norm). The researchers suggest that this mechanism happens automatically and not consciously and may possibly turn around in adolescence.

5.3. Role of Empathy

5.3.1. How Is Empathy Innate?

To show how empathy is a mechanism that is innate to us, I will refer to research by Hoffman and Davidov et al., (Hoffman, 2000) (Davidov, Zahn-Waxler, Roth-Hanania, & Knafo, 2013) who furthered the work of Hoffman; these researchers illustrate how young infants display empathy. Hoffman viewed that humans have an innate capacity for empathy, but we can only develop concern for others in our second year of life (Hoffman, 1975, 1984, 2000). He sees that self-recognition plays an important role in empathy as it is important that one differentiates between feeling concerned for another and confusing it with your own feelings. Therefore, self-recognition is required in order to make such a differentiation. Mirror self-recognition tasks such as the Rouge test are used to determine whether an infant has reached self-differentiation. This task involves placing a red spot on the forehead of an infant and then placing them in front of a mirror. Infants who touch their own foreheads after seeing them in the mirror have self-recognition. However, such a task involves complex cognitive abilities, such as the ability to reflect. (Davidov, Zahn-Waxler, Roth-Hanania, & Knafo, 2013) Debunks his claim by showing that infants show concern for others in their first year of life and that it is their fundamental nature. Hoffman's claim comes from his assumption that infants do not have the ability to distinguish themselves from others and end up confusing others' distress as their own. Yet, the researchers argue that this claim is not consistent with research proving infants' ability to distinguish themselves from others. They also argue that Hoffman's claim is not based on empirical evidence, also, that he dismisses the concept of emotional regulation in infancy.

Based on previous research carried out by Zahn-Waxler et al. (1992), it was discovered that self-recognition does not necessarily have to precede feeling concern for others. Rather, self-concept, a simpler form of self-recognition, has been found to be enough for feeling concern. Self-concept has been found to exist in infants from the start of their lives. It is the ability to differentiate sensory sensations from the self and others; for instance, being moved by someone else or whether the sensation came from the self and between the infant's own cries and another's because they feel different on a sensory-perceptual level. Experimenters have found empirical

evidence that newborns are able to distinguish between their own cries and others and also have no response to their own crying, whereas they have a response of distress to the cries of others.

5.3.2. Evidence of Concern for Others in the First Year

Research on the response of infants to the signs of distress from their mothers and peers indicated that infants have concern for others before their second year of life as well as levels of affective empathy and cognitive empathy. Affective empathy did not increase with age, whereas cognitive empathy did. As the infant developed and became able to integrate cognition, affect and action, they were able to exhibit more prosocial helping behaviours. In their first year of life, infants have shown other-focused distress, and self-focused distress was actually rare. When another is distressed, they get increasingly involved and concerned. An important addition is made in regard to the confusion between self-distress and other-distress; an optimal amount of arousal is important when it comes to empathic concern. Over-arousal usually does lead to self-distress in infancy since they have a lower capacity to self-regulate when they are negatively aroused. For example, when infants hear a very long recording (4-6 minutes) of another infant crying, it leads to over-arousal and dysregulation, whereas when the arousal is mild, infants stay in other-focused. Thus, we can see that empathy is indeed an innate mechanism.

5.3.3. Is Empathy Important for Morality?

5.3.4. Why Is Empathy Important for Morality and for the Innateness Argument?

Because we have the rationalists and the empathy perspective who trust our innate intuitions and feelings, rationalists believe we can't trust our innate instincts and have a negative view of empathy's role in morality. Empathy perspective theorists prove that empathy plays an important role in guiding morality/moral action.

There's been recent research suggesting that hypothetical moral questions do not correlate with what is found in the lab. If you have to compare losing your finger to losing a million lives, you have to compare the cost. So, how do we value other

people's pain, and how does this process compare to how we evaluate our own pain? How do we measure the price of pain? (Crockett, Kurth-Nelson, Siegel, & Dolan, 2014). The first attempt was by Thorndike in the 1990s; he asked people how much they would need to be paid to inflict various kinds of harm. However, there is a problem with this approach; it is difficult to say whether these stated prices reflect the actual prices. It is also difficult to implement in a lab. What people will say in a hypothetical situation is often different from what they will do in a situation that has real consequences, especially if these consequences involve some trade-off between personal benefits and someone else's suffering. Crockett developed a method in a lab to measure precisely how people value their own pain and the pain of others. It is through electric shocks which are painful enough to want to avoid it but are not painful enough to cause significant damage. Many studies have shown that people will value other people's pain more than zero but far less than their own pain. Usually, it has been proven that people care more about their monetary gains than about others, which shows that people would value others' pain to a certain extent but not more than their own. The empathy perspective predicts that the extent to which you empathise with someone, you might value their pain equally to your own pain. At best, you will care about someone else's pain as if it were your pain. However, this perspective would predict that people would value others' pain the same as their own.

In Crockett's lab, participants were asked to trade off profits against pain for themselves or a stranger; two subjects were brought in that did not know each other. Each subject was assigned a random role; a decider who made decisions with respect to their pain and the receiver's pain, and the other role was the receiver. The action of the decider was to determine whether to give a smaller amount of shocks which would result in a smaller amount of money, versus more money and more shocks to the receiver.

The results of these experiments have revealed that people are 'hyperaltruistic'. They gave different values to pain aversion for self versus pain aversion for others; people have to be paid more money to inflict pain on others as opposed to themselves, thus showing that they weigh harm infliction on others more than harm infliction on self. Additionally, it has been shown that the deciders were hyperaltruistic in both cases,

where they would receive more shocks and when they had to pay to decrease the shocks for the receiver.

When participants were asked about the reason why they made their decisions, the majority said that they were sure about how they could handle the pain but unsure about how the others would. One feature of social decisions is uncertainty; we can never get directly in the head of another person, even if we're really high in empathy. So, we don't want to impose what might be intolerable costs on other people; this is a self-serving view. Experimenters wanted to test this view; they found that the deciders approximated that they were able to tolerate more pain than others. Another possible explanation for these findings is that people do not want to feel responsible for the negative consequences of others which could have made them value the pain of others more than their own. Something further that has been discovered is that when people were deciding for others, they took more time than they did for themselves since they had to calculate the cost of moral responsibility thus showing that prosocial behaviour takes more slow and careful deliberation.

5.3.5. How Can the Innateness of Morality Influence Our Actions?

- *Hoffman's Theory*

Hoffman believes that empathy is an evolutionary trait that is on the bell curve, meaning some people have more empathy than others and vice versa (Hoffman, 2000). Thus, he views it as an innate capacity. He mentions that the definition of empathy is twofold; the first is the cognitive capability of recognising another person's internal states, this includes their feelings, thoughts and so on, and the second is the emotional response to seeing another person expressing emotion. Hoffman refers to the latter when talking about empathy; affective empathy. He mainly focuses on empathic distress as he sees it relevant to prosocial action; in other words, when people empathise with others' feelings of pain, sadness, discomfort, danger or any kind of distress, they are more likely to engage in moral helping behaviour. To prove that empathic distress is a prosocial motive, he must also prove that (1) when one feels empathic distress, they will engage in helping behaviour, (2) for empathic distress to be a motivator of helping behaviour, it must go in advance of

the helping behaviour, and (3) similar to other motives, it must reduce in its intensity after helping. He provides evidence for these connections through the following experiments:

In one experiment, sixth graders were split into two groups; one group was required to discuss a sad event from another person's life, while the other group was required to discuss a sad event from their own lives. Results showed that the first group, who discussed a sad event from someone else's life, donated more time to making pictures for children in the hospital than the second group. Through this experiment, it is evident that the more children felt empathic distress, the more they engaged in prosocial behaviours (Berndt, 1979).

In another experiment, university students were asked to watch a Confederate work on an unpleasant task. During his work, he showed signs of distress and then asked the subject, watching him take his place. One group had the choice of taking his place or remaining in their seat to continue watching the Confederate (as he continued to show that he was distressed). The other group had the choice to continue watching the Confederate or to go home. Results found that out of the first group, three-quarters chose to take the Confederate's place instead of continuing to watch him, and over half of the second group chose to take the Confederate's place. Furthermore, results showed that those who made these choices were the more empathic ones of the group (Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, Switzer, & Speer, 1991).

Hoffman also maintained that it is important to also provide evidence that empathic distress is the motivator of the action. To do so, he argued that empathic distress must come before the action of helping. In one study (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977), it was found that the higher the physiological arousal (accelerated heart rate as a result of watching a confederate have chairs topple over her), the faster they were to get up and help. Furthermore, he claimed that after someone helps another, their empathic distress declines. As he found through various studies of both adults and children, those who overtly help others after experiencing empathic distress did not continue to feel empathic distress as opposed to others who did not and continued feeling distressed. For Hoffman, this shows that empathic distress behaves in the same way as other motives.

However, this leads to the question; are people motivated to help others because they will feel good or for purely altruistic purposes (wanting the other to feel better)? Hoffman claimed that just because it can make people feel good to help others, it does not necessitate that it is the only reason people engage in helping behaviours. He found that empathic helpers do care about whether the victim's distress was alleviated as opposed to merely helping for the sake of helping, without caring about the consequences. And thus, from this, Hoffman concluded that empathic distress is a prosocial motive as the main aim for helpers is to alleviate the pain of the victim. Hoffman did acknowledge that this idea of empathic distress acting as a prosocial motive may depict humans in an angelic manner and that there are many times when people may feel empathic distress yet fail to help. He presented three possible reasons why this may happen.

- 1) The presence of others may lead to the hindrance of helping behaviour due to two possible reasons (Latane & Darley, 1970)
 - a) "Pluralistic ignorance" is the assumption that it must not be that important since others are not reacting,
 - b) And "diffusion of responsibility", the assumption that someone else must have acted (called for help, for instance).
- 2) Interference of egoistic motives
"Fear, energy expenditure, financial cost, loss of time, missed opportunities and so on."
- 3) In anticipation of the cost of helping, people may even try to avoid feeling empathy in fear of what it may lead them to do.

- Empathy's Limitations

Although most of Hoffman's work focuses on showing the importance of empathy as a mechanism for prosocial moral action, he also addresses the possible limitations of too much empathy: over-arousal and bias. Over-arousal in empathy occurs when it depends on the intensity and salience of distress signals from the victim and their relationship with the observer. Given this, Hoffman contends that the more intense and salient the victim's distress, the more likely the observer's empathic distress will become over-aroused, leading the person to become personally distressed. When

someone is personally distressed, they become unable to attend to another's needs. On top of this, there are other factors that will influence whether someone has the capacity to feel empathy in a given moment; these are: being anxious about failure, loss of approval, and being very physically uncomfortable. It is due to empathy's strength in ensuring that people engage in helping behaviour that can also be its own weakness; it has many modes of arousal, such as sensitivity to facial expressions and situational cues. However, the more the sensitivity, the more cues one will perceive and thus, the possibility of over-arousal increases.

- Individual Differences

There are people who have a higher capacity for empathy; exposure to painful and distressing circumstances for victims can also be highly distressing for highly empathic people, which leads them to become limited and incapable of staying other-focused. Yet, it was also found that having the ability for emotional regulation can help decrease the vulnerability to over-arousal.

In the matter of bias, empathy does have the potential of two types of biases: familiarity bias and here-and-now bias. Due to our evolution that occurred in small groups and the likelihood of conflict occurring due to scarcity of resources, we are more likely to empathise with those in our groups; family, ethnicity and those of the sorts. Although the majority of research on empathy has involved strangers showing that people do empathise with and help strangers, evidence has also suggested that we empathise to a larger extent with those closest to us; family members, close friends, relatives, as well as those whose needs are the same as our own needs. The here-and-now bias of empathy can happen because acting on empathy relies on cues of distress that happen in the present and immediate circumstances in terms of familiarity bias.

Accordingly, could we say that Prinz and Bloom were correct in saying empathy is a poor guide to morality due to its limitations? Hoffman thinks not; he believes that these are mere limitations, and problems, that are not enough to disqualify empathy as a motivational base for moral action since these problems are not "fatal" and can even lead one to become more committed to being a helper. The biases that empathy

can lead to can even be used to help people help more as people could think, “That could have been my own mother or my own friend”. Moreover, familiarity bias can be decreased when empathy is grounded in moral principles. This can happen because moral principles have a cognitive dimension that gives structure and stability to empathy which helps it rely less on the intensity and salience of personal and situational cues. Further, due to the nature of cognitive representations (pick up on stimuli, place them in a structure and help stabilise responses), the effects of empathy remain in the long-term memory, which is its stabilising effect.

A concern of Prinz and Bloom regarding empathy is that it leads people to only help those they empathise with. However, Hoffman asserts that this, first of all, is not the case as people actually engage in ‘mass empathy’ because of TV exposure, and second of all, empathising with everyone does not necessarily have a good effect; quite the contrary, it leads to “promiscuous” or “diffuse” empathy that can lead to society crashing. Instead, empathy *should* be selective, and its limitations may actually be self-preserving mechanisms of empathy. He concludes that empathic morality functions the best in small, homogeneous, face-to-face communities; in more heterogenous and multicultural societies, it could potentially lead to hostility between groups. Furthermore, Hoffman does acknowledge that empathy as a motivational base for morality, although very strong, should not be the only motivation for morality.

In this case, the infant can differentiate between self and other through their subjective sensory experience. So, if the baby is moved by someone else, they would know that it is not a self-generated movement through the different feel it has.

CHAPTER VI

OUR MORAL RESPONSIBILITY – WHY WE NEED TO CULTIVATE MORAL HABITS

Although morality has been proven to be innate, or at least partially innate, and its innateness can motivate us on an intrinsic level to behave morally (Hoffman, 2000), does that mean that we are innately good? Does that mean that we do not really have to put in a lot of effort to act because we will just be good, and those behaving immorally are just going against their nature?

Well, no. If we go back to the definition of innateness, we can see that a trait that is innate does not necessitate or determine our actions. We innately have the mechanisms that will allow us to behave in moral ways more easily; we have moral intuitions that we may or may not allow to guide us. Someone who has a short temper as a trait, for example, may feel more inclined to behave in certain ways given the right conditions or context, his feeling of anger, for example, is a quick response to stimuli, but it does not become an action unless the actor decides to act on it. If this person decides to act on it, then he is only reinforcing this trait and making it a habit, yet, this person may also decide to put in the conscious effort not to act on his instinct each time it is provoked in a certain context if this decision and action are repeated, it will become part of an automatic process in the brain that is more unconscious and fast, it will become this person's new instinct. In this section, I will argue that due to our cognitive nature as humans, in order to behave morally in a consistent manner, we must make the conscious decision to make moral practice a habit and, in essence, make it a part of our 'autopilot mode'. This claim is consistent with Aristotle's claims about the acquisition of a virtuous character through voluntary controlled repetitive behaviour.

- Dual Modes in Social Cognition

Traditional research before the 1970s presumed that when people made their decisions, and judgements or carried out any behaviour, they were aware of what led them to do so and were able to control the process (Kunda, 1999). However, recent research has found that this is not the case; in fact, the majority of our cognitive processes are a result of unconscious, unintentional processes. These processes have been found to influence us in a variety of ways without us even being aware of them: these processes are called *automatic processing*. Automatic processing is when people are on autopilot and tend to do things mindlessly (which is 47% of the time according to (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010) without conscious thought, referring to their tendencies and habits. There are levels to automaticity; there are things that we do that are intended yet unconscious and controllable, for instance. Full automaticity is when those processes are unintentional, uncontrollable, efficient, autonomous, unconscious, goal independent, stimulus-driven and fast. For example, it is when we make first impressions of people, cut people off in conversations after hearing a lecture on assertiveness, or do not like someone because they resemble someone we hated in the past. Automatic habits are those like driving, brushing your teeth, taking a shower and so forth. You do not think about each and every step when you are brushing your teeth. Freud assumed that the reason behind these automatic, unconscious processes is because it is too overwhelming and threatening to think of consciously, and so we end up repressing them. Although this may be the case for traumatic events, it cannot account for day-to-day events. The reason for such automatic processing is merely for efficient reasons (Fiske & Taylor, 2017); we are cognitive misers; we use shortcuts that have worked out for us in the past because we simply do not have the time to try to understand the complexity of humans in our day to day lives. Thus, we take the familiar route and make decisions that have worked in the past to understand and predict (heuristics).

(Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) Found that when we make a judgement or have a preference, we have very little awareness of the factors influencing our judgement. And when this happens, we tend to be very confident about our answers when asked how we reached our conclusion, yet, the reality is these answers come from what we think may have influenced our judgement rather than actual introspection. Thus,

Nisbett and Wilson carried out a set of studies to show that people have a lack of introspection. For instance, in one of their studies, a group of participants heard a comment from the experimenter; those who heard this comment had a different judgement later on than those who did not hear it. Further, when participants were asked about why they made that judgement, they insisted that their judgement was not made based on the comment they had heard, thus showing evidence of a lack of introspection. Another example of a study that shows the same phenomenon was when people did not help another person in distress when other people were around (Latane & Darley, 1970), but when they were told about the study, they insisted that they were not impacted by other people being present. In a classic study by (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996), participants were primed by concepts of rudeness and politeness through a scrambled-sentence task to see if it would influence their behaviour; they had been told to go out and get the experimenter when they were done with the task; however, they found the experimenter busy talking to someone for an extended period of time during which the experimenter did not acknowledge the participant, this went on for about 10 minutes or until the participant attempted to interrupt the experimenter. Results showed that those primed with rude words were significantly more likely to interrupt the experimenter compared to those primed with neutral or polite words, and the opposite is true for those primed with polite words. Further, the participants did not know that this incident was a part of the experiment, and so when asked, they were completely unaware of the impact of the priming words on their behaviour. Thus, the experimenters concluded that there are many subtle ways in which a certain situation can influence our behaviour. The implications of these studies proved that merely asking participants for their ideas on what influenced their behaviour is not something that is reliable or trustworthy. One criticism of these studies is that it is possible that people might have forgotten what may have influenced their behaviour or that they may have wanted to avoid a negative impression, and so left it out. However, it has been proven that amnesic patients who are incapable of consciously remembering recent experiences were able to learn new motor skills and recall new facts without remembering learning either.

Controlled processing, on the other hand, is slower, controlled, conscious, rational, analytic, reflective and deliberate. The four features of controllability are awareness, intention, efficiency and control. A person could have an automatic thought but

could control whether or not to act on it; thus, controlled thinking can have a big influence on how we act. Based on this social cognitive dual processing model, people's thought processes will either be controlled or automatic or in between. When we process social cues, such as faces, at a subliminal (preconscious) level, it will influence the cognitive associations we make, our emotional reactions and our behaviour. Whereas, if we are exposed to concepts on a conscious level (conscious priming), this will trigger unconscious automatic processes. When cultivating a habit, the mere instigation of the goal we would aim to achieve triggers automatic behaviours that help in reaching that goal.

In consequence, our cognitive structure is limited, we cannot focus on more than one thing at the same time, and if we were to use controlled processing for everything, it would lead to mental fatigue. Many times, we perform certain actions and find ourselves unaware of how we completed them; we reach our destination after driving for half an hour after we brush our teeth or cook, but we are not always aware of the steps we took to carry out the actions and reach the results. This happens with desired outcomes and goals that we want to achieve, as well as with undesired outcomes. It is in our nature to form habits, without realising we can end up forming unwanted habits such as unhealthy eating habits and addiction. But how do habits explain our actions? The only tool we have for consistent moral action is habit formation (Thomas-Smith, 2021). Habitual reflection, although it may seem counterintuitive, as I have been making the case that humans are cognitively limited, is necessary, but only to a certain level. When creating a new habit, one uses controlled processing quite a lot more in the beginning, and it may be difficult temporarily as we will find ourselves slipping quite a bit until we are able to reach a point where the behaviour requires less and less conscious and controlled effort until it becomes part of the automatic cognitive process. Thus, through repetition and practice, it will become automatic. This is what makes up one's character, as per Aristotle.

To conclude, this research is consistent with the idea that prosocial behaviour requires slow, careful and deliberate action. This can be seen in the language we use when describing people that are regarded as moral; we use words such as "thoughtful" and "considerate", and those that are regarded as selfish are described

as “thoughtless” and “inconsiderate” (Crockett, Kurth-Nelson, Siegel, & Dolan, 2014). The reason we have to make morality a habit is because of the lack of time we have in our daily lives; we have a great tendency to use availability heuristics and make biases that are based on automatic processing due to the mere efficiency of it. There is so much information our conscious and unconscious mind is processing all the time; in the current moment, it is not possible to take in all information at once, so we filter it by paying attention to specific information and deciding what to respond to. If we were to use controlled processing all the time, if we were to think about all factors in a situation, it would consume our energy on things that may not be relevant; it would slow us down to a significant degree, not allowing us to get through the day and do the things we need to do, in this sense, it would limit us and cause us to have mental fatigue.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANSWER TO: IS MORALITY INNATE? WHAT PSYCHOLOGY SAYS

That being the case, I have referred to multiple empirical accounts from psychologists whose evidence points towards the direction that morality is innate. Developmental psychologists such as Wynn (2008) and Hamlin (2013) contributed to the innateness argument by proving that infants as young as six months and even newborns inherently have an understanding and preference for behaviours that are moral (helping behaviours). Hamlin proves that their capabilities go as far as being able to evaluate mental states behind an action that seems to stem from good intent versus an action with actual good intent. Infants have relevant innate motivations and evaluations that are on the same level as adults' moral sensing. Haidt & Joseph expand the domains of morality and are still able to demonstrate that it is innate. Their new domains add up to 5 domains which give rise to one or more moral emotions and motivations. They show that the mind has an innate preparedness to perceive relevant stimuli; this has been witnessed in infants before they are able to pick up on it from experience. These researchers were able to provide evidence for the innateness of morality, and its universality, while still accounting for its cultural variation; this evidence refutes Prinz's claim that the universality claim of morality is not proven because of the amount of cultural variation that exists.

Hoffman shows how empathic distress influences our actions by showing that when people feel empathic distress, they engage in moral action; he also manages to prove that it functions like other motives by decreasing physiological arousal after helping. He was able to support the claim that empathic helpers engage in helping not only because of the good feeling it gives them but because they genuinely care about whether the victim's pain is alleviated. He also addresses the limitations of empathy and asserts that they are not enough to disqualify empathy as a motivational base for moral action. Thus, Hoffman shows how the innateness of morality can influence our

moral actions. Crockett et al. were able to put hypothetical questions to the test in her lab and were also able to show how people are hyperaltruistic when given a chance. Decety & Cowell added to the innateness argument by referring to evidence that confirms that morality is, in fact, a result of evolution; they dive into the neurological factor of morality. They present new data showing how there are certain regions in the brain that may be responsible for morality, and they also refer to evidence that animals also engage in prosocial behaviours similar to that of human infants. They assert that although it may be a result of evolution and it may be innate, it is still changeable and adaptable, we still acquire moral information about what is right and wrong through our cultural environments, and we can even change our innate empathic mechanism to widen to care about those other than our kin and close circles, building on what Haidt & Joseph claimed about actual and proper domains, as well as what Hoffman maintained about what happens when moral principles which use cognition become embedded with empathy.

Therefore, it seems that there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that morality, whether it is moral sensing, evaluation, feeling, judgement, or any sort, is innate. Prinz claims that there is more evidence supporting the argument that morality is acquired; this is simply inaccurate. There is definitely a large body of evidence pointing to the fact that it is innate. There are parts of morality, moral principles, and rules, which are acquired through cultural conditioning and socialisation, yet it is not enough to say that there is no part of morality that is innate.

CHAPTER VIII

CRITIQUE OF MORALITY IS NOT INNATE: AGAINST EMPATHY

Both Prinz and Bloom have radical views against empathy; they claim that it makes you biased and only focus on those you empathise with. However, most experiments on empathy are done with strangers, and findings have revealed that most people empathise with and help strangers in distress. Hoffman has reliably proven how empathy acts as a prosocial motive. So, if we help strangers because we empathise with them, why is it such a bad moral guide? We do empathise more with those closest to us. Empathy, like everything else, does have its limitations; as acknowledged and studied by Hoffman, like Aristotle asserted, too much of anything, even good, will become bad. Too much honesty can also become bad; does that mean we should eradicate honesty?

You could argue that empathy should not be the *only* guide for morality and that rationality also plays an important role, as well as culture and socialisation. Hoffman does claim that the limitations of empathic bias can be reduced when empathy is based on moral principles, meaning empathy by itself – although it is a great motivational base for morality – is not and should not be the only base or guide for morality.

For Bloom, empathy is restricted to the narrow spotlight, whereas compassion is more distant and diffused; he claims that although we have empathic gut feelings, it does not mean we have to act on them, rather we should use the rational part of our brains to overcome and override our natural impulses and passions. Empathy should be completely eradicated. He also claims that empathy is completely distinct from compassionate behaviour. This claim is rather debatable as Hoffman mentioned how moral principles interact with and become embedded with empathy because moral principles use cognition (Hoffman, 2000) in chapter 6, and how that can decrease the

limitations of empathy; empathy here begins to grow into something like the “rational compassion” that Bloom himself mentions. So, it does not stand to say that empathy and compassion or rationality in their totality cannot be compatible.

8.1. Dwyer’s Response to Prinz’s Morality Is Not Innate Argument

Dwyer attempts to refute claims set by Prinz by arguing that Prinz is very ambiguous with the terms he is using when making the case that morality is not innate (Dwyer, 2008). He does not have a sufficient understanding of the differences between moral judging, moral norms, moral rules, moral sensing and so on. First, ‘moral competence’ is defined more specifically through its capacities; mature people who have reached moral competence are able to judge whether certain actions are permissible, impermissible, or obligatory; they can judge to what extent an actor is responsible for his actions, they are also able to judge which situations ask for a moral response. Through doing this, she claims that Prinz’s question is ambiguous. She claims that linguistic nativists do not say that language itself is innate; a child is not born knowing English or Mandarin; for example, the grammar itself is not innate either, but what is innate is the mechanism in the brain called the ‘language faculty’. This is an abstract system in the mind that makes it easy for people to associate symbols with meaning. As a result of the interaction between these innate features and the environment in which one grows up, children learn language. Therefore, Dwyer asserts that the way in which Prinz asks his question is as “awkward” as asking, “Is language innate?”. Moral nativism does not claim that moral norms, rules or domains are innate; rather, it is the “moral faculty” that is innate, which can be seen in terms of principles.

Additionally, she critiques his notion of imitation and internalisation as “nothing more than terms of wishful thinking” We can say for sure that imitation occurs when mirror neurons are being used. Further, she claims that Prinz fails to explain how children learn moral rules as he merely asserts that they do. She claims that the acquisition of moral rules, which Prinz claims to be a straightforward process of mere induction, is an oversimplified statement not based on empirical claims. Children cannot learn morality through mere acquisition and imitation due to the complex process that adults go through when displaying their reactions; in most

cases, what happens in their brains, including the emotions experienced, cannot be differentiated from a nonmoral experience. Therefore, children may notice what happens with their parents, but their parents do not always codify these experiences to them. Hence, the child's brain must have something innate about morality that contributes to this quick and smooth attribution of morality.



CHAPTER IX

PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY PARALLELS

9.1. The Struggle Between Reason and Passion

Those arguing that morality is not innate have a tendency to see all of the morality to be not innate but acquired. On the other hand, those arguing that morality is innate understand that only parts of morality are innate, such as innate sensing, preferring moral actions over non-moral ones, the capability to pick up social cues indicating moral norms, or someone breaking moral rules, someone in distress and so on, are innate, while acknowledging that the rest of morality is acquired and learned from culture and experience. ‘Morality is not innate’ theorists like Kant, Mill, Bloom and Prinz also tend to see that we cannot trust whatever is innately present within us; they usually acknowledge that feelings, sentiments, empathy and emotions are present within us innately, but these instincts cannot be trusted because they will not allow us to be rational and to be able to make the right decision in the right moments, and in Kant’s case, will lead us to radical evil (Kant believed that only when one acts against his internal passions and desires for goodwill, then the act can be seen as inherently good). Aristotle and Hume, on the contrary, do not see that we cannot trust our innate instincts. Aristotle believes that our emotions play a vital role in the acquisition of morality. He claims that emotions will have an influence on us either way, it will eventually end up influencing our reason, and that it would be ineffectual to attempt to exclude them from morality; instead, it would be more effective to condition our emotions with reason in order to reach a balanced middle point. Thus, he sees that we can use our emotions in a way to benefit us rather than hinder us, and he does not have a negative lens on our emotions like Kant, Mill, Bloom and Prinz do.

Kant, Mill, Bloom and Prinz and many other thinkers all have the view that reason is what allows us to behave morally, and instances in which we know something is

wrong and still do it are caused by allowing our passions to take over. Hume rejects this notion; he claims that reason alone is not enough to motivate human will (Pollock, n.d.). He differentiates between two types of reasoning; demonstrative reasoning and probable reasoning. The former is the abstract kind that creates relations between ideas. Hume argues that this cannot motivate us because it does not have a physical existence, and human will is only motivated by what exists physically. The latter is the kind of reasoning that allows us to make inferences based on experience that lead us to cause and effect. This type of reasoning tells us which actions are associated with pleasure or pain, which may seem to motivate human will. However, it is worth mentioning that Hume makes an important distinction; it is our instinct to avoid pain and seek pleasure that acts as the motivational force, not the information itself. Thus Hume claims that reason cannot be the motivator of human action; rather, the motivators of human actions must be our passion and desire in conjunction with the information we derive from reason. Therefore, according to Hume, there is no conflict between reason and passion. The idea that emotion and reason are on opposite sides where you can only use one or the other, or they are in constant conflict, has been proven to not be true. In fact, it has been found that emotion supports rational thinking (Damasio, 1994). Additionally, most of the time, when people believe they are thinking rationally, they are actually just rationalising their emotions that they may or may not have been consciously acknowledged to themselves. Therefore, I argue that the absolute dismissal of emotion can actually do more harm than good because it puts us in a position where we are acting on emotion without our awareness. A better approach would be to see that our emotions and our innate intuitions and impulses can be utilised to our advantage, and just like anything else, we have to use them in moderation.

Hoffman's views on moral principles align with Aristotle's virtue ethics, as both emphasize the role of utilising cognition for moral decision-making. Unlike Kant, Bloom, and Prinz, he does not perceive these innate feelings as misleading. By integrating both moral principles and empathic distress, we can optimize our moral judgments and actions. Both Hoffman and Aristotle similarly maintain a balanced perspective, recognizing the value of innate feelings as a powerful motivator and moral guide when used in conjunction with moral principles (which necessitates the use of reason. (Davidov, Zahn-Waxler, Roth-Hanania, & Knafo, 2013), (Wynn,

2008), (Hamlin, 2013), and (Haidt & Joseph, 2008) all viewed and proved that morality is partially innate and that these innate intuitions can help guide us morally, which also aligns with Aristotle's perspective that we can trust our intuitions.

9.2. Is Moral Knowledge Enough for Moral Action?

Kant and Mill maintained that moral knowledge through mere reasoning would be enough for us to be moral in a consistent way. Bloom and Prinz also believe that reason is enough to be moral. Regardless, it has also been proven that using reason for moral knowledge is not enough to ensure the consistency of our moral actions, our brains do not have the cognitive capacity to enable us to think about each and every situation that we encounter, it would cause us mental fatigue and thus Mill and Bloom's consequentialist thinking would not be realistically sustainable. Rather, Aristotle's view that we must develop a character of good virtuous habit that enables us to behave in a naturally moral and virtuous manner is more realistically sustainable and in accordance with empirical research showing the limitations of human cognition and the nature of our fast, efficient lives. For instance, (Crockett, Kurth-Nelson, Siegel, & Dolan, 2014)'s research found that people take a longer time to take a moral decision regarding the pain of another person, this is consistent with the findings of social cognitive studies as it shows that we engage in more controlled processing when thinking about morality. Further, (Sripada & Stich, 2006)'s work discovered that we have an innate cognitive mechanism that help up acquire and internalise moral norms around us, is also consistent with Aristotle's virtue ethics.

On top of this, al Ghazali sees that moral action cannot happen without using knowledge, innateness for him is being capable of being moral using inherent qualities given to us by God. His view is close to that of Aristotle and of the psychological findings that state that we have certain innate cognitive mechanisms that help us to behave morally and we acquire moral principles, rules and norms. On the other hand, al-Mu'tazilites claim that morality is innate independent of scripture and other means (experience for instance), this view does not fully correspond to the mass of psychological evidence showing that although morality is partially innate, we still learn through experience and from those around us.

Kant believed that if we were left to our own devices, we would act on our instincts that would lead us to radical evil. However, years of research in psychology has shown us that that is not the case, that we do have innate moral intuitions that keep us in check, but to a certain degree. Does this mean we will behave immorally if we do not make moral action a habit? Not really, if we were left to our own devices (if we behaved based on autopilot), a lot of our thought patterns and habits that we pick up on automatically without intending to, would come from our environments, the people around us and our culture. Thus, you can say that culture plays an important role in the morality of people; if one's culture engages in moral practices then we are more likely to be moral because it would be part of our automatic processes. This does not necessarily mean that if our culture engages in immoral practices, we will necessarily become immoral, because we still have our innate instincts and intuitions about morality. Yet, if we make it a habit to not act on these intuitions, and our culture did nothing to stop us (like punishing us for immoral actions), then we would be much more likely to engage in immoral practices and even end up being immoral people.

Furthermore, Hoffman proves that feeling good about helping others is not the only motive for helping others. He found that people care about if other's distress is alleviated showing how empathy is the true motive behind many moral actions. This shows that Mill's Utilitarian approach is wrong in its claim that the reason or motive behind why we engage in moral action is because of the pleasure that it induces in us. Regardless, it is more than that, it is rooted in our nature as humans and our need to be prosocial and cooperate within a social system.

9.3. Has Psychology Helped with Answering the Question?

Has psychology helped us in answering this philosophical question? I would say yes. Philosophy poses some important questions and does a lot in trying to answer them, Psychology does a good job of implementing those hypothetical questions into real life, although the ethical components may often pose difficulties and limitations. When psychologists attempt to answer a philosophical question, it will inevitably take a couple of years of trial and error and of building upon other researcher's studies in order to reach a reliable, and valid conclusion. And even then, reaching a

conclusion that involves consensus may not be possible due to the mere complexity of the human. Regardless, I would say that it definitely helps us go further by seeing what can realistically be applied.



CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

When people are thinking about or discussing moral issues, the discussion is never a blank slate that can be filled with any kind of reason, there is usually an already laid infrastructure that directs people's thoughts and affects towards a certain conclusion (Haidt & Joseph, 2008). Empirical evidence reveals findings that lean more towards Aristotle's virtue ethics. Aristotle was right in saying that through habituation and practical wisdom we become virtuous people, he was also right in trusting our innate impulses, although he misses the point that moral capacities such as moral sensing, evaluation and judgement are innate. We have innate mechanisms such as empathy which acts as a prosocial motive, and the cognitive mechanisms proposed by all the other psychologists that help us pick up on social cues and moral norms. However, we are complex beings that unlike other animals, have a more complex cognitive process when it comes to the acquisition of these moral values. Cultural conditioning and socialisation do indeed play a big role in deciding which values prevail over others and which values a person acquires and thus, the identity they create. Further, as humans we have free will and the ability to choose how we behave. Therefore, the fact that morality is somewhat innate does not rid us of our responsibility to put in the conscious effort to make moral practice a habit. What this innateness implies is that we have an innate setting that produces social-perceptual tendencies that make the process of the acquisition of moral principles, rules and actions easier.

Therefore, I believe that humans are neither intrinsically good nor bad, moral, nor immoral, rather I would say that we are capable of being either, and the kinds of values we choose determine whether we end up moral or immoral beings.

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