

“I Don’t Want Your Compassion!” The Importance of Empathy for Morality

Manuel Camassa[†]
m.camassa90@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

After the great enthusiasm about the moral potentialities of empathy of the last thirty years, this phenomenon has been recently called into question, if not openly criticized, by both philosophers and psychologists among whom we find Jesse Prinz or Paul Bloom. This paper aims to show why empathy should not too easily be regarded as useless or even deleterious for morality and to propose a special role for it. In order to reach this goal, I will briefly sketch what I mean with the term empathy and how is this psychological mechanism different from other akin phenomena like compassion. I will then turn my attention to some criticisms that can be made about the role of empathy for morality which show that empathy seems not a necessary element of the three main dimensions of morality, that is moral judgment, moral development and moral conduct. It will be argued that although empathy is not necessary for moral judgment, it has some very important roles to play for the other two moral dimensions. Empathy should be considered as part of the fundamental features of a moral person.

1. Empathy. A Few Preliminary Remarks

The aim of this paper is the analysis of the moral role of empathy. The main question that is going to be addressed is the following: is empathy necessary for morality? In order to find a possible answer to these questions, it will be of great help if we split the thick concept of ‘morality’ into three different constitutive parts of it and we reformulate our questions in the following way: is empathy necessary for: (1) Moral judgment? (2) Moral development? (3) Moral conduct/motivation?

[†] Department of Philosophy, University of Lucerne, Switzerland.

Every section of the paper will deal with one of these dimensions by presenting the criticisms that can be made about the role of empathy and by providing possible answers to those. After that, a conclusion will be drawn. Empathy is a very complex phenomenon and until now there exist no agreement among both scholars and lay public about its definition.¹

If we look at the literature, as well as at the description given by, let us say, “normal people”, empathy tends to be described as a phenomenon which involves one or more of these concepts:

- (A) Feeling what someone else feels;
- (B) Caring about someone else;
- (C) Being emotionally affected by someone else's emotions and experiences, though not necessarily experiencing the same emotions;
- (D) Imagining oneself in another's situation;
- (E) Imagining being another in that other's situation;
- (F) Making inferences about another's mental states.

As we can notice, the big problem with empathy is its vagueness, its being a fundamentally thin concept, and this also explicates the conflation of the empathic phenomenon with other akin phenomena like sympathy or compassion. Hence, to work with this concept a clear-cut definition of it is needed, and the fact that this definition will under some aspects be ‘stipulative’ should not be a matter. As the famous psychologist and researcher on empathy Daniel Batson once wrote: ‘In spite of frequent claims that one's own use of these terms is best, I know no clear basis [...] for favoring one labeling scheme over another. In such circumstances, I believe the best one can do is recognize the different phenomena, make clear the labeling scheme one is adopting, and use it consistently’ (Batson, 2011, 19 – 20). This is in fact the strategy used by the vast majority of researchers on empathy and I will make no exception. Empathy, according to the present definition, is a psychological mechanism which allows us to understand and feel with a variable degree of approximation the mental states of another subject. These states can include, but are not limited to, thoughts, beliefs, and emotions. Roughly put, when we merely understand what the ‘empathized’ subject is thinking or feeling, then we speak of cognitive

¹ For an exhaustive list of different definitions see Batson (2011) and Coplan (2011).

empathy (Baron-Cohen 2003; Eslinger 1998; Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, & Emde, 1992); on the contrary, when we also feel what he or she is feeling, then we talk about affective or emotional empathy (Rogers et al. 2007; Shamay-Tsoory, Aharon-Peretz and Perry 2009; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992). Furthermore, empathy can be the result of a primary, non-reducible, unmediated and other-directed process (Scheler 1973; Stein 1989; Zahavi 2011; Zahavi 2014; Zahavi and Overgaard 2011), or it can involve the use of imaginative enactment, targeting the other in his own specific, personal context, and, where possible, taking into account the particular narrative and characterization of the other as well² (Goldie 2000; Gallagher 2011, 2012). It must anyway be remembered that empathy is a mechanism by its very nature prone to errors and inaccuracies. After all, what another person is feeling or thinking in a given moment is never completely transparent to others (Gallagher 2001, 2007; Goldie 2011). As Edith Stein would say,³ an emotion may very well be embodied in some way, but it is primordially given only to the subject who is feeling it *in propria persona*, using the words of Edmund Husserl.

From what I have asserted so far, another important feature of empathy should become apparent, and it is its supposed moral neutrality. When I try to empathize with somebody I am basically trying to understand and/or feel what they might be thinking or feeling, and this kind of act doesn't seem to have a clear moral value *per se*.⁴ Put in another way, we can affirm that empathy is best

² One is facing the first kind of process when, for example, one directly 'perceives' the anger on the face of another subject, after having said something insulting to him. One sees his eyebrows wrinkling, his breath becoming heavy and gasping, his face turning red, his fists clenching and so on. In this case, one doesn't need to resort to any imaginative process in order to understand that the other is angry. What the other is feeling is crystal-clear. As Wittgenstein (1980) famously wrote: "Do you look within yourself, in order to recognize the fury in his face?" The second kind of process is present when a reporter, for instance, tries to empathize with a refugee by asking her questions about her past life, about her present conditions, about her character and so on.

A good example of the second type of phenomenon might be trying to infer what Bill Clinton might have been feeling after the Lewinsky scandal popped up. We know the context in which it happened, we have a certain characterisation of Clinton as a president and as a man and thanks to our imagination we can try to empathize with him.

³ Stein (1989), p. 6.

⁴ Some authors – like Prinz or Bloom – would deny this position and support the view that empathy biases moral judgment, therefore it cannot be considered as 'morally neutral'. However, such a reply would be based on a misunderstanding of what I mean with the words 'morally neutral'. I do not want to imply that empathy has no kind of effect (positive or negative) for morality, but only

explained as *feeling with* and not *feeling for* (see e.g. Slote 2010, 30). When I feel what you feel, this doesn't imply that I also feel for you. And this leads us to another question: what kind of phenomenon are we experiencing, when we feel for someone? Normally, scholars tend to define it as 'sympathy' (Bain 1899; Blum 1980; Darwall 1998; Darwin 1871; de Waal 1996; Eisenberg & Strayer 1987; Gruen & Mendelsohn 1986; Preston & de Waal, 2002; Wispé 1986, 1991) or 'compassion', and, more rarely, 'pity' (Blum 1980; Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas 2010; Hume, 1740/1853; Nussbaum 2001; Smith, 1759/1853). Even if I think that there are some subtle differences between the concepts of compassion and pity, for the sake of brevity and conciseness I will consider them as synonyms and refer to them using the all-encompassing term *compassion*. A good definition of what modern-day psychologists describe as compassion is offered by Keltner and Goetz (2007): 'the emotion one experiences when feeling concern for another's suffering and desiring to enhance that individual's welfare'.

Thus, compassion can be distinguished from empathy because of the following features:

- (1) It is a specific emotion
- (2) It involves concern specifically for other people's suffering
- (3) It seems to be intrinsically motivating and altruistically oriented

Having briefly sketched the salient characteristics of empathy and compassion it is now time to switch our focus to the role empathy can play in the moral domain.

2. Empathy and Moral Judgment

One way of thinking of empathy as the basis of our moral judgment is by making it the central element of a sentimental kind of ethics, and, more specifically, by considering it the foundation of our moral approbation and disapprobation. A very influential philosopher who makes exactly this point and defines himself as 'sentimentalist' and 'Humean' is Michael Slote. In his books *The Ethics of Care*

that its effect may vary, from positive to negative, depending on when, how, and with whom one chooses to empathize. Feeling what another feels in a certain moment is not, *per se*, an intrinsic good or bad act. It is just a fact. Put in another way, empathy is a skill, and skills can be used equally to pursue morally good or morally bad purposes: for example, the surgeon possesses certain skills that allow him to save lives, but the same skills might be employed to kill a man. In this sense, and only in this strict sense is empathy 'morally neutral'.

and *Empathy* (2007) and especially *Moral Sentimentalism* (2010), he spends a great deal of pages in the attempt to ground our moral judgment on our ability to empathize with other people. This is a view he also expresses in one of his latest works, where he writes:

I argued that when we are thus warmed by another, we are, in a most basic way, morally approving of them or their actions. But by the same token we can be chilled by the cold-heartedness someone displays in their attitude or actions toward some third party, and MS argued that this constitutes a basic kind of disapproval of that cold-hearted person.⁵

Hence, in Slote's opinion the mechanism of moral approbation and disapprobation is based on the empathy we feel towards the agent: if she does a good action, then we feel 'warmed' and approve of it; on the opposite, if the action is evil, we feel an empathic 'cold-heartedened' sensation which leads us to disapprove of that action. This is a position that Slote thinks can be developed from the work of David Hume's *Treatise*.⁶ Now, the question if such a stance is in line with the Humean conception may still be open to dispute, but in any case, this seems to be a legitimate view on the possible role played by empathy in morality and specifically in grounding our moral judgments. Is it also correct? There are very good clues that it might be not. Think, for example, of the cases in which there is no salient victim to empathize with. One can consider, for instance, bootlegging CDs or DVDs to be morally wrong, even without relying on empathy. Even paying taxes seems to be something we consider morally right. And this is so, also when our empathy or compassion may sometimes bring us to the opposite direction. If, for example, I have some budgetary troubles and a family to maintain, I might think of evading taxes out of empathy for my wife and children but then not doing it out of a sense of justice or some other principle of the sort.

There is also a series of transgressions which are commonly judged as immoral without thereby having grounded this judgment on empathy or compassion. Jesse Prinz (2011, p. 214) offers the following list: 'necrophilia, consensual sibling incest, destruction of (unpopulated) places in the environment, or desecration of a grave of someone who has no surviving relative'. In all these cases empathy can hardly be the cause of our moral disapprobation, for we have no one to empathize with.

⁵ Slote (2017), p. 845.

⁶ Hume (2009).

Moreover, the Humean theory seems unable to offer an explication for the cases in which approbation and disapprobation precede, rather than follow empathy, for example when we are inclined to feel empathy (or even sympathy) for the poor man who pays all his taxes in spite of his financial issues. Of course, I do not want to imply that empathy or compassion never anticipate our sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, but in many cases, when empathy is present, it is present as a consequence of these two sentiments, not as a precursor. Considering all these critical points, empathy turns out to be contingent upon moral judgment, since we can express moral judgments without having to rely on empathy. However, one might object, empathy is not necessary in these cases, only because they are all cases in which others are not really involved. I.e., if we take empathy to be fundamental only for the regulation of moral behavior between two or more individuals, then we may discover a necessary moral role for it. But even in this context there are some issues. Jesse Prinz has an interesting way of putting it. He imagines the following situation: suppose that I come to eat the last delicious cookie from a packet I have been sharing with a friend of mine. After doing it, I feel a pang of guilt. Is this feeling of guilt coming from empathy for my friend? It does not seem the case. In order to feel guilty, I just have to construe my action as greedy. Quoting Prinz (2011, p. 215) on this issue:

Morally significant actions can be recognized without empathy, even if those actions are ones that involve harm. We need not reflect on the harm to see that the action is bad. Perhaps you are delighted that I ate the last cookie. I recognize that, empathetically, and I still feel guilty; I still think that I should have offered the cookie to you.

Hence, seemingly, morality needs not to be based on judgments stemming from empathy, even when we are considering a sentimentalist kind of morals. Whereas I agree with this position, I think that Prinz goes too far in his critique of empathy. It's true: empathy does not have a role to play for moral judgment. However, empathy could still play a fundamental role for moral development. In other words, we may very well suppose that when we have acquired a certain capacity for moral reasoning, relying on empathy would become more and more redundant, but probably this emotional phenomenon might turn out to be the basic psychological mechanism through which we can obtain a moral sense at all.

So, having rejected its supposed synchronic role in morality, shall we conclude that empathy can have at least a diachronic one?

3. Empathy and Moral Development/Education.

This view seems *prima facie* appealing. After all, when we think of what morality essentially involves, we think of the principled regulation of our behavior in relation to others. Therefore, empathy, which seems to many psychologists to have a strict connection with moral behavior,⁷ might turn out to be central. In order to prove this intuition, more and more researchers have shifted their focus to the study of pathological populations taken to be completely devoid of empathy: psychopaths. These seem in fact to lack both empathy and compassion and if the result were that their well-known amoral or even immoral behavior was due to this deficit, then we would have good reason to conclude that compassion and empathy are diachronically necessary for morality. What is needed are indeed evidences of the fact that empathy can *cause* moral behavior, and not that empathy and moral behavior are merely *correlated*. However, psychopathy doesn't seem (at least at the present stage) to offer this kind of evidence. In fact, even if a plethora of scholars see in empathy the central characteristic to explain all the amoral features typical of psychopathy, this view can be challenged.

It could be suggested (as Prinz does in his 2011 article and I tend to agree with him) that it is the constitutive impossibility for psychopaths to experience mature, wholehearted emotions that bring them to be callous, irresponsible, unempathetic, and, at the end of the day, amoral. After all, empathy as we have defined it is the capacity to experience the emotions of others, and if one is unable to be deeply moved even by his own emotions, he will remain all the more indifferent to the emotions of others. Put in another way, psychopaths do not feel empathy because they cannot feel any kind of emotion in a wholehearted manner. For Prinz appears consequently safe to affirm that in normally developing children with a normal emotionality, methods of moral education founded in punishments – love withdrawal, positive feedbacks, as well as the offering of positive role models *et cetera* – are both necessary and sufficient for the formation of a mature morality. But is it the case? I'm inclined to disagree. Indeed, in what follows I will attempt to show that empathy has an

⁷ Probably the most famous and well-documented works are those of Hoffman (2000), and the life-long work of Batson and his colleagues of which we good summaries in Batson and Shaw (1991) and Batson (2011).

irreplaceable function for moral development, and all educators should not forget to make use of it.

If I think of my childhood, I can easily remember many times in which my parents admonished me through the stimulation of my empathy and I believe that this is an experience common to lots of other people. Sentences like: 'Don't act like that with your sister! How would you feel if she did the same to you?' were often to be heard. This is in fact a well-known phenomenon for psychologists and pedagogists. Martin Hoffman names it 'inductive discipline' or simply 'induction' (Hoffman 2000, chapters 5 and 6). Hoffman conceives this mechanism to be the opposite of the 'power-asserting' kind of discipline, by means of which parents attempt to raise a child merely through threats of punishment (which are then carried out if the child does not obey) and by inculcating moral reflection, motivation and behavior through the sheer citing of moral rules and principles. Induction appeals on the contrary to the empathic capacity of the child by letting him imagine how he would feel if he was to undergo the harm he had done to another and thereby making him fully aware of the evil he had committed. If this strategy is applied repeatedly over time, the child will come to associate bad feelings (especially feelings of guilt) in situations in which the harm he can do is not yet done. Hoffman calls these habitual associations 'guilt scripts' and asserts that they are essential for moral motivation. In his own words:

[...] peer pressure compels children to realize that others have claims; cognition enables them to understand others' perspectives; empathic distress and guilt motivate them to take others' claims and perspectives into account (Hoffman 2000, 10 – 11).

And here is where I believe that 'anti-empathists' like Jesse Prinz go awry. They are right when they say that at the present state of the research it is impossible to conclude with absolute certainty that empathy is necessary for moral development and, therefore, that it is also diachronically necessary for the formation of moral judgments, but we have very good clues that it might be very important. Are we sure that a child would really be able to understand what is wrong with a given action without observing and reflecting on its outcomes also at an emotional level? Let us take again into account the 'taking the last cookie' example. Prinz claims that it is sufficient to construct the action as greedy to feel a pang of guilt and therefore be motivated to act morally. But the very concept of

‘greed’ is, at a large extent, based on empathy. If we look at the definition of ‘greedy’ provided by the Oxford Dictionary (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/greedy>), we find: ‘Having an excessive desire or appetite for food’ or: ‘Having or showing an intense and selfish desire for wealth or power.’ Now, the term ‘selfish’ is quite telling. To be selfish implies a closure with regards to others, a lack of openness and receptivity to others’ sentiments, desires, needs and expectations. The selfish person is the unempathetic person par excellence. If I feel greedy, and therefore also guilty, because I have eaten the last cookie, this is not because I think I have been greedy in the sense of gluttonous or overindulgent (I may have eaten only a few cookies), but in the sense of having been disrespectful towards you and towards the desires you might have had in relation to the cookies, and, in order to entertain this line of thought, I need empathy. In fact, suppose that in my childhood I used to eat the last cookie all the time, when sharing them with friends, and suppose that all that my parents did in reaction, was to tell me that what I did was wrong, because it was greedy, but without using the ‘inductive discipline’ method I explained earlier. That is, they did not lead me to empathize with my peers, telling me to imagine what I would feel if my friends were to always eat the last cookie. In this case, I don’t think that I’d have been able to develop a real sense of guilt for what I had done. In other words, I wouldn’t have been able to internalize this moral rule: it would have been only a kind of convention for me, like an external imposition. A critic of empathy may very well reject this view by claiming that we don’t have enough evidence to conclude that other methods like punishment, love-withdrawal and so on might have worked as well, however, I have difficulties in thinking that the development of a refined moral sense can really happen without empathy. Nevertheless, it could be argued (as Prinz does), that it’s imitation to be at the base of moral education: imitation processes – so Prinz – permit to internalize moral rules thanks to (1) emotional contagion, and (2) the observation of certain role models.⁸

However, if this theory is supposed to offer a real alternative to an empathy-based moral education, then I believe that it fails to hit the target. On the one hand, stating that imitation is grounded on emotional contagion⁹

⁸ See Prinz (2005), especially pp. 279–281.

⁹ See Prinz (2005), pp. 279–280: ‘When a child hits someone and sees that her victim has been hurt, it causes the child to feel bad by emotional contagion. This gives hurting a negative value that does not seem to depend on natural conventions.’

doesn't *ipso facto* divest the role of empathy, since many authors would claim emotional contagion to be the more rudimental part of the complex phenomenon of empathy.¹⁰ On the other hand, even the imitation of certain role models seem to be inescapably grounded on empathy, in fact, it is hard to conceive of imitation without a certain degree on simulation and perspective-taking. Think of when you try to emulate the behavior of a real or idealized person who deeply influenced your life: 'What would my father/mother/teacher/Buddha/Jesus do in this situation? How would he or she behave?'

Yet again, Prinz might reply that we don't need empathy to imitate a role model: all that is needed is instead the inculcation of certain ideas by someone who has authority on us (our parents, or somebody we love or esteem very much) which in turn leads to the development of shame and guilt-scripts. This seems to be suggested by his very words: 'victimless transgressions such as masturbation may be moralized by convincing children that it will lead to disease, deviance, or divine censure'.¹¹ However, this would make Prinz's view vulnerable to the same kind of objection I voiced while discussing his 'last cookie example'. The fact is that such a stance inevitably leads to see morals as grounded on the wrong kind of justification, i.e. a justification *ab auctoritate*: 'It's bad for me to eat the last cookie because mama said so' affirms implicitly the child imagined by Prinz. And though I know that Prinz actually says that it's the sense of guilt experienced by the child that brings him to the refusal of eating the last cookie, however, if pangs of guilt are nothing more than 'forms of sadness that have been calibrated to special eliciting conditions'¹² then ultimately the only justification the child could offer for her behavior (once reached adulthood) is: 'Because I was raised this way!'. And this hardly appears to be the kind of morality we want to instill in our children, the morality a father and a mother try to inculcate when they tell the child (to use the same sentence employed *supra*): 'Don't act like that with your sister! How would you feel if she did the same to you?'. Empathy permits us to offer our children another completely different kind of moral education: hurting someone is bad not because of what we might have taught them as parents, but because it makes the other suffer and empathy is the access to this experience of suffering. Empathy is the key to the *inner world* of others. Thanks to empathy, children come to the acknowledgement of

¹⁰ See, e.g., Darwall (1998), d'Arms (2000), Hoffman (2000), and de Waal (2009).

¹¹ Prinz (2005), p. 280.

¹² *Ibid.*

the fact that others have needs, desires, intentions, and emotions as they also do. Empathy makes the others internally present to the child and for this reason they start to matter for her. Hence, I also believe, like Prinz, that ‘guilt scripts’ can be inculcated, but I think, in opposition to him, that these scripts ought to be based on empathy.¹³

But this takes us already in the direction of moral motivation, that will be the issue of the next chapter. For the moment, we have shown that anti-empathists have to better sharpen their blades, if they really want to cut empathy out of moral education and development. Indeed, as we have seen, an empathic kind of education seems to promise more than other alternatives.

4. Empathy and Moral Motivation

There’s a dimension of morality that seems to be really dependent on empathy, and it’s that concerning moral motivation. Undeniably, empathy and compassion play a vital role as powerful sentimental motivators for morality. It suffices to take a look at advertising and TV commercials for charities to notice this role. They don’t usually display data or statistics of any sort, instead, they prefer to focalize our feelings towards a particular individual. They tell us the story of a poor African child, escaping from war, they give us her name and age, they show us some heart-breaking pictures of her and tell us that she needs our help and that by donating to this charity we’ll save her life. This kind of strategy appears to be more effective than simply providing the audience with, say, some information about the aims of the charity and the achieved results.¹⁴

¹³ I know that it might be objected that feeling the pain of others doesn’t always lead the perpetrator of the violent act to a sense of displeasure. Sometimes, instead, we take pleasure in harming others, for example when we seek retaliation. But this is intrinsic to the nature of empathy and it’s the element I tried to explain by talking about empathy’s ‘moral neutrality’. Empathy can be used for good or bad purposes and it is up to us to decide how to employ it. However, I reject the view of anti-empathists like Prinz and Bloom when they use this feature of empathy to criticize its role for morality on the whole. Already Aristoteles had warned that a virtue like courage can become dangerous when it’s not a wise man, but a morally vicious man to make use of it. Nonetheless, this doesn’t make courage morally questionable. In the same way, empathy must be guided by moral principles and moral principles must be employed in moral education, but – and that’s the position I’m defending – without forgetting empathy.

¹⁴ For studies confirming the important role of empathy for donations to charities see e.g. Verhaert and Van den Poel (2011), see also Lee, Winterich and Ross (2014) for an interesting study comparing the effects of empathy and perceived moral responsibility when donating to a charity and Small and Verrochi (2009) for the consequences of showing certain facial emotion expressions in a charity’s advertising on our choice to financially support it.

Nevertheless, it's possible to object that the motivational role of empathy is not necessarily and causally linked with moral behavior *per se*. Following this objection, empathy just has a contingent connection with helping behavior, which amounts to saying that it's a motivational force among others and that it can encourage, but also fail to encourage helping behavior. More in general, we are used to underestimating the motivational power of our emotional reactions, which are very often not based on empathy. Perhaps, an example might help to shed light on this point.

Imagine this situation: M. is a young student staying in a hostel in a foreign country, in a city he's never seen before and far from his hometown. Tomorrow is a big day for him, as he will have to pass an important exam if he wants to study at that city's university. Unfortunately, M. is unable to catch some sleep, so, he decides to go for a walk. Once he comes back to his floor and gets out of the elevator, he sees an odd scene. An elderly woman, clearly homeless, is miserably dragging herself barefoot, stumbling down the hall and mumbling incomprehensible words. It is impossible for M. to understand if she's drunk, high on drugs, mentally ill or even injured, but it's certainly not a pleasant spectacle to watch. The thought of simply ignoring her and entering his room crosses M.'s mind, but together with this thought M. also considers the fact that the woman might be needing some help and he tells himself that he cannot just leave her in this condition. So, M. decides to approach her, in order to help her in some way. The woman is a few meters ahead of him, but, after the first steps, he has to stop: he's literally paralyzed by the most tremendous stench he has ever smelled. As he comes nearer to the woman, he's able to see details he hadn't noticed before, like the fact that the white piece of cloth that covered her (that once upon a time might very well have deserved the name of 'a dress') is covered in suspicious spots. While he's still frozen and uncertain about what to do, she falls over. Once again, a voice inside M. tells himself to simply head for his room and call reception, but, as he considers this possible course of action, he feels guilty. It's clear that the woman needs help (in her indistinct muttering M. manages to hear the word 'toilet') and he feels some sort of obligation to do something for her. So, trying to breathe as little as possible and avoiding looking at her dress, he helps her to stand up by taking her arm and eventually supports her to the toilet. After that, he reaches the reception on the ground floor, explains the situation to them and, once they tell him they would call the police and the ambulance, he finally comes back to his room and has a long, warm shower.

This example shows very clearly how the motivational force of emotions work. Let us try to analyze it step by step. When M. first came back from his walk, he was in a gloomy mood, and he was certainly not in the best condition to help. He was worried about the exam on the next day and frustrated because he was unable to get some sleep. Then he saw the woman. From the way she was dragging herself along the hall he immediately recognized that she might have needed help. In other words, M. construed the situation in his mind in the following way: ‘an elderly woman seems to be in trouble, I’m the only one in the hall and this condition already makes me to a given extent morally responsible for this woman, hence, if I don’t do anything for her, I will feel guilty’. M. isn’t sure from where this sense of responsibility came. Was it the result of moral rules and principles acquired in his education, like: ‘help people in need’? Was it the thought that God was watching him? Or maybe the internalization of what Sartre would call *le regarde d’autrui*? It’s hard to see why we act in a given way when the possible motivations can be so different and numerous and when it cannot at all be excluded that it was in fact a combination of various motives which led us to undertaking a certain course of action. What M. knows is that this sense of guilt helped him to overcome his initial doubts and made him approach the woman. But then, a new type of emotion came into play: disgust. Disgust is a negatively valenced emotion which typically leads the person who feels it to refrain from the object that causes it. And that is exactly the effect it had on M.: he wanted to help the old woman, but what he saw and smelled prevented him from doing so. This setback caused him to review his course of action once more and to ask himself if he should really be the one to help her, if it would not be better to simply call reception and let them deal with this poor woman, *et cetera*. In other words, his brain, pushed by disgust, started to elaborate a possible alternative escape-strategy. But then, once again, the thought that he could not leave her on the ground, that he had to do something, struck him again. Was it a sense of responsibility? A sort of anticipatory guilt? Or maybe even an anticipatory emotion of pride in thinking that by helping her he would be doing ‘the right thing’, to cite the famous film of Spyke Lee? Here, too, M. cannot rule out any of these elements. But he knows something for sure: he wasn’t empathizing with her. He never tried to imagine what it must have been like being her and experiencing that situation; he didn’t feel her suffering. Being completely honest to himself, M. has to admit that he was too much concerned with his own suffering in trying to overcome his emotion of disgust

to even think of empathizing with the woman. So, whatever force led him to help her stand on her feet and accompany her to the toilet, it certainly wasn't empathy. Hopefully, this example made clear that if it's true that we often need some kind of emotional trigger in order to act morally, this stimulus doesn't always need, however, to be an empathic one. Other emotions are pretty much apt to play this motivational role. What is more, empathy can sometimes be even deleterious for moral motivation, due to a phenomenon called 'vicarious/personal distress', i.e. the sharing of negative feelings from others which ultimately leads us to feel distressed and renounce help.

There are several studies which have focused on this potentially very negative feature of empathy (i.a. Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997; Batson, Lishner et al., 2003; Jackson, Brunet, Meltzoff, & Decety, 2006; Lamm, Batson, & Decety, 2007). Among the most famous are the works of Tania Singer and Olga Klimecki, who attempt to demonstrate the superiority of compassion towards empathy by showing how the former is free from the dangerous inclination to vicarious distress, since compassion doesn't involve the mirroring of any feeling, but rather, calm and warm feelings of care and affiliation: 'In contrast to empathy', write Klimecki and Singer (2014, R875), 'compassion does not mean sharing the suffering of the other: rather, it is characterized by feelings of warmth, concern and care for the other, as well as a strong motivation to improve the other's well-being.' (For further analysis see Klimecki and Singer 2013, 2015; Klimecki, Ricard and Singer 2013; Klimecki et al. 2014).

The aim of all these recent pieces of research is to show that empathy shouldn't be seen as the only emotional or sentimental source we can rely on for motivational purposes when dealing with the active practice of morality. Compassion, as opposed to empathy, seems in fact to imply a tighter connection with helping behavior (after all, when *I feel for* someone, in contrast to *feel with* someone, I'm already thinking of myself as somebody who can actively do something for the others, and not as a mere passive 'receptor' of their feelings). And, as we have seen, compassion also appears resistant to the typical shortcomings of empathy.

Thus, perhaps, in concentrating on empathy and on the importance to inhabit the unpleasant feelings of others and live their pain, as it were, on our own skin, we're probably overlooking how much better off we were if we were to act under the influence of more positively connotated emotions.

But then, does the role played by compassion and other emotions make empathy useless in the context of moral motivation? Must empathic distress necessarily lead to the adoption of a selfish, rather than altruistic behavior and should we consequently join that increasingly fashionable circle of critics and objectors of empathy in which we find Paul Bloom and Jesse Prinz, among others, and, in some sense, Tania Singer and Olga Klimecki? I think that all these questions should be answered negatively.

First of all, although I agree with Singer and Klimecki (see *supra*) when they show that compassion and empathy are two distinct mechanisms which rely on two different neuronal patterns in our brain, this doesn't mean *ipso facto* that compassion cannot sometimes originate from empathy: as a matter of fact, this occurs very often. Take as example the videos showed by animalist or vegan associations. Here, the aim is certainly the elicitation of a strong, altruistic, and compassionate behavior towards animals, but the means employed to reach this outcome are clearly empathic. In other words, empathy is instrumentally elicited, in order to elicit compassion, as a consequence. Consider the sentences that are commonly used in these videos: 'Imagine being a chicken. The first day of your life on earth you are castrated and then forced to live your entire existence in a small place overcrowded by other chickens like you, while literally dragging yourself over your own excrement, waiting to be slaughtered'; or 'Imagine being a pig and seeing the butcher stunning your mate and then killing them in front of your eyes, knowing that you would be the next', *et cetera*. It is crystal clear that this methodology is employed in order precisely to elicit empathic distress in us, in the hope that this distress will lead the spectator of the film or the reader of the article, to not only feel with animals, but to feel for them, and, eventually, do something for them. And this actually works, as, when asked, most people who became vegan answer that they did it out of respect or love for animals.¹⁵ Therefore, not only can empathy bring to compassion, but even when it leads to an experience of empathic distress, this distress can often be preliminary to altruistic behavior. Furthermore, I claim that real compassion can only stem

¹⁵ See, e.g., a survey conducted with 726 vegans in Australia, where it is displayed that the main reason for people going vegan is 'ethics for the animals':

<https://vomadlife.com/blogs/news/why-most-people-go-vegan-2016-survey-results-reveal-all>

For studies highlighting the fundamental role of empathy in animal ethics see especially Aaltola (2012), Ascione (2008), Berenguer (2007), Gruen (2004), Gruen (2009), Signal and Taylor (2007), Solomon (1999).

from empathy. After all, how can I be really *sad for*¹⁶ someone, if I don't feel *sad with* someone? What is compassion without the dimension of 'dwelling', of 'lingering' in another's pain? Does speaking of *com-compassion* really make sense if we get rid of the dimension of *sharing*(com) *the pathos* (passion) of others? The answer, I think, is not, and in the next pages we'll see why.

5. The Special Role of Empathy

We observed that empathy can have important roles to play both at a developmental and at a motivational level for morality. But are these roles enough to grant empathy an irreplaceable status in morals? Perhaps, we might be able to develop morality, as well as to act and to judge morally without empathy and use instead deontological or utilitarian principles together with what Paul Bloom (2016) calls 'rational compassion' (a sort of active concern for other people stemming from the rational evaluation of their needy conditions). But would it be better that way? Would that be an advantage or a disadvantage for morality? I'm inclined to think that setting aside empathy from the moral sphere should be considered a great loss. If we take morality to regulate the actions and intentions of individuals with bodies and sensitive appetites, who live an emotional life and do not always follow the dictates of pure reason and logic, but who also value care, attachment and the resulting vulnerability they get from them, then empathy ought and in fact is necessary for moral behavior. Many of the recent discoveries in neurosciences show how complex our brain is and how difficult it is to distinguish between a purely rational and a purely affective part of ourselves. Thoughts, beliefs, and emotions seem on the contrary to be often intertwined and to influence each other. Without empathy we might reach morally significant results, but – and this is the final claim of this paper – we wouldn't act *perfectly* and *completely* morally. This concept may sound odd to many, so, in what follows, I will try to sketch a brief, but hopefully clear explanation of what I mean by this.

Suppose that a couple, Samuel and Alice, are talking. Alice seems quite upset, so, Samuel, who loves her very much and always tries to take care of her, asks her with a concerned face what's wrong. Alice initially denies that something is wrong and attempts to change the subject, but Samuel persists. After a couple of minutes, Alice starts to open up and tells Samuel her problem. Samuel listens to her problem very carefully, without interrupting her. After

¹⁶ As we have seen, the 'feeling for' is the central characteristic of sympathy/compassion.

Alice has finished her story, Samuel takes a couple of minutes to meditate on the matter and then exclaims: ‘Maybe you could...’ and offers Alice what he believes is the best solution to her problem.¹⁷ However, surprisingly enough for Samuel, Alice reacts with irritation: ‘Oh, why do you never listen to me?’ Samuel is puzzled:

‘What... Why do you say I never listen to you? I listened to your story for ten minutes without saying a word!’

‘Oh, poor you!’ replies Alice with more than a hint of sarcasm.

‘No, I mean... I really care about you. I was just trying to figure out a possible solution for your problem. I wanted to help you!’

‘Yeah, I see how you try to help me! You’re always the same! Too focused on yourself to really understand what the other needs. Forget about it. It’s my fault! I knew I hadn’t talked to you about it.’ replies a disappointed Alice.

Samuel, astonished and hurt, is speechless.

This and other situations of the kind are with all probability common to lots of people. Let’s try to analyze what went wrong in the communication between Samuel and Alice. So, Samuel cares for Alice and the moment he hears that she has a problem, he immediately prepares himself to help her. Therefore, after having listened to Alice’s story very carefully, he reflects upon the possible solution and eventually offers it to Alice. The schema is quite simple and can be resumed as follows: ‘I realize that you have a problem. From what I think I’ve understood, your problem is “x”. And I’m convinced that the best solution for “x” is “y”. So, why don’t you try to do “y”?’ Taken *per se*, there is nothing wrong with this line of thought: everything seems rational and logical, and yet, Alice is convinced that Samuel hasn’t understood her. There seems to be nothing offensive in this reasoning, and nonetheless, Alice feels offended and thinks Samuel is selfish. However, all this makes sense when we become aware of the fact that actually something is missing from this line of thought, and it’s empathy. Samuel takes the problem, analyzes it, and gives the solution. Even if he said that he cares for Alice (and he really does) he does not take Alice completely into account: his focus is on the problem. And this fact is of exceptional importance for our claim, because, put in another way, we might very well affirm that Samuel in this precise case has a kind of rational compassion, but not empathy for Alice.

¹⁷ The example is narrated in a dialogical way to better convey the emotional load.

He cares for her, he feels bad for her and feels the desire of helping her, and he accomplishes this desire by helping her out in what he thinks is the best way to do it. But he doesn't empathize with her, and this lack of empathy is perceived by Alice, who, as a consequence, feels hurt and reacts quite acidly. Samuel doesn't show empathy because he treats Alice's problem as a mechanic would treat a breakdown in a car, or as a surgeon would treat a cancer at the stomach, that is by focusing on the problem, ultimately for the sake of the other, of course, but without thereby feeling with the other. Perhaps, if Samuel had really tried to empathize with Alice, he would have realized that what she really needed was not a ready-made solution, but simply some moral support. Perhaps she just wanted to be listened to and then hear soothing words of concern. She wanted to feel herself cared about and not just to see the effects of care. And this kind of aid can be offered only by empathy. That's why I argue that the *feeling with* alone can already possess moral value. Moreover, frequently when we are troubled it is not the *feeling for* that we seek (which, after all, can often be overly paternalistic and make the object of compassion feel pitied), but the *feeling with*. We want people to be *tuned into* us. We like it when we are on the same wavelength with our partner or our friends, but also with our doctor, with our politicians, even with strangers. In fact, we spend our whole lives looking for people who are tuned into us.

My claim is that to help others with compassion, but not with empathy, can sometimes work perfectly fine, but in the long run it can lead to several problems: it can create a distance between the person who feels a rational kind of compassion, and the target of their compassion. Since on the one side there's an individual with warm feelings of concern and who's very much inclined to help, but who doesn't feel, in the slightest, the same feelings as the suffering person, and on the other side this latter subject, who doesn't feel the helping person is tuned into their feelings ends up just feeling pitied. Kant famously remarked in the Critique of Pure Reason that thoughts without intuitions are empty and that intuitions without concepts are blind. Well, I think that we can find the same connection between empathy and compassion: empathy without compassion is sometimes empty (because it doesn't always necessarily lead to helping behavior) and compassion without empathy is blind (because we cannot really act morally towards another person without first being in tune with them).¹⁸

¹⁸ How can you help a person without understanding what it feels like to be in a certain situation? Empathy provides a special kind of knowledge: *knowing how it is*.

Furthermore, it seems that the role empathy can play in morals was noticed even by the staunchest defender of the law of duty, Kant, who refers to it with the name ‘sympathy’ or ‘sympathetic feeling’, or in German: *Teilnehmende Empfindung*, and writes about it:

Sympathetic joy and sadness (*sympathia moralis*) are sensible feelings of pleasure or pain [...] at another’s state of joy or sorrow (shared feeling, sympathetic feeling). Nature has already implanted in man susceptibility to these feelings. But to use this as a means to promoting active and rational benevolence is still a particular, though only a conditional, duty. It is called the duty of humanity (*humanitas*) because man is regarded here not merely as a rational being but also as an animal endowed with reason (Kant 1991, 250). [Emphasis in original].

From this quote it can be noticed that for Kant empathy is a natural sentiment and that we can use it instrumentally in order to achieve what duty alone (i.e. the categorical imperative) would not be able to achieve. It seems fair to affirm that Kant sees empathy as a sort of emotional ‘crutch’ or ‘prosthesis’ for the moral man, and I share this view. But I also think that by developing this view of Kant we can reach two other important conclusions about the moral dimension of empathy that we can summarize in two slogans: (A) empathy is a fundamental part of our humanity (what Kant calls ‘humanitas’), and (B) empathy is what is in some cases required to not only act morally but to act in a morally, so to say, ‘more perfect’ way.

Let us consider again the example of Samuel and Alice. This example illustrates the intrinsic value of empathy compared to compassion. Empathy has a special and unique importance on its own, regardless of whether it can lead to compassion, or not. When we are in need, we do not want someone helping us with the gloating and detached smile of a bodhisattva, we want a certain sharing, a commonality of feelings, we want – in a sense – to be ‘welcomed’ in the hearts of others. We want them to be open and receptive, even vulnerable towards us. And to those of whom would argue that sometimes we want friends to be happy when we are sad, so that we can try to forget our pain by sharing their happiness, it should be answered not only that this is in fact another case of empathy (we basically empathize with our friends’ joyful state), but also that who holds such a claim has with all probability never experienced the warm and sweet sensation one gets when, in communicating to a friend one’s own sorrow, one sees the other shedding a tear in response.

My claim is that even if it makes no sense to affirm that a person has not acted morally when they had good intentions and when they chose a morally apt means of realizing those intentions, if they've failed to empathize with the other when it was needed, then their action cannot be considered morally perfect, because it wasn't perfectly appropriate for the situation. In some cases (as we have seen with Samuel and Alice's example), empathy is even what is required to really be of some help and reach one's own moral aims.

Take the case of lies. We know that the categorical imperative imposes a duty to always be truthful and never lie to anyone. But imagine for a second this situation: suppose that Mark decides not to lie to his wife Jean because it is 'his duty' (so he tells his wife) to do so. Indeed, the categorical imperative commands total honesty. My claim is that in such a situation Jean would (and actually should) feel herself offended. Mark's behavior seems to be very much comparable to that of the famous 'husband with one thought too many' made by Bernard Williams at the end of *Persons, Characters and Morality*.¹⁹ There, Williams famously observed that a moral justification defending the man against the charge that he ought to have been impartial provides the rescuer with 'one thought too many'. A morally good husband shouldn't think about impartiality when it comes to save the life of his wife over the life of another person he's not acquainted with. Here, Mark's appeal to the categorical imperative to justify his decision to not lie to Jean seems '*less than moral*' or only '*oddly moral*' because it is grounded on what we feel is the wrong motive: it's another 'thought too many'. A good husband should avoid to lie to her wife not only because it is his duty to do so, but because he loves her, he cares for her, he *feels with* her. 'How would she feel if I told her a lie?'; 'How would I feel if she lied to me?'. These should be the thoughts driving a good husband, and not something like: 'What would happen if I universalized my maxim to lie in order to protect myself from bad consequences?'

Two criticisms might be advanced to my claim: on the one side, empathy seems to divest the role of the categorical imperative in the Kantian morality; on the other side it could be argued that by making this example I may have shown that empathy proves to be good only for intimate relationships, but not for morality in general.²⁰ I think that my position can dodge both these criticisms. It's true that I made the examples of two couples (Samuel and Alice;

¹⁹ Williams (1981).

²⁰ I want to thank an anonymous reviewer for these objections.

Mark and Jean) but only because these kinds of example help me to better illustrate the point, as I take the reader to be familiar with such situations. However, as I said *supra*, we don't want just our partners to be *tuned with us*. Following this same line, we shouldn't refuse to empathize with other people, even with strangers. Empathy can be a plus in every relation we have, and morality is very much based on relations (with our family or friends, but also with our society, people in distant lands, future generations, animals,²¹ *et cetera*). Put in another way, empathy isn't good just for 'intimate relationships', but for (moral) relationships in general. Furthermore, intimate relationships are also a *locus* of morality: the moral man acts morally with both strangers and acquaintances and we should strive towards an ethics which can be used in all kinds of situations.

Regarding the other possible criticism, my answer is twofold: on the one side it's not my aim to defend a purely Kantian morality, so I could avoid the critique by simply stating that empathy is good for morality, no matter what Kant would think about it. Nonetheless, I want to give also another reply that may be able to reconcile the ethics of Kant (with all its emphasis on duty) and empathy. In fact, I think that even in the context of a rationalist kind of ethics (like Kant's ethics) empathy can perfect our moral duty by fine-tuning it. Empathy ought to accompany the accomplishment of the actions required by the law of duty, for the very good reason that it shows the human side of morality. After all, what is the difference between being helped by a moral human being and being helped – say – by a robot, an A.I. programmed to help others in need? It's the capacity of the first one of helping me with emotion, her ability to feel what it means to be suffering, to be needy, to feel miserable, and help me to move on, to feel better. But again, someone may assert, there are a few examples of helping behavior in which empathy doesn't appear to play a role. For instance, we want competent doctors, the question if they are empathic or not seems not to matter; what matters here is the result. However, my claim – which reflects our normal moral intuition – is that the morality of an action (as opposed to the morality of an intention) is not measured only by *what* one does, but *how* one does it; and there are many different ways to save a life. Suppose you're being treated by a highly competent but extremely unempathetic doctor *à la* Gregory House. In the end, he manages to cure your illness, nevertheless, would you be ready to assert that

²¹ Think – just to make a few examples – of helping people starving in Africa because of empathy for them, or contrasting global warming because of the empathy for (even imagined) future generations, *et cetera*.

you don't see any difference of (moral) grade between a Dr. House and a doctor as competent as him, but also very empathic? Both doctors will succeed to cure you, but who would you say was capable to help you the most? Who would you say was a better/more virtuous person on the whole?

However, the anti-empathist might reply that if you're very sick, you're not interested in any mirroring of feelings. In fact, you may be very worry, perhaps even frightened, and you don't want your doctor to be scared as you are. But empathy means not (or not only) feeling exactly the same emotions of the other. If it were, it would be something different: it would be identification, or emotional contagion. Empathy means feeling what another feels, but without thereby forgetting one's own identity and the role one plays in a given context. Emotions, once empathized, must – so to say – 'be brought home'. Hence, an empathic doctor would understand and feel what is like to be a scared patient, but then act like a good doctor. And by doing this, she reveals a 'more fully developed' morality than the unempathetic one, for she helps you for the good (moral) reasons (she wants to heal you and not 'defeat the disease') and in the good (moral) way (i.e. by feeling with you, giving you the respect and consideration that you deserve, and, more importantly, need).²²

Furthermore, although Kant never explicitly and unequivocally sustained it (perhaps he would even deny it), this position could be brought in accordance with a thought he expressed in his late *Metaphysics of Morals*, where we find:

Would it not be better for the well-being of the world generally if human morality were limited to duties of Right, fulfilled with the utmost conscientiousness, and benevolence were considered morally indifferent? It is not so easy to see what effect this would have on man's happiness. But at least a great moral adornment, love of man, would then be missing from the world. Love of man is, accordingly, required by itself, in order to present the world as a beautiful moral whole in its full perfection, even if no account is taken of advantages (of happiness). (Kant 1991, 251).

²² Of course, helping the other in a more detached and cold way doesn't make a difference when it comes to sending 25 dollars to a charity that help people in a far and foreign land, but it plays a huge role when the other is present right before us. And every day-morality is prevalently constituted by first-person encounters.

Here, Kant seems to concede a special role for benevolence. He isn't sure whether it should be considered as morally indifferent or not, but he's sure that it is a 'great moral adornment'. I think that a modern-day Kantian could grant the same status to empathy. Empathy is not and must not be the base of morality, but it is a moral adornment of the moral person: it certifies her humanity and makes her more morally virtuous. The empathic person is never distant from the others' needs, nor cold toward their requests. And helping another showing warmth and proximity makes all the difference in the world.

6. Conclusion.

After all this, Prinz or one of his most dogged defenders might still argue that what I've done so far was begging some other questions of Prinz about empathy, which all remain quite open. At the end of the quoted 2011 article the American philosopher claims e.g. that empathy is prone to biases and parochialism (like cuteness effect or preferential treatment), it can be easily manipulated, it can motivate harmful actions, and it interferes negatively with the ends of morality. How can my view on empathy account for all that?

Every single one of these questions would deserve at least a paper to be worthily answered, hence it would be utopic on my side to provide all the useful replies in this article. Nevertheless, an answer can be given. I think that Prinz (and Bloom, for that matter) seems to overlook the fact that empathy can be measured, controlled, and addressed in different directions. Anti-empathists like him seem to consider empathy as a mechanism that intrinsically and inevitably takes to biases and negative consequences. But the fact is: it is simply not true. Critics of empathy fail to acknowledge what I called the 'moral neutrality' of empathy, its being essentially a tool, an instrument, that can be used indifferently for good or bad purposes. When we use empathy to incentivize preferential treatment or to favor the life of an animal perceived as 'cute' versus an animal viewed as 'ugly'; when we let ourselves succumb to in-group biases *et cetera*, we are certainly not using empathy in a 'morally good' way. However, the good news is: things can be different. When our empathy for poor Sheri leads us to the desire of moving her on top of the waitlist above others who are needier, this same desire can be corrected by nothing else than empathy for the other people on the list. We don't necessarily need a transcendental principle of justice in order to do that, we just need empathy for both parties. The same applies for all the other cases proposed by Prinz: we might actually feel more 'natural empathy' (in the sense that we are naturally more inclined to feel

it) for a dying mouse than a rat, but after we tell ourselves that both these creatures are suffering the same pain and dying the same death, after we feel with the rat as we do for the mouse, our natural bias disappears.²³

This kind of corrections can be applied to all the other cases raised by both Prinz and Bloom: salience effects, proximity affects, manipulation... All the negative consequences of empathy identified by these critics can be attributed only to an overstimulated empathy of the more natural kind, not to a reflected type of it. Our rational and empathic abilities can and must work together: it's only when we develop both of them that we can wholly flourish as human beings. This is the reason why I decided to quote Kant from the *Metaphysics of Morals*.

After all these considerations, it is now time to draw our conclusions. The claims which I have attempted to defend in this paper are the following:

- (1) Although, taking into consideration the present state of the research, empathy cannot be said with certainty to be necessary for morality, there is evidence that link it – as we have seen – to compassion and helping behavior, which in turn are commonly considered to be integral parts of morality. Empathy seems also to be able to complement a morality based on a set of rational principles and can be instrumentally used as a motivational ‘crutch’.
- (2) Empathy seems, in some cases, to be even sufficient for moral behavior, as in the cases in which ‘feeling with’, instead of ‘feeling for’ is required. In other words, empathizing is sometimes the moral thing to do.
- (3) Though moral judgment is (and in my opinion has to remain) a matter of principles, empathy can and should make its voice be heard in the spheres of moral development and moral motivation, working in tandem with rational principles.

In conclusion, I want to argue that if we chose to get rid of empathy in the sphere of morals, we would not only lose, to use once again Kant's words: ‘a great moral adornment’ (Kant 1991, 251), but our very humanity would be mutilated. To feel with others, to take their perspectives, to experience their joy and their pain, to be, in one word, receptive towards other human beings is a fundamental part of what it means to be human. It is certainly not a coincidence that the adjective ‘humane’ in English is used as a synonym of ‘compassionate’, ‘sympathetic’, or

²³ For an interesting view on how to regulate our emotions and empathy in particular, see Kauppinen (2014).

‘empathic’. In fact, how would a person who always acts morally, but who never experiences empathy for other creatures, look like? I claim that their acts would be only formally moral, but they would unveil an imperfect moral content. It is a cold kind of care that care which is performed without empathy for the other. It is a cold kind of love that love which is felt without empathy. And if we all agree on the special places occupied by love and care not only in our relationships with other humans and animals, but also in our moral behavior, then we should never forego empathy.

REFERENCES

- Aaltola, E. (2012) *Animal suffering: Philosophy and culture*. New York: Palgrave.
- Aniskiewicz, A. S. (1979). ‘Autonomic Components of Vicarious Conditioning and Psychopathy’. *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 35: 60–67.
- Ascione, F. (ed.) (2008) *The international handbook of animal abuse and cruelty: Theory, research, and application*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press.
- Bain, A. (1899). *Emotions and the will*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Baron-Cohen (2003). *The Essential Difference: The Truth about the Male and Female Brain*. New York: Basic Books.
- Batson, C. D. (2011). *Altruism in Humans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Batson, C. D., Early, S., & Salvarani, G. (1997). ‘Perspective taking: Imagining how another feels versus imagining how you would feel’. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 23, 751–758.
- Batson, C. D., Klein, T. R., Highberger, L., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). ‘Immortality from Empathy-induced Altruism: When Compassion and Justice Conflict’. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 68: 1042–1054.
- Batson, C. D., Lishner, D. A., Carpenter, A., Dulin, L., Harjusola-Webb, S., Stocks, E. R., Gale, S., Hassan, O., & Sampat, B. (2003). “‘... As you would have them do unto you’”: Does imagining yourself in the other’s place stimulate moral action?’ *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 29, 1190–1201.
- Batson, C. D. & Shaw, L.L. (1991). ‘Evidence for Altruism: Toward a Pluralism of Prosocial Motives.’ In: *Psychological Inquiry* 2(2): 107 – 122.
- Berenguer, J. (2007). ‘The effect of empathy in proenvironmental attitudes and behaviors’. *Environment and Behavior* 39: 269–283

- Bloom, P. (2016). *Against Empathy. The case for Rational Compassion*. London: Penguin.
- Blum, L. A. (1980). *Friendship, altruism, and morality*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Coplan, A. (2011). 'Understanding Empathy. Its Features and Effects.' In: A. Coplan and P. Goldie, (eds.) *Empathy. Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, pp. 3–18. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- d'Arms, J. (2000). 'Empathy and Evaluative Enquiry'. In: *74 Chicago-Kent Law Review (1998–2000)*, 1467–1500.
- Darwall, S. (1998). 'Empathy, sympathy, care'. *Philosophical Studies*, 89, 261–282.
- Darwin, C. (1871). *The descent of man and selection in relation to sex*. New York: Appleton.
- Eisenberg, N., Strayer, J. (eds.) (1987). *Empathy and its development*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Eslinger, P. J. (1998). 'Neurological and neuropsychological bases of empathy'. *European Neurology*, 1998, 193–199.
- Gallagher, S. (2001). 'The Practice of Mind. Theory, Simulation or Primary Interaction?' *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8, 83–108.
- Gallagher, S. (2007). 'Simulation trouble'. *Social Neuroscience*, 2 (3–4), 353–365.
- Gallagher, S. (2011). 'Narrative competency and the massive hermeneutical background'. *Hermeneutics in Education*, 21–38.
- Gallagher, S. (2012). 'Empathy, Simulation, and Narrative'. *Science in Context* 25, 355–381.
- Goetz, J. L., Keltner, D., & Simon-Thomas, E. (2010). 'Compassion: An evolutionary analysis and empirical review'. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136, 351–374.
- Goldie, P. (2000). *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goldie, P. (2011). 'Anti-Empathy'. In: A. Coplan, P. Goldie, (eds.), *Empathy. Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, pp. 302–317. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gruen, R. J., & Mendelsohn, G. (1986). 'Emotional responses to affective displays in others: The distinction between empathy and sympathy'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 609–614.

- Gruen, L. (2004). 'Empathy and vegetarian commitments'. In: Sapontzi SS (ed.) *Food for thought: The debate over eating meat*. pp 284–293. New York: Prometheus.
- Gruen, L. (2009) 'Attending to nature: empathetic engagement with the more than human world'. *Ethics and the Environment* 14: 23–38
- Hoffman, M. L. (2000). *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hume, D. (2009). *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Portland, OR: Floating Word Press. (Original work published 1740).
- Jackson, P. L., Brunet, E., Meltzoff, A. N., & Decety, J. (2006). 'Empathy examined through the neural mechanisms involved in imagining how I feel versus how you feel pain'. *Neuropsychologia* 44, 752–761.
- Kant, I. (1991). *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Intr., Trans., and Notes by M. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kauppinen, A. (2014). 'Empathy, Emotion Regulation, and Moral Judgment'. In: H. L. Maibom (ed.) *Empathy and Morality*, pp. 98–122. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Keltner & Goetz (2007). 'Compassion'. In: R. F. Baumeister and K. D. Vohs (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*, pp. 159–161. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Klimecki, O. M., and Singer, T. (2013). 'Empathy from the Perspective of Social Neuroscience'. In: J. Armony & Vuilleumier (eds.) *The Cambridge handbook of affective neuroscience*, pp. 533–551. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Klimecki, O. M., and Singer, T. (2014). 'Empathy and Compassion'. *Current Biology* 24, R875–R878.
- Klimecki, O. M., and Singer, T. (2015). 'Compassion'. In: A. W. Toga, (ed.) *Brain Mapping: An Encyclopedic Reference*, vol. 3, pp. 195–199. Academic Press: Elsevier.
- Klimecki, O. M., Ricard, M., Singer, T. (2013). 'Empathy Versus Compassion: Lessons from 1st and 3rd Person Methods'. In: T. Singer and M. Bolz (eds.) *Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science*. Max Planck Society. E-book: <http://www.compassion-training.org/?page=download&lang=en>
- Klimecki, O. M., Leiberg, S., Ricard, M., Singer, T. (2014). 'Differential Pattern of Functional Brain Plasticity after Compassion and Empathy Training'. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 9, 873–879.

- Lamm, C., Batson, C. D., & Decety, J. (2007). 'The neural substrate of human empathy: Effects of perspective-taking and cognitive appraisal'. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 19, 1–17.
- Lee, S., Winterich K. P., Ross W. T. (2014). 'I'm Moral, But I Won't Help You: The Distinct Roles of Empathy and Justice in Donations'. *Journal of Consumer Research* 41, 678–696.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2001). *Upheavals of thought: The intelligence of emotions*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Patrick, C. J. (1994). 'Emotion and Psychopathy: Starting New Insights'. *Psychophysiology* 31, 319–330.
- Preston, S. D., & de Waal, F. B. M. (2002). 'Empathy: Its ultimate and proximate bases'. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 25, 1–72.
- Prinz, J. J. (2005). 'Imitation and Moral Development'. In: S. Hurley & N. Chater (eds.) *Perspectives on Imitation: From Neuroscience to Social Science: Vol. 2. Imitation, Human Development, and Culture*, pp. 267–282. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press.
- Prinz, J. J. (2011). 'Is empathy necessary for morality?' In: A. Coplan and P. Goldie (eds.) *Empathy. Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, pp. 211–229. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rogers, K., Dziobek, I., Hassenstab, J., Wolf, O. T., Convit, A. (2007). 'Who cares? Revisiting empathy in Asperger syndrome'. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 37 (4): 709–715.
- Rousseau, J. J. (1979). *Emile, or On Education*. Introduction, Translation and Notes by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books.
- Scheler, M. (2008). *The Nature of Sympathy*. Trans. P. Heath. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers.
- Shamay-Tsoory, S. G., Aharon-Peretz, J., Perry, D. (2009). 'Two systems for empathy: a double dissociation between emotional and cognitive empathy in inferior frontal gyrus versus ventromedial prefrontal lesions'. *Brain*. 132 (3): 617–627.
- Signal, T., Taylor, N. (2007). 'Attitude to animals and empathy: comparing animal protection and general community samples'. *Anthrozoös* 20: 125–130.
- Slote, M. (2007). *The Ethics of Care and Empathy*. New York: Routledge.
- Slote, M. (2010). *Moral Sentimentalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Slote, M. (2017). 'The Many Faces of Empathy'. *Philosophia* 45 (3): 843–855.

- Small, D. A., Verrochi, N. M. (2009). 'The Face of Need: Facial Emotion Expression on Charity Advertisements'. *Journal of Marketing Research* 46, 777–787.
- Smith, A. (1853). *The theory of moral sentiments*. London: Alex Murray. (Original work published 1759).
- Solomon, R.C. (1999). 'Peter Singer's Expanding Circle: Compassion and the liberation of ethics'. In: D. Jamieson (ed.) *Singer and his critics*, pp. 64–84. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Stein, E. (1989). *On the Problem of Empathy*. Trans. W. Stein. Washington, DC: ICS Publications.
- Verhaert, G. A., Van den Poel, D. (2011). 'Empathy as added value in predicting donation behavior'. *Journal of Business Research* 64, 1288–1295.
- Waal, F. B. M. de (1996). *Good natured: The origins of right and wrong in humans and other animals*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Waal, F. B. M. de (2009). *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society*. New York: Crown Publishing Group.
- Williams, B. (1981). *Moral Luck*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wispé, L. (1986). 'The distinction between sympathy and empathy: To call forth a concept a word is needed'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 314–321.
- Wispé, L. (1991). *The psychology of sympathy*. New York: Plenum.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1980). *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*. Vol. I, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Zahavi, D. (2011). 'Empathy and direct social perception: A Phenomenological Proposal'. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 2(3): 541–558.
- Zahavi, D. (2014). *Self and Other. Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zahavi, D. & Overgaard, S. (2011). 'Empathy without isomorphism: A phenomenological account'. In: J. Decety (ed.) *Empathy: From Bench to Bedside*, pp. 3–20. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Zahn-Waxler, C., Radke-Yarrow, M., Wagner, E., & Chapman, M. (1992). 'Development of concern for others'. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 126–136.
- Zahn-Waxler, C., Robinson, J. L., & Emde, R. N. (1992). 'The development of empathy in twins'. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 1038–1047.