

Emotion and morality: Understanding the role of empathy and other specific  
emotions in moral judgment and moral behaviour

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in

Cognitive Science

Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario

© 2016

Nalini Elisa Ramlakhan

Abstract: Empathy is often considered to be an important emotion for morality. In fact, many researchers argue that morality is impossible without empathy (Howe, 2013). In this research project, I argue against the widely held view that empathy is important for morality. I examine autistic individuals and psychopaths, both known for having an impairment in empathy, in order to show that empathy is not important for morality. I argue that although autistic individuals are deficient in empathy, they display moral behaviour, thus empathy cannot be the core of morality. I argue that while psychopaths are said to lack empathy, they are not wholly devoid of empathy. If it is the case that psychopaths do not fully lack empathy, then there must be more to morality than empathy. I also show that empathy can cause partiality, and thus cannot be the core of morality.

In support of a sentimentalist framework of morality, I determine the emotions important for morality by conducting a systematic review of the studies on emotion and morality. I examine and analyze studies conducted on both negative and positive emotions. I conclude that disgust, anger, distress sympathy, elevation, and mirth are important emotions for morality.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Andrew Brook for working on this project with me over the last few years. I cannot thank you enough for your guidance, insights, and commitment to this project. I have learned so much from you over the past few years, and I am so grateful to have had you as my thesis supervisor. Thank you for always pushing me a little further and believing in my full potential.

I would like to thank Dr. David Matheson and Dr. John Logan for being on my committee. Your insights have been very helpful and very much appreciated.

I would like to thank Dr. Dan McArthur and Dr. Peter Watson for being a part of my thesis examination. I appreciate the feedback on my project.

I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for partially funding my research project.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents who have been supportive throughout the duration of my thesis project. Your love and support has taken me a long way. Thank you for always believing that I can achieve anything and everything that I want to as long as I work hard for it.

Contents

- 1: Determining whether empathy is necessary for morality ..... 6**
- 1.1 Introduction and preliminary definitions ..... 7**
- 1.1.1 *Morality*..... 12
- 1.1.2 *Thesis project* ..... 13
- 1.2 Structure ..... 15**
- 1.3 Definitions and relationships..... 18**
- 1.3.1 *Cognitive empathy*..... 19
- 1.3.2 *Affective empathy* ..... 20
- 1.3.3 *Sympathy* ..... 22
- 1.3.4 *Personal distress* ..... 24
- 1.3.5 *Distress for others* ..... 24
- 1.4 Hypothesis..... 26**
- 1.5 Empathy-based theories of morality ..... 28**
- 1.5.1 *Howe’s theory of morality*..... 28
- 1.5.2 *Marsh’s theory of morality* ..... 31
- 1.5.3 *Baron-Cohen’s theory of morality* ..... 34
- 1.5.4 *Daniel Batson’s theory of morality* ..... 39
- 1.6 Emotion and morality: Theories of how moral judgments are made and which emotions guide morality ..... 41**
- 1.6.1 *Introduction*..... 41
- 1.6.2 *Jonathan Haidt’s theory of morality* ..... 42
- 1.6.3 *Nichols’ theory of moral judgment* ..... 49
- 1.6.4 *Positive emotions and moral judgment* ..... 54
- 1.6.5 *Moral judgment and moral dilemmas* ..... 55
- 1.6.6 *Examples from autism* ..... 57
- 1.6.7 *Examples of morality that are not driven by empathy* ..... 66
- 1.6.8 *A brief discussion of psychopathy*..... 68

1.6.9 <i>Is empathy causally sufficient for moral behaviour? Examining what is missing from psychopaths</i>	81
1.6.10 <i>Conclusion</i>	97
<b>1.7 Prinz's alternative</b>	97
1.7.1 <i>Introduction</i>	97
1.7.2 <i>Prinz on morality</i>	99
1.7.3 <i>Empathy and partiality</i>	108
1.7.4 <i>Conclusion</i>	111
<b>2 Determining which emotions are important for morality</b>	113
2.1 <b>Introduction</b>	114
<b>2.2 Alternatives to an empathy-based morality</b>	119
2.2.1 <i>Haidt's theory of morality</i>	119
2.2.2 <i>Nichols' theory of morality</i>	120
2.2.3 <i>McGeer's theory of morality</i>	121
2.2.4 <i>Prinz's theory of morality</i>	121
<b>2.3 Negative emotions</b>	122
2.3.1 An analysis of: Bjorklund, F. (2004).	122
<i>Introduction</i>	122
<i>Details of the study</i>	124
<i>Discussion</i>	129
2.3.2 An Analysis of: Inbar, Y., Pizarro, D.A., Knobe, J., & Bloom, P. (2009).	131
<i>Introduction</i>	131
<i>Details of the study</i>	134
<i>Discussion</i>	138
2.3.3 An analysis of: Chapman, H.A. & Anderson, A.K. (2014).	141
<i>Introduction</i>	141
<i>Details of the study</i>	142
<i>Discussion</i>	145
2.3.4 An analysis of: Rozin, P., Lowery, L., Imada, S., & Haidt, J. (1999).	147
<i>Introduction</i>	147
<i>Details of the studies</i>	149
<i>Discussion</i>	153

2.3.5 An analysis of: Hutcherson, C. & Gross, J. (2011).	155
<i>Introduction</i> .....	155
<i>Details of the studies</i> .....	156
<i>Discussion</i> .....	162
2.3.6 <b>Conclusion</b> .....	163
<b>2.4 Positive emotions</b> .....	164
<b>2.4.1 Introduction</b> .....	164
2.4.2 An analysis of: Valdesolo, P. & DeSteno, D. (2006).....	165
<i>Introduction</i> .....	165
<i>Details of the study</i> .....	166
<i>Discussion</i> .....	167
2.4.3 An analysis of: Strohminger, N., Lewis, R., & Meyer, D. (2011)..	168
<i>Introduction</i> .....	168
<i>Details of the study</i> .....	169
<i>Discussion</i> .....	172
2.4.4 An analysis of: Algoe, S. & Haidt, J. (2009).	173
<i>Introduction</i> .....	173
<i>Details of the study</i> .....	175
<i>Discussion</i> .....	182
<b>2.4.5 Conclusion</b> .....	183
<b>2.5 Positive and negative emotions</b> .....	185
<b>2.5.1 Introduction</b> .....	185
2.5.2 An Analysis of: Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R.A., Miller, P.A., Fultz, J., Shell, R., Mathy, R., & Reno, R. (1989).....	185
<i>Introduction</i> .....	185
<i>Details of the study</i> .....	187
<i>Discussion</i> .....	192
2.5.3 An analysis of: Kaplan, U. & Tivnan, T. (2014).....	193
<i>Introduction</i> .....	193
<i>Details of the study</i> .....	194
<i>Discussion</i> .....	197
2.5.4 An analysis of: Seidel, A. & Prinz, J. (2012).....	199

<i>Introduction</i> .....	199
<i>Details of the study</i> .....	200
<i>Discussion</i> .....	204
<b>2.5.5 Conclusion</b> .....	206
<b>2.6 Future work</b> .....	207
<b>2.6.1 Introduction</b> .....	207
2.6.2 An analysis of: Ugazio, G., Lamm, C., & Singer, T. (2012)..	209
<i>Introduction</i> .....	209
<i>Details of the study</i> .....	211
<i>Discussion</i> .....	214
2.6.3 An analysis of: Szekely, R.D. & Miu, A.C. (2015)..	215
<i>Introduction</i> .....	215
<i>Details of the study</i> .....	217
<i>Discussion</i> .....	221
<b>2.6.4 Conclusion</b> .....	223
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	224

## 1. Determining whether empathy is necessary for morality

## 1.1 Introduction and preliminary definitions

In this research project, I examine whether empathy plays a significant role in moral judgment and moral behaviour (1), while examining which emotions are responsible for morality (2).

Empathy is the ability to recognize and vicariously share the emotions of others. Empathy is a complex emotion and involves imagining another's psychological state while maintaining a self-other differentiation; it is knowing another person's state of mind without their state of mind being the same as yours (Howe, 2013). Vicariously sharing the emotions of another person is feeling an emotion very similar to, though not exactly the same as, what another individual is feeling. Empathy is 'feeling with' another individual (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987). Empathy as a whole involves both a cognitive component, recognizing what another person is feeling, and an affective component, vicariously sharing an emotion similar to what you think another individual is feeling. Empathy does not require feeling concerned for an individual.

Empathy requires sharing or feeling an emotion *similar* to what another individual is feeling because other forms of emotions elicited when perspective taking are too broad to count as empathy. For instance, reactive emotions, emotions that are elicited as a result of reacting to a specific situation or event, would not count as empathic emotions because although you are perspective taking, you can react in numerous ways which may have nothing to do with how the other person is feeling. Thinking of reactive emotions as empathic emotions blurs the line with other emotions. For example, reactive emotions may, at times, elicit sympathy, and sympathy is distinct from empathy, and blurring the line between the two emotions is problematic. Moreover, our minds are constantly perceiving and evaluating events as good or bad, and we therefore experience reactive emotions to many different situations. For example, if I go to a grocery store

and witness a cashier being bullied and evaluate the act as something bad or unjust, I can experience an array of emotions, such as anger, being upset, distress, etc. Similarly, if I go to a ballet and watch a beautiful dance number, I may react with heartfelt emotions. In both scenarios, I am experiencing many different emotions which may not be congruent with what the individual in question is feeling.

Including anything over and above what I have defined as ‘empathy’ would amount to including a wide range of emotions. Empathy is generally seen as being able to connect or feel with others. This is how the emotion is generally construed in emotion research (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987). Reacting to others’ situations or feelings does not imply that you will feel with others because you are reacting to the situation in question rather than sharing the emotions of others. In order to determine which emotions are necessary for morality and what role empathy plays in morality, we need to work with precise definitions. Giving ‘empathy’ a broad usage would make it almost impossible to capture what is meant when we use the term.

Restricting the definition of empathy to vicariously felt emotions is important for a couple of reasons. First, if the term is not restricted, there are many morally tinged ways that the term can be used. This is an issue because from this it follows that the term has no boundaries. Second, it is consistent with some researchers’ definition of empathy, such as the definitions put forth by Howe (2013), Baron-Cohen (2011), and Prinz (2011a; Prinz 2011b).

My definition of empathy is also consistent with the definition of ‘sympathy’ put forth by British moralists Adam Smith and David Hume. Both Smith and Hume used the term ‘sympathy’ as ‘empathy’ is defined in this research project and as empathy is usually projected in empathy literature (Maibom, 2014; Prinz, 2011a; 2011b), and mean something different than ‘sympathy’

as defined below. The term ‘empathy’ is only a little over 100 years old (Prinz, 2011a), coined in 1909 by Edward Titchner, but can be seen in the works of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century British moralists. In describing sympathy, Smith (1759/1976) states that “whatever is the passion which arises from any object in the person principally concerned, an analogous emotion springs up, at the thought of his situation, in the breast of every attentive spectator” (p. 11). Here, although speaking of ‘sympathy,’ we can see that Smith’s conception of ‘sympathy’ matches my definition of ‘empathy’ and accords with the way that empathy is used today. Smith (1759/1976) claims that

as we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation... By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them (p.11)

Here, we see something very similar to the definition of empathy given above. There is both a cognitive component, imagining yourself in someone else’s position, and an affective component, feeling an emotion similar to, though weaker and not exactly the same as, what another individual is feeling. For Smith, this duality in the nature of empathy is important. We may therefore suppose that what Smith speaks of as sympathy is what I have described as empathy.

In describing what it is like to feel sympathy, Hume (1826) gives the following example: “a cheerful countenance infuses a sensible complacency and serenity into my mind; as an angry or sorrowful one throws a sudden damp upon me” (p.53). Similar to Smith’s definition, Hume describes sympathy as feeling something similar to what another individual is feeling. Thus, my definition of empathy can be seen as consistent with how some moral philosophers use the term.

When speaking of Hume and Smith's theories, I will use the term 'empathy' to refer to their definition of 'sympathy.' On Hume and Smith's theories of moral judgment, the ability to empathize with others' sentiments is crucial (Sayre-McCord, unpublished manuscript).

There are moral judgments that are strongly associated with affect and those that are dissociated from affect. Moral judgments that are dissociated from affect are judgments based solely on reason. An example of a moral judgment dissociated from affect is making the judgment that stealing from independently owned markets is morally wrong because it takes away from a family's livelihood. It is possible to make this judgment without having an accompanying emotional reaction to the situation; you don't need to feel the emotion of anger or guilt when making this judgment. Rather, you may reach this judgment through reason alone. These kinds of moral judgments are Kantian in nature, where the judgment is reached through reason and not sentiment or emotion. My project is not concerned with judgments of this nature. This project focuses only on moral judgments that are caused or accompanied by affect (e.g., moral judgments caused by emotion and moral judgments that cause corresponding emotions). These moral judgments are Humean in nature, where the judgment is reached primarily through sentiment or emotion. When I speak about moral judgments, I am strictly speaking about judgments that are associated with affect, and do not include judgments that are dissociated from affect.

An emotion can be thought of as a feeling that consists of specific representational or propositional content accompanied by a specific sensational reaction. To experience an emotion is to feel a certain way about something (representational or propositional content) and have a corresponding feeling. For example, if I say that murder is wrong and would feel guilty if I murdered someone, I am experiencing guilt as a feeling that corresponds to some propositional

content. Therefore, if I am feeling guilty, there is something that I am feeling guilty about. An emotion, then, can be thought of as propositional content with a corresponding feeling. This project concerns both lower-level and higher-level emotions. Lower-level emotions include primitive emotions, such as happiness, sadness, and anger. Lower-level emotions tend to be universal and basic, and can also be found in primates. Higher-level emotions consists of more complex emotions, such as guilt and empathy. These are emotions that require higher-cognitive processes, such as mind-reading and mirroring, and are less instinctual than lower-level emotions.

It is widely held that cognitive and affective empathy, which will be further discussed below, are needed for morality. Some researchers, such as David Howe (2013), claim that “empathy oils the wheels of social life” (p. 15). Howe claims that morality stems from our emotional lives, where the presence of empathy ensures moral conduct. For Howe, caring for others and principles of fairness and justice have close ties to empathy. Howe claims that “the more we recognize and understand the other person’s point of view, the more likely it is that our dealings with him or her will be fair, compassionate, and moral” (p. 149). What is more, he says that if our behaviour is to be judged as moral, “it is likely that it involves both affective and cognitive empathy...if we imaginatively think about the other’s plight we are likely to *feel* their distress. And when we feel the other’s feelings, we are more likely to think about and reflect on the way the world looks and feels to them” (Howe, 2013, p. 160). Other emotion researchers, such as Batson (2012) (Batson uses empathy much more broadly than I have defined it, and means something more than empathy as I use the term), Marsh (2012; 2014), and Baron-Cohen (2011), argue that empathy is at the core of morality. Marsh (2012) claims that empathy, feeling with another, allows for automatic awareness of another’s psychological state, which may be

crucial in promoting moral behaviour. Baron-Cohen (2012) substitutes the term ‘evil’ with ‘empathy erosion,’ claiming that moral atrocities arise from lacking empathy. According to Baron-Cohen, this is why psychopaths are highly immoral. Recently, the view that empathy is necessary for morality has been criticized, notably by Prinz. Prinz (2011a; 2011b) argues that empathy plays little, if any, role in morality and can work against the ends of morality.

In this research project, I examine whether empathy plays a significant role in morality while examining which emotions are responsible for morality. Although the question of whether empathy is responsible for moral development is an important one, this project focuses only on moral judgment and moral behaviour. When I use the term ‘morality,’ I am referring to these two features of morality. When I use the phrase ‘moral behaviour,’ I am referring strictly to prosocial behaviour.

#### 1.1.1 *Morality*

By ‘moral judgment,’ I simply mean the judgments that individuals believe to be overriding and universal. Moral judgment occurs when an individual judges whether another individual or group of individuals have transgressed a norm that is considered to override other norms. Moral norms are overriding and trump other norms, and hold intrinsic value as a result.

‘Moral behaviour,’ which is tied to moral judgment, is concerned with the treatment of others. When we engage in moral behaviour, the way in which we treat others is dominated by our moral values and moral judgments. That is, the treatment of others is valued intrinsically and not instrumentally, where moral motivation stems from our moral judgments. Moral judgments motivate; moral judgments lead to moral behaviour. For example, if you make the judgment that stealing from a graduate student at any time is morally wrong, then you will refrain from stealing from graduate students. If you stole from a graduate student after making the judgment that it is

morally wrong to do so, you hold a false belief or have made a false judgment that stealing from a graduate student is morally wrong because moral judgments are valued intrinsically and not instrumentally. If you make the judgment that stealing from large corporations is morally permissible, then there will be no moral factors that refrain you from stealing from large corporations.

On my sentimentalist (sentimentalism is the view that morality is caused by, or accords with, our emotions or emotional reactions to moral situations) theory of morality, moral judgments are intrinsically motivating. This makes me an internalist with regard to moral judgments. Internalism about moral judgments holds that when an individual makes a moral judgment, a judgment about right and wrong or good and bad, the individual is motivated to act on the judgment (Maibom, 2014). Prinz (2006) points out that not all philosophers agree on this point, but “they all admit that moral judgments characteristically give rise to motivational states” (p. 36). Because moral judgments motivate moral behaviour, I use the term ‘morality’ to discuss both moral judgment and moral behaviour, and often treat them as one and the same thing.

### 1.1.2 *Thesis project*

In this research project, I will critically examine and analyze the existing data in emotion research in order to determine whether empathy is necessary for morality, and whether the literature and research supports the traditional view, that empathy is somehow necessary for morality, or the opposing view, that empathy is not necessary for morality. My main research goal will be to determine whether humans are able to make moral judgments and behave morally without empathy (1). Upon determining whether empathy is necessary for morality, I will provide some key insights that might be useful in the eventual construction of a novel framework of morality. I will do this by using conceptual and meta-analysis to defend a version of

sentimentalism. Meta-analysis<sup>1</sup> is a collective review of existing data used to shed light on certain issues and to test the validity of existing data or theories. My analysis will include a review of the most cited studies in moral judgment and moral behaviour in an attempt to determine which emotions are responsible for morality (2). My research design will be outlined in 1.7.4.

I will also determine the core emotions that motivate morality. Some researchers claim that empathy is necessary for morality. However, I argue that it may sometimes be causally sufficient for morality, but rarely necessary. That is, empathy is not a necessary foundation of morality. Something can be a causally sufficient condition without it being a necessary one. For instance, together with other factors, greenhouse gases are causally sufficient to create hurricanes, but they are not necessary. Warm air combined with warm water and converging winds are necessary conditions in causing hurricanes. Without these conditions, hurricanes cannot occur. However, hurricanes can occur without greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gases combined with other weather conditions can cause hurricanes, but they are not necessary, making them a causally sufficient but not necessary condition of hurricanes.

With regard to morality, empathy, combined with other emotions, may sometimes be causally sufficient to motivate morality. However, empathy does not need to be present in order to make moral judgments or display moral behaviour. Furthermore, empathy can work against the ends of morality by promoting partiality, in which case empathy is a hindrance to morality. Empathy can promote partiality because we tend to offer help to others who are considered to be a part of our in-group, where no assistance, or less assistance, is offered to out-group members.

---

<sup>1</sup> I use the term 'meta-analysis' differently than it is used in some empirical disciplines, like psychology. In psychology, a meta-analysis is a method used to quantitatively assess the size of an effect across multiple studies.

Prinz (2011a) notes that empathy can be manipulated, causing skewed moral judgment.

According to Maibom (2014), “one concern with a view of moral judgments based ultimately on empathy is that empathy is fragile and biased. For instance, we feel more empathy for those close to us spatially, temporally, and affectionately” (p. 28). Bloom (2010) claims that empathy is a poor guide if you want to do good and behave morally, although empathy can, at times, be a moral force against selfishness and indifference.

We can think of the causal sufficiency claim in the following way: empathy is unable to serve as the core of morality, despite the fact that it may, at times, bring about moral behaviour and be used in moral judgment. Empathy can lead to morality but it is rarely necessary for morality. If empathy does have a place in morality, it is certainly not given as much importance as other emotions, but rather, plays a marginal, if any, role.

## **1.2 Structure**

This research project is organized in two parts. The first part examines whether empathy is necessary for morality. The second part analyzes studies to determine the emotions important for morality.

In 1.5, I will briefly discuss the theories of an empathy-based morality. The works of Howe, Marsh, Baron-Cohen, and Batson will be explored.

In 1.6, I will look at whether empathy is needed for morality. In attempting to determine what is needed for morality, I will look at studies and examples that suggest that morality is usually guided by negative emotions, such as disgust and distress. For instance, Haidt (2001) has shown that disgust plays a significant role in making moral judgments, Nichols (2004) has shown the importance of disgust in the maintenance of norms throughout history, and Batson,

Quinn, Fultz, Vanderplas, and Isen (1983) have shown that experiencing distress can lead to moral behaviour and is exercised when making moral judgments. I also briefly look at how eliciting positive emotions can lead to moral praise and helping behaviour. Positive emotions are further discussed in 2.4.

I will look at examples from autism in order to determine what capacities are needed for morality. Autistic individuals are of interest to empathy researchers because many claim that autistic individuals have an empathy deficit that does not allow for instances of morality due to the inability to recognize and vicariously share others' emotions. The opposing view holds that autistic individuals are able to make moral judgments, thus recognizing and experiencing others' emotions is not needed for morality.

Following this, I will examine studies and look at examples that suggest that emotions other than empathy may be responsible for morality. For instance, soldiers, police officers, firefighters, and rescue workers display moral behaviour in their everyday line of work. We can question whether empathy is the necessary motivator in these individuals' behaviour. Other factors and principles, such as swearing to serve and protect the community and a desire to uphold this principle, may be the main motivators. These individuals do not need to empathize in order to display moral behaviour. In fact, it may be rather difficult for police officers to empathize with citizens in the community when they decide to pull the trigger on a potential aggressor. Their reasoning behind their action may be a desire to protect citizens, where considering how certain citizens are feeling and sharing that emotion are irrelevant. Soldiers probably do not empathize with the citizens of their country when they go to war. Rather, they are following a call of duty and may have a desire to uphold that duty.

In 1.6.8, I will look at examples from psychopathy to determine whether empathy is necessary for morality. I will first examine the literature on psychopathy. Psychopaths are of specific interest to moral psychologists and empathy researchers as psychopathy often results in an immoral character. In fact, it tends to be described by psychologists as a moral disorder and was once viewed as moral insanity (Prichard, 1837). Looking at psychopathy can give us a better understanding of the nature of human morality. By looking at what psychopaths lack with regard to morality, we can gain insight regarding which emotions are needed for morality. Psychopaths are of interest to this project because “they appear to have no cognitive deficit in understanding others’ states of mind, including their beliefs and desires, motives and intentions, cares and concerns” (McGeer, 2008, p. 230), suggesting that they have the ability to cognitively empathize. If psychopaths have cognitive empathy, there is a possibility that they have the ability to affectively empathize. If this is the case, empathy cannot be causally sufficient for morality. We can gain insight on the nature of morality by looking at the behaviour of psychopaths because if it is the case that psychopaths have the ability to empathize but are highly immoral, then it follows that empathy is not causally sufficient for morality. Furthermore, in attempting to build a sentimentalist framework of morality, determining the emotional deficits that result in psychopathy is important because the emotions that psychopaths are deficient in may be the emotions responsible for morality.

In 1.7, I will look at an alternative to the empathy-based theory of morality. I will discuss Prinz’s theory of morality, examining his factual claims regarding what drives moral judgment and moral behaviour. In this section, it will be shown that there are many factors guiding morality, where empathy plays a marginal, if any, role. It will also be shown that empathy can cause partiality in individuals, suggesting that empathy is not causally sufficient for morality.

The second part of this research project concerns analyzing studies that focus on the role of emotions in morality. In 2.1, I will outline the structure of my analysis that will be conducted in the second part of this research project. This analysis will provide key insights on emotion and morality that might be useful in the eventual construction of a novel sentimentalist framework of morality. This will be the last stage necessary to successfully complete this research project.

I will discuss the plausibility of a sentimentalist account of morality while providing novel insights that could lead to the development of a new framework of sentimentalism that differs from the traditional view where empathy is necessary for morality. Sentimentalism is the view that morality is caused by, or accords with, our emotions or emotional reactions to moral situations. My main aim in my dissertation is to show through my analysis that there is enough evidence to suggest that emotions other than empathy are necessary for morality and that empathy plays a marginal, if any, role in morality. I also aim to provide key insights on emotion and morality by looking at the origin of certain emotions, such as disgust, to successfully determine the emotions that motivate morality. The structure of this part of my project will be further discussed in 2.1.

### **1.3 Definitions and relationships<sup>2</sup>**

Many scholars in this field use the terms empathy and sympathy quite differently, while some, such as Batson, use them synonymously, and it is important to look at how the terms are used and what the differences are between the ways the terms are used. I will begin this section by defining empathy. I will define two elements of empathy: cognitive empathy and affective

---

<sup>2</sup> I define terms and concepts throughout this project by giving necessary and sufficient conditions. For instance, for the term 'sympathy,' I use agreed upon definitions and discuss what is necessary and sufficient for one to feel sympathy. This is not the only way to define terms and concepts, but I believe it is the best way to do so as it allows for a clear understanding of terms and concepts.

empathy. Following this, I will define sympathy and look at how it differs from empathy. I will also show that empathy is not needed for sympathy. Because many researchers, such as Batson, make a connection between sympathy, personal distress, and distress for others, I will define both types of distress.

### 1.3.1 *Cognitive empathy*

There are two elements of empathy. First, there is the cognitive component, referred to as ‘cognitive empathy.’ Cognitive empathy involves perspective taking. Perspective taking involves putting yourself in another person’s shoes and recognizing their emotion(s). According to Howe (2013), cognitive empathy “is based on seeing, imagining and thinking about the situation from another person’s point of view,” and involves a “cognitively based, reflective understanding of the other’s perspective” (p. 14). For example, if you see someone crying while they are reading a letter, you can imagine that they have received unwanted news and recognize that they are probably sad or upset. Perspective taking is accomplished by what is commonly called ‘mind-reading.’

Mind-reading is responsible for understanding others’ minds. That is, it is the ability to understand others’ points of view and imagine what their intentions, beliefs, emotions, and desires are in a given situation. Ultimately, it is recognizing and understanding others’ feelings given their perspective (Evans & Lee, 2013). Evans and Lee (2013) state that children begin to develop mind-reading abilities at a relatively young age (around 2-3 years old).

Cognitive empathy is seen as the unemotional element of empathy because it does not require an individual to be moved by others’ experiences or to share others’ emotions. Rather, it requires that they recognize and understand what another individual is feeling. Cognitive empathy involves an “understanding that other people with separate minds are out there and that

while you can often share their perspective, they know, feel, and perceive different things, too” (Szalavitz & Perry, 2010, p. 80).

### 1.3.2 *Affective empathy*

The second element of empathy is affective, referred to as ‘affective empathy.’ Affective empathy is the emotional side of empathy (Howe, 2013). Affective empathy is felt as a vicarious emotion, where we feel what we take another individual to be feeling (Prinz, 2011a). A vicarious emotion is an emotion that you experience (a first-person subjective experience) by imagining how another person is feeling in a given context, where this emotion is similar to the emotion being experienced by the other. For instance, if I am upset and you experience a vicarious emotion as a result of affectively empathizing with me, you will either be upset, sad, or grieved. Affective empathy can be understood as experiencing an emotion similar to what you take another individual to be feeling, while understanding that although you are emotionally affected by the other’s situation, it is the other who is in despair or pain and not you. For instance, if I see you crying, I will feel sad as a result of vicariously sharing your emotion, yet I will understand that you are in despair and not me. Vicariously feeling what you take another individual to be feeling is considered an empathic emotion because you are feeling with others.

Affective empathy differs from cognitive empathy because cognitive empathy does not require that you feel the same or similar emotion that another individual is feeling. Rather, it simply requires you to identify another individual’s feelings based on the situation. Affective empathy requires that you feel a vicarious emotion as a result of imagining how an individual feels in a given situation. Howe (2013) points out that “at its most visceral, empathy is felt in the body. We physically feel the other’s joy, fear or sadness and so know something of the world,”

and “the fact that we share the same biology and the same senses means that we know at the physical level what it is to experience pain or jealousy” (p. 13).

Cognitive empathy is not closely related to morality. Cognitive empathy can include experiencing reactive emotions, such as experiencing anger when a friend has told you that she has been a victim of theft. Your friend may not be angry, but may be upset or grieved. In this case, you are recognizing and understanding your friend’s mental state, but your reaction to the situation is *your* experience to the situation, where you are not sharing your friend’s emotions. Purely responsive or reactive emotions do not count as vicariously sharing another’s emotion, where we feel what we take another to be feeling. When an emotion is experienced as reactive, *you* are reacting to a situation based on *your* state of mind rather than imagining how the *other* would react or feel in the given context and then sharing that emotion. Thus, reactive emotions would not fall under the label of ‘vicarious emotions,’ and would therefore not be considered affective empathy. In order to affectively empathize with someone, you need to imagine how they would feel in a given context, not how you would feel, and feel an emotion very similar to what they are feeling.

On my view, a complete account of empathy will incorporate both elements of empathy. Howe (2013) claims that an expansive account of empathy involves both cognitive and affective processes. A solid definition of empathy includes both the capacity to read other people’s minds and the ability to vicariously share their experience. This is how I will be using the term ‘empathy.’ The capacity to read other people’s minds is cognitive empathy, while the ability to share others’ experience is affective empathy.

### 1.3.3 *Sympathy*

A concern to help someone or having concern for someone's welfare is how 'sympathy' will be used throughout this research project. This definition is widely agreed upon and less debated than the definition for empathy is in the empathy literature. When experiencing sympathy, we usually want to help the person in the situation (Maibom, 2012), but this is not always the case. If something bad happens to you, I can sympathize with you as a result of believing that something bad has happened to you where I am concerned for your welfare without taking any action to help you. For example, if you are a chain smoker, I can be concerned for your welfare without assisting you in seeking remedies to quit the habit. Furthermore, if you get lung cancer as a result of your chain smoking, I may be concerned about your health but may do nothing to help you.

Sympathy differs from empathy because empathy does not require that I be concerned for another individual in any way. Empathy requires perspective taking and vicariously sharing another's experience, but does not require that I have concern for a person's welfare. German philosopher Max Scheler (1954) claims that it is possible to empathize with someone without experiencing sympathy. Sympathy is experienced as a third-person emotional response. We can feel sympathy for someone without vicariously sharing their emotions. For instance, I do not need to experience your grief or upset if you are quitting smoking in order to be concerned for you. As Maibom (2014) puts it, "by contrast to empathy, sympathy is not emotion matching but welfare directed. We can sympathize with someone in a bad situation because of her situation, in relative independence of what she feels about it" (p. 6).

It is important to note that Batson, one of the most significant and influential scholars in the field of empathy and emotion research, uses the term 'empathy' more broadly than I do, and

in a way that blurs a lot of definitions. His definition of ‘empathy’ closely matches ‘sympathy’ as defined in this paper. In defining empathy, Batson uses the word ‘empathic-concern.’ For Batson, empathy means “an other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need” (Batson, 2011, p. 11). Batson talks of empathy as having concern for another individual. According to Batson, empathy requires welfare matching, and an individual who feels empathic concern for someone will feel compassionate, warm-hearted, soft and tender feelings, moved and touched. Batson’s use of the term ‘empathy’ includes not just empathy as defined above, but also includes numerous other emotions, such as sympathy, compassion, softheartedness, tenderness, sorrow, sadness, upset, distress, grief, and concern.

Using empathy as a term that is not isolated from other emotions can be confusing, especially when looking at what is needed for moral behaviour and moral judgment. As Preston and de Waal (2002) point out, empathy should be distinguished from other related emotions, such as sympathy and distress, despite the fact that they are related in the minds of many researchers. It is often difficult to speak of empathy without looking at sympathy, distress, etc. Because this research project focuses on whether empathy is needed for morality and determining which emotions are necessary for morality, using the term empathy as Batson defines it is problematic. The distinctions between the emotions need to be made in order to ask certain questions about morality. If we are to successfully determine which emotions are necessary for morality, it will be important to treat each emotion separately and refrain from blurring the boundaries. This is why I will not adopt Batson’s terminology. Rather, I will use the term ‘empathy’ as I have defined it above.

#### 1.3.4 *Personal distress*

Personal distress simply means the discomfort that we feel for ourselves. With regard to the literature that we are examining, personal distress is a result of feeling discomfort or anxiety when seeing another person suffer. This discomfort can arise from feeling numerous emotions, such as fear, disgust, and nausea. For instance, if I see a man with a gash in his leg on the side of the road, where this individual is crying and asking for help, although I may not feel concerned for this person, a level of discomfort may arise in me upon seeing this person suffer. I may feel a high level of discomfort or anxiety for myself as a result of being in such a situation, and may want to help this man simply because his wounded leg is making me feel queasy. I can experience these emotions without having any concern to help him. Thus, I will have an egoistic or selfish motivation to help him rather than an altruistic one. If helping behaviour occurs when experiencing personal distress, the motivation stems from selfish desires to release one's own discomfort.

#### 1.3.5 *Distress for others*

Distress for others is having feelings of discomfort or anxiety for an individual, which arise from emotions such as fear or pain, in a way that leads to an urge to help (Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997). If, then, I see the man on the side of the road and have feelings of distress for him, that is, concern for his wounded leg and getting him help, I will want to help him because I care about his welfare. Batson claims that this response to the situation is classified as an empathic emotion, whereas personal distress is not. For Batson, an empathic emotion is more like a sympathetic response, as defined in this paper, than experiencing a vicarious emotion. What Batson calls an 'empathic emotion' is considered a 'sympathetic emotion' on my account. Because Batson defines empathy quite broadly, incorporating sympathy in the definition of

empathy, I do not think that labelling ‘distress for others’ as an ‘empathic emotion’ is optimal. Rather, we should consider it a sympathetic emotion or sympathetic response to a situation.

Distress for others differs from personal distress because when experiencing personal distress, you are distressed yourself because you are uncomfortable and therefore take certain actions to relieve your own distress. When experiencing distress for others, you are concerned with relieving the other person’s suffering, and are not concerned, or less concerned, with your own distress and discomfort. The difference between personal distress and distress for others is when experiencing personal distress, the object of the distress is the self, whereas when experiencing distress for others, the object of the distress is the other (Maibom, 2012). Helping behaviour that occurs when experiencing distress for others stems from altruistic desires to release another’s discomfort.

Usually, individuals experience personal distress and distress for others simultaneously. Maibom (2014) states that “one cannot be distressed for the other without being distressed oneself” and suggests that we think of distress for others and personal distress “as two sides of the same coin” (p. 8). For instance, I may feel queasy and uncomfortable at seeing the wounded man on the side of the road asking for help, while at the same time feeling distressed for him and having concern to help him. I may help him because I want to relieve my own discomfort and because I care about his well-being. When experiencing both types of distress, helping behaviour usually results because there is egoistic motivation (personal distress) experienced with concern for the other, or what Batson calls altruistic motivation (distress for others). When distress for others overrides personal distress, the act is seen as a genuine act of helping that is motivated by altruistic desires. When personal distress overrides distress for others, the act is viewed as egoistic or selfish and motivated by personal desires.

It is also important to note that I can experience personal distress or distress for others and have concern for someone without actually helping them. Here, distress is present, but does not work as a motivating force, and would therefore not be considered a part of morality.

#### **1.4 Hypothesis**

My general overall hypothesis is that empathy is not causally necessary for morality. In this section, I put forth a detailed hypothesis and claims that I will be arguing for that fall under this general hypothesis. I hypothesize that empathy is causally sufficient in motivating morality at times, but need not be present for moral motivation. I hypothesize that when empathy plays a role in motivating morality, the role is marginal.

Given my preliminary findings, which will be discussed below, I hypothesize that emotions other than empathy may be responsible for how we make moral judgments, though empathy may, at times, be causally sufficient for moral judgment. For instance, I may make the judgment that stealing from a graduate student is wrong because I empathize with hardworking academics. However, I do not need to empathize with a graduate student who has had her personal belongings stolen in order to make the judgment that stealing from a graduate student is wrong. Instead, I may be motivated to make that judgment by having a desire to respect the law or personal property. Furthermore, I hypothesize that empathy is not causally necessary for moral behaviour. For instance, I may help track down a thief who has stolen from a graduate student because I vicariously share the emotions, such as anger and upset, experienced by the student. Here, empathy is causally sufficient to motivate moral behaviour. However, other emotions, such as distress, may be responsible for moral behaviour. I may decide to help the graduate student track down the thief because I am distressed that if I do not help her, the thief

may eventually steal my property. In this instance, I do not need to empathize with the victim of theft in order to display moral behaviour. Morality can be motivated by emotions other than empathy.

I argue that although autistic individuals have an impairment in empathy, they engage in morality in a way that is consistent with what is generally considered moral, and that their morality is guided by emotions other than empathy. While it is difficult for most autistic individuals to recognize and understand how another individual is feeling, it does not stop them from wanting to maximize others' utility nor does it stop them from having a desire to follow moral norms.

Finally, I argue that although psychopaths are said to lack empathy, their immorality stems from a deficiency in emotions other than empathy. I argue that a deficiency in distress and fear are in part responsible for psychopaths' immoral judgments and behaviour. I also argue that psychopaths do not wholly lack empathy as defined above. McGeer (2008) claims that psychopaths "seem remarkably adept at reading the minds of others, if only to manipulate them" (p. 230), and case studies in psychopathy support McGeer's claim. If psychopaths have the ability to cognitively empathize with others, then it is possible that they also have the ability to affectively empathize to some degree as well.

Evidence suggests that empathy is not causally necessary for morality. The studies and literature that I am analyzing suggest that morality is driven by numerous emotions other than empathy. A reflection on the origins of disgust in humans shows us how important this emotion is in motivating morality. Furthermore, studies analyzing distress in humans and primates suggest that distress is a key component for morality. Currently, there is enough research to

support the hypothesis that empathy is not the only basis for morality. While empathy may, at times, be causally sufficient for what we take to be moral, it is rarely necessary as other emotions can drive morality.

## **1.5 Empathy-based theories of morality**

This section will briefly look at approaches to morality that claim that empathy is responsible for morality (Howe, 2013; Marsh, 2012, 2014; Baron-Cohen, 2013; and Batson 2012).

### *1.5.1 Howe's theory of morality*

Howe (2013) claims that empathy is “one of those skills that when present, humanises people and their relationships. When empathy is missing, however, the world feels harsh, indifferent, less caring, even brutal” (p. 2). For Howe, morality is impossible without empathy, and an absence of empathy results in violence, abuse, and selfishness. Bearing similarities to my own definition of empathy, Howe defines empathy as having both a cognitive and affective element, where we are able to feel and understand another person's world while maintaining a self-other differentiation.

On Howe's model of morality, emotion drives individuals to make moral judgments and display moral behaviour, where empathy is the core of these emotions. Howe (2013) argues that “the more we recognize and understand the other person's point of view, the more likely it is that our dealings with him or her will be fair, compassionate and moral” (p. 149). Recognizing and understanding others' points of view is what has been defined as empathy, and for Howe, empathic feelings encourage responses toward others that are caring, protective, and promote principles of justice and equality. Howe claims that moral heroes, such as those who campaigned

for the abolition of slavery and those who protected Jewish individuals from Nazi soldiers, all experienced empathic arousal and moral outrage. Howe (2013) claims that “empathy involves recognition of what is going on in someone else’s brain, imagining what it must be like to be in that state of mind, to be emotionally affected by that understanding and to feel the other’s feelings” (p. 50). According to Howe (2013), it is empathy that leads to morality because “empathy has the power to activate moral principles” (p. 151). What is more, Howe claims that empathy acts as a universal motivator in promoting justice and concerns of welfare. Although Howe admits that there may be times when other emotions drive morality, morality is dependent on empathy, and without empathy morality would not be possible.

Howe claims that psychopaths are immoral because they lack empathy. For Howe (2013), “it is empathizers who are good at understanding and interacting with other people. Making sense of people and tuning into their minds requires you to be personal and involved. It needs you to recognize that you are affecting them and they are affecting you” (p. 65). According to Howe, this is something that psychopaths are unable to do and is the root cause of their immorality. More specifically, he claims that research suggests that “the affective empathy processing circuits of psychopaths...fail to activate when the person is interacting with those in distress” (p. 49). Howe claims that psychopaths may have some cognitive empathy and are able to recognize some emotions in others, however, they lack affective empathy. He claims that because psychopaths lack affective empathy, they “are simply not processing certain types of emotional information” (Howe, 2013, p. 89). Howe believes that psychopaths are unable to empathize with their victims’ suffering. For instance, Howe (2013) claims that pain observed in others has no affect on psychopaths.

Autism is a disorder characterized by many deficits, but is largely characterized by an impairment in empathy. Acknowledging that autistic individuals have an impairment in empathy, Howe claims that they differ from psychopaths because they highly value rules, laws, and order. While autistic individuals may have both a cognitive and affective empathy impairment and as a result may sometimes treat others instrumentally (Howe, 2013), they are unlike psychopaths because they never behave in such a way as to intentionally exploit others or treat them cruelly. According to Howe, this is why autistic individuals are still viewed as moral individuals. However, he does not explicate this claim and state whether the behaviour displayed in autistic individuals is actually moral or simply a restraint of immoral behaviour. If empathy is necessary for morality, and on Howe's model, it is, then it is not clear whether the behaviour displayed in autistic individuals is moral. Howe (2013) claims that one of the major differences between psychopaths and autistic individuals is that "whereas individuals with autism find society a problem, those with psychopathy are a problem for society" (p. 87).

Finally, Howe (2013) claims that "morality develops out of our emotional lives" (p. 147), where empathy is the key emotion needed for morality. For Howe, by acknowledging and recognizing other peoples' feelings, we recognize what we should and should not do. Howe claims that "the more we *recognize* and *understand* another's point of view, the more likely it is that our dealings with him or her will be fair, compassionate, and moral" (p. 149, my italics), and that "empathy has the power to activate moral principles" (p. 151). Furthermore, Howe claims that empathy plays a central role in moral behaviour, and as a result, it "has the power to act as a universal prosocial motivator in matters of welfare and justice" (p. 160).

Although Howe acknowledges that there may sometimes be cases where empathy does not guide morality, he claims that empathy is central to morality, and that without it, we would

be living in a selfish and brutish world. Because we have a tendency to empathize with people who bear similarities to ourselves, empathy “rises and falls depending on whether the other is ‘one of us’ or ‘one of them,’ a member of the ‘ingroup’ or not. This may not always lead to a sound judgment or moral consensus...we tend to like what we know and find little comfort in the strange” (Howe, 2013, p. 155). However, Howe claims that there is a way out of this partiality. He claims that “the more we are encouraged to imagine what it must be like to be someone else in a particular situation, the more likely it is that our empathic sensitivities will heighten...when I stop and imagine what it must be like for you to be racially taunted in the city in which you were born and raised, the hurt, injustice, distress and anger also become mine” (Howe, 2013, p. 156). What is more, Howe claims that prejudices can be reduced if people put themselves in others’ shoes. On Howe’s account of morality, “people’s willingness to act morally can be improved when people are asked to take the perspective of the other” (p. 157). Thus, empathy motivates morality. Howe’s claim, that empathy is all that goes into morality, is quite a strong claim, and one that I will show is false.

### 1.5.2 *Marsh’s theory of morality*

Marsh’s definition of empathy differs from my own. Marsh (2012) claims that “empathy is a general term for an emotional response to another’s emotional state...empathic emotional responses include both matching emotional responses—you feel sad, so I feel sad—and compatible responses—you feel pain, so I feel anxiety” (p. 192). Although Marsh includes both a cognitive and an affective element in her definition of empathy, her definition goes beyond my definition because she includes reactive emotions as empathic emotions. However, her main focus on empathic emotions appears to be on accurately representing another person’s distress.

Marsh (2012) claims that empathy works as a powerful force, that when fostered, can lead an individual to risk their own health to save a stranger. Marsh claims that there is a strong relationship between empathy and the ability to detect and respond to distress in other individuals. Marsh's research suggests that fear, pain, and disgust are three distress-related emotions. However, Marsh (2012) claims that "fear is the most vivid communicator of distress... it signifies that harm is impending" (p. 195). Furthermore, she argues that while other empathic abilities and emotions may be motivators for morality, being able to accurately represent another person's distress, fear in particular, motivates morality.<sup>3</sup>

Because psychopathy is usually associated with having a fearless temperament, Marsh claims that it is no surprise that we find psychopaths highly immoral. Marsh (2012) claims that psychopaths are "impaired in recognizing fearful facial expressions" (p. 196), and are more impaired in recognizing fearful expressions than any other facial expressions (Marsh & Blair, 2008). Furthermore, Marsh (2012) claims that autistic individuals are unlike psychopaths because they demonstrate basic compassion in response to others' distress. For Marsh, experiencing empathy via distress-related emotions is responsible for morality. Because psychopaths fail to recognize fear in others, Marsh claims that they are incapable of sympathy or compassion. Furthermore, Marsh and Cardinale (2012) found that psychopathy "is associated with impairments in identifying behaviours that cause fear and in judging the moral acceptability of these behaviours" (p. 1). While Marsh claims that pain and disgust are also motivators of morality, she insists that fear plays a significant role in morality due to the impairment of experiencing fear that results from psychopathy. What is more, the immorality that results from

---

<sup>3</sup> The communication and detection of fear or distress in another individual can be represented not just through facial representation, but also through verbal communication.

psychopathy arises not only from psychopaths' impairment in experiencing fear, but also stems from psychopaths being unable to recognize and respond to others' fear (Marsh & Cardinale, 2012).

Marsh uses research and studies from neuroscience to support her view. It is well-known that the amygdala is recruited in fear responses. Individuals with localized damage to the amygdala do not experience fear in the same way that normal individuals do, and as a result engage in more impulsive and risk-taking behaviour than normal individuals (Damasio, Everitt, & Bishop, 1996). Psychopaths, as fMRI studies suggest, show dysfunction in amygdala activation patterns when they view stimuli that tend to elicit fear in normal individuals (Marsh, 2012). That is, psychopaths have a decreased response to fear and may therefore have difficulty recognizing that emotion in others. Marsh (2012) concludes that, as the studies from neuroscience and psychology show,

psychopaths have fearless temperaments, fail to recognize fear in others, and lack sympathy or compassion. A parsimonious explanation for this pattern is that psychopaths do not exhibit the increased amygdala activation and sympathetic nervous system activation in response to fearful expressions that indicate empathic simulation and that would enable emotion recognition (p. 197)

Marsh claims that accurately perceiving and representing another person's distress elicits moral behaviour, where fearful expressions are urgent signifiers of distress, more so than other emotions. Fearful facial expressions, Marsh (2012) explains, tend to be associated with an infantile face and possess similar features, such as having round eyes and high eyebrows. Marsh (2012) claims that "by mimicking the characteristics of an infant, expressions of fear may thereby generate the nonaggressive, protective responses that actual infants usually elicit in adults" (p.198). This explains why the ability to process fearful expressions is important for morality. On Marsh's model, experiencing empathy via distress-related emotions, such as fear, is

necessary and generally sufficient for morality. However, even if fear is an empathic emotion, it is not clear that pain and disgust, the two other emotions Marsh believes to be motivators for morality, are empathic emotions. That is, pain and disgust can be experienced through routes other than empathy. This will be further discussed in 1.6.2 and 2.3. Marsh (2012) claims that the insula is the region most closely associated with experiencing disgust, and that “if recognizing disgust in others occurs via empathic emotional mapping, common regions should be active both when disgust is experienced and when it is perceived in someone else. This has been confirmed using functional magnetic resonance imaging” (p. 193). She claims that the insula and the anterior cingulate cortex are important for pain, and like disgust, is experienced via emotional mapping.

It is not clear that disgust and pain are empathic emotions. While they may be necessary for morality, it does not follow that they must be experienced via empathy in order to motivate morality. This will be further discussed below. It is important to note that Marsh believes that these emotions must be experienced via empathic emotional mapping (e.g., though means of simulation) in order to motivate morality. This is why her theory is an empathy-based theory of morality.

Although I have discussed Marsh’s work here, I will continue to discuss her work in the forthcoming sections.

### 1.5.3 *Baron-Cohen’s theory of morality*

In his latest book, *The Science of Evil*, Baron-Cohen (2011) argues that empathy is the driving force in morality. Baron-Cohen begins *The Science of Evil* by attempting to replace the term ‘evil’ with ‘empathy erosion’ because evil is not a scientific term and thus cannot be understood scientifically. The aim in *The Science of Evil* is to understand how people are capable

of causing extreme hurt to one another. Baron-Cohen (2011) claims that “when we hold up the concept of evil to examine it, it is no explanation at all. For a scientist this is of course, wholly inadequate...unlike the concept of evil, empathy has explanatory power” (p. 6). For Baron-Cohen, the concept of evil cannot explain why people are immoral because it is not an objective concept that can be studied scientifically. Instead, he chooses to replace ‘evil’ with ‘empathy erosion’ in an attempt to understand where immorality stems from, claiming that ‘empathy erosion’ has the power to explain what ‘evil’ cannot.

Empathy erosion can result from corrosive emotions, such as having resentment toward someone. Empathy erosion can also result from permanent psychological characteristics. Whatever the cause of empathy erosion, Baron-Cohen (2011) claims that it “arises from people *turning other people into objects*” (p. 6, his italics). For Baron-Cohen (2011), empathy erosion is responsible for immoral acts, such as cutting off a woman’s finger while she is paying for groceries in order to steal her ring.

Baron-Cohen (2011) gives examples of individuals who appear to have ‘zero degrees of empathy,’ which is his term for individuals who have severe empathy deficits, arguing that empathy is the core of morality, that without it, we get an immoral individual.

For Baron-Cohen, “*empathy occurs when we suspend our single-minded focus of attention and instead adopt a double-minded focus of attention*” (pp. 15, 16, his italics). Single-minded attention occurs when we are thinking only about our own minds, whereas double-minded attention means that we are thinking about our own minds and someone else’s mind at the same time. Baron-Cohen’s definition of empathy is similar to the one I am using, where there is both a cognitive and affective element. When empathy is turned off (Baron-Cohen believes

that empathy works like a dimmer switch), single-minded attention occurs. When empathy is turned on, double-minded attention occurs. He extends the definition of empathy, stating that “*empathy is our ability to identify what someone else is thinking or feeling and to respond to their thoughts and feelings with an appropriate emotion*” (p. 16). It appears as if Baron-Cohen includes reactive emotions in his definition of empathy. However, he goes on to say that “being able to empathize means being able to understand accurately the *other* person’s position, to identify with ‘where they are at’” (p. 18). This closely matches my definition of empathy. Double-minded attention has both a cognitive and affective element, and being able to understand another’s position and identify ‘where they are at’ requires vicariously sharing the other’s emotions.

Baron-Cohen claims that empathy is regulated by the empathy circuit, which include the following brain regions: the medial prefrontal cortex, which is used for social information processing and comparing your perspective to someone else’s perspective in addition to reward and punishment conditioning; the orbito-frontal cortex, which is responsible for social judgment; the frontal operculum, which is partially responsible for processing language and mindreading; the inferior frontal gyrus, which is responsible for emotion recognition; the caudal anterior cingulate cortex and the interior insula, which are responsible for processing pain (your own pain and observing others’ pain) and self-awareness; the temporoparietal junction, which is responsible for mindreading; the superior temporal sulcus, which is used in recognizing what someone is gazing at; the somatosensory cortex, which is involved in coding when you are having a tactile experience and is also activated when observing others being touched, and is said to be responsible for identifying distress in others; the inferior parietal lobule and the inferior parietal sulcus, which are said to be a part of the mirror neuron system (in some theories, the

mirror neuron system is said to be responsible for mindreading and mimicry); and the amygdala, which is involved in emotional learning and regulation, and is often referred to as the center of the emotional brain. Baron-Cohen (2011) claims that these brain regions are activated to a lesser degree in people with low empathy, which often results in immoral behaviour.

Baron-Cohen (2011) argues that there are various populations that display zero degrees of empathy. For the purposes of this research project, we are concerned with two of the populations that he claims have zero degrees of empathy: psychopaths and autistic individuals.

According to Baron-Cohen (2011), psychopaths are immoral because they lack empathy. When immoral behaviour results from lacking empathy, it is negative. It is negative because the consequences are disastrous. Baron-Cohen reviews the psychopathy literature in an attempt to show that psychopaths are highly immoral and lack empathy, arguing for a link between morality and empathy. Baron-Cohen discusses the behaviour of criminal psychopaths as opposed to white-collar or successful psychopaths. He argues that these individuals are “imprisoned in their own self-focus. Imprisoned, because for them it is not a temporary state of mind after which their empathy can recover” (Baron-Cohen, 2011, p. 18). He claims that psychopaths are centered on themselves and care less about anyone or anything that does not concern them. Having empathy, according to Baron-Cohen, is essential for morality, and these individuals can never be moral in the way we might like them to be. According to Baron-Cohen, these individuals have zero degrees of empathy, and this is the root cause of their immorality. Baron-Cohen uses the term ‘zero degrees of empathy’ to describe individuals who completely lack empathy. He claims that this is what occurs when zero degrees of empathy results in negative consequences. He uses the term ‘negative’ in contrast to ‘positive’ because the consequences of lacking empathy in this case

are harmful. Due to various factors, such as upbringing and lesions or deficits in parts of the empathy circuit, psychopaths are incapable of being moral.

Baron-Cohen (2011) also describes individuals who are less reckless and not harmful to society who appear to have zero degrees of empathy. This is when having zero degrees of empathy is positive. It is positive in contrast to being negative because these individuals are not harmful to society in the same way that individuals who have zero degrees of empathy in the negative form are. In particular, he looks at autistic individuals and claims that they learn to be moral through systematizing. Furthermore, he claims that their morality differs from everyday morality. For instance, Baron-Cohen discusses an autistic patient named Michael, who must have social order and regularity in his world. Michael insists on everything being in its own place in his home unless he moves it elsewhere (no one else is allowed to move it), his life operates on a system of rules that are imposed on everyone, especially his parents, and he neglects to understand how his parents feel, he wears the same exact clothes every day, and eats the same exact meals every day. What is more, like other autistic individuals, Michael has trouble socializing with others. He is unable to speak comfortably to peers and he does not know what to do or say in social situations. He says that “other people seem to communicate through their eyes, not their words, and that they seem to know what each other means or what they are saying” (Baron-Cohen, 2011, p. 99). Michael does not understand how people interact.

According to Baron-Cohen (2011), Michael

has zero degrees of empathy because as he readily confesses, he has no idea what others are thinking or feeling or how to respond to someone else’s feelings. He has learned a few simple rules, such as ‘when someone is upset, offer a cup of tea’ or ‘when someone is angry, apologize,’ but these rules don’t seem to be very helpful (p. 99)

Baron-Cohen (2011) claims that empathy is compromised in these individuals, but pattern recognition and systemizing are enhanced. The reason they are not immoral is because these individuals develop their moral code through systematizing rather than developing it through the empathic route. Thus, their morality is quite different from ours, as these individuals “have a strong desire to live by rules and expect others to do the same for reasons of *fairness*” (Baron-Cohen, 2011, p. 122). Furthermore, Baron-Cohen claims that the reason autistic individuals are not cruel toward others in the way that psychopaths are is because acting cruelly violates the moral system that they have created through logic alone. Baron-Cohen appears to be suggesting that empathy is needed to be moral, and when individuals lack empathy, the end result of their behaviour can be either negative or positive. In the case of positive, individuals are not harmful or reckless, but still lack the affective element of empathy required to be moral. Autistic individuals lack empathy in the way that Baron-Cohen has described it, where double-minded attention is a prominent factor. They are less concerned with the other individual than they are with rule-following.

#### 1.5.4 *Daniel Batson’s theory of morality*

Finally, let us briefly turn to Batson’s theory on empathy and morality. Although Batson is one of the most influential scholars in empathy and emotion research, as noted above he uses empathy as an umbrella term, not distinguishing empathy from other emotions, and as a result it becomes difficult to determine what he thinks is necessary for morality. Batson’s research is concerned with a different question than my own, and therefore has only limited relevance to my research project. Batson (2012) is concerned with whether prosocial behaviour is motivated by concern for the less fortunate or egoistic concerns. However, I will briefly discuss his theory on empathy and morality, focusing on the parts that directly concern this project. It is worth mentioning that despite Batson’s use of the term empathy, his claim that empathic concern leads

to altruism is consistent with my general hypothesis, that empathy is not causally necessary for morality. That is, Batson is not committed to the claim that empathy is necessary for morality, but is committed to the claim that often enough, empathy is causally sufficient for morality.

Batson's theory is called the 'empathy-altruism hypothesis.' This hypothesis claims that "empathic concern produces altruistic motivation" (Batson, 2012, p. 41). Empathic concern is defined by Batson (2012) as an "other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of another person in need" (p. 50). Furthermore, Batson (2012) claims that empathy "involves feeling *for* the other, not *as* the other feels" (p. 41). In his previous work, Batson created a list of what empathy consists of. This was discussed above. In a recent article, Batson lists what empathy does not mean. In this list, he includes the following: knowing others' thoughts or feelings; adopting the posture or matching the neural response of another; coming to feel as another feels; feeling distress at others' suffering; imagining how you would feel in someone else's shoes; and a general disposition or trait to feel for others (Batson, 2012). Batson does not include vicariously sharing others' emotions in his list of what empathy does not include (although he comes very close to it) and he claims that empathy does not involve feeling as another person is feeling. Batson's definition of 'empathic concern' bears similarities to my definition of empathy. However, by listing what empathy does not mean, it is easy to reach the conclusion that by empathy, Batson means something different than what I, and some other researchers, call empathy.

Testing the empathy-altruism hypothesis in over thirty experiments over many years of research, Batson (2012) claims that the results of the experiments support the tentative conclusion that "empathic concern felt for a person in need does indeed evoke altruistic motivation to have that need removed" (p. 50). Batson argues that there are both positives and

negatives to empathy-induced altruism. While it promotes care and sensitivity toward others, it can also lead people to violate their own standards of fairness by fostering partiality toward those for whom the empathy is felt. According to Batson, empathy-induced altruism has been found to increase cooperation in competitive situations, increase mutual care among students in schools that have implemented empathy-based training programs, promote conflict resolution, and improve attitudes toward and action on behalf of outgroups. Empathy-induced altruism can also have negative effects, such as promoting partiality when asked to empathize with a particular individual. Despite the fact that empathy-induced altruism can have both positive and negative effects, Batson concludes that “empathic concern felt for a person in need does indeed evoke altruistic motivation to have that need removed” (p. 50). It is empathic concern that promotes moral behaviour and empathy is the core of morality on this model (Batson, 2012).

Once again, it is important to keep in mind that Batson’s definition of empathy is closer to my definition of sympathy than it is to my definition of empathy. Thus, anything that Batson says about empathy is irrelevant. However, because Batson is one of the leading researchers in empathy, his work should be discussed. Also, his work will be discussed in the sections that follow in relation to what I define as sympathy and distress (personal distress and distress for others), and is therefore relevant to this project to some extent.

## **1.6 Emotion and morality: Theories of how moral judgments are made and which emotions guide morality**

### *1.6.1 Introduction*

1.6.2 and 1.6.3 will look at approaches to morality that claim that emotions other than empathy are responsible for moral judgment. These approaches claim that emotions play a significant role in most moral judgments and that certain emotions lead us to make specific

moral judgments, but the crucial emotion is not empathy. For example, psychologist Jonathan Haidt claims that disgust plays a significant role in judging certain transgressions as moral transgressions. I will review studies from Haidt and Nichols to determine which emotions are used when making moral judgments. In doing so, I will examine what role, if any, empathy plays in moral judgment. In this section, I will examine how moral judgments are made and determine which emotions are sufficient for morality. Because Haidt and Nicholas focus primarily on negative emotions, such as disgust, the focus of this section will be mostly on negative emotions. However, I will briefly discuss the role that positive emotions play in morality in 1.6.4.

1.6.5 and 1.6.7 will briefly look at examples of moral judgment that are driven by emotions other than empathy that have not been discussed in the previous sections.

1.6.6 will look at examples from autism to determine whether empathy is necessary for morality. In particular, I will look at the work of philosopher Victoria McGeer. Here, I will discuss another alternative to the view that empathy is necessary for morality.

Finally, 1.6.8 and 1.6.9 will look at examples from psychopathy to determine whether empathy is necessary for morality, and to better understand which emotions are significant for morality.

### 1.6.2 *Jonathan Haidt's theory of morality*

My main interests in Haidt are in examining his view that emotions lead to morality and in examining the view that the most important emotions that drive morality are not related to empathy. In order to do so, I first need to look at his theory quite generally to better understand the role of affect in morality.

Haidt's model is called the Social Intuitions Model. It is based on basic intuitions that all humans have, and Haidt claims that these intuitions guide morality. Intuition and emotion are related in this model. For Haidt, intuitions include various automatic and uncontrollable cognitive processes, including emotional appraisals and automatic processes that occur outside the control of consciousness and reasoning (Haidt, Bjorklund, & Murphy, 2000).

Haidt's approach is based on the 'affective primacy principle.' This principle, first articulated by Wilhelm Wundt and later expanded on by Robert Zajonc, claims that in perceiving, minds are always evaluating and higher-level thinking is influenced by affective reactions, such as liking or disliking something (Haidt, 2007). That is, affective reactions precede higher-level human thinking, where our affective system pushes us toward approaching or avoiding the situation or thing in question. Emotions, then, are important to a lot of moral reactions. Some theorists, such as Hauser (2006) and Trivers (1971), who endorse affective primacy offer an evolutionary approach to morality, where it is agreed that the emotional building blocks of morality were already in place long before language and the ability to engage in conscious reasoning came about in humans (Haidt, 2007). On this view, moral judgment is much like perception—fast, automatic, and controlled by lower-level processes. However, affective primacy can be endorsed without endorsing an evolutionary approach to morality, where moral judgment is still viewed as a fast and automatic process.

To avoid confusion and ambiguity between 'affect' and 'cognition,' where such a distinction appears to imply that affective reactions do not involve any sort of mental computations, Haidt draws a distinction between moral intuitions and moral reasoning. On Haidt's model, moral intuitions can be thought of as the

fast, automatic, and (usually) affect-laden processes in which an evaluative feeling of good-bad or like-dislike (about the actions or character of a person) appears in consciousness without any awareness of having gone through steps of search, weighing evidence, or inferring a conclusion (Haidt, 2007, p. 998)

By contrast, moral reasoning involves conscious mental activity that consists in using information about individuals, situations, and individuals' actions in order to reach a moral judgment (Haidt, 2007). This process is more effortful and less intuitive.

Haidt's model takes the affective primacy principle as its starting point. Haidt (2007) claims that moral judgments are simply gut reactions or intuitions. Rarely do we do invoke conscious reasoning when we make a moral judgment because we are guided by our intuitions. When conscious reasoning is invoked, it is after the first automatic process has been completed (the affective process of moral intuition), and moral reasoning can be seen as a post-hoc process. In the process of moral reasoning, we search for justifications to support our initial reaction to the situation.

The following is an example from Haidt that illustrates how individuals are guided by emotions when making a moral judgment:

Julie and Mark are brother and sister. They are traveling together in France on summer vacation from college. One night they are staying alone in a cabin near the beach. They decide that it would be interesting and fun if they tried making love. At the very least it would be a new experience for each of them. Julie was already taking birth control pills, but Mark uses a condom too, just to be safe. They both enjoy making love, but they decide not to do it again. They keep that night as a special secret, which makes them feel even closer to each other. What do you think about that, was it OK for them to make love? (Haidt, 2001, p. 814)

Haidt, Bjorklund, and Murphy (2000) used this scenario in a study on moral judgment. The study had 30 participants (17 females, 13 males). When asked if it was OK for Mark and Julie to make love, most individuals said no, it was not OK and they viewed it as a moral transgression. When pressed to explain why, most individuals claimed that the act is gross or

disgusting. They did not refer to societal norms or how others would perceive the situation, suggesting that the disgust experienced was not experienced via an empathic route, as Marsh suggests. On their initial reaction, only 20 percent of the participants said that it was OK for Mark and Julie to make love. After the experimenter ‘argued’ with the participants, claiming that their judgment had no rational basis to be viewed as a moral transgression since no harm occurred, 32 percent of the participants said that it was OK for Mark and Julie to make love. Given this example, two things become clear with regard to Haidt’s model of morality. First, it is emotion and not reason that guides moral judgment, and second, it is disgust and not empathy that leads to the judgment that incest is wrong.

Haidt claims that because we do not invoke conscious moral reasoning and are instead guided by intuitions when making moral judgments, individuals experience moral dumbfounding. Dumbfounding is the phenomenon of being unable to explain how you reached the judgment that you made. Dumbfounding occurs when an individual makes a judgment but is unable to explain why they made the judgment. That is, they make a judgment in absence of any sort of rational justification insisting that their judgment is correct, but are unable to explain why. In the example given above, when asked to judge whether the act was morally permissible, it appeared that most individuals were dumbfounded when asked to explain why they judged the act as morally wrong. According to Haidt, this is because individuals feel a quick flash of an emotion or intuition, say a flash of revulsion at the thought of incest, and reach the conclusion that incest is wrong even if there are no negative consequences that follow the act. Then, “when faced with a social demand for a verbal justification, one becomes a lawyer trying to build a case, rather than a judge searching for the truth” (Haidt, 2001, p. 814). According to Haidt, Bjorklund, and Murphy (2000), “dumbfounding occurs when a strong intuition is left unsupported

by articulable reasons. The clearest evidence of dumbfounding is that participants will often directly state that they know or believe something, but cannot find reasons to support their belief” (p. 14). When affect is primary, we are often morally dumbfounded in explaining how we reached our judgment. According to Haidt, dumbfounding occurs because people cling to their initial intuition that an act is morally wrong or morally right without having any sort of justification for the judgment. Here, reasoning is viewed as an ex post facto process (Haidt, Bjorklund, & Murphy, 2000).

Further support for the affective primacy principle comes from studies that suggest that individuals have instant implicit reactions to stories of moral violations. These implicit reactions suggest that empathy is not involved in the process of these moral judgments, as empathy involves imagining how another individual feels and sharing that emotion, a process that does not always occur instantaneously. Some examples that Haidt gives are from his studies that show that eliciting disgust in individuals will cause individuals to judge an action as a moral transgression. For example, most individuals claim that a man who masturbates into a chicken carcass and then cooks the chicken for dinner is immoral or has committed an immoral act. Most participants in this study also found it immoral if someone cleaned their toilet with their nation’s flag. In Haidt, Bjorklund, and Murphy’s (2000) study mentioned above, only 13 percent of participants said that it would be OK for a woman to eat the flesh of a dead human, where the flesh was fully cooked so the woman would not be harmed in any way. When the experimenter ‘argued’ with the participants about their justification for viewing the act as a moral transgression, some participants changed their mind, which increased the number of participants who viewed the act as permissible to 28 percent. Haidt (2001) states that the scenarios in his studies “were carefully constructed so that no plausible harm could be found, and most

participants directly stated that nobody was hurt by the actions in question” (p. 817). Thus, there was no one to empathize with. The scenarios were devoid of empathy, but triggered other emotions, and were designed to trigger intuitive judgments. The typical answer that an act causes harm, usually given by individuals when attempting to justify their judgment that an act is morally impermissible, could not be used to justify their judgments.

We sometimes modify or reject our initial reaction to a moral situation and change our judgment. On Haidt’s (2007) model, there are at least three ways in which our immediate intuitive responses can be overridden. The first is through conscious verbal reasoning, where we weigh the costs and benefits of each action that can be taken. The second is by reframing a situation which would then trigger a second flash of intuition that may compete with the first. The third is through social reasoning, where we engage in conversation with others where they may raise arguments that would change our initial response (this is what occurred in the study mentioned above). However, according to Haidt, it is moral intuition, and not moral reasoning, that guides our initial judgment. Haidt (2007) claims that “moral reasoning is often like the press secretary for a secretive administration—constantly generating the most persuasive arguments it can muster for policies whose true origins and goals are unknown” (p. 1000). For Haidt, moral judgment is not dissociable from affect, where affect is always primary.

To further emphasize the role that intuition and emotion play in moral judgment, Wheatley and Haidt (2005) created a study where 63 participants (37 females, 26 males) were hypnotized to feel disgust when they heard the words ‘take’ or ‘often.’ Participants heard a story about a student council president named Dan who organizes and facilitates faculty-student discussions. The scenario included one of two versions of the following sentence: “He [tries to take]/[often picks] topics that appeal to both professors and students in order to stimulate

discussion” (Haidt, 2007, p. 1000). 22 out of the 63 participants who felt a pang of disgust upon hearing these words while reading the scenario condemned Dan, and then engaged in post-hoc reasoning in an attempt to justify why he should be condemned. They were unable to find a reason, and their initial gut reaction was overridden by controlled processes. Wheatley and Haidt (2005) found that one third of the participants in the hypnotic disgust condition came up with post-hoc justifications, claiming that ‘Dan seems snobby’ or ‘that he’s up to something.’ According to Haidt (2007), “they invented reasons to make sense of their otherwise inexplicable feeling of disgust” (p. 1000). This emphasizes the role that moral intuition usually plays in morality. While moral reasoning sometimes plays a role, it is preceded by intuition on Haidt’s model. Furthermore, Haidt claims that the system responsible for affective primacy is a rather ancient system, whereas the system responsible for moral reasoning is new cognitive machinery that was shaped by adaptive pressures. The findings from this study also suggest that negative emotions, such as disgust, are sufficient for making moral judgments despite not having a reason to think that the situation is wrong (Prinz, 2006). According to Prinz (2006), the findings suggest that “negative feeling can give rise to a negative moral appraisal without any specific belief about some property in virtue of which something is wrong” (p. 31), thus providing support for a sentimentalist view of morality. The findings also suggest that disgust does not need to be experienced via an empathic route in order to make moral judgments. The disgust induced was non-moral disgust, and participants were hypnotized to feel disgust when they heard a specific word, thus they were not empathizing with others.

Haidt’s model of moral judgment goes beyond what has been discussed here. What is important to note for now is that Haidt provides an evolutionary account of morality, and he discusses the importance of emotion in moral judgment. Although we are concerned with how

moral judgments are made and while the evolution of moral judgment is important, it does not concern us here, yet it is worth mentioning the following, though it is merely speculative. As mentioned above, empathizing requires what appears to be uniquely human cognitive abilities. While there is talk of a mirror neuron system (which some believe is a precursor of empathy) in macaque monkeys, empathizing requires higher-level cognitive abilities, such as putting yourself in someone else's shoes and imagining how they are feeling, and then vicariously sharing that emotion. Unlike other emotions that are automatic and have been shaped by evolution over many, many years, empathy, which requires higher-level cognitive processes, is relatively new. The existence of pre-empathic, automatic emotions could explain why we see forms of morality in many animals that are similar to human morality yet do not involve empathy (e.g., sharing, caring, harm prevention, etc.). For example, Masserman et al. (1964) found that rhesus monkeys were willing to starve themselves in order to prevent a shock to a conspecific. Rice and Gainer (1962) found that a rat who sees a distressed conspecific suspended in the air by a harness will press a lever to lower the rat down to the ground and stay close and oriented toward the other rat. All this speculation is meant to say is that if the Social Intuitions Model is correct, then it is emotion and not reason that leads to moral judgment, and empathy plays very little, if any, role in moral judgment.

### 1.6.3 *Nichols's theory of moral judgment*

Similar to Haidt, Nichols argues that emotions, such as disgust, play a role in morality and in the survival of norms throughout history. In his theory, empathy is not given a role in morality.<sup>4</sup> In *Sentimental Rules*, Nichols (2004) argues that affective responses, such as disgust,

---

<sup>4</sup> Nichols (2001) does, however, talk about a Concern Mechanism that helps guide morality. In cases of distress, our Concern Mechanism is elicited, where we respond to others' distress by engaging in prosocial behaviour. According to Nichols, this mechanism is impaired in psychopaths. The Concern Mechanism requires minimal mind reading capacities, but does not require empathy.

play a significant role in treating certain violations as immoral rather than morally neutral. If a norm is backed by an affective response, the norm will have a greater chance of survival. For instance, Nichols shows that certain etiquette norms that were present in the Medieval era that were not continuously backed by an affective response are no longer present, while those that were backed by an affective response are still present in contemporary etiquette. The key point here is that affect plays a significant role in determining how we treat certain violations, and there appears to be a “striking connection between our emotions and our norms” (Nichols, 2008, p. 268). Here, affect and moral judgment go hand in hand, where emotions elicit a moral judgment or accompany a moral judgment. An example given by Nichols is individuals finding it immoral when a guest at a dinner party spits into his glass and drinks it. Although no one is being harmed and there is clearly no moral violation, the disgust elicited by the act leads to the judgment that the act is immoral, and will usually lead individuals who find the act immoral to refrain from performing that action.

The view proposed by Nichols, that affectively-backed norms usually survive throughout history and have a greater chance of survival than norms that are not backed by affect, is called the ‘affective resonance hypothesis.’ This hypothesis claims that “norms that prohibit actions to which we are predisposed to be emotionally averse will enjoy enhanced cultural fitness over other norms” (Nichols, 2008, p.269). As we have seen so far, this hypothesis is plausible, and may account for the survival of norms throughout history. The survival of a norm and affect often go together. Further support for the affective resonance hypothesis stems from the suggestion that we view affectively-backed norms more seriously than norms that are not backed by affect (e.g., spitting into a glass and then drinking it v. placing the fork on the wrong side of the knife at the dinner table). Given our discussion on disgust thus far, the claim that “norms that

prohibit actions that are independently likely to excite negative emotion should be more likely to survive than norms that are not connected to emotions” (Nichols, 2008, p. 270) can be easily supported.

Furthermore, as Nichols points out, we have norms in our society that prohibit the gratuitous display of bodily fluids. These norms are closely linked with disgust responses, and are what makes these norms moral rather than conventional. For instance, many find it immoral when others wipe their nose on their cap or clothing or re-swallow saliva (Nichols, 2008). Borrowing Haidt’s example, in Western culture we find it immoral if a man masturbates into a chicken carcass and then cooks it for dinner despite the fact that no one is being harmed. It is evident that the disgust elicited by the scenario is what leads to the judgment that the act is somehow immoral. Furthermore, in many Eastern cultures, a woman who is menstruating would be considered morally blameworthy if she partook in a religious ceremony or served food to others. Menstruation is viewed as unclean and often elicits disgust in many individuals who are a part of that culture. What is more, while such actions are considered immoral, individuals would not find it immoral if the fork is placed on the wrong side of the knife at the dinner table (a conventional transgression). Here, we can see how affect plays a role in determining whether we treat a transgression as moral or conventional.

According to Nichols, we usually consider a norm a moral norm if it is affectively-backed. When a norm is backed by affect, it tends to stick as a norm in society and progresses as a moral norm throughout time. Harm norms in just about every culture are closely linked to our emotional responses to suffering (Nichols, 2008). For instance, children usually regard hitting another child or pulling a school mate’s hair as morally wrong, and usually refer to the victim’s suffering for justification. According to Nichols, one possible reason why harm norms tend to

survive throughout history and enjoy enhanced cultural fitness over other norms is because humans appear to have an aversive response to seeing others suffer. He claims that “norms are more likely to be preserved in the culture if the norms resonate with our affective systems by prohibiting actions that are likely to elicit negative affect,” and it is clear that “our normative lives would be radically different if we had a different emotional repertoire” (Nichols, 2008, p. 272). These examples emphasize the importance of emotion in moral judgment. Furthermore, we see how affect leads to moral judgment where empathy does not play a role.

It is also important to note that when disgust or pain at seeing another suffer is accompanied by the judgment that ‘X is wrong,’ it is not clear that empathy plays a role. When we are disgusted by something, rarely do we have anything or anyone to empathize with. For example, we do not empathize with anyone when we view a man masturbating into a chicken carcass as immoral, nor do those in other cultures empathize with anyone when they view a woman that serves food when menstruating as immoral. It may be the case that we do sometimes empathize with others when we make moral judgments that are elicited by others’ suffering. However, this need not be the case. If we are bothered by another’s suffering and view an act as a moral transgression because of it, there are other emotions, such as distress or anger, which can be responsible. For example, if I see you pull someone else’s hair and view it as a moral transgression, it may be because I get distressed when I witness confrontations or that I am a conflict resolver. I do not need to empathize with the victim in order to judge your action as a moral transgression, nor does feeling distressed need to be experienced via an empathic route, as Marsh suggests. In some cases, I may not need to feel anything at all in order to view your action as a moral transgression. However, it is usually the case that we will feel a negative emotion in response to suffering, as moral norms and affect often go together on Nichols’s model.

Nichols (2008) puts forth a version of sentimentalism that differs from traditional accounts of sentimentalism, such as subjectivism<sup>5</sup> and emotivism.<sup>6</sup> However, like other sentimentalists, Nichols (2008) maintains that given the empirical research on moral judgment, “core moral judgment is mediated by affective response” (p. 263). Nichols claims that all normal individuals have an affective mechanism that is implicated in core moral judgment and responds to harm or distress in others. However, the affective mechanism does not need to be elicited in every instance of seeing another individual in distress or a state of suffering. As mentioned above, we may, at times, not feel any emotion at all when we make moral judgments. Although the present project is concerned with moral judgments associated with affect, it is important to keep in mind that Nichols does not claim that the affective mechanism will be present every time a moral judgment is made.

Unlike traditional sentimentalist accounts of moral judgment, Nichols claims that affective responses do not always suffice to explain moral judgment. Rather, moral judgment is also dependent on a body of information that specifies a class of transgressions (Nichols, 2008). This body of information, which we refer to as norms, is affectively-backed. The norms are not the emotions. The norms are what have been backed by affect and survive throughout history. Recall that this is the affective resonance hypothesis. We see how Nichols maintains a sentimentalist view of morality, showing how affect is the core of moral judgment and responsible for the survival of norms throughout history. This suggests that there are some norms that do not appear to rest on emotion (they appear more rationalized) or are not congruent with

---

<sup>5</sup> With regard to moral theories, subjectivism is the view that moral truths are subjectively true (true to the person who holds the view) rather than objectively true (true regardless of whether one holds the view).

<sup>6</sup> Emotivism is the view that moral statements or moral truths are simply expressions of feeling. For example, claiming that ‘stealing is wrong’ amounts to saying ‘boo stealing.’

emotion, but are still caused by emotion. For Nichols, the emotions that are present in the affective resonance hypothesis are universal and innately specified, and include basic emotions such as anger, disgust, fear, and sadness. What is important to take out of this discussion is that moral judgments that are elicited by affect are elicited by emotions such as disgust and not empathy.

Thus far, we have explored two theories, one proposed by Haidt and one by Nichols, that suggest that affect plays a significant role in morality. This is not to say that other emotion researchers deny this. Of course, Batson, Baron-Cohen, and others would agree that affect plays a considerable role in morality. However, they would also hold that empathy is one of the most significant emotions that play a role in morality. Neither Haidt nor Nichols explicitly deny that empathy plays a role in morality, but it is clear from my review that it is other emotions and not empathy that leads to moral judgment. Every example provided by Haidt and Nichols supports this position. What I have tried to illustrate is that emotions other than empathy, predominantly disgust in the given examples, are responsible for most moral judgments. In the examples given above, it is not evident that empathy is invoked when making moral judgments or when viewing transgressions as moral transgressions. In the examples provided by Haidt, there is no one to empathize with, and no one is being harmed in the given situations. The same applies to the examples given by Nichols. Thus, we see that moral judgments can be made without invoking empathy, and that disgust plays a significant role in motivating moral judgment.

#### *1.6.4 Positive emotions and moral judgment*

Briefly, I want to discuss the role of positive emotions in morality. The examples discussed thus far have focused only on negative emotions, and it seems intuitive that positive emotions also play a role in morality. Positive emotions include emotions such as happiness, joy,

and excitement. When individuals experience positive emotions in a moral situation, they tend to be morally motivated. Batson (2012) discusses studies that suggest that individuals who are in a good or happy mood tend to be more charitable toward others. Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006) claim that being in a positive mood leads individuals to be more lenient when making moral judgments. What is more, morally praiseworthy actions elicit warm or happy feelings while morally blameworthy actions do not. For example, we elicit emotions of happiness or warmth when we witness that someone has donated a significant amount of money to charity. These positive emotions lead to moral praise or viewing an action as permissible, while negative emotions, as discussed above, lead to moral blame or viewing an action as impermissible. Algoe and Haidt (2009) claim that witnessing moral actions lead others to behave similarly. Studies that examine the role of positive emotions will be further discussed and analyzed in 2.4.

#### *1.6.5 Moral judgment and moral dilemmas*

The Trolley Dilemma, often used in philosophy to examine moral judgment, is another example that shows that empathy is rarely necessary for moral judgment. In The Trolley Dilemma, individuals are posed with the following situation: there is an out-of-control trolley heading in the direction of five hikers. The trolley is unable to stop, and will result in killing the five hikers who are unaware that the trolley is headed in their direction. On another track, there is one individual who will not be hit and killed by the trolley if it continues on the track it is on, but will be killed if the trolley is redirected. The question is whether it is morally right to pull a lever that will redirect the trolley on the track where the single individual resides, killing him and saving the lives of the five hikers. Most people claim that pulling the lever is a morally right action. When posed with a slightly different version of this dilemma, The Footbridge Dilemma, where the only way to save the five hikers is to physically push a large man off a bridge because he is the only object heavy enough to stop the trolley from running over and killing the five

hikers, most people respond that this would be a morally wrong action. While the consequences of both actions are the same, one act is viewed as morally preferable while the other is not. The Trolley Dilemma and The Footbridge Dilemma demonstrate that the crucial emotion in moral judgment here is not empathy. When Hauser (2006) posed this question to subjects in a web-based experiment, he found that individuals responded in the same manner, irrespective of location, gender, and age. What is more, when Greene et al. (2004) used an fMRI to determine which brain regions are recruited when making moral judgments, Greene and colleagues noticed that most subjects, when posed with The Trolley Dilemma, had increased activity in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex of the brain. This part of the brain is often used for reasoning or calculating. Greene and colleagues found that when subjects were posed with The Footbridge Dilemma, they had increased activity in the medial parts of the frontal cortex, which is the area often associated with emotion, suggesting that when an action involves physically harming someone, our intuitions guide our judgment. This may explain why most individuals judge that sacrificing one life and saving five lives in The Trolley Dilemma is permissible, but not in The Footbridge Dilemma.

Some, such as John Mikhail (2008), try to justify our judgments through moral reasoning. Mikhail claims that we invoke the doctrine of double effect when attempting to make a moral judgment. The doctrine of double effect states that an action is permissible if the consequences of the action are foreseen but not intended, but impermissible if they are both intended and foreseen. However, it may be, as Steven Pinker (2008) claims, that we experience revulsion when thinking of harming an innocent person. That is, in The Footbridge Dilemma, we experience disgust at the thought of physically pushing the large, innocent man off the footbridge, which is why we judge the act as impermissible. In The Trolley Dilemma, we do not

experience the same emotion because we are not asked to imagine physically pushing someone onto a trolley track. Here, we can see that affect may be responsible for our moral judgment, where a judgment is either accompanied by emotion (we judge that harming an innocent man is wrong because it is repulsive), or as Haidt proposes, an emotion causes a moral judgment (we feel disgusted at harming an innocent person which drives the judgment that it is wrong) where we then engage in post-hoc reasoning, attempting to justify why one action is preferable while the other is not, despite the fact that the consequences are the same. What is more, in The Footbridge Dilemma, we are much closer in distance to the individual are asked to harm. In The Trolley Dilemma, the distance to the individual that we are asked to harm is much further and therefore less personal. Greene (2004) claims that dilemmas that involve personal moral scenarios elicit higher levels of emotion than impersonal moral scenarios. This will be further discussed in (2).

#### 1.6.6 *Examples from autism*

Even if Haidt and Nichols are correct, there may be other ways to show that empathy is not necessary for morality. One way is through hypothetical thought experiments, such as The Trolley Dilemma. Another way is by looking at a population of individuals who are known for having an impairment in empathy and examining how they make moral judgments and engage in moral behaviour. I look at autism because many people see some sort of moral behaviour and judgment in autistic individuals despite the acknowledgement that these individuals have an impairment in empathy. I will now turn to examples from autism in my examination of whether empathy is necessary for morality. Autism appears to be another case where there can be morality without empathy.

Autism is a spectrum disorder and not every feature of autism is present in individuals with the disorder, but the following is a list of general impairments that tend to be found in most autistic individuals: an impairment in reciprocal social interactions, which includes lack of awareness of others' feelings; lack of imitative abilities; abnormal comfort seeking behaviour when experiencing distress; lack of social play; extreme literal-mindedness; lack of appropriate social behaviours, such as not meeting one's eye gaze when speaking; lack of imaginative abilities and pretend play; and obsessive insistence on routine and order (McGeer, 2008). Szalavitz and Perry (2010) claim that there are three required diagnostic clusters of symptoms which will vary from individual to individual. These clusters are: difficulties with social interactions, difficulties with language, and repetitive behaviours and obsessions.

Social interaction and being aware of others' feelings is dependent in part on empathy. They involve, at the very least, the cognitive element of empathy described above. Social interaction requires awareness of others' feelings. Lacking awareness of others' feelings, deficits in imitative abilities, and impairments in social play are consequences of an impairment in empathy. However, it is debated how much empathy is impaired (Szalavitz & Perry, 2010).

Philosopher Victoria McGeer examines what lessons we can learn from autism with regard to morality. McGeer discusses how autistic individuals interact with others in an attempt to examine their ability to make moral judgments and engage in moral behaviour. One individual McGeer takes particular interest in is Temple Grandin. Despite being autistic, which we will soon see, Grandin is a successful professor of animal science and a livestock equipment designer. Growing up, Grandin had a speech impediment that made speaking very difficult for her. Although she was able to hear and understand sentences, her words, though she tried to utter them, rarely ever made it out of her mouth, and came out as stutters when she did. Grandin also

had auditory and tactile problems. Despite issues in childhood, adolescence, and even today, Grandin has progressed, and continues to progress, finding different ways to deal with her impairments. Grandin is of significant interest because of her success and ability to function in the social world despite her disorder.

At the age of 3, Grandin could barely say the word ‘ball,’ and threw temper tantrums if her speech therapist pushed her too hard. Speech impediments are common in autistic individuals. In the most severe cases, there is no speech at all (Szalavitz & Perry, 2010). Grandin (1992) claims that her speech as a child resembled the speech of young children who had tumours removed from their cerebellum. In order to deal not just with her speech problems but also anxiety and tactile issues, Grandin decided to take anti-depressants in her early thirties after researching that certain types of anti-depressants can assist in dealing with many problems that some autistic individuals face. During the first eight years of taking anti-depressants, Grandin (1992) claims that there was gradual improvement in her speech, posture, and sociability. Unlike many autistic individuals, Grandin has friends and is able to engage in social interactions. This suggests that she is on the mild end of the autism spectrum. Her friends noticed the changes as well, claiming that she made more eye contact and appeared to be less anxious. Now, Grandin’s speech is normal, and it is only when she looks back at old video tapes does she realize how much progress she has made (Grandin, 1992). Grandin (2006) states that social interaction is still difficult for her, and that she is not very good at viewing the world from others’ points of view. Although Grandin still faces many difficulties, she has progressed significantly throughout the years.

In reviewing a passage from Grandin, McGeer (2008) claims that Grandin is aware that she “lacks the normal emotional profile of other human beings, specifically ‘the feeling of

attachment' that drives others, for instance, to endanger themselves for the sake of a comrade, dead though he may be" (p. 232). Although Grandin may be attached to some things, such as her work and a few people, such as her friends and family, she lacks 'empathic attachment.' Empathic attachment is attachment sought through an empathic route, such as mind-reading and vicariously sharing others' emotions; it is a way of getting attached to someone or a group of people by understanding how they feel or by putting yourself in their shoes. What is important here is Grandin's acknowledgement that she lacks the sort of empathic connection as we saw in 1.5 that many scholars believe to be responsible for morality. However, individuals with autism, unlike those who suffer from psychopathy (who will be discussed below), appear to have a sense of duty which they view as binding on all individuals.

McGeer (2008) claims that there must be some other source of "autistic moral concern, since empathy in the sense of affective attunement with other people seems clearly beyond the scope of their experience" (p. 234). Let us explore a few examples of morality in autistic individuals and determine what else could be responsible for their morality.

McGeer (2008) gives the example of an autistic individual who was unable to fathom that every home did not have a well-tuned piano. This individual, who has a love for pitch and music, thought that there should be an amendment requiring every home to have a well-tuned piano. In his eyes, he is attempting to make the world a better place in light of what is important to him. In this case, it is possible that this individual was distressed, be it personal or other-oriented, at the fact that not everyone has a well-tuned piano.

Then there is also Grandin, who appears to want to know what the 'right' thing to do is, and Grandin has made extraordinary efforts to understand what this could be. In order to make

her behaviour socially acceptable and to display some sort of morality, Grandin has built up a store of memories and experiences, watched numerous television shows and movies, and has read many newspaper articles in an attempt to guide her social behaviour in a morally praiseworthy way. It is possible that Grandin wanted to adopt a moral code so that she is not treated in an isolated manner. It can also be argued that she wanted to adopt a moral code because she has a desire to follow rules. Desires are often driven by emotions, such as love and contempt (e.g., love for a particular object; contempt for not achieving a goal), thus it is not unusual that Grandin should want to know and understand moral norms as she may have a desire not to be treated with contempt and she may have a love for rule-following. While Baron-Cohen claims that autistic individuals display morality due to their ability to systematize and their logical capabilities, I think that autistic individuals, like Grandin, have a deeper desire to be moral, and it is this desire that allows for morality in autistic individuals.

While an impairment in empathy does make it challenging for autistic individuals to act in morally appropriate ways, as they are deficient in the ability to share emotions with others or to understand others' emotions and points of view, it appears that this "does nothing to undermine their interest in so acting; it does nothing to undermine their moral concern" (McGeer, 2008, p. 234). It is possible that high-functioning autistic individuals, such as those who understand that people have separate minds but have difficulty understanding others' emotions, have difficulty perspective taking because they project their own view point, which is very different from others' view point, onto others. This line of reasoning may apply to the morality displayed in the autistic individual described above. Because he is limited in perspective taking and projects his view point onto others, his morality is limited to what *he* believes a moral

norm should be. That is, he is making a moral judgment in light of what is important to him where this judgment or norm is considered to be overriding.

Although this is merely speculative, there is some plausibility to the claim that autistic individuals display moral behaviour as a result of projecting their own viewpoint and what is important to them onto others. Many of us empathize with others when we attempt to understand others' points of view. Because normally developed individuals do not have an empathy deficit, this is easily done. Because autistic individuals have an empathy deficit, some autistic individuals may understand that people have separate minds, but they will have difficulty understanding their emotions and may project their own view point onto others without realizing to what extent their view point differs from others' view point. We also tend to assume that other people in our community value the same ends as we do, and tend to be shocked upon learning that someone else may value something different. For instance, a small town of very religious Catholics expect that the rest of the town will value the Sabbath day, and will be infuriated if an atheist moves into town and decides not to attend Church. Our values are projected onto others if we think that others have similar values. Similarly, some autistic individuals are projecting what is morally significant to them onto others and consider it to be overriding.

McGeer (2008) claims that given the fact that autistic individuals have a desire for rule-following and routines, the moral agency displayed in autistic individuals is a result of abiding by the social and moral rules that they have been taught, even if not fully sharing our understanding of what those rules are meant to serve. To illustrate this line of reasoning, McGeer tells the story of an autistic man who was playing *Scruples*, a board game where the players listen to stories and say what they would do in the given situation. This individual was given a story about a woman who had no job and no financial support and had several young children.

The owner of the store saw the woman stealing a small amount of groceries from his store. When asked what he would do in the situation, the young man with autism replied that “everyone has to go through the checkout line. It is illegal not to go through the checkout line. She should be arrested” (McGeer, 2008, p. 240). According to McGeer, the young man was unable to understand that a milder response was called for.

While it is clearly an open question how deep their moral understanding is and whether their morality includes both a cognitive and affective component, it is clear that autistic individuals are capable of making moral judgments based on their passion for rules, order, and routine. Recall that moral judgments are judgments that individuals believe to be overriding. Given their desire for order and rule-following, it is no surprise that autistic individuals’ moral judgments do not stray far from societal norms and are considered overriding. According to Prinz (2006), we moralize conventional rules if we learn them through a process of emotional conditioning, and if autistic individuals have a passion or desire for rule-following and order, then it is no surprise that they will follow the moral rules and make moral judgments that society has set in place. This is one reason how, despite having an impairment in empathy, autistic individuals display morality. Autistic individuals treat as morally binding a much wider range of norms than we do. Their judgments count as moral because they make judgments in light of what is important to them and project this onto others. They also make judgments in line with what we consider to be moral because they have learned the norms that society has set in place and have learned that complying with these norms is expected of them. As a result, they treat as morally binding a wider range of norms than usual, and these norms are overriding. This may be why some autistic individuals, such as Grandin, are concerned with appearing socially acceptable and doing the morally right thing. Grandin can identify and act on the norms of others even if she

doesn't share them. It also explains why Grandin is not attempting to know what the right thing to do is in every area that concerns other people. For example, Grandin does not care about the clothes that she wears or how presentable she looks to others. This could be because this is not important to Grandin, and also because it is not a norm that society enforces. That is, Grandin makes judgments in light of what is important to her and makes judgments in line with what society has set in place. To be more specific, concern for rule-following and certain types of social order may be driven by emotion (e.g., the desire to follow rules may be driven by feeling distressed when rules are not followed).

McGeer (2008) claims that many high-functioning autistic individuals become moral agents because they are “able and willing to govern their own behaviour and to judge the behaviour of others by reference to a deeper, more reflective consideration of the ends such behaviour might be thought to serve” (p. 242). Although speculative, it could be the case that autistic individuals are motivated to make moral judgments and display moral agency by their rule-following behaviour and concern for social order. Again, it may be the case that concern for social order is driven by emotion, such as the distress felt when there is a lack of social order or the joy that emerges when there is social order. As Prinz (2006) states, “it is emotionally taxing to violate social and moral rules” (p. 30). McGeer's explanation of the moral behaviour displayed in autistic individuals can be summed up in her own words:

while autistic individuals may be lacking in the kind of empathic attunement that provides the backbone of a typically developed moral agency, they do have a strong affective interest in living in the kind of world that is orderly, predictable, and indeed, respectful of individual space. They like clear boundaries and prefer social transactions that are aboveboard and explicit. Thus, it is no surprise that we find in them an interesting and substantial variety of (genuine) moral agency (McGeer, 2008, p.246)

According to McGeer (2008), the capacity to respond to reason is rooted in the “capacity for valuing certain ends, and valuing certain ends is fundamentally rooted in the depth and quality of one’s affective life” (p. 247). Because the affective lives of autistic individuals differ significantly from those of normally developed individuals, we can speculate that we would see differences in the ends that are valued by autistic individuals and those of others, and in the way these ends are prioritized. If autistic individuals greatly desire rule-following and routines, it is no surprise that they make moral judgments that are in accordance with societal moral norms, and would explain why moral agency appears to be of interest to autistic individuals. McGeer points out that morality may be based on more than just empathy. Straying from the common view of morality, she claims that morality is based on other concerns, such as concerns for order and meaning.

Given the examples above, autistic individuals appear to have some sort of concern for rule-following and adhering to society’s moral norms. Although some autistic individuals may not share the same morals as normal individuals do, they are driven by affect and their own concerns to be moral. While some autistic individuals may not entirely understand why some norms are considered to be moral, they choose to be moral for some of the reasons discussed above.

Unlike psychopaths, who will be discussed shortly, autistic individuals show some sort of moral concern. It is well known that psychopaths and autistic individuals have similar deficits, such as an impairment in empathy, yet “the nature of their impairments gives rise to very different moral psychological outcomes” (McGeer, 2008, p. 229). Like psychopaths, autistic individuals are impaired in creating an empathic connection with others that many believe is crucial for morality. However, unlike psychopaths, most autistic individuals are not callous or

insensitive to the moral domain. McGeer (2008) notes that “as far as they are cognitively able, individuals with autism seem remarkably prone to view their own and others’ behaviour in moral terms; i.e., in terms of duties or obligations that ought to be binding on all people” (232). While I hold no particular view that accounts for the differences, and cannot at the moment explain the stark differences in moral behaviour between autistic individuals and psychopaths, the recognition that both psychopaths and autistic individuals have an empathy deficit yet display very different moral profiles is significant. Autistic individuals care about morality and psychopaths do not. If both populations have an empathy deficit yet one population is moral and the other amoral or immoral, then there must be something other than empathy guiding moral behaviour. While autistic individuals have a desire to follow moral conventions, “when we ask psychopaths to modify their behavior so that it conforms to our expectations and norms, we may be asking them to do something against their ‘nature.’ They may agree to our request, but only if it is in their own best interests to do so” (Hare, 1993, p. 203).

Thus far, I have looked at models of morality that have emotions other than empathy at their core and have examined arguments that suggest that empathy is not necessary for morality. I have shown that many of our moral judgments are not dependent on empathy. Now, I will briefly turn to other examples of morality that are not driven by empathy, but are instead driven by other emotions.

#### *1.6.7 Examples of morality that are not driven by empathy*

In 1.6.1, I mentioned that individuals can display moral behaviour and make moral judgments without invoking empathy. I claimed that it may well be the case that police officers and soldiers do not empathize with anyone when they display moral behaviour. Rather, they may have a desire and passion to follow their line of duty. For instance, they may feel pride in what

they do and in protecting people, which is enough to elicit helping behaviour. A police officer may also have a passion for the law, and may feel outraged when a citizen breaks a law and thus takes measures to protect a victim. The officer does not need to empathize with a potential victim when they display helping behaviour. The outrage experienced is sufficient to elicit moral behaviour. Prinz (2011) claims that emotions elicited by sentiments, where a sentiment is a disposition to have an emotion, lead us to make moral judgments and display moral behavior. If Prinz is correct, then the outrage elicited can lead to moral behaviour. Furthermore, Prinz claims that moral judgments and the emotions that co-occur with these judgments are motivating; they will lead to moral behaviour because moral judgments caused by emotion are action-guiding. I will review Prinz's thesis in more detail in 1.7. However, it is important to note in the meantime that emotions that are elicited by sentiments can motivate morality, where empathy is not a necessary emotion.

Distress can also lead to helping behaviour. As previously mentioned, feelings of distress, whether it is personal distress or other-oriented distress, can lead to acts of kindness. For instance, if you witness someone being bullied, you do not need to empathize with the victim of bullying in order to stand up for him. Bullying may elicit feelings of upset, or may trigger outrage and anger. These feelings may cause you to feel distress in addition to what you are already feeling, and may lead you to take a stand against the bully. Chances are, you are not empathizing with the victim when standing up to a bully. In fact, empathizing with the victim may prevent you from helping because like the victim, you may feel fear or terror and instead leave the situation unresolved. The point here is that there are examples of non-empathy driven morality which we should consider when determining whether empathy is causally necessary for morality.

If empathy is not at the core of morality, then other emotions might be. I will now consider psychopaths to determine whether empathy is needed for morality. In particular, I will look at what motivates moral behaviour. In order to determine what is needed for morality, it is important to look at the factors that result in an immoral character (or amoral, depending on what view of psychopathy you hold). That is, it is necessary to determine what psychopaths lack and what it is that allows for their morally reprehensible behaviour. This will be the task of the first part of this discussion and review. In the second part, I will look at studies that suggest that empathy does not play a significant role in motivating moral behaviour. Psychopaths are of significant interest due to their immoral nature. Psychopathy is sometimes characterized as a moral disorder.<sup>7</sup> Like autism, among other disorders, psychopathy exists on a spectrum, and is not a ‘one size fits all’ disorder. Psychopathic characteristics are experienced to varying degrees in individuals with psychopathy. In order to determine what is causally necessary for morality, examining a population that appears to have little to no morality will allow for a deeper understanding regarding the emotions that constitute morality. If empathy is not causally sufficient for morality, then something else must be, and psychopaths are a good example to look at what is missing for morality.

#### 1.6.8 *A brief discussion of psychopathy*

Before we delve into our discussion on morality and psychopathy, I need to first determine what clinically constitutes a psychopath, in addition to making a distinction between primary and secondary psychopaths, as this distinction is usually made in the literature (see Hare 1993 and Skeem et al., 2007). The PCL-R (Hare Psychopathy Checklist Revised) is the most

---

<sup>7</sup> While psychopaths are known for their immoral characters due to popular psychology, not all researchers are interested in their immoral behaviour or categorize psychopathy as a moral disorder. Some researchers are interested in other factors, such as emotional language processing (see Bagley, Abramowitz and Kosson, 2009).

widely used test to determine whether an individual is a psychopath or has psychopathic characteristics and tendencies (Marsh, 2014). The PCL-R was devised by psychologist Robert Hare. The PCL-R requires the psychologist or psychiatrist, who has been trained extensively on administering and scoring the test, to conduct a semi-structured interview that assesses participants on the core features of the PCL-R, such as interpersonal and affective traits (Poythress, Lilienfeld, Skeem, Douglas, Edens, Epstien, & Patrick, 2010). The PCL-R consists of twenty items, and each item is given a score of 0 (the trait is not present), 1 (the trait is partially present), or 2 (the trait is definitely present) with a maximum score of 40 (Marsh, 2014). A person who scores a perfect score is a full-blown psychopath, although a score of 30 out of 40 is the normal cut-off for a diagnosis of psychopathy (Dolan & Doyle, 2000).<sup>8</sup> According to Hare, Clark, Grann, and Thornton (2000), “total scores can range from 0 to 40 and reflect an estimate of the degree to which the individual matches the prototypical psychopath” (p. 625).

According to Hare et al. (2000), the PCL-R measures affective, interpersonal, and behavioural attributes. Of the affective attributes, psychopaths are generally arrogant, callous, superficial, and deceptive. Of the interpersonal attributes, psychopaths are short-tempered, remorseless, and are lacking in deep-seated emotions (e.g., guilt). These affective and interpersonal attributes usually lead to the behavioural attributes, such as living a socially deviant lifestyle (Hare et al., 2000). Cooke, Michie, Hart, and Hare (1999) state that “Factor 1 reflects the affective and interpersonal features of psychopathy and has been labeled the Selfish, Callous, and Remorseless Use of Others; Factor 2 reflects the social deviance features of psychopathy and has been labeled Chronically Unstable and Antisocial lifestyle” (p. 3).

---

<sup>8</sup> The cut-off for diagnosis varies in different countries, but remain relatively constant throughout. For example, Sweden has a cut-off of 26/40 (Hare et al. 2000).

The following features are scored on Factor 1 of the PCL-R (in no particular order): glibness/superficial charm; grandiose sense of self-worth; pathological lying; conning/manipulative; shallow affect; lack of remorse/guilt; lack of empathy/callousness; and failure to accept responsibility for one's own actions. The following features are scored on Factor 2 of the PLC-R (in no particular order): revocation of conditional release; need for stimulation/proneness for boredom; juvenile delinquency; impulsivity; early behaviour problems; lack of realistic, long-term goals; parasitic lifestyle; poor behavioural controls; and irresponsibility. The following items are not scored on either factor, but are included in the diagnosis (in no particular order): criminal versatility; many short-term marital relationships; and promiscuous sexual behaviour (Cookie et al., 1999; Hare, 2004).

According to Marsh (2014),

the classic division of psychopathic traits is a two-factor solution incorporating socio-affective traits termed *callous-unemotional traits* that include lack of guilt or remorse and shallow affect; and antisocial and under-controlled behaviours, like irresponsibility impulsivity, and poor anger control (p. 140)

Antisocial behaviours are observed in other deviant populations, such as individuals with antisocial personality disorder (ASPD). What separates psychopaths from these individuals is having callous-unemotional traits. These traits are often referred to as the core features of the disorder (Marsh. 2014). According to Marsh (2014),

the two factors that compose psychopathy are strongly positively related, such that higher levels of callous-unemotional traits predispose an individual to increased antisocial behaviours, particularly antisocial behaviour that serves an instrumental goal, such as bullying, sexual violence, or assault during the course of a robbery (p. 141)

It is important to note that there is a difference between ASPD and psychopathy.

Although the disorders share some features and psychopathy has an antisocial factor, ASPD is a much more common disorder.

The validity of the PCL-R has been debated. One concern brought to attention by some researchers (Poythress et al., 2010) is that the PCL-R captures features of mostly criminal psychopaths, as the scale is used mostly in criminal settings. However, as Hare et al. (2000) point out, the PCL-R was designed to measure the core attributes of psychopathy (interpersonal, affective, and behavioural). These core attributes do not focus solely on criminal behaviour. What is more, Hare et al. (2000) note that while not all psychopaths come into contact with the criminal justice system, the defining features of psychopathy place them at high risk for crime.

Another concern is that the PCL-R requires access to criminal records, case history information, and a detailed interview, and is therefore too time consuming to administer. Poythress et al. (2010) note that while the PCL-R has pragmatic limitations, such as being time consuming and not being administrable to groups, the PCL-R is more valid than other measures of psychopathy that require self-report measures, such as the Levenson Primary and Secondary Psychopathy scales (Levenson, Kiehl, & Fitzpatrick, 1995). While self-report measures can be easily administered and are not as time consuming to complete, self-report measures have disadvantages. For example, those with psychopathic characteristics may lack insight into the nature of their deficits and it may be difficult to ask these individuals to comment on emotions that they have difficulty experiencing (Poythress et al., 2010). The PCL-R is a more reliable, objective scale. What is more, self-report measures tend to use the PCL-R as a model, having both factors 1 and 2 present in the measures (Poythress et al., 2010), suggesting that the PCL-R is a reliable and valid scale to diagnose psychopathy. As Poythress et al. (2010) note, “the more these self-report measures perform like the PCL-R, the greater the likelihood that investigators and clinicians may approach them as efficient alternatives to psychopathy assessment with offenders” (p. 207). These measures are used as efficient alternatives as they are less time

consuming, easier to distribute, and do not require someone trained in PCL-R assessment to assess the self-report measures. In a study that compared the PCL-R to two self-report measures of psychopathy, the Levenson Primary and Secondary Psychopathy scales and the Psychopathic Personality Inventory (Lilienfeld and Andrews, 1996), Poythress et al. concluded that the PCL-R is a more trustworthy measure, attesting to the reliability of the scale.

A Screening Version of the PCL-R (PCL:SV) has also been developed in order to deal with issues related to the time and costs associated with administering the PCL-R (Hart, Cox, & Hare, 1995), and to administer the PCL-R outside of forensic settings (Cookie et al., 1999). The PCL:SV includes 12 items derived from the PCL-R and are rated on the same 3-point scale. Diagnosis for psychopathy requires a cut-off of 18/24 (Cookie et al., 1999).

The PCL-R, like other measures of assessment, cannot capture every single feature of the disorder, and often times other measures are used as a supplemental diagnostic tool. The PCL-R remains an important and widely used scale to diagnose psychopathy. It is an important scale, as other scales used to diagnosis psychopathy use the PCL-R as a benchmark, suggesting that the scale is reliable. The PCL-R also captures most features of psychopathy, and does so more than other scales, and is thus a reliable scale to measure psychopathy.

Skeem et al. note that there are features not captured by the PCL-R that distinguish primary and secondary psychopaths. I include their work here in order to make a further distinction between primary and secondary psychopaths. A recent study by Skeem et al. that focused on phenotypic distinctions between primary and secondary psychopaths sheds light on major differences between primary and secondary psychopathy. They state that “primary psychopathy is underpinned by an inherited affective deficit, whereas secondary psychopathy

reflects an acquired affective disturbance” (p. 395). That is, secondary psychopathy is effected by environmental factors more than primary psychopathy. Skeem et al. state that “secondary psychopaths’ hostile, callous behaviour can be understood as an emotional adaptation to such factors as parent rejection and abuse” (p. 395). As a result, secondary psychopaths may be less resistant to treatment than primary psychopaths. Skeem et al. state that “relative to primary psychopaths, secondary psychopaths reported more childhood and adult fights, greater alcohol abuse, lower socialization, and higher trait anxiety” (p. 398). Secondary psychopaths tend to be emotionally disturbed, moody, submissive, experience higher levels of anxiety compared to normal individuals and primary psychopaths, and have low self-confidence. Primary psychopaths, on the other hand, are confident, dominant, and extraverted (Skeem et al., 2007). Among other factors, trait anxiety is one significant factor that separates primary psychopaths from secondary psychopaths. Skeem et al. (2007) have confirmed this in their research.

Secondary psychopaths tend to have more overlap with individuals with ASPD because they score higher on the antisocial and under-controlled behaviours factor than the socio-affective traits factor. Primary and secondary psychopaths tend to have the same moral profile, but primary psychopaths are less destructive than secondary psychopaths.

Primary psychopaths are those who score high on features of the PCL-R that are concerned with the following: affect, which include lack of remorse, guilt, and empathy; and interpersonal relationships, which include being manipulative, pathological lying, and having a grandiose sense of self-worth. Secondary psychopaths score higher on features of the PCL-R that are concerned with the following: lifestyle choices, such as having a parasitic lifestyle,

impulsivity<sup>9</sup> in everyday behaviour and decision-making, and being irresponsible; and having antisocial tendencies, such as poor behaviour controls, early behaviour problems, and early delinquency (Maibom, 2008). Secondary psychopaths tend to be more violent than primary psychopaths, and report greater amounts of alienation and aggression than primary psychopaths, who report greater wellbeing, control, and achievement than secondary psychopaths (Maibom, 2008). Compared to primary psychopaths, secondary psychopaths tend to be more socially withdrawn, have poor clinical functioning, manifest traits present in borderline personality disorder, and manifest traits associated with major mental illnesses (Skeem et al., 2007). In their research distinguishing primary and secondary psychopaths, Skeem et al. found that “relative to primary psychopaths, secondary psychopaths manifested greater trait anxiety, comparable antisocial behavior, and somewhat lower psychopathic traits” (p. 403). Their research concludes that “primary psychopaths are interpersonally confident, dominant, and free of negative emotionality, whereas secondary psychopaths are withdrawn, hostile, and afflicted with relatively serious emotional problems” (p. 405). What is more, the results from their study

indicated that secondary (high-anxious) psychopaths were most dramatically distinguished from primary (low-anxious) psychopaths by their (a) emotional disturbance (anxiety, major mental and substance abuse disorders, borderline features, impaired functioning), (b) interpersonal hostility (irritability, paranoid features, indirect aggression), and (c) interpersonal submissiveness (lack of assertiveness, withdrawal, avoidant and dependent features) (p. 405)

---

<sup>9</sup> This claim has been debated. Skeem et al. (2007) have shown that secondary psychopaths are not more impulsive than primary psychopaths.

I am mostly concerned with primary psychopaths, as secondary psychopathy largely overlaps with ASPD, and secondary psychopathy appears to be largely influenced by environment, unlike primary psychopathy, suggesting that some of the psychopathic traits are acquired rather than inherent.

Psychopaths make up a small but significant portion of individuals in society that are described by the media. Hare (1993) points out that psychopaths are not just serial killers and con men, but are also white collar criminals—those who are hype-prone stock promoters, gang members, disbarred lawyers, unscrupulous business people, and professional gamblers. Some politicians and doctors are psychopaths as well, but manage to stay out of the criminal system by either not getting caught for their actions or not engaging in criminal behaviour. This is not to say that anyone in such a ‘profession’ is a psychopath. Psychopaths who do not engage in physical criminal behaviour (e.g., raping, stealing, murdering), usually white collar psychopaths, are equally as cunning and manipulative as violent criminal psychopaths. Their ability to be ‘successful’ is partly due to a wealthy or successful family upbringing (Dutton, 2012). White collar psychopaths manipulate and cheat, using their charm to climb their way up the social ladder.

Psychopaths are known to be cold, calculating, manipulative, and charming. They have been known to charm and manipulate their way through life in order to get what they want when they want. Many psychopaths live a life of crime and violence, being thrown in jail and taken out of jail, only to be thrown in again due to the inevitability of recidivation. Criminal psychopaths have the highest recidivism rates of all criminals. This is due to their inability to learn that their actions are immoral and harmful to themselves, and there is little hope for change (Hare, 1993). However, Skeem et al. (2007) note that there is considerable evidence that suggests that “a

sizeable portion of psychopathic offenders...do not reoffend during or after incarceration” (p. 396). Hare (1993) describes the typical psychopath as an individual without conscience. He speaks of such a person as being a “self-centered, callous, and remorseless person profoundly lacking in empathy and the ability to form warm emotional relationships with others, a person who functions without the restraints of conscience” (Hare, 1993, p. 2), and lacks the qualities that allow for humans to live in social harmony.

By empathy, Hare means something slightly different than my definition given above. Hare, like Batson, seems to conflate empathy and sympathy, stating that empathy is the prerequisite for love and the ability to care about others’ pain and suffering. Recall that on my definition, empathy does not require one to be concerned for another individual. Regardless of how Hare uses the fine details of the term, by ‘lack of empathy,’ he appears to mean both empathy and sympathy as I have defined it.

Although we may be quick to classify the psychopath as ‘mad’ or ‘insane,’ according to psychiatric and legal standards psychopaths are not insane. Psychopathy results from a cold and calculating rational mind that is combined with the inability to treat others as feeling and thinking human beings, rather than a deranged mind. As Maibom (2008) puts it, psychopathy cannot be used as an insanity defense in legal practice because “psychopaths are able to correctly identify what actions they are performing, determine whether those actions are right or wrong, and control their actions. They do not suffer from delusions or hallucinations of the sort that usually exculpate other mentally ill defendants” (p. 167). In other words, the significant difference between violent insane defendants and criminal psychopaths is that psychopaths do not suffer from hallucinations or delusional thinking that result in criminal behaviour, and the violence inflicted by criminal psychopaths tend to be instrumental in nature (they expect to gain

from the action), which tends not to be the case in insane defendants. For instance, there have been many cases of mothers drowning their children because they believed that God (or Satan in the case of Andrea Yates) was asking them to commit such an act. However, these individuals usually suffered from severe schizophrenia or another mental illness that causes extreme paranoia. The reason why insane defendants are excused for their morally reprehensible behaviour and psychopaths are not rests with the assumption that insane defendants are, at the time of their crime, in a deranged state of mind that impairs their ability to think and behave normally, whereas psychopaths are not suffering from a deranged mind but a cold and calculating mind.

To a normal individual, this behaviour is seen as morally reprehensible, as it is difficult for us to imagine others without feelings, thoughts, and desires similar to our own (Hare, 1993). According to Hare (1993), this is because most of us know what it is like to empathize with others. That is, we understand what it is like to vicariously feel what we take another to be feeling. It is widely agreed and uncontroversial that psychopaths cannot empathize with other individuals. As mentioned above when we discussed the works of Howe and Marsh, psychopaths cannot feel pain, fear, and distress as normal individuals do, and as a result, cannot empathize with others with regard to these emotions.

An impairment in empathy fits the description of item 8 on the PCL-R. Item 8 states that “he is only concerned with ‘Number 1’ and views others as objects to be manipulated. He is cynical and selfish. Any appreciation of the pain, anguish, or discomfort of others is merely abstract and intellectual” (Hare, 2004, p. 39). Psychopaths tend to play victim when they get caught for their criminal activities. When asked why they commit the crimes they commit, they respond with, ‘they (their victim) had it coming,’ or ‘that’s what they get for insulting me. I am

clearly the victim here.’ Something as little as an individual’s gaze briefly and innocently falling on a psychopath can result in the victim’s death (Baron-Cohen, 2011). This is important because unlike autistic individuals, psychopaths have little or no regard for moral behaviour because they are concerned only with themselves and are not concerned with projecting their viewpoint onto others. The element of empathy that psychopaths appear to be deficient in is affective. They do not have a deficit in cognitive empathy, as they have no problem mind-reading, but cannot feel some emotions in the same way that normal individuals do, suggesting that any sort of empathy deficit found in psychopathy is affective in nature. Support for this can be found in Christianson et al.’s (1996) study that examined emotion processing in psychopaths and nonpsychopaths. They found that psychopaths failed to show the effect of recalling emotional material better than non-emotional material, which is an effect found in normal populations. Not being able to recall emotional material may be a consequence of an emotion deficit.

Another feature that appears to be exclusive to psychopathy is the inability to understand the moral/conventional distinction. Understanding the moral/conventional distinction is the ability to differentiate a moral norm from a conventional norm. Conventional norms are norms that are authority-dependent. For instance, ‘it is wrong to chew gum in class if the teacher says so’ is classified as a conventional norm. A moral norm is a norm that would hold even if an authority figure said it is okay to commit the act. For example, beating someone up for their cookies is morally wrong even if the teacher says it is okay to beat up a classmate for their cookies. As Blair (1995) describes the distinction, “moral transgressions have been defined by their consequences for the rights and welfare of others, and social conventional transgressions have been defined as violations of the behavioural uniformities that structure social interactions within social systems” (p. 5). Passing the moral/conventional distinction task shows a deep

understanding that some norms, such as conventional norms, do not necessarily concern others' welfare or wellbeing, while some norms, such as moral norms, take others' welfare into consideration and are taken more seriously when transgressed than conventional norms. Moral norms are judged as less rule-contingent and more serious than conventional norms. Making a distinction between moral and conventional norms is "viewed as a critical indicator of moral capacity" (McGeer, 2008, p. 230).

An understanding of moral norms appears to have an emotional basis (Prinz, 2011b) while conventional norms do not. Norms that are taught to children with emotion or have an emotional component tend to be moralized (Prinz, 2011b). Our discussion of Haidt and Nichols supports this claim. Compared to conventional norms, transgressing moral norms is viewed as less acceptable and more harmful. Many populations of people pass the moral/conventional distinction task, such as adults with autism, non-psychopathic criminals, adults with Down Syndrome, and very young children.

Both psychopaths and autistic individuals are known for having a deficit in empathy to some extent. However, most autistic individuals are able to understand the moral/conventional distinction while psychopaths cannot. Blair's (1996) study demonstrates that autistic individuals are able to understand the distinction. What is more, according to Blair (1996), autistic individuals can understand the distinction while psychopaths cannot because autistic individuals are sensitive to others' distress while psychopaths are not. Autistic individuals show heightened autonomic responses to pictures of distressed faces compared to pictures of neutral faces. This suggests that being concerned for others is independent of empathy. If both populations have a deficit in empathy yet autistic individuals understand the moral/conventional distinction and psychopaths cannot, there must be something other than empathy that is responsible for morality.

A deficit in empathy is shared by both populations, yet this deficit is not enough to turn autistic individuals' behaviour into that of psychopaths' behaviour. Thus, there must be more to morality than empathy. That is, there must be more than a deficit in empathy that allows for autistic individuals to understand the moral/conventional distinction and display moral behaviour and for psychopaths to be immoral and not understand the distinction.

In "The Moral Instinct," cognitive scientist Steven Pinker (2008) points out that four year old children appear to have a conception of moral principles and are also able to distinguish between conventional and moral norms. Pinker notes that four-year-olds believe it is not okay to hit another child, as well as believing it is not okay to wear pajamas to school. When children are asked if an authority figure says it is okay to wear pajamas to school and hit another child, would both actions then be permissible, children respond that it would be okay to wear their pajamas to school, but still maintain that it is not okay to hit the child, thereby showing the ability to distinguish between moral and conventional norms (Pinker, 2008).

Psychopaths think that both moral and conventional norms are authority-dependent, and any attempt to refrain from breaking the law is based upon a self-interested reason (e.g., trying to stay out of jail) rather than a moral reason (e.g., caring about another's welfare). They tend to classify moral transgressions as conventional transgressions. For example, they think that hitting another person and driving without your driver's license are to be condemned in the same manner. They cannot seem to grasp that moral norms interfere with others' welfare and are wrong because of the harm inflicted on others (Blair, 1995; 1996). They tend to rationalize a moral transgression by providing reasons they would give to rationalize a conventional transgression, such as appealing to authority.

The question is, what factors account for psychopaths' inability to understand the moral/conventional distinction? Marsh (2014) claims that studies that emphasize that psychopaths are unable to understand the moral/conventional distinction show that the moral deficits in psychopathy result from an inability to recognize and feel distress in their victims. According to Marsh, the reason psychopaths are unable to understand the moral/conventional distinction is due to the inability to feel distressed at another's suffering. Blair (1995) provides a similar line of reasoning, arguing that distress plays a significant role in distinguishing between moral and conventional norms. The question that arises from this analysis is whether we need empathy to experience distress. It may be that the inability to understand the moral/conventional distinction arises from an affective deficit. This is suggestive in explaining why psychopaths do not understand the distinction while autistic individuals do. However, this line of reasoning is merely speculative.

#### 1.6.9 *Is empathy causally sufficient for moral behaviour? Examining what is missing from psychopaths*

Psychopaths have numerous emotional deficits. Psychopaths have *decreased* galvanic skin responses (GSRs) compared to normal individuals when shown images of people in distress. GSRs measure how much sweat is produced in the palms when shown emotionally charged images. What's important here is that GSRs were reduced, and not absent, in psychopaths when compared to normal subjects. So while they appear to be less responsive to images of people in distress than normal individuals, they still respond more to images of others in distress than neutral images (Blair, Jones, Clark, & Smith, 1997). Using a startle reflex paradigm, which reflect anxiety or fear rather than empathy (Maibom, 2008), Patrick (2007) found that psychopaths do in fact react *less* to others' distress than normal individuals, again showing that the ability to feel distress for others is not absent, but deficient. A startle reflex is an instinctual

or automatic response to threatening stimuli, such as freezing or fleeing when danger is near. The importance of startle reflex is noted by Hare (1993) when he says that “psychopaths are always getting into trouble, in large part because their behavior is *not* motivated by anxiety or guided by cues that warn of danger” (194). Similar findings have been found in Bechara et al. (1996) where patients with prefrontal cortex damage who displayed psychopathic characteristics were unable to detect signs of threat or danger. Maibom (2008) points out that while startle reflex reflects fear or anxiety and not empathy, it is possible that the deficit represents “a more generalized disorder in the threshold for the initiation of defensive action (from an orienting response) compared to nonpsychopaths” (p. 172). As a result, she suggests that the evidence supports the claim that psychopaths have impaired negative reactions to people in distress, but it does not follow that they lack these reactions altogether. Maibom (2014) states that “psychopaths’ impaired negative reactions to others’ distress may be due to the fact that they experience less fear, anxiety, or distress in response to seeing others in distress than nonpsychopathic individuals” (pp.14, 15).

This is an interesting finding because distress, be it personal distress or distress for others, appears to be responsible for some forms of moral behaviour. This is something that will be discussed in 1.7 and further discussed in 2. If psychopaths do in fact feel distress, it may be the case that they may be able to share emotions of distress with others. That is, they may be able to vicariously feel what they take another individual to be feeling. However, this is just speculation. If the emotion is minimally experienced, then it may be the case that empathizing with others who feel this emotion may not be entirely impossible. If psychopaths can empathize, then it is probably not empathy that accounts for moral behaviour.

Arguing against the widely held belief that psychopaths wholly lack empathy, Maibom (2008) claims that psychopaths are deficient in empathy rather than wholly devoid of it (she

examines various studies conducted on psychopaths, and cites a study from Patrick that measured psychopaths' fear and stress response to others' distress, where it was found that secondary psychopaths, unlike primary psychopaths, are unimpaired in this task). Recall that secondary psychopaths are more violent than primary ones. What this study showed was that the more violent group of psychopaths were more responsive to others' distress than the less violent ones, suggesting, or at least not eliminating the possibility, that psychopaths can vicariously experience fear and distress. According to Maibom (2008), this "conflicts with the attribution of psychopathic immorality to deficient empathic responses" (p. 173). This analysis surely questions the role that empathy plays in morality. If psychopaths, who are largely recognized as moral monsters, are able to empathize, then it follows that empathy may not be causally sufficient for morality.

Maibom (2008) argues that the empathy thesis, which states that empathy is the main factor in moral behaviour, rules out the hypothesis that there could be other ways of giving weight to moral prohibitions. For example, one may decide not to harm others because it would be unjust, infringe on another's rights, or lead to the loss of one's soul, sanity, or autonomy. According to Maibom (2008), "these are manifestly not considerations that make reference to the wellbeing of others, yet considerations that add depth to the understanding of moral transgressions" (p. 173). The key point here is that empathy is not always invoked when refraining from harm or when following moral norms. Although Maibom appeals to rational considerations when attempting to explain the roots of morality, her analysis is important. My analysis of the empathy thesis is similar to Maibom's in that I am skeptical about the role of empathy in morality. However, I focus on the role of affect rather than rational considerations.

The view that psychopaths are devoid of empathy rather than deficient in empathy as Maibom (2008) holds is widely held amongst emotion researchers. However, there is further evidence that suggests that Maibom's view is on the right track in addition to what has already been discussed. Hare claims that the treatments that are aimed at increasing an individual's understanding of others' thoughts, beliefs, and desires make psychopaths more violent upon release. They learn new and better ways to manipulate others, and "attempts to teach psychopaths how to 'really feel' remorse or empathy are doomed to failure" (Hare, 1993, p.197).<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Hare (1993) notes that after therapy and release from prison, some psychopaths' rate of recidivation was much higher than that of nonpsychopaths, and it was found that "psychopaths were almost four times more likely to commit a violent offense following release from a therapeutic community program than were other patients" (p. 199). What is more, Hare (1993) notes that therapy programs aimed at understanding others' thoughts and beliefs were not only ineffective, but made psychopaths worse. Hare (1993) states that "psychopaths who did *not* take part in the program were *less* violent following release from the unit than were the treated psychopaths" (p. 199, his italics). In other words, any sort of treatment aimed at invoking empathy in psychopaths resulted in more harm.

I think this can be interpreted as support for the view that psychopaths are not devoid of empathy, nor are they unable to acquire elements of empathy. If they are more violent upon release after being trained in how to be empathic, then it may be the case that they have a *better* understanding of what and how their victims are feeling, and may use that as a manipulative force against their victim. According to Hare, Clark, Grann, and Thornton (2010), "one

---

<sup>10</sup> However, if Skeem et al. (2007) are correct in their view, secondary psychopaths would respond well to treatments.

explanation for this curious finding may be that group therapy and insight-oriented programs help psychopaths to develop better ways of manipulating, deceiving, and using people, including staff, but do little to help them to understand themselves” (p. 630). It appears that, given psychopaths’ emotion deficit, it makes them better at recognizing and understanding others’ emotions via cognitive empathy. As one psychopath put it, “these programs are like finishing school. They teach you how to put the squeeze on people” (Hare, 1993, p. 199).

Maibom (2008) claims that we cannot take it for granted that psychopaths do not have the ability to understand morality, and that there is little experimental evidence to suggest that psychopaths fail to appreciate what we would consider the higher things in life, such as honour, religion, purity, and so on. She also acknowledges that there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that they are deficient in many of these areas. However,

they do not *lack* the abilities associated with deep moral understanding. There are large individual differences between people; how empathic they are, how reasonable they are, and so on. We all have our strengths and weaknesses. Psychopaths have, perhaps, mainly weaknesses when it comes to deep moral understanding. Such a deficient ability, however, is quite a different matter than lacking ability. It should not be ignored. (Maibom, 2008, p. 176)

Given the studies and literature examined above, it is not clear that psychopaths lack empathy or the ability to acquire a deep moral understanding. Yet, some psychopaths are highly immoral and continue to recidivate. If what has been examined so far is correct, the presence of empathy is not by itself a factor in blocking immoral behaviour.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> It can be argued that low levels of empathy reduce moral behaviour. However, if the analysis of autistic individuals is correct, then it is not the case that low levels of empathy reduce moral behaviour. Also, it is not clear that psychopaths have a low level of empathy. Given my analysis of psychopathy thus far, psychopaths appear to be able to empathize to some degree.

There are, of course, scholars in the field of emotion research who disagree with this analysis of psychopathy and empathy, and stay loyal to the more common view of morality, where empathy is seen as the core of moral behavior. Baron-Cohen, who was discussed above, takes quite a different view on empathy and psychopathy than Maibom. We return to Baron-Cohen here so that his claim that psychopaths lack empathy can be further examined. He claims that the root cause of psychopaths' immorality is a consequence of an absence of empathy. As mentioned in 1.5.3, Baron-Cohen (2011) argues that empathy is the driving force in morality. Recall that for Baron-Cohen (2011), "*empathy occurs when we suspend our single-minded focus of attention and instead adopt a double-minded focus of attention*" (pp. 15, 16, his italics). Single-minded attention occurs when we are thinking only about our own minds, whereas double-minded attention means that we are thinking about our own minds and someone else's mind at the same time. When empathy is turned off, single-minded attention occurs. When there is empathy, there is double-minded attention.

According to Baron-Cohen, psychopaths have zero degrees of empathy. We have already discussed the nature of psychopaths above, so I will not discuss that again. Rather, I will focus on explaining why Baron-Cohen believes that psychopaths lack empathy, and why he thinks that lacking empathy is responsible for their immoral behaviour.

Baron-Cohen, like Maibom, cites examples of studies that examine psychopaths' GSRs to emotionally charged material. He claims that "GSR measures reveal that psychopaths have *reduced* autonomic responsiveness (they are *less* aroused) while looking at pictures of individuals in distress" (Baron-Cohen, 2011, p. 6, my italics). However, recall from our discussion above, having reduced autonomic responsiveness does not mean that they are *lacking* the sort of responsiveness that normal individuals experience. It simply means that they

experience it to a lesser degree, and it does not follow that they are incapable of acquiring the capacities that would allow for an appropriate reaction. Thus, psychopaths, because they have reduced and not absent autonomic responses, may be able to vicariously feel distress experienced by others, or may be capable of acquiring the capacities needed to do so.

According to the studies reviewed by Baron-Cohen (2011), psychopaths fail to show increased brain activity in the central and parietal regions of the brain in response to emotionally charged words as normal subjects do. What is more, “patients with damage in the vMPFC show reduced heart rate arousal to emotionally distressing stimuli” (Baron-Cohen, 2011, p. 82). Many patients with vMPFC damage display psychopathic characteristics. Given this data, Baron-Cohen concludes that psychopaths are unable to empathize. Although we do not know how psychopaths feel, we may be able to make correlations between feelings and brain states.

Before continuing to review Baron-Cohen’s analysis on empathy and psychopaths, I will make a brief digression and discuss the importance of the vMPFC in emotion processing, and look at what this brain region is said to be responsible for with regard to human behaviour. It is well established that damage to the vMPFC can result in impulsive, criminal, and aggressive behaviour and antisocial tendencies. As mentioned above, although we do not know how psychopaths feel, we may be able to make correlations between feelings and brain states, and the vMPFC is known for emotion regulation among other things.

Damasio (1994) claims that the vMPFC is responsible for storing information about the emotional valence of a specific course of action. When our actions produce rewards, it is emotionally positive, meaning that positive emotions or emotions that we seek, such as happiness, are elicited, while actions that produce punishment are emotionally negative, meaning

that negative emotions or emotions that we seek to avoid, such as anger, are elicited. He suggests that we tend to engage in actions that produce positive valence and stay away from those that produce negative valence, where the vMPFC is responsible for this type of regulation. This hypothesis is called the somatic-marker hypothesis. Damasio's studies show that individuals with vMPFC and orbitofrontal cortex damage do not refrain from actions that produce negative valence. As a result, risk-taking behaviour steadily increases in these individuals, and studies have linked increased risk-taking behaviour to violence (Barrett, 1994).

Criminal psychopaths tend to recidivate due to the inability to learn that harming others is harmful to their own well-being and that harming others harms themselves (a result of not being able to refrain from acts that produce negative consequences). In fact, almost all criminal psychopaths recidivate while normal criminals have a lesser tendency to recidivate (Hare, 1993). According to Hare (1993), "the recidivism rate of psychopaths is about *double* that of other offenders" (p. 96) and "the *violent* recidivism rate of psychopaths is about *triple* that of other offenders" (p. 96) and this is because "the behaviour of psychopaths is notoriously resistant to change" (p. 94). Given this, I gather that recidivation and risk-taking behaviour may result from psychopaths' inability to respond appropriately to negative affect.

An example that shows the importance of the vMPFC comes from Phineas Gage. Gage, a railroad worker in the 1840's, was working on a railroad in Vermont. Filling a drill hole with gunpowder and tamping the powder down gently with an iron tamping rod, the gunpowder exploded and the rod, which was 3 feet and seven inches long and weighed 13.25 pounds, shot through the left side of Gage's face and exited through his skull. Surprisingly, Gage survived this accident. His personality, however, did not. Gage, who was once a model citizen, turned into a childish, rude individual, who uttered profanity and disrespected individuals in the community,

showing no social inhibition (Baron-Cohen, 2011). What is more, Gage displayed some psychopathic characteristics and tendencies after his accident. In the late 1990's, Hanna Damasio and colleagues retrieved Gage's skull, and using neuroimaging techniques concluded that the rod must have damaged Gage's vMPFC (Damasio, Grabowski, Frank, Galaburda, & Damasio, 1994). Many scholars agree with this assessment of Gage's accident, but things are not that clear. For an alternative view, see Kean (2014) and MacMillian (2002).

What this suggests is that the vMPFC is important for processing information about the emotional valence of a specific course of action and for controlling impulsivity (risk-taking behaviour). What we can say is that this brain region is important for decision-making and for controlling emotions that are associated with impulsivity. However, we cannot jump to the conclusion, as Baron-Cohen does, that individuals with vMPFC damage or decreased activation in this area lack empathy. Studies show that such damage or decreased activation in this area is responsible for *reduced* arousal to such stimuli, but not a *lack* of arousal. Furthermore, it does not follow that psychopaths lack empathy because they do not process emotional material in the way that normal individuals do. There might be other factors, which were discussed above, that may be responsible for this. Given Baron-Cohen's analysis, it may be possible that individuals with psychopathic tendencies fail to learn from their negative behaviour, which increases risk-taking behaviour and helps explain why they seem undeterred by behaviour that results in negative consequences, such as incarceration.

According to Baron-Cohen, what makes psychopaths immoral is having zero degrees of empathy. When immoral behaviour results from lacking empathy, it is negative. It is negative because the consequences are disastrous. I have tried to show that Baron-Cohen is incorrect in claiming that psychopaths lack empathy. Rather, there must be some other emotional

impairments that make immoral behaviour possible in psychopaths. Psychopaths, if they do happen to have a grave empathy impairment, are impaired in empathy, and not lacking.

Marsh describes psychopaths as having callous, unemotional traits, shallow affect, and lacking in guilt or remorse. We have discussed Marsh's work on morality above, but we return to her work here in order to review and examine her assessment of psychopathy. According to Marsh (2014), psychopaths are antisocial and have poor anger control. However, antisocial behaviour and poor anger control are also found in other deviant populations, and what sets psychopaths apart from these populations are the unemotional traits. Marsh (2014) claims that "the most consistent moral deficits in psychopathy emerge in paradigms that focus on the issue of victim suffering" (p. 147). This suggests that psychopaths may be deficient in recognizing distress cues in others. What is more, Marsh (2014) states that there are sufficient studies to draw the conclusion that "psychopathy is most closely linked to impaired moral judgments when making those judgments require reference to information about a victim's distress, particularly fear" (p. 147).

Marsh claims that the basis for the lack of fear and in turn lack of distress in psychopaths may be empathic in nature. Marsh claims that psychopaths are immoral due to the inability to experience the fear and distress of their victims via an empathic route. According to Marsh, psychopaths may fail to respond to victims' suffering because they may be unable to experience emotions associated with suffering. That is, maybe they cannot mirror the emotions of their victims because they are unable to experience them. Marsh (2014) claims that "empirical data also support that subjective experiences of fear are reduced in psychopathy" (p. 149). For example, in a study conducted by Marsh, Finger, Schechter, Jurkowitz, Reid, and Blair (2011), adolescents with psychopathic characteristics and nonpsychopathic adolescents were asked to

recall stories from their life where they had felt anger, disgust, fear, happiness, and sadness. They were then asked to report how they felt physiologically during those experiences. According to Marsh and colleagues, it was reported that psychopathic adolescents reported experiencing less fight or flight activation than control subjects when recalling frightening experiences, and the groups differed only in their responses to fear.

As Marsh and many other psychopathy researchers point out, psychopaths do not appear to be without emotion, generally speaking. Emotions such as anger and positive excitement are prevalent in psychopaths, and possibly even enhanced (Scerbo et al. 1990; Bjork, Chen, & Hommer, 2012; Marsh, 2014). This suggests that psychopaths have little difficulty recognizing many emotions, but are impaired in recognizing fearful emotional expressions. As a result, Marsh claims that there may be a link between impaired empathy and morality. She claims that people typically experience a low-level form of empathy, what we called automatic or emotional contagion above, and psychopaths may have difficulty recognizing fear in others because they do not experience this low-level form of empathy as a result of a fear processing deficit. According to Marsh and Cardinale (2012), this deficit makes it difficult to identify behaviours that cause fear and in turn makes it difficult for psychopaths to understand the wrongness of moral transgressions: “psychopathy not only impairs responses to frightening events, it also impairs recognition of and responding to *others’* fear” (p. 893). As a result, Marsh (2014) concludes that “impaired empathic responding to others’ fear may be the source of psychopaths’ fear recognition deficits and, by extension, their deficits in empathic concern” (p. 151). Thus, the basis for the immoral behaviour displayed in psychopathy is empathic in nature. On Marsh’s model, psychopaths have an empathy deficit as a result of a deficiency in fear recognition. Similar to Prinz’s view, which will be discussed in the following section, Marsh believes that

any sort of empathy deficit found in psychopathy results from a more general emotion deficit, in this case a deficit in processing fear.

Marsh believes that empathy plays a role in morality to some degree. Marsh does not believe that a deficit in empathy *causes* an impairment in fear processing which then results in immoral behaviour. Rather, she believes that a deficit in processing fear results in an empathy deficit. Marsh believes that fear, and related emotions, need to be experienced via an empathic route in order for an individual to be moral. Without this empathic experience, individuals are unable to understand the significance of moral transgressions.

Similar to Haidt and Nichols's view of morality, Marsh agrees that emotions are responsible for morality. That is, there are particular emotions, predominantly fear and distress on Marsh's model and disgust and related emotions on Haidt and Nichols's model, that are responsible for morality, and that without these emotions, morality is not possible.

Marsh examines a very particular part of the emotional spectrum—distress related emotions. It may turn out that having shallow affect with regard to these specific emotions results in immoral behavior. However, it does not follow that we should draw the conclusion that experiencing these emotions via an empathic route is necessary for morality because there may be other explanations regarding a deficiency in experiencing and processing fear and the role it plays in morality.

Cleckley (1982) importantly noted that psychopaths have an unusual absence of nervousness and are immune from the anxiety and worry that are typically found with fearful behaviour and feelings.<sup>12</sup> This results in reckless, life-threatening, and impulsive behaviour.

An impairment in experiencing fear, or not feeling some level of anxiety in particular situations, suggests that these individuals will be more prone to high-risk taking, impulsive, and violent behaviour, and in turn, immoral behaviour. What is more, Hare (1993) notes that criminal psychopaths tend to behave immorally due to the ability to inhibit fear and anxiety. Hare has also conducted a study that looks at impaired fear response in psychopaths. In this study, psychopaths and nonpsychopathic individuals were given the option of receiving an immediate shock or a delayed shock. Most nonpsychopathic individuals asked for the immediate shock because they wanted to ‘get the shock over with,’ while psychopathic individuals were indifferent to choosing between the two options (Hare, 1966). Waiting for the shock did not make psychopaths anxious, fearful, or nervous as it would make normal individuals. This suggests that not only experiencing reduced distress, but also experiencing reduced fear and anxiety, can lead to immoral behaviour as a result of increased risk-taking behaviour and impulsivity.

A deficiency in fear could be caused by a decrease in amygdala activity, as the amygdala “plays a key role in the experience of fear” (Baron-Cohen, 2011, p. 80). For instance, behavioural geneticist Lykken (1957) conducted a conditioning experiment where an electric shock was paired with the sound of a buzzer going off. Baron-Cohen (2011) summarizes Lykken’s (1957) results, stating that

‘normal’ individuals developed ‘electrodermal fear’ (sweating) when hearing the buzzer (that is, the buzzer had become a conditioned stimulus). In contrast, psychopaths showed

---

<sup>12</sup> On the distinction between primary and secondary psychopathy, Cleckley’s statement appears to apply to primary psychopaths.

less electrodermal fear to the buzzer—they did not acquire the ‘conditioned response’ to the threat. They also showed less of a startle reflex (automatic jump) to a loud sound or to an object looming toward them (p. 80)

In 14 out of 16 double trials, group I, the group that was diagnosed as psychopaths according to Cleckley’s standards, showed the least GSR reaction to the conditioned stimulus in comparison to group II, inmates who did not meet the criteria for psychopathy but were categorized as neurotic sociopaths, and group III, the control group. The results of the comparison were statistically significant (Lykken, 1957).

Because psychopaths have lower distress and fear responses than normal individuals and do not respond to victims’ suffering in the same way that normal individuals do, some researchers, such as Marsh, claim that there must be an empathic basis to morality. Marsh (2014) claims that “the emotions that psychopaths fail to respond to in victims may mirror the emotions they tend not to experience themselves” (p. 147). She claims that psychopaths’ muted capacity for fear and distress makes them unable to recognize these emotions in others, which leaves them unable to formulate an appropriate (concerned) response (what Batson may call an empathic response, or what I call a sympathetic response).

My conclusion on these analyses is that an impairment in empathy is not what opens the door to immoral behaviour. As mentioned above, psychopaths are deficient in empathy, and have lower distress cues than normal individuals. Furthermore, they do not feel and recognize fear as easily as normal individuals, and have lower arousal and startle reflex responses compared to normal individuals when shown distressing images. However, it cannot be concluded, given the literature that I have examined above, that psychopaths’ bad behaviour is entirely attributed to an impairment in empathy, nor can it be concluded that they are incapable of acquiring a ‘normal’ level of empathy. As mentioned above, having reduced arousal in what Marsh labels the distress-

related emotions may simply be a result of shallow affect and not an impairment in empathy. What is more, it is possible that training in empathy actually makes psychopaths more destructive. While there have been many studies conducted on psychopaths that look at behaviour and emotions, we cannot say that there is sufficient empirical data for concluding that there is an absence of empathy in individuals with psychopathy. We can, however, say that there is suggestive evidence from controlled experiments that show that psychopaths do not completely lack empathy.

It may be the case that the inability to strongly feel some emotions, such as distress, fear, and anxiety, are responsible for the immorality displayed in psychopaths' behaviour. If this is plausible, we can say that psychopaths suffer from shallow emotions. This means that psychopaths cannot feel some emotions, such as distress, in the same way that normal individuals do. It does not follow from this claim that they do not feel distress, fear, etc. Given the review above, it simply means that they feel these emotions to a lesser degree. To what degree is questionable, as psychopathy is not a 'one size fit all' disorder. Psychopaths behave differently from one another, and this is evident depending on how they score on the different factors of the PCL-R. Furthermore, and this relates to a deeper issue in philosophy, what is called 'the problem of other minds,' we can only study the emotions of psychopaths objectively, and draw observations from GSRs, fMRIs, PETs, etc. We could not know to what degree psychopaths feel distress or fear unless we ourselves suffer from psychopathy. While we do not have direct access to the consciousness of a psychopath, we do have a lot of indirect evidence that shows what psychopaths are feeling. Given the results of the studies that were discussed above, we can draw the conclusion that psychopaths are not devoid of distress, anxiety, fear, or other empathy-related emotions. Rather, they are deficient in experiencing these emotions, which

suggests that they can experience them to some degree. This tells us that there may be more to moral behaviour than empathy.

Marsh (2014), who supports the view that empathy is the core of morality, acknowledges that “fear is likely muted to varying degrees rather than absent in most individuals with psychopathic traits” (p. 151). Furthermore, she acknowledges that “whereas psychopathy is associated with impaired recognition of fearful emotional expressions, recognition of other expressions appears relatively unaffected” (Marsh, 2014, p. 151). In addition to this impaired recognition, psychopaths are able to empathize, to a certain extent, with many of the feelings that normal individuals experience, and feel many emotions. For instance, Ali, Amorim, and Chamorro-Premuzic (2009) found that individuals with primary psychopathy characteristics, but not those with secondary psychopathy characteristics, respond with positive affect when shown negative images. They also found that there was no association between trait emotional intelligence<sup>13</sup> and individuals with primary psychopathy characteristics, although there was a negative association for those with secondary psychopathy characteristics. This suggests that individuals with primary psychopathy characteristics are not significantly impaired in understanding others’ emotions. Studies of positive emotions and morality will be analyzed in 2.4 in order to further examine the role of positive emotions in morality. We cannot conclude that psychopaths are unable to vicariously feel others’ emotions, and as a result, it follows that empathy may not be sufficient for morality. There is more to psychopaths’ emotional spectrum than researchers originally believed. If psychopaths suffer from a moral disorder, and if they can empathize, then it does not follow that empathy is sufficient for morality. Of course, more

---

<sup>13</sup> Trait emotion intelligence refers “to a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies and integrates the affective aspects of personality” (Siegling, Furnham, & Petrides, 2015, p. 57).

research must be conducted on emotions, and that will be the task of the second half of this research project.

#### 1.6.10 *Conclusion*

In this section, I have explored models of morality by Haidt and Nichols, where it was shown that empathy is not causally necessary for morality. Rather, other emotions, such as disgust, motivate morality. I also looked at examples from autism and saw that despite having an impairment in empathy, autistic individuals are capable of making moral judgments and displaying moral behaviour, suggesting that empathy cannot be causally necessary for morality. I also looked at examples of morality that are not driven by empathy, which suggests that emotions other than empathy play a significant role in motivating morality. Finally, I turned to psychopathy and discussed and examined the following: the behaviour and traits characteristic of psychopathy; theories that hold that given what we know about psychopathy, empathy is not a significant motivator of morality; and theories that hold that empathy is the core of morality given psychopaths' behaviour. I have also provided a critical analysis of these theories, claiming that we cannot conclude that empathy is at the core of morality. Instead, emotions other than empathy motivate morality.

### **1.7 Prinz's alternative**

#### 1.7.1 *Introduction*

Given what has been discussed thus far, empathy may not be causally necessary nor causally sufficient for morality. In this section, we will look at a model of morality that argues that empathy is neither sufficient nor necessary for morality. The purpose of this is to show that emotions other than empathy are responsible for morality and that empathy may promote

partiality, and to examine another sentimentalist framework that does not have empathy at its core.

Prinz (2011a; 2011b) argues that empathy is not necessary for morality, although he does believe that other emotions, such as anger and disgust, are both necessary and sufficient for morality (Prinz, 2006). Prinz's definition of empathy is similar to my own. Prinz (2011b) defines empathy as "a kind of vicarious emotion: it's feeling what one takes another person to be feeling. And 'taking' here can be a matter of automatic contagion or the result of a complicated exercise of the imagination" (p. 212). For Prinz, empathy can occur as a result of emotional mimicry, also called emotional contagion, where one catches the feeling that another is feeling without putting themselves in the other's shoes. Emotional mimicry is an automatic process that does not require much effort on the part of the empathizer. My definition of empathy does not include emotional mimicry. According to Prinz, empathy can also occur through imaginative processes, where we imagine what the other is feeling and vicariously feel that emotion.

Prinz challenges the view that empathy is somehow necessary for morality. His main argument is that there is little evidence for the claim that empathy is necessary for morality, and that there is also sufficient reason to think that empathy can interfere with the ends of morality. Prinz (2011b) claims that "a capacity for empathy might make us better people, but placing empathy at the center of our moral lives may be ill-advised" (p. 211). Prinz claims that emotions other than empathy are sufficient and necessary for morality, which makes him a sentimentalist. Recall that sentimentalism is the view that morality is motivated by our emotions of approval or disapproval of certain actions. According to Prinz (2006), you cannot make a moral judgment without feeling an emotion. Prinz acknowledges that there may be cases of moral judgment without emotion, but these judgments are parasitic on emotional cases, where we have

previously experienced an emotion with the judgment. One difference between my view and Prinz's view is that I do not agree with Prinz that all moral judgments are emotion-based. Although I am a sentimentalist, on my view of morality some moral judgments can be made without emotion, and these judgments need not be parasitic on emotional cases. Prinz (2006) claims that "judgments that did not have a sentimental component would differ from the ordinary cases of moral judgments, and I see little reason why we should call such judgments moral" (p. 34). Another difference is that while I do think that moral judgments give rise to motivational states, Prinz claims that they are always intrinsically motivating. I do not think that in every instance of moral judgment, we will be motivated to act, although the judgment will give rise to a motivational state. I hold a weaker version of sentimentalism than Prinz.

#### 1.7.2 *Prinz on morality*

Prinz, like McGeer, points out that one can be a sentimentalist without endorsing the view that empathy is needed for morality. On Prinz's model, "disapprobation can arise directly upon consideration of various kinds of action" (Prinz, 2011b, p. 214). For Prinz, disapprobation is a sentiment, where sentiments are dispositions to have an emotion. In the case of stealing, if we have a disapprobation toward stealing, we are disposed to have negative feelings or feelings of disapproval toward ourselves if we steal and feelings of disapproval toward others if they steal, where the feelings depend on the kind of action that is being considered. Prinz (2011b) claims that "stealing is a crime against a person, and when such actions are performed by others, they elicit anger, and when performed by the self, they elicit guilt" (p. 215). There may also be cases where we have feelings of approval toward stealing. According to Prinz (2011b), "the feelings depend on the kind of action under consideration" (p. 215). For example, when we consider the classical dilemma of Heinz, we wouldn't consider stealing immoral because our

feelings toward stealing stray from the usual linkage between stealing and immorality in this scenario.

In this dilemma, Heinz's wife is dying from cancer, and a new treatment that will save her life has been recently developed. The pharmacist who created the drug lives in Heinz's neighbourhood and is selling the drug for ten times more than the actual cost of the drug. Heinz saves up all of his money and borrows money from friends and family members in an attempt to buy the drug. However, he falls short of the money and asks the pharmacist if he can pay him the remainder later or if he can lower the cost of the drug. The pharmacist replies that he created the drug and can sell it at whatever cost he chooses, and if Heinz wants the drug, he must pay him upfront. Since Heinz doesn't have the money, he leaves the pharmacy. Knowing that his wife will die if not given the drug, Heinz breaks into the pharmacy at night and steals the drug. Is Heinz morally wrong for stealing the drug?

Most individuals feel bad for Heinz's wife and elicit anger toward the pharmacist due to the demand for an excessive amount of money for the drug, and therefore judge the act of stealing as permissible. It is clear that in this scenario, we are experiencing sympathy, where we feel concerned for Heinz's wife and bad for Heinz. It is not clear that we are vicariously feeling what we take Heinz to be feeling when we read the dilemma and make the judgment that stealing is permissible. More often than not, we do not feel anxious or worried, as Heinz does. Rather, we feel concerned for his wife and want her to get the drug. In the case of a robber who steals from a struggling graduate student, we would consider the action immoral simply because we would feel bad about ourselves and elicit guilt if we stole from a graduate student. According to Prinz (2006), "to harbour a moral belief is to have a sentiment of approbation or disapprobation" (p. 36). It is the emotions that constitute approbation and disapprobation that are responsible for

moral judgment. The difference between sentiments and emotions is sentiments are dispositions to have emotions, and emotions are occurrent states (Prinz, 2006).

Another example of morality given by Prinz is crimes against nature, such as consensual incest and necrophilia. According to Prinz (2011b), “the dominant emotional response is disgust, when the action is performed by another, and shame if we perform or even consider performing such an action ourselves” (p. 215). There are also “crimes against community, such as the violation of public trust, which tend to elicit contempt or some kind of self-loathing” (Prinz, 2011b, p. 215). For Prinz, when you judge that a particular action is wrong, the judgment derives from a sentiment and consists in an appropriate emotional response, and empathy is not necessary for this process. Empathy may be a component every so often in disapprobation, but that does not entail its necessity. For instance, “if I judge that I was wrong to eat the last cookie, my judgment consists in a feeling of guilt about my action. That guilt is a manifestation of my disapprobation of last-cookie-eating, or, more likely, an indirect manifestation of a more generalized disapprobation of greed” (Prinz, 2011b, p. 215). Prinz claims that one can recognize the greediness of their action without imagining how another individual is feeling and then vicariously sharing that emotion. What is more, he claims that “morally significant actions can be recognized without empathy, even if those actions are ones that involve harm. We do not need to reflect on the harm to see that the action is bad” (Prinz, 2011b, p. 215). Prinz’s alternative to the empathy-based theory of morality can be summed up as follows:

A (negative) moral judgment arises when an action elicits an emotional response in virtue of the fact that the judge has a sentiment of disapprobation towards actions of that kind. (Positive moral judgments may sometimes involve sentiments of approbation, which may dispose us to positive feelings, such as gratitude, pride in good conduct, or admiration)...It’s cognitively cumbersome to think through the simulation of another person every time I classify some behaviour as greedy (or thieving, or murderous, or

incestuous, or nepotistic, or indecent, and so on, for everything I am apt to condemn as morally bad) (Prinz, 2011b, p. 215, his parentheses)

Prinz claims that if his picture of morality is correct, then a sentimentalist theory of morality based on emotions such as guilt, disgust, anger, etc., can be advanced in which empathy has a marginal role. For Prinz (2011b), “empathy may help us come to the conclusion that a particular action is wrong on a particular occasion, but it hardly seems necessary for that purpose” (p. 216).

In support of his sentimentalist view, Prinz (2011b) claims that

moral judgments have an emotional basis. Token moral judgments contain certain emotions such as anger, disgust, guilt, and shame. Emotions are motivating states, and each of these moral emotions has a behavioural profile. Anger promotes aggression, disgust promotes withdrawal, guilt promotes reparation, and shame promotes self-concealment (pp. 218, 219)

Prinz claims, quite rightly, that we seek to avoid these emotions, and will avoid actions that invoke these emotions. As a result, attempting to avoid these emotions can work to promote morality in individuals. Prinz argues that negative emotions and the emotions involved in approbation and disapprobation have a greater motivating force than those associated with empathy. For instance, “if we anticipate that an action will make us feel guilty, we will be thereby inclined to avoid that action” (Prinz, 2011b, p. 219). He claims that empathy does little with regard to helping people in need. Rather, emotions such as shame or guilt for not helping others are more motivating, as we seek to avoid these emotions. In fact, it may very well be the case that the distress caused by these emotions, even if it is personal distress, will motivate us to lend a helping hand to others.

Support for Prinz’s alternative to the empathy-based theory of morality can be found in a distinction that Batson makes that was discussed in 1.3. Batson et al. (1983) make a distinction

between personal distress and empathy, where empathy can be viewed as distress for others which often leads to sympathy. Personal distress is egoistic, but can still lead to helping behaviour. The motivation in personal distress is selfish because we want to relieve our own distress rather than the other's distress. Although the two forms of distress are distinct, both can lead to helping behaviour, and Batson et al. (1983) have demonstrated this. They created conditions with easy escape and difficult escape conditions to determine if individuals would help others in need, and made a distinction between individuals with low levels of sympathy and high levels of sympathy. Participants in this study were confronted with a person of the same sex who was in need under conditions where, without helping, it was either easy or difficult to escape exposure to the other person's suffering. Before participants became aware that they were allowed to help the other person in need, subjects were asked to report their emotional response to the other person's suffering, and were grouped into two groups: those who felt high levels of personal distress when seeing the other person suffer were grouped as feeling low levels of sympathy, and those who felt distress for the person suffering were grouped as feeling high levels of sympathy. Participants were given an 'easy escape' condition or 'difficult escape' condition. Participants in both conditions were asked to watch over a closed-circuit television as another participant (who was really a confederate who was given the role of 'worker') received shocks at random intervals for two minutes. Participants were asked to report their impression of the worker after looking at the closed-circuit television. Those in the 'easy escape' condition were told that the worker had to complete ten more trials, where they only had to watch the first two. In the 'difficult escape' condition, participants were told that they had to observe all ten trials. After the first two trials, participants were asked if they wanted to take the place of the

worker, who appeared to be in a small amount of pain, but agreed to continue with the remainder of the study.

Batson et al. (1983) found that individuals who experienced personal distress helped more when the escape condition was difficult, suggesting that their motivation to help was selfish (e.g., they wanted to get rid of their own discomfort). Subjects who experienced high levels of sympathy were likely to help individuals when the escape conditions were both easy and difficult, showing that their motivation was an altruistic desire to reduce the distress of the person in need (distress for others).

Batson et al.'s (1983) results show that other emotions, distress in this case, whether it is personal distress or distress for others, can motivate us to help others. In the case of personal distress, it is a selfish desire to relieve our own distress, but we still lend a helping hand when in a difficult escape condition. Also, as previously mentioned in 1.3, it is often difficult to tease apart personal distress and distress for others, and they are usually experienced together. I take this as support for the view that when experiencing distress for others, empathy need not be invoked in order to feel distress for the individual. As discussed above, one can experience sympathy without experiencing empathy. That is, we can have concern for an individual without empathizing with them. I can feel distressed for you and want to help you even if I cannot recognize or share your emotions. I may genuinely want to see you happy or not harmed, and seeing you in a position where you are not happy may bring about distress for you, which can lead to helping behaviour. In order to have concern for you, I may not need to vicariously feel what I take you to be feeling. We can and sometimes do empathize when we experience distress, but it is not always the case that we do or need to. Here, empathy may be a causally sufficient

source for helping behaviour, but given the analysis above, it is not necessary. Distress on its own, or in combination with other emotions, such as disgust, can lead to moral behaviour.

In the previous section, we discussed whether psychopaths' empathy deficit plays a role in their immoral behaviour. I argued that while psychopaths do not wholly lack empathy, they have a deficit in empathy, yet this is not the root cause of their immoral behaviour. Thus, there must be something other than empathy that cause psychopaths to behave immorally.

Blair's (1995) empathy-based theory of morality is criticized by Prinz (2011b). Because Prinz argues against empathy-based theories of morality and because Prinz criticizes Blair's assessment of empathy and psychopathy, I will briefly turn to Blair's work.

Blair argues that psychopaths' immorality stems from an empathy deficit. According to Blair (1995), the reason that psychopaths are unable to make a distinction between moral and conventional norms and transgressions is because they lack a violence inhibition mechanism (VIM). For Blair, experiencing distress via an empathic route engages the VIM. On Blair's model, normally developed individuals have an innate tendency to empathize with observed distress. According to Blair's theory, the reason why we do not harm others is because we do not wish to feel distressed. For instance, "if one child causes another child to cry, the offending child will catch the observed emotion and feel badly. This bad feeling serves as an inhibition signal that causes her to cease the actions that are causing the distress and to associate bad feelings with that kind of action in the future" (Prinz, 2011b, p. 217). According to Blair, the VIM is mediated by empathic distress, and this empathic distress becomes associated with moral rules rather than conventional rules because conventional transgressions do not cause distress.

Arguing against the thesis that psychopaths are immoral because they have an empathy deficit, Prinz (2011b) claims that “there are other explanations of why psychopaths have deficits in both empathy and moral competence: these two deficits may arise from a third cause. In particular, psychopaths suffer from a more general deficit in moral emotions” (p. 217). This deficit results from having shallow affect, which is one of the diagnostic criteria of psychopathy (Cleckley, 1982). As discussed above, psychopaths have difficulty recognizing some emotions, fear and sadness being prominent. Recognition deficits are said to be correlated with deficits in experiencing emotions (Prinz, 2011a; 2011b). According to Prinz (2011b),

these abnormalities could explain both the low levels of empathy in psychopaths and the lack of moral competence. Empathy requires a disposition to experience emotions appropriate for another person, and a person with shallow affect and poor emotion recognition will have a diminished capacity for empathy as a result. The emotion deficit will also make an individual comparatively insensitive to common methods of moral education: they will be relatively indifferent to punishment, because they have low levels of fear, and they will be unmoved by love withdrawal, because they have low levels of sadness. They will also have a diminished capacity for emotions like guilt, which seem to have sadness as a component, and moral anger... Therefore, the deficit in moral competence can be explained without appeal to the empathy deficit (p. 218)

On Prinz’s model, we can explain the immoral behaviour displayed in psychopaths by appealing to a more general emotional deficit rather than appealing to an empathy deficit.

On Prinz’s account, there are other emotional responses that appear to be both necessary and sufficient for morality, which supports the sentimentalist model of morality that he offers. According to Prinz (2006), psychopathy results from a low-level deficit in negative emotions, especially fear and sadness. Prinz (2006) claims that “without core negative emotions, they cannot acquire empathetic distress, remorse, or guilt. These emotional deficits seem to be the root cause in their patterns of antisocial behaviour” (p. 32). As a result, psychopaths are amoral or immoral and behave badly because they are unable to make moral judgments. Prinz also

seems to be implying that empathic distress, remorse, and guilt might be responsible for morality. He states that without the ability to experience core negative emotions, psychopaths cannot recognize and share those emotions with victims. Although Prinz argues against the empathy thesis, some of his arguments appear to be in line with Marsh's thesis, that some emotions need to be experienced via an empathic route in order for one to be moral. If this line of reasoning is correct, this is another, major, difference between my view and Prinz's view. I argue against the view that these emotions need to be experienced via empathy in order to be moral.

According to Prinz, the general emotion deficit found in psychopaths lends support to the necessity of emotions in morality, and also lends support to the view that empathy is not the core of morality. Prinz claims that we can obviously make moral statements without feeling any emotion. However, an individual cannot sincerely claim that 'murder is wrong' without being disposed to have negative feelings toward murder. Prinz (2006) claims that

we might imagine a person who knows everything non-emotional about killing. She knows that killing diminishes utility and that killing would be practically irrational if we universalized the maxim, thou shalt kill. Would we say of this person that she believes killing is wrong? It seems not. She could believe all these things without having any view about the morality of killing or even any comprehension of what it would mean to say that killing is wrong. Conversely, if a person did harbor a strong negative sentiment towards killing, we would say that she believes killing to be morally wrong, even if she did not have any explicit belief about whether killing diminished utility or led to contradictions in the will. These intuitions suggest that emotions are both necessary and sufficient for moral judgment (p. 32)

Prinz, like myself, is an internalist. He claims that when an individual makes a moral judgment, they are motivated by it. However, Prinz holds a much stronger version of internalism than I do. Prinz holds that sentiments are always motivating. That is, emotion always motivates one to behave in a particular manner or make a moral judgment. Prinz claims that these sentiments always allow us to feel self-or other-directed emotions of praise or blame. For

instance, if we feel disgust after witnessing a particular action, that disgust is directed toward the self or another. While I do think that emotions are motivating, I do not claim that every emotion felt when making a moral judgment is directed toward the self or other. That is, I think that we can feel disgust when making a moral judgment without actually directing that toward the self or other. This will be further discussed in 2. I am an internalist to the extent that I claim that moral judgments have intrinsic, and not instrumental, value. This is another difference between my theory and Prinz's theory.

According to Prinz (2006), psychopaths may be unable to understand the moral/conventional distinction because moral rules are directly grounded in emotion. Prinz (2006) claims that “when we think about hitting, it makes us feel bad, and we simply cannot turn that feeling off. Hitting seems phenomenologically wrong regardless of what authorities say” (p. 37). According to Prinz (2006), we will “moralize mere conventions if we learn them through a process of emotional conditioning” (p. 37). This line of reasoning is plausible. Recall from 1.6 that autistic individuals are able to pass the moral/conventional distinction task while psychopaths cannot. If psychopaths have shallow emotions and suffer from a more general emotional deficit rather than an empathy deficit, this may explain why they are unable to understand the moral/conventional distinction while autistic individuals are able to understand the distinction. Although this does not prove that psychopaths have a general emotion deficit or that an emotion deficit prevents them from understanding the moral/conventional distinction, it is nonetheless suggestive.

### 1.7.3 *Empathy and partiality*

Thus far I have shown that emotions other than empathy may be responsible for morality. While some emotion researchers argue that empathy is the main motivator in morality, there are

sufficient arguments, discussed above, to suggest that empathy is not the main motivator in morality. I have shown thus far that empathy is not causally necessary for morality. Now, I will provide arguments, in addition to what was argued for in 1.6, to show that empathy may not be causally sufficient for morality, although, as previously mentioned, it may, at times, play a marginal role in morality.

There are arguments that suggest that empathy cannot be the main motivator in morality because it can work against the ends of morality. Prinz points out that in many collectivist cultures, that is, cultures that consist of closely linked individuals who consider themselves as part of a group, individuals prioritize group membership by placing more emphasis on empathy than on individualism. Individualist cultures place more value on autonomy rather than group cohesion. Similarly, Sturmer, Snyder, and Omoto (2005) claim that empathy requires attachment, where attachment can be thought of as perspective taking. Out-group members are usually seen as dissimilar and therefore not attached to the self (it becomes difficult to take the perspective of the other if we think someone is too dissimilar), whereas in-group members are seen as the same and attached to the self (we think in-group members have similar ideas and interests as we do because we belong to the same group). As a consequence of this, individuals tend to help in-group members rather than out-group members because individuals tend to empathize more with their own social group, where help is given only to members of the in-group.

What is more, Bloom (2010) points out that

empathy is biased; we are more prone to feel empathy for attractive people and for those who look like us or share our ethnic or national background. And empathy is narrow; it connects us to particular individuals, real or imagined, but is insensitive to numerical differences and statistical data...our public decisions will be fairer and more moral once we put empathy aside. Our policies are improved when we appreciate that a hundred deaths are worse than one, even if we know the name of the one, and when we

acknowledge that the life of someone in a faraway country is worth as much as the life of a neighbour, even if our emotions pull us in a different direction

Here, we can see how empathy does not drive morality and can work against the ends of morality. Empathy can cause us to be biased when making moral judgments, thus leading to an immoral, or less moral, action.

Prinz (2011a; 2011b) claims that empathy can interfere with the ends of morality, and that empathic emotions are not suited for moral judgment and moral motivation. Prinz (2011b) claims that empathy “is a double-edged sword: it can promote compliance and complacency” (p. 225). He claims that empathy is not always motivating and can lead to preferential treatment due to the fact that if we do empathize with others, we can, as a by-product, treat others immorally. Prinz gives the example from Batson, Early, and Salvarani (1997), where subjects were presented with a story about a woman named Sheri. Sheri is awaiting medical treatment. Subjects were asked if they wanted to move Sheri to the top of the waiting list above others who were more needy. Subjects in the control group who were encouraged to empathize with Sheri chose to move Sheri up on the waiting list over those who were in greater need of treatment. This study demonstrates that empathy can lead to partiality.

Recall our definition of sympathy given above. Sympathy can sometimes lead to moral behaviour. As used above, cognitive and affective empathy do not always motivate moral acts. Rather, both forms of empathy give us insight into an individual’s behaviour, and affective empathy allows for the sharing of the other person’s emotion. Sympathy, which is having a concern for someone’s welfare, among other emotions, like distress, can motivate us to be moral. Prinz claims that being concerned for someone, having sympathetic feelings toward an individual, does not require perspective taking. For instance, I can be concerned for my friend’s

well-being if they are a heavy smoker without being aware of their feelings and vicariously sharing their emotions. Prinz (2011b) also points out that an individual can have sympathetic concern for a plant or an insect, but it is not clear that they are empathizing with anything or anyone in particular. What is more, Bloom (2010), in discussing motivators other than empathy with regard to morality, says that

It is conceivable, I suppose, that someone who hears about the plight of starving children might actually go through the empathetic exercise of imagining what it is like to starve to death. But this empathetic distress surely isn't necessary for charitable giving. A compassionate person might value others' lives in the abstract, and, recognizing the misery caused by starvation, be motivated to act accordingly

Bloom (2010) also notes that invoking empathy in every instance of morality can lead to 'empathy exhaustion' or 'empathy burnout', which can in turn lead to fewer instances of moral behaviour. Instead, one should adopt 'great compassion,' which is being able to be compassionate or have love for others (Bloom, 2010) without empathic attachment (Goodman, 2009). This sort of morality leads to a form of impartial consequentialism (Parfit, 1986; Siderits, 2007) and does more good than empathy can with regard to morality.

#### 1.7.4 *Conclusion*

Grounding his account of moral judgment in affect, Prinz shows how emotions other than empathy may be sufficient and necessary for morality. For Prinz, emotions co-occur with, and influence, moral judgments. On Prinz's model of morality, "emotions co-occur with moral judgments, influence moral judgments, are sufficient for moral judgments, and are necessary for moral judgments, because moral judgments are constituted by emotional dispositions" (Prinz, 2006, p. 36). My theory of morality differs from Prinz's model, as I treat emotion and judgment as complimentary, while Prinz treats emotion as a precursor to moral judgment and behaviour. I have shown how distress, disgust, guilt, and other negative emotions may motivate moral

judgment, where little or no empathy is invoked when making these judgments. I also have shown how empathy can be biased, resulting in partiality, and can actually do more harm than good. This is not to say that empathy cannot, or does not, lead to moral behaviour. However, it is clear that empathy is not causally necessary or sufficient for moral behaviour, although, at times, it may play a marginal role in morality. There are many other emotions, as discussed above, which motivate moral behaviour, particularly distress. Thus, empathy is rarely necessary for morality, and other emotions are causally sufficient and necessary for morality.

Recall from 1.1 that in a typical Humean or sentimentalist model of morality, empathy leads to the disapprobation or approbation of an action. Sentimentalism, as discussed in 1.1, is usually associated with the moral philosophy of Hume. For Hume, empathy is at the heart of morality and lies at the foundation of our sentiments of approbation and disapprobation. According to Hume, moral sentiments are sentiments of approbation and disapprobation. For example, we tend to have feelings of approbation toward someone if we see them lend a helping hand to others. We tend to have feelings of disapprobation toward someone if they are mistreating or bullying others. This is because other peoples' happiness, pain, or suffering is communicated through what Hume (1777/1960) calls 'fellow feeling', which is arrived at through empathy. Approbation and disapprobation consists of numerous emotions. For example, if we have feelings of disapprobation toward someone, we may feel disgusted, angry, resentful, etc. These emotions consist of feelings that lead to disapproval.

For Hume, and other early sentimentalists, this is what moral judgment boils down to; if we have feelings of approbation toward someone or an action, then we make the judgment that the action is permissible or that someone has acted in a morally praiseworthy manner, and if we have feelings of disapprobation, then we make the judgment that the action is impermissible or

that an individual is morally blameworthy. Hume (1777/1960) claims that reason plays little role in selecting the ends of morality, and the ends of our actions cannot be accounted for by reasons, but instead “recommend themselves entirely to the sentiment and affections of mankind” (p. 293). For Hume, reason plays a role in selecting our means for those ends, but plays little role in selecting the ends.

Since Hume, there have been variations of sentimentalism offered by philosophers, including Prinz’s version. In the following part of my project, I will provide some insights that might be useful in the eventual construction of a novel sentimentalist framework of morality. The framework that I have in mind is novel because it will differ significantly from Hume’s theory by removing empathy as the foundation of morality, and will differ from Prinz’s theory by treating emotion and judgment as complimentary rather than treating emotion as a precursor to judgment. My insights will focus strictly on the factual claims, *what* drives morality, rather than the normative, what *ought* to drive morality.

## **2: Determining which emotions are important for morality**

## **2.1 Introduction**

The final stage of this research project is providing key insights that might be useful in the eventual construction of a novel framework of sentimentalism that is consistent with the literature that has been examined and the studies that have been analyzed.

In this part of the project, I will conduct detailed analyses of thirteen studies that examine the role of emotions in morality. I will be conducting a systematic review of the literature in order to answer a specific research question by summarizing empirical conclusions that are related to my research question (which emotions are responsible for morality?). The studies to be included are the following:

1. Bjorklund, F. (2004). Just because it's disgusting does make it more wrong: Level of disgust affects moral judgment. *Lund Psychological Reports*, 5, 1-13.
2. Inbar, Y., Pizarro, D.A., Knobe, J., & Bloom, P. (2009). Disgust sensitivity predicts intuitive disapproval of gays. *Emotion*, 9, 435-439.
3. Chapman, H.A. & Anderson, A.K. (2014). Trait physical disgust is related to moral judgments outside of the purity domain. *Emotion*, 14, 341-348.
4. Rozin, P., Lowery, L., Imada, S., & Haidt, J. (1999). The CAD triad hypothesis: A mapping between three moral emotions (contempt, anger, disgust) and three moral codes (community, autonomy, divinity). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 574-586.
5. Hutcherson, C. & Gross, J. (2011). The moral emotions: A social-functional account of anger, disgust, and contempt. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100, 719-737.
6. Valdesolo, P. & DeSteno, D. (2006). Manipulation of emotional context shape moral judgment. *Psychological Science*, 17, 476-477.

7. Strohminger, N., Lewis, R., & Meyer, D. (2011), Divergent effects of different positive emotions on moral judgment. *Cognition*, 119, 295-300.
8. Algoe, S. & Haidt, J. (2009). Witnessing excellence in action: the ‘other-praising’ emotions of elevation, gratitude, and admiration. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4, 105-127.
9. Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R.A., Miller, P.A., Fultz, J., Shell, R., Mathy, R., & Reno, R. (1989). Relation of sympathy and personal distress to prosocial behaviour: A multimethod study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 55-66.
10. Kaplan, U. & Tivnan, T. (2014). Multiplicity of Emotions in Moral Judgment and Motivation. *Ethics & Behaviour*, 24, 421-443.
11. Seidel, A. & Prinz, J. (2012). Mad and glad: Musically induced emotions have divergent impact on morals. *Motivation and Emotion*, 37, 629-637.
12. Ugazio, G., Lamm, C., & Singer, T. (2012). The role of emotions for moral judgments depends on the type of emotion and moral scenario. *Emotion*, 12, 579-590.
13. Szekely, R.D. & Miu, A.C. (2015). Incidental emotions in moral dilemmas: The influence of emotion regulation. *Cognition and Emotion*, 29, 64-75.

These are the thirteen studies that my detailed study of the literature will review. Because empathy is not necessary for morality, as I have shown throughout the first part of this research project, there must be other emotions that are important for morality. I have already shown how disgust influences moral judgment. Analyzing these studies should shed light and help determine the emotions important for moral judgment and moral behaviour.

I will be analyzing specific studies on emotion and morality in order to determine which emotions researchers believe to be significant for moral judgment and moral behaviour. The

analysis in this part will also lend support to sentimentalism. One worry is that the arguments against the empathy-based account of morality can also be given against any emotion-based account of morality. That is, one might argue that if empathy is not necessary for morality, emotion in general might not be necessary for morality. The analysis in this section will shed light on this issue, and uncover which emotions play dominant roles in morality and might be the core of morality. While empathy does not play a significant role, other emotions do, and without these emotions, some forms of morality may not be possible. The aim of this part of this project is to determine which emotions constitute morality.

This part is broken down into five sections. The first section, 2.2, summarizes the alternatives to an empathy-based morality discussed in 1.5. The purpose of this section is to remind the reader of the alternatives to the empathy-based account provided in the first half of this project. The point here is to emphasize the contribution put forth by these scholars as well as to examine how they differ from the new studies that will be analyzed in 2. This, I believe, will provide a fuller sentimentalist account of morality that I wish to eventually construct. 2.3 analyzes negative emotions. This section discusses, examines, and analyzes five studies focused mostly on disgust, but also analyzes studies that examine contempt and anger. 2.4 analyzes three studies that examine the role of positive emotions, such as sympathy, mirth, and elevation, in morality. 2.5 analyses three studies that examine the role of both positive and negative emotions in morality. Some of the emotions include compassion, distress, anger, happiness, sadness, hate, and fear. The final section, 2.6, analyzes two studies that look at how emotions enter into decision-making. 2.6 serves as a foundation for future research. I will be using a significant number of recent discoveries in the cognitive sciences and psychology to contribute to the questions and issues in philosophy regarding morality and emotion. Combined with

philosophical examination and analysis, these discoveries in the cognitive sciences and psychology will help determine the emotions that are important for morality. The aim of this section is to give an in-depth account of the emotions important for morality.

I end this section, and conclude my overall project, by providing a summary of the emotions important for morality given my analyses.

While the literature on emotion and morality is vast and growing, I have selected the studies that I believe significantly contribute to the main research questions in this project. The first question asked and answered in (1) was whether empathy is necessary for morality, where I concluded that it is not. I argued that while empathy may not play a significant role in morality, other emotions do. The second question that this research project aims to answer is, which emotions have been found to play a significant role in morality? This is the question that this half of this research project explores. As a result of keeping my research questions narrow and focused, studies of great influence in the field of moral psychology were not included in my analyses. I have chosen the studies that relate to, and help to answer, my research questions, and is why I have included these thirteen studies.

I have excluded studies of great influence conducted by Joshua Greene (2004) and Joshua Knobe (2003), among others. I have excluded these studies due to the focus of this project. Greene focuses on the neuroscience of emotion and morality. Greene examines emotion more generally, and does not measure specific types of emotion and the role they play in morality. Although very important, Greene's research reveals more about the brain areas recruited in moral decision-making and less about the specific emotions necessary for morality. As Prinz (2006) states, "The brain scans simply add empirical support to a pretheoretical intuition that emotions

arise when we respond to a wide range of morally significant events, including rudeness, unfairness, law-breaking, and saving lives. What neuroscience cannot at this stage establish is the specific role that emotions play” (p. 31). In a similar vein, Knobe’s research tells us about how we judge morality based on a person’s intentions, and does not focus on emotion in morality. The studies that I have chosen examine emotions that many believe to be responsible for morality, or at least to contribute to morality. My analyses of these studies will help determine the status of these emotions in moral behaviour and moral judgment by examining empirical evidence.

With the exception of Eisenberg, Fabes, Miller, Fultz, Shell, Mathy, and Reno (1989), it is important to note that in all of the studies discussed here, the work has been conducted on young adults ranging from late adolescence to early adulthood (roughly ages 18-22). Limiting my examination to populations in this age bracket was not intended, but is a result of the studies chosen. Most studies in moral psychology are conducted on participants in this age bracket. Future work should focus on including older populations, as the results of the studies may be influenced by age. It is my opinion that the studies discussed here eventually be replicated, with a focus on older participants. My future research may include replicating some of these studies.

## **2.2 Alternatives to an empathy-based morality**

### *2.2.1 Haidt’s theory of morality*

Recall from 1.6 that Haidt claims that emotion, not reason, drives moral judgment. If, and when, moral reasoning is involved in making a moral judgment, it is usually after the initial

judgment has taken place. Haidt's model, called the Social Intuitions Model, puts forth a theory of moral judgment that is based on emotion, or what he calls 'intuition.'

Although Haidt does not explicitly state that empathy does not play a role in morality, the Social Intuitions Model does not have empathy at its core. Instead, other emotions, such as disgust, are the primary motivators of morality. Haidt's main interest is in testing negative emotions, although he does examine the influence of positive emotions, which will be discussed below in 2.4.4. Haidt's model is based on a version of sentimentalism, the view that morality is guided by emotion, but does not give empathy a significant role in his model of morality.

### 2.2.2 *Nichols's theory of morality*

Similar to Haidt, Nichols's theory of morality is centred on the role of emotion. More specifically, Nichols argues that norms that are bound with emotion tend to be moralized, while norms that are not bound with emotion tend to be conventionalized. He claims that we are able to make a distinction between moral and conventional norms due to our emotional reactions to norms and transgressions. That is, if a norm is bound with an emotion, such as disgust, we will usually consider the norm to be a moral norm. When a norm has been transgressed and elicits emotion, we tend to consider the transgression a moral transgression rather than a conventional transgression, even if no harm has occurred.

Nichols, like Haidt, does not explicitly deny the role of empathy in morality. However, Nichols does not place empathy at the center of morality, nor does he claim that empathy is important for morality, suggesting that emotions other than empathy are important for morality.

### 2.2.3 *McGeer's theory of morality*

McGeer discusses the role of empathy in morality by examining the moral behaviour of autistic individuals and psychopaths. She uses these two populations as examples, as I do, because both are said to have a deficit in empathy yet have very different moral manners.

McGeer argues that if both populations are said to be deficient in empathy yet autistic individuals seem to want to be moral while psychopaths do not, there must be something other than empathy that drives morality. Rather than arguing that it is reason, and not emotion, that drives morality, McGeer argues that emotions other than empathy are motivators for the morality displayed in autistic individuals. Holding a sentimentalist view of morality, McGeer claims that emotions other than empathy must be responsible for morality.

### 2.2.4 *Prinz's theory of morality*

Prinz argues against the empathy thesis. He argues that emotions other than empathy are responsible for morality. Prinz wholeheartedly endorses sentimentalism, arguing that emotion is responsible for morality. On Prinz's model of morality, emotion not only causes moral judgment, but also motivates moral behaviour. He argues that when you make a judgment that 'X is wrong,' you are also motivated to refrain from engaging in action X.

Prinz argues that while many claim that empathy motivates morality, empathy works against the ends of morality. Because we tend to empathize with in-group members, empathy can lead to partiality. As a result, Prinz argues that empathy is not sufficient for morality, and can cause more harm than good.

### 2.2.5 *Conclusion*

In the first half of this project, I discussed alternatives to empathy-based theories of morality. These theories, summarized here, suggest that emotions other than empathy are

responsible for morality. In the present part of my project, I will determine which emotions are important for morality, lending support to these sentimentalist theories of morality and providing another alternative to the view that empathy is necessary for morality.

## **2.3 Negative emotions**

### 2.3.1 An analysis of: Bjorklund (2004).

#### *Introduction*

The first study I analyze in this section was conducted by psychologist Fredrik Bjorklund and comes from his 2004 article “Just because it’s disgusting does make it more wrong: Level of disgust affects moral judgment.” In this study, Bjorklund shows a dissociation between moral reasoning and intuition, while emphasizing the role that disgust plays in moral judgment. In an attempt to break free from the traditional view of moral reasoning put forth by Lawrence Kohlberg (1984), Bjorklund (2004) suggests that with regard to moral judgment, “judgment strength should vary as a consequence of the strength of the underlying intuition, so that an increase in intuition strength leads to a strengthening of the subsequent judgment” (p. 2). Similar to Haidt, by ‘intuition,’ Bjorklund means ‘feeling’ or ‘emotion.’

In order to show the role of intuition in moral judgment, particularly that “a negative affective state, such as feeling disgusted, should lead to more harsh moral judgments” (p. 3), Bjorklund conducted three similar studies that examined the role of disgust when making moral judgments. The studies required participants to read vignettes and judge whether a moral norm had been violated. In all three experiments, “participants read stories describing morally questionable actions and made judgments of wrongness. Judgments were affected by morally irrelevant disgust, and the effect was moderated by individual differences in disgust sensitivity and preferred processing mode” (Bjorklund, 2004, p. 1).

In the first experiment, 62 participants read multiple vignettes on a computer screen. Each vignette had a plain or vivid ending. Vignettes with plain endings did not have the details of the ending vividly described, whereas vignettes that had a vivid ending had very detailed and descriptive endings. The difference between the plain ending vignettes and the vivid ending vignettes was “how vividly particular situational features were described” (Bjorklund, 2004, p. 3). The main vignettes described situational stories where a moral norm appeared to be violated and where disgusting features were present. Depending on which experimental condition they were given, some participants received the plain ending, where less disgusting features appeared to be present, while others received the vivid ending, where disgusting features were prominent. Bjorklund (2004) hypothesized that participants who received the vivid ending would judge the situation in a more condemning manner than those who received the plain ending. The following is an example of one of the vignettes that appeared in Bjorklund’s (2004) study:

An adult brother and sister were on vacation together in France. One evening, after sharing a bottle of wine, they began to kiss, and they found themselves in bed together. They were surprised to find that they enjoyed being physically intimate, and they continued to have sexual relations (while using two forms of birth control) for the remaining two weeks of their vacation.

Plain ending: They traveled all over France, beginning in Paris, and then West to Bretagne. But their favorite part of France was the South, the region that so many famous painters had immortalized.

Vivid ending: They used a variety of sexual positions, but their favorite was when the brother took the sister from behind. They also enjoyed kissing and making love in the shower, where they could see and touch all parts of each others’ naked bodies (p.3)

Bjorklund also included control vignettes to determine whether vividness has an impact on moral judgment, regardless of disgust. Control vignettes did not elicit disgust and did not have disgusting features like the other vignettes did. Although these vignettes did not have disgusting features, they still described a situation where a moral norm was violated. The following is an example that appeared in Bjorklund’s (2004) study:

Jeff needed money, and he didn't want to get a boring job, so he decided to start shoplifting. He found a large electronics store and stole two portable CD players.

Plain ending: He found the store by looking through the yellow pages. There were several stores listed, so he took one that was in a neighborhood that he had been to a few times.

Vivid ending: He walked into the store carrying a large red shopping bag from another store. When nobody was looking, he pushed the CD players into his bag, and then continued browsing along the aisles (p. 4)

There was also another type of control vignette. In these vignettes, no moral violation occurred. Instead, these vignettes included “descriptions of situations where something disgusting happened, and the disgusting aspects were described in either a plain or a vivid fashion depending on experimental condition” (Bjorklund, 2004, p. 4). The purpose of these control vignettes was to determine if disgust has an impact on moral judgment whether or not there was an action to condone. The following is an example from Bjorklund’s (2004) study:

Sally loved to try new foods, and she particularly liked to explore new ethnic restaurants. One day she took her best friend out to a new Malaysian restaurant with a very extensive menu. Her friend, who was not nearly so adventurous, ordered a dish similar to Chinese chicken fried rice. But Sally went right to the back of the menu and ordered a few things at random, even though she could not pronounce or understand what she was ordering. It turns out she ordered fried squid-eye.

Plain ending: Malaysian cuisine is extremely diverse, including many influences from China and from other countries in South-East Asia. Malaysian cuisine is generally quite spicy.

Vivid ending: A squid’s eye is like a large black tennis ball full of jelly when raw, but when cooked the interior of the eyeball hardens to a rubbery consistency, and it must be cut with a sharp knife (p. 4)

According to Bjorklund (2004), “the vignettes were pretested in order to make sure that the ‘plain’ and ‘vivid’ versions actually differed in how disgusting they were to the participants” (p. 4).

#### *Details of the study*

In the first study, participants were asked to read the vignettes on a computer screen, and then make judgments about the character’s behaviour. Bjorklund also included a mental load task

unbeknownst to the participants in an attempt to block their attempts at reflecting on their judgments (Bjorklund, 2004). A mental load task is a cognitive task that requires mental effort. The mental load task required that participants press the space bar on the keyboard every ten seconds. Vignettes were rated for wrongness on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all wrong/harmful) to 7 (extremely wrong/harmful).

Bjorklund (2004) found, as predicted, that the wrongness ratings for the vignettes that appeared to have a moral violation were higher in the vignettes that had a vivid ending ( $M=5.38$ ) rather than a plain ending ( $M=4.84$ ). There was no significant difference between the vividness and plain conditions for the control vignettes. Bjorklund (2004) also found that the “mean strength of moral wrongness ratings to be unrelated to the mean time it took for participants to make the judgments” (p. 5). That is, the mental load task had no influence on how strongly participants condoned an action.

This study suggests that when in a moral situation, individuals will judge an action to be more wrong if the details of the situation elicit more disgust. This emphasizes the role that disgust plays in moral judgment. The more disgusting we find a particular situation or an action, the more likely we are to judge it as immoral. The findings of this study corroborates Haidt’s theory discussed in 1.6.2, where I discussed the role of disgust in moral judgment.

Bjorklund (2004) judged the first experiment to be inconclusive for two reasons, although it is suggestive about the role of disgust in moral judgment. First, the experiment is inconclusive with regard to “whether mental load is a necessary condition for the effect of disgust-vividness on moral judgment to occur” (Bjorklund, 2004, p. 6). Second, there was a shortcoming in the way the response time was operationalized. Rather than measuring the time elapsed from the

presentation of a vignette and a judgment scale on the computer screen to the time a response was made, which is how response time was measured in the first experiment, the presentation of the vignette was separated from the presentation of the judgment scale in the second experiment (Bjorklund, 2004). In an attempt to get the most accurate results, Bjorklund states that

the participant should not expect to be asked to make a moral judgment after reading each vignette. Knowing in advance that one is to make a moral judgment after reading may affect attention and information processing such that the judgment is made more or less immediately after the relevant information is presented. Therefore Experiment 2 included an additional set of vignettes where participants were asked to make judgments regarding whether what the protagonist did was irresponsible or unprofessional. When presented with a particular vignette participants did not know what kind of judgment they were going to be asked to make when finished reading (p. 6)

The second experiment included 77 participants. The second experiment was similar to the first experiment, but, as mentioned above, differed in response time. According to Bjorklund (2004),

instead of measuring the time from the simultaneous presentation of a vignette and a judgment scale on the computer screen to the time a response was made, the presentation of the vignette was separated from the presentation of the judgment scale. Participants were presented with a vignette on the computer screen, pressed a key on the computer keyboard when finished reading, and were then immediately presented with the judgment scale in question (p. 6)

As mentioned above, the second experiment also differed from the first by including an additional set of vignettes where participants were asked whether the character in the scenario acted irresponsibly or unprofessionally. This allowed for “the separation of vignette reading and judgment making to be effective” (Bjorklund, 2004, p. 6) because participants were not asked to make a moral judgment after reading every vignette, but were asked to make a judgment regarding professionalism. According to Bjorklund (2004), “knowing in advance that one is to make a moral judgment after reading may affect attention and information processing such that

the judgment is made more or less immediately after the relevant information is presented” (p. 6). This is why the additional set of vignettes was included in experiment 2. By adding a set of vignettes, participants would be unsure as to whether they were going to be asked a question regarding morality or professionalism after reading the vignette in question.

In the second experiment, Bjorklund included a version of the Disgust Scale (DS). The DS measures an individual’s propensity to experience disgust and is widely used (Olatunji, Williams, Lohr, Elwood, Tolin, Abramowitz, & Sawchuck, 2007). According to Olatunji et al. (2007), the DS

is a 32-item measure of how disgusting particular experiences would be, and it assesses eight domains of disgust sensitivity, including the following: (a) Food (food that has spoiled, is culturally unacceptable, or has been fouled in some way); (b) Animals (animals that are slimy or live in dirty conditions); (c) Body Products (body products including body odors and feces, mucus, etc.); (d) Body Envelope Violations (body envelope violations or mutilation of the body); (e) Death (death and dead bodies); (f) Sex (sex involving culturally deviant sexual behavior); (g) Hygiene (violations of culturally expected hygiene practices); and (h) Sympathetic Magic (which involves stimuli without infectious qualities that either resemble contaminants—e.g., feces-shaped candy—or were once in contact with contaminants—e.g., a sweater worn by an ill person) (p. 282)

Using the DS in the second experiment allowed each participant’s disgust level to be evaluated and included in the analysis. Bjorklund’s study assessed individual differences in condoning an action, attempting to show that the higher disgust sensitivity a person has, the more likely they are to judge an action as immoral. Bjorklund predicted that “participants rating themselves as high in disgust sensitivity would make stronger wrongness ratings than participants rating themselves as low in disgust sensitivity” (p. 6), and the results of the second experiment supported this prediction.

Bjorklund (2004) found that participants who had a high disgust sensitivity judged the wrongness of a moral situation more harshly in both the vivid ( $M=6.56$ ) and the plain ( $M=5.98$ ) conditions than did those who had lower disgust sensitivity ( $M=5.81$  in the vivid condition;  $M=5.71$  in the plain condition). The results from this experiment suggests that “high disgust sensitivity and vivid descriptions lead to the strongest wrongness ratings” (p. 8).

Because Bjorklund is interested in individual differences in moral judgment, he conducted a third experiment in order to take a closer look at the effect of disgust sensitivity on moral judgment individually in participants rather than the group as a whole, and in order to show that moral reasoning may not play as significant a role as traditionally thought. According to Bjorklund (2004), the purpose of the third experiment

was to investigate the influence of disgust sensitivity and processing mode (intuition/reasoning) simultaneously, predicting people high in disgust sensitivity and low in self-reported use of reasoning to make the strongest moral judgments. Similarly, people high in self-reported use of intuition should make stronger moral judgments than those low in use of intuition, particularly when high in disgust sensitivity (p. 8)

In this third experiment, only the vignettes with vivid disgust were used. After making moral judgments about each vignette, participants were asked to complete the disgust scale, similar to what was asked of participants in experiment 2. Unlike experiments 1 and 2, participants were then asked to complete a self-report measure of the use of reasoning and intuition.

Bjorklund (2004) found that “wrongness ratings revealed no main effect of reasoning level” (p. 8). More importantly, he found that, similar to experiment 2, those individuals who had high disgust sensitivity ratings judged an action to be more wrong than those with lower disgust sensitivity. Although there was no significant interaction between intuition and disgust

sensitivity ratings, Bjorklund found that those with higher disgust sensitivity had stronger intuitions about the moral wrongness of the situation in the given vignette. That is, those who self-reported being stronger in intuition than moral reasoning had higher disgust sensitivity and judged the moral wrongness of an action more harshly than those who judged the wrongness of an action less harshly. However, there was no significant interaction between disgust sensitivity and intuition.

### *Discussion*

Bjorklund's results from the three experiments suggest many things about moral judgment, and also supports my arguments presented thus far, that emotions other than empathy play a significant role in moral judgment. The results from Bjorklund's study also call into question the role of moral reasoning in moral judgment. Similar to Haidt's model discussed in 1.6.2, Bjorklund (2004) shows that intuition plays an important role in moral judgment by invoking disgust in particular vignettes. When participants read vignettes that described actions that were disgusting and appeared to break a norm where no one in the vignette was harmed, participants judged the actions as *morally* wrong, where the strength of the judgment was increased by means of irrelevant disgust (e.g., the vivid endings of the vignettes). That is, the more disgust elicited in the vignette, the more the participant viewed the action in the vignette as morally wrong. According to Bjorklund (2004), "this occurred with little or no awareness of the misattribution<sup>14</sup> that led to the exaggerated wrongness judgment; the disgusting features affected the moral judgment implicitly" (p. 9). In line with Prinz (2006), "such findings suggest that we

---

<sup>14</sup> It is my suggestion that Bjorklund replace the word 'misattribution' with 'disapprobation,' as the participants were judging an action rather than attributing something to it.

can form the belief that something is morally wrong by simply having a negative emotion directed towards it. In this sense, emotions are sufficient for moral appraisal” (p. 31).

Empathy does not need to be included as an emotion important for moral judgment. While it can be argued that the disgust experienced in this study was experienced via an empathic route (e.g., that participants were imagining how others would feel about the vignette and then sharing that emotion), this does not appear to be the case. As Bjorklund points out, when participants read vignettes that described actions that were disgusting and appeared to break a norm where no one in the vignette was harmed, participants judged the actions as morally wrong, where the strength of the judgment was increased by means of irrelevant disgust. That is, the vignettes that had vivid descriptions were viewed more harshly than those with plain endings. It is difficult to make the case that an individual is empathizing with others and thus experiencing disgust. If this were true, then participants should judge the action in similar manners, regardless of whether the ending was vivid or plain. That is, the ending should not influence the judgment of the ‘empathizer.’ What is more, participants higher in disgust sensitivity gave stronger wrongness ratings, suggesting that disgust, generally speaking, influences moral judgment. If disgust experienced via empathy did influence moral judgment, then disgust sensitivity should not play such a significant role in wrongness ratings. Support for this can be found in the results from Wheatley and Haidt’s (2005) study discussed in 1.6. Hypnotizable participants felt disgust when hearing a particular word, and thus judged a neutral action to be immoral or inappropriate. Participants did not empathize with others in society or anyone else when making a judgment. Induced disgust influenced how they judged the action in question.

The results from Bjorklund's study suggest that, as discussed previously in 1.6, norms that are bound with emotion, in this case disgust, tend to be viewed as moral norms, even if no one is being harmed. In Bjorklund's study, although no one was being harmed in the vignettes, individuals still viewed the action as morally wrong simply because it was bound with disgust. From Bjorklund's three experiments analyzed, it is suggestive that disgust is an important component in moral judgment. We can conclude that disgust is a significant emotion in moral judgment, and that when manipulated, can lead individuals to judge a transgression as a moral transgression despite no harm being committed. Bjorklund has also shown that disgust sensitivity may also determine how wrong an individual judges a transgression to be. That is, individual differences in disgust sensitivity levels can influence how harshly a transgression is judged. Inbar, Pizarro, Knobe, and Bloom (2009) also examined the effect of disgust sensitivity levels in making moral judgments.

### 2.3.2 An Analysis of: Inbar, Pizarro, Knobe, & Bloom (2009).

#### *Introduction*

Inbar et al. (2009) demonstrate, in two related studies, that being prone to disgust or having high levels of disgust sensitivity is associated with an intuitive disapproval of gay<sup>15</sup> couples. Acknowledging that disgust has previously played a role in moral scenarios, Inbar et al.'s studies suggest that individuals with high levels of disgust sensitivity show disfavor or disapproval toward gay couples compared to heterosexual couples.

---

<sup>15</sup> Inbar et al. use the term 'gay' to refer to homosexual individuals. In particular, they are referring to males who are attracted to males. I occasionally use the term 'gay' as they do in order to keep with the wording of the article under discussion.

As moral philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2001) and other scholars such as Chandra Sripada (2008) note, certain properties of disgust, such as foulness and bad smell, have been associated with and projected onto ‘outgroups.’ Recall that outgroups are groups of individuals who society believes fit outside societal norms or are simply different and appear strange to members of society. For example, low caste Hindus in India, also called untouchables, are considered to be outgroup members because they are seen as not belonging with the rest of society. They are often associated with impurity, dirtiness, bad smells, and foulness. Jewish individuals were perceived by many throughout history in the same manner. At one time, women in North America were considered outgroup members as were homosexuals. In many parts of the world, women and homosexuals are still considered outgroup members. In many parts of the Middle East, women are seen as impure and unintelligent, while homosexuals are considered dirty and ungodly in many parts of the Southern United States. Because disgust tends to play an active role in morality, outgroup members, who are usually associated with feelings of disgust, are often viewed as immoral members of society.

Inbar et al. (2009) state that “disgust is a peculiar emotion. It is readily elicited by a simple smell, sound, sight, or even word: The mere thought of disgust elicitors such as maggots, pus, or putrid meat can turn one’s stomach” (p. 435). For instance, the word ‘rotten’ or the sight and smell of spoiled meat often produce feelings of disgust in an individual. Support for this comes from 1.6.3, where I paid particular attention to the role of disgust in shaping moral norms. Recall that Nichols (2002) argues for the view that moral norms are tied to and associated with emotion while conventional norms are not. Nichols (2002) demonstrates that individuals view disgusting behaviours, such as spitting into a glass of water and then drinking it at a dinner party, as immoral, rather than non-disgusting behaviours, such as drinking soup out of a bowl. Disgust

can be quickly elicited by simply witnessing, reading or hearing about, a disgusting action. Haidt (2001) demonstrates that most individuals judge consensual incest to be morally wrong even if the consequences are morally neutral simply because thinking about such an act produces feelings of disgust. As Inbar et al. (2009) note, “it is not surprising, then, that disgust would be effective in persuading people to morally condemn specific individuals or groups” (p. 435). Because they are associated with disgusting features, low caste Hindus, those who have abnormal sexual practices, and homosexuals, just to name a few, are considered outgroup members. What is more, homosexuals were once, and often still are, associated with disease and impurity.

Inbar et al. (2009) claim that “disgust is thought to be especially important in shaping what have been called moral intuitions—moral judgments that arise from psychological processes that are not fully accessible to consciousness” (p. 435), and their claim is sufficiently supported. Recall Haidt’s Social Intuitions Model from 1.6.2. Haidt claims that moral judgments are guided by intuitions or emotions that are unconscious, and that moral reasoning, a conscious process, takes place only after the initial judgment has taken place.

Given the importance of disgust in moral judgment and in shaping moral norms, and given that homosexuals are usually morally condemned by society, Inbar et al. (2009) wanted to test whether having a dispositional proneness to disgust or high sensitivity to experiencing disgust is associated with negative moral judgments of gay individuals. More specifically, Inbar et al. (2009) wanted to test whether “the disgust sensitive—those people who experience disgust frequently and readily—also intuitively judge homosexuality to be immoral, even if they do not explicitly endorse a view of homosexuality as morally wrong” (p. 435). They tested this in two

studies. Both studies examined the relationship between disgust sensitivity and intuitive evaluations of gay individuals.

#### *Details of the study*

The first study examined intentional behaviour, disgust sensitivity, and the intuitive evaluation of gay individuals. This study implemented the side-effect effect, a phenomenon noted by Joshua Knobe (2003). The side-effect effect is a phenomenon where individuals judge moral behaviours as intentional actions as opposed to accidental actions (Knobe, 2003). It is called the side-effect effect because judging one's moral intentions seem to influence both moral and non-moral aspects of a particular situation. In other words, "people determine intentionality based on the moral consideration of whether the side effect is good or bad" (Wible, 2008). According to Inbar et al. (2009), "people are more inclined to say that a behavior was performed intentionally when they regard that behavior as morally wrong" (p. 436). Given that, Inbar et al. hypothesized that individuals would judge behaviours they thought to be morally wrong as intentional rather than nonintentional.

Inbar et al. created a vignette that encouraged gay men to kiss in public, an action that they predicted liberal North American college students would not explicitly judge to be morally wrong, but would still object to on an intuitive level. Inbar et al. (2009) predicted that "judgments regarding the intentionality of the acts would serve as an index of this intuitive judgment, especially because judgments of intentionality are not normally perceived as condemnatory" and that "participants highly sensitive to disgust would be especially likely to exhibit implicit disapproval of this behaviour, finding it to be more intentional than participants low in disgust sensitivity" (p. 436).

It is unclear as to why Inbar et al. predict that participants highly sensitive to disgust would exhibit implicit disapproval rather than explicit disapproval. Many actions that appear to be disgusting in nature are disapproved explicitly. (e.g., a person may give a man who wipes snot on his sleeve a rude or disapproving look). One possible reason is that because Inbar et al. claim that judgments of intentionality are not usually perceived as condemnatory, the disapproval of the behaviour would be implicit rather than explicit. While I take note of this issue, I leave it aside in order to further analyze the role of disgust in morality.

Inbar et al. used the Disgust Sensitivity Scale (DSS) to measure differences in sensitivity to disgust.

Participants in study 1 were given one of two scenarios to read. The first scenario, the gay kissing scenario, involved a director making a music video that had the effect of encouraging gay men to French-kiss in public. The second scenario was a control scenario that involved a director making a music video that encouraged French-kissing in public among couples. Although the control scenario did not describe the couples as heterosexuals, Inbar et al. expected that participants would make the assumption that the couples were heterosexual. According to Inbar et al. (2009), “in both cases, these effects (the effect of kissing) were described as side effects—the director knew about the effect, but this was not the primary goal of his behaviour” (p. 436, parentheses mine).

Following the vignette, participants were asked the following questions in the following order:

- (1) Did the director intentionally encourage homosexual men [couples] to French kiss in public? (1 = not at all, 7 = definitely);
- (2) Is there anything wrong with homosexual men [couples] French kissing in public? (circle: yes or no);
- (3) Was it wrong of the director to make a video that he knew would encourage homosexual men [couples] to

French kiss in public? (1 = not at all, 7 = definitely) (Inbar, Pizarro, Knobe, & Bloom, 2009, p. 436)

Following the completion of these questions, participants completed the short-form DSS so their disgust sensitivity level could be measured.

With regard to explicit moral judgments, Inbar et al. found that the majority of the participants (73%) reported that there was nothing wrong with gay men kissing in public, and that a little over half of the participants (55%) reported that there was nothing wrong with straight<sup>16</sup> couples kissing in public.

With regard to intuitive moral judgments, Inbar et al. regressed intentionality judgments and found that there was a significant difference between the director encouraging gay couples to kiss and encouraging straight couples to kiss. To be more specific, they found that participants believed that the director's action, encouraging kissing between couples, was more intentional when he encouraged gay couples to kiss in public (M=4.36) than when he encouraged straight couples to kiss in public (M=2.91) (Inbar, Pizarro, Knobe, & Bloom, 2009).

With regard to disgust sensitivity, Inbar et al. found that there was a main effect of disgust sensitivity on which judgments were viewed by participants as intentional. Participants that had higher levels of disgust sensitivity viewed the director's actions as intentional more than participants who had lower levels of disgust sensitivity. Disgust sensitivity was associated with stronger judgments of intentionality in the gay kissing condition, while disgust sensitivity did not predict intentionality judgments in the control condition. According to Inbar et al. (2009), "disgust sensitivity predicts implicit moral responses to male-male sexual contact—as measured

---

<sup>16</sup> The term 'straight' is used in everyday language and also by Inbar et al. to refer to heterosexual individuals. I occasionally use the term 'straight' as they do in order to keep with the wording of the article under discussion.

through intentionality judgments—though it does not predict explicit responses” (p. 437). Study 1 suggests that there is a relationship between disgust sensitivity and the intuitive disapproval or condemnation of gay individuals who display public affection.

Inbar et al. replicated study 1 using a more extensively validated measure since measuring the side-effect effect is a novel measure of intuitive moral judgments. In study 2, Inbar et al. implemented the Implicit Association Test (IAT). The IAT is a computer task where participants are asked “to pair exemplars from one of two target categories (e.g., gay and straight) with strongly positively or negatively valenced words (e.g., wonderful and horrible)” and “has been employed to assess implicit positive and negative associations with a large variety of concepts and groups, including gay people” (Inbar, Pizarro, Knobe & Bloom, 2009, p. 437). Inbar et al. employed a version of the IAT that was designed to measure participants’ implicit associations with gay individuals compared to straight individuals.

Participants in study 2 completed Inbar et al.’s version of the IAT and the DSS. The materials used in the IAT were a set of images that represented the categories ‘gay’ and ‘straight’, and stimuli that included the words ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’, ‘straight’, and ‘homosexual.’ Eight positive words, such as wonderful, and eight negative words, such as horrible, were used to represent the categories ‘pleasant’ and ‘unpleasant.’

Similar to study 1, Inbar et al. found that participants implicitly evaluated gay individuals more negatively than straight individuals. In particular, they found that individuals who had higher disgust sensitivity evaluated gay individuals more negatively than straight individuals, suggesting that disgust affects implicit evaluations of gay individuals, who are often associated with being outgroup members. According to Inbar et al. (2009), the results of study 2 “showed

that the more disgust sensitive participants were, the less favorably they implicitly evaluated gay people” (p. 438).

### *Discussion*

Both studies conducted by Inbar et al. demonstrate that individuals with high levels of disgust sensitivity show more implicit negative moral evaluations and judgments of gay individuals than straight individuals. Both studies also demonstrate the role of disgust in moral judgment. Individuals tend to view actions as morally impermissible or morally wrong, and individuals as immoral, if the action or individual is bound with disgust. Recall from 1.6 that individuals find that actions that elicit disgust are immoral. For instance, in Wheatly and Haidt’s (2005) study, participants were hypnotized to feel disgust when they heard the words ‘take’ or ‘often.’ Participants heard a story about a student council president named Dan who organizes and facilitates faculty-student discussions. The scenario included one of two versions of the following sentence: “He [tries to take]/[often picks] topics that appeal to both professors and students in order to stimulate discussion” (Haidt, 2007, p. 1000). A significant percent of participants who felt a pang of disgust upon hearing these words while reading the scenario condemned Dan, and then engaged in confabulation in an attempt to justify why he should be condemned. Dan and his actions were seen as immoral simply because disgust was elicited. Simply feeling disgusted can lead to moral condemnation despite no immoral action taking place. What is more, disgust is not experienced via an empathic route, suggesting that empathy plays a marginal role, if any, in morality.

With regard to Inbar et al.’s (2009) study, it is suggestive that disgust plays a role in the intuitive moral judgment of gay individuals in the same way that disgust plays a role in condemning an individual’s actions, even though they may not have committed an immoral act.

The question is, why are intuitive moral judgments of gay individuals more negative in individuals with high disgust levels? One answer, as discussed above in the previous analysis, is that feeling disgusted or eliciting feelings of disgust can lead to harsher moral judgments. According to Inbar et al. (2009), “one possible explanation may lie in the role that disgust has played in the perceptions of outgroups that are seen as violating cultural norms, especially norms related to food preparation, cleanliness, and sexual behavior” (p. 438). For example, women in India who are menstruating are often viewed as unclean, and are seen as violating a moral norm if they serve food while menstruating. Those who view these women as unclean are probably not imagining what those in their social groups think about these women and then sharing those emotions or feelings. That is, they are not empathizing with anyone when they experience disgust. Rather, they experience disgust, or other emotions, as reactions to the situations, due to their religious view, or simply because the norm is bound with emotion. As mentioned above, low caste Hindus in India are seen as outgroup members and are often viewed as dirty and impure. Because of this, they are viewed as immoral individuals despite not having committed any immoral action. Male-male sexual contact is often seen as outgroup behaviour because it is viewed by many as different and falling outside of societal norms. Thus, the fear of ‘otherness’ drives both the feeling of disgust and the condemnation of male-male sexual contact.

According to Inbar et al. (2008), “the vast majority of cultures, past and present, have recognised purity as an important moral dimension. Behaviours that are seen as degrading, defiling, or unnatural reduce purity and are thus immoral even if they do not harm oneself or others” (p. 2). There are many examples that support the view that disgust plays a significant role in the perception of outgroup members. What is more, as Hutcherson and Gross (2011) point out, disgust “results in a lasting reluctance to come into contact with objects themselves contaminated

by contact with something disgusting” (p. 721), which is why social groups that appear disgusting to society are considered outgroups and usually remain outgroups for a lengthy period of time. Alternatively, they may be considered disgusting because they are outgroup members.

While disgust sensitivity differs in individuals, the findings from Inbar et al.’s studies suggest that individuals that are higher in disgust sensitivity are more likely to judge an action as morally wrong if the action is associated with outgroup members. More specifically, the results of the studies demonstrate that “the content of our moral intuitions is related to an emotional tendency that differs reliably across individuals” (Inbar, Pizarro, Knobe & Bloom, 2009, p. 438). It is clear that disgust plays a significant role in morality, and that individual differences in the propensity to experience disgust is linked to differences in moral judgments. The higher disgust sensitivity an individual has, the harsher they judge the norm in question.

A similar phenomenon can also be found in Haidt, Koller, and Dias’s (1993) study, where they found that culture and socioeconomic status (SES) influenced whether a transgression was deemed morally or conventionally wrong. They found that Americans residing in Philadelphia who have a high SES did not find disgusting actions, such as cleaning your toilet with your nation’s flag, to be immoral as long as the action did not result in harmful consequences. However, in lower SES groups, and in Brazil, Haidt et al. (1993) found that disgusting actions were moralized even if the action did not result in harmful consequences. According to Haidt et al. (1993), “Philadelphia and high-SES groups made more references to the ethics of autonomy and fewer references to the ethics of community” (p. 625) than did low SES groups. This provides further support for the view that disgust often plays a significant role in morality, and that differences in the perception of disgust can lead to different moral values and judgments.

Thus far, we have seen that disgust plays a significant role in morality. More specifically, we have seen that disgust is particularly important in judging transgressions that contain physical elements of disgust, such as sexual orientation, incest, and abnormal food. But, is disgust involved in ‘pure’ forms of morality? That is, is disgust involved in moral judgments that do not contain physically disgusting stimuli? This is a question that emotion researchers Chapman and Anderson (2014) set out to determine.

### 2.3.3 An analysis of: Chapman & Anderson (2014).

#### *Introduction*

In order to further examine the effects of disgust and disgust sensitivity on moral judgment, I now turn to a recent study conducted by psychologists Hannah Chapman and Adam Anderson. In two related studies, Chapman and Anderson examined the relationship “between individual differences in the tendency to experience disgust toward physical stimuli (i.e., trait physical disgust) and reactions to pure moral transgressions” (p. 341). According to Chapman and Anderson, and as the analysis of Inbar et al.’s (2009) study suggests, individual differences in trait physical disgust (disgust sensitivity) affects moral judgment. The primary aims of Chapman and Anderson’s (2014) studies were to examine the relationship between individual differences in trait physical disgust and the wrongness of ‘pure’ moral transgressions, and to determine whether trait physical disgust is related to moralizing ambiguous social norms. Trait physical disgust is simply the tendency to experience disgust toward physical stimuli. While I do not agree with using the term ‘trait physical disgust’, as I would rather use ‘disgust sensitivity’, I use the term that the authors use in order to keep with the wording of the article under discussion. Chapman and Anderson take ‘pure’ moral transgressions to be any moral

transgression that is not limited to bodily or purity norms and does not contain physically disgusting stimuli.

According to Chapman and Anderson (2014), “if trait physical disgust is related to differences in the tendency to view social norms in a moral light, it would suggest that disgust may play an important role in defining the boundaries of the moral domain” (p. 342). In Section 1.6, I showed that disgust plays a role in whether we view a norm as conventional or moral. Recall that individuals do not judge setting the fork on the wrong side of the knife at the dinner table as immoral, but judge spitting into a glass and drinking it as immoral. According to Nichols (2002), the moralization of a norm occurs when it is continuously bound with emotion. Chapman and Anderson’s research contributes to this theory by attempting to show that transgressions that do not contain physically disgusting stimuli tend to be moralized by individuals who have high levels of trait physical disgust.

#### *Details of the study*

In the first study, Chapman and Anderson administered a shortened version of the DS to 1,200 undergraduate students, and recruited 40 individuals who scored in the bottom and top quarters to participate in the study. The participants then completed the full version of the DS. According to Chapman and Anderson, the DS “does not measure disgust toward purely moral stimuli” (p. 342), and was therefore an appropriate scale to employ.

In order to examine the relationship between trait physical disgust and moral judgment, Chapman and Anderson created 48 one to two sentence scenarios that described an action performed by a third party in a high school environment. There were three different types of scenarios: moral transgressions that were unambiguous and clearly harmful, such as a student slapping another student; social transgressions, such as a student not raising their hand to ask a

question in class; and neutral actions, such as a student sitting down to read a library book. After reading each scenario, participants were asked to rate the action described on wrongness and permissibility, on a scale from 1 to 9 (not at all to extremely; allowed or not allowed). Following this “items that were judged to be impermissible were then probed for moralization” by drawing upon “a well-validated finding from the moral development literature, namely, that moral norms are viewed as being independent of an authority’s dictates” (Chapman & Anderson, 2014, p. 342).<sup>17</sup>

The results from the first study showed that, consistent with previous work in the literature, moral transgressions were rated as more wrong than conventional transgressions, and participants with high trait physical disgust rated both moral and conventional transgressions as more wrong than individuals with low trait physical disgust, suggesting that individual differences in trait physical disgust influences moral judgments. Chapman and Anderson (2014) also conducted independent *t* tests that showed “that high-DS participants were more likely to moralize conventional transgressions—viewing them as being independent of authority—than were low-DS participants” (p. 343). This suggests that, *contra* Marsh, disgust does not need to be experienced via an empathic route in order to play a role in morality. Individuals who have higher levels of disgust sensitivity judge transgressions more harshly than those with lower levels of disgust sensitivity, suggesting that disgust, on its own, is sufficient for moral judgment. According to Chapman and Anderson (2014), “study 1 provides initial evidence that normal

---

<sup>17</sup> Chapman and Anderson seem to be working from the literature on moral psychology with regard to how children differentiate between moral and conventional norms. Not all moral norms are viewed as independent of an authority’s dictates. Many individuals conflate morality with authority (e.g., suicide bombers, terrorist organizations).

variation in trait physical disgust is related to moral judgments outside of the purity domain” (p. 343).

Due to the small sample size and because anger is sometimes correlated with disgust toward moral transgressions, Chapman and Anderson conducted a second, similar, study, that included a larger sample size and measures that controlled for anger.

Study 2 had 292 participants and controlled for anger by implementing the Trait scale of the Spielberger State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory. The scale assesses the intensity of anger as an emotional state at a particular time and how often angry feelings are experienced over time (Spielberger, 2010). According to Chapman and Anderson (2014), the Trait scale of the Spielberger State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory is “a 10-item measure of participants’ general tendency to experience anger” (p. 344), which made it a suitable scale to be implemented for the study. Study 2 also implemented a revised and improved version of the DS, the DS-R. Study 2 used a subset of stimuli from study 1, as study 2 was a shortened version of Study 1. Chapman and Anderson (2014) “selected the eight conventional scenarios with the highest mean wrongness ratings and the eight moral scenarios with the lowest mean wrongness ratings” in an effort to “to narrow the gap in mean wrongness ratings between the moral and conventional stimuli” (p. 344). Participants were asked to rate the action on wrongness and permissibility on a scale from 1 to 5 (not at all to extremely; allowed or not allowed). Similar to study 1, actions that were judged to be impermissible were probed for moralization.

The results from study 2 replicated the results from study 1. They found that trait physical disgust was a significant predictor of wrongness judgments for both moral and conventional norms, and that trait physical disgust also predicted the moralization of conventional norms. In

Chapman and Anderson's (2014) words, "replicating and extending the results of Study 1, Study 2 showed that individual differences in trait physical disgust were related to moral judgments, even when controlling for a number of potential confounds" (p. 345), such as anger. They found that anger did not influence trait disgust effects. What is more, none of the transgression items in study 2 refer to physically disgusting stimuli, suggesting that the influence of disgust in the moral domain may not be limited to bodily or purity norms.

### *Discussion*

Chapman and Anderson's research corroborates previous research on disgust sensitivity and moral judgment. Recall that Bjorklund (2004) found that individuals with higher disgust sensitivity had stronger intuitions about the moral wrongness of a situation. Those with higher disgust sensitivity judged the moral wrongness of an action more harshly than those with lower disgust sensitivity. Bjorklund's research lends further support to Chapman and Anderson's argument that disgust sensitivity is a predictor of wrongness judgments.

Significantly, Chapman and Anderson (2014) claim that "because none of our transgression items refer to physically disgusting stimuli, our data suggest that the influence of disgust in the moral domain is not limited to issues of purity or bodily norms" (p. 345). This emphasizes the role of disgust in morality, suggesting that disgust plays a significant role in morality.

Disgust, as this study suggests, is not limited to concerns of purity or bodily norms, but also concerns 'pure' moral transgressions. That is, disgust influences moral norms that do not contain physically disgusting stimuli. Also corroborating Nichols's (2002) theory, Chapman and Anderson's study also suggests that disgust is a factor in moralizing conventional norms. While they don't defend the view that disgust on its own is sufficient for morality as there can be many

behaviours that are disgusting but not immoral and not disgusting but immoral, Chapman and Anderson (2014) claim that the findings from their studies “suggest that disgust may not merely be a consequence of perceiving a moral transgression, but may—at least under some circumstances—be able to push neutral acts into the moral domain” (p. 346).

An empathy theorist might respond that when individuals are categorizing norms as moral rather than conventional, and when this categorization is due to experiencing an emotion, like disgust, the emotion is experienced through an empathic route, such as imagining what one’s fellow friends and family would say about the situation at hand and then vicariously sharing the emotion. While there might be some plausibility to this line of reasoning, I do not think that there are sufficient arguments to support this view. It appears more plausible that when an individual views another individual as immoral for spitting into a glass at a dinner party and then drinking it, they get an instant feeling of disgust, which leads them to view the act as disgusting. Empathizing with others with regard to what they would think of the situation at hand is a rather lengthy process for an automatic or instant feeling followed by a judgment. What is more, disgust sensitivity plays a role in how harsh a transgression is treated. That is, individuals differ on wrongness ratings of a transgression in some situations depending on their disgust sensitivity levels. If it happened to be the case that individuals were empathizing with others while making a moral judgment, disgust sensitivity levels should not have the influence that they do on wrongness ratings.

The following study analyzed also examines the role of disgust in morality, while examining other negative emotions, such as contempt and anger.

#### 2.3.4 An analysis of: Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt (1999).

##### *Introduction*

Thus far I have analyzed studies that focus specifically on the role of disgust in morality. There are two emotions that are related to disgust that also deserve attention. These emotions are anger and contempt.

Rozin et al. (1999) proposed the CAD (contempt/community, anger/autonomy, disgust/divinity) triad hypothesis. Given previous research, and drawing heavily on Shweder et al.'s (1997) work that there are three types of ethics (community, autonomy, and divinity), these scholars claim that contempt, anger, and disgust are moral emotions,<sup>18</sup> and although they are related emotions, they are distinguishable from one another. Rozin et al. claim that anger is linked to autonomy violations, contempt is linked to community violations, and that disgust is linked to divinity and purity violations. Rozin et al. (1999) state that

these linkages make conceptual sense. Because contempt is often linked to hierarchical relations between individuals and groups, it makes sense that contempt will often be triggered by violations of the ethics of community. Because the appraisal condition for anger is often said to be an insult or rights violation, it stands to reason that anger will often be triggered by violations of the ethics of autonomy. Finally, because disgust is an emotion that guards the "soul" from degradation, it makes sense that disgust will often be triggered by violations of the ethics of divinity (p. 576)

According to Rozin et al., these emotions are reactions to the moral violations of other individuals, and they are often experienced together in day-to-day interactions.

The CAD triad hypothesis states that all three emotions involve disapproval of others, and that anger and disgust have evolutionary roots.

---

<sup>18</sup> The term 'moral emotion' is a term used by Rozin et al. My understanding of the term is that it is an emotion that plays a role in morality.

Anger evolved for harm avoidance and threats. According to Rozin et al. (1999), anger has usually been studied in animals and humans as a non-moral emotion, but “seems to have been elaborated among human beings into a largely moral emotion” (p. 575). Support for this claim can be easily found when we reflect on situations that have angered us. Most of them tend to be immoral or unjust in nature and threaten our autonomy.

Disgust, as previously discussed throughout this research project, also has roots in evolution. Disgust is seen as distaste and leads to avoidance of a particular thing or person. According to Rozin et al. (1999), distaste, or what has also been called core disgust (disgust associated with physical things, such as maggots, rotting meat, corpses, etc.), has been elaborated over time into sociomoral disgust. According to Rozin et al. (1999), “sociomoral disgust is triggered by a variety of situations in which people behave without dignity or in which people strip others of their dignity” (p. 575).

It is important to note that contempt and anger are often linked to dignity as well. For instance, when someone angers us, or if we show contempt toward them, we usually don't hold them in high esteem, thus stripping them of their dignity. A thief angers me while an animal abuser angers me and elicits contempt, and I do not view either with dignity. The point here is to emphasize that disgust is not always linked to dignity, and that other emotions may be more closely linked to dignity.

Rozin et al. state that there is no clear animal origin for contempt. However, they do believe that it plays a significant role in morality, as they argue that it is tied to community violations. Rozin et al. (1999) claim that “like the moral forms of anger and disgust, contempt is usually said to involve a negative evaluation of others and their actions” (p. 575).

Rozin et al. (1999) tested the validity of the CAD triad hypothesis in four related studies.

*Details of the studies*

Study 1 consisted of two separate tasks that were performed by two separate groups of participants. One task asked participants to match situations to emotion faces, while the other task asked participants to match situations to emotion words. 100 American undergraduates performed the task, as well as 274 Japanese undergraduate students. Rozin et al. included both American and Japanese participants in an attempt to show that these emotions are universal and play a role in morality. Participants were given a list of 46 situations (e.g., witnessing someone burn their nation's flag; witnessing someone stealing a purse; witnessing someone eating rotten meat) where they were asked to match the situation with an emotion face or emotion word depending on which task they were given. Rozin et al. captured pictures of six different emotion faces (faces of an individual feeling disgust, anger, or contempt) to present to participants who were given the face task. Rozin et al. used the Facial Action Coding System (FACS) designed by Ekman and Friesen (1978) to ensure the accuracy of the pictures. The FACS is a comprehensive method of describing facial activity, and is widely used in emotion research.

Rozin et al. (1999) found that for community violations, American participants (Japanese mean given in parentheses) who were given the face task assigned a mean of 66% (53%) to the contempt face, 27% (34%) to the angry face, and 8% (14%) to the disgusted face. American participants given the word task assigned a mean of 28% (26) to the word 'contempt', 20% (17%) to the word 'anger', and 9% (18%) to the word 'disgust.' For violations of autonomy, participants rated anger as the highest for both the face and word task. American participants who were given the face task assigned a mean of 57% (53%) to the angry face, 28% (20%) to the contempt face, and 15% (18%) to the disgusted face. American participants who were given the word task assigned a mean of 58% (46%) to the word 'angry', 19% (25%) to the word

‘contempt’, and 10% (11%) to the word ‘disgust.’ For violations of divinity, American participants who were give the face task assigned a mean of 71% (53%) to the disgust face, 19% (21%) to the contempt face, and 10% (26%) to the angry face. American participants who were given the word task for divinity violations assigned a mean of 79% (46%) to the word ‘disgust’, 3% (15%) to the word ‘contempt’, and 2% (3%) to the word ‘anger.’

There are significant differences in the mean responses for Japanese and American participants, especially for divinity violations. Given this, it is not clear that these emotions are universal, and to show support for the CAD triad hypothesis, these results need to be qualified. However, Rozin et al.’s study is important because it emphasizes the link between emotion and morality, and is therefore significant when attempting to determine which emotions play a role in morality, and that is why I have included it in my analysis.

The results of study 1 supports the theory that emotion plays a significant role in morality, and that the three emotions are distinguished from one another. It also supports the CAD triad hypothesis, linking community violations to contempt, autonomy violations to anger, and divinity violations to disgust. Acknowledging that they may not have accounted for cross-cultural differences and ambiguity in the scenarios, Rozin et al. (1999) conducted a second study that “addressed the moral categorization of situations...by informing participants about Shweder’s three ethics (community, autonomy, and divinity) and allowing them to categorize the situation themselves” (p. 581).

Study 2 was similar to study 1 with the inclusion of information and the categorization of Shweder’s ethics. Shweder’s ethics, as presented to participants in study 2, are:

1. [The ethics of Autonomy] Individual freedom/rights violations. In these cases an action is wrong because it directly hurts another person, or infringes upon his/her rights or freedoms as an individual. To decide if an action is wrong, you think about things like harm, rights, justice, freedom, fairness, individualism, and the importance of individual choice and liberty.
2. [The ethics of Community] Community/hierarchy violations. In these cases an action is wrong because a person fails to carry out his or her duties within a community, or to the social hierarchy within the community. To decide if an action is wrong, you think about things like duty, role-obligation, respect for authority, loyalty, group honor, interdependence, and the preservation of the community.
3. [The ethics of Divinity] Divinity/purity violations. In these cases a person disrespects the sacredness of God, or causes impurity or degradation to himself/herself, or to others. To decide if an action is wrong, you think about things like sin, the natural order of things, sanctity, and the protection of the soul or the world from degradation and spiritual defilement (Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999, pp. 575-76)

Study 2 included 100 Japanese students and 36 American students. Results were similar to study 1, and thus will not be further discussed. What is of importance is that Rozin et al. found that the “results...reveal considerable disagreement among individuals both within and between cultures” (p. 581). This supports the trend seen in Bjorklund’s research as well as Chapman and Anderson’s research. While there does appear to be some universal aspects of morality, there are still differences between cultures and individuals, and these are usually dependent on the extent to which the emotions are felt in individuals. What is more Rozin, et al. claim that

the moral-emotion triad hypothesis states that there is a mapping between the three other-critical moral emotions and Shweder's three moral ethics.<sup>19</sup> Within any culture, actions that are violations of the ethics of autonomy will be most likely to elicit anger; violations of the ethics of community will be most likely to elicit contempt, and violations of the ethics of divinity will be most likely to elicit disgust. We do not claim that the mapping is perfect, and we expect to find many individual violations that do not primarily elicit the predicted emotion. However, we predict that, averaged across many violations, the relationship will hold and will be substantial (p. 576)

---

<sup>19</sup> While I do not agree with the term ‘moral ethics’, I use it in order to keep with the wording of the article under discussion.

Support for this claim can be found in Haidt et al. (1999). While they found that culture and SES influenced moral values, and that some autonomy and community violations elicited disgust, others were judged to be violations of purity or divinity.

Rozin et al. (1999) claim that the results from studies 1 and 2 support the CAD triad hypothesis, namely that there is a link between morality and specific emotions, although there may be several explanations for this link. Rozin et al. (1999) state that “one possibility is that some of the emotion-situation mapping may have to do with the seriousness-negativity of the moral violations or how bad the person involved would feel” (p. 581-82), claiming that there are suggestions of this in study 1.<sup>20</sup> In order to assess the influence of seriousness-negativity or ‘badness’ in a situation, Rozin et al. conducted study 3.

Study 3 consisted of 21 American college students who were presented with the 46 situations from studies 1 and 2. They were instructed to read the situations and determine how the person in the scenario would feel on a scale from 0 (not bad at all) to 4 (extremely bad). In order to analyze the data, “the mean of the badness ratings (how bad the person would feel) for each of the situations by the 21 American participants was correlated with the moral code (study 2) and face-word (study 1) ratings made by other American participants” (Rozin et al., 1999, p. 583). Of importance, Rozin et al. (1999) found that correcting for the influence of seriousness-negativity or the ‘badness’ of a situation did not significantly alter the results from the previous studies, suggesting that the CAD triad relationships are present.

To further prove the validity of the CAD triad hypothesis, a fourth, and final, study was conducted. Twenty American participants were asked to read the 46 situations and to make the

---

<sup>20</sup> I believe that this claim is not fully supported. However, I mention it for the sake of completeness.

face that was appropriate for the person in the situation. Participants were asked to make the face after 5 seconds of reading the situation. If spontaneous facial expressions were made directly after reading the situation, the spontaneous facial expression was used. The expressions were videotaped and analyzed using FACS by a certified rater.

Rozin et al. used a very simple method in order to analyze the data. They identified particular facial movements that were associated with the contempt, anger, and disgust displayed by the participants. The results of study 4 further support the CAD triad hypothesis. According to Rozin et al. (1999) “the CAD triad hypothesis predicts that the frequency of each of the designated facial units expressed in response to a situation should correspond to the moral categorization score of Americans for that situation...the results...strongly support the hypothesis” (p. 584).

### *Discussion*

Given the details and summaries of the four studies conducted by Rozin et al., it is evident that emotions play a significant role in morality, and that certain violations are linked to specific emotions (e.g., divinity violations are linked to disgust). Because these violations are linked to certain emotions and thus play a role in morality, these emotions are classified by Rozin et al. as ‘moral emotions.’ Rozin et al., drawing on work from Shweder et al. (1997), argue that the three emotions critical for morality are contempt, anger, and disgust, with anger and disgust having animal precursors. According to Rozin et al. (1999), the results from the four studies present evidence for the CAD triad hypothesis by “using emotion words, recognition of facial expressions of emotion, and actual facial expressions of emotion” (p. 585) to determine the roles of contempt, anger, and disgust in morality.

It is evident given what has been discussed in this research project thus far that disgust often motivates moral behaviour and moral judgment. Anger may play a role in morality to a certain extent. Everyday interactions are sufficient to support the view that anger plays a role in morality. For example, if we see someone being bullied, we may feel angry and judge the bully to be an immoral person. Here, we can see the link between anger and autonomy. When a person is being bullied, their autonomy is threatened.

Further support for the view that anger plays a role in morality comes from 1.6.8 and 1.6.9. Recall that some psychopaths have poor anger control. Baron-Cohen (2011) recounts a story of a psychopath who felt insulted or a sense of injustice when an individual momentarily gazed at him. That is, he felt that his autonomy or authority was threatened. The lack of anger control resulted in the psychopath assaulting the individual. Lacking control when too angry can lead to this sort of behaviour. For instance, many individuals, when overly angry at unjust or immoral acts, will seek revenge on the perpetrators which sometimes lead to immoral behaviour. Anger, in moderation, can be a good thing since it can lead to judging transgressions as immoral, but when anger is experienced in excess, it can lead to immoral behaviour, such as verbal or physical assault. The point here is that anger may need to be elicited or experienced in order to understand that a wrong has occurred, or you may understand that a wrong has occurred and get angry, but if excessively experienced, anger can lead to immoral behaviour, and many psychopaths feel higher levels of anger than normal individuals. The same trend can be found for other emotions, such as disgust. Disgust can be a good indicator of immoral behaviour and thus lead to avoidance. However, when experienced in excess, disgust can lead to immoral judgments, such as ostracizing outgroup members.

Contempt, an emotion that has yet to be fully discussed in this research project, needs further empirical support if it is to be considered an important emotion for morality. Shame, a complex emotion, has been linked to morality by some researchers (Maibom, 2010), and contempt can lead to shame for those who the contempt is directed toward. However, it is unclear whether contempt is important for morality. A recent study by Hutcherson and Gross sheds light on this issue, in addition to further exploring disgust and anger. Acknowledging that there is support for the CAD triad hypothesis, Hutcherson and Gross put forth their own version of a model of morality that is social-functionalist in nature, but differs from the CAD triad hypothesis.

### 2.3.5 An analysis of: Hutcherson & Gross (2011).

#### *Introduction*

Hutcherson and Gross (2011) adopt a social-functionalist approach regarding the negative emotions anger, disgust, and contempt. Although they do not explicitly define what a social-functionalist approach is, I gather that it is an approach that suggests that specific emotions have a specific social or moral function. Hutcherson and Gross's social-functionalist approach, similar to Rozin et al.'s (1999) CAD triad hypothesis which is also considered a social-functionalist approach, states that anger, disgust, and contempt are related, but distinguishable, emotions, and each emotion is associated with different actions and consequences. One of the main research questions put forth by Hutcherson and Gross (2011) is whether "there are meaningful differences among the emotions described by these three terms, and if so, what are they" (p. 719)? The relevance of this question is important with regard to morality. If related emotions have distinct cognitive-behavioural outputs, then it may not be the case, as previously argued by some researchers (Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2006), that valence alone influences moral judgment. It is

also an important question to answer because if there are meaningful differences between the emotions, it suggests that similar emotions function differently socially and morally.

The CAD triad hypothesis, as discussed above, considers each emotion to be separate, claiming that the three emotions result from the moral domain and involve three different types of ethics (community, autonomy, and divinity). However qualified the CAD needs to be, it does have some relevance regarding the social and moral function of emotions. The CAD goes some way to suggest that contempt, anger, and disgust often play roles in morality.

The social-functional account proposed by Hutcherson and Gross (2011) suggests that “anger, moral disgust, and contempt should be differentiable on the basis of appraisals that elicit one emotion more strongly than the others, with corresponding differences in the behaviours consequent to each emotion” (p. 721). With the exception of Rozin et al.’s (1999) study, little empirical work has been conducted on distinguishing these three emotions, and some models conflate the emotions, suggesting that more empirical work needs to be conducted in order to determine how distinguishable, and to what extent, these emotions are. This was the primary aim in Hutcherson and Gross’s (2011) research.

#### *Details of the studies*

Hutcherson and Gross conducted five studies in order to determine how distinguishable the emotions are and to what extent, and also to determine the role the emotions play in morality. Study 1 focused specifically on disgust. The goal in study 1 was to “address whether there is a specifically moral version of disgust, responsive to purely social offenses and differentiable from feeling ‘grossed out’” (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011, p. 723). By ‘grossed out’, Hutcherson and Gross mean any sort of disgust that does not necessarily elicit moral condemnation (e.g., biting into a pastry to find that it is rotten).<sup>151</sup> psychology students completed questionnaires that

consisted of a subset of the questions used in Rozin et al.'s (1999) study. All questionnaires were worded to describe an individual committing an offense (e.g., someone embezzles from a bank). The offenses include violations of community, autonomy, and divinity.

Hutcherson and Gross (2011) found that across community violations, moral disgust, which Hutcherson and Gross view as an elaborated version of non-social disgust (elicited by disease, decay, death, etc.), received higher intensity ratings than any other emotion. Across autonomy violations, moral disgust was again found to be rated significantly higher than any emotion. Across divinity violations, grossed out was rated the highest, but there was no significant difference between grossed out and moral disgust, and both were rated higher than any emotion. The results from study 1 suggest that moral disgust is not limited to divinity violations, but to moral violations more generally. The results of the study also suggest that moral disgust and being grossed out may be two different emotional entities. Moral disgust is disgust elicited when an immoral action has been committed, whereas feeling grossed out can occur without immoral action, but the two are often linked to one another, and I have treated them as interchangeable terms thus far. Being grossed out, as one might be when they see someone spit into a glass and drink it, can lead to moral condemnation, just as viewing morally disgusting behaviour can lead to physical disgust or feeling grossed out.

According to Hutcherson and Gross (2011), "although the data do suggest that moral disgust and grossed out are two different emotional entities, they do not yet rule out an account in which moral disgust is simply used to express the sum of other negative emotions, including anger and contempt" (p. 725). Studies 2 and 3 therefore identified specific appraisals that differentiated disgust, anger, and contempt.

Study 2 differentiated anger and moral disgust. 131 psychology undergraduate students completed one of three questionnaires. In the first version of the questionnaire, violations were worded such that the participant was presented as the victim. In the second version of the questionnaire, violations were worded such that the victim was a friend of the participant. In the third version of the questionnaire, violations were worded such that the victim was an ‘other’, or unbeknownst to the participant (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011).

The results from study 2 show that in the ‘self’ condition, 42% of participants felt that anger was the best descriptive word. In the ‘friend’ condition, 40% of participants felt that anger was the best descriptive word, and 20% thought that anger was the best descriptive word in the ‘other’ condition. Hutcherson and Gross found the opposite trend for moral disgust in these conditions.

Hutcherson and Gross (2011) state that

Varying the recipient of harm had a substantial effect on the emotions felt. Consistent with the prediction that anger and its associated action tendencies might be most adaptive when the harm directly implicates the self, anger was highest for the self condition, lower in the friend condition, and lowest in the other condition. Additionally, as endorsement of anger decreased across the three conditions, endorsement frequency of moral disgust increased... This pattern is consistent with moral disgust being concerned with the intentions or maliciousness of the perpetrator, whereas anger is concerned with attack against direct threat (p. 726)

With regard to one of my main research questions, which is determining which emotions play a significant role in morality, it is evident given the previous analyses, as well as the analysis of Hutcherson and Gross’s (2011) research thus far, that disgust plays a significant role in morality. The analyses have shown how disgust, when elicited or manipulated, influence morality. As discussed in 1.6, disgust plays an important role in determining which norms will be moral and which will be conventional, and also plays an important role in judging moral

transgressions. Given the analyses of the studies in this section thus far, it is fair to claim that we often view individuals who we believe have bad or malicious intentions as disgusting and therefore immoral. This line of reasoning was also present in Inbar et al.'s (2009) study where participants linked immoral behaviour to intention. Simply eliciting disgust in situations where we perceive someone to have bad intentions can lead to judging that individual as an immoral person. Recall Wheatly and Haidt's (2005) study where hypnotizable subjects viewed Dan as immoral simply because disgust was elicited when they heard the words 'take' or 'often', where many believed that he was up to no good. It is evident that disgust plays a significant role in morality, and extends to morality more generally and is not limited to divinity or purity norms.

Hutcherson and Gross's research also shows that anger is a separate emotion from disgust, and may also play an active role in morality. Consistent with evolutionary theories that discuss anger, Hutcherson and Gross's study emphasizes that anger is most elicited when there is a direct threat to oneself and is also elicited, to a lesser extent, when perceiving a friend or bystander who has been threatened. This suggests that anger may play a role in morality, especially in the ethics of autonomy as Rozin et al. (1999) argue, although may not be as significant as disgust. For example, if someone stole my books from my office, I would be outraged and consider whoever stole my books immoral. That is, the action of theft, anger, and judging the perpetrator as immoral go together. If I witness a friend or colleague's books being stolen, I will still be angry, to a lesser extent, and consider the thief immoral. In some instances, we may feel angrier if the theft or action in question had been committed toward a close friend or family member than ourselves. The point here is that being angry can cause us to judge an action as immoral. Think of when you hear about an unjust act being committed. Chances are you feel angry and feel that the perpetrator is immoral. You may also feel disgusted at the same time,

which suggests that emotions co-occur. Thus, it is evident that both disgust and anger play a role in morality, although the role of disgust may be more significant than anger. One reason for this, as Hutcherson and Gross (2011) claim, is that disgust tends to be a longer-lasting emotion and is associated with a longer period of avoidance than anger.<sup>21</sup>

Briefly, I want to review and analyze studies 4 and 5 of Hutcherson and Gross's (2011) research, as they lend support to the sentimentalist account of morality and also emphasize the distinction between moral emotions.<sup>22</sup> Studies 4 and 5 examined the perceived consequences associated with moral emotions.

Study 4 included 46 participants from Stanford University and the surrounding community. The study asked participants to complete a series of questionnaires that asked which negative target emotions they would rather be a recipient of (e.g., moral disgust, anger, fear, grossed out, sad, etc.). Answering this question may help determine which emotions are important for morality. According to Hutcherson and Gross (2011), "compared with moral disgust, participants by a wide margin preferred to be the recipient of someone's anger...participants also strongly preferred to be the target of anger than someone's contempt...and to anger rather than sadden someone" (p. 729).

58% of participants who claimed that they would rather be the recipient of someone's anger rather than disgust claimed that anger could be more easily reversed and that disgust was a longer lasting emotion, and 60% claimed that anger was less of a judgment of a person's moral character than disgust. According to Hutcherson and Gross (2011), "a similar set of justifications

---

<sup>21</sup> While this claim is not fully supported by Hutcherson and Gross, I include it for the sake of completeness as this claim is a part of their overall argument,

<sup>22</sup> Again, the term 'moral emotion' is a term used by the authors, and I assume adopted from Rozin et al.

was provided by participants who preferred to be the target of contempt to moral disgust” (p. 729). What is more, none of the participants said that contempt would be more of a judgment of a person’s moral character than disgust. According to Hutcherson and Gross (2011), the results of study 4 show that moral disgust is the most indicative of a person’s moral character, and is the most damaging emotion because it is the hardest to undo. However, this line of reasoning does not necessarily follow. What follows from the results of study 4 is that some emotions play more of a role than others in the judgment of a person’s character.

The results of study 4 also suggest that contempt may not play a role in morality. None of the participants said that contempt would be more of a judgment of a person’s moral character than disgust. This suggests that disgust is one of the most important emotions for morality because it is highly indicative of one’s moral character, and emphasizes that contempt does not play a role in morality, but instead is an emotion linked with competence, or not using one’s full ability. Competence is not usually linked to morality, but linked to ability, skill, and capability. If someone is incompetent at cooking, we usually do not consider that person immoral. Rozin et al. claim that contempt is linked to community violations and is therefore a moral emotion. However, many community violations,<sup>23</sup> such as not participating in a neighbourhood watch program, may not be a violation of a moral norm but rather a conventional norm. If it is the case that community violations are generally conventional transgressions and not moral transgressions, then contempt may not be an important emotion for morality. Study 5 sheds light on this issue.

---

<sup>23</sup> Contempt is also linked with other violations, such as authority. For example, if a teenager continuously disobeys their parents when asked not to skip classes at school, they tend to be looked at with contempt by their parents and teachers.

Study 5 consisted of 27 participants from Stanford University. Participants were asked to recall events where someone did something immoral, idiotic, or relevant and negative to themselves or to someone else and to describe the emotions that they experienced. Of relevance, Hutcherson and Gross (2011) found moral disgust to be the emotion most strongly associated with a person's moral character. Disgust was highly associated with immoral behaviour. They also found that anger was associated with a person's moral character, although it was a weaker association than disgust. Contempt was not found to be associated with a person's moral character, although it did co-occur with anger at times. According to Hutcherson and Gross (2011), contempt is "specifically and uniquely associated with judgments related to incompetence, stupidity, and status, but not to immorality" (p. 732). It is interesting that the effect was the same whether it was oneself that was effected or another individual. Generally, individuals are more effected by an event if it happened to them rather than another individual, unless the individual is a family member or spouse. According to Hutcherson and Gross's results, the effect was the same for both oneself and another individual.

### *Discussion*

As Hutcherson and Gross's research shows, disgust and anger play a role in morality, while, *contra* Rozin et al., contempt does not. Instead, contempt may play a role in judging conventional transgressions. Of particular importance, Hutcherson and Gross (2011) claim that "disgust seems to most clearly emerge as specifically and uniquely tied to intentional, immoral behaviour" (p. 733). This sits well with what has been discussed in this research project thus far (e.g., Inbar et al., 2009; Wheatly & Haidt, 2005), suggesting once again that disgust often plays an active role in morality. If disgust is tied to intentionality, as Hutcherson and Gross and Inbar et al. claim, then it is suggestive that we often view disgusting behaviours that are immoral as intentional or attempting to cause some sort of harm. If this is the case, it is not difficult to draw

the conclusion, as Hutcherson and Gross do, that disgust is a longer lasting emotion and that the effects of disgust are more harmful to one's character than anger or contempt.

Hutcherson and Gross's research also expands on, and helps to qualify, some of Rozin et al.'s claims. For instance, Rozin et al. claim that anger and disgust are important emotions for morality, and Hutcherson and Gross's research corroborate this claim. However, while Rozin et al. claim that contempt plays a role in morality, Hutcherson and Gross's research has discounted this claim, showing that contempt does not play a role in morality but instead serves a function in judging conventional transgressions.

### **2.3.6 Conclusion**

In this section, I analyzed five studies that focus on how negative emotions influence morality. In Bjorklund's study, I discussed and analyzed the influence of disgust in moral judgment, and found that disgust is an emotion that plays an important role in morality, and that disgust sensitivity is a good predictor of moral judgment. After analyzing Inbar et al.'s studies, I found, again, disgust to be an important emotion for morality, and that individual differences in the propensity to experience disgust are linked to differences in moral judgment. Similar to what I found in Bjorklund's research, after analyzing Chapman and Anderson's research, I found that disgust sensitivity is a significant predictor of wrongness judgments. I also found that the influence of disgust in the moral domain is not limited to bodily or purity norms. These three studies emphasize the important role of disgust in morality, and show how disgust, when elicited or manipulated, can influence morality. These studies also corroborate Prinz's claim, that negative emotions, like disgust, significantly motivate moral judgment. Thus, I conclude that disgust is significant for morality.

Rozin et al. and Hutcherson and Gross's research focus on multiple negative emotions in morality. Rozin et al. argue that contempt, anger, and disgust are important for morality and that each emotion is tied to a specific type of ethics. When analyzing this study, I found that these claims are unfounded, although I agree with the authors that disgust is important for morality and that anger may play a role in morality. Hutcherson and Gross use Rozin et al.'s research and shows that disgust and anger are important for morality, but contempt is not. After analyzing this study, I found that both disgust and anger play a role in morality while contempt does not. Rather, contempt may serve a function in judging conventional transgressions. Thus, with regard to negative emotions, disgust and anger are important for morality.

## **2.4 Positive emotions**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

Thus far, my analysis has consisted of examining the role of negative emotions in morality. Although positive emotions have received less attention than negative emotions in moral psychology, they arguably deserve equal attention. Positive emotions are generally thought to influence moral judgment and increase the likelihood of helping behaviour. However, little work has been conducted on specific positive emotions and the social and moral influences of these emotions. This section aims to contribute to this research by analyzing three studies that examine the role of positive emotion in morality.

The first study examines how manipulating emotions influences moral judgment. The first study is brief, and attempts to show that positive affect plays a role in moral judgment. The second study builds on the first study and focuses on mirth and elevation in moral judgment. The third study examines the effects of elevation, gratitude, and admiration on morality.

#### 2.4.2 An analysis of: Valdesolo & DeSteno (2006).

##### *Introduction*

In an attempt to contribute to the literature on emotion and morality, Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006) conducted a brief study to show the contextual sensitivity of affect. More specifically, their study aims to show that inducing positive affect can reduce the perceived negativity of a moral situation, suggesting that positive affect plays a specific role in morality. Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006) use the classic Trolley and Footbridge Dilemmas (discussed in detail in 1.6.5) as their main examples to show that inducing positive affect might “reduce the perceived negativity, or aversion ‘signal,’ of any potential moral violation and, thereby, increase utilitarian responding” (p. 476).

Acknowledging that both cognitive and affective systems are at work when making moral judgments, Valdesolo and DeSteno use The Trolley Dilemma in their study for two reasons: 1) it provides an opportunity to replicate work, such as Greene, Nystrom, Engell, Darley, and Cohen (2004), and 2) it is an appropriate control condition because “given that the lack of negative prepotent emotional response in the trolley dilemma, we expected that heightened positive affect would not influence responses to it” (pp. 476/77). Previous work by Greene et al., (2004), as discussed above, suggests that dilemmas, such as The Trolley Dilemma, do not arouse a lot of emotion, and are therefore controlled by the cognitive processes of the brain, whereas dilemmas such as The Footbridge Dilemma involve increased activation of affective systems due to the physical contact in the scenario. As a result, inducing positive affect in The Trolley Dilemma should not influence the typical utilitarian response because emotion does not play a significant role in this dilemma. However, inducing positive affect and then asking a participant to make a judgment should influence the judgment made in The Footbridge Dilemma because this moral dilemma is bound with emotion.

### *Details of the study*

The study included data from 79 participants. Participants were placed in either a neutral or positive affect condition. Participants in the neutral condition were shown a 5 minute clip from a segment about a small Spanish village. Participants in the positive affect condition were shown a 5 minute clip from Saturday Night Live, a late-night comedy show. Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006) state that “positive affect was assessed as the mean response to a four-item feeling-descriptor measure consisting of the following items rated on 7-point scales: happy, content, pleasant, good” (p. 477). Valdesolo and DeSteno predicted that participants who viewed the positive affect clip would report a more positive emotional state.

After participants watched the clip, they were presented with the dilemmas in a random order. Participants read the dilemmas on a computer screen. After reading the dilemma, they were asked to indicate whether a described course of action (e.g., pushing the large man off the footbridge) would be appropriate (utilitarian decision) or inappropriate<sup>24</sup> (deontological decision) (Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2006).

Valdesolo and DeSteno found that, as predicted, participants who viewed the positive affect clip reported a more positive affective state ( $M=4.57$ ) compared to participants who viewed the neutral clip ( $M=2.77$ ). More importantly, they found that participants having increased positivity increased the odds of selecting the utilitarian judgment in the Footbridge Dilemma (Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2006). As predicted, increased positivity did not influence judgment in the Trolley Dilemma. As Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006) state, “more heightened positivity increased the odds of selecting the appropriate (i.e., utilitarian) response to the

---

<sup>24</sup> According to Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006), the appropriate judgment is the utilitarian judgment and the inappropriate judgment is the deontological judgment.

footbridge dilemma by a factor of 3.8,  $\chi^2(1, N=79)=3.90$ ,  $prep=.89$ , thereby confirming our central prediction” (p. 477).

### *Discussion*

According to Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006), the results of the study “demonstrate that the causal efficacy of emotion in guiding moral judgment does not reside solely in responses evoked by the considered dilemma, but also resides in the affective characteristics of the environment... a skilled manipulation of individuals’ affective states can shape their moral judgments.” (p. 477). That is, affect influences moral judgment, and individual differences in moral judgment is dependent upon their affective state. Similar to some of the studies analyzed in 2.3, Valdesolo and DeSteno argue that individual differences in affective states influence moral judgment. Recall that Bjorklund and Chapman and Anderson argue that individual differences in disgust sensitivity are a good predictor of wrongness judgments. Valdesolo and DeSteno claim that being in a positive affective state influences moral judgment; the more heightened your positive affect, the more likely you are to make a utilitarian judgment.

Although this study is quite broad in the sense that specific positive emotions are not identified and positive emotions are examined and discussed quite generally, this study suggests that heightened positive affect increases the likelihood that in given moral dilemmas, individuals will favour calculated judgments over judgments governed by emotion. That is, the more positive the mood that an individual is in, the more likely they are to override judgments that are guided by emotion.

One way to interpret these findings is to suggest that being in a heightened positive mood, depending on the emotion experienced, may allow one to be more utilitarian. Recall from 1.6.8 and 1.6.9 that psychopaths do not seem to be impaired in experiencing positive emotions,

and that some psychopaths make calculated decisions instead of decisions based on harm or fairness principles. Although this is speculation, it is suggestive that positive mood, depending on the emotion induced, may allow for one to be more utilitarian. For instance, if the positively valenced emotion experienced is mirth, then given the results from Algoe and Haidt (2009) and Strohminger et al. (2011) which will be discussed below, one would expect a utilitarian judgment to be made. Given Strohminger et al.'s examination of mirth and the method used to induce mirth, Valdesolo and DeSteno probably induced the positive emotion of mirth, as the same induction method was used (watching a funny video clip), and not another positive emotion. What is more, Strohminger et al. (2011) state that "Valdesolo and DeSteno's results may not be related to positive affect but rather to the distinct properties of mirth" (p. 296). This explanation also supports the view that related emotions are distinct and have different social and moral functions. I will now turn to Strohminger et al.'s study in order to further analyze Valdesolo and DeSteno's claim that positive affect shapes moral judgment, and to determine the role of positive emotion in morality.

#### 2.4.3 An analysis of: Strohminger, Lewis, & Meyer (2011).

##### *Introduction*

Strohminger et al. (2011) point out that positive emotions are usually viewed as having beneficial consequences, and are viewed as having similar cognitive-behavioural effects to one another. Positive emotions are usually viewed as having positive influences on morality, leading individuals to display moral behaviour. Positive emotions are usually given less attention in emotion research than negative emotions, and are less understood as a result. Strohminger et al. set out to distinguish the cognitive-behavioural effects between mirth and elevation, suggesting that they have different social functions.

The main aims of Strohminger et al.'s (2011) research are to examine the extent that positive affect in general has on utilitarian moral judgment, and to determine whether different positive emotions can lead to distinct influences on morality. As mentioned, Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006) found that increased positive affect can lead to utilitarian moral judgments and the violation of deontological norms. Strohminger et al. set out to determine how much the degree of a particular emotion affects the permissibility ratings of moral dilemmas.

Before delving into the details of the study, it is worthwhile to define the emotions being examined.

Elevation is “a response to acts of moral beauty in which we feel as though we have become (for a moment) less selfish, and we want to act accordingly” (Algoe & Haidt, 2009, p. 2). It is the name for the emotional response to witnessing acts of virtue (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). According to Algoe and Haidt (2009), “elevation is elicited by acts of charity, gratitude, fidelity, generosity, or any other strong display of virtue. It leads to distinctive physical feelings; a feeling of ‘dilation’ or opening in the chest, combined with the feeling that one has been uplifted or ‘elevated’ in some way” (p. 2). Elevation differs from other positive emotions, such as happiness. It is a more complex emotion, unlike happiness which is a basic emotion, and has a different function than happiness.

Mirth is another term for amusement, and usually involves laughter. According to Strohminger et al. (2011), mirth is the positive emotion associated with humour.

#### *Details of the study*

In order to analyze the influence of positive emotions on moral judgment, the researchers used 12 audio clips for three different emotion conditions (mirth, elevation, and neutral). The

audio clips were roughly 4 minutes long. The clips for mirth included recordings from a stand-up comedy. The clips for elevation included inspiring stories from *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, which is a series of books about real uplifting events. The neutral clips included lectures from professors. They also used 24 moral dilemmas that appear to have utilitarian and deontological moral decision-making, such as The Trolley and Footbridge dilemmas discussed in 1.6.5.

55 undergraduate students participated in the study. Participants were asked to wear headphones while listening to one of the clips they were randomly assigned to. Participants did not hear the same clip more than once. There were a total of 12 successive trials per participant, and each emotion-induced clip was randomly paired with one of the 24 dilemmas. After hearing each audio clip, participants were asked to rate the clip on a scale from 1-6 (1 = not at all funny/uplifting/interesting, 6 = extremely funny/uplifting/interesting). After rating the clip, participants were asked to read a moral dilemma and then rate how permissible a deontological violation (e.g., pushing the large man off the footbridge) was on a scale from 1-6 (1 = forbidden, 6 = completely permissible).

Strohminger et al. (2011) found that positive valenced induced audio clips (audio clips that elicited positive emotions) did not account reliably for permissibility ratings regarding moral dilemmas ( $p > .4$ ). More specifically, they found that there was no reliable effect of positive valence. *Contra* Valdesolo and DeSteno, this suggests that positive valence in and of itself does not influence moral judgment. Instead, what influences moral judgment is the type of emotion elicited. Strohminger et al. (2011) state that “the valence-based approach to positive emotion has permeated many areas of research, including moral psychology” (p. 295). However, given that there was no reliable effect of positive valence, different emotions may serve different moral functions, and valence, by itself, is not a good indicator of predicting moral judgment.

With regard to the mirth condition, where participants were given a mirth audio clip which was then paired with a moral dilemma, Strohminger et al. (2011) found a positive correlation between mirth and favouring deontological violations ( $t = 2.34, p=0.02$ ). According to Strohminger et al. (2010), “the higher the rated ‘funniness,’ the more the participants tended to favour deontological violations” (p. 298). This suggests that mirth has an appraisal tendency of irreverence (Strohminger, Lewis & Myer, 2011), meaning that these deontological violations are not taken seriously. These results also shed light on Valdesolo and DeSteno’s research. Valdesolo and DeSteno claim that individual differences in moral judgment are dependent on their affective state—increased positive affect leads to utilitarian moral judgments. However, as Strohminger et al. point out, it may be that the specific emotion itself, e.g., mirth, and not valence, influences moral judgment.

With regard to the elevation condition, elevation did not reliably account for permissibility ratings regarding the moral dilemmas. However, when a regression analysis<sup>25</sup> was performed, Strohminger et al. found that there was in fact a correlation between elevation and lower permissibility ratings for the moral dilemmas ( $t = 2.87, p=0.004$ ). Strohminger et al. (2011) also found that “a reliable linear trend emerges in the permissibility ratings across the three emotion conditions, with mirth leading to the highest mean permissiveness and elevation the lowest” (p. 299). One interesting finding, according to Strohminger et al. (2011), is that when the top-rated emotion clip (or clips in the case of a tie) was “taken for each participant—the funniest, most interesting, or most elevating—a reliable linear trend emerges in the permissibility

---

<sup>25</sup> A regression analysis is a statistical process that estimates the contribution of a set of variables towards predicting a variable.

ratings across the three emotion conditions, with mirth leading to the highest mean permissiveness and elevation the lowest” ( $t(51) = 2.44, p = 0.018$ ) (p. 299).

### *Discussion*

The results of the study suggest that experiencing mirth generally leads to the tolerance of deontological violations while elevation leads to the rejection of deontological violations. Contrary to previous research, the results of this study suggest that positive emotions in general do not lead to specific moral judgments or prosocial behaviour. It is usually thought that positive affect in general has a specific effect on morality (Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2006). However, as Strohminger et al. (2011) have shown, not all positive emotions lead to the same moral judgment, and positive emotions, such as mirth and elevation, have different moral functions. According to Strohminger et al. (2011), “the present study supports the view that positive emotions are functionally distinct, and influence decision-making according to emotion-specific appraisals” (p. 299). The differences between mirth and elevation on moral judgment suggests that the specific properties of positive emotions, in this case mirth and elevation, can have different consequences for morality, and that positive emotions may serve very different social and moral functions.

The results suggest that mirth and elevation have different influences on moral judgment. Strohminger et al. (2011) state that “mirth’s appraisal tendency may be to increase irreverence and remove the gravitas of otherwise serious ideas. In the context of moral judgment, this suggests that mirth would increase the permissiveness for moral violations, including deontological violations” (p. 296).<sup>26</sup> This suggests that mirth plays a role in increasing the

---

<sup>26</sup> Note that according to Strohminger et al., violating a deontological norm is equivalent to violating a moral norm. It appears that Strohminger et al. consider much of morality to be deontological in nature. Strohminger et al.’s

permissiveness for some moral violations, such as some deontological violations. The analysis provided by Strohminger et al. privileges deontology, as they suggest that a deontological violation is a moral violation. A deontological violation does not necessarily lead to a moral violation. That is, calculated moral judgments or utilitarian moral judgments are not always immoral, as Strohminger et al. seem to suggest.<sup>27</sup> Rather, utilitarianism applies a different framework to morality than deontology. It is important to note that the analysis provided by Strohminger et al. that appears to privilege deontology is not my view.

Elevation appears to play a role in positive morality. According to Strohminger et al., this may be because elevation is generally associated with moral reverence and is often associated with moral precursors, such as helping behaviour. Strohminger et al. (2011) state that “when it comes to the footbridge-type moral dilemmas, elevation might make people less likely to endorse the violence or harm entailed by utilitarianism, instead encouraging decisions that seem ‘decent’ rather than cold and calculating” (p. 296). I now turn to the final study that will be analyzed in this section in order to further understand the role of elevation, among other positive emotions, in morality.

#### 2.4.4 An analysis of: Algoe & Haidt (2009).

##### *Introduction*

Algoe and Haidt (2009), acknowledging that there is a lack of literature with regard to positive emotions and morality, also attempt to show that positive emotions are different from one another and thus have different functions. They claim that elevation, gratitude, and

---

view is not to be confused with my own. I do not hold that a deontological violation is always equivalent to a moral violation.

<sup>27</sup> This line of reasoning can be applied to most moral theories and differs depending on which moral theory you hold to be most plausible.

admiration differ from other positive emotions, such as joy or happiness, and also differ from each other. Through their research, they attempt to show that elevation promotes prosocial and affiliative behaviour, that gratitude motivates improved relationships with benefactors, and that admiration motivates self-improvement. They claim that these emotions are phylogenetically newer than basic emotions. Although Algoe and Haidt talk of prosocial behaviour instead of moral behaviour, the term ‘prosocial behaviour’ is often used in place of, or as a part of, moral behaviour in the literature. Prosocial behaviour is sometimes seen as a broader category than moral behaviour. The results regarding emotion and prosocial behaviour in this study, and similar studies, provides significant support for similar claims about emotion and moral behaviour. When I use the term ‘prosocial behaviour,’ I am referring to moral behaviour as defined in this project.

As mentioned above, elevation is defined as the emotional response to moral exemplars (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). According to Algoe and Haidt (2009), “elevation is elicited by acts of charity, gratitude, fidelity, generosity, or any other strong display of virtue” (p. 2). Gratitude is simply being thankful for something and serves the social function of promoting relationships with others. Admiration is an emotional response to both moral and non-moral excellence, although Algoe and Haidt limit the definition to an emotional response to non-moral excellence. Admiration is a response to an extraordinary talent. According to Algoe and Haidt (2009), “admiration as we conceive it involves inspiration as its motivational output” (p. 4).

Algoe and Haidt (2009) had two main hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that elevation, gratitude, and admiration are different from happiness. Elevation, gratitude, and admiration are usually viewed as synonymous with happiness or an emotion similar to happiness. Similar to Strohinger et al. (2011), Algoe and Haidt (2009) claim that not all positive emotions

are the same, and that positive emotions have different social and moral functions. This led to their second hypothesis, which is that elevation, gratitude, and admiration differ from each other. They conducted three studies to test their hypotheses.

### *Details of the study*

The purpose of study 1 was to examine the relationships between joy and elevation, gratitude, and admiration. This was done by collecting patterns of recalled experiences for the emotions. Participants included 135 undergraduate students at the University of Virginia. Participants were given packets of instructions. Participants were asked to recall a time when they experienced a specific type of event depending on the condition that they received (elevation, gratitude, admiration, or joy), and then answered a questionnaire about their emotional experience. Algoe and Haidt (2009) state that “emotion elicitation were anchored on situational descriptions, rather than on single words (such as ‘admiration’), because we have found that emotion words are often unstable anchors, particularly for the less common emotions, and because there is no widely known single word for elevation” (p. 5). The following is an example of the elevation condition: “Please think of a specific time when you saw someone demonstrating humanity’s higher or better nature. Please pick a situation in which you were not the beneficiary, that is, you saw someone doing something good, honorable, or charitable for someone else” (Algoe & Haidt, 2009, p. 5). The emotion was never listed in the instructions or questionnaire.

Participants were also asked to think of a situation where there was little or no negative feelings, or where positive feelings were stronger than negative feelings. This allowed for a relatively pure story of a single emotion. In order to assess changes in the relationship with the

other person, participants were asked whether the person in the recalled event did something to cause the feelings that resulted from the situation.

Algoe and Haidt found that compared to the joy condition (5%), those in the elevation (44%), gratitude (29%), and admiration (57%) conditions were more likely to want to enhance the reputation of the other person or wanted to emulate the other's actions (elevation= 67%; gratitude= 19%; and admiration= 33%). They found that participants in the elevation (43%) condition wanted to be prosocial and wanted to do what the other had done. This suggests that elevation may be a moral emotion. In the gratitude (39%) condition, participants wanted to acknowledge the other's actions or reward or somehow repay the person. Participants in the admiration (17%) and elevation (20%) conditions wanted to improve themselves. Participants in the joy condition wanted to tell others about their own good feelings (81%) and celebrate by jumping or shouting (57%) (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). Participants in the joy condition were more likely to focus on themselves, which suggests that joy may be less of a prosocial emotion than elevation, gratitude, and admiration.

Study 1 confirmed both hypotheses. According to Algoe and Haidt (2009), participants in the elevation, gratitude, and admiration conditions

focused their thoughts and motivations on people other than themselves, inducing desires to enhance relationships and to make changes that demonstrated (at least temporary) moral growth. Meanwhile, those in the joy condition had high energy and seemed to focus on themselves and their own feelings, even when they indicated another person had caused their happiness (p. 10)

The results of the study suggest that joy may not play a role in morality despite the fact that it is a positive emotion, and as mentioned, positive feelings are usually linked with prosocial behaviour. The results also suggest that joy may limit morality if experienced excessively since the focus is on the person experiencing joy and their own feelings.

Algoe and Haidt (2009) claim that one complement to their method used in study 1 would be to induce emotions in the lab or to capture them in real time, which is what they did in study 2. The purpose of study 2 was to examine what happens when individuals witness excellence (e.g., someone doing good deeds, someone achieving success) in others in real time. It differs from study 1 because participants were asked to recall an experience in study 1. Algoe and Haidt did not include a gratitude condition in study 2 because it is difficult to elicit gratitude through a video, which was one of the methods they used to elicit emotions in real time.

Study 2 had two parts (study 2a and study 2b) that included the same 130 participants. Participants were shown a video clip of either a young man who established a homeless shelter (elevation condition), a documentary of Michael Jordan (admiration condition), or a stand-up comedy (amusement condition). Amusement was used as the control condition because it is pleasurable, amusement is usually associated with happiness, and amusement clips are widely used to induce positive affect (see Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2006 and Strohinger et al., 2011). Participants in each condition were asked to describe the video, and were then asked to report their feelings and physical sensations. Participants were also asked to complete a motivation scale that Algoe and Haidt created from the results of the first study. Finally, participants were asked to rate 10 items that signified how much the event had changed them.

According to Algoe and Haidt (2009), the results of study 2 support their predictions

about the feelings experienced in each condition: admiration participants had the highest ratings on the admiration factor, followed by elevation participants; elevation participants had the highest ratings on the warmth factor (there is no word for elevation, but words related to admiration plus words related to warmth or love is not a bad approximation); and amusement participants had the highest ratings on the amusement factor (followed by admiration participants) (p. 12).

Similar to the participants in the joy condition in study 1, participants in the amusement condition reported feeling light and bouncy. Participants in the admiration condition reported having warm feelings, and participants in the elevation condition reported having warm feelings and a lump in their throat. 51% of the participants in the elevation condition, 28% of participants in the admiration condition, and 9% of participants in the amusement condition wrote that they wanted to emulate the actions of the person in the video clip. Participants in the elevation condition were also more likely to be prosocial, whereas participants in the admiration and amusement conditions were not (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). Moral motivation was tested for by using participants' responses to the situations (e.g., stating that they wanted to do nice things for random people). 43% of the participants in the admiration condition reported that they wanted to engage in physical activity, and 35% said that they wanted to engage in activities that lead to academic or professional success. These motivations were not reported for participants in the elevation or amusement conditions.

Of importance, participants in the elevation (38%) condition reported the strongest motivations to do something prosocial and to be a better person. Participants in the admiration (35%) condition reported motivations to achieve success oneself, and this motivation was unique to participants in the admiration condition. Participants in both the elevation (51%) condition and the admiration (28%) condition reported wanting to emulate the behaviour of the individual in the video clip. According to Algoe and Haidt (2009), the results, similar to study 1, suggest that amusement does not have social and moral motivations, whereas elevation and admiration do. Elevation functions as motivating others to be kind and caring, and admiration functions as motivating individuals to be successful. As Algoe and Haidt (2009) state, "study 2a provided strong evidence that elevation and admiration are different in many ways from amusement

(Hypothesis 1), and that they differ from each other in several ways as well (Hypothesis 2)” (p. 14).

Study 2b was similar to study 2a, but rather than watching video clips, participants were asked to examine everyday occurrences of elevation, admiration, and amusement over a three week period. Participants were asked to “fill out an event record each time that someone else ‘does something good for another person (other than yourself)’ (elevation); ‘exceeds a standard of behavior or performance’ (admiration); or ‘tells a joke that includes a set-up and a punch line’ (amusement)” (Algoe & Haidt, 2009, p. 15). Similar to study 2a, participants were asked to record physical sensations and how much the event had changed them as a person immediately after the occurrence took place.

The results of study 2b were very similar to the results of study 2a, thus will not be further discussed. One result worth reporting is that participants in the elevation condition wanted to do things for other people and become a better person, and participants in the admiration condition wanted to become more successful and wanted to tell others about the individual in the occurrence. According to Algoe and Haidt (2009),

Participants in the three conditions demonstrated different patterns of emotion ratings, physical sensations, and self-reported motivations. Elevation motivated people to be kind toward others, whereas admiration motivated people to achieve success and boost the prestige of the admired person. Amusement participants once again showed no distinct pattern of motivation. The other-praising emotions do seem to influence the thought-action repertoires of those experiencing them in daily life, as well as in the lab (p. 17)

Algoe and Haidt note that one limitation of studies 1 and 2 is that they do not measure behaviour. Study 3 was conducted in order to examine whether elevation, admiration, and gratitude change the way individuals act in the world. They tested this by manipulating emotion to influence behaviour. They compared the effect of admiration and gratitude on a behaviour

relevant to forming relationships (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). The method used was a writing technique that induced the given emotion toward an individual who was not present. They then tested the incidental side effects of the emotion.

Participants were undergraduate students who were randomly assigned to one of the following conditions: admiration, gratitude, or emotionally-neutral. They were given the choice of chatting on the internet with a peer who contributed to the overall good of the environment, the prosocial choice, or with a peer who was interested in making friends, the social choice.

Participants were assigned to one of the three conditions and asked to write a letter. Participants in the admiration condition were asked to write about a time that they felt a person had exhibited a great talent or skill; participants in the gratitude condition were asked to write about a time that someone had done something for them; and participants in the emotionally-neutral condition were asked to write about their method of transportation to class. After writing the letter, participants were told that they were going to have an online chat with someone who was also completing the study. However, this individual was fabricated, and the participant would in fact be chatting with an experimenter. The participants were given the choice of chatting with the prosocial or social individual. While they waited for the experimenter to set up the chat, they were asked to respond to questions regarding their emotional and motivational feelings toward the writing task. Participants rated a number of positive and negative emotions. A subset of participants was asked to “rate their motivations as well, focusing on the extent to which they were interested in (1) meeting others like the person to whom they wrote, (2) improving some aspect of themselves, and (3) giving back to others, using a rating scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)” (Algoe & Haidt, 2009, p. 19). Participants were then asked how interested they were in having the online chat.

Algoe and Haidt (2009) predicted that

participants in the gratitude condition would generalize their mental content to the choice about an incidental interaction partner in the lab, by being more likely to choose to interact with the prosocial individual than people in the other two conditions. Although admiration and gratitude both come from appraisals of others' exemplary actions, we expected that they would produce distinct mental content (measured by motivations), and that the gratitude-specific motivations would subsequently influence choice of interaction partner (p. 18)

Of relevance, Algoe and Haidt (2009) found that participants in the admiration (M=6.21) and gratitude (M=6.28) conditions had higher ratings than those in the emotionally-neutral (M=5.52) condition of wanting to meet individuals who were similar to the person that they wrote about. Participants in the admiration (M=6.0) condition were more likely to want to improve themselves than participants in the gratitude (M=5.05) and emotionally-neutral (M=5.0) conditions. Participants in the gratitude (M=5.89) condition had a greater desire to give back to others than participants in the admiration (M=5.26) and emotionally neutral (M=4.67) conditions. Participants in all conditions were equally interested in having an online chat with another participant. 45% of participants in the gratitude condition chose to chat with the prosocial individual, whereas only 25% percent of participants in the admiration condition and 19% of participants in the emotionally-neutral condition chose to chat with the prosocial individual.

According to Algoe and Haidt (2009), the results of the study suggest that,

The direct effect of condition on prosocial motives is not significant, but the indirect path from condition to prosocial motives, *through emotion*, is significant...gratitude-specific motivational changes significantly predicted incidental action: prosocial motivations predict the choice to interact with a prosocial peer in the lab. The emotion changed what was in the mind, and this influenced subsequent behavior (p. 21, italics mine)

### *Discussion*

Algoe and Haidt's (2009) study shows that emotion is significant for prosocial or moral behaviour. Specific emotions lead to specific behavioural outputs, suggesting that while elevation, gratitude, and admiration are positive emotions and are similar to one another, they have different functions. That is, each emotion may have different implications for moral life (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). With regard to study 3, individuals who elicited gratitude were more likely to give back to others, a moral or prosocial outcome, whereas individuals who elicited admiration were more likely to focus on improving themselves, which can be seen as a self-centered motivation. Study 3 suggests that admiration does not play a significant role in morality, whereas gratitude might be important for moral behaviour.

The results of the three studies in Algoe and Haidt's (2009) research confirm their two hypotheses that elevation, admiration, and gratitude are different from other 'happy' emotions such as joy and amusement, and are also different from one another. As Algoe and Haidt (2009) state,

Each other-praising emotion had a characteristic motivational feature: elevation participants were motivated to be kind or warm toward others (Studies 1, 2a, and 2b), gratitude participants wanted to reach out to or connect with their benefactors (Study 1) or to 'give back' (Study 3), and admiration participants were energized and wanted to work harder to reach their own goals (Studies 2a, 2b, and 3) (p. 21)

Algoe and Haidt (2009) also state that the effects reported from the three studies were caused by emotions, and revealed the motivating components of those emotions. That is, the results suggest that emotions are mediating and serve different social functions. Algoe and Haidt (2009) state that "other-praising emotions have social and moral entailments, whereas amusement does not" (p. 14).

With regard to morality and the questions that my research aims to answer, the results of Algoe and Haidt's (2009) study suggests that admiration does not play any distinct role in morality, while elevation and gratitude do. Elevation and gratitude, as the research under discussion suggests, may be mediating emotions with regard to moral behaviour. Gratitude and elevation pave the way for one to do something for others, while admiration does not. The focus of admiration is oneself, and thus it might not be important for morality. The results also suggest that some positive emotions such as amusement or joy may not have significant roles in morality. This differs from Strohinger et al.'s findings that mirth (2011) increases the permissiveness of deontological violations and increases the likelihood of utilitarian judgments.

#### **2.4.5 Conclusion**

In 1.6.4, I suggested that, given previous research (Batson, 2012), there is good reason to expect that at least some positive emotions motivate morality. In particular, I claimed that positive emotions can lead to moral praise or viewing an action as permissible, and that morally praiseworthy actions elicit warm or happy feelings in individuals. The analyses of the studies in this section helped shed light on these claims.

In this section, I examined the role of positive emotions in morality, and found that positive emotions influence morality. I found that contrary to previous research, not all positive emotions have the same effect on morality, and that valence is not a good predictor of morality. Valdesolo and DeSteno's research shows that manipulating an individual's affective state shapes moral judgment. Individual differences in moral judgment are dependent upon their affective state. I also found that, as suggested in 1.6.4, positive emotions and affect do in fact allow for the

permissibility of some moral judgments. This study emphasizes that manipulating emotion influences moral judgment, and that emotion is therefore important for morality.

Strohminger et al.'s research shows that both mirth and elevation play a role in morality, but have opposite effects, further emphasizing that valence is not a good predictor of moral judgment. Instead, it is the type of emotion that influences moral judgment. Mirth leads to the increased permissiveness of some deontological violations and leads to utilitarian judgments, while elevation has the opposite effect.

Finally, Algoe and Haidt's research emphasizes that emotion is significant for morality, and plays a mediating role in morality. Their research shows that related positive emotions have different behavioural outputs, and similar to Strohminger et al.'s research, that valence alone does not predict moral judgment, but the type of emotion and the degree to which it is experienced. Their research shows that specific emotions lead to specific behavioural outputs. Algoe and Haidt's research also shows, as I suggested in 1.6.4, that witnessing moral actions elicit warm and happy feelings in individuals, and can motivate individuals to be prosocial.

The analyses in this section suggest that elevation plays a role in morality as it serves the function of increasing prosocial behaviour when elicited; gratitude might play a role in morality, although more research is needed in order to conclusively determine the role of gratitude in morality; admiration does not play a role in moral behaviour; mirth leads to the permissiveness of some deontological violations and increases the likelihood of utilitarian judgments; experiencing some positive emotions excessively, such as joy, inhibits positive morality; and each emotion has a specific motivational feature.

## **2.5 Positive and negative emotions**

### **2.5.1 Introduction**

In 2.3, I analyzed studies that examine the role of negative emotions in morality. In 2.4, I analyzed studies that examine the role of positive affect and emotions in morality. In doing so, I found that both negative and positive emotions play important roles in morality, some more than others. I also found that related emotions differ from one another in their effects and have separate social and moral functions.

In this section, I examine and analyze three studies that focus on both positive and negative emotions. The first study examines sympathy and personal distress in morality. The second study examines nine positive and negative emotions and the effects of these emotions on moral judgment. The third study looks at positive and negative affect on wrongness judgments and prosocial behaviour.

### **2.5.2 An Analysis of: Eisenberg, Fabes, Miller, Fultz, Shell, Mathy, & Reno (1989).**

#### *Introduction*

Drawing on Batson's (1987) research, Eisenberg et al. (1989) set out to examine sympathy and personal distress in morality. Acknowledging that there are distinctions between the emotions, Eisenberg et al. (1989) claim that "there are limitations in the literature in which sympathy and personal distress have been assessed with either self-report indexes or experimental manipulations... there is a need for research in which sympathy and personal distress are assessed with non-self-report indexes" (p. 56). This was the primary aim of their research.

Eisenberg et al. (1989) used facial, self-report, and heart rate (HR) indexes as markers of sympathy and personal distress, and examined these in relation to prosocial behaviour in adults

and children. Eisenberg et al. define sympathy as concerned attention that is directed toward another individual, which is similar to my own definition. Their definition of empathy is also similar to my own. They define empathy as a vicariously produced reaction to another's state. Recall that my definition of empathy requires producing a vicarious emotion, but does not include reactive emotions.

Drawing on work from Batson (1987), Eisenberg et al. wanted to assess whether being in an easy escape condition would maximize altruistic behaviour, which would support Batson's hypothesis that the helping behaviour displayed is a result of wanting to relieve the other person's distress (distress for others) instead of one's own distress (personal distress). Eisenberg et al. (1989) predicted that sympathy would relate positively to prosocial or moral behaviour. They also predicted that personal distress would not lead to prosocial behaviour because as Batson (1987) has demonstrated, an individual who experiences personal distress in an easy escape condition is more likely to leave than to offer help.

Eisenberg et al. (1989) also predicted that, in their emotion-eliciting condition, which involved another individual's distress and sadness, empathic sadness would be associated with a sympathetic reaction and would lead to prosocial behaviour. Eisenberg et al. (1989) hypothesized that "facial sadness would be a reflection of other-oriented empathic sadness and therefore would be positively related to indexes of sympathy or concerned attention" (p. 59). Empathic sadness is defined by Eisenberg et al. (1989) as "vicariously produced sadness in reaction to another's negative state" (p. 56).

Finally, drawing on previous findings (Eisenberg, 1988; Fabes et al. 1988; Craig, 1968) that suggest that personal distress is associated with HR acceleration and sympathy with HR

deceleration, Eisenberg et al. (1989) predicted that participants who are prosocial would have a decelerated heart rate whereas participants who are not prosocial would have an accelerated heart rate. As Eisenberg et al. (1989) state, “one would expect people who are willing to help in contexts likely to evoke sympathy to exhibit HR deceleration when exposed to needy others; in contrast, one would expect HR acceleration to be associated with lower levels in prosocial intentions in which it is easy to escape further contact with the distressing stimulus” (p. 57).

#### *Details of the study*

The main purpose of the study was to use facial, self-report, and physiological indexes, such as heart rate, as markers of sympathy and personal distress, and to examine the relations to prosocial behavior in a situation in which escape from the other was easy (Eisenberg et al., 1989). The study consisted of second graders (66), fifth graders (69), and adults (69 undergraduate students). The experimenters described the study to the participants as a project that was being conducted for a local TV station that was interested in obtaining emotional reactions from unaired broadcasts about real people and events in the community.

When adults were tested, they were first shown a bland tape recording of a newscast announcing community events and meetings. This tape was showed so that the experimenters’ cover story would be believed. The experimenter left the room while the participant watched the tape, and the participant rang the bell when they were finished. The experimenter then asked the participant to fill out an emotional reaction questionnaire and an evaluation form that would be used in rating the TV program. The participants were asked to respond to 12 adjectives that indicated their emotional state on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all; 7 = extremely). The adjectives reflected the participants’ personal distress, sympathy, and sadness in reaction to another’s need. The evaluation form assessed on a 7-point scale how interesting participants found the broadcast

to be. The experimenter left the room while the participant completed the forms. All participants viewed the tapes alone.

The experimenter returned upon the participant's completion of the questionnaire and evaluation form, and introduced a second tape from a series entitled 'News from the Personal Side' (Eisenberg et al., 1989). The series was described to the participant as a short program about real events that happened to people in the local community. The participants were shown a tape where a woman was seated in a hospital room with her injured children explaining the adjustment problems they were having as a result of an accident. The woman in the tape explicitly communicated her children's fears of falling behind in school as well as her issue of being a single mother and trying to find time to attend to her kids and take care of the household chores. When the participant finished watching the video, the experimenter returned and asked the participant to fill out the same evaluation and questionnaire that was used for the first tape. Upon discovering that they had misplaced part of the evaluation (it was not actually misplaced, but a part of the experiment unknown to the participant), the experimenter asked the participant to fill out the questionnaire and evaluation while they went to search for the misplaced part of the evaluation. Roughly after one minute of the participant filling out the questionnaire, the experimenter returned, slightly out of breath, and placed the missing part of the evaluation on the clipboard. They then turned to the participant and said,

I also have this [envelope] to give you. I don't know what is in it, but the professor in charge of this research said to give it to the student scheduled to watch tape #24, so I guess that's you. So why don't you open and read this note first, and then work on the evaluation form and ring the bell when you are through (Eisenberg et al., 1989, p. 57)

The envelope contained two letters. One was from the professor, the other was from the woman in the tape. The letter from the professor stated that she had encouraged the woman in the

tape to ask for assistance from the participant watching the video. The letter from the woman stated that she was uneasy about writing the letter, but did so after the encouragement from the professor as she could use help with household chores (e.g., yard work) in order to tutor and spend time with her children. She also stated that she did not want the participant to feel obligated in any way. Participants were reassured that they would not have any contact with the family in need if they decided not to volunteer their time, and that the experimenter would be unaware of their decision (modeling Batson's easy escape condition). There was a small slip of paper enclosed with the letters where participants were able to indicate, if they chose to, how many hours they were willing to help the woman with her household chores in 3-hour increments on an 8-point scale (1 = no helping; 8 = more than 18 hours of helping). The participant then slipped the paper along with the letters into an unsigned envelope, although they were able to sign it if they wished. They then continued with the 'missing' evaluation form which asked participants questions about how likeable the woman in the film was and the degree to which she needed help.

The information that was presented to the adults was presented in a similar manner to children, although children were given simplified instructions when necessary, and used only 11 adjectives to rate their emotional reactions. The experimenter also read the letter from the professor and the woman to the children, and instead of asking the children whether they would help the woman with household chores, children were asked if they would assist in getting homework materials for the children or giving up recess time to help. Experiments told participants that the children in need were new to school, but were in different classes than the children. Experimenters explained to the participants that the children would not be returning to school for a while, and would therefore not be in contact with the children (modeling Batson's

easy escape condition). Participants were shown a two-week calendar where they were able to indicate how much time they were willing to help by putting an 'x' on the calendar box (this was coded as 1 = 0 days; 11 = 10 days). For a subgroup of 50 children, experimenters told participants that they were able to donate five dollars that they received as compensation for participating in the study, or part of it, to the children in need. The children were then left to circle how much money they wanted to donate (this was coded as 1 = \$0; 11 = \$5). This subgroup of participants also rated on a 7-point scale how much they liked recess.

According to Eisenberg et al. (1989), the results from the data show that for both adults and children, facial sadness during the hospital tape was significantly related to facial concerned attention (partial  $r(66) = .33, p < .006$ , and partial  $r(131) = .43, p < .001$ ). They also found that, for children but not adults, facial sadness during the hospital tape was marginally negatively related to facial expressions of personal distress (partial  $r(131) = -.16, p < .059$ ). According to Eisenberg et al. (1989), "it appears that facial sadness and concern were positively interrelated and were unrelated (or marginally negatively unrelated) to facial distress" (p. 59).

Eisenberg et al. also compared facial expressions with participants' self-reports of their emotional reactions during the same time frame. They found that adults' displays of sadness and facial concerned attention were marginally related to their reports of feeling sympathy (partial  $r(65) = .29$  and  $.22, p < .017$  and  $.082$ ), and found a marginally significant negative relation between facial sadness and personal distress when watching the hospital tape (partial  $r(64) = -.22, p < .081$ ). For children, they found that facial sadness was positively related to participants' reports of negative mood ( $r(130) = .20, p < .025$ ), and negatively related to reports of positive mood (partial  $r(129) = -.22, p < .011$ ). Eisenberg et al. (1989) note that the relation of facial sadness to reports of emotion was most evident for girls in the second grade. According to

Eisenberg et al., the results provide partial support for the view that facial sadness reflects sympathetic responses.

With regard to HR acceleration and deceleration, Eisenberg et al. found that across the entire sample of participants, there was a decrease in HR, where this decrease was associated with low levels of facial distress (partial  $r(199) = .21, p < .003$ ). For adults, acceleration in HR was positively related to self-reports of negative mood, but not to reports of distress or sympathy. They also found that fifth graders, but not second graders, increase in HR was positively related to self-reports of personal distress. Eisenberg et al. (1989) state that “although there were relatively few correlations between HR and facial or self-report indexes, those that were obtained are consistent with expectations” (p. 60), thus providing support for their hypothesis.

In order to examine the hypothesis that sympathy is positively related to prosocial tendencies while personal distress is unrelated to prosocial tendencies, Eisenberg et al. (1989) split participants in two groups: those who decided to not help at all or decided to help for a minimum amount of time ( $n = 70$ ; 1 recess for child participants; 1-3 hours for adults), and those who decided to help for more than the minimum ( $n = 130$ ). The results show that the HR of helpers was decelerated ( $F(1, 127) = 3.64, p < .06$ ), but was not decelerated for the low helpers, in both children and adults. They also found that change in HR was related to the amount of money that children donated to the family in need. What is more, Eisenberg et al. (1989) found that HR deceleration was associated with higher donations in second graders.

With regard to self-reports and facial data, Eisenberg et al. (1989) found that self-reports of sympathy were significantly related to willingness to help the family in need ( $F(1, 62) = 4.40, p < .04$ ). They also found that self-reports of personal distress were marginally positively related

to helpful intentions ( $F(1, 62) = 4.40, p < .0$ ), and that sadness and concerned attention were positively correlated with the willingness to help the family in need ( $r(64) = .30$  and  $.20, ps < .032$  and  $.10$ ). With regard to children, there was no relation between facial expressions and willingness to help. However, there was a relation between willingness to help and the children's reactions to hearing the mother's letter. There was a positive correlation between sympathetic reactions and helping or donating in younger children ( $r(23) = .48, p < .016$ ), and a negative correlation between personal distress reactions and helping or donating. Eisenberg et al. (1989) state that

there were relatively clear relations between facial reactions believed to reflect sympathy or empathic sadness and willingness to help for adults. For children...there was some indication that children's personal distress reactions were negatively related to prosocial responding, whereas concerned attention reactions during the reading of the letter were positively related to prosocial tendencies (p. 62)

### *Discussion*

According to Eisenberg et al. (1989), "these findings are interpreted as providing additional, convergent support for the notion that sympathy and personal distress are differentially related to prosocial behaviour" (p. 55). As stated in 1.3 and as shown throughout this project thus far, prosocial behaviour may result from both egoistic and altruistic motivations, and as a result, both sympathy and distress may be needed for morality. Personal distress, usually experienced as anxiety or discomfort, can lead to prosocial behaviour as the behaviour is motivated by one's own discomfort, as previous studies suggest (Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, & Birch, 1981; Batson, 1987). Eisenberg et al.'s (1989) research suggests that when the escape condition is easy, participants are unlikely to display helping behaviour, although personal distress was marginally related to helping behaviour. In contrast, feelings of sympathy are expected to lead to prosocial behaviour as a result of the other's discomfort. While sympathy

appears to be essential for morality, personal distress may be only partially responsible for morality, such as when the escape condition is difficult, as Batson suggests.

### 2.5.3 An analysis of: Kaplan & Tivnan (2014).

#### *Introduction*

Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) claim that multiple emotions are present in formulating a moral judgment. They also claim that moral judgments are motivated in a similar manner to moral behaviour, stating that “emotions motivate both judgment and action” (p. 426). Their research aims to shed light on two related questions: “which emotions are most likely to be associated with moral judgment and motivation, and to what degree do they operate in the context of dilemmas involving social conflict” (Kaplan & Tivnan, 2014, p. 421)? Their research is similar to Strohinger et al. (2011) and Algoe and Haidt’s (2009) research in attempting to determine the specific functions of specific emotions. Kaplan and Tivnan examine nine emotions: fear, anger, guilt, hate, distress, compassion, love, appreciation, and gratitude.

Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) put forth a Dynamic Systems (DS) view of morality and emotion, claiming that

emotion and cognitive appraisals are interconnected contributors to moral judgment, as well as possible outcomes of judgment in an iterative process. What determines moral judgment is not a fixed component, such as emotion or reasoning, but rather a motivational process by which specific moral cognitions and emotions interact (p. 422-23)

Similar to Algoe and Haidt (2009), Kaplan and Tivnan view emotions as mediating.

Kaplan and Tivnan’s (2014) research examine the nine different emotions together with

emotional awareness.<sup>28</sup> With regard to moral judgment, they predict that their research will find evidence for the presence of multiple emotions in each person and that the emotions will be dependent on the moral judgment taking place. That is, the dilemma under consideration should affect which emotions are elicited, where these emotions influence the moral judgment made. They also predict, similar to Strohming et al. (2011), Algoe and Haidt (2009), and Chapman and Anderson (2011), that the emotions will differ from one another. That is, although some emotions may overlap and have similar qualities (e.g., anger and hate), when elicited, each emotion leads to different moral judgments or moral behaviours. Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) claim that they “expect to find associations between the operations of specific emotions and structures of moral motivation” (p. 424).

One reason for examining judgment and motivation together is because, similar to Prinz (2006), Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) claim that moral judgment and moral motivation are interconnected. They state that “moral behaviour itself is a process of ethical decision making...emotions motivate both judgment and action” (p. 426).

#### *Details of the study*

In order to answer the two research questions asked above, Kaplan and Tivnan conducted a study involving hypothetical moral dilemmas and moral decision-making. There was a total of 559 participants in this study. Participants were recruited from three universities in the United States. Some of the participants participated online, while others completed the study on paper during class time. Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) developed a new questionnaire for this study called the Moral Motivations and Emotions questionnaire. The questionnaire involves a series of

---

<sup>28</sup> Kaplan and Tivnan also examine the nine emotions together with cognitive developmental structures. However, as I stated in the Introduction of this research project, while the development of morality is an important issue, this project does not examine the developmental nature of morality.

hypothetical and public policy dilemmas. One of the hypothetical dilemmas in the questionnaire is the Heinz dilemma that was discussed in 1.7. Participants were asked to suppose they heard the story from Heinz and asked how they would experience each of the nine emotions on a scale from 1 (I would not feel this way at all) to 5 (I would very much feel this way) toward Heinz and the pharmacist. Similar to Algoe and Haidt (2009), Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) state that “participants ratings of emotions are expected to reveal meaningful distinctions between specific emotions toward certain targets” (p. 428). After participants completed the questionnaire, they were asked whether they think Heinz should steal the drug. They were given the options ‘yes,’ ‘no,’ or ‘another option.’ The story ends with Heinz being caught and found guilty by a jury for stealing the drug. Participants were asked to assume that they were the judge, and asked whether they would let Heinz go free or sentence him (Kaplan & Tivnan, 2014).<sup>29</sup>

This was followed by another hypothetical dilemma that participants were asked to judge. The story involved a 14-year-old boy named Joe who wanted to go to camp. Joe’s father tells Joe that he can go to camp if he works hard and saves his own money. Sure enough, when camp time rolls around, Joe has saved enough money to go to camp. However, Joe’s father changes his mind about letting Joe spend his own money on going to camp and asks Joe to give him the money to go on a fishing trip. Participants were asked to suppose that they heard this story from Joe, who they just met, and were asked to complete the assessment they were given in the scenario with Heinz (how does the participant feel toward Joe and Joe’s father). The moral judgment was whether Joe should give his money to his father for the fishing trip (Kaplan & Tivnan, 2014).

---

<sup>29</sup> Although a distinction is often made between legal and moral responsibility and judgment, legal judgments are often expressions of moral judgments.

The results of the study show that a “range of emotions were reported to be activated within moral dilemmas in ways specific to the roles that emotion targets play, with sharp distinctions between victims and victimizers” (Kaplan & Tivnan, 2014, p. 430). Although the participants judged each emotion on a scale from 1 to 5, the scale was adjusted to 1 to 4 for presentation purposes, and are therefore reported accordingly. The mean of the emotions experienced toward Heinz is reported in descending order: compassion (3.02), distress (1.73), appreciation (1.62), love (1.55), gratitude (1.21), guilt (1.09), fear (.77), anger (.47), and hate (.23). The mean of emotions experienced toward the pharmacist is reported in descending order: anger (2.99), hate (2.19), distress (1.46), fear (.74), guilt (.63), appreciation (.39), compassion (.38), gratitude (.30), and love (.19). The mean of the emotions experienced toward Joe is reported in descending order: compassion (2.74), appreciation (1.64), love (1.36), distress (1.29), gratitude (1.20), guilt (.58) anger (.20), fear (.18), and hate (.13). The mean of emotions experienced toward Joe’s father is reported in descending order: anger (2.83), hate (1.73), distress (1.36), fear (.81), guilt (.64), compassion (.34), love (.26), appreciation (.21), and gratitude (.17) (Kaplan & Tivnan, 2014).

The results show that compassion toward victims, Heinz and Joe, and anger followed by hate toward the victimizers, the pharmacist and Joe’s father, were reported most strongly. Distress was strong toward both victims and victimizers. Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) found that anger and hate were strongly correlated with each other and negatively correlated with compassion. They also found that distress was positively related to compassion, anger, and hate.

In order to examine moral motivation, “the overall motivation score for each participant was computed for each judgment” (Kaplan & Tivnan, 2014, p. 432). Kaplan and Tivnan used a procedure that was successful in previous research by theorists who endorse a dynamic systems

view with regard to cultural orientations and well-being. (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim & Kaplan, 2003). The procedure reconceptualises Kohlberg's stages of morality as structures of motivation. Kaplan and Tivnan found that distress toward both victims and victimizers is positively associated with moral motivation, anger is positively related to moral motivation, and that hate is negatively related to moral motivation. Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) state that the results of the study show that "a variety of emotions were differentially associated with judgment. Each of the nine emotions revealed differential associations with at least one judgment choice" (p. 432).

The results of this study suggest that distress and anger are important emotions for morality. Both emotions are positively related to moral motivation. I have previously shown in 1.3 and in the analysis of Eisenberg et al.'s research how distress can lead to morality. The results also suggest that there is not simply a one-to-one correspondence between a specific emotion and moral judgment. As Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) put it, "people are likely to experience multiple emotions in response to the same event" (p. 436).

The results suggest that anger may lead to helping behaviour probably due to outrage, although as previously mentioned (2.3), excessive anger can lead to immoral behaviour. Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) found that

participants who reported stronger fear, anger, and hate toward Joe and strong compassion, love, and appreciation toward Joe's father were more likely to judge that Joe should obey his father's demand. By contrast, higher compassion toward Joe and higher anger and hate toward Joe's father were associated with an increased likelihood to judge that Joe should refuse his father's demands (p. 437)

### *Discussion*

Overall, the victims in the study elicited strong compassion, moderate distress, and mild to moderate levels of love, gratitude, appreciation, and guilt in participants. The victimizers in the study evoked strong anger, moderate to strong levels of hate, moderate distress, and mild

levels of guilt and fear in participants (Kaplan & Tivnan, 2014). Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) state that “the majority of emotions examined (except distress and guilt) were associated with individual differences in moral judgment” (p. 437). Because anger and hate toward the victims were reported more strongly than other emotions, it may be that anger and hate are important in condemning or condoning another’s actions, but it is unclear as to whether they play an active role in morality, although the results of the study and previous research suggest that anger may be important for morality. Recall that the results from Hutcherson and Gross’s (2011) study suggest that anger plays a role in morality. Anger can lead to moral outrage which results in the condemnation of a specific action. Participants who were angry at Joe’s father condemned his action, and participants who were angry at the pharmacist condemned the pharmacist’s actions.

Compassion was the most strongly reported emotion toward Heinz and Joe, which suggests that compassion is an important emotion for morality. Recall from 1.7 that Bloom (2010) supports the view that compassion is important for morality, and discusses the importance of the emotion in motivating morality. Marsh (2014) also claims that compassion is important for morality, stating that autistic individuals are unlike psychopaths because they demonstrate basic compassion in response to others’ distress. Thus, compassion motivates morality.

Distress was also an emotion that was strongly reported by participants toward both victims and victimizers. Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) state that the distress elicited was probably distress for others and not personal distress because they were not asked to put themselves in the situation, but were asked to pretend that they heard the stories from the victims. Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) state that “the prevalence of compassion and distress toward victims in the present

study affirms their status as important moral emotions”<sup>30</sup> (p. 438). Furthermore, Kaplan and Tivnan (2014) state that “compassion and distress are both related and distinct moral emotions” (p. 440), lending support to the view that emotions have distinct functions. Support for this statement can also be found in Eisenberg et al.’s (1989) study; the results suggest that sympathy and personal distress are differentially related to prosocial behaviour. Kaplan and Tivnan’s (2014) research suggests that compassion, distress, and anger are important for morality.

#### 2.5.4 An analysis of: Seidel & Prinz (2012).

##### *Introduction*

In order to further examine the role of positive and negative emotions in morality, I now turn to Seidel and Prinz’s (2012) research that examines the role of happiness and anger in morality. Seidel and Prinz implement a unique method for assessing these emotions, using instrumental music to elicit anger and happiness.

In their research, Seidel and Prinz contrast anger with happiness to show that anger increases the tendency to judge an action as morally wrong, in line with Kaplan and Tivnan’s (2014) findings, and reduces the tendency to view actions as obligatory, while happiness increases the tendency to judge an action as morally good and obligatory. The purpose of Seidel and Prinz’s research is to demonstrate the impact of anger and happiness on moral judgment. Seidel and Prinz (2012) claim that “moral judgments can be positive or negative: we can judge action as good or wrong” (p. 629). In their research, they aim to show that good judgments and wrong judgments are influenced by emotions like anger and happiness. In an attempt to

---

<sup>30</sup> Kaplan and Tivnan also use the term ‘moral emotion’ to mean an emotion that plays a role in morality or is important for morality.

determine if anger and happiness influence people's moral judgments, Seidel and Prinz (2012) set out with two main questions: will individuals be more likely to judge an action as wrong when feeling angry, and will individuals judge that an action is good when happy? The reason that Seidel and Prinz (2012) choose to examine anger and happiness is that "anger and happiness are important emotions to morality...they are associated with harming and helping, two opposing poles in the moral domain" (p. 629). They used instrumental music to induce emotion to show the influence of anger and happiness on moral judgment. One reason they used instrumental music is that instrumental music may induce a form of non-moral anger. Instrumental music may induce a form of non-moral anger because participants are not exposed to any immoral acts prior to judging the transgressions. Rather, the music is harsh and dissonant and may therefore induce anger.

Seidel and Prinz (2012) also aimed to determine the "impact of anger on wrongness judgment explicitly and compare it to a positively valenced emotion such as happiness" (p. 630). Seidel and Prinz conducted two studies to answer their questions.

#### *Details of the study*

The first study aimed to determine whether individuals will be more likely to judge an action as wrong when feeling angry, and whether wrongness judgments will be influenced by feeling happy. 66 participants from an American university participated in the study. In order to induce emotional states, Seidel and Prinz used a piece of harsh and dissonant Japanese music and Edvard Grieg's 'Morning Mood.' The first piece was used to induce non-moral anger, and the second piece was used to induce feelings of happiness.

Participants were each assigned to one of the three experimental conditions: angry music, happy music, or no music (control group). Participants in the control group responded to moral

judgment questions with no music. Participants in the angry music and happy music conditions listened to music for 60 seconds prior to responding to the moral judgment questions.

Participants were given packets containing the moral vignettes and a manipulation check. The manipulation check consisted of 8 items (angry/irritated, sad/heavy-hearted, afraid/anxious, happy/uplifted), and was designed to ensure that the music elicited the type of mood that Seidel and Prinz intended to evoke. The manipulation check was included to ensure that the harsh Japanese music predominantly evoked a form of anger and not other negative emotions.

Seidel and Prinz found that the harsh Japanese music effectively induced anger. They found that participants in the angry music condition reported higher levels of anger ( $M=4.10$ ) than participants in the happy music condition ( $M=1.42$ ) and the control condition ( $M=1.61$ ). The music in the happy music condition induced the highest levels of happiness ( $M=5.25$ ) compared to the angry condition ( $M=2.96$ ) and the control condition ( $M=3.85$ ).

Participants were presented with three vignettes. Participants were asked to evaluate the transgressions on a nine point scale. Participants were given the following vignettes, “a man finds a wallet on the street and keeps the money, a man fakes his resume credentials, and a man cuts in front of cars in order to beat the traffic” (Seidel & Prinz, 2012, p. 632), and asked to evaluate the moral transgressions from 0 (perfectly ok) to 9 (extremely wrong).

The results of the study show that participants in the angry music condition ( $M=6.10$ ) responded with significantly harsher moral judgments than participants in the happy music condition ( $M=3.48$ ) and the control condition ( $M=4.19$ ). Seidel and Prinz (2012) also “sought to explore if feeling happy would decrease the severity of moral judgments relative to participants exposed to the neutral condition” (p. 632) but found no statistically significant difference.

The results of the study suggest that induced anger influences the severity of moral judgments. Participants who reported feeling angrier judged transgressions more harshly than participants in the happy music and control conditions, who reported lower levels of anger. According to Seidel and Prinz (2012) “participants exposed to harsh angry noise music were more likely to judge minor moral transgressions as wrong relative to participants in the neutral control group or those in a happy music condition” (p. 633). This result also corroborates Hutcherson and Gross (2011) and Kaplan and Tivnan’s (2014) findings that anger can lead to the condemnation of actions.

In order to examine the contribution of happiness to moral judgment, Seidel and Prinz conducted a second experiment. Although the results of study 1 suggest that happiness does not impact negative moral judgments, Seidel and Prinz hypothesized that happiness may contribute to positive moral judgments.

115 undergraduate students at an American university participated in this study. Seidel and Prinz used the same music as they did in study 1 and followed the same protocol. Seidel and Prinz created five moral vignettes for this study, and used these vignettes to assess moral judgments. The vignettes depicted individuals that were in need (e.g., a poor man asking for donations while unemployed). Using a nine-point scale (not good to extremely good), participants were asked to report whether it was good to help the characters in the vignettes. Participants were also given a nine-point scale to rate their obligation to help. Seidel and Prinz refer to the first set of judgments as good judgments, and the second set of judgments as should judgments.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Good judgments are judgments that we make while should judgments are actions that we ought to do. Good judgments concern factual statements, while should judgments concern normative statements. My project, as

Study 2 also included a manipulation check that “consisted of 4 items (happy/uplifted, and irritated/angry) designed to tap emotions evoked by ‘Morning Mood’ and Japanese noise music” (Seidel & Prinz, 2012, p. 633). Seidel and Prinz found that participants in the happy music condition reported highest levels of happiness ( $M=4.60$ ) compared to participants in the angry music condition ( $M=1.47$ ) and the control condition ( $M=3.77$ ). Participants in the angry noise condition reported the highest levels of anger ( $M=4.57$ ) compared to participants in the happy music condition ( $M=1.60$ ) and the control condition ( $M=1.71$ ).

The results of the study show that participants in the happy music condition ( $M=6.90$ ) were significantly more likely to endorse judgments of goodness compared to participants in the control condition ( $M=5.40$ ) and participants in the angry music condition ( $M=4.30$ ). Seidel and Prinz found that participants in the angry music condition were least likely to endorse judgments of goodness compared to participants in the happy music condition and the control condition.

Regarding should judgments, or judgments about moral obligation, Seidel and Prinz found a statistically significant difference between the three groups. Participants in the happy music condition ( $M=6.85$ ) were significantly more likely to endorse judgments of moral obligation compared to participants in the angry music ( $M=4.48$ ) and control conditions ( $M=5.70$ ). Participants in the angry music condition were least likely to endorse judgments of moral obligation.

The results from study 2 suggest that individuals who were in an induced happy state were more likely to endorse good and should judgments compared to individuals who were

---

mentioned at the outset, does not examine normative statements. That is, my project does not examine what we ought to do in moral situations. Rather, my project examines the emotions that play important roles in morality, and is silent about whether those emotions should influence morality and the obligations bound with morality.

induced by anger and individuals who were in a neutral affective state. Individuals who were in an induced angry state were least likely to help the characters in the vignette and also the least likely to endorse judgments of moral obligation. According to Seidel and Prinz (2012), the results of study 2 “provides direct empirical support for the thesis that happiness increases judgments of moral goodness and obligation. The results also show that anger reduces these judgments” (p. 634).

### *Discussion*

Seidel and Prinz’s research shows that anger and happiness impact moral judgment. In study 1, Seidel and Prinz demonstrated that participants who were exposed to angry music were more likely than participants in the other conditions to judge minor transgressions, such as cutting someone off while driving, as wrong. In study 2, Seidel and Prinz showed that participants who were exposed to happy music were more likely than participants in the other conditions to help the characters from the vignettes and judge the helping actions as obligatory.

The results of the studies suggest that anger and happiness may play a role in morality. Similar to Kaplan and Tivnan (2014), Seidel and Prinz found that anger increases judgments of wrongness. The more anger that is induced in an individual, the more likely they will view the perpetrator’s actions as morally wrong. Support for this can also be found in the psychopathy literature. Recall that anger or outrage often causes a psychopath to believe that his victim deserves to be assaulted. Even if the anger is inappropriate, the psychopath believes that his anger is justified, and as a result looks at himself as the victim rather than the person that he victimizes. Linking anger with moral wrongness is also present in Hutcherson and Gross’s (2011) research. The results of Seidel and Prinz’s (2012) research also suggest that uplifted feelings are important for moral or helping behaviour and judging such behaviour as obligatory.

One important factor excluded from Seidel and Prinz's research is distinguishing happiness from other 'happy' emotions, or determining if the happiness felt was in fact happiness or another related emotion. As my previous analyses have shown, positive emotions differ from one another, and 'happiness' generally speaking or induced positive affect on its own does not influence morality. Recall Valdesolo and DeSteno and Strohminger et al.'s research where I concluded that being in a positively induced affective state does not directly influence morality. Instead, it is the specific positive emotion, such as elevation, that influences morality. I discussed how mirth, which is a positive emotion, increases the permissiveness of deontological violations and leads to utilitarian judgment, and how elevation has the opposite effect. However, given the unique method of using instrumental music, it is probably the case that the happy emotion experienced was not mirth, but another uplifted emotion.

Seidel and Prinz (2012) claim that the results of their research suggest that "emotions are not merely consequences of different kinds of moral judgments, but may also play a role in the formation of such judgments. Similar to Kaplan and Tivnan's (2014) research, Seidel and Prinz (2012) claim that different emotions lead to different moral judgments and that "that positive and negative moral judgments can engage positive and negative emotions respectively" (p. 636).

Seidel and Prinz's research focuses on the valence of positive and negative emotions, and the effect of this on morality. The analysis of Seidel and Prinz's research supports the claim that anger plays a role in morality. The results suggest that induced non-moral anger causes harsher moral judgments compared to induced happiness. Individuals in the anger condition judged minor transgressions more harshly than participants in the happy and neutral conditions. One function of anger, then, may be making stronger wrongness judgments. Recall that in Kaplan and Tivnan's (2014) study, participants who experienced anger toward the pharmacist and Joe's

father condemned their actions, and felt compassion or sympathy toward Heinz and Joe. Although the anger examined in Kaplan and Tivnan's research is not non-moral, the anger experienced led to the judgment that the pharmacist and Joe's father acted in an immoral manner. Anger was also found to be important in judging transgressions as immoral in Hutcherson and Gross's (2011) research. Thus far, we have adequate support for the claim that anger is important for morality. In particular, anger may be important for making wrongness judgments and condemning immoral actions.

### **2.5.5 Conclusion**

In this section, I analyzed studies that examine both positive and negative emotions. Eisenberg et al.'s research, using multiple markers of sympathy and personal distress, shows that sympathy is important for morality, while distress, although playing a role in morality, may be less important for morality than sympathy, as distress leads to prosocial behaviour mostly when the escape condition is difficult.

Kaplan and Tivnan's research shows that compassion, distress, and anger are important for morality. Their research lends support to Eisenberg et al.'s research that suggests that distress may be important for morality. Recall from 1.6.9 that psychopaths have decreased levels of distress. It could be that this decrease in distress is what partially leads to their immoral behaviour. If distress plays an active role in morality, then it is suggestive that individuals who have decreased levels of distress may display immoral or less prosocial behaviour than normal individuals. Although an empathy theorist, such as Marsh, might claim that psychopaths are immoral because they cannot experience distress via an empathic route, I think that not feeling high levels of distress in general (e.g., when witnessing someone acting immorally toward

another individual; when contemplating harming someone) can lead to immoral or less prosocial behaviour. That is, I do not think that distress needs to be experienced via an empathic route in order for morality to take place. It is not clear that psychopaths cannot empathize with others, and it is clear that they do experience distress, however most psychopaths do not display high levels of distress.

Kaplan and Tivnan's research also corroborates what was found in 2.3—that anger plays a role in wrongness judgments.

Finally, Seidel and Prinz's research, similar to Valdesolo and DeSteno's research, shows how manipulating affective states influences moral judgment. Seidel and Prinz's research also emphasizes the role of anger in morality by showing that when elicited, non-moral anger increases wrongness judgments.

## **2.6 The mechanisms by which emotions influence moral judgment (future work)**

### **2.6.1 Introduction**

The final two studies analyzed examine how emotions enter into decision-making and the mechanisms by which emotions influence moral judgment, and therefore serve as a foundation for future work. There is a small, but significant, number of studies conducted on how emotions enter into decision-making. Here, I sample the work in order to lay the foundation for future research. Sampling the work will also allow for further examination of the role emotions play in morality without merging two separate projects.

Thus far, I have argued that empathy is not necessary for morality (1), and have analyzed studies to determine which emotions influence and motivate morality (2). In analyzing which

emotions play a role in morality, I have found that both positive and negative emotions are important for morality (to be further discussed in the Conclusion).

Some of the studies analyzed suggest that emotions have specific moral functions, and that regardless of valence, similar emotions, when elicited, result in different cognitive behavioural outputs. From this, it follows that eliciting a specific token emotion will have a specific token behavioural output. Determining the specific functions of emotions that are important for morality and other social factors (e.g., stigmatization) are issues that my future work will address. For example, if disgust is a longer-lasting emotion than other emotions, such as anger, and if disgust plays a role in ostracizing individuals as some of the studies suggest, then it may be that disgust has both a moral and social role. If contempt is linked to competence, then contempt may serve the function of viewing individuals as incompetent or idiotic. Another issue that my future work will address is determining the mechanisms by which emotions affect morality. For example, if mirth serves the function of increasing the permissibility of some deontological violations, then one should be cautious about inducing this emotion prior to asking an individual to make a moral judgment regarding harm norms. If emotions influence the overall social and moral world, it is important to determine how they influence behaviour and the repercussions of this. For example, if disgust leads to stigmatization or if mirth leads to the permissibility of some deontological violations, then they have obvious consequences both socially and morally. Disgust-sensitive individuals may be more likely to ostracize members of society. If jury members experience mirth prior to making a verdict regarding the violation of a harm norm, there can be grave consequences. The final studies analyzed in this section shed light on this issue, as well as providing some insight regarding the emotions important for morality.

## 2.6.2 An analysis of: Ugazio, Lamm, & Singer (2012).

### *Introduction*

Ugazio et al.'s (2012) research sheds light on the interaction between types of emotions and particular types of moral judgment. Similar to some of the researchers whose work I discussed in the previous sections, Ugazio et al. claim that emotions play a significant role in moral judgment, but the specific effects of emotion on morality depend on the emotion induced. Ugazio et al. focus on anger and disgust, and hypothesize that inducing anger would lead participants to judge certain actions as morally permissible, while inducing disgust would lead participants to judge certain actions as less permissible. The main objective of their research is to provide "a better understanding of the interaction between types of emotions with particular types of moral judgments" (Ugazio, Lamm, & Singer, 2012, p. 579).

While some researches, such as Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006), focus on affect (e.g., the higher the positive affect, the more likely a utilitarian judgment will be made), Ugazio et al. focus on the motivational tendency of emotions (e.g., how specific emotions motivate a particular morality). That is, they focus on how emotions enter into morality and the effects of these emotions on morality. Part of the reason for this, as I showed in my analysis of Strohminger et al. (2011), is that similar emotions can have very different social and moral functions. Ugazio et al. focus on the motivational dimension of emotions and their different roles in moral judgment. Ugazio et al. (2012) state that they chose the motivational tendency framework because "(a) in order to express their moral judgment on a given behaviour, subjects are required to imagine the described action and have to decide whether they would endorse it or not, (b) previous research on social decision making has mainly focused on the dimensions of motivational direction and valence" (p. 581).

Ugazio et al. focus on approach and withdrawal emotions. Approach emotions are emotions that are more likely to result in behaviour that involves approaching persons, situations, or events. Withdrawal emotions are emotions that result in the withdrawal of persons, situations, or events. Anger is considered an approach emotion, whereas disgust is considered a withdrawal emotion. According to Ugazio et al. (2012), anger and disgust are important to test because they have a shared negative valence but opposite motivational tendencies, which can allow researchers to formulate “predictions on the effect emotions one should expect on moral judgments” (p. 581).

Ugazio et al.’s (2012) research “was designed to investigate how emotions differing in motivational tendency influence moral judgments and how these effects depend on the type of moral scenario being judged” (p. 581). They were looking at the mechanisms by which emotions influence moral judgment. The study also directly compared moral judgments expressed on four different types of moral scenarios (disgust-related moral scenarios, personal and impersonal moral scenarios, and beliefs moral scenarios). Disgust-related moral scenarios are scenarios discussed in 1.6, such as Haidt’s example of consensual incest. The Trolley Dilemma is an example of an impersonal scenario, while The Footbridge Dilemma is an example of a personal scenario. A beliefs moral scenario is a scenario where the protagonist believes that a given action will have a specific outcome (e.g., believing that stealing bread to feed the homeless will have a beneficial outcome).

Ugazio et al. (2012) predicted differential effects of emotions on moral judgment depending on their motivation (e.g., approach v. withdrawal). They also predicted that approach emotions would increase the number of permissibility judgments while withdrawal emotions would decrease the number of permissibility judgments in given moral scenarios. Similar to

some of the other researchers discussed thus far, Ugazio et al. predicted that the emotions have different functions and will therefore lead to different moral judgments. Going a step further, they also predicted that the type of moral scenario used will influence moral judgments. They state that emotions should have “a stronger influence on moral judgments in the disgust-related and personal scenarios as compared to the impersonal or beliefs scenarios. Furthermore, disgust induction should have an especially strong effect on the disgust-related paradigms” (p. 581). They also predicted that emotions should not influence beliefs moral scenarios because making judgments about these scenarios rely on making inferences about the individual’s intentions and involves abstract judgment. Finally, they predicted that there will be more emotional arousal in personal moral scenarios over impersonal moral scenarios. They claim that motivational direction (approach v. withdrawal) influences moral judgment. As a result, anger and disgust, although both negative emotions, should have different effects on moral judgment. More specifically, the effects should be opposite in nature.

#### *Details of the study*

Ugazio et al. conducted two experiments to determine the functions and effects of disgust and anger in moral judgment. Study 1 examined the role of disgust by inducing disgust via an odor (experiment 1a) and by asking participants to watch a video clip that should induce disgust (experiment 1b). Participants were assigned to the disgust condition or the control condition. Disgust was not induced in the control condition. In study 1a, disgust was induced by an odorous spray on a garbage bag that was in the room. Participants in the control condition completed the study in an identical room with a neutral odor. Study 1a consisted of 55 participants. In study 1b, disgust was induced by showing participants a two minute video clip of an individual interacting with vomit. In the control condition, participants were show a two minute video clip that described a painting. Study 1b consisted of 109 participants.

Participants read 40 scenarios (10 per scenario type), and for each scenario they were asked whether it was permissible for the protagonist to commit a specific action. The scenarios were adapted from previous research (Greene et al., 2008; Schnall et al., 2008; Young et al., 2006). The order of the types of scenarios was randomized. After completing the questions, participants were asked to indicate how strongly they felt anger, happiness, sadness, or disgust on an 11-point scale. Participants were also asked to indicate how strongly they felt these emotions immediately before and after responding to the questions. This allowed for Ugazio et al. to examine how and which emotions enter into moral decision-making, as well as to examine the effects of emotion on judgments. Participants were also asked to report whether the emotion felt influenced their moral judgment. This was asked in order to assess any possible effects about participants' beliefs of emotion on moral judgment (Ugazio, Lamm, & Singer, 2012).

Study 2 was similar to study 1 but induced anger instead of disgust, allowing the researchers to examine how anger enters into moral judgment and the influence of anger on these judgments. 122 undergraduate students participated in this study. Participants were assigned to an anger or control condition. Anger was induced by providing negative feedback on an essay written by the participant. In order to make the story believable, participants were asked to write an essay and correct another participant's essay. Participants were introduced to each other before the experiment began. Participants were given ten minutes to write an essay on a controversial topic, such as selling alcohol to minors. Participants were allowed to pick one of five essay topics. After writing the essays, participants were given another participant's essay to evaluate. Evaluation was based on four criteria: logic, rationality, interest, and intelligence. Participants gave the essays either a positive, negative, or neutral evaluation. These evaluations were swapped by experimenters with prepared evaluations that were either negative, to induce

anger, or neutral on the four criteria. Ugazio et al. (2012) note that the negative evaluations may have also induced other more complex emotions, such as shame, but they did not control for these emotions because their focus in this research was on basic emotions, such as anger and disgust.

Ugazio et al. (2012) found that the methods used to induce disgust in study 1 resulted in higher average ratings of disgust ( $M=6.73$  for experiment 1a;  $M=7.93$  for experiment 1b;  $M=7.61$  combined) compared to subjects in the control condition. As expected, disgust was felt more strongly in the disgust condition than in the control condition. Ugazio et al. (2012) also found that there were no significant differences with the non-target emotion intensities (sadness, anger, happiness). Disgust was felt more significantly than the other non-target emotions.

Similar to the results of study 1, study 2 showed that participants in the anger condition felt more anger than those in the control group. Anger was also felt more strongly than the non-target emotions. Participants in the anger condition also felt moderate levels of sadness compared to those in the control group, and the difference between the two groups was significant. However, Ugazio et al. (2012) state that this result is not problematic because “anger was felt significantly more strongly than sadness, suggesting that the main group effects on moral judgments are attributable to the presence of anger and that...the expected effects of sadness—a withdrawal emotion—on moral judgments might have counteracted the effects exerted by anger” (p. 587).

Ugazio et al. (2012) found that disgust did not affect disgust-related scenarios ( $F<2$ ), and that the effect of emotions was not stronger for personal than impersonal moral scenarios ( $F<1$ ). This contradicts previous research (Greene, 2008) that suggests that personal moral dilemmas are

bound with higher emotional arousal than impersonal dilemmas. Greene (2008) found that when asked to make a moral judgment about an impersonal dilemma, such as The Trolley Dilemma, participants elicited lower levels of emotional arousal than when asked to make a judgment about a personal moral dilemma, such as The Footbridge Dilemma.

They also found that, as predicted, experiencing anger while making a moral judgment allowed for greater permissibility of the action (e.g., pulling the lever or pushing the large man off the bridge) than when experiencing disgust. Ugazio et al. (2012) state that the results of both studies “support the hypothesis that motivational tendency is a crucial feature in determining how emotions affect moral judgments” (p. 587).

Ugazio et al. also hypothesized that the influence of emotions depends on the type of moral scenario. The results of their research partially support this hypothesis. They found that contrary to their predictions, emotions influenced impersonal moral scenarios (e.g., scenarios similar to The Trolley Dilemma).

### *Discussion*

Ugazio et al. (2012) state that the results indicate “that the experimental induction of emotions also affects impersonal moral judgments and that emotion induction effects for them are similar in size to those observed for the personal scenarios” (p. 587), acknowledging that these results are at odds with previous research (e.g., Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2006). They provide various reasons for these results, stating that the most plausible reason “may be that induced emotions particularly influence moral scenarios entailing a strong *action demand*” (p. 588, their italics). That is, both personal and impersonal scenarios require action, such as pushing the large man off a footbridge or pulling a lever, and thus emotion influences both types of scenarios. Note that I am skeptical accepting these results, as previous research suggests that personal moral

scenarios elicit more emotional arousal than impersonal moral scenarios. However, the results do not conflict with the purpose of the analysis, which is to examine how emotions enter into decision-making.

The results confirmed the prediction that emotion influences personal moral scenarios and not moral beliefs scenarios, but did not support the prediction that disgust should influence judgment in disgust-related scenarios, contrary to previous research (Wheatly & Haidt, 2005). Ugazio, et al. state that this result “was particularly surprising, as it stands against previously reported findings...suggesting that the emotion of disgust plays a crucial role in moral judgment” (p. 587). Again, they state that this may be due to the fact that disgust-related scenarios do not require action, unlike personal and impersonal scenarios. What is more, as Chapman and Anderson’s (2014) research suggests, the influence of disgust in the moral domain is not limited to bodily or purity norms. That is, disgust is related to scenarios other than disgust-related dilemmas, and plays a role in ‘pure’ moral transgressions. This may also help explain why disgust did not heavily influence disgust-related scenarios.

The results from Ugazio et al.’s research provides further support for the view that anger plays a role in morality. Their research questions the role of disgust in morality, but this doubt is overridden by their claim that disgust-related scenarios do not require action. That is, it does not follow that disgust is not important for morality because it does not show up in behaviour.

### 2.6.3 An analysis of: Szekely & Miu (2015).

#### *Introduction*

A more recent study, similar to Valdesolo and DeSteno (2006) and Ugazio et al.’s (2012) studies, was conducted by Szekely and Miu (2015). Szekely and Miu examine the influence of

emotion and individual differences in what they call ‘harm to save’ (H2S) dilemmas, and their research focuses on the emotions experienced when asked to sacrifice one life in order to save five (e.g., The Footbridge Dilemma). Similar to Kaplan and Tivnan (2014), they claim that multiple emotions are present during moral decision-making. Szekely and Miu claim that the emotions experienced when asked to make a moral choice in a moral dilemma influences the decision that is made. Given that, they argue that regulating or manipulating emotions influence morality.

Unlike some of the studies analyzed thus far, Szekely and Miu used free self-report descriptions of emotional experience. That is, they allowed participants to freely report the emotions experienced, and the emotions were categorized as ‘disgust,’ ‘anger,’ etc. As Szekely and Miu note, many researchers use ‘forced choice’ when asking participants to describe the emotions experienced while making a moral judgment; participants are restricted in describing their emotional experience to the emotions provided by the researchers. By using free self-report descriptions of emotions, Szekely and Miu hoped to uncover the real emotions important for morality.

Szekely and Miu’s (2015) research examine the relationship between emotional reactivity, emotion regulation, and moral choice in H2S dilemmas. They distinguish moral choice from moral judgment, stating that moral choice requires projecting oneself into the dilemma and asking what the individual would do if put in a given situation rather than simply asking for a moral judgment.<sup>32</sup> Szekely and Miu claim that making moral judgments does not

---

<sup>32</sup> It is my belief that when an individual makes a moral judgment, it is often not an abstract judgment. Rather, the individual attempts to put themselves in the scenario in order to make a moral judgment. Many moral scenarios ask what the individual would do in a given situation, unlike the Heinz Dilemma. I have not been discussing moral judgment in the abstract sense, and thus use ‘moral judgment’ and what Szekely and Miu call ‘moral choice’ interchangeably. Kaplan and Tivnan’s (2014) research uses abstract moral judgment. However, as Ugazio et al.

require putting oneself in the position of the protagonist in the moral scenario, while moral choice does. Szekely and Miu (2015) state that “it is possible that projecting oneself in moral dilemma situations and deciding what course of action to follow could be more emotionally salient and more readily uncover emotional biases on decision” (p. 66). Szekely and Miu conducted two related studies in order to examine the relationship between emotional reactivity, emotional regulation, and moral choice.

#### *Details of the study*

Study 1 was conducted to investigate the relationship between emotional experiences and moral choice in H2S dilemmas. 63 participants completed the study. Participants were asked to read a set of 12 personal H2S moral dilemmas (e.g., The Footbridge Dilemma) and asked to imagine themselves as vividly as possible in each of the scenarios. They were then asked to make a moral choice—a deontological or utilitarian choice. Participants made a deontological choice if they decided to save one life instead of five, or a utilitarian choice if they decided to sacrifice one life and save five. After responding to each dilemma, participants were asked to indicate if they felt an emotion when resolving the dilemma. Participants who indicated a felt emotion were asked to identify the predominant emotion and rate its intensity on a 5-point Likert scale (1= not at all; 5= very intense). Participants were instructed to indicate only one emotion, which was the emotion they experienced most strongly. The aim of this task was to determine the influence of emotional experience on moral choice, where the emotions lead to the moral choice. The emotions are viewed as causes, and not results, of the choice made.

---

(2012) point out, previous studies suggest that emotions influence moral judgment whether an action is performed in first person or by a third party.

The results of the study show that during H2S moral dilemmas, participants experienced mostly fear and sadness when resolving the dilemmas. They also experienced compassion, guilt, anger, disgust, regret, and contempt. According to Szekely and Miu, fear and sadness were most frequently reported when participants made deontological choices. Regret was most frequently reported when participants made utilitarian choices. Szekely and Miu (2015) state that “the presence of emotion was significantly reported by over 80% of participants in all the moral dilemmas...emotional experience was common in all the dilemmas” (p. 68). This result suggests that emotion is important for moral choice. More specifically, the result suggests that experiencing fear and sadness are often bound with deontological choices. Szekely and Miu also found that fear and disgust were more frequently reported when deontological judgments were made. This finding is not surprising. Steven Pinker (2008) states that individuals tend to experience revulsion at the thought of harming an innocent individual, and disgust is usually elicited when contemplating harming innocent others.<sup>33</sup>

Szekely and Miu found that higher emotional arousal was associated with higher deontological choices. This lends support to Joshua Greene’s (2004; 2008) theory that deontological choices are associated with emotion more than utilitarian judgments. In “The Secret Joke of Kant’s Soul,” Greene (2008) argues that utilitarian judgments use more cognitive processes than emotional processes, and that deontological judgments use more emotional processes than cognitive processes. Greene (2008) also found that in conflicting moral dilemmas, such as the Crying Baby Dilemma where one must decide to smother one’s own baby in order to save their own life and lives of innocent others, cognitive and emotional processes are in competition, and when cognitive processes override emotional processes, utilitarian judgments

---

<sup>33</sup> See Blair (1995) for a similar view.

are made more often than deontological judgments. Their finding contradicts Ugazio et al.'s (2012) finding that suggests that personal and impersonal dilemmas do not differ in emotional arousal. Szekely and Miu's finding is consistent with the literature in moral psychology, and supports my own view that impersonal moral dilemmas elicit lower levels of emotion than personal moral dilemmas.

Szekely and Miu found that across the twelve dilemmas, 56.45% of responses were deontological. For the individuals who reported experiencing emotion, 62.16% of emotions were related to fear and sadness, while the other responses described emotions related to guilt, anger, disgust, compassion, regret, and contempt. The frequency of emotions other than fear and sadness did not differ between deontological and utilitarian responses, and the results of study 1 suggest that both self (disgust, anger) and other-focused (guilt, compassion) emotions are causative during moral choice. According to Szekely and Miu (2015), "these associations that were uncovered in Study 1 suggest that the focus on self may contribute to deontological decisions (when deontological and utilitarian tendencies are assessed as inversely related dimensions), whereas the focus on others may enhance utilitarian decisions" (p. 72). Although I am skeptical about this claim, I include it here for the sake of completeness.

In order to further examine emotion in moral judgment, study 2 was conducted. The purpose of study 2 was "to investigate the influence of individual differences in the habitual use of several emotion regulation strategies on moral choice, and whether these effects were carried through emotional arousal" (Szekely & Miu, 2015, p. 69). 345 participants completed this study. Participants were given the same set of moral dilemmas that was used in study 1. Participants were given the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire in order to determine individual differences in cognitive emotion regulation. The Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire

identifies the coping strategies that an individual uses after experiencing a negative event or situation. Szekely and Miu define cognitive emotion regulation as “habitual thinking styles in stressful situations” (p. 69).

Szekely and Miu used four emotion regulation strategies in their study: 1) positive reappraisal, such as attaching a positive meaning to negative events; 2) acceptance, such as accepting what one has experienced; 3) rumination, which is thinking about the ideas and feelings that are associated with negative events; and 4) catastrophizing, which is emphasizing the impact of negative events. Szekely and Miu (2015) state that “each subscale has four items, and the participants were instructed to rate each item on a scale from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always)” (p. 70).

After completing the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, participants were given the set of dilemmas and asked to imagine themselves as vividly as possible in each scenario and then instructed to make a moral choice—deontological or utilitarian. Similar to study 1, participants were then asked to indicate if they experienced any emotions while deliberating, and asked to rate their emotional arousal. Participants were also asked to rate the valence of their emotion (1= unpleasant; 5= pleasant). Finally, they were asked to rate how successfully they transposed themselves in the moral dilemmas.

The results of the study show that the mean percent of deontological choices was 62.99%. Similar to study 1, “deontological responses were significantly more frequent than utilitarian responses in all the dilemmas” (Szekely & Miu, 2015, p. 71). Participants in study 2 also reported increased personal involvement across all moral dilemmas ( $M= 3.7$ ). Over 70% of participants reported emotion across the dilemmas, which again emphasizes the importance of

emotion in morality. The emotions experienced while resolving the moral dilemma led to the specific moral judgment.

Participants experienced moderately negative emotions across the dilemmas (emotional arousal:  $M= 3.01$ ; emotional valence:  $M= 1.32$ ). Szekely and Miu also found that individual differences in positive reappraisal significantly predicted participants' moral choice, but individual differences in acceptance, rumination, and catastrophizing were not significant predictors of moral choice. The results of the study show that “the higher the reappraisal score, the lower the likelihood of deontological responses” (p. 71). There was also a significant indirect effect of reappraisal on moral choices through emotional arousal. Emotional arousal positively predicted deontological moral choices, and reappraisal negatively predicted emotional arousal. In other words, reappraisal was negatively related to emotional arousal, which in turn led to utilitarian judgments. Individuals who had higher emotional arousal made more deontological moral choices. The results of study 2 suggest that reappraisal inclined participants toward utilitarian choices as opposed to deontological choices.

### *Discussion*

Szekely and Miu (2015) state that

Using H2S moral dilemmas, the present studies yielded three main findings: (1) a wide spectrum of emotions are experienced during these moral dilemmas, with self-focused emotions such as fear and sadness being the most common (Study 1); (2) there is a positive relation between emotional arousal during moral dilemmas and deontological choices (Studies 1 and 2); and (3) individual differences in reappraisal, but not other emotion regulation strategies (i.e., acceptance, rumination or catastrophizing) are negatively associated with deontological choices and this effect is carried through emotional arousal (Study 2) (p. 71)

The results of Szekely and Miu's (2015) research suggest that fear and sadness may be important emotions for moral judgment as the emotions lead to specific judgments; these

emotions were predominantly experienced when participants were deliberating moral choice in H2S dilemmas. Other emotions, such as disgust, anger, guilt, compassion, regret and contempt were also experienced, but to a lesser degree. Regret was frequently reported when participants made utilitarian choices and disgust was also frequently reported when deontological choices were made. Szekely and Miu's research emphasizes the importance of fear and sadness in moral choice; they state that these emotions were predominantly experienced by participants. Recall that Hutcherson and Gross (2011) also found that fear and sadness were important emotions for morality. When participants were asked to imagine themselves, a friend, or a stranger in a given situation, Hutcherson and Gross found that fear was predominantly experienced in the self condition, and that sadness was predominantly experienced when asked to imagine a scenario involving physical harm. Support for this claim can be found in Blair's (1995) work on psychopathy. Blair claims that when an attacker witnesses submissive cues, such as fear or other non-verbal facial cues of distress (e.g., sadness), in their victim, they will usually withdraw from the harmful act. Szekely and Miu's findings suggest that both fear and sadness are important for moral judgment.

A novel feature of Szekely and Miu's (2015) research, as mentioned above, is the inclusion of free self-report descriptions of emotional experience. According to Szekely and Miu, this allowed participants to report their emotional experience without being restricted to the emotions provided by researchers. As a result of using free self-report descriptions of emotional experience, Szekely and Miu (2015) state that the results of their research "may offer a more complete picture of participants' conscious emotional experience" (p. 72) than other studies. While it may be that using free self-report descriptions of emotional experience may allow for a more complete picture of emotional experience during moral choice, the results from Szekely

and Miu's research corroborate what other researchers have found, namely that fear and sadness influence moral judgment.

#### **2.6.4 Conclusion**

In this section, I analyzed two studies that examine the mechanisms by which emotions influence morality. Ugazio et al.'s study focused on the motivational dimension of emotions and their different roles in moral judgment, and looked at how emotions that differ in motivational tendency influence morality, providing evidence that emotions play a causative role in morality. They argued that emotions have different moral functions and will thus lead to different moral judgments. Focusing specifically on disgust and anger, Ugazio et al. found that anger plays a role in morality and influences permissibility judgments. Their research questions the role of disgust in morality. However, as I previously mentioned, the doubt that disgust plays a role in morality is overridden by previous research on morality, my analysis in 2.3 that suggests that disgust plays a significant role in morality, and Ugazio et al.'s claim that disgust-related scenarios do not require action.

Szekely and Miu found that multiple emotions, but predominantly fear and sadness, are present during moral choice. They also found that disgust and anger lead to deontological judgments while guilt and compassion lead to utilitarian choices, suggesting that specific emotions lead to specific moral judgments.

The findings from these studies provide a foundation for my future research that will focus on determining the mechanisms by which emotions affect morality and other social factors. The findings also shed light on the emotions important for morality, providing further evidence for the emotions important for moral judgment and moral behaviour.

## **Part V: Conclusion**

The first half of this research project examined whether the empathy thesis is plausible. I found that empathy does not play a significant role in morality, despite the celebration of its popularity in the moral domain. Holding a sentimentalist view of morality, my aim in the second half of this research project was to determine which emotions, if not empathy, are significant for morality. By conducting an examination and analysis of the literature, I found which emotions are most significant for both negative and positive morality.

Disgust is one of the most important emotions for morality. As my analysis has shown, disgust sensitivity is a good predictor of moral judgment. More specifically, disgust is a good predictor of wrongness judgements. Individual differences in the propensity to experience disgust is linked to individual differences in moral judgment. What is more, my analysis showed that, despite what is traditionally thought by some researchers, the influence of disgust in the moral domain is not limited to purity or bodily norms, but also extend to ‘pure’ forms of morality.

Anger is another emotion that appears to play a significant role in morality. Anger can be thought of as being both positively and negatively related to morality. Anger is positively related to morality because experiencing anger when witnessing an unjust act can lead to moral outrage, which usually results in the condemnation of a specific action. Experiencing anger, even non-moral anger, can also lead to making stronger wrongness judgments, as Seidel and Prinz have shown.

Anger is also negatively related to morality. When experienced in excess, anger can lead to acting immorally, such as seeking revenge on perpetrators, or mistreating individuals. We have seen such examples in 1.6.9.

Distress appears to play an important role in morality. Distress appears to be positively related to morality, in that, when experienced, it can lead to moral behaviour. Distress, whether it is personal distress or distress for others, appears to have positive influences on morality.

Turning to positive emotions, sympathy, sometimes called ‘compassion,’ is an important emotion for morality. Sympathy, a positive emotion, has been known to lead to moral behaviour. For example, Buddhist ethics, among other forms of ethics, is based on compassion, (Goodman, 2009), a term that is often used interchangeably with sympathy. The studies analyzed here lend support to the view that sympathy is important for motivating morality. According to Marsh, one major factor that separates autistic individuals from psychopaths is their ability to demonstrate basic compassion or concern in response to another person’s suffering.

It is not always the case that an individual needs to experience sympathy in order to display moral behaviour. As discussed in 1.3, I can have concern for you without actually being motivated to help you. However, given what we have seen regarding sympathy and morality, sympathy can motivate morality. The role of sympathy in morality is not as significant as disgust, anger, and distress.

Elevation, as this analysis has shown, is important for morality. Witnessing morally outstanding acts prompts others to be prosocial.

Mirth, an extension of amusement, leads to utilitarian moral judgment. Experiencing this emotion prior to making a moral judgment allows for more calculated moral judgments. While it

is usually thought that positive emotions lead to similar judgments, my analysis has shown otherwise, emphasizing that valence, on its own, is not a good predictor of moral judgment. Instead, experiencing specific emotions lead to specific moral judgments.

My analysis has shown the importance of emotion in morality. Emotion can influence and shape morality in many different ways. I have shown how different emotions, though similarly valenced and similar in nature, can lead to very different moral outcomes. In an attempt to prove the empathy theorist wrong, I have shown which emotions are important for morality. However, this list is not conclusive. There may be other emotions that are responsible for morality. With the exception of a few emotions, my analysis has focused primarily on the role of basic emotions in morality. My future research may include examining the role of complex emotions in morality.

### Bibliography

Ali, F., Amorim, I. S., & Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2009). Empathy deficits and trait emotional intelligence in psychopathy and Machiavellianism. *Personality and Individual Differences, 47*, 758-762.

- Algoe, S. & Haidt, J. (2009). Witnessing excellence in action: the ‘other-praising’ emotions of elevation, gratitude, and admiration. *J Posit Psychology*, 4, 105-127.
- Bagley, A. D., Abramowitz, C.S., & Kosson, D.S. (2009). Vocal affect recognition and psychopathy: Converging findings across traditional and cluster analytic approaches to assessing the construct. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 118 (2), 388-398.
- Baron-Cohen, S. (2011). *The science of evil*. New York: Basic Books.
- Barratt, E.S. (1994). Impulsiveness and aggression. In John Monahan & Henry J. Steadman (Eds.), *Violence and Mental Disorder: Developments in Risk Assessment* (61-80). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Batson, C. D. (1987). Prosocial motivation: Is it ever truly altruistic? In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 20, pp. 65-122). New York: Academic Press.
- Batson, C.D. (2011). *Altruism in humans*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Batson, C.D. (2012). The empathy-altruism hypothesis: Issues and implications. In J. Decety (Ed). *Empathy: From Bench to Bedside* (41-54). Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Batson, C. D., Duncan, B. D., Ackerman, P., Buckley, T., & Birch, K. (1981). Is empathic emotion a source of altruistic motivation? *Journal of personality and Social Psychology*, 40, 290-302.
- 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., O’ Quinn, K., Fultz, J., Vanderplas, M., & Isen, A. (1983). Self-reported distress and empathy and egoistic versus altruistic motivation for helping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45, 706-718.
- Bechara, A., Damasio, H., Damasio, A. R., & Lee, G. P. (1999) Different contributions of the human amygdala and ventromedial prefrontal cortex to decision-making. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 19, 5473-5481.
- Bechara, A., Tranel, D., Damasio, H. & Damasio, A. (1996). Failure to respond autonomically to anticipated future outcomes following damage to prefrontal cortex. *Cerebral Cortex*, 6, 215–225.
- Bjork, J.M., Chen, G., & Hommer, D.W. (2012). Psychopathic tendencies and mesolimbic recruitment by cues for instrumental and passively obtained rewards. *Biological Psychology*, 89, 408-415.
- Bjorklund, F. (2004). Just because it’s disgusting does make it more wrong: Level of disgust affects moral judgment. *Lund Psychological Reports*, 5, 1-13.
- Blair, R.J.R. (1995). A cognitive developmental approach to morality: Investigating the psychopath. *Cognition* 57, 1-29.
- Blair, R. J. R. (1996). Brief report: Morality in the autistic child. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 26, 571-579.
- Blair, R.J.R. (1999). Psychophysiological responsiveness to the distress of others in children with autism. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 26, 477-485.

- Blair, R. J. R., Mitchell, D., & Blair, K. (2005). *The psychopath: Emotion and the brain*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Blair, R.J.R., Jones, L., Clark, F., & Smith, M. (1995). Is the psychopath morally insane? *Personality & Individual Differences, 19*, 741-752.
- Blair, J., Jones, L., Clark, F., & Smith, M. (1997). The psychopathic individual: a lack of responsiveness to distress cues? *Psychophysiology, 34*, 192–198.
- Bloom, P. (2010). Against Empathy? *Boston Review Blog*. September 10.
- Chapman, H.A. & Anderson, A.K. (2014). Trait physical disgust is related to moral judgments outside of the purity domain. *Emotion, 14*, 341-348.
- Chirkov, V., Ryan, R., Kim, Y., & Kaplan, U. (2003). Differentiating autonomy from individualism and independence: A self-determination theory perspective on internalization of cultural orientations and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 97-110.
- Christianson S.A., Forth, A.E., Hare, R.D., Strachan, C., Lidberg, L., & Thorell, L.H. (1996). Remembering details of emotional events: a comparison between psychopathic and nonpsychopathic offenders. *Personality & Individual Differences, 20*, 437–443.
- Cleckley, H. (1982). *The mask of sanity*. St. Louis, MO: Mosby.
- Craig, K. D. (1968). Physiological arousal as a function of imaged, vicarious, and direct stress experiences. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 73*, 513-520.
- Damasio, A. (1994). *Descartes error: Emotion, reason, and the human brain*. New York: Putnam.
- Damasio, A., Everitt, B.J., & Bishop, D. (1996). The somatic marker hypothesis and the possible functions of the prefrontal cortex. *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences, 35*, 1413-1420.
- Damasio, H., Grabowski, T., Frank, R., Galaburda, A. M., & Damasio, A. R. (1994). The return of Phineas Gage: clues about the brain from the skull of a famous patient. *Science, 264*, 1102-1105.
- Dolan, M. & Doyle, M. (2000). Violence risk prediction: Clinical and actuarial measures and the role of the Psychopathy Checklist. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 177*, 303-311.
- Dutton, K. (2012). *The wisdom of psychopaths: Lessons in life from saints, spies, and serial killers*. New York: Scientific American.
- Eisenberg, N. & Strayer, J. (1987). Critical issues in the study of empathy. In Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (eds.), *Empathy and its development* (3-13). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R.A., Miller, P.A., Fultz, J., Shell, R., Mathy, R., & Reno, R. (1989). Relation of sympathy and personal distress to prosocial behaviour: A multimethod study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*, 55-66.

- Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. V. (1978). *The facial action coding system (FACS)*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Evans, A. & Kang, L. (2013). Emergence of lying in very young children. *Developmental Psychology*, *49*, 1958-1963.
- Goodman, C. (2009). *Consequences of Compassion*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Grandin, T. (1992). Calming effects of deep touch pressure in patients with autistic disorder, college students, and animals. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, *2*, 63-72.
- Grandin, T. (2006). *Thinking in pictures, expanded edition: My life with autism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Greene, J. D. (2007). Why are VMPFC patients more utilitarian? A dual-process theory of moral judgment explains. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *11*, 322–323.
- Greene J., Nystrom L., Engell, A., Darley, J., & Cohen, J. (2004). The neural bases of cognitive conflict and control in moral judgment. *Neuron*, *44*, 389–400.
- Greene, J., Morelli, S.A., Lowenberg, K., Nystrom, L., & Cohen, J. (2008). Cognitive load selectively interferes with utilitarian moral judgment. *Cognition*, *107*, 1144-1154.
- Goodman, C. (2009). *Consequences of compassion: An interpretation and defense of Buddhist ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*, *108*, 814-34.
- Haidt, J. (2007). The new synthesis in moral psychology. *Science*, *316*, 988-1002.
- Haidt, J., & Bjorklund, F. (2008). Social intuitionists answer six questions about moral psychology. In Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (Ed.), *Moral psychology: Intuition and Diversity vol. 2*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Haidt, J., Bjorklund, F., & Murphy, S. (2000). Moral dumbfounding: when intuition finds no reason. Unpublished manuscript, University of Virginia.
- Haidt, J., Koller, S.H., & Dias, M.G. (1993). Affect, culture, and morality, or is it wrong to eat your Dog? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *65*, 613-628.
- Haidt, J., McCauley, C. R., & Rozin, P. (1994). Individual differences in sensitivity to disgust: A scale sampling seven domains of disgust elicitors. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *16*, 701-713.
- Hare, R. D. (1966). Psychopathy and choice of immediate versus delayed punishment. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *71*, 139-151.
- Hare, R.D. (1993). *Without conscience: The disturbing world of psychopaths among us*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Hare, R.D. (2004). *The Hare psychopathy checklist-revised, 2nd Ed*. Toronto: Mental Health Services.

- Hare, R. D., Clark, D., Grann, M., & Thornton, D. (2000). Psychopathy and the predictive validity of the PCL-R: An international perspective. *Behavioral sciences & the law, 18*, 623-645.
- Hauser, M. (2006). *Moral minds: How nature designed our universal sense of right and wrong*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Howe, D. (2013). *Empathy: What it is and why it matters*. New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hume, D. (1777/1960). *An enquiry concerning the principles of morals*. La Salle: Open Court.
- Hume, D. (1826). *The philosophical works of David Hume*. London: Oxford University.
- Hutcherson, C. & Gross, J. (2011). The moral emotions: A social–functionalist account of anger, disgust, and contempt. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*, 719-737.
- Inbar, Y., Pizarro, D.A., Knobe, J., & Bloom, P. (2009). Disgust sensitivity predicts intuitive disapproval of gays. *American Psychological Association, 9*, 435-439.
- Kaplan, U. & Tivnan, T. (2014). Multiplicity of Emotions in Moral Judgment and Motivation. *Ethics & Behaviour, 24*, 421-443
- Kean, Sam (2014). Phineas Gage: Neuroscience’s most famous patient. *Slate*.
- Knobe, J. (2003). Intentional action and side effects in ordinary language. *Analysis, 63*, 190-194.
- Kohlberg, L. (1984). The psychology of moral development: The nature and validity of moral stages. *Essays on moral development (Vol. 2)*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.
- Levenson, M. R., Kiehl, K. A., & Fitzpatrick, C. M. (1995). Assessing psychopathic attributes in a noninstitutionalized population. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68*, 151-158.
- Lilienfeld, S. O., & Andrews, B. (1996). Development and preliminary validation of a self-report measure of psychopathic personality traits in noncriminal populations. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 66*, 488-524.
- Lykken, D.T. (1957) A study of anxiety in the sociopathic personality. *Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology, 55*, 6–10.
- Macmillan, M. (2002). Phineas Gage. In V.S. Ramachandran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of the human brain*, 83-857. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Maibom, H. (2008). The mad, the bad, and the psychopath. *Neuroethics, 1*, 167-84.
- Maibom, H. (2012). The many faces of empathy and their relation to prosocial action and aggression inhibition. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science (WIRE)*, 3, 253-63.
- Maibom, H. (2014). (Almost) everything you ever wanted to know about empathy. In H. Maibom (Ed). *Empathy and morality* (1-40). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Marsh, A.A. (2012). Empathy and compassion: A cognitive neuroscience perspective. In J. Decety (Ed). *From Bench to Bedside* (191-205). New York. Oxford University Press.

- Marsh, A. A. (2014). Empathy and Moral Deficits in Psychopathy. In H. Maibom (Ed). *Empathy and morality* (138-154). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Marsh, A.A. & Blair, R.J.R. (2008). Deficits in facial affect recognition among antisocial populations: A meta-analysis. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 32, 454–465.
- Marsh, A. A., and Cardinale, E. M. (2012). Psychopathy and fear: Specific impairments in judging behaviours that frighten others. *Emotion*, 12, 892-898.
- Marsh, A. A., Finger, E. E., Schechter, J.C., Jurkowitz, I. T., Reid, M. E., & Blair, R. J. R. (2011). Adolescents with psychopathic traits report reductions in physiological responses to fear. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 52, 834-831.
- Masserman, J. H., Wechkin, S. & Terris, W. (1964). "Altruistic" behavior in rhesus monkeys. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 121, 584-585.
- McGeer, V. (2008). Varieties of moral agency: lessons from autism (and psychopathy). In Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (Ed.), *Moral psychology: The neuroscience of morality: emotion, disease and development* vol. 3 (281-296). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Mikhail, J. (2008). The Poverty of the Moral Stimulus. In Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (Ed.), *Moral psychology: Intuition and Diversity* vol. 2 (353-359). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Moll, J., de Oliveira-Souza, R., & Zahn, R. (2008). The neural basis of moral cognition: Sentiments, concepts, and values. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1124, 161–180.
- Nichols, S. (2001). Norms with feeling: towards a psychological account of moral judgment. *Mind and Language* 4 (2001).
- Nichols, S. (2004). *Sentimental rules: On the natural foundations of moral judgment*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nichols, S. (2008). Sentimentalism Naturalized. In Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (Ed.), *Moral psychology: Intuition and Diversity* vol. 2. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Nussbaum, M.C. (2001). *Women and human Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Parfit, Derek. (1986). *Reasons and persons*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Patrick, C. (2007). Getting to the heart of psychopathy. In H. Hervé, and J. Yuille (Eds.), *The psychopath: theory, research, and practice* (207–252). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Pinker, S. (2008). The Moral Instinct. *New York Times*. Jan 13
- Poythress, N. G., Lilienfeld, S. O., Skeem, J. L., Douglas, K. S., Edens, J. F., Epstein, M., & Patrick, C. J. (2010). Using the PCL-R to help estimate the validity of two self-report measures of psychopathy with offenders. *Assessment*, 17, 206-219.

- Preston, S. & de Waal, F. (2002). Empathy: Its ultimate and proximate bases. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 25, 1-72.
- Prinz, J. (2006). The emotional basis of moral judgments. *Philosophical Explorations*, 9, 29-43.
- Prinz, J. (2011a). Against empathy. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 49, 214-233.
- Prinz, J. (2011b). Is empathy necessary for morality? In A. Coplan & P. Goldie (Eds.), *Empathy: Philosophical and psychological perspectives* (211-29). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Prichard, J. C. (1837). *A treatise on insanity and other disorders affecting the mind*. Philadelphia: E. L. Carey & Hart.
- Rice, G. E. J. & Gainer, P. (1962) "Altruism" in the albino rat. *Journal of Comparative & Physiological Psychology*, 55, 123-125.
- Rozin, P., Lowery, L., Imada, S., & Haidt, J. (1999). The CAD triad hypothesis: A mapping between three moral emotions (contempt, anger, disgust) and three moral codes (community, autonomy, divinity). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 574-586.
- Sayre-McCord. (Unpublished Manuscript). Hume and Smith on sympathy, approbation, and moral judgment.
- Scerbo, A., Raine, A., O'Brien, M., Chan, C.J., Rhee, C., & Smiley, N. (1990). Reward dominance and passive avoidance learning in adolescent psychopaths. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 18, 451-463.
- Scheler, M. (1954). *The Nature and Forms of Sympathy*.
- Schnall, S., Benton, J., & Harvey, S. With a clean conscience: Cleanliness reduces the severity of moral judgments. (2008). *Psychological Science*, 19, 1219-1222.
- Shweder, R. A., Much, N. C, Mahapatra, M., & Park, L. (1997). The big three of morality (autonomy, community, divinity) and the big three explanations of suffering. In A. Brandt & P. Rozin (Eds.), *Morality and health* (pp. 119-169). New York: Routledge.
- Seidel, A. & Prinz, J. (2012). Mad and glad: Musically induced emotions have divergent impact on morals. *Motiv Emot*, 37, 629-637.
- Siderits, M. (2007). *Buddhism as philosophy*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- Siegling, A., Furnham, A., & Petrides. K.V. (2015). Trait emotional intelligence and personality. *J Psychoeduc Assess*, 57-67.
- Singer, T., & Lamm, C. (2009). The social neuroscience of empathy. *The Year in Cognitive Neuroscience 2009: Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1156, 81-96.
- Skeem, J., Johansson, P., Andershed, H., Kerr, M., & Loudon, J. E. (2007). Two subtypes of psychopathic violent offenders that parallel primary and secondary variants. *Journal of abnormal psychology*, 116, 395-409.

- Smetana, J. & Kim, S. (1987). Korean children's conceptions of moral and conventional transgressions. *Developmental Psychology*, 23, 577-582.
- Smith, A. (1759/1976). *The theory of moral sentiments*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sripada, C.S. Nativism and moral psychology. In Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (Ed.), *Moral Psychology: The Evolution of Morality: Adaptations and Innateness* vol. 1 (319-343). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Spielberger, C. D. (2010). State-trait anger expression inventory. *Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 1.
- Strohinger, N., Lewis, R., & Meyer, D. (2011), Divergent effects of different positive emotions on moral judgment. *Cognition*, 119, 295-300.
- Sturmer, S., Snyder, M., & Omoto, A. M. (2005). Prosocial emotions and helping: The moderating role of group membership. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88, 532-546.
- Szalavitz, M., and Perry, B.D. (2010). *Born for love*. New York, New York: HarperCollins.
- Szekely, R.D. & Miu, A.C. (2015). Incidental emotions in moral dilemmas: The influence of emotion regulation. *Cognition and Emotion*, 29, 64-75.
- Trivers, R.L. (1971). The evolution of reciprocal altruism. *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, 46, 35-57.
- Ugazio, G., Lamm, C., & Singer, T. (2012). The role of emotions for moral judgments depends on the type of emotion and moral scenario. *Emotion*, 12, 579-590.
- Wheatley, T., & Haidt, J. (2005). Hypnotic disgust makes moral judgments more severe. *Psychological Science*, 16, 780- 784.
- Wible, A. (2008). Knobe, side effects, and the morally good business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 85, 173-178.
- Young, L., Cushman, F., Hauser, M. D., & Saxe, R. (2006). The neural basis of the interaction between theory of mind and moral judgment. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, 104, 8235–8240.