**SEMINAR:** COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY #721  
**DATE:** MARCH 9, 2009  
**TITLE:** "HOW WE BECOME MORAL: THE SOURCES OF MORAL MOTIVATION"  
**SPEAKER:** MICHAEL SCHULMAN & THE UNIVERSITY SEMINAR ON ETHICS, MORAL EDUCATION, AND SOCIETY  
**RESPONDENT:** CHRISTOPHER GOWANS (FORDHAM UNIVERSITY)  
BRONWYN FINNIGAN (BARUCH COLLEGE, CUNY)  
JONATHAN C. GOLD (PRINCETON UNIVERSITY)  
**CHAIR:** JONATHAN GOLD (PRINCETON UNIVERSITY)  
**RAPPORTEUR:** CHRISTOPHER KELLEY (COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY)

**ABSTRACT:**

I have argued that moral motivation derives from three independent sources: empathy, moral principles, and moral affiliations. All three motivational sources affect the behavior of most individuals, but to different degrees. The relative strengths of these sources determine an individual's "moral style." Religions foster moral motivation by tapping into all three sources, but different religions emphasize each source to different degrees. Thus, different religions have their own moral style.

In the seminar, I will present an overview of these ideas, to be followed by responses from four members of the Seminar on Comparative Philosophy.
Good evening. I'm Ron Gross, and it's my pleasure to welcome you to this fifth session of our 2008-2009 season of the two companion seminars, the University Seminar on Innovation in Education and the University Seminar on Ethics, Moral Education, and Society. This evening, we are privileged to be joined by members of another of the university seminars, the very distinguished one on Comparative Philosophy. This joining of forces, of intellectual forces, by three university seminars is a significant expression to me of the impulse that impelled Margaret Meade to start these seminars right after World War II. She started them 60 years ago with two purposes. One was to transcend the departmentalism, specialization, and careerism of academe, and the second one was to provide venues in which people could reflect productively on issues that had real deep cultural and societal and economic consequences, rather than just offering opportunities for publications credits. And I like to think that Dr. Meade would have smiled on our coming together from three different seminars this evening to probe something that is so consequential in our public discourse today.

Just a little very brief housekeeping before we get on with our session. There are two – I brought two handouts. They are at the end of the table for when you leave so that they are not distracting at this point. One is on a Socratic conversation that I'll be conducting here at the end of this month on respect, the concept of respect, which I thought might be of interest to some people at this session. And the second one is an announcement of Conversation Week, which is a national and to some degree via the Internet global initiative to promote conversations at the grassroots level throughout the world, and particularly in the United States, on issues of consequence that citizens can come together to discuss in informal venues outside of academe: coffeehouses, bars, living rooms, libraries, community centers, senior centers, vest-pocket parks, office building atriums, et cetera. So there is a website with information on that if you are interested.
I would like to ask if you would kindly turn off your cell phones – I'll do it myself – since we have run into that. Oh, and there go two of our speakers turning off their cell phones.

(Laughter)

RONALD GROSS

There you go. Okay.

FEMALE SPEAKER

Bravo, Ron.

RONALD GROSS

Thank you, okay. Oh, please know that this session is – and we are very grateful for this – is being recorded by Chris for archival purposes. And so if at any point you wish to take account of that, or ask that it be shut off for any reason, that's perfectly okay. There is also a sign-in sheet that should be going around. Is there? Do we have a sign-in sheet going around?

FEMALE SPEAKER

There it is.
RONALD GROSS

Great, okay, which we would appreciate your signing just for the recordkeeping mandate of the University Seminars' central office. And we do – we go till 9:00, just so you have a sense of the timeframe.

Are there any announcements or any questions indeed that any of you would like to raise before we get into our program for the evening? Okay. Then it is my great pleasure to introduce our principal speaker this evening, Michael Schulman, who co-chairs the seminar on ethics with Professor Kathleen Wallace, who is also with us, of course. It is to him, not to me, that belongs the credit for conceiving and organizing this evening's adventure for us. Intellectual adventuresomeness has been a characteristic of Michael's career in several fields. He is a person of wide-ranging talents and commitments. Before I get to his most relevant credentials for this session, I just – I think you'll be interested to know that he has been an acting teacher, director, and playwright, who founded the British American Acting Academy, dedicated to combining the best of British and American acting technique. He has authored a number of bestselling theater books published by Penguin, Bantam, and St. Martin's Press. And his innovative work as an acting teacher was featured in a chapter of the book published by Penguin, The New Generation of Acting Teachers, edited by Eva Mekler, who is also here this evening. Eva? Yeah.

So everything else that I say about him may well be fraudulent, but he pulls it off magnificently. In his current professional —

MICHAEL SCHULMAN

Just leave room for me to speak.
Ronald Gross

Do you mean time or – in his current professional and scholarly life, Michael is a psychologist and author of four books, *Bringing Up a Moral Child: A New Approach for Teaching Your Child to be Just, Kind, and Responsible; The Passionate Mind: Bringing Up an Intelligent and Creative Child; Schools as Moral Communities; and Building Moral Communities.*

This evening's conversation on moral motivation and moral styles and religion takes off from a chapter he wrote, "How We Become Moral: The Sources of Moral Motivation," in *The Handbook of Positive Psychology* published by Oxford University Press, which most of you received as part of the invitation to this session.

Currently, his clinical work as a psychologist at Lincoln Watts Service, Inc., a foster care agency in New York, includes providing psychological treatment to inner city adolescents and youngsters and designing moral motivation programs for adolescents living in congregate care settings. Please join me in welcoming Michael Schulman.

(Michael Schulman)

Thank you. Okay. Thank you very much. As many of you know, or all of you know who read the invitation, the announcement, I'm going to make a presentation, and then there will be responses from three members of the Seminar in Comparative Philosophy. Originally, there were four, but one we learned today was ill, is ill. So
there will be three. And the chair of the seminar, Jonathan Gold, who is sitting here, will be one of the respondents, and he will also introduce the other respondents. And the format will be they will respond to what I say and then we'll have some kind of discussion, and then we'll throw it out to the rest of the group.

For me, this is a wonderful opportunity because some years ago I introduced the notion of "moral styles," which I will describe in a couple of minutes. And in the chapter that was attached to the announcement that was in *The Handbook of Positive Psychology*, I applied that notion to religions, speculated about whether it can be applied to religion. I'm not an expert in religion, and I thought it would be very interesting to get some feedback on whether it makes sense to apply it to religion.

Now the respondents may find that the whole idea doesn't make sense, even when applied to individuals, and that too will be interesting for me to hear about. So they won't only respond to the applications to religion, but they will respond to the general notions of moral motivation that I present.

In the interest of time, I think what I may do – I took an excerpt from what I've written, and I think I'm going to read it. And that way I won't wander off and go over my allotted time. And for me the fun will be getting the responses. I know what I have to say.

Okay. Moral motivations are defined here as the inclination to care about others and treat them kindly and fairly. They have developed, like all other motives, as a product of our evolutionary history. Individuals don't survive well on their own. Those that live in communities where people are bonded to each other and take care
of each other have a better chance of surviving than those in which people are competitive with and hostile to each other.

Traditionally, theories of motivation explain behavior in terms of some benefit or reinforcement to the individual doing the behaving. But morality is about getting reinforced or rewarded by some benefit to another. It's a very unique concept. And if you read sociobiologists, they don't really believe that that is what morality is. They think that ultimately the selfish gene finds a way to exert itself, and that morality is really about benefit to the self.

I'm doing what I said I wouldn't do and that is going off – I can spend the next 10 minutes on why I think the major theories of sociobiology miss the essence of morality. But I won't do that.

Therefore, a theory of moral motivation, if it is about getting reinforced or rewarded by some benefit to another – a theory of moral motivation has to account for the sources of this capacity to be reinforced by beneficial outcomes to others. Correspondingly, a theory of moral education cannot simply be about changing behavior with already established reinforcers, like food, money, or praise. It must be about increasing the reinforcement strength of benefitting others.

And I will go off here to clarify what I mean by that. As a clinician, you're often faced, let's say, with an aggressive youngster. And within the traditional reinforcement theory, your approaches – how can we use already established reinforcers to get that kid to stop beating people up as much, or to treat them nicely? So you manipulate food or access to games or cash. These are already established reinforcers. None of that increases
the morality of the individual. None of that increases their inclination, their self-motivation, to treat others with more kindness and fairness.

So one of the first papers I did in this field, a clinical paper, was called "Love Training." And the goal was to get an aggressive child to love her siblings, who she was trying to kill, and to set up a system so that she would find benefit to the sisters intrinsically rewarding. And that was really my first foray into this field of moral motivation.

Mark Twain, contemplating the sources of moral motivation, reckoned that, quote, "There are several good protections against temptations, but the surest is cowardice." But despite Twain's insight, fear of punishment by humans or gods is not a moral motive. Moral motives lead us to resist temptation even when we know we can get away with it. I have developed a theory of moral motivation that posits that our inclinations toward kindness and fairness derive from three independent sources: empathy, which is the capacity to experience another's feelings as if they were your own; principles or personal standards of the right and wrong ways to treat others; and moral affiliations, a desire to feel one with and deserving of the love of moral exemplars.

Empathy one observes in children as early as their second year. It comes with a system. It is not something that is taught. One can encourage it. One can say things to a child like, "Think how you would feel if somebody did that to you. Remember how you felt when somebody treated you that way." But one doesn't instill empathy. It is something that you see in children often by 18 months. And empathy tends to lead to altruism. When you feel for someone, you often want to ease their suffering or bring them some kind of benefit.
The second source of moral motivation, principles or standards of right and wrong, are evident by children's third year. And even five year olds will argue for their point of view about the right way to act. And it is very interesting to see that, where a kid is arguing with a parent about what is right, what is wrong. It certainly goes against Piaget's notion of child development, where he said the child couldn't possibly do that until the child was seven. But most of his research was on his own children, who I think were pretty strange.

There is an interesting study originally done by a psychologist name Elliot Turiel and then replicated by his students and others many, many times over, where you do things like ask a child in a preschool, a young child, "Is it okay to eat in that side of the room?" And if there is a rule against it, the child will say, "No." "Well, what if teacher says it's okay?" "Oh, then it is okay." "Is it okay to push Johnny off the chair if you want his chair?" "No." "What if teacher says it's okay?" "Oh, teacher shouldn't say that."

So children on their own, even children who push, know that there is something wrong. They know on their own that there is something wrong with hurting somebody and something right about helping somebody. And this kind of research has been replicated many times over. They make a kind of natural distinction between moral acts, harming and helping, and what Turiel calls conventional acts, like where we eat or what staircase we go up and what staircase we go down.

The third source of moral motivation is – I call affiliative morality. Some people call it internalization. It is already evident in the four to five year old. Children this age commonly want to be thought of by others as good, especially by those they love and think of as good. Moreover, children this age are often attracted to goodness, which is why they like watching TV shows like Barney and Mister Rogers. When they are older,
they will read books like *To Kill a Mockingbird* for the same reason. They identify, or like identifying, with the good.

By five, children have begun to internalize their moral models, meaning they carry the images and words of their models with them as guides to their behavior. In later childhood, as they become part of and attached to good groups, they will identify with the moral mission of those groups and want to be thought of as good, worthy group members, such as good scouts, good Christians, good family members.

One of the things I want to add to the second source of moral motivation I mentioned, which was morality through principle, is that you – it's a more cognitive side of morality, where you begin to evaluate whether your principles are good or bad according to some criteria. And when I get into some of the discussion of religion, some of the religions explain why certain things are good and bad, and others don't. Others just say God wants you to do it, so do it. So it's more cognitive, and there is a sense that one can figure out what is good and bad, as that little kid in Turiel's experimental groups kind of could figure out this is bad, this is good.

There are moral emotions associated with each of these three moral motivations. For example, if you harm somebody that you empathize with, it rebounds back on oneself, and one feels guilty. If you're in someone else's heart, in a sense, and you harm them, then you feel their pain, that you're the cause of it. And I think that's what we call guilt. If you have moral affiliations and you don't live up to the standards of these moral figures, and you do something that violates their standards, you feel shame. You don't want them to know about it, or you need to confess to them that you violated the principle. You walk around with this sense of shame and the kind of dread that they're going to know about it and think less of you. Not beat you. It's not

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about fear of punishment. It is really about fear of being expelled from the good group, being ostracized from
the goodness you want to be a part of. And if you violate one of your own principles, the third source of moral
motivation, you feel a lack of integrity. You feel self-loathing. You feel you can't live up to – you're not living
up to what you believe in.

My favorite example from research was done by someone who was a member of our group, Eva Fogelman, who
studied Christians who rescued Jews. And she found the same three sources of moral motivation. Some
Christians said they helped because their heart went out – a Jewish father brought his child to the door and said,
"Please save my child." And the man knew he was putting himself and his own family at risk, but he said, "I
looked in the man's eyes, I looked at the child; I couldn't turn them away." Other people helped out of a sense
of principle. One man said, "I never really knew Jews. The few I knew I didn't like very much. But I saw evil
in the world, and I couldn't live with myself if I didn't fight it." And the third people said, "Well, my pastor or
my priest or my uncle who is a good man said, 'We have to do this,' and so I knew I had to do it." So she found
the same three sources enacted in this very real world situation.

Okay. Moral styles. What I posit is that we all act on all three motivations, or most of us do. The psychopath
has little or none of any of them. Most of us have some of all of them. And which is dominant in us I felt may
represent a style of acting in the world that I call the "moral style." I remember the first time I introduced this
notion in a talk, a father came up to me during the break, and he said, "You've just described my three
daughters. I think of all three as moral, but one just came into the world with a good heart. And she doesn't
have theories of morality or think much about morality. She just is somebody who feels for others. My other
daughter I'm sure is going to be a civil liberties lawyer. She isn't so great one on one with persons, but she loves
'the people.' She has a sense of principle, and she will fight for principle. And the third is involved in the church and in the girl scouts, and her sense of belonging to these good groups is what seems to be this dominant motivation in her.

So that for me was of course the ultimate confirmation of these ideas. I didn't need to do any more research on it. And you may think—those of you that have brought up more than one child, you may find that they are different along these lines. I speculate that each of these three motivations is distributed in the population along a bell-shaped curve. That's purely speculation. I started to develop a test of moral styles some years ago, but it kind of fell by the wayside. It is something that I do hope to go back to.

Okay. Now, let me take the moral styles notion into religion. All religions draw from all three moral domains. Now this—let me say, this for me—I of course find sense in what I'm saying, but it's more speculative for me than some of the other things I say, where I can cite lots of research that seems to support my argument. And this is—I'm moving into the area that I'm looking forward to learning more about tonight.

All religions draw from all three moral domains, but different religions or sects within religions emphasize one domain more than another. All the major religions have long histories formed as an amalgamation of other religious trends going on around them, evolved over the decades, had breaks. And so you can call somebody a Christian, but if they're a Catholic versus a Lutheran versus a Calvinist, there may be many differences between them. But I'm suggesting that within the major religions, certain ideas are dominant moral styles.
Judaism stresses principles, and much labor is devoted to figuring out how to apply the Torah and the Talmud, both of which are filled with disputations to everyday life. So Jews love to argue about what the religion – how the religion is telling us to act. Christianity emphasizes the affiliative domain. Morality stems primarily from one's relationship to Christ, who is always present and who one wants to honor by living up to his teachings. Hinduism stresses empathic bonds as exemplified by this quote from a sacred text, "As one's life is dear to oneself, so also are those of all beings. The good show compassion toward all living beings because of their resemblance to themselves." And that's an empathic motivation. It's an empathic reason for being kind to others, treating them well. And what I find interesting is that in what I have read in other religions, except for Buddhism, which kind of came out of the same roots as Hinduism, there aren't those kinds of explanations of why being good – why one should be good. And if you can think of others in other religions, I'd be happy to hear that. But this seemed unusual in that you're good because of your awareness of your similarity to others. It's an explanation. It's not just, "Be good because I tell you to, and you'll be rewarded and punished depending on whether you listen to me."

Let me give you some quotes from each religion that I found illustrate these moral styles. Let's start with Christianity. From – I may not be pronouncing it properly – Colossians? Does anybody know? Colossians. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the lord Jesus." From John: "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me." Ephesians, Ephesians? Ephesus, okay. "Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for us. An offering and a sacrifice to God has a fragrant aroma." So the connection – and I have one more from John, "By this, all will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one
another." So the love for one another is not here based on your similarity, recognizing your commonness with others. It is based on your relationship to me, to Jesus.

I have some quotes from Judaism. One of the interesting things I found on the Internet was written by someone named Rob Barrett [ph] in the year 2000. And he is talking about a book that Elie Wiesel wrote. "As a teenager in the Auschwitz death camp, degraded and suffering, facing the possibility of unjust death, Elie Wiesel witnessed three Jewish scholars trying God and finding him guilty of crimes against humankind." It was interesting, trying God. That means that within their framework, there is a morality above God that God is not adhering to. I don't think in Christianity that notion exists at all. "After reflecting on this outcome, they recited evening prayers," which is also interesting. "Wiesel's play, The Trial of God, is a depiction of this experience recorded so that we can sip those tensions which he has deeply drunk. Wiesel sets his story in a Ukrainian village in 1649 after a brutal pogrom that has left alive only one Jewish innkeeper and his tortured daughter. The innkeeper is returned to some semblance of a normal life, alternating between raging at both God and men and dotingly loving his insane daughter. Three Jewish minstrels wander into his inn seeking to perform a celebratory Purim play for the Jews of the village, unaware that the village Jews are but corpses. After the players learn of their inappropriate aims, Barish the innkeeper suggests that they put on a more serious play, a trial with God as the defendant for the suffering and death in his village. Barish's proposal is accepted. The minstrels are the judges and Barish jumps at the opportunity to prosecute God."

It's a little longer than I thought, and again for the sake of time – what Barish does is he – what Elie Wiesel does is he uses this story as a way to retell the book of Job. The innkeeper speaks for Job. Barish, like Job, formerly lived amicably with God. Now with his life torn apart, he displays Job's combination of indefatigable faith and
seething outrage. He charges God as the enemy, and yet the thought of betraying his faith by converting to Christianity is unthinkable. Similarly, Job declared, "Though he slays me, I will hope in him. Nevertheless, I will argue my ways with him."

And it goes on. It's a wonderful analysis of the story. But my point is that in Job and in modern Judaism, arguing with God is a long tradition. Other examples that I have – when God determines to call all of the Israelites with the plague and begin anew with Moses as a second Noah, Moses dissuades God from this rash course. And I'll read a little bit from Numbers, where Moses argues with God. "But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the lord appeared at the tent of meeting to all of the Israelites. The lord said to Moses, 'How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, and I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they.' Moses said to the lord — 'Moses said to the lord, 'Then the Egyptians will hear about it. By your power you brought these people up from among them, and they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that you, oh lord, are with these people and that you, oh lord, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. If you put these people to death all at one time, the nations who have heard this report about you will say, 'The lord was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them on oath, so he slaughtered them in the dessert.' Now may the lord's strength be displayed just as you have declared."

Anyway, he convinces God not to do it, which is – again, I don't know if in other religions you argue morality with God, and beat him. Another wonderful example from – this ends with, "The lord replied, 'I have forgiven
them, as you asked," he says to Moses. But he doesn't fully forgive them because he then says they're going to wander in the dessert for 40 years. And most of them will never see the promised land.

The same thing with Abraham, with Sodom and Gomorrah. As many of you know, God was going to – didn't like what was going on there, and he was going to wipe out the whole city. But Abraham stood yet before Jehovah, and Abraham drew near and said, "Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there are 50 righteous within the city, wilt thou consume and not spare the place for the 50 righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous and the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked. That be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" He is saying, "God, shape up. You're not doing right."

And as many of you know, they had a debate about – God said, "Okay, if you find 50," and Abraham said, "Well, what if I only find 45? You are going to kill them all just because I couldn't find the extra five?" And God says, "All right, 45." And he gets him down to 10. And ultimately, he can't find 10, and God wipes out Sodom and Gomorrah. It's an interesting relationship to God. And I think Jews still have that kind of willingness – you see it even in something like Fiddler on the Roof, where Tevye debates with God.

Okay. Let's move on to Buddhism. And this is from a book called the Dhammapada. And there are a series of statements from 129 to 132: "All tremble before the rod of punishment. All fear death. Likening others to oneself, one should neither slay nor cause to slay." The next: "All tremble before the rod of punishment, for all life is dear. Likening others to oneself, one should neither slay nor cause to slay" 131: "He who desirous of happiness for himself torments with a rod others who are likewise seeking enjoyment shall not obtain happiness.
in the hereafter." So the message here is think about others like yourself. "He who desires of happiness for himself does not torment others who likewise long for happiness shall obtain happiness in the hereafter." So there is a promise of reward or punishment here. It is not simply just think about others' feelings, and you'll treat them well. There is a notion of a hereafter, where you will be rewarded and punished.

Buddha taught – and this is from something I found on a site that I didn't get the reference to, or not in this paper. Buddha taught that to achieve salvation, one did not have to accept the authority of the scriptures or the existence of God. While Pola Rahula [ph], a Sri Lankan Buddhist monk and scholar wrote, quote, "It is always a question of knowing and seeing, and not that of believing. The teaching of the Buddha is qualified as an ehi pasika [ph], inviting you to come and see, but not to come and believe. It is always seeing through knowledge or wisdom and not believing through faith," which is again very different than I think the Christian and the Jewish notions. It is if you observe others and see how they are like you, it will affect how you treat them. And it's not simply because an authority tells you.

And I have some quotes from Hinduism. Now, it is very interesting. In the Bhagavad-Gita, Arunja [sp] – is that how it is pronounced?

MALE SPEAKER

Arjuna.

MICHAEL SCHULMAN
Arjuna is engaged in war, is a great warrior, and is about to slay – do battle and likely – because his side is stronger – slay his opponents. And here again, unlike anything that I've come across in the Old Testament or the New Testament, he said, "My dear Krishna — " so he's talking to God, "Seeing my friends and relatives present before me in such a fighting spirit, I feel the limbs of my body quivering and my mouth drying up. My whole body is trembling. My hair is standing on end. My bow is slipping from my hand, and my skin is burning. I am now unable to stand here any longer. I am forgetting myself, and my mind is reeling. I see only causes of misfortune. I do not see how any good can come from killing my own kinsmen in this battle. Nor can I, my dear Krishna, desire any subsequent victory, kingdom, or happiness." And by his kinsmen, it was a wide circle of others that he was responding to. I mean, if you think of the history of English wars, where one kinsman, a cousin, a nephew, a child, killed off another kinsman, leading from Richard II to Henry IV to a series of kings, I mean, they too were kinsmen, but because their interests were different, they saw each other as enemies. He is empathizing with those whose interests are different from his and who are technically his enemies. "Oh Govinda, of what avail to us are our kingdom, happiness, and even life itself when all those for whom we may desire them are now arrayed on this battlefield, when teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other relatives are ready to give up their lives and properties and are standing before me, why should I wish to kill them even though they might otherwise kill me? I am not prepared to fight with them even in exchange for the three worlds, let alone this earth. What pleasure will we derive from killing the sons of Dhritarashtra?" I'm probably mispronouncing that. "Better for me if they were to kill me unarmed and unresisting on the battlefield." And he throws his bow aside. And a little bit later, the supreme personality of godhead said, "While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor the dead. Never was there a time when I did not exist nor you nor all these kings, nor in the future shall any of us cease to be."
And Krishna goes and explains to him that the soul is eternal and the death of these people is not really important, and what is important is his duty. And later, he goes on to say, "That which pervades the entire body you should know to be indestructible," the soul or the spirit. "No one is able to destroy that imperishable soul. Consider your specific duty as a satriya [ph]." Maybe that's similar to a mitzvah. "You should know that there is no better engagement for you —"

MALE SPEAKER

It means warrior.

MICHAEL SCHULMAN

Okay. "– than fighting on religious principles. And so there is no need for hesitation. Happy are the warriors to whom such fighting opportunities come unsought, opening for them the doors of the heavenly planets." And then he tells him what shame he'll bring on himself if he fails to live up to his duty, and goes on later in the Bhagavad-Gita saying, "I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from me. The wise, who perfectly know this, engage in my devotional service and worship me with all their hearts. The thoughts of my pure devotees dwell in me. Their lives are fully devoted to my service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about me. To those who are constantly devoted to serving me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to me."

And he goes on to talk about – that what's important is their relationship to him, and their duty stems from that, which is different than what I read from Hinduism before, which said – which seemed to encourage empathy.
And Arjuna's reaction was an empathic reaction. But here, God is saying, "Your compassion, your empathy is not important. What is important is your duty. And if you are devoted to me, you will do your duty." So not knowing very much about Hinduism, whether in the actual practice of Hinduism, the empathic moral style is more dominant or the affiliative moral style is more dominant, I'm not sure because they both seem to be emphasized in different texts. Actually, in all religious texts, in all religions, you will find all of them – examples of all of them. And what I am curious about is in the practice, in the way children are brought up, is one emphasized more than another.

How am I doing on time?

MALE SPEAKER

It's five until 8:00. It's 7:55.

MICHAEL SCHULMAN

Should I wind down? Okay. I have some examples, which I won't read you, but I'll tell you, from Islam. And there, the sense of duty – and here again, one's relation to Allah and learning about Allah through the prophet Mohammed is crucial. In what I found, there isn't a lot of emphasis on empathy. There is a great emphasis on duty, on responsibility, on – and there are many rules one should follow. And here again, I personally have not had a lot of conversations with believers in Islam and what we get, given our relationship to Islam, in the media – I'm not sure if they characterize it very well. But there is, I think, from what I have gathered, a great sense of duty. And one of those duties is the promotion of Islam, the bringing Islam to the world because it is the one true religion. And how you treat your fellow religionists, your obligations are not the same to non-religionists.
And that's probably true of most religions, where your obligations to your inner group are not the same as to those who are non-believers, heretics.

Last point. If the notion of moral styles has some – makes some sense as applied to religion, is it useful in any way, besides maybe having some truth? But can we use it in any way? And perhaps we can. Perhaps in our negotiations with people from other cultures who believe in other religions, perhaps if we were aware that their main moral style is one that emphasizes duty as opposed to one that emphasizes empathy, maybe our negotiating style and how we approach them and how we show them respect and what we avoid because it will show them disrespect – that there may be some practical value out of understanding the dominant moral style of their religion and their core morality.

I will stop there.

(Applause)

RONALD GROSS

I'm going to free up this chair in case the respondents want to sit here to be a little more visible to the group, if that's convenient. Please use this.

JONATHAN GOLD

Oh, okay. That's a fine idea. So should I sit in that chair, too?

RONALD GROSS
I think it might be easier for sightlines, yeah, good.

**JONATHAN GOLD**

Chris, should I pass – you're okay. Well, thank you very much, Michael. This was really very interesting, very helpful, a helpful clarification of many of your points from the paper that we've all read. And I just wanted also to thank Kathleen for – and you for bringing this together and making it all work. Thank you very much. I think we have still ahead of us a very interesting conversation.

We have only three instead of four of the listed respondents. Chris Gowans, as you heard, from Fordham has the flu, and he sends his regrets that he can't be here. So that is a shame, and we'll do our best to fill in as best we can, those of us who are left. We have Bronwyn Finnigan, from the University of Auckland, who is a specialist in Indo-Tibetan philosophy and also ethics in contemporary philosophical traditions. And we've been very lucky to have her because she has been this year up at Harvard, so we've gotten her to come down and join our seminar. So it's great to have you here. Thank you for coming down. And Hagop Sarkissian, who teaches at Baruch, CUNY, in the philosophy department there. And he is a specialist in also contemporary ethics, and at the same time he is a specialist in Chinese philosophy, specializing in Confucianism. So he also brings a unique perspective. I am Jonathan Gold. I teach at Princeton in the department of religion. And my specialty is Indian and Tibetan Buddhist thought.

So without further ado, the plan is Bronwyn will speak for around 10 or 15 minutes, and then Hagop, and then myself, and then we'll ask Michael to respond briefly, I guess, to our responses, and then open it up for questions.
So do you want to come over here?

**BRONWYN FINNIGAN**

Sure. Okay. I'd just like to start by thanking Professor Gold for having me here all the way up from Boston, and Dr. Schulman for giving us such a rich paper to respond to.

**FEMALE SPEAKER**

Louder?

**BRONWYN FINNIGAN**

Oh, a bit too quiet? Okay. So as Jonathan mentioned, I'm a visiting fellow in the philosophy department at Harvard. My interests orient around virtue ethics, and a lot of my recent work has been looking at virtue ethics in the context of Buddhist philosophy. So this title of this paper, "How to Become Moral," I think is a very refreshing respite, I think, from a lot of contemporary ethical concerns, which tend to frame the issue around moments of deliberative choice and what is the right thing to do and how do we justify it and what is the criterion. The question of how to become moral, I believe, is in the same family as how to become virtuous and how to become a bodhisattva. So there is quite a lot of material that I found that I could draw on.

But given that I'm not a psychologist, there is much in the paper that I can't comment on, a lot of the empirical information that I won't address, although I'd really like to. I'd like to know more, actually. So my questions
and comments are going to relate to a consideration of the overall view being argued for in the paper that was submitted to us, and also an analysis of some of the concepts.

In particular, I'm going to focus on the concept of a moral motive. And the reason why I'm focusing on this concept is that in the traditions of Buddhist thought I focus on, compassion is talked about as a motive. And there is quite rigorous philosophical debates about what exactly this could be. So I'm interested in knowing what that is, and so I'm interested in knowing what you mean by this idea. So that is what I'm going to focus on.

Now it seems that two assumptions about the nature of moral motives are immediately apparent in the title of the chapter. So the title, as we know, has two parts, "How to Become Moral," and "The Sources of Moral Motivation." So the conjunction of these claims imply an assumption, namely, that whatever moral motives are, they are going to be related to being moral. And also, the guiding question of the paper, as I understand it, is concerned with how to cultivate morality in children. So the assumption that underlines this question is whatever moral motives are, they must be subject to education.

So as I read the paper, Dr. Schulman differentiates between what he calls three sources of moral motivation, which came to be in principle redundant because they all lead to the same thing. And you elaborate upon different methods for cultivating morality in light of these different sources of moral motives. But after reading the paper several times, it remains unclear to me what a moral motive is. So I'm left wondering whether these are three sources of moral motives and three roots to the same thing, such as a motive that makes us act in
certain ways. Or are there three aspects of what it is to be moral and thereby three different ways of educating oneself into being moral?

So the motive isn't really signifying anything; it is just functioning as a description of three different ways of acting rather than three different things that cause us to act. So this is a puzzle that I'd just like to talk about a little bit in my response.

So in reading the article, it seemed to me that there are at least three different ways of thinking of moral motives and their relation to being moral. And I'd just like to sketch them, just for discussion. I'd be really interested to see how they relate to one another.

So the first way of thinking of moral motives that I took from the paper was something like moral motives as efficient mental causes. So you make a number of claims that make it sound like motives are sort of mental causes or causal properties of agents that make us or stimulate or propel our actions. And the kinds of claims that kind of create that image for me is sort of the idea that they are fundamental to our nature, like aggression and fear were for Freud, and also, the suggestion that we don't arrive at them by reason. So they're almost instinctive in a way. And you also talk about them as evolved, that our species wouldn't have flourished if we didn't have it. So it makes it really sound like it is a property that we have that motivates our actions. And so the idea that this gives to me is that an action is moral because it is caused by just such a motive.

Now, if that's the idea of a moral motive, then the question is, well, how do we think about education, if this is the idea of what a motive is? It is already part of human nature, so it's fundamental. So it's not like we're
creating them. We already have them on this understanding. So it seems – and also, they're not arrived at by a reason, so it's not like you can really persuade a child into them. They're not the right rational kind to be responsive to reasons. So it seemed that on this idea of a motive, education is something like preventing the non-moral motives from moving us to act because they're there as well; they're fundamental, and somehow allowing the moral ones to make us move – move us to act.

But there are places in the paper that kind of put tension with this understanding of what a moral motive is. For instance, you talk about sources of moral motives, where principles and authority are sources of moral motives. So if it's a fundamental, non-rational motive that moves us, it seems to put pressure on the idea that a principle could be a source of that thing.

So this is where the paper sort of moves into talking about motives. But I kind of think of motives as instrumental. So you make a claim at one point in the paper that a moral action is one for which we infer an intention for fair or kind outcomes. So here it seems that actions are not moral because they're the effects of the products of certain mental moral causes, but the action is moral because it is an instrumental relation to a certain end. So there is an end that we find valuable, for instance, fairness or kindness or benefiting others. And the action is moral because the agent intends this end.

Now, what differentiates this from the first view is that the end doesn't cause the actions. So for instance, my end in coming to New York is to be at this seminar, but being at the seminar doesn't cause me to be here. The efficient cause is maybe the train or my neurophysiology. So the end has no causal power on this second idea of the motive. And where this instrumental sense of motives becomes most apparent in the paper is the example
of people providing answers to questions about their behavior in the holocaust. So in this example, the person's moral motives are understood as instantiated in their reasons, the reasons they give for why they acted the way they did.

So in this place, and in some other places in the paper, it sort of—the person's intention or reason for acting seems to be where the moral motive lies. But if that's another way of thinking about moral motive, it is a very different sense of moral motive than that of motives as efficient causes that—properties that we have. And the difference becomes apparent when we think of the kind of education that we can cultivate children into.

In the case of these kind of moral motives, the instrumental ones, reasoning can get a grip on them. It's the relation of certain actions to certain ends that they value. So you can persuade a child that, you know, given this value, these are different actions that you have reasons to do, where the reasons to do and the intention to what they do is what the moral motive is.

But again, although you talk about moral motives in this way, there are also tensions with other ideas about these ones. For instance, it seems we don't just want a child to cooperate for the right reason; we want her to be cooperative, we want her to be kind, we want her to be moral. So just having the intention or the reason to do something doesn't seem sufficient for one to be moral. And also, you have got this wonderful idea about conscience and concern for others. But, you know, if it was just a matter of having the right end and an instrumental relation, then they don't seem relevant unless they are somehow helping us achieve that end, just on this—where the motive is the reason rather than the motive being something just a little bit—capturing
something about what it is to be a moral being rather than someone who does moral things for the right moral reasons. I think that's the distinction.

So it seems to me that what you're trying to capture is that we want children to have complex dispositions to conduct themselves in certain ways, where this involves feelings; for instance, concern, sympathy, or compassion, but which also involves certain orientations in perception, what they respond to, the cues they notice, and their attitudes and judgments. And of course, children will have differences in temperaments, but the point just being that being moral is instantiating these complex dispositions, which have multiple aspects that all need to be cultivated, though not necessarily at the same time or with different emphases.

But if this is right, the question is where are the moral motives? So my suggestion has been that the sources of moral motivation are not sources of moral motives, but rather they represent different aspects of what it is to be moral, and which suggests different methods for cultivating these aspects into dispositions for conduct and engagement in the world. But nonetheless, having said that, I think there is still a need for a moral motive. And so this is where the third idea comes out, which is moral motives as one thing to be moral, which is the kind that you make at one point. And I think I just want to sort of bring it out.

So the idea is that a child would not cultivate these dispositions, no matter what method you adopted, unless she wanted to be moral or good; so the thought being that the project of moral education is to motivate children to want to be good, where this may involve seeing certain ends as valuable or feeling certain ways towards these ends when they involve others, or recognizing behaviors of others that also value these ends. So those three versions being three different methods focusing on different aspects of what it is to be moral. But being moral
doesn't need to presuppose that one's actions are motivated or caused or moved by this moral motive as an efficient cause, nor does the agent need to appeal to these reasons or explicit intentions when they engage morally in the world, which is moral motive as instrumental; the idea just being one is moral simply insofar as one engages in the world in a certain kind of way, where this would not be possible unless she originally wanted to be the kind of person who wanted to act morally.

So I guess what I – the suggestion I've arrived – left at is that these three ways are not three roots to moral motive that then makes us do something, but we have to be motivated somehow to want to be good, to cultivate these three different aspects, where different temperaments are going to emphasize different aspects of these composite whole of what it is to be good. So what I'm left with is what understanding of moral motive should I take from the paper, of all of the varieties that I've kind of found within the discussion?

**RONALD GROSS**

Okay. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

**MICHAEL SCHULMAN**

Can I go home now?

(Laughter)
Hi. I'm Hagop Sarkissian. I don't have the virtue of having a script. But I'll promise to try to be brief. I am what I say. It's a real pleasure to be here. I do work in moral psychology, and I think what makes moral psychology such an exciting discipline right now is that it is so inter-disciplinary. There are many different disciplines that are all sort of contributing to an ongoing debate today. I think that's exemplified in this seminar today. And indeed, in a very important sort of recent three-volume collection of disparate research lines edited by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong just called *Moral Psychology*, the contributees run the gamut from philosophers to psychologists to neurobiologists. And I think that it's what lending to moral psychology being such an exciting area. And I'm very excited to be here today, to be a part of this dialogue.

So my comments – one is more of a seeking clarification sort of thing, and then the other one is sort of to bring some questions to bear on this tripartite division between empathy, principles, and affiliations. So these are characterized as three independent sources of moral motivation. And using this engineering term of redundant design, I think the point is we should all be really happy that there is this redundant design, because if one of them fails or if one of them is very weak in one of us, the other ones will compensate. And of course, we need sort of these moral motivations to all get along with another so chaos doesn't reign and so forth.

So the first sort of comment I have has to do with empathy as one of these sources. And here I just want to sort of ask whether – is it empathy itself that is the source? And if so, how are we to understand the other emotions that you invoke in the paper, emotions such as guilt that we feel when we transgress certain norms, or shame when we violate our own principles and so forth? Are these independent sources, or is empathy somehow the root of all of them?
And then the second part of my comments, I'm just going to be asking about the relationship between empathy as a kind of emotional source and principles. And I'm going to suggest that perhaps we shouldn't see these as independent, and that in fact principles are just expressions of emotions. And part of this is motivated by the fact that while I was doing my graduate research, even though in the philosophy department I spent as much time reading the work of living psychologists as I was reading the work of dead philosophers. So they're the large inspiration of some of my comments today.

MICHAEL SCHULMAN

Can I ask you to elaborate a little bit on why you see empathy and principle as related as —

HAGOP SARKISSIAN

Sure, okay. I will definitely do that.

MICHAEL SCHULMAN

Okay.

HAGOP SARKISSIAN

Okay. Whether I'm comprehensible is another question. All right. So in classical Confucian thought, which is one of the hats that I wear, Mencius was an early thinker, and he has this really wonderful example to show one of the sources of motivation that comes very close to this empathy. And, you know, Mencius was surrounded by all of these kings who just — seemed to just not think that they were capable of being moral individuals.
Mencius would come and have an audience with the king and try to get the king to be benevolent to his people, and he was oftentimes met by kings who would basically answer, "Did you see the harem on your way in? I'm just not the kind of guy that is interested in these moral questions. I'm not capable of being moral." And he was surrounded by these guys. And it was sort of imperative for Mencius to show that we had these sources of moral motivation.

The one that takes pride of place in his philosophy is precisely this one of empathy. And it is couched and glossed very much in the terms suggested by Dr. Schulman in terms of empathy at the suffering of others. So the prime example of this is imagine you are about to see a little child fall into a well. He says, "Anybody seeing this child will be motivated from concern at the well-being of that child." He doesn't say that people will all go and dive and try to save the child. But he says that without wanting the praise of the parents or looking good in the community or seeking some reward, he will have this instinctual response at that sight of suffering. And in another passage, he tells the king, "You claim you have no capacity to be moral. But I know this story of you. Once there was an ox being led by in the courtyard below, and you spared it, and you asked a goat to be sacrificed instead." And the king says, "Oh, yes. The face of the ox looked like an innocent man being sent to his execution. I just couldn't bear to see it die." And he is, like, "Well, there you go." That is the source of motivation. Compassion will lead you to benevolence. You just have to sort of focus on this motivation and try to hook it up with more objects in the world.

So reading the paper, seeing empathy as one of the sources of moral motivation was really nice for me to hook up to these other interests I have in classical Chinese thought. But Mencius thought that this sort of sprout that
he called, this little, little sprout of empathy that we have, is just one amongst four. He said that there were
three other such sprouts, and they all grow up into individual virtues.

So Mencius would agree that empathy is certainly a source of moral motivation. But he put alongside them
other ones. So, for example, he thought that shame or sometimes what is translated as a kind of disdain can be
trained up into the virtue of rightness or righteousness; and that deference, for example, the emotion of
dehereence that we bring to the world, can lead one to be a person full of propriety and civility; and finally, basic
feelings of categorizing the world in terms of things that are this and things that are this not allow us to become
wise.

And so in the paper, you too sort of speak about other emotions, such as guilt and so forth. So I want to know,
is somehow empathy primitive? I mean, in Mencius' thought, he spends a lot of time on empathy, and the other
ones – the other sort of sprouts get short shrift in comparison. But he clearly saw these all as sources of
motivation. So I was sort of interested in if you could elaborate further on whether you see sort of empathy as
being the core, or there is sort of a plurality of emotions that can underwrite morality; and specifically perhaps
with regard to Mencius' claim that disdain is a source of morality. So this doesn't sound really nice, right?

But some have argued, for example Bruce Brooks, that in classical Confucian thought hatred is a virtue. And
the idea is that if you can't get angry at the sight of injustice, there is something wrong with you. You should
get angry at the wrongdoings being committed. And I know that the paper was a contribution to positive
psychology. Maybe we don't want to dwell on these sort of negative emotions. But can these sort of negative
emotions be sources of morality?
So those are my sort of comments that want to – you know, just asking for more elaboration on that theme.

So now to the second part of my comments, and these have to do with the relationship between principles and emotions that I asked about. So these claim to be independent sources of morality. That is, our principles can be a source of morality; they're independent, and then emotions, for example, empathy. And in discussing this, you mentioned the work of Elliot Turiel, who has this long research tradition showing that children, as he noted, can distinguish between moral violations and violations that are sort of conventional in nature, like when you should eat and what you should wear to class – hinge upon authority and aren't generalizable. But moral violations, like pushing a kid off a chair, the example you gave, or tugging on another kid's hair – there is something different about these moral violations. And I think Turiel had the following four characteristics for these types of violations. They are authority-independent. That is, if a teacher says it's okay, it's still not okay. They are generalizable. That is, they apply to all kids everywhere and not just locally. They are more serious than conventional violations. And finally, they involve harming others.

And so in the paper, you characterize these as sort of, you know, a source that we have to sort of understand moral rules as being different than other sorts of rules. I guess here I'm wondering – there has been a lot of psychological research suggesting that maybe these rules that we have are just sort of external expressions of the emotions themselves and have no independent standing, okay?

So here are the sorts of research programs I have in mind. So, for example, Jonathan Haidt, who himself is sometimes called a positivist psychologist, has worked on disgust as a source of moral motivation. And he uses...
these very sort of colorful examples in his studies, for example, a man masturbating with a chicken before he
eats it, or somebody wiping a toilet with a flag. And it tells people about these sort of actions that are supposed
to elicit disgust in individuals when they read them. And he asks them whether or not these are morally wrong
to do these things, that is, to play with the chicken before you eat it or to wipe the toilet bowl with the flag, or
incestuous sex that doesn't lead to any sort of harm. What he finds is that subjects say that it is still wrong, that
these violations are still wrong, even though they don't lead to any plausible harm. That is, they don't harm
anybody, but they take them to be sort of independent of authority, generalizable, and to be more serious than
conventional violations. It is just wrong to clean the toilet with your flag. It doesn't matter if you're hurting
anybody. And these seem at least on first pass to be – disgust seems to be a source of morality, at least in
certain domains.

Sean Nichols [sp] has run studies on kids – Sean Nichols is a philosopher, and he has run studies on kids to
show that kids think that violations that are disgusting are just as serious as moral violations. So, for example,
if you ask little kids if it is okay to spit in a cup, you know, like hurl a big logy in a cup and then drink it at the
dinner table, is that okay? And they say no. Well, this is not a moral issue. And they say, "Well, what if
Mommy and Daddy say it is okay?" They say, "No. You still can't do it. It's absolutely unacceptable."

Again, we have an emotional – an emotion underwriting acceptance of a rule that is not sort of in itself moral.
And the suggestion by Haidt and others is that maybe these felt emotions lead us to think that there are certain
rule violations, but that the rules are really parasitic upon these emotions.
So my question is, how are we to understand the independence of these norms? Do they have any force on their own or are they somehow derived – do they somehow derive their force from emotions themselves? And as a final thought, again going back to Confucius, a famous passage in the Analects when he is sort of asked, "Well, how do you sum up your philosophy?" And he says, "Well, it comes down to shu, and shu is this sort of empathetic understanding between individuals, this sort of felt human emotion between people. And in one part of the Analects, he just glosses this as the Golden Rule, well, actually the negative Golden Rule, the Silver Rule: "Do not do unto others as you would not do unto yourself," so showing that – suggesting that there is a tight relationship between this principle and this sort of emotion.

So again, in the Confucian tradition, we see this. We see this in the work of psychologists, who suggest that maybe certain other emotions other than empathy can be underwriting these principles. And I was wondering if you could say more about how you see these as being independent sources.

RONALD GROSS

Thank you.

(Applause)

JONATHAN GOLD

Okay. I'm going to try to draw together a number of different impressions that I've had, first from reading the paper and then through this discussion. The abstract for this talk and our original discussion had this emphasis on the question of religion. And, of course, Michael's talk emphasized these quotes from various religious
traditions. And I feel compelled to respond. In fact, I've been having a hard time sitting still and not responding.

In any event, my first instinct is really to want to underline the point that you make, which is that each religious tradition will definitely exhibit aspects of every form of motivation. As a student educated originally in the heyday of the postmodern, I find myself bristling at any kind of reduction of a complex and shifting tradition to a relatively simplistic or at least simple moral equation. But more importantly, I think I want to expand upon your other point, which is that religions develop in history, and they take on new forms in response to challenges, both within and without. And as a result, we should expect that every major religious tradition should have had ample opportunity, and indeed necessity, for developing every sensible strategy there is for cultivating moral character. That is, no major religion could actually afford, if we're thinking sort of religions evolving in competition with one another, to attract only a part of the population, only those people who really are empathetic or only those people who really like rules, or something like that, and leave the remainder to be convinced of the greatness of some competitor religion.

And so if indeed there are these three methods of cultivating morality, we should expect to find every tradition providing extensive and in fact interconnected applications of each of these methods. And I want to emphasize this fact of their being interconnected as well. I think this is what we do find.

Just to take an example, Rabbi Hillel, who is the sort of great Jewish – one of the great rabbis of the Talmud – of course is a great moral exemplar on the one hand. And very much like his near-contemporary, Jesus, he had a world view that – in which the benchmark of successful moral behavior was, well, to cultivate empathy. And
so we have – but, of course, he was a great teacher, and he was learned in the Talmud. So we have in this figure a traditional rabbinic Jewish worldview that really draws together all three of the methods, right: to study Talmud, which is clearly moral standards, just is to read what the great rabbis, who are the moral exemplars argued. But what were they arguing about? Well, fundamentally, the proper application of empathy above all things. This is the way they summarized their big – their main points.

So, I mean, I'm actually not at all a scholar of Judaism. I don't know anything about it from a scholarly perspective really. But we can let that example sit. We can shift to what I do specialize in, which is Buddhism. The Buddha again would seem like a prominent example of a moral exemplar. But his teachings emphasize the cultivation of compassion, the cultivation of empathy. And this is especially true if we look at stories of the Buddha's past lives, in which he does things like feed himself to a hungry tigress to prevent her from eating her cubs, and so on.

At the same time, there is a tremendous amount of moral reasoning within Buddhist texts, and we find argumentations – argumentation approving the validity of moral reasoning, as you were citing from the Dhammapada, stuff like that. But even more so, you find argumentation showing that it is actually beneficial to you as a practitioner to switch your identity with others, at least in a visualization practice, and to take on their pains on yourself and to offer your own positive experiences, your good karma, to other people, and you take on other people's pains.

There are also sort of arguments that generate empathy in a sense through reason. So I'm not sure where these sorts of arguments fit in the schema if these are not interrelated. So, for instance, an argument that – in the
Buddhist tradition, for instance, it is believed that the idea of the self is a false construction. We don't actually have a self. What we have is a kind of ongoing false belief in a self, a projection of a self, a narrative that we make up again and again, from moment to moment. And seeing this is of great benefit. Once you see this, then you can translate your natural selfish behavior, which is to say you want to eliminate your own suffering, into a spontaneous compassion for all beings.

Once you're able to act on spontaneous compassion for all beings, that is to say, normally – so the argument goes like this: look, you're already interested in reducing your own suffering. But you don't have a self. Therefore, reduce the suffering of all beings. You already want to eliminate suffering; just apply it in a more reasonable way to all beings. So this is a set of arguments designed to – well, I'm not sure exactly how it fits, but we say to generate empathy out of selfishness, right, through the careful application of reason.

In any event, I want to sort of emphasize then that if we look at any of these texts and any of the traditions in history, we're going to find them drawing upon all of these different methods of moral cultivation, and in fact drawing them into this integrated whole, so that from one of them, you can get to the other, that is to show that the Buddha understands that to be empathetic is completely crucial, but then also the Buddha is the Buddha; he's great, and you should align yourself with the Buddhist tradition. And at the same time, he has all kinds of rules.

I didn't mention that the – if you're a monk in the Buddhist tradition, you have about 250 rules that you need to follow and recite every fortnight or so, and constantly be watching your behavior as a result. Now, there are two different motives that are described for this kind of practice, and they are both completely owned and
affirmed by the Buddhist tradition. One is that if you engage in this kind of rule-following behavior, it generates empathy; it helps you be a more empathetic person; it helps you stabilize your mind and control yourself.

But the other is that if the monks don't behave like this, the laypeople, who are not monks, are not going to look up to the monks, which is to say we don't have – so which is another way to put it is to say that monastic behavior is proscribed in order to make the monks into moral exemplars. And so immediately a monk is a moral exemplar, as soon as they start behaving in this way.

In any event, all of this is just to say that if we look at these traditions as complex wholes, they are going to have all of this stuff. Now having said that, it is absolutely true that if you search the Internet for what Buddhists say about stuff and what Christians say about stuff and what Jews say about stuff, you're not going to get the same emphasis in these areas. And I think this is actually – it is significant. This is not something that I want to sit here and say, well, that's wrong. You can't get anything about these traditions from the Internet.

What I want to say is that what you get is not like a scholar's worldview, but a contemporary – very contemporary since it is the Internet, but even just sort of a modern transformation of all of these traditions. And if we go along with Weber and Marx, and we acknowledge that one of the hallmarks of modernity is the commodification of everything, especially religion in many contexts, we can see that competition among religions has transformed all of these traditions into – well, and maybe what we're looking at here is a kind of diversification through branding. That is to say, we have religious traditions that have all of these various resources marketing themselves to different segments of the population or of various niche populations. And so
it might be that what we're looking at is – well, I mean, for instance, I think it is actually very interesting as a possibility that we have here one of the more successful or at least potentially successful explanations for why, for instance, so many modern American Buddhists are Jewish, which is to say that there has been a migration of – well, we can float my hypothesis that I think is testable if – once we have your test for moral motives, right, in place, we can float this test, which is – we could float this hypothesis, which is that modern Judaism, in aligning itself with liberal Protestantism, has thrown away, cast aside a lot of the tendencies of traditional Judaism that drew out the empathetic – those people who are interested in empathy. And on the far side of that, modern Buddhism has cast aside a lot of the stuff so that if you actually talk to modern American Buddhists, they often say, "Well, you don't have to believe in the Buddha." You don't have to believe in the Buddha, that Buddhism is not about faith, you hear very often. I think you quoted it.

This is not something that any 13th century Buddhist ever said, right? Now, that is not to say that there are no texts – there are texts in which the Buddha says, "Test it. Try it out for yourself and see if it isn't true." But, you know, if I say that, then you're like, "Oh, okay." You know, that's one way to respond to that, right, as a rhetorical point, right? In modernity, this becomes a hallmark of Buddhism in the modern world, this idea that Buddhism is rational; it is founded on basic principles that can be proven through introspection, through practice, right? And this is basically accepted among many modern Buddhists, that this is what Buddhism is. This is a way that Buddhism markets itself in modernity, as being rational, not about affiliating, and also not about rule-following. You don't find a lot of modern western Buddhists taking on the 250 vows of a monk, right? And even you would find a lot of modern Buddhists saying something like they don't particularly respect monks, right? If they've got meditative attainment, they would respect that, right? If you've spent a lot of time
meditating, yes, but not if you're just like following a lot of vows. What is the big deal, right? So that again is completely contrary to a traditional view of the monastic life outside of America.

So anyway, this is just to say we have the flip side of – so why do the Jews become – okay, here is my thesis then, right? I mean, your thesis that we can then prove, right, by – once we can test it, this is really just as a possible, you know – an example of a possibility. But imagine we test people and it turns out that people are frustrated with their Jewish upbringing in that it doesn't draw out whatever it is that we are testing for in the empathy side, and they find this in the Buddhist context. They're not interested in affiliating with the Jewish tradition, which is emphasizing so much the affiliative part, right? You have to be – so anyway, this is a simplistic reduction, emphasizing, you know, peoplehood or something like that, rejecting the peoplehood of Jews and taking on this other more – okay, so you get the point of what I'm saying.

What we would like to do then, if that is a kind of example of how we can imagine this all playing out – what we want to do now is take your test and survey everyone through history, right, and see, well, why is it that at a particular moment the Hindu tradition as defined in the Gita, as you rightly point out, rejects the nonviolence that Arjuna is positing and takes on a different set of arguments. Well, there is clearly affiliation issues there that are shaped by the historical moment. But we don't get the fine-grained detail of what is it in human minds that is making people drawn to one side rather than the other. We can get the argument in the text, and we can draw that out. But what appeals to people? That is, I think, a very interesting set of issues.

So that's what I wanted to talk about.

(Applause)
MICHAEL SCHULMAN

I would respond to each of those comments, except I forgot everything they said. All right. Did you write it down? I hope I'm going to address what you said, that I understood it.

In terms of the notion of motive and moral motive, I see morality as a social construct. It's something we attribute to others and to ourselves according to certain criteria. If you see somebody give somebody money, is it a moral act? I think none of us would have enough information. If they're paying a bill, we'd say no, that's not a moral act. If they're giving to somebody because their minister told them to, and if you wanted – and the minister said, "If you want to be accepted in our community, you give them the money," I don't think we'd see that as a moral act. We see it as a moral act when we say they are – that's why I introduced that notion of reinforcement – that they are reinforced by the benefit to others. And that's always a judgment. We can surmise what is reinforcing them, but we're never going to prove what is reinforcing them.

And sometimes we're wrong. The notion of the unconscious can be looked at as your attributing certain reinforcers to yourself when somebody else who says, "No, no. You're acting out of unconscious motivation," is attributing another reinforcement. For example, if you say to – you've just been screaming at your child for 20 minutes, and your friend says, "What are you doing that for?" and you say, "I'm doing it for her own good because I want her to understand what is important and how much trouble she is going to get into or how self-destructive her acts are," and your companion says to you, "Well, she got that after three minutes. And do you remember when she said whatever she said. I think she got it after three minutes, and you went on for 20 minutes because you wanted to hurt her." Now, the noble father says, "What do you mean I wanted to hurt my
child?" And now we have a disagreement, an observer saying, "What is reinforcing you is — " I'm saying what is reinforcing me is a benefit to somebody else. And the observer looking at the data a little differently is saying, "No, what is reinforcing you is you want to hurt somebody else." And if that observer is modern psychoanalytically oriented, they say, "Well, your motive was unconscious."

So okay. We have some acts that we are willing to say the person did it to benefit somebody else. Now as a psychologist, the question is, why did they do it? I mean, what led them to want to benefit somebody else? It's essentially a – you're looking for a causal statement. And you may find that as Eva Fogelman found, that as you question them or as you question yourself, they don't have – one man that Eva quoted – actually, it wasn't in her book. It was at a conference. It was a conference where there were some rescuers, and one of the rescuers used the phrase, "The hand of compassion was quicker than the calculus of reason." It was a very sophisticated rescuer. And this was 30, 40 years after the rescue. It wasn't – he didn't have to figure out, "What should I do?" It simply came upon him. And I see empathy as a kind of reflex, that it is a kind of automatic response, whereas somebody else has to figure out their moral choice.

I am against the death penalty. When I came to that conclusion, it was before the Innocent Project was publicized. And whenever I would hear about somebody getting the death penalty, their crime seemed so heinous that I had no empathy for them. And yet my sense of what would create a good world, reasoning my way to what would create a good world, the state killing people seemed like it would not create a good world, for various reasons that I won't take time now to explain. They're not particularly unusual.
So that to me was a saying, "Okay. You're making what you claim is a moral – taking a moral stand that killing people who have committed crimes shouldn't be done. Why?" Now for some people, it is empathy. It is a sense that no one should be put in that situation, no one should be forcibly faced with their own death at the hands of fellow beings. My response wasn't that. It wasn't a sense of even though this person did a heinous thing, we shouldn't make them suffer like that. It really had to do with a sense of what is a good community. How can we form a better community?

So the process is starting with an observation of an act, attributing an intention behind the act, and if the intention is – seems to be for the benefit of the other, calling it a moral act, and then asking the question, "What led to the moral act?" and looking for these motives. The motives themselves are not the moral act. The motives are not what make them moral. The intention behind the act is to me what makes them moral.

Now, we use morality to get to I think something that you were saying. We use the notion of morality in other ways besides acts with good intention. For example, sexual morality is – we have the same term, but that is about adhering to community sexual rules, having sex at this time with these kinds of people under these circumstances. And we call that moral. Now, the reinforcer there is not necessarily benefit to another. And my theory of empathy, principle, and affiliation may not apply as the motives behind those. They may apply, but my interest is not in those kind – other kinds of things that we call moral. For example, not drinking from a cup you spit in or not even using a flag in a disrespectful way – there are certainly motives that are worth analyzing. But I'm not claiming that mine are necessarily the ones you'll find. They may be similar. I mean, one may see the flag as a symbol of the community and wiping the toilet with it as disrespecting the community. But even if – you know, in Haidt's work, even if probably somebody said, "Well, what if the person just did it in their own
toilet with nobody observing?" It wasn't on YouTube. Would it still be disrespectful? And they might say yes, and there their relationship to the symbol is very important, and it doesn't necessarily have anything to do with harming or helping others.

One can call it moral, but it would be moral sub-one or moral sub-two, and the kind I'm talking about that have to do with harming and helping would be moral sub-one.

In terms of education, the term I use is that children come into the world with the susceptibility for moral education. They don't have to – it doesn't have to be kind of forced into them. They also come in with motivations that we would consider anti-moral, where pounding your enemy or somebody you define as your enemy is reinforcing; gathering all the good things for oneself is reinforcing. And morality is vying – operating where the reinforcement is benefitting others is vying with the reinforcement that is benefitting oneself. And you can – parents can tap into these three moral motivations through what they say to a child. For example – I mentioned this before – saying to a child, "How would you feel if somebody did that to you?" or "Remember when so-and-so did that to you?" That's reminding them to put themselves in someone else's place. The child is perfectly capable of doing it, but isn't inclined to do it perhaps in this particular situation because he wants the thing, or he doesn't define that other person has "us." He might do it with somebody who is "us," but he might not do it if the skin color is different because that's not "us." So the parent can expand the sphere of who is us, which is one form of moral education, or the parent can remind the child that, yes, even when you want that thing very badly, think about the other person's feelings.
In terms of internalization, the parent might – affiliation, the parent might say – we see the bumper sticker, "What would Jesus do?" or, you know, "What car would Jesus buy?" It's a way of thinking through your choice in terms of your exemplar. And you – well, I'll connect these to the emotional question that Hagop asked. But you are not – the child who is tugging on a toy against another child may not care about the feelings of that other child, but may care about what Mommy or Jesus will think of him.

I'm a vegetarian. I've always felt empathy for animals, but for most of my life it wasn't strong enough for me to become a vegetarian. The first time I was a vegetarian, it came out of affiliation. I spent a number of days – I was invited to give a talk at a national Humane Society conference. And I was stuck with vegetarians for days, and I really liked these people. Unlike a lot of animal rights people, they not only liked animals, but they liked humans. And I felt very bonded with them, and my – when I got back to the city – this conference was in Texas – I remained a vegetarian for about six months while those connections continued. There wasn't much in the way of – the Internet was fairly new then. There wasn't much in the way of e-mails. But I stayed bonded, and when the connections kind of drifted way, I found myself sitting in front of a bacon cheeseburger, and went for it.

A few years later, I was – somebody sent me a postcard of a little pig, playful, smiling little pig. And it was a kind of natural empathic response, and I've played with little pigs. And I said, "That's it. I'm not eating these anymore," and I've been a vegetarian ever since. And it was not out of affiliation, because affiliations can be temporary, especially with humans. When it's with Jesus, one of the powerful things about Jesus, always with you, sees everything. Can't hide from Jesus, whereas I can hide from those other people. They stopped e-mailing me.

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And in terms of principle, you can say to a child, "What is the best family we can have?" And I've used that with kids. Well, you're always angry at your parents. You're always -- they're always angry at you. But you seem to love each other. I'll ask the kid, "Do you want to -- do you expect to be in contact? You're always so angry. Do you expect -- like 10 years from now, are you going to still know your parents?" "Yeah, of course." "Okay. So your family is going to continue?" "Yeah, of course." "Okay. So let's get together and talk about what is the best family." And I've never had a kid who wasn't interested in that. Didn't always solve the problem, but I've never had a kid who wasn't interested in the dialogue.

There is the notion -- you mentioned identity, developing -- once one thinks of oneself as creating good relations with others or a better world, as smart humans, we begin to see ourselves a certain way. That's what we do. We label ourselves. We say, "Well, I'm an empathic person. I don't think much about morality, but generally I treat people well because I feel for them." So we do develop a moral identity which is a kind of cognitive response. And we -- or it can be, "I am a good Christian. I am a good Jew." You mentioned that important of Jewish identity that is not about arguing with God, but it is a sense of, "I'm a Jew, and Jews stand for this." I'd be ashamed when something like Madoff comes along. There is a sense of shame in the community. How could a Jew do that? So there are certain expectations that -- and you're right -- are different from the sense of just a kind of more intellectual argument about what is right and wrong in this situation.

Also, that notion of being moral, that we do sometimes take that identity and we call ourselves a moral person, but I think most of us -- I may be generalizing. I think people who think about their morality a lot realize that it's probably not good to give themselves that kind of label, that we all have moral acts that actually are judged
to be moral because we judge – they're reinforced by benefit to others, and there are acts that we judge to be not moral because we don't really care about the benefit to others, or we get pleasure out of somebody else's pain. So I think most of us learn not to walk around with a kind of mantle, "I am a moral being." But I may be wrong about that.

BRONWYN FINNIGAN

I think you're right about that.

MICHAEL SCHULMAN

Okay. In terms of the different emotions that you mentioned, empathy is a kind of core reflexive emotion and guilt is a byproduct of it. It's not, as I see it, a core – feeling – as I said, feeling for others puts you inside them. And when we hurt somebody that we are inside, it rebounds back on ourselves, and we call that feeling – it's just a feeling that now I need to label. And I think the label we provide for that is "guilt." We provide – we have another set of feelings that we call "shame." Again, it is just a label, but as I experience them at least, they're different than the things I call "guilt." Shame has to do – with guilt, who knows about what I've done is irrelevant.

One of the examples I sometimes use – I talk about moral turning points. And for me, a moral turning point was when I was four years old, I punched the person I probably loved most in my life at that point, my grandmother, because I was angry at whatever it was that I don't remember. I punched her in the breast – and my grandmother was all breast – and hurt her, and ran out of the apartment, ran under – down the flights of stairs, hid under the steps and wept and wept because I hurt my grandma. My grandmother was not going to
punish me. She was not a punisher. But something came over me that was different than I had ever felt in my
life, and it didn't have anything to do with who might know about it or who might punish me.

But I've known other feelings that were shame, that I call "shame," because if I could get away with nobody
finding out about it, I wasn't going to feel so bad. But that people would know I did that, ooh. So that's a
different emotion based on affiliation. And there are times when I have had other feelings, where I felt – well,
one of the examples I use is a man who was making a lot of money by cheating people. He was in finance. He
was selling people things that – vulnerable people, older people, people – unsophisticated people – he was
selling them shares in stuff that had no chance of making money. And if it did make money by some luck, he
would roll them over. And he said he had to stop because he couldn't live with himself. And some of it, there
was empathy when he'd picture some of these people. But his sense of who he was as a person, it wasn't how he
could any longer live with himself that way. And he started driving a cab, and he was making a lot less money.
But he said he felt better about himself. And that self-loathing is another kind of emotion, and it derives from
that set of principles and how you want to live in the world and what you think is right.

And the last thing I'll say – I guess we are getting late. We are late. I agree with what you said, that I think all
religions do use them all and are an amalgam. And yet I still wonder if you hang out with Jews, and the
conversation is about morality, I think it's going to be different than if you hang out with Muslims and the
conversation is about morality, than if you hang out with Buddhists and the conversation is about morality.
And, you know, maybe three different Buddhist groups will have three different kinds of conversation, and
certainly – I know the Jewish traditions best, and different Jewish groups are going to have different kinds of
conversations. But here again, it is a guess – and you may be right – a guess that there is going to be some
differences that – there won't be anything quite like the relationship to Christ among Jews, and maybe that too is different than the relationship to Buddha, because Buddha is not necessarily watching you.

Okay. I'll be quiet.

RONALD GROSS

Did you want to respond?

JONATHAN GOLD

Well, of course I do. But maybe —

RONALD GROSS

Well, this session was announced to end at 9:00. And so what I would like to do, for those – for anyone who – and I know there are some – who have an early class or last train, bus, or subway to get, or who just plain have reached the point where they want to think about these ideas on their own for a while, I want you to feel perfectly comfortable to leave at this point. I'm going to ask for an expression of appreciation for all of our speakers, then I'm going to decree that we continue for another 25 minutes until 9:30 because knowing the people in this group, I know that I cannot end this session without giving people in the group an opportunity to express their thoughts or ask a question. So let's have a —

(Applause)