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## MORALITY IS A PRINCIPLE OF NATURE DISCOVERED BY PHILOSOPHY AND EVOLUTIONARY SCIENCES

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### Abstract

*This work concerns metaethics and its goal is to present a short summary 1. How philosophers attempted to justify our moral behavior by postulating the existence of a „natural moral law”, and 2. how the achievements of modern psychology, ethology, and evolutionary sciences led to the confirmation of its existence and elucidation of its origin. Author offers a new interpretation of the natural moral law as an unwritten principle which regulates behavior of the entire living world. Our morality, i.e. cooperative behavior in social systems, is a result of biological evolutionary process, and is expressed in the entire living world at the subconscious level in the process of cooperation. When the evolution reached the rational level, it is also expressed in the conscious intellectual constructs.*

**Key words:** *Natural moral law, Stoics, Evolution, Cooperation, Good will, Intuition of philosophers, Moral development, Moral faculty, “Moral grammar”.*

### Introduction

Philosophers when answering the question, How to live our lives and how to treat each other, developed several theories such as hedonism, psychological egoism and altruism, ethical egoism, consequentialism and utilitarianism, deontological theory (Kant's well-being theory), virtue ethical theory, contractarianism and social contract theory, *prima facie* duties theory, natural law theory.<sup>1</sup> The natural law theory seems to be the most fundamental going to the roots conditioning human behavior and all other

philosophical speculations. The idea of a natural law in morality governing our behavior has a long history and was interpreted or understood in a variety of ways. Though it has limited value for formulation of detailed practical maxims to conduct human behavior, nevertheless it is still used by contemporary religious leaders to argue in defense of their particular moral assumptions based on their theological worldview. It has, however, a great historical value for the evaluation of validity of secular philosophical intuition. For modern science, starting with Darwin and his insight into evolution of man, reached the level of sophistication and precision where is able to explain the naturalistic basis for the intuition of philosophers.

<sup>1</sup>. Russ Shafer Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1901; first edition 1877).

This idea of a natural law governing the world can be traced all the way back to the fifth century B.C.E. when the social and political changes on the one hand and ideas about the external world developed by the Presocratic philosophers-scientists led to the rise of intellectual ferment, the age of the ancient Enlightenment.<sup>2</sup> The primary role in this movement was played by the so-called Sophists, professional teachers. They changed the previous focus of interest from the physical reality to the human affairs.<sup>3</sup>

The Sophists recognized the existence of the “unwritten and necessary natural law,”<sup>4</sup> though considered as originating from gods. And as long as religion was the major factor guiding people god was the author of those standards and it seems that such were the opinions of ancient writers such as Hesiod and Heraclitus.<sup>5</sup> It designated an eternal moral principle universally valid and overruling the positive laws of men.

<sup>2</sup>. Jürgen Habermas, contemporary German philosopher calls this age an Axial Age.

<sup>3</sup>. The words Sophist (*sophistes*) derives from the Greek *sophos* (skilled, wise, clever, learned, subtle, ingenious), *sophia* (skill, cleverness, wisdom, learning), *sophizomai* (practice an art, play tricks, devise skillfully, speculate). The term was widely used in the ancient Greece and designated a poet, as a teacher of men, a knowledgeable and prudent man, a person with a specific skill, expert or adept. In the fifth century this term acquired a specific meaning designating a class of Sophists i.e. of professional teachers, educators, scholars who gave lessons in grammar, rhetoric, politics, mathematics, for money. They taught in small seminars or circles, in public gatherings or private homes. This term became an abusive term in the hands of the satirical writer, Aristophanes, who slandered them and criticized as deceivers. For him Sophists represented an age of decline and breakdown of morals. Athenians were ambivalent about Sophists for they claimed to teach *aretē* (virtue) and how to become a good citizen (Plato, *Protagoras* 319a). Athenians in their democratic outlook did not consider that a special training was necessary for this in contrast to learning specific practical skills (*technē*). Their opinion was shared by Plato who named them “worthless fellows” primarily for their atheism or agnosticism. In the next century Aeschines referred to Socrates as “Socrates the sophist” and later Lucian of Samosata (125-180 C.E.) referred to Christ “that crucified sophist” (*Peregrinus* 13). W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists*, Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971, reprint 1987), pp. 35-54. The texts of preserved fragments of the Sophists’ writings are available in a bilingual collection: *Sofisti. Testimonianze e frammenti. Testo greco a fronte*. A cura di Mario Untersteiner con la collaborazione di Antonio Battagazzore. Introduzione di Giovanni Reale, indici di Vincenzo Cicero, (Milano: Bompiani, 2009).

<sup>4</sup>. For example Antiphon in Jan Legowicz, *Filozofia Starożytna Grecji i Rzymu*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1968), p. 123-124.

<sup>5</sup>. Heraclitus, *The Cosmic Fragments*. Edited with an introduction and commentary by G. S. Kirk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954). fr. 114. Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, with an English translation and by Hugh G. Evelyn-White (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 276-284.

Plato (427-347 B.C.E.) rejects the idea that morals and moral law are changing.<sup>6</sup> He refers us to the unchanging reality, the reality of the Forms (*eidos*) which is accessible only to reason and of which human societies are largely ignorant. Thus, the human behavior in societies is not only subject to the rules established by men in societies, but also to the universal law which is unwritten and to which even gods are subject.<sup>7</sup> Thus it seems that Plato laid the foundation for this original concept of the unchanging natural moral law as part of our natural world.

Next who dwelled on the topic of the natural law was Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.) who distinguished in his *Nicomachean Ethics* between conventional or legal justice, and natural justice. However, both are not unchangeable.<sup>8</sup> Aristotle could arrive at such a conclusion since he viewed nature from the biological perspective observing biological phenomena.

If it so, the question now arises what is human nature, what is human characteristic or human function and this principle that makes us humans? After a lengthy discussion and comparison with other forms of life Aristotle states that:

The proper function of man, then, consists in an activity of the soul (*psuchē*) in conformity with a rational principle or, at least, not without it. In speaking of a proper function of a given individual we mean that it is the same in kind as the function of an individual who sets high standards for himself... the good of man is an activity of the soul in conformity with excellence or virtue, and if there are several virtues, in conformity with the best and most complete.<sup>9</sup>

Aristotle, however, understood the “souls” as a biological phenomenon, function of the body.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup>. Plato, *The Republic, Parmenides*, in *The Republic and Other Works*, translated by B. Jowett, (New York: Anchor Book, 1973).

<sup>7</sup>. Famous dialogue from *Euthyphro* : “Euthyphro – Yes, I should say that what all the gods love is pious and holy, and the opposite which they all hate, impious. Socrates – Ought we to inquire into the truth of this, Euthyphro, or simply to accept the mere statement on our own authority and that of others? Euthyphro - We should inquire; and I believe that the statement will stand the test of inquiry. Socrates – That, my good friend, we shall know better in a little while. The point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious or holy is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved by the gods.” Plato, *Euthyphro* in *The Republic and Other Works*, *op. cit.*, p. 435.

<sup>8</sup>. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated, with introduction and notes by Martin Ostwald, (New York, London: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1962), Bk V. 7.

<sup>9</sup>. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *op. cit.*, Bk I.7.

<sup>10</sup>. It is difficult to evaluate the Aristotle’s view on the soul from the point of view of modern biology and psychology. Aristotle was not able to explain biological processes and function of the living organisms in modern biological concepts and terms. He tried, however, to do this using available to him analytical approaches. He used his own concepts of nature which were modified Platonic ideas, his own theory of matter and forms. He differentiated three elements in the substance, matter, form, and combination of both, and attempted to show that the soul (or psyche in his terminology) is the first actualization of the body which is organized by nature. Form or essence is the element that

## The Stoic Philosophy

By stating that reason and rationality is the distinctive human characteristic, Aristotle set the foundations for formulations of the natural law as governing the world and humans which was postulated by the Greek Stoics and explicitly formulated by Cicero. The Stoic philosophy was the most important and influential development in Hellenistic philosophy and it affected Christian writers and their moral thinking, and many philosophers. It was revived in the deism and naturalism of the Enlightenment and continues to affect modern thinking as well. It was founded by Zeno of Citium (333-262 B.C.E.) and developed by his successors Cleanthes (303-233 B.C.E.) and Chrysippus (b. ca 280 -d. ca 208/4 B.C.E.).<sup>11</sup>

organizes. It cannot be matter since the soul is the element due to which living organisms are alive and matter is only the potential element. Thus, the soul in every living being is an agent that performs a variety of operations. It is not a substance separate from the body, with which it is connected. So, the nutritive soul in all kinds of living organisms such as plants and animals, must be able to perform nutritive and reproductive functions. All animals have additional sensory perception, at least sense of touch and are able to experience pleasure and pain. These functions are performed by sensory soul. Still other animals have more subtle variety of senses such as vision, hearing, taste, and more complicated perceptions such as memory, imagination, and self-movement. In the Book III Aristotle considers the questions concerning mind which, according to him, belongs only to the human soul. Aristotle argues that thinking is different from both the sensory perception and imagination. He claims that senses cannot deceive, and imagination is an agency that is able to bring back things that were perceived anteriorly while thinking may sometimes be erroneous. Since the mind is able to think whenever it desires, one has to differentiate it into two capabilities: one passive which contains all ideas that belong to mind and can be considered, whereas the second one brings them to action, i.e. the mind is actually thinking about them. In this way Aristotle differentiated possible intellect that is a collection of concepts and universal ideas, and the agent-intellect (proper mind) that is able to recall those ideas and form thoughts. But since Aristotle was not able to find any corresponding organ (Aristotle missed to recognize the function of the brain and of the central nervous system) he thought that it was nonmaterial and able to survive outside the body, thus immortal. He did not consider here the souls of the individual human, but most likely a cosmic power, which he considered as the first mover that was represented by the cosmic mind postulated by Anaxagoras and commonly accepted in his time. Alexander of Aphrodisias, ancient commentator of Aristotle, postulated that human mind that is not yet fully developed is "*nous hylikos*," inseparable from the body and mortal. The active mind, "*nous poietikos*" through action of which human mind is actualized he identified with god. Chisholm H., ed. *Alexander of Aphrodisias*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., Cambridge University Press, 1911, p. 566. Aristotle, *Peri Yuch/j*, (*Peri Psuche/s*) *Traite, de l'ame*, traduit et annoté, par G. Rodier, Ernest Leroux, Éditeur, Paris 1900. Hillar M., *The Problem of the Soul in Aristotle's "De anima"*, in *Contributors to the Philosophy of Humanism*, Humanists of Houston, Houston, 1994, pp. 51-82.

<sup>11</sup>. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* collegit Ioannes Ab Arim, (Stutgardiae: in Aedibus B.G. Teubneri, MCMLXIV), Vol. 1-4, (abbreviated as SVF). Italian edition with translation of the

Like Aristotle, Stoics assumed a reality composed of two fundamental principles: matter and form. Matter constituted a passive, indeterminate principle (to pa.scon eivnai th.n a:poion ouvsi,an) and form was the governing, active principle (to. poiou.n lo.gon to.n qeo,n) constituting the nature of beings.<sup>12</sup> This form is an active principle that enlivens and vitalizes creatures. Following Heraclitus, the Stoics assumed that it is one and the same principle, *logos*, that governs the thought and structure of the world which was considered ideal because of its orderliness.<sup>13</sup> The Stoic philosophers (Zeno and Cleanthes) initially identified this all-pervasive *logos* with cosmic fire (pu/r tecnico,n = artistic, creative fire),<sup>14</sup> but, influenced by contemporary physiology and Diogenes of Apollonia, they came to view it as the creature's breath, that is, *pneuma*, a weightless permeation which was a compound of cosmic fire and air.<sup>15</sup> By analogy with the living creature, the rational principle of the whole world was also identified with *pneuma* as an activating and vivifying principle.

This rational principle and order in nature was described under various names, Logos, Pneuma (pneu.ma = breath, spirit), Fate, God, Providence, and because of it the world was considered to be fully deterministic. This creative reason, the cosmic rational principle, was anticipated by Plato's either as "soul of the world" or "divine Craftsman."<sup>16</sup>

All these terms – Soul of the world, Mind of the world, Nature, Providence, Craftsman, Logos, God – all refer to one and the same thing, an artistic and creative fire, fiery and intelligent breath (pneu/ma noero,n kai. purw/q/dej( pu/r duna,mewj( pu/r tecnico,n).<sup>17</sup> Inasmuch as it is the principle controlling the universe, it is called the *logos*.<sup>18</sup> And inasmuch as it is the germ from which all other things develop, and their specific types are defined, it is called the *seminal logos* (*logos spermatikos*). Nature taken as a whole, as the governing principle of all things, is equivalent to the *logos*, but as for particular living things, only some possess reason as a natural faculty. This *logos* governing the world is, at the same time, a force, the natural law from which nothing can escape and which leads the entire world to a common end.

Stoics were the first philosophers who maintained systematically that all things are necessarily interrelated "from everything that happens something else follows depending on it by necessity."<sup>19</sup>

*Fragmenta: Gli Stoici. Opere e Testimonianze* a cura di Margherita Isnardi Parente, Vol. 1-2. (Milano: TEA, 1994). A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy. Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), second edition.

<sup>12</sup>. SVF II.300.

<sup>13</sup>. Cicero, *De natura deorum, op. cit.*, II. 16-39.

<sup>14</sup>. SVF I.120.

<sup>15</sup>. SVF III.300. But in modern religious theistic terminology, spirit. In naturalistic interpretation this *pneuma* is oxygen necessary to maintain life.

<sup>16</sup>. SVF II, 913. Marcus Aurelius wrote: "One god, one substance, one law, common/or universal logos and one truth." Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, translated with an introduction by Maxwell Staniforth (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964). VII, 9.

<sup>17</sup>. SVF I.120, 158, 176; II. 1009, 1132; III.323.

<sup>18</sup>. SVF III. 323.

<sup>19</sup>. SVF, II. 945.



Chance was for them simply a name for undiscovered causes.<sup>20</sup> Since things in the world are related in one way or the other (mutual relationship and interaction in the world Stoics called "sympathy") Stoics postulated that they are related by relative disposition, that is, they depended upon something else, e.g., being a father entails a relationship with his child or children, etc.<sup>21</sup> This idea may partially correspond to modern concepts of mutual interdependence in ecological terms. But it had much deeper significance for the Stoics since it also included a moral and psychological sense of relating to one's self, society, and the world. To be a happy and good man meant for the Stoics to be related to the universe, "to feel at home in the universe," and to other human beings in a manner according to reason. Marcus Aurelius wrote: "Neither can I be angry with my brother or fall foul of him; for he and I were born to work together...",<sup>22</sup> and, "The chief good of a rational being is fellowship with his neighbors – for it has been made clear long ago that fellowship is the purpose behind our creation."<sup>23</sup> We find this Stoic principle repeated almost verbatim by Jürgen Habermas as the only justification for the morality and ethics. He develops it into his "moral principle of universalizability" when an individual is integrated into a social order and where his moral obligation comes from the process of socialization. Before Habermas Immanuel Kant developed the same principle into his logical maxim of "categorical imperative."<sup>24</sup>

Concerning human nature, Stoics gave the traditional answer, that it is the Mind that distinguished humans from other things. The concept was borrowed from Diogenes the Cynic (b. ca 412 B.C.E.). This rationality was understood as the practical wisdom of living in accordance with Nature. Individual human beings share this rational principle with Nature; thus, it is a part of the world. They are endowed in varying degrees with "seed powers" (or *spermatikoi logoi*) which were part of the principle or *logos* of Nature. Cosmic events and human actions are both consequences of one thing, the *logos*. Modern psychology, physiology, neurology and psychiatry provide evidence that there are no reasons to deny that mental processes are purely physical processes in the central nervous system.<sup>25</sup> This Stoic concept of rationality acquired a new meaning in Habermas's interpretation as the communicative action in a social context representing a point of convergence for various cultures and societies. This convergence is based on the role played by universal concepts found in every community such as truth, rationality, justification, and consensus.

<sup>20</sup>. SVF, II. 67.

<sup>21</sup>. SVF, II. 402-404.

<sup>22</sup>. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations op. cit.*, II.1.

<sup>23</sup>. Marcus Aurelius, *op. cit.*, V.16.

<sup>24</sup>. Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, translated by

Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1990). Immanuel Kant *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *What is Enlightenment?* Translated with an introduction by Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, twenty-first printing 1988).

<sup>25</sup>. Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience. The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1998). Marc D. Hauser, *Moral Minds. How Nature Designed Our Universal Sense of Right and Wrong*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006).

They form a "grammar" for the discourse by analogy to the Chomsky's universal language grammar.<sup>26</sup>

Stoic theory thus has anticipated modern concepts since mind and matter are two constituents or attributes of one thing, the body. A man is a unified substance, but what he consists of is not uniform.

This governing principle, *logos*, is the seat of consciousness and to it belong all the functions which we would associate with the brain. One function is called "impulse," (*òrmh.*) a movement of thought towards or away from something<sup>27</sup> which is initiated by an impression. Impression and impulse provide the causal explanations of goal-oriented animal movements. Creatures are genetically determined to show aversion and preference and they are well disposed towards themselves. The technical term describing this relationship to the environment is *oikeiōsis* (*oivkeiwsij*), a self-awareness. The behavior depends on animal or human recognition of the object as belonging to itself by its faculty of "assent."<sup>28</sup> But we are not impelled or repelled by things which we fail to recognize as a source of advantage or harm.<sup>29</sup> This faculty impels us to select things necessary for self-preservation and not necessarily by reason. An infant is "not yet rational" and it takes about 7 years to develop the *logos*.<sup>30</sup> Automatic impulse thus governs the behavior of humans in the earliest years, the first thought is self-preservation. Gradually, as the child develops, its governing principle is modified by accretion of the *logos*, then "reason [becomes] supreme as the craftsman of impulse."<sup>31</sup> Reason, however, does not destroy the earlier impulses but they are taken over by reason.

Thus, human nature develops from something which is non-rational to a structure governed by reason.<sup>32</sup> Now new objects of desire develop, and virtue becomes a human characteristic.<sup>33</sup>

Attainment of rationality alters the whole structure of a man's governing principle. Human behavior is a mode of rational conduct which is the use of faculties for the purpose designed by universal natural law.<sup>34</sup> Even the actions which we usually describe as an irrational impulse are in fact governed by the rational principle in the sense that they produce a judgment (intellectual assent) that moves to action, the movement of the soul. So the distinction is between the right reason (*eulogos*) and wrong reason (*alogos*).<sup>35</sup> Therefore, everything that we do is rational in a sense, but the sage or the good man is the criterion, because he alone has the right

<sup>26</sup>. Jürgen Habermas, *Between facts and Norms*, translated by William Rehg, (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1998), p.

<sup>27</sup>. SVF, III. 377.

<sup>28</sup>. SVF, II. 171.

<sup>29</sup>. SVF, II. 979, 991.

<sup>30</sup>. Aëtius, IV. 11.4 in *Dox. graeci. op. cit.*; Sénèque *Lettres à Lucillius* Texte établi par François Préchac et traduit par Henri Noblot (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1964), Tome I-VII. T. V. Ep. 124.9.

<sup>31</sup>. D.L. VII. 86.

<sup>32</sup>. Cicero, *De natura deorum*, II, 29; Sénèque, *Lettres à Lucillius, op. cit.*, T. V. Ep. 121, 10.

<sup>33</sup>. Cicero, *Du bien suprême et des maux les plus graves (De Finibus)* traduction nouvelle avec notice and notes par Charles Appuhn (Paris: Librairie Garnier Frères, 1938). III, 20.

<sup>34</sup>. SVF ,II. 899; III. 5, 175, 438, 466, 488.

<sup>35</sup>. SVF ,I. 203; III. 468.

reason<sup>36</sup> in a consistent way.<sup>37</sup> We fluctuate between right and wrong reason and we make moral progress not by extirpating the desires and emotions but by making them increasingly consistent with the right reason.<sup>38,39</sup>

### Cicero and His Formulation of the Natural Law

Thus, in the Stoic philosophy humans have a natural capacity to act in accordance with the natural law or “right reason” through the impulse to virtue. And we find this understanding of the natural law formulated by Cicero<sup>40</sup> in his *Republic*:

True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions... We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times, and there will be one master and ruler, that is God, over us all, for he is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst penalties, even if he escapes what is commonly considered punishment...<sup>41</sup>

Cicero in the *Laws* explains why this natural law is called law by differentiating understanding of it by the “populace” and by the “learned men.”<sup>42</sup>

It is clear that Cicero defines natural law as “law” by analogy to the human positive law. And such is its popular understanding. However, in reality it is natural force, mind and reason inherent in human nature regardless of the underlying and accepted metaphysics, recognized by “the most learned men” which directs our behavior on an individual and social level. It is natural because

it is proper for human nature: “that animal which we call man, endowed with foresight and quick intelligence, complex, keen, possessing memory, full of reason and prudence, has been given a certain distinguished status by the supreme God who created him; for he is the only one among so many different kinds and varieties of living beings who has a share in reason and thought, while all the rest are deprived of it.” And further: “But those who have reason in common must also have right reason in common. And since right reason is law, we must believe that men have Law also in common with gods. Further, those who share Law must also share Justice.”<sup>43</sup>

### Natural Development of Human Rationality

Thus, in the Stoic view the natural law is the function of our human reason which, however, can be corrupted, and which functions for an individual and for the society. Moreover, Nature works by allowing a stepwise development of rationality, as the development of an individual proceeds, and with it the moral awareness through the mechanism of an “impulse” (*hormē*).<sup>44,45</sup>

Thus, the pattern of human behavior changes from a purely animal-like instinctive pattern to a fully rational one and involves, according to Cicero, five stages. They represent the development of human nature, but only a few people will reach the highest stages, because the process is not independent of a man’s own effort. The “function” or goal of man in this process is attainment of perfection of his nature. The term used by Cicero is *officium* (corresponding to the English office, duty or task, as the office of an official charged with certain duties) and the Greek term is *kathēkon*. One could not talk about the “duty” of an animal or of an infant, but rather of their natural function. The term duty becomes appropriate in stages three-through-five in human development as the changes in behavior become now functions of a rational being. Similar view on the human moral development was formulated by Lawrence Kohlberg and Kazimierz Dabrowski.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>36</sup>. SVF, III, 175, 570-571.

<sup>37</sup>. SVF, III, 459.

<sup>38</sup>. SVF III, 278.

<sup>39</sup>. SVF II, 979.

<sup>40</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 B.C.E.-46 B.C.E.) was a Roman politician, lawyer, philosopher, and linguist, one of the greatest minds of the ancient Rome. Cicero introduced to the Romans knowledge of the Greek schools of philosophy and created Latin philosophical language. His voluminous writings were influential in the subsequent centuries for developing political and legal thought, and especially Christian ethical thought. His philosophy, Stoic in its outlook, is humanist and still serves as a starting point for modern religious and secular elaborations. Among the most cited works of Cicero one must list *On the Nature of the Gods* (*De natura deorum*), *On the Chief Good and Evil* (*De finibus bonorum et malorum*), *On Fate* (*De fato*), *On Laws* (*De legibus*), and *On Duties* (*De officiis*).

<sup>40</sup>. Cicero, *The Republic*, in *De re publica. De legibus*, with an English translation by Clinton Walker Keyes, (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, William Heinemann, Ltd, 1988). Bk III, XXII.

<sup>42</sup>. The Greek term for law is *nomos* which Cicero derives from *ne, mw*, to distribute, to grant, and the Latin term *lex* Cicero drives from *lego*, to choose. Quote from *The laws*, in *De re publica. De legibus, op. cit.*, Bk I, VI, 18-19.

<sup>43</sup>. Cicero, *The Laws*, in *op. cit.*, Bk I, VII, 22-23.

<sup>44</sup>. Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* with an English translation by R. D. Hicks. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995). Vol 1-2. VII, 85-86.

<sup>45</sup>. Cicero, *De Finibus*, III, 20-21.

<sup>46</sup>. Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) developed a theory, based on the philosophical intuition of Cicero, of the moral development of children through three levels – the pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional, each subdivided into two stages: level 1: stage 1 – morality is understood as obedience and punishment and avoidance of harm to others; stage 2 – morality is understood as satisfying one’s own interests and letting others do the same; level 2: stage 3 – morality is understood as playing the role of being a good person, i.e., meeting expectations, following the rules, and being concerned for others; stage 4 – morality is understood as doing one’s duty, maintaining the social order and the welfare of the society. Level 3: stage 5 – morality is understood as basic rights, values, and legal contracts of a society. Laws and duties are calculated on overall utility (utilitarian morality); stage 6 – morality is understood as an accord with universal, self-chosen principles (e.g., justice, equality and respect for the dignity of all human beings) which confer validity to maxims and actions (Kantian morality). Kazimierz Dabrowski, *Positive Disintegration*, edited, with an introduction, by Jason Aronson, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964).

## Foundation of Kant's Moral Philosophy and its Reinterpretation

Kant's writings on ethics<sup>47</sup> are the most important since antiquity. Kant argues, following the ancient Stoics, that our moral obligations in the final analysis derive from reason by recognition of the natural moral law, and not from either god, or communities, nor from inclinations or desires. Thus, Kant recognizes the instinctive, subconscious origin of our moral behavior and differentiates several levels of motivation and of the operation of the behavioral rules preserving human autonomy and free choice in our moral decisions.

There are many parallels in Kant's thought with the ideas developed by the ancient Stoics. His thought is thus an elaboration on the themes of the ancient philosophers.<sup>48</sup> It is important for our analysis to keep in mind that the philosophical intuitions we find in various schools in the West and in the East can be reevaluated today in a more precise way due to the progress in the natural sciences, and especially from the evolutionary perspective. This does not mean that such perspective was absent in the previous search, especially in the ancient Greek or Indian thought. The naturalistic outlook represented in the ancient schools and philosophical intuitions today is confirmed by studies of our biological nature. Yet we humans are not automata which follow the prescribed pattern of input/output operating in the mechanical, even highly adaptive systems defined by science. With the rise of sentient and rational life appeared a new quality in nature, namely, freedom.<sup>49</sup> Still this freedom should be controlled by reason though we are not always motivated by moral law. Modern science provides today insight into the mechanisms operating in human behavior at several levels.

Kant begins his treatise, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785),<sup>50</sup> with the classification of our rational knowledge. Kant specified the task of a moral philosopher as clarifying the "principle of morality" on which the rational agent can act insofar as his action is morally good; to justify this principle, that is, to show that this principle is actually binding upon an imperfect agent such as a human being; to apply this principle to build an exposition of human obligations, i.e., duties. In this first work out

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Kazimierz Dabrowski, *Personality Shaping through Positive Disintegration*, introduction by O. Hobart Mowrer, (London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd., 1967).

<sup>47</sup>. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), *Metaphysics of Ethics* (1797).

<sup>48</sup>. The ancient moral philosophy of the Stoics is still valid. It acquired in Kant's elaboration more precise generalization. But this philosophy still inspires more detailed elaborations and application to modern conditions of life, especially by combining the concepts developed by Kant with general outlook of the Stoics. Such an approach reached the level of a new height of logical analysis in the work of Lawrence C. Becker, *A New Stoicism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>49</sup>. Daniel C. Bennett, *Freedom Evolves*, (New York: Viking, 2003).

<sup>50</sup>. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment?* Translated, with Introduction, by Lewis White Beck. (New York: London: Macmillan Publishing Company, Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1988). Onora O'Neill, "Kantian Ethics." In *A Companion to Ethics*. Peter Singer, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp. 175-185.

of the three treatises devoted to moral philosophy<sup>51</sup> Kant dealt with the first task of the moral philosopher. He was not interested in constructing an ethical doctrine or writing a casuistry of morals, but searched for an axiom or principle which might be used for building a general theory of laws of freedom (in contrast to the laws of nature, concerned with physical nature), the science of which he called ethics or theory of morals. In the *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) Kant defined more precisely what ethics is, namely, as the science of how one is under obligation without regard for any possible external lawgiving, that is, as doctrine of virtue.<sup>52</sup> Just as natural philosophy (physics) has its empirical part so does moral philosophy because it has to determine the human will as it is affected by nature. Kant calls this anthropology.

Thus, the laws of moral philosophy are those according to which everything should happen, allowing for conditions under which what should happen often does not. Though the title contains the word metaphysics it is not about the understanding of ultimate reality, or the metaphysics of nature, but a rigorous search for an establishment of the supreme principle of a possible pure will which cannot be derived from observations of actual behavior of men but can be established by reason. For Kant defines metaphysics as "a system of *a priori* knowledge from concepts alone ... a practical philosophy, which has not nature but freedom of choice for its object" and as such it requires metaphysics of morals which "every man also has it within himself, though as a rule only in an obscure way."<sup>53</sup>

Kant starts his considerations with an analysis of the conditions for attaining happiness – namely, of being worthy to be happy i.e., of having a good will that is striving for moral perfection. Our moral obligation in the Greek and Judaic traditions is to achieve this "purity of heart" or "kingdom of god," which means good will. "Nothing in the world – indeed nothing even beyond the world – can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a good will."<sup>54</sup> This is a spontaneous feeling of respect for moral law and an innate sense of "ought." This postulate is an empirical one derived from the observation of universal human nature. Kant next analyzes in quite a manner of evolutionary approach that nature for achieving its end – preservation of life and its welfare – would select instinct rather than reason:

For all the actions which the creature has to perform with this intention, and the entire rule of conduct, would be dictated much more exactly by instinct, and that the end would be far more certainly attained by instinct than it ever could be by reason. And if, ... reason should have been granted to the favored creature, it would have served only to let it contemplate the happy constitution of its nature, to admire it, to rejoice in it, and to be grateful for it to its beneficent cause. But reason would not have been given in order that the being should subject its faculty of desire to that weak and delusive

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<sup>51</sup>. Those three treatises are: the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797).

<sup>52</sup>. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, introduction, translation, and notes by Mary Gregor, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1991), XVII, 410.

<sup>53</sup>. *Ibidem*, II, 216.

<sup>54</sup>. Kant, *Foundations, op. cit.*, p. 9.

guidance and to meddle with the purpose of nature. In a word, nature would have taken care that reason did not break forth into practical use nor have the presumption, with its weak insights, to think out for itself the plan of happiness and the means of attaining it. Nature would have taken over not only the choice of ends but also that of the means, and with wise foresight she would have entrusted both to instinct alone... Reason is not, however, competent to guide the will safely with regard to its object and the satisfaction of all our needs ... and to this end an innate instinct would have led with far more certainty. But reason is given to us as a practical faculty, i.e., one which is meant to have an influence on the will. As nature has elsewhere distributed capacities suitable to the functions they are to perform, reason's proper function must be to produce a will good in itself and not one good merely as a means, for to the former reason is absolutely essential.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, the function of reason is the establishment of this "good will." Good will is good because of its willingness, that is, it is good in itself without regard to anything else. It is not the sole and complete good but it is the highest good and the condition for all others. "It dwells already in the natural sound understanding and does not need so much to be taught as only to be brought to light. In the estimation of the total worth of our actions it always takes first place and is the condition of everything else."<sup>56</sup> As an example of such situation Kant gives us an interpretation of the scriptural passages that command us to love neighbors and enemies. It is not done from inclination but from duty, which resides in the will not in feelings or propensities, but in principles of action.

In saying this Kant describes nothing other than common moral consciousness and derives the principle for moral action. Charles Darwin observed that in the time of Kant the origin of this moral consciousness was questioned and Kant himself asked about it. Darwin was among the first who gave a naturalistic explanation for its origin. He stated in his *The Descent of Man* (1871):<sup>57</sup>

I fully subscribe to the judgment of those writers who maintain that of all the differences between man and the lower animals, the moral sense or conscience is by far the most important. This sense as Mackintosh<sup>58</sup> remarks, 'has a rightful supremacy over every other principle of human action;' it is summed up in that short but imperious word *ought*, leading him without a moment's of hesitation to risk his life for that of a fellow-creature; or after due deliberation, impelled simply by the deep feeling of right or duty, to sacrifice it in some great cause. Immanuel Kant exclaims, 'Duty! Wondrous thought, that worketh neither by fond insinuation, flattery, nor by any threat, but merely by holding up thy naked law in the soul, and so extorting for thyself always reverence, if not always obedience; before whom all

<sup>55</sup>. Kant, *ibid.* p. 11-12.

<sup>56</sup>. Kant, *ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>57</sup>. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, in *The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man*, (New York: The Modern Library, no date). Chapter 4, pp. 471-472.

<sup>58</sup>. Mackintosh, *Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy*, 1837, p. 231.

appetites are dumb, however secretly they rebel; whence thy original'?'<sup>59</sup>

This great question has been discussed by many writers of consummate ability; and my sole excuse for touching on it, is the impossibility of here passing it over; and because, as far as I know, no one has approached it exclusively from the side of natural history. The investigation possesses, also some independent interest, as an attempt to see how far the study of the lower animals throws light on one of the highest physical faculties of man.

The following proposition seems to me in a high degree probable – namely, that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affection being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers have become as well, or nearly as well developed as in man.

We can now add to Kant's postulate that modern science confirms Kant's intuition and provides a biological, naturalistic, evolutionary explanation for the existence of this moral consciousness.

Kant insists that in deciding what we ought to do our variable desires are not important – for an action to be truly moral it has to be done in the belief and because of the belief that it is right, i.e., out of respect for moral law.

It is important to indicate at this point that Kant and all philosophers until the post-Darwinian times considered as truly (strictly) moral the actions produced by conscious rational and reflective analysis. This view arose from Origen's account of the Stoic analysis of the motion of objects and action of animals and humans.<sup>60</sup> Origen reported that the Stoics differentiated human

<sup>59</sup>. Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Ethics*, translated by J.W. Semple, (Edinburgh, 1836), p. 136. This quote comes from Kant's work *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). The full quote is: "Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name that dost embrace nothing charming or insinuating but requirest submission and yet seekest not to move the will by threatening aught that would arouse natural aversion or terror, but only holdest forth a law which of itself finds entrance into the mind and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience) – a law before which all inclinations are mute even though secretly work against it: what origin is worthy of thee, and where is the root of thy noble descent which proudly rejects all kinship with the inclinations and from which to be descended is the indispensable condition of the only worth which men alone can give themselves?" Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, edited and translated with notes and introduction by Lewis White Beck, third edition, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993), p. 90.

<sup>60</sup>. Origen (185-ca 254) succeeded Clement of Alexandria in the school of Alexandria. Clement was the patriarch of Alexandria who at first supported Origen but expelled him later for being ordained without the patriarch's permission. Origen then moved to Palestine and died there. He wrote commentaries on all the books of the bible. In a treatise, *First Principles (Peri Archon)*, he formulated one of the first philosophical expositions of Christian doctrine in which he interpreted scripture allegorically. He was a Neo-Pythagorean and Neo-Platonist, and like Plotinus believed that



beings from all other natural things by a particular kind of movement (action) unique to them. What distinguished those things from others that are moved from without is that they have a certain kind of cause (*aitia*) of motion in themselves. Things like plants and animals have an internal cause of motion, “nature” (*logos* for Stoics) and “soul” (in Origen’s view); inanimate objects must have an external agency to be moved along; they move by thrust of external force. Plants and animals by virtue of having “soul” (and “nature”) are capable of self-movement or action. In the case of animals, sensory stimulation is a necessary condition of the impulse to self-movement. Those lacking intelligence move and act according to a prescribed pattern. Human beings do not move or act in a set fashion—because the faculty of reason (*logos*) enables them to judge (*krinō*) their sensory presentations—to reject or accept and to be guided. Origen calls this third kind of movement (action) self-movement of which only rational animals are capable, motion (action) “through themselves.”<sup>61</sup> We are deserving of praise when we choose the noble and avoid the base, but when we follow the opposite course, we are blameworthy. Origen reasons: It is neither true nor reasonable to lay the blame on external things and release ourselves from the accusation making ourselves analogous to wood and stones inasmuch as they are drawn along by external things that move them; such is the argument of someone who wants to set up a counterfeit notion of autonomy. For if we should ask him what autonomy is, he would say that it obtains “if there are no external causes, when I intend to do something in particular, that incite to the contrary.”<sup>62</sup>

The Stoics believed that human beings are capable of self-movement without actually initiating their own motion. Origen’s account of the difference in motion (action) between humans and other animals gave rise to the concept of morality as a behavior conditioned by a rational, reflective act. Origen said: “our nature as human beings furnishes the souls for considering the noble and the base and for judging between them. Even though we have no control over the fact that something external causes in us a presentation of this or that sort—the decision (*krisis*) to use this occurrence in one way or another is the function of nothing other than the reason within us.”<sup>63</sup> Origen said: “our nature as human beings furnishes the souls for considering the noble and the base and for judging between them. Even though we have no control over the fact that something external causes in us a presentation of this or that sort—the decision (*krisis*) to use this occurrence in one way or another is the function of nothing other than the reason within us.”<sup>64</sup> Many actions, even if they produce good results, that are done in accordance with the law do not belong to the realm of moral actions in this strict sense if they are done with some ulterior motives. Thus truly morally good action will not only be in accord

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the soul passes through stages of incarnation before reaching god. For him even demons would be reunited with god. He considered god the First Principle, and Christ, the Logos, as subordinate to him. Origen’s view was declared anathema in the sixth century.

<sup>61</sup>. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* Collegit Ioannes Ab Arnim (Stuttgartiae: In Aedibus B.G. Teubneri, MCMLXIV). Vol 1-4. (abbreviated as SVF). SVF 2.989, 879. Origen, *De principiis*, (*On the First Principles*), translated with introduction and notes by G. W. Butterworth, (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973). III, 1, 2, 3.

<sup>62</sup>. SVF II. 990.

<sup>63</sup>. SVF II.992.

<sup>64</sup>. SVF II.992.

with the law but also because the law is acknowledged as absolutely and universally binding. Kant formulated thus the condition of morality in three propositions: 1. It must be done from duty; 2. Moral value is in the maxim by which action is determined and not in the purpose, thus it depends on the principle of volition; 3. Duty is a necessity of an action from the respect of law i.e., consciousness of the submission of the will to a law. And the subjective principle of volition must be distinguished from the objective principle of volition which would serve all rational being also subjectively if they were governed by reason.

Table 1 summarizes Kant’s three levels of human behavior. Only the third level, according to Kant, corresponds to the strictly moral behavior in Kant’s definition. However, this level is reached only by a few individuals and does not reflect how humans actually behave.



Table 1  
LEVELS OF BEHAVIORAL RULES

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I.	INSTINCTIVE e.g. food, procreation, fear of the unknown social life in social animals (governed by genes and epigenetic rules only)
II.	HETERONOMOUS A. Empirical: From fear, desire; from the principle of happiness from the concept of moral sense (based on inclinations; all inclinations summed up in the idea of “happiness”) B. Rational motivated by extrinsic values: From the concept of perfection Ontological or transcendental, theological (These levels corresponds partially to subconscious proto-moral from innate “moral faculty” or “capacity” postulated by natural sciences)
III.	AUTONOMOUS Categorical Imperative (Autonomous moral law) A law for the will of every rational being It only can have as its subject itself considered giving universal law.

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### Modern Science Provides a Biological Basis for Human Behavior and Validates Philosophical Speculation

We may now present a brief exposition of how the natural law should be understood so far. The natural law postulate formulates recognition of a general principle operating in nature which is innate in humans and governs their behavior. It has character of the law because it is binding to humans; it is universal, because it is independent of particular positive law and applies to all people. Our human understanding of this natural law is growing with the development of our rationality; thus, it is the law of human nature, the law of reason. Our behavior changes from an animal-like instinctive pattern to a fully rational one through stages: “The first appropriate function of a creature is to maintain itself, in its natural condition. The second, that it should seize hold of the things which accord with Nature and banish those which are the opposite.” Thus, we can differentiate in the natural law two types of principles, one instinctive, automatic which directs our behavior unconsciously, and the second one, reflective, rational at which we arrive after some rational analysis. For as soon as man acquires the capacity for understanding or rational concepts, he draws rational conclusions that the highest human good is that which is worthy of praise and desirable for its own sake.<sup>65</sup>

These principles are classified as a law from popular understanding of a governing principle by analogy to a written law, that is human positive law which “in written form decrees whatever is it wishes, either by command or prohibition.” But in reality “law is intelligence, whose natural function it is to command right conduct and forbid wrongdoing... it is the mind and reason of the intelligent man, the standard by which justice and injustice are measured.”

Christian religious thinkers adopted the Ciceronian formulation of the natural law for Thomas Aquinas stated that reason is the rule and measure of human action: “The good of the human being is being in accordance with reason, and human evil is being outside the order of reasonableness... So human virtue, which makes good both the human person and his works, is in accordance with human nature just in so far as it is in accordance with reason; and vice is contrary to human nature just in so far as it is contrary to the order of reasonableness.”<sup>66</sup> They linked it, however, to their religious speculations.

Since time immemorial humans were preoccupied with their own behavior and attitudes versus other humans, the rest of the animate world, and the surrounding environment. This is attested by the oldest written documents from the Mesopotamian, Mediterranean, and Far Eastern regions of the World.<sup>67</sup> In every culture we find the formulation known as the “Golden Rule” as the universal principle guiding human behavior. This

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<sup>65</sup>. Cicero’s view on human behavior coincides with that of Immanuel Kant who postulated categorical imperative as the maxim for human conduct. This maxim represents the highest level of understanding of morality and therefore he also postulated hypothetical imperative in which human behavior may be governed by other motifs. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment?* Translated, with an Introduction by Lewis White Beck, (New York, London: Macmillan Publishing Company, Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1988). Marian Hillar, “Is a Universal ethics Possible? A Humanist Proposition.” In *The Philosophy of Humanism and the Issues of Today*. American Humanist Association, Houston, 1995, pp. 127-148. In the final analysis reason is the basis for morality and philosophy produced very good intuitive theory how it works. Derek Parfit, *Reason and Persons*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). Jürgen Habermas, “A Conversation about God and the World,” in *Time of Transitions*, edited and translated by Ciaran Cronin and Max Pensky, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2006), pp. 149-170. Modern science now grounds this philosophical intuition in evolutionary biological processes providing solid empirical foundations.

<sup>66</sup>. *Summa Theologiae, op. cit.*, 1a 2ae, 71, a.2c.

<sup>67</sup>. Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology*, (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, U.K.; New York, USA, 1976). Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology*, (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, U.K.; New York, USA, 1986). W.Y. Evans-Wentz, compiler and editor, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 1960). *The Texts of Taoism*, translated by Jmaes Legge, Part I, II, (Dover Publications, Inc. : New York, first published, 1962). James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East. Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, Vol. 1, 2, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1973). *Hindu Myths. A Sourcebook Translated from the Sanskrit*. With

rule is expressed in religious injunctions as well as in philosophical analyses wherever such attempts were made as is attested again by the history of philosophy.

On the other hand, naturalistic investigation which is today classified as science also attempted to give more critical and natural explanations. These attempts were most often combined with philosophical speculation because of a lack of proper investigative tools to attack the issue from a strictly naturalistic perspective of the human psyche. As it was previously indicated, the serious foundations for modern studies were laid down by Charles Darwin who initiated investigations on the biological foundations to philosophical speculations.<sup>68</sup>

Serious foundations for modern psychology were produced by William James (1843-1920) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). We had to wait, however, till the second half of the twentieth century to see the explosion of studies related to our behavior (morals) from various fields of investigations: experimental psychology, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, anthropology, ethology, neurobiology, neurology. Most of such modern studies were recently summarized by Marc D. Hauser in his book, *Moral Minds. How Nature Designed Our Universal Sense of Right and Wrong*.<sup>69</sup>

Table 2 lists sciences that provide evidence for the biological basis of our moral behavior. Following Darwin, primatologists and other biologists<sup>70</sup> have long argued that the roots of human morality are manifest in social animals like apes and monkeys. They express feelings of empathy and expectations of reciprocity which are essential behaviors for mammalian group life and constitute a counterpart to human morality. Marc D. Hauser summarizing all studies done with animals and in modern psychology and anthropology proposes that people are born with a moral grammar wired into their neural circuits by evolution. He claims that this grammar generates instant moral judgments which are instantaneously inaccessible to the conscious mind. Hauser presents his

Table 2

NATURAL SCIENCES PROVIDE EVIDENCE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE SO-CALLED *MORAL FACULTY* (CAPACITY) IN THE HUMAN PSYCHE

1. Thought experiments and computer games;
2. Developmental psychology – studies of infants and young children; Stages in psychological development; Studies of identical monozygotic twins; (Lawrence Kohlberg, Kazimierz Dąbrowski)
3. Experimental psychology;
4. Anthropology;
5. Ethology (Studies on chimpanzees and bonobos)
6. Evolutionary psychology: Hamilton's Kin Selection Trivers's Reciprocal Altruism Group Selection Cooperation in the microbial world
7. Evolutionary process is based on a. inherited changes (mutations); b. natural selection; c. cooperation
8. Universality of the Golden Rule

argument as a hypothesis to be proved, but it is based on solid experimental ground, including work with primates, and in empirical results derived from studies performed by moral philosophers. Hauser argues that moral grammar operates in the same way as the universal grammar proposed by linguist Noam Chomsky for developing language faculty. This universal grammar is a system of rules for generating syntax and vocabulary but does not specify any particular language. That is supplied by the culture in which a child grows up. By analogy, moral grammar, too, is a system composed of neural circuits which generate moral behavior and not a list of specific rules. Basic rules are the same in every society, but it allows for cultural variations, since cultures can put different emphases on its elements. Table 3 presents comparisons observed between our moral behavior and behavior of higher animals.

introduction by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1975). *The Rig Veda* translated and annotated by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1984). *The Upanishads*, translated by F. Max Müller, Part 1, 2, (Dover Publications: New York, first published 1962). Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 2 (first publication, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1931). James P. Allen, translator and introduction, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, GA, 2005). Wing-Tsit Chan, translated and compiled, *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1963).

<sup>68</sup>. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (1871), p. 471-472. In *The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man*, (New York: The Modern Library no date).

<sup>69</sup>. Marc D. Hauser, *Moral Minds. How Nature Designed Our Universal Sense of Right and Wrong*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006).

<sup>70</sup>. Frans de Waal, *Our Inner Ape*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 2005). Frans de Waal, *Primates and Philosophers. How Morality Evolved*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal. Evolutionary Psychology of Everyday Life*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). Robert Trivers, *Natural Selection and Social Theory. Selected papers of Robert Trivers*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Table 3

## THREE LEVELS OF MORALITY COMPARED FROM ANIMAL STUDIES

## THREE LEVELS OF MORALITY COMPARED FROM ANIMAL STUDIES

Level	Description	Human and Apes Compared
1. Moral sentiments (Kant's instinctive behavior)	Human psychology provides "building blocks" of morality, such as the capacity for empathy, a tendency for reciprocity, a sense of fairness, and the ability to harmonize relationships.	In these areas, there exist evident parallels with other primates.
2. Social pressure (Kant's heteronomous)	Insisting that everyone behaves in a way that favors a cooperative group life behavior. The tools to this end are reward, punishment, and reputation building.	Community concern and prescriptive social rules do exist in other primates, but social pressure is less systematic and less concerned with the goals of society as a whole.
3. Judgment and reasoning (Kant's autonomous behavior)	Internalization of others' needs and goals to the degree that these needs and goals figure in our judgment of behavior, including others' behavior that does not directly touch us. Moral judgment is self-reflective (i.e., governs our own behavior as well) and often logically reasoned.	Others' needs and goals may be internalized to some degree, but this is where the similarities end. Humans are the only species to worry about why we think what we think.

Frans de Waal, *Primates and Philosophers* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), p.168

This proposal has strong and far-reaching implications. It means that parents and teachers do not really teach children the rules of correct behavior rather, they instill the cultural biases and modifications. Also, it demonstrates in a tangible way that religions are not the source of moral codes. On the contrary, moral grammar which operates subconsciously is immune to religious doctrines. At best, religions enforce instinctive behavior and most often indoctrinate people with cultural biases.

Moral grammar is a product of the evolutionary process because restraints on behavior are necessary for social living and have been favored by natural selection for survival. Friedrich Nietzsche was among those philosophers who argued for societal origin of rules of behavior which developed as cultures evolved.<sup>71</sup>

Hauser developed his ideas through work with vervet monkeys in Kenya and with birds.<sup>72</sup> Later on, when psychologists developed techniques to study the thinking of human babies, he found that many such studies could be repeated with animals thus setting the cognitive abilities of human babies in an evolutionary framework. His proposal of a moral grammar derived from collaboration with Noam Chomsky who argued that the faculty of language had developed as an adaptation of some neural system in animals. By analogy with language, Hauser thought that moral behavior is also acquired through development of neural circuits which constitute an innate set of rules. Moral grammar, now universal among people, is thought to have evolved to its present shape during the hunter-gatherer stage of our past, some 200,000 years ago through

the mechanism of group selection as was suggested already by Nietzsche in a cultural context.

The question arises now, what validity does moral philosophical speculation have in view of scientific theories and the evidence behind them, such as the one postulated by Hauser? The answer which is suggested by Hauser was presented in the form of three models for human behavior incorporating three major themes of philosophical speculation.

The first model, the so-called Humean Model, is based on the entire line of philosophical speculation going back in antiquity to the Stoics, and in modern times has been best expressed by David Hume. Hume assumed that "perceptions" produce feelings and emotional reactions from which follows judgment.<sup>73</sup>

The second model, labeled the Kantian Model, emerges from Kant's moral philosophy misunderstood or interpreted only from one perspective, that of his "categorical imperative." Hauser, who noticed this misconception, introduced a double path in the model. Kant accepted the existence of something he called "good will." It has thus a quality of an instinct. We proceed to evaluate events, actions, etc, either on some principles which he classified as 1. heteronomous (empirical e.g., from principle of happiness, the so-called *moral sense* (in modern terminology it is the *moral faculty* or *moral grammar*), inclinations, etc, or rational e.g., from the concept of perfection, transcendental or theological) because they derive from the outside of the individual; 2. an autonomous or categorical imperative which is an autonomous moral law, a law for the will of every rational being. He expressed it as a formula or

<sup>71</sup>. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals*, translated by Francis Golffing, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990).

<sup>72</sup>. Marc D. Hauser, *The Evolution of Communication*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).

<sup>73</sup>. Author previously discussed Kant's ethics in the context of the possibility of developing a universal moral code: Marian Hillar, "Is a Universal ethics Possible? A Humanist Proposition." In *The Philosophy of Humanism and the Issues of Today*. American Humanist Association, Houston, 1995, pp. 127-148.

maxim by which we can judge. It has to be universal to be classified as the moral imperative.

But Kant did not go, and in his time, it would be very difficult to do it, into the biological foundations of this mechanism. It was anyway an ideal situation if all humans behaved all the time in such a rational way. He knew that humans do not behave all the time in this way and not always use reason for judgment. Thus, these heteronomous principles were valid in practice (and still are).

The third model, the Rawlsian Model, is based on the theory of John Rawls who postulated an instinctive "moral faculty" which allows us to differentiate moral actions and situations from those which have no moral value and to differentiate actions which are allowed, permissible, or forbidden. So, in this last model we have perception first, then automatically (unconsciously) we judge them and only then we develop emotions and feelings about them. Of course, in the later stage comes also conscious reflection and reasoning which is then the basis for developing cultural rules, laws, etc. The last model is more realistic, and it accommodate all previous models as certain approximations and at the same time is confirmed by evidence from scientific studies in many disciplines and provides evolutionary basis for human behavior. Still Kant's model seems to be the most complete though its biological basis could not be developed in the time of Kant.

### **Conclusions**

The theme of moral behavior was traditionally the subject of inquiry in philosophy and religions. In the ancient world Stoics proposed a natural moral law as a principle that regulates human behavior in society. Immanuel Kant proposed naturalistic theory of human behavior on three levels, instinctive, heteronomous, and autonomous. Kant recognized the existence of subconscious, non-rational principle which he defined as "good will." The function of reason is to expose this principle and bring it to the sphere of consciousness. Then our behavior becomes "moral in the sense that it is directed by reflection" (Origen). Kant posed a question concerning the origin of this subconscious moral sense and Darwin answered Kant's question proposing its evolutionary origin. During the last century natural and evolutionary sciences were successful in explaining the human evolution and particularly in discoveries concerning characteristics of human behavior as a continuation of characteristics of the behavior in animal world and confirmed the suggestions of the Stoics and Kant. Today natural scientists and scholars postulate cooperation, collaboration (moral behavior) as the third element driving and directing the evolutionary process next to mutations and natural selection. It seems that they fully confirm intuitions of philosophers. The thesis about the fundamental status of cooperation in the entire animate world imposes a new reinterpretation of the natural moral law. We must recognize that cooperation is the basic fundamental element of living world and appeared during the process of biological evolution with the development of the neuron. This was laconically asserted by Irene Greaves who stated: "Love is the purpose of evolution."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>. Greaves I., *Lovescaping: Building the Humanity of Tomorrow by Practicing Love in Action*, Amazon Publishing, Bellevue, WA 2018.