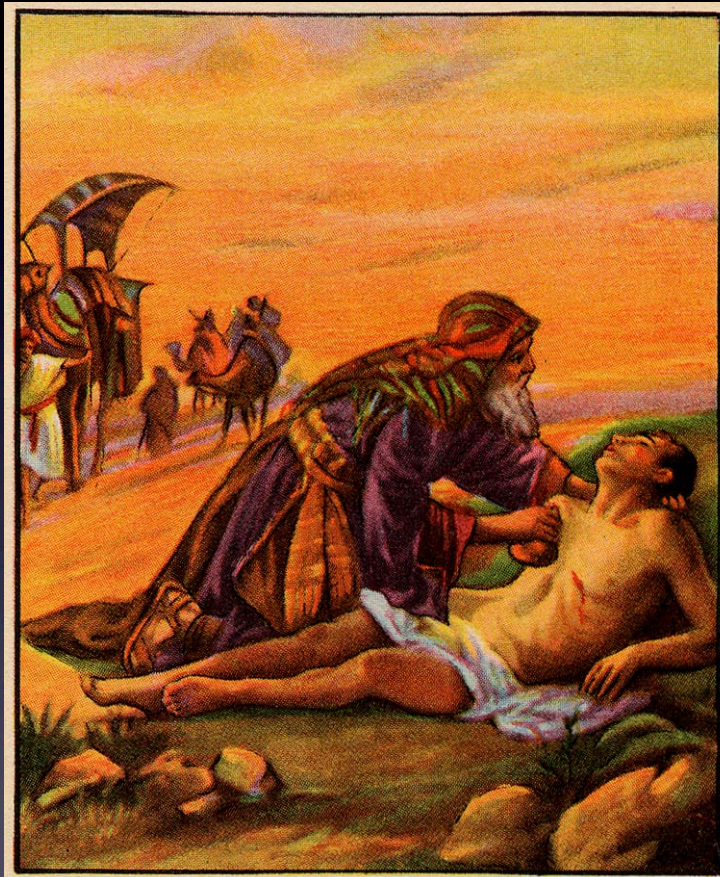


Emotion and Morality (Pt.I)

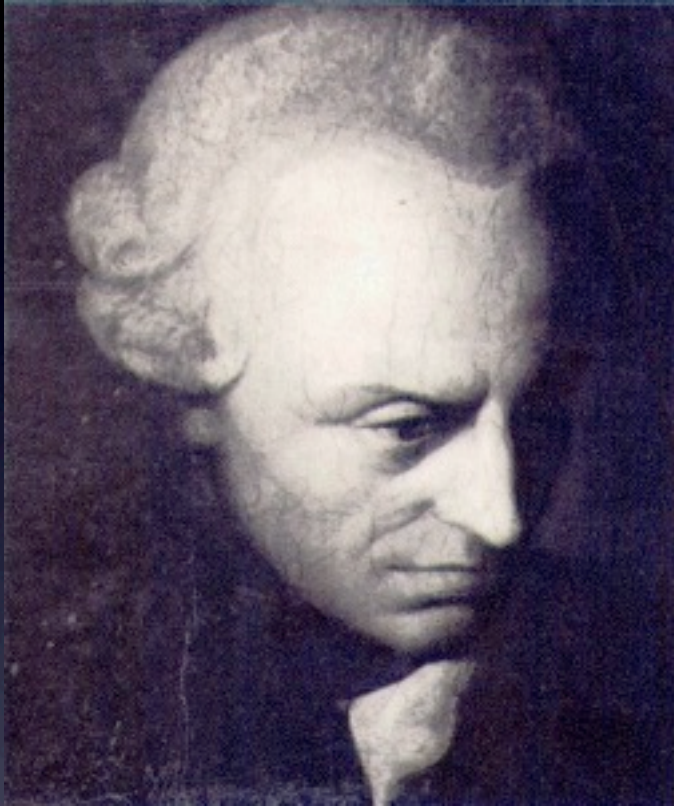


Psychology of Emotion
Lecture 13
Professor David Pizarro

Would we be good *without* emotions?

- What role does emotion play in making us moral creatures?
 1. How much does it influence our judgments of right and wrong?
 2. How much does it influence our behavior (for the good)?

Moral Reason/Moral Emotion

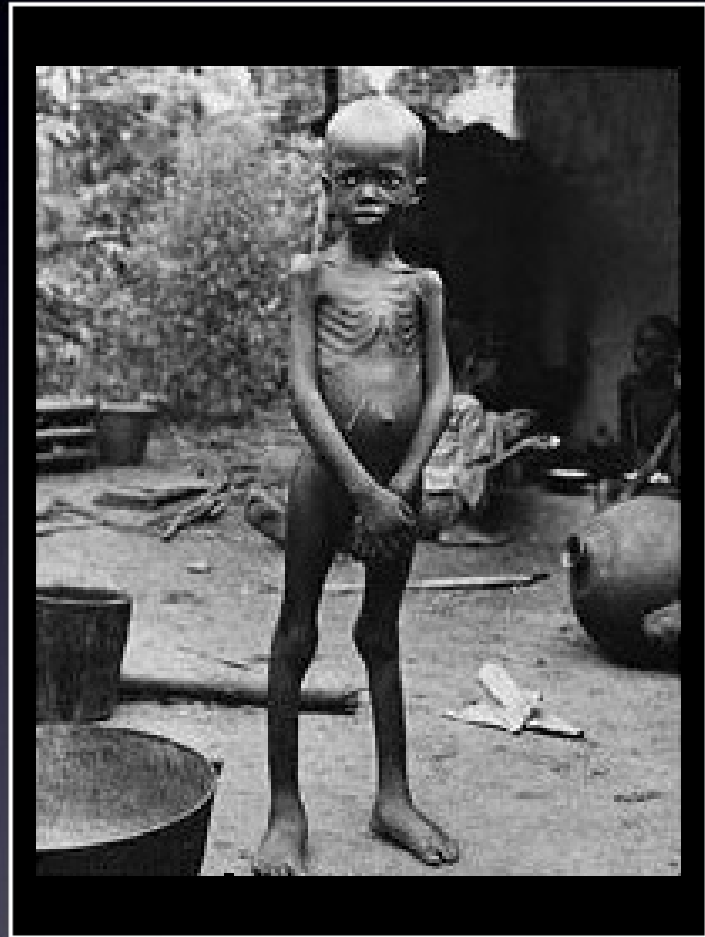


VS



Isn't morality all about feeling?

- You *feel* badly for people who suffer
- You *feel* loyalty to family and friends
- You *feel* guilty about doing wrong things



But emotions seem to bias us...

- Emotions can be:
 - Partial (more emotions for things we care about)
 - Arbitrary (mood/emotion may be influenced by stupid things)
 - Passive (can't always control emotion)

Impartiality:

Peter Singer (1995)

- ... by thinking about my place in the world, I am able to see that I am just one being among others, with interests and desires like others. I have a personal perspective on the world, from which my interests are at the front and center of the stage, the interests of my family and friends are close behind, and the interests of strangers are pushed to the back and sides. But reason enables me to see that others have similarly subjective perspectives, and that from “the point of view of the universe,” my perspective is no more privileged than theirs.

The “Golden Rule” Across Time and Culture

Hindu Faith

This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee would cause thee pain.

The Mahabharata

Jewish Faith

What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.

The Talmud

Zoroastrian Faith

Whatever is disagreeable to yourself do not do unto others.

Shayast-na-Shayast 13:29

Buddhist Faith

Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.

Udana-Varga

Christian Faith

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

The Gospel of Matthew Matt 7:12, Luke 6:31

Muslim Faith

No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.

Hadith

Moral Reason vs. Moral Emotion: Traditional View

- Psychologists studying morality took the Reason-based approach
- Reason IS the most important influence on moral judgment.
- As a result, emotions were relatively ignored by moral psychologists.



“Hot” Psychology

- Computer metaphor in cognitive revolution had ignored “hot” processes
- but in the past 20-30 years we learned that...



- Emotions are universal phenomena
- They color our perceptions
- They focus our attention
- They energize our decisions
- They motivate us to act
- But emotions are even MORE deeply implicated than this in *moral* judgment.

The Very Foundation of Morality?

- If it weren't for “moral” emotions, we might not even CARE about other people
- Empathy/Sympathy seems to be the source of this care...



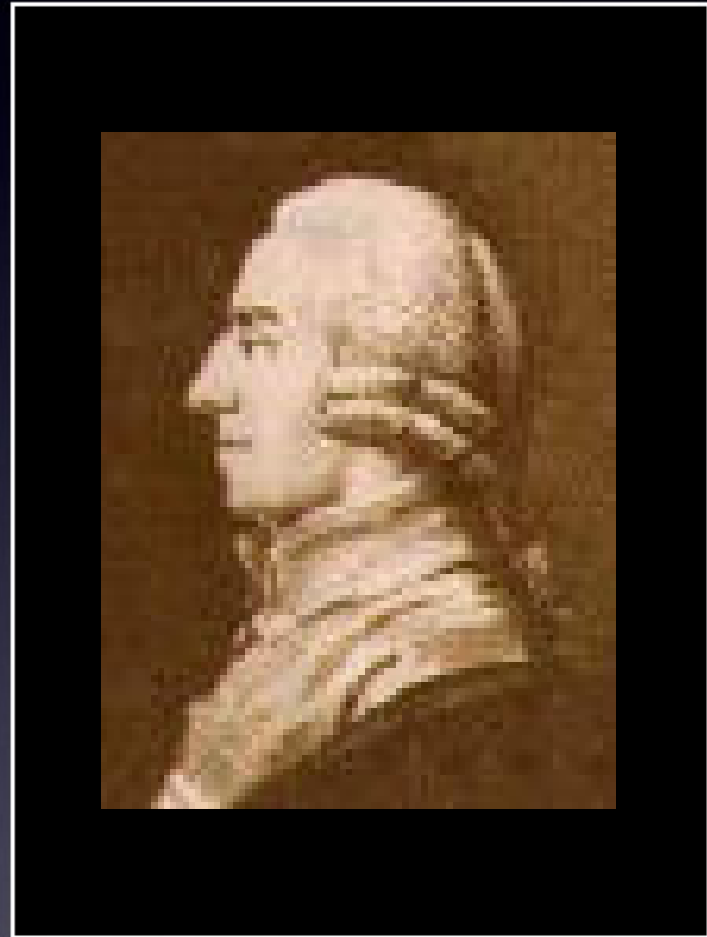
“Maybe dispassion is needed in science, but empathic emotion serves best in ethics.”

-Robert Nozick

Adam Smith

(A theory of moral sentiments)

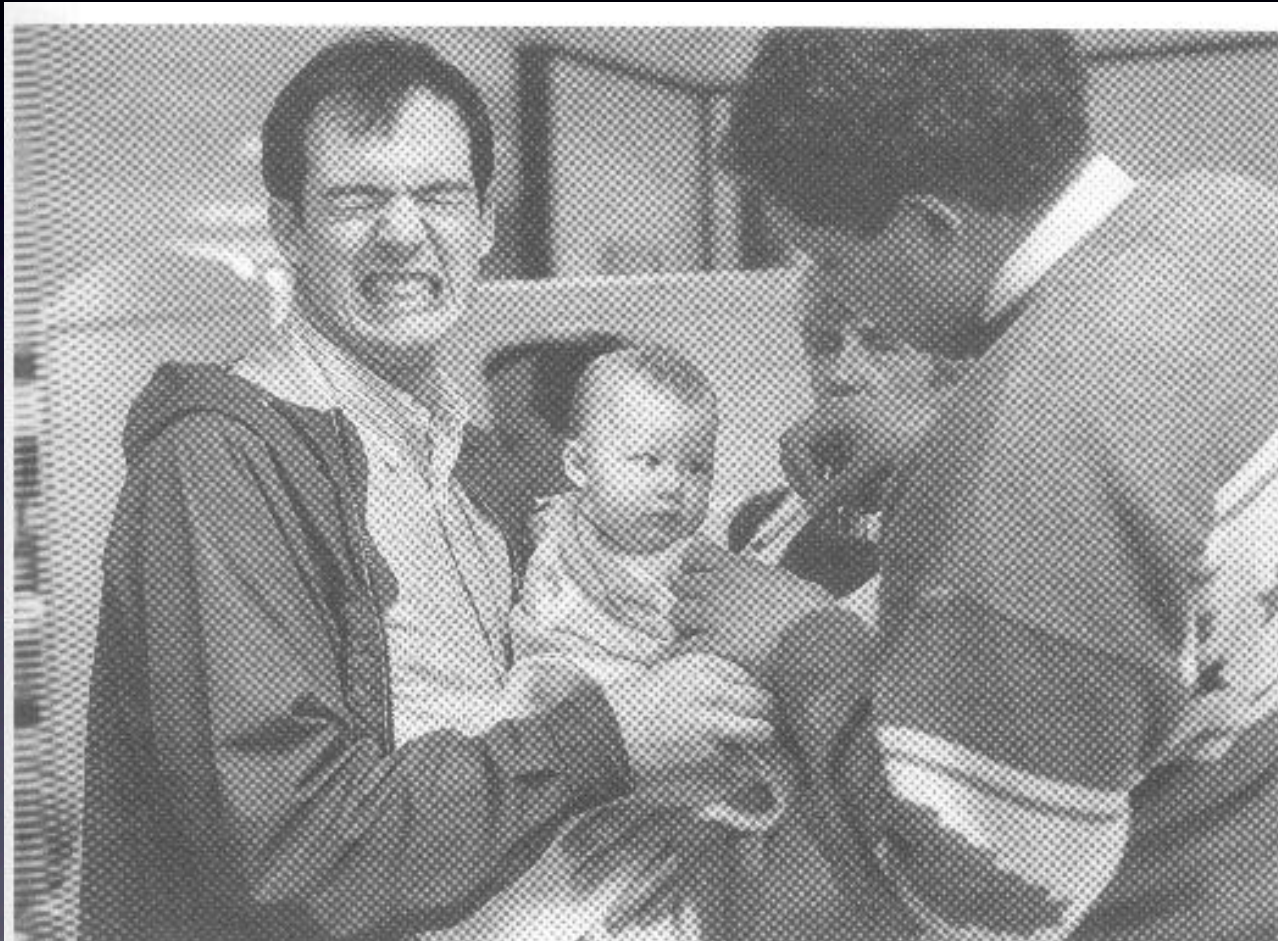
“When we see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg or our arm, and when it does fall, we feel it in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer.”



Empathy

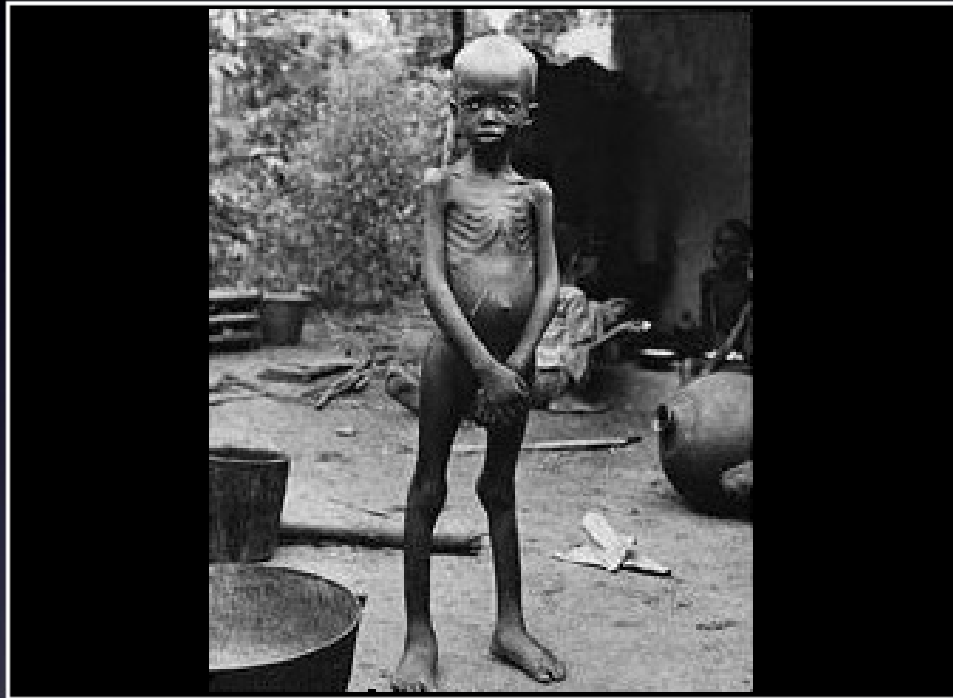
- “...the experience of feelings, chiefly emotions, similar in kind to those expressed by or known to exist in another person. It... sets aside our own personality, and moves us to partake of the pleasure or pain, the happiness or misery, of others” (Davis, 1900)
- A vicarious affective experience that is more appropriate to the situation of the other than to oneself. (Hoffman, 1987)

Empathy is literally “feeling into”...

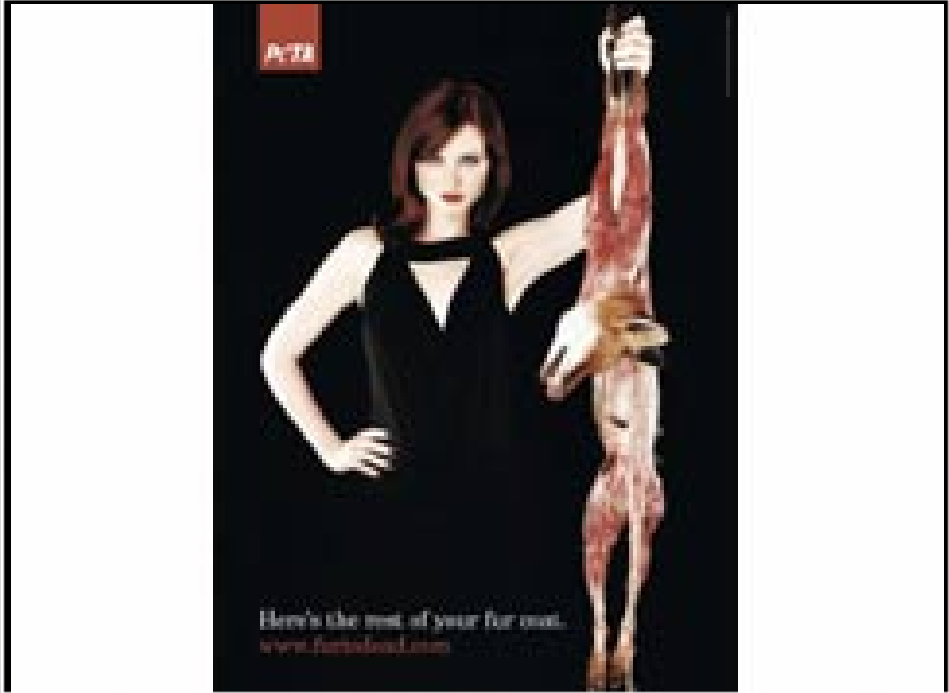


Empathy as Concern for others

- Empathy can be any emotion--positive or negative (happiness, surprise, etc.).
- But presence of suffering serves as a great trigger (elicitor) of an empathic reaction of hurting for other people
- We feel as if the suffering is *ours* in some way.



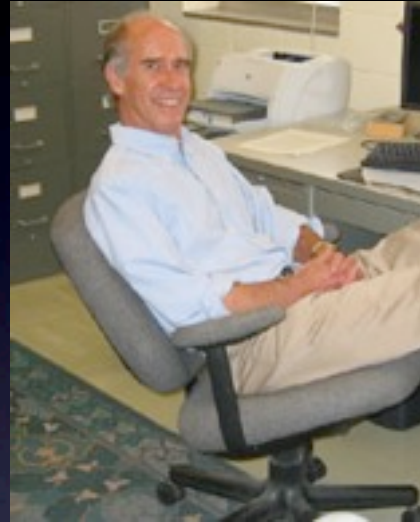








Empathy causes concern...



- Daniel Batson
- Participants asked to feel empathy OR asked to be objective.
- Empathy leads to greater concern and greater helping.
- Even possible to “trick” you into thinking you’re experiencing empathy.

Psychopathy as a breakdown in empathy

13-year-old mugger, when asked about one of his victims:

“What do I care? I’m not her.”

Gary Gillmore:

“I was always capable of murder ... I can become totally devoid of feelings of others, unemotional. I know I’m doing something grossly ... wrong. I can still go ahead and do it.”

Ted Bundy:

“I mean, there are so many people”



Two Routes to Empathy

1. Instinctive Empathy
2. Empathy Through Perspective Taking

Instinctive Empathy

“When we see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg or our arm, and when it does fall, we feel it in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer.”



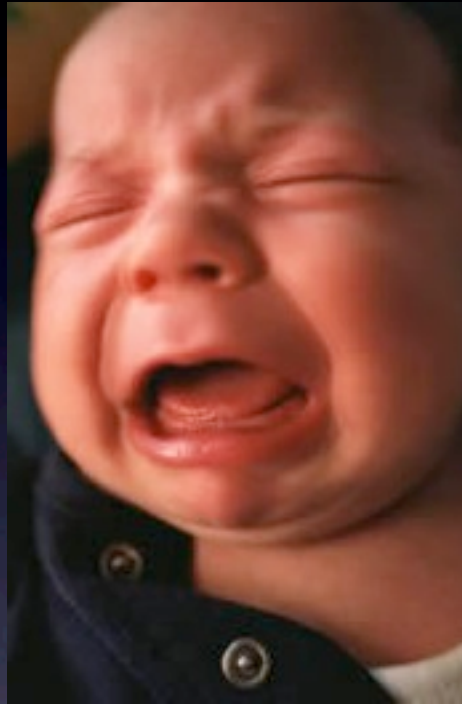
Evidence that it's Instinctive?

- Present in infancy
- Present in other animals
- Physiological mechanisms

Empathy not limited to humans...

- Albino rat distressed--suspended in midair. Fellow rat will press lever to lower him/her.
- Rhesus monkeys press bar to receive food reward (large or small). Large reward causes electric shocks for another monkey. Most monkeys will stop pressing bar for large reward.

Empathy in infancy



- From birth to 14 months infants will react with distress to cries of other infants.
- After first year, the distress of others will lead to helping behaviors.