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Opening and Closing the Moral Judgment--Moral Action Gap

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Felt Moral Obligation: An Alternative

Foundation for Moral Behavior

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
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Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

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This study analyzed moral psychology's "moral judgment-moral action gap" research and found that morality was being described as a secondary phenomenon produced by underlying substrates (such as identity and self constructs, "brain modules," and "evolved emotional systems") which are themselves non-moral. Deriving morality from "the non-moral" presents a kind of ontological gap in the moral psychology research. Researchers implicitly close this gap assuming it is possible to get moral judgments and actions out of non-moral substrates. But the difficulty remains how the moral as "moral" becomes infused into any moral psychology models.

Morality is not a secondary phenomenon arising out of something else. This study argues that there is a need to shift our understanding of what it means to be human, to a view in which the moral is fundamental. An alternative foundation for assessing the moral is found in the work of Emmanuel Levinas who sees ethics as a metaphysical concern. This means that he sees the essential moral character of human life and the reality of human agency as ontologically fundamental, or constitutive of human nature itself. In other words, the ethical is the "first cause" in regards to understanding the nature and action of the self. Thus morality is not merely epiphenomenal to some more fundamental reality. Levinas holds that as humans, we are called to the Other. This call of obligation to the Other comes before all other human endeavors.

After presenting Levinas's alternative foundation of obligation to the Other which herein is labeled Felt Moral Obligation (FMO), C. Terry Warner's conceptualizations of FMO in relation to the moral judgment-action gap are presented. In light of these conceptualizations, this study argues that there is actually no moral judgment-moral action gap, but only holistic events of moral self-betrayal. Warner illustrates that rejecting FMO is a single moral event, a holistic act performed by a moral agent that involves moral responses of self-justification, offense-

taking, and rationalization. The person finds him or herself in a state of self-betrayal. Levinas and Warner implicitly assert that such self-betraying responses are not fundamentally biological or rational, but rather, fundamentally moral.

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CONTENTS

Introduction: Opening and Closing

Moral Judgment- Moral Action Gaps

One strand of current research in "moral psychology" is moving toward models of moral personhood or personality (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009). Among issues that researchers wish to address in new theories of moral personhood are two important concerns. The first is the search for a definition of moral personhood which explains or even closes the "moral judgment-moral action gap." This gap refers to the incongruity between an individual's moral judgment and the action that follows this moral judgment. Why does a person make a moral judgment and then fail to follow through with action that is consistent with this judgment? Within the last ten years, some researchers have sought to articulate more holistic definitions of moral personhood (Cervone & Tripathi, 2009; Frimer & Walker, 2008; Lapsley & Hill, 2009; McAdams, 2009; Schlenker, Miller & Johnson, 2009; Walker & Frimer, 2009). Frimer and Walker (2008), for example, have declared that the field of moral psychology is seeking a "new paradigm" that could be a framework for a definitive type of moral personhood or moral personality. They are hopeful that within this new paradigm, the moral judgment-moral action gap may be clarified. They ask whether moral judgment is better understood as deliberative or intuitive. Past models of moral action have generally focused on deliberative moral reasoning as the key to moral action (see, e.g., Bandura, 1991; Blasi, 1980, 1983; Kohlberg, 1969; Rest, 1979). However, some current researchers see moral action consisting of interactions of various functions such as perceptions, sentiments and intuitions *as well as* reasoning (see, e.g., Bargh & Pratto, 1986; Haidt & Bjorklund, 2007). For example, in Haidt's research, his most general claim is that moral action has its roots in intuition, not in reasoning. But his more specific claim is that his model

captures the interaction between intuition, judgment, and reasoning (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Frimer and Walker (2008) note that "contemporary moral psychology is univocal in recognizing that a complete account of moral personhood requires looking beyond the single variable of moral cognition in search for the glue that might hold moral thought and action together in a causal way" (p. 334). This "glue" seems to be an elusive key that will allow researchers to explain moral action.

A second concern that researchers wish to address in new theories of moral personhood is the role of emotions and intuitions in moral action. Since Hoffman (1970) and Eisenberg (1986) articulated their theories of the role emotions play in moral behavior, the burgeoning field of neuro-imaging has produced increased interest in the non-rational, physical basis of human actions. Striving to account for the moral judgment-action gap has brought to the fore the question of which component of moral judgment is chiefly responsible for moral action: deliberative reasoning (the dominant view of some past models) or more "automatic" emotions and intuitions. Some models put deliberative reasoning after flashes of intuition or perceptions (e.g., Bargh, 2005; Haidt, 2001); some put rationality before emotion as a type of unconscious reasoning that produces intuitions (e.g., Sunstein, 2005). Some consider intuition *to be* a type of reasoning (e.g., Gigerenzer, 2008). Despite the variety of views, researchers are in agreement that there is an element of automaticity (whether it is labeled emotional, intuitive, or perceptive) in moral judgment (Lapsley & Hill, 2008).

These two issues—the judgment/action gap and the nature and role of "pre-reason," primitive evaluative processes in moral judgment and action—will be addressed in this dissertation by means of an analysis of a third issue, one which researchers do not adequately address in the moral psychology literature. It could also be called a kind of a gap – an ontological

gap –which has implications for how we frame our discussion of moral action. This is the gap between the *moral* and the *non-moral.* Researchers implicitly, almost magically, close this gap, meaning simply that they assume it is possible to get "the moral" (i.e., moral judgments and actions) out of the "non-moral" (i.e., certain behavior, personality types, biological substrates such as "brain modules," "evolved unconscious emotional systems" or "psychological schemas").

However, within the moral psychology literature, the question lingers: 'How does the moral *as* moral become infused into any of these models?' Another way to phrase this question is, "How do researchers move from explaining what 'is' (judgments, intuitions, emotions, reasoning, behavior) to account for what is experienced as an '*ought*' (moral judgments, moral intuitions, moral emotions, moral reasoning, and moral behavior)?"

The "is to ought" dilemma is a long-standing issue in moral philosophy and has been addressed at length elsewhere.[1] Kohlberg (1971) sought to close this gap early in his research on moral development by directly confronting the "is to ought" dilemma.[2] However, over the years, the question 'why *ought* we act morally?' never seems to have been answered satisfactorily. Closely related to this question is the question of how to explain where 'the moral' originates, and why certain psychological events and outward actions merit the label "moral." Researchers strive to close the gap between *is* and *ought* by reducing moral action to "smaller" and more

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[1] The "is to ought" dilemma (known as Hume's guillotine) has been articulated most notably by the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1739/2001). He observed that many writers in his day made claims about what *ought* to be, on the basis of statements about what *is*. He asserts that there is a significant difference (or what we term an ontological gap) between descriptive statements (about what is) and prescriptive statements (about what ought to be).

[2] In "From Is to Ought: How to Commit the Psychological Fallacy and Get Away with It in the Study of Moral Development," Kohlberg sought to solve the "is to ought" dilemma by demonstrating a "parallelism" between psychological descriptions and philosophical-normative analyses of his stages. This parallelism, he contended, led to a kind of complementarity and even a convergence of the two analyses (see Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989).

explicitly defined components of moral judgment such as cognition, schemas, social influence, emotional systems, or brain modules, or in other words, by reducing the "ought" to the "is," and thereby reducing the gap by definition. Metaphorically speaking, it is like closing the gap between the two opposing banks of a stream by putting a lot of stepping stones in the stream between the two banks. The result is lots of little gaps instead of one big one. This is why interest has increased of late in the automaticity of the processes of moral judgment. Perhaps the moral is manifested in emotions and intuitions—the seemingly unconscious and immediate reactions that occur continuously as we interact with the world. However, as this paper will argue, even when taking these phenomena into account, the gap between the moral and non-moral is never adequately bridged.

This dissertation proposes that a primary reason for this gap is a fundamental misconception about the meaning of personhood, as well as a basic misunderstanding of the nature of individuals in relation to one another. Correcting these misconceptions requires a shift in our understanding of what it means to be human. This dissertation contends that the correct view of personhood is one in which there is a feeling of "ought-ness" that is vital to what it means to be human. It also claims that ought-ness cannot be reduced to primitive processes which are themselves fundamentally non-moral, such as we find in much current research on moral action that strives to illuminate this "ought-ness" in a variety of ways, or make it into mere socially acquired habit.

In this sense, this dissertation explores the notion that humans are fundamentally moral. As such their morality *comprises*, rather than is *derived from,* their fundamental nature. This perspective is grounded in the work of Emmanuel Levinas, in which the ethical (or, for the

purposes of this dissertation, what we have termed moral)[3] is understood to be "first philosophy." In other words, Levinas locates morality in metaphysics. This means that he sees the essential moral character of human life and the reality of human agency as ontologically fundamental, or constitutive of human nature itself (Levinas, 1969, 1987). These essential characteristics are not merely epiphenomenal to some more fundamental reality as described in much of the contemporary moral psychology literature. It also means that humans "have," and experience, a "felt moral obligation" (FMO) to "the other."

In exploring the research on the moral judgment-action gap, this paper claims that there is actually no moral judgment-action gap as understood by researchers. Work by C. Terry Warner (1986, 1997) demonstrates that rejecting felt moral obligation (an action he refers to as "self-betrayal"), as understood in the Levinasian tradition, is a moral act in itself. Thus a moral judgment is felt (as obligation), and in the very feeling of that obligation, a moral action is performed—even though the action is often a rejection of the felt moral judgment. This dissertation claims that this judgment-and-action is a holistic phenomenon consisting of the failure to carry out a felt moral obligation. It is an act that involves resistance, avoidance, and often moral responses of self-justification, offense-taking, accusation, and rationalization of unwanted guilt feelings. From this philosophical perspective, there is really no gap between the judgment and the act immediately following. The emotions involved do not arise out of underlying neural components or substrates of personality but are produced (or at least

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[3] It should be noted that "ethics," in Levinas's philosophical project does not mean what is typically referred to as ethics or even morality, that is—a code of conduct that cultivates virtues or employs rationalist self legislation about how one should act. Derrida (1967) notes that Levinas does not want to propose laws or moral rules but to propose an ethics of ethics. In other words, Levinas does not seek to determine *a* morality, but rather the essence of the ethical relation in general. Since "the moral" in this dissertation is also defined in a broader sense as beyond rationality and fundamental to humanity (see p. 9 herein), for the purposes of this dissertation, the terms "ethical" and "moral" will be used interchangeably.

appropriated) by the individual. Warner's philosophy of self-betraying emotion is based on the assumption that humans are fundamentally moral agents able to accept or reject felt moral obligation toward others. He claims that emotions that occur therewith are appropriated in order to justify and rationalize the individual's actions to himself and others. Thus, he is deceiving himself into (creating and) believing something that, from another perspective, he does not, in actuality, truly believe, or at least he did not believe at the time of the original felt moral obligation.

This dissertation claims that such self-betraying emotions are not fundamentally biological or rational, but rather, fundamentally moral. For Levinas and Warner, the rational is not necessarily equated with the moral as is the case in much Greek thought upon which moral psychology is built. Chapter two gives a brief synopsis of 'the moral' in Greek thought, followed by a survey of the prominent research explicating various models and theories of moral psychology starting with Kohlberg's revolution, and then presenting those that built upon Kohlberg in contrast to those that countered Kohlberg. Then, chapter three asks how researchers are able to derive 'the moral' from the research. In other words, how do they explain the ontological gap between the descriptive "is" and the prescriptive "ought." Moreover, how do researchers account for the moral judgment-action gap within their theoretical models? Chapters four and five claim that answering these questions requires a correct view of personhood built upon an alternative view of what it means to be human and of what our relations to other people must fundamentally consist. Levinas's and Warner's philosophical framework is presented in which this alternative view can be articulated.

The Literature Review

Past and Current Models of Moral Psychology

This chapter will identify some specific meanings of the term "moral" and how it is used in moral psychology research along with a brief synopsis of notions of 'the moral' in Greek thought and Kantian philosophy. Then a concise survey of current relevant moral psychology research (which springs out of Greek and Kantian viewpoints) will illustrate (1) how the various models and families of models deal with the moral in human behavior, and (2) how they address the moral judgment-moral action gap. To present this research, Kohlberg's revolutionary foundational program will be detailed, followed by those theorists who embraced Kohlberg and built upon his findings.

Moral: the meaning of the term. In order to discuss how the moral is understood in a variety of contemporary moral psychology research literatures, it is important to clarify what is meant by the terms 'moral' or "morality." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2008) refers to two usages of the term. The first is a "descriptive" usage, in which morality means a *code of conduct* or belief which is held to be authoritative in matters of right and wrong. From this perspective, morals are created and defined by society, philosophy, religion, and/or individual conscience. Descriptive morality does not explain why anything should be considered moral or immoral, only that it may classified so. This might be termed the "is" of morality. For example, while descriptive morality would not necessarily hold that "murder is immoral" absolutely and by its very nature, it would nevertheless propose that murder is immoral because we have decided it is. The second type of usage could be termed the "ought" of morality or the moral in some universal sense. In this usage, morality refers to an *ideal code of belief* and conduct, one

which would be promoted in preference to other alternatives by a moral person. In this "prescriptive" sense, moral value judgments are made because of the perceived existence of universal standards (Gert, 2008).

Both of these usages are prevalent in the research of psychologists who study moral behavior. The terms moral and ethical are synonymous, yet ethical studies is a separate field, a branch of philosophy in which thinkers seek to address questions about the fundamental nature of morality, and whether the moral has any objective justification, as well as the nature of moral capacity or moral agency and how it develops (Stace, 1937). These aims are similar to those of moral psychologists, except that psychologists' endeavors are often without, perhaps, the philosophical and analytical background that is sometimes needed to address these aims.

Within this context of examining the fundamental nature of morality, and for the broader aims of this paper, the exact meaning of the sometimes ambiguous term "moral" will be taken from the writings of Williams and Gantt (2002) who defined "moral" as any event that has a meaningful implication or consequence in the lives of human beings. In other words, the moral is that which makes a meaningful difference to a person in a given context. This also means that any event that proves genuinely meaningful to an individual is so because it is morally relevant to that individual.

To understand the nature of morality as it is portrayed in psychology, this chapter will first present a brief history of the moral in Greek thought, and then describe various psychological models of how the moral is dealt with in current moral psychological theorizing. Moral psychology is generally known as that project which originated some fifty years ago with the investigations of Lawrence Kohlberg. This chapter presents his and other contemporary

research which explores the fundamental nature of what ethics or morality is and the makeup and development of moral capacity.

Brief History of 'The Moral'

For the purposes of this paper, I will briefly outline the first true philosophical, analytic explorations of morality in the ancient western world (Hare, 2006, 2008) and then move to the modern world, to explore how earlier work has influenced modern thinkers in the specific project of today's moral psychology. Thus, emphasis will be given to those figures whose influence can be most clearly discerned in the work of those psychologists who study moral reasoning and action.

Morality or "ethics" was first explored in an analytical fashion by Greek philosophers. Socrates (470-399 B.C.) believed that through rational processes or reasoning we can discern truth, which for him, included moral truth. While the dialogues of Socrates—as given by Plato— aimed at discerning truth that transcended mere opinion, habit, and desire, and was thus universal, there was also a part of Socrates' pursuit of the true and the good that turned the seeker of truth inward. Socrates talked about the importance of obtaining "self-knowledge" which he saw as vital to virtue—or acting morally. A lack of self-knowledge led to ignorance and thus a lack of virtue or evil (Viney & King 1998). Therefore the only way to be happy and thereby to thwart evil was to possess virtue. Virtue had to do with making the soul as good (or moral) as possible. Socrates saw virtue, and knowledge of "the good" as, in essential respects, the same thing.

Socrates went even further explicating knowledge of the good as something that elicits action. He said, "to know the good is to do the good." This notion that *knowing* causes *doing* sits at the core of the current debate in psychological approaches to morality, and bears directly on

the claim of contemporary researchers who cite empirical evidence contrary to Socrates claim. Their evidence indicates that to know the good, is *not necessarily* to do the good (Blasi,1980; Frimer & Walker, 2008; Walker & Hennig, 1997). On the other hand, Socrates did acknowledge that humans frequently commit acts that they know to be wrong, that can even be called evil. However, he believed that they do so thinking that these acts are actually good in some way (Stumpf & Feiser, 2003). It seems clear that Socrates had an understanding of "knowledge" that intrinsically involved commitment and action in a way not exactly found in most contemporary approaches to knowledge, especially, perhaps, in the social sciences. It is common in contemporary theories and models to separate "knowing" and "behaving functions. Such a notion would certainly have seemed strange and naïve to Socrates.

Rationality equals virtue. Socrates equates virtue with fulfilling one's function as a rational being. In other words, a person's essential moral function is to act rationally. Wrong-doing, then is the result of a person's lack of functioning rationally in knowing what behaviors would bring true, not fleeting happiness. Humans have desires for happiness and we choose our actions with the hope that these actions will bring us happiness. However, some acts that appear to bring happiness, according to Socrates, actually do not, such as pursuing material possessions, power or physical pleasure. Socrates equates pursuing such vices with ignorance, or an errant use of our rationality—that is, failing to understand that certain behaviors cannot produce happiness. Thus, an accurate knowledge of human nature is required to obtain true happiness, to understand the good, and to act morally (see e.g., Stumpf & Freiser, 2003, p. 43).

Socrates' student, Plato, directly advanced Socrates' views at his Academy in Athens by promoting the concept of a soul, and the concept of virtue as the efficient functioning of things. A knife is good when it fulfills its function by cutting efficiently. Musicians are good when they

fulfill the function of their art. For Plato, a soul is good when it fulfills its unique function of the art of living. A knife's function has limits. A musician's art has limits to its function (limits of pitch, tuning, timing). Thus, the art of living similarly requires knowledge of limits. And knowledge of these limits are virtues. (Stumpf & Fieser, 2003). The 'soul' consisted of *reason, spirit* and *appetite*, and the rational part of the soul has the right to rule or limit the spirit and appetite, or these latter can lead us into a world of fantasy and deception. If control of the appetites is lost, then false knowledge occurs as passions influence reason about what brings true happiness. False knowledge may result in acting against one's better reasoning which becomes what modern moral theorists might call a moral judgment-action gap. Plato believed that recovering control of the passions born of the spirit and the appetites could close this so-called gap and once again facilitate moral action.

Reason's sovereign control (or the efficient functioning of virtues) resulted in the 'good life.' Plato's four cardinal virtues were Moderation, Wisdom, Courage and Justice. Moderation (sometimes "temperance") is the rational control of the appetites, reason achieves the virtue of Wisdom, and Courage is achieved by avoiding rash, headlong action. When each of these virtues is fulfilling its special function, Justice is attained which is a general virtue and reflects a person's well-being and inner harmony, where all elements of the mind are in concordance with one another. These four virtues inform Plato's view of a moral foundation. In other words, the moral is derived from these four virtues as they are incorporated rationally into the psyche. For "value ethics" thinkers, human well-being is the highest aim of moral thought and conduct and the virtues are the requisite skills and character-traits that bring about the moral (Stumpf & Feiser, 2003).

Aristotle, as a student of Plato, endorsed these four main virtues and was sympathetic to the rational features of Plato's moral philosophy, but also incorporated personal experience as a way of ordering one's actions rationally. Morality involves action, and happiness is the ultimate end of human action. Although we have the natural capacity for right behavior, we do not act rightly *by nature*. Our life has a boundless number of possibilities (Stumpf & Feiser, 2003).

For Aristotle, our capacity for rationality allows us to deliberate and weigh options. We are able to perceive, imagine and make judgments about events. Thus, the question arises, 'how is one able to judge events as good or bad?' A child is generally unable to find moral imperatives in rational arguments. However, a child *is* able to discover moral principles in a cognitive manner from the constant behavioral instruction by his community of adults. Thus, moral principles are learned through behavior that is installed by the surrounding community. It is the history of the person's activities that supplies the possibilities for him to act rationally (Robinson, 1981). Though the child is initially educated toward constructive behavior by the community, he moves beyond this period and into a stage of rationality in which he can plan his life cognizant of choices he must make as he pursues *eudemonia* or happiness.

Akrasia—loss of rational function. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle each in turn claimed that the good life, virtue or morality, is a product of the human ability to function rationally. When there is a chronic inability to function rationally, then the good life is undermined by what is termed "akrasia" or the state of acting against one's better judgment. However, Socrates argued that akrasia is an illogical moral concept because since "to know the good is to do the good," no one willingly goes toward the bad or what he believes to be bad (*Protagoras* 351a – 358d). Thus, the person must believe that in some way, what he is doing is ultimately good. In contrast, Aristotle attributes displays of inconsistency between moral reason and moral action to

appetites for pleasure and anger. Either one can lead to impetuosity and weakness. Aristotle's treatment of akrasia is influenced by Plato's three-part division of the soul into reason, spirit and appetite in which either the spirited part (which houses anger, as well as other emotions) or the appetitive part (which houses the desire for physical pleasures) can disrupt the dictates of reason. However, Aristotle gives prominence to pleasure as the chief passion that undermines reason. Moreover, the akratic person has an additional flaw in that he gives in to feeling rather than reason more often than the average person (Stumpf & Feiser, 2003).

Two millennia after Plato and Aristotle, the notion of akrasia was still at the center of moral philosophical discussion. The question of what people ought to do and why they do not do it was addressed by Immanuel Kant (1785/1993), who, like the Greeks, claimed that moral judgments come from our reason and not from our experience. He embraced reasoning, or the rational mind as the source for the moral. For Kant, akrasia involved failing to perform one's duty, where duties were universal imperatives arrived at through discerning fundamental moral laws. If a moral rule or law is valid for me as a rational being, it must be valid for all rational beings. Any gaps (as they are sometimes termed) in the ability to discern fundamental principles or "rules" of behavior are attributed to ignorance of the rules.

Plato's pursuit of self-knowledge through inward reflection as the basis for the moral in particular is reflected in Kant's proposed method of using "practical reason" to arrive at moral action. Practical reason is the general human capacity for resolving, through reflection, the question of what one is to do in any given situation (Wallace, 2009). In other words, for Kant, what makes us moral as humans is our rationality.

Kant grounded morality in *a priori* principles which are considered valid independently of any empirical observation.[4] Kant's best known a priori principle is the "Categorical Imperative" which is a moral obligation derived from the concept of duty. One is obligated out of duty to perform certain moral actions. A rational being strives to do what he *ought* to do (Kant, 1785/1993). Thus, Kant defined the demands of moral laws as Categorical Imperatives. They are *imperatives* because they *command* us to exercise our *wills* in a particular way. They are *categorical* because they relate to us unconditionally, without exception and without any reference to outcomes that we may or may not desire. Categorical imperatives are *intrinsically* valid, meaning they are good in and of themselves; they must be obeyed in all situations and circumstances. In Kant's view, it is from the Categorical Imperative that all other moral obligations are generated, and by which all moral obligations can be tested (Johnson, 2008). These obligations were generalizable, universal and obligatory and thus not derived from culturally constructed standards.

Akrasia has been of interest to current moral psychologists for much the same reason that it has occupied the attention of philosophers—the need to explain a seeming paradox or conceptual contradiction. The *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (1999) summarizes the issue thusly: "A major source of the interest [in akrasia] is clear: akratic action raises difficult questions about the connection between thought and action, a connection of paramount importance for most theories of the explanation of intentional behavior. Insofar as moral theory does not float free of evidence about the etiology of human behavior, the tough questions arise

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[4] Kant is sometimes contrasted with David Hume who explored "moral science" similarly to any other science, that is, meaning it is open to empirical investigation and to explanation in naturalistic terms. His view was that morals are not derived from reason and that reason alone cannot motivate "the will." Rather, morals are derived from what he called "the moral sentiments" – feelings of approval or disapproval (Denis, 2009).

there as well. Ostensible akratic action, then occupies a philosophical space in the intersection of the philosophy of mind and moral theory (pp. 14-15).

Today, this "philosophical space in the intersection of the philosophy of mind and moral theory" sits at the core of much theory and research in moral psychology. Indeed, akratic action, or the gap between moral judgment and moral action, raises questions about connections between thought and behavior. Moral psychologists have long focused on explanations for this so-called gap. Modern explanations bear the influence of Greek thought, and Kantian ethics especially in the philosophical underpinnings of contemporary research, or the philosophical assumptions of which theorists are often unaware. For example, Socrates' axiom, "to know the good is to do the good" which reflects the importance in Greek thought of arriving at truths through reasoning, influenced Kohlberg's emphasis on the chief role of *rationality* as the arbiter for discerning moral universals. This set the tone for the direction the emerging field would take. Kohlberg and Piaget claimed that human reasoning ability is the key to recognizing and understanding moral stages of development (Kohlberg, 1969, 1971; Piaget, 1977). They and others sought to turn away from moral relativism and embrace Kantian ethical principles that propose perceptions of moral principles are universal in their application. For example, Kohlberg embraced Aristotle's notion that social experiences do promote development, but they do so by stimulating our mental processes. Moreover, Kohlberg's emphasis on justice morality reflects Plato and Aristotle's claims that virtues function to attain justice which is needed for well being, inner harmony or the moral life. His stress on uncovering and promoting the Kantian "oughts" of moral duty was seen as a significant break from psychology's focus on the 'is," or descriptions of the moral (Frimer & Walker, 2008; Kohlberg, 1971; Lapsley & Hill, 2009). In short, Kohlberg

and his followers believed Socrates' axiom would eventually be born out in their empirical research (Blasi, 1980; Frimer & Walker, 2008, 2009; Walker & Hennig, 1997).

Modernity: Piaget, Kohlberg. The following paragraphs illustrate how current moral psychology research describes psychological events and outward action by means of theories and models of moral action which present 'the moral' in diverse ways. This research also illustrates the variety of explanations of akrasia, or what is termed in modern moral psychology research as the moral judgment-moral action gap. The research will be surveyed beginning with Kohlberg's original contributions, after which three areas of moral psychology research will be reviewed as follows: (1) those theorists who agreed with Kohlberg's original "rational moral judgments" approach, (2) those who promote domain theory which sees no moral judgment-action gaps, and (3) those theorists who emphasize the fast and automatic intuitive approach in explanations of moral behavior.

Most branches of moral psychology have built upon the original research of Lawrence Kohlberg (1971, 1981, 1984), who departed from the ethical relativism of positivistic[5] psychology that dominated the field at the time (Lapsley & Hill, 2009; Turiel, 1998). Kohlberg's thinking was heavily influenced by Jean Piaget, who believed that children develop moral ideas in stages of cognitive development. Children, Piaget held, have experiences that result in the formation of judgments about social relationships, rules, laws, authority and social institutions. Social moral standards are transmitted by adults, and the child "participates in the elaborations of norms instead of receiving them ready-made," thus creating their own conceptions of the world

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[5] Positivism is a philosophy that holds that the only authentic knowledge is that which is based on actual sense experience. Positivists are skeptical of theological and metaphysical questions and take the view that understanding is based upon logical inference grounded in observable facts. A positivistic approach dominated the field in psychology during the rise of behaviorism (Carnap, 1959).

(Piaget, 1977, p. 315). According to Piaget, the child constructs his own moral world view and forms ideas about right and wrong, fair and unfair. These ideas are not the direct product of adult teaching and are often maintained in the face of adult wishes to the contrary (Gallagher, 1978).

Piaget's theory of morality was considered radical by some when his book, *The Moral Judgment of the Child,* was published because he used philosophical criteria to define morality as universalizable, generalizable, and obligatory (Ash & Woodward, 1987; Piaget, 1977). He drew on Kantian theory which emphasized generating universal moral maxims through logical, rational thought processes. Thus, he rejected equating cultural norms with moral norms. In other words, he rejected the moral relativity that pervaded most research in human development at the time (Frimer & Walker, 2008).

In the tradition of Piaget's four stages of cognitive-development, Kohlberg launched contemporary moral psychology with his doctoral dissertation in 1958. His structural development model holds that the stages of moral development emerge from our own thinking about moral problems. Social experiences play a part in moral development, but they do so by stimulating our mental processes. Thus, for Kohlberg, reasoning about the moral and ethical is the basis for moral behavior (Kohlberg, 1969).

Kohlberg was interested in how individuals would justify their action if faced with certain moral dilemmas. Their responses to these dilemmas established how far within structures or stages of moral development a person had progressed. He outlined six discrete stages of moral reasoning within three overarching levels of moral development. These stages were centered in cognitive reasoning (or rationality). Kohlberg claimed that the *moral* is manifested within the formulation of moral judgments that progress through stages of development and could be demonstrated empirically (Kohlberg, 1971). This is the way in which

Kohlberg shifted the paradigm for moral philosophy or moral psychology. Up to this point, from the modern, Western perspective, most empirical study of 'the moral' was descriptive (Lapsley & Hill 2009). Most research chronicled how various groups of peoples lived their moral lives and what the moral life consisted of, not what universal moral principles should constitute moral life. He made the bold claim that individuals should aspire to certain moral universal principles of moral reasoning, and furthermore, that these principles could be laid bare through rigorous scientific investigation.

According to Kohlberg, every person's moral reasoning begins at stage one and develops progressively to stage two, then stage three, etc. Movement from one stage or level to the next entails reorganization of a correct form of thought into a new form. Not everyone can progress through all six stages. According to Kohlberg, it is quite rare to find people who have progressed to stage five or six (Kohlberg, 1971) emphasizing that his stages were *not* the product of maturation (Kohlberg, 1968). That is, the stage structures and sequences do not simply unfold according to a genetic blueprint. Neither are his stages the product of socialization. That is, socializing agents (e.g., parents and teachers) do not directly teach new forms of thinking. The stages emerge, instead, from our own thinking about moral problems. Social experiences do promote development, but they do so by stimulating our mental processes. As we discuss and debate with others, we find our views questioned and challenged and are therefore motivated to come up with new, more comprehensive positions. New stages reflect these broader viewpoints (See Kohlberg, 1969). Reflecting Piaget and thus Kantian ethics, Kohlberg claimed that his stages of moral development are universal. His sixth stage of moral development (the postconventional, universal principles level) occurs when moral reasoning is based in abstract

thinking using universal ethical principles. The individual considers laws valid and worthy of obedience only as far as they are grounded in justice.

For Kohlberg, moral development represented the transformations that occur in a person's thinking, not as an increased knowledge of cultural values that leads to ethical relativity, but as maturing knowledge of existing structures of moral judgment found universally in development sequences across cultures (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). In other words, Kohlberg sought to eliminate moral relativism by advocating that perceptions of moral principles are universal in their application. They constitute a standard against which the laws or conventions of society should be judged. Thus, Kohlberg sought to demonstrate empirically that there are better and worse forms of moral thought (Frimer & Walker, 2008; Kohlberg, 1971).

Lapsley and Hill (2009) discuss the far reaching ramifications of how Kohlberg 'moralised' child psychology: "He committed the 'cognitive developmental approach to socialization' to an anti-relativism project where the unwelcome spectre of ethical relativism was to yield to the empirical findings of moral stage theory. . . [He insisted] on a principle of phenomenalism for defining moral phenomena. This principle asserts that moral reasoning is a conscious process of individual moral judgment using ordinary moral language (Kohlberg et al., 1983). The moral quality of behavior hinges on agent phenomenology; it depends solely on the subjective perspective, judgment and intention of the agent" (p. 1). In other words, for Kohlberg, a particular behavior had no moral status unless it was motivated by a moral judgment that could be identified as a conscious process (Kohlberg et al., 1983, p. 8). Lapsley and Hill note that this principle of phenomenalism was used as a cudgel against behaviorism (which rejected both cognitivism and ordinary moral language) (p. 2).

Lapsley and Narvaez (2009) claim that we have learned important lessons from Kohlberg. One is that philosophical analysis must precede psychological work and psychological explanations must be grounded by philosophical considerations. This view is still influential to some extent. However some current theorists are moving away from the concept of phenomenalism. They note that as a result of its narrow focus and theoretical isolation, the principle of phenomenalism gravely distorts and truncates psychological explanation of moral functioning (See Cervone & Tripathi, 2009; Haidt, 2004; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006). However, it continues to be generally accepted in moral psychology that research is to be constrained and grounded by ethical theory (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2008).

Building Upon Kohlberg's Foundation

James Rest extended Kohlberg's work methodologically and theoretically with his formulation of the Defining Issues Test (DIT), which began as a "quick and dirty" multiple choice alternative to Kohlberg's time consuming interview procedure. It is a device for activating moral schemas (general knowledge structures that organize information) (Narvaez & Bock, 2002). It is based on a component model of moral development built upon Kohlberg's stages of moral development—an approach he called 'Neo-Kohlbergian'. Rest maintained that four key psychological components must be developed for a person to be moral. These were moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral character. Without these key components, a person would not be able to recognize moral issues and make correct and intelligent judgments, have the motivation to take action and the character to maintain good morality throughout the person's life. He would be a person with many gaps between his judgment and behavior. With twenty-five years of DIT research, Rest and others (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 2000) reached some conclusions with some degree of confidence.

Under their Neo-Kohlbergian approach, dealing with the moral became a more multifaceted endeavor foreshadowing the many complex models of moral judgment, motivation and action that have followed. For them, moral action was determined through cognition and post-conventional moral thinking (consistent with Kohlberg's model) (Rest, 1999).

Moral identity. Blasi (1995) subscribed to this sort of neo-Kohlbergian point of view as he sought to reinforce Kohlberg's Cognitive Developmental Theory accounting for the moral by focusing on motivation, an area of exploration not within the particular purview of Kohlberg's main research, (Blasi, 1999). Though toward the end of his career Kohlberg did become more interested in the component of motivation in his research (Kohlberg & Candee, 1984), Blasi saw Kohlberg's empirical findings illuminating an individual's understanding of moral principles without shedding much light on the motivation to act on those principles. Even though Kohlberg claimed that an individual's competent moral reasoning is not sufficient to completely explain moral action, only to inform it (Aquino & Reed, 2002), Kohlberg's findings showed that moral reasoning was, in fact, only a modest predictor of moral behavior. Blasi introduced the concept of the role of "the self" as a sort of mediator between moral reasoning and moral action. Could it be that 'the self' was the source for moral motivation? Up until then, most of Kohlberg's empirical findings involved responses to hypothetical moral dilemmas in which an individual self might not be particularly engaged or which might not seem relevant to the self (Walker, 2004). Blasi's model of the self was one of the first influential theories that endeavored to connect moral cognition (reasoning) to moral action, or bridge the so-called moral judgment-action gap. He proposed that moral judgments or moral reasoning could more reliably connect with moral behavior if other judgments about personal responsibility based upon moral identity were taken into account (Blasi, 1995).

Blasi is considered a pioneer in theory of moral identity. His examination has laid a foundation upon which other moral identity scholars have built using social cognition research and theory. These other scholars have focused on concepts such as values, goals, actions and roles that make up the content of identity. The content of identity can take a moral quality (e.g., values such as honesty and kindness, goals of helping, serving or caring for others etc.) and, to one degree or another, become central and important in a person's life (Blasi, 1983; Hardy, in press; Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Thus, Walker, Pitts, Hennig, and Matsuba (1995) have shown that some individuals see themselves exhibiting the moral on a regular basis, while others do not consider moral standards and values particularly relevant to their daily activities.

Blasi's original Self Model (2005) posited that three major components intersect to bridge the moral judgment–action gap. The first, explained above, is the moral self, or what is sometimes referred to as "moral centrality." The moral self focuses on the importance of moral values to one's self-identity. Second, personal responsibility is the component which determines that after a moral judgment is made, there is a responsibility for the individual to essentially act upon the judgment. He or she makes the determination that there is a moral obligation to undertake the action. This sense of personal responsibility is an important aspect of the connection between judgment and action because it reflects a personal sense of moral worth. Third, self-consistency or integrity is a fundamental motive in personality functioning. It reflects congruence between judgment and action. It is this sense of the 'integrity of self' that is at stake in moral action (see Walker, 2005, p. 3).

Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) and Colby and Damon (1992, 1993) posit that the union of moral goals with personal ones is a hallmark of a moral personality. Blasi's model claims if one acts consistently according to his or her core beliefs, his or her moral values, goals and

actions, then he or she possesses a moral identity or personality. Hardy & Carlo (2005) note most theorists agree that when morality is important to one's sense of self and identity, it heightens one's sense of obligation and responsibility to live consistent with one's moral concerns.

Since Blasi introduced his Self Model, he has elaborated in more detail on the structure of the self's identity. He has classified two aspects that make up a concrete identity: first, the content around which the sense of self is constructed or the objective content of identity (such as moral ideals) and second, the modes in which identity is experienced, or the subjective experience of identity. As moral identity matures, the sense of self evolves to become based more upon the internal content of identity such as moral values and goals rather than external identity content such as relationships and behavior. Maturity also brings a sense of increased organization of the self and a greater sense of agency over one's self (Blasi, 1993; Hardy & Carlo, 2005).

In summary, Blasi sees the structure of one's moral identity as a key to the source of moral motivation and thus the source for understanding or bridging the moral judgment-moral action gap. However, some researchers (Frimer & Walker, 2008; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Lapsley & Hill, 2009) have noted that Blasi's ideas are quite abstract and somewhat inaccessible and, thus, have been the subject of little empirical research. Moreover, Blasi's endorsement of the first person perspective on the moral has made it difficult to devise empirical studies that often involve self-report methods which call into question the meaning and predictive validity of self-endorsed traits. In addition, the survey instruments which rate character traits often exhibit arbitrariness and variability across lists of collections of virtues hearkening back to the 'bag of virtues' approach which Kohlberg sought to move beyond (Frimer & Walker, 2008).

On the other hand, some research has been conducted into the concept of "moral exemplars" presumably under the assumption that they possess moral identities. Damon and Colby's (1992) qualitative research on individuals known for their moral exemplarity found that these individuals experienced "a unity between self and morality" and that "their own interests were synonymous with their moral goals" (Colby & Damon, 1995, p. 362). Hart and Fegley (1995) compared teenage moral exemplars to other teens and found that the moral expemplar more often described themselves with moral personality traits such as honesty and being helpful than did the other teens. Additional research using self-descriptions found similar results (Reimer & Wade-Stein, 2004).

Other identity research includes Hart's (2005) model which strives to identify a moral identity in terms of five factors that give rise to moral behavior (personality, social influence, moral cognition, self and opportunity). Aquino and Reed (2002) propose that moral identity can be the basis for social identification that people use to construct their definitions of self. This self-conception is organized around a set of common moral traits that are central to most people's moral identity. Their self-report questionnaire taps into the degree to which moral traits are central to a person's self-concept. Cervone and Tripathi (2009) stress the need for moral identity researchers to step outside the field of moral psychology, shift the focus away from the moral and engage general personality theorists. This allows moral psychologists to access broader studies in personality and cognitive science and break out of what they see as the compartmentalized discourse within moral psychology.

In summary, it appears that the research exploring the self as the key to moral identity and thus to bridging the moral judgment-moral action gap accepts the idea that the moral comes from the norms and principles of society and that personal integrity is the key characteristic of

morality or the moral person, who is willing to live morally even in the face of unethical cultural norms and practices. In other words, the dimension of the self of primary concern is that of unity versus disunity, or what Blasi refers to as the integrity of identity. Moral psychology theorists view an identity with integrity as a self that is unified, internally consistent and has an essence that exhibits agency across contexts and thus, because of this consistency, experiences few moral judgment/action gaps (Blasi 2005; See Frimer & Walker, 2008, p. 345-346).

Moral Domain Theory

As with most "moral psychology," what has become known as "domain theory," also stems from Kohlberg's foundational research because it emphasizes the role of cognition in moral functioning. Elliot Turiel and Larry Nucci are domain theorists, meaning that they promote the distinction between domains of judgment. In other words, individual concepts of social right and wrong are not all of one type. For Nucci (1997) morality constitutes a domain or category of understanding distinct from other aspects of our knowledge. He claims basic distinctions must be made between morality and conventions of society. Some forms of social behavior stem from moral universals, other forms of social conduct are subject to determination by local cultural or social norms, and still others are matters of personal choice (Turiel, 1983). Whether an individual behaves morally depends upon the judgments he makes about which domain takes precedence in a particular context. Thus, social judgments are organized within domains of knowledge.

Nucci asserts that certain types of social behavior are governed by moral universals held to be right or wrong independent of particular governing social rules. Behaviors which meet these criteria are those which refer to actions, such as hurting, stealing, and slander, which have an impact on the welfare of others. Accordingly, concepts of morality have been found to be

structured by underlying conceptions of justice and welfare (Turiel, 1983). The moral, then, may be defined as one's concepts, reasoning, and actions which pertain to the welfare, rights and fair treatment of other persons.

In this sense, morality (defined in terms of justice, welfare and rights) can be distinguished from concepts of social conventions, which are the determined standards of conduct particular to a given social group. Conventions established by social systems such as standards of dress, etc. derive their status as correct or incorrect forms of conduct from their embeddedness within a particular shared system of meaning and social interaction. The particular acts in and of themselves have no prescriptive force so the importance of conventions lies in the function they serve to coordinate social interaction. Concepts of social convention have been found to be structured by underlying notions of social organization (Tu riel,1983).

Turiel elaborates on the differences between the moral and social domain in his Social Domain Theory (1983, 1998, 2002). Turiel explores the boundaries of actions that fall either within the truly moral domain or are a product of mere social or personal convention. In contrast to Blasi, he proposes that morality is not a domain in which judgments are central for some and peripheral for others, but that morality stands alongside other important social and personal judgments. In order to understand the connection between judgment and action, Turiel believes it is necessary to consider how an individual applies his judgments in each domain—moral, social and personal (Turiel, 2003).

His social-interactionist model defines actions that lead to injustice, harm, or the violation of rights as falling within the "moral domain." He claims that definition of moral action is derived in part from criteria given in the philosophy of Aristotle where concepts of welfare, justice and rights are not considered to be determined by consensus or existing social

arrangements, but are universally valid everywhere. In contrast, actions that involve matters of social or personal convention have no intrinsic interpersonal consequences (causing harm, injustice or violation of rights), thus they fall outside the moral domain. In this view, social conventions are based on arbitrary actions that are relative to social contexts. Through their participation in social groups, such as the family, school, or with their peers, individuals eventually form concepts about social systems and their "rules."

No judgment-action gap. Turiel and Nucci's work does not accept the premise that a moral judgment-moral action gap exists. They explain inconsistencies between judgment and behavior as the result of individuals accessing different domains of behavior. In other words, in addition to "moral" judgments, people make other judgments based on personal preference and social norms. Thus, whatever precedes action is in actuality a judgment about which of these other judgments to prioritize. While an action may be inconsistent with a person's moral judgment, it may *not* be inconsistent with that person's overarching judgments that have higher priority. In other words, the person can know something is right, but in the end decide that he would rather do something else because in balancing his moral and personal and social concerns, something else won out as seeming more important in the end. This particular aspect of Turiel's model could be compared to Blasi's personal responsibility component in which after a moral judgment is made, the person decides whether he has a responsibility in the particular moment or situation to act upon the judgment.

Thus the moral exists only within the moral domain. However, even though Turiel and Nucci recognize the prescriptive nature of behavior in the moral domain, they assert that the individual must make the judgment about whether it merits acting upon, or whether another sphere of action takes precedence. In other words, Turiel and Nucci may deem a particular moral

action to be more important than action in the social or personal conventional sphere. However, unless the individual deems it so to be there is no moral failure. The individual decides which sphere takes priority at any given time. The notion of integrity and personal responsibility within a moral self concept of identity as a source of moral motivation (Blasi, 1995; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004) does not apply within Turiel's social-interactionist model.

In a similar vein to Turiel and Nucci, Bergman's Model (2002) accepts an individual to be moral, even if he does not act upon his moral understanding. In other words, Bergman emphasizes that intention matters most. He finds the moral in the relationships among components of reasoning, motivation, action, and identity. With this model he seeks to answer the question raised by Turiel's model, 'If it is just a matter of prioritizing domains of behavior, why be moral?' He asserts that his model preserves the centrality of moral reasoning in the moral domain, while also taking seriously as independent factors personal convention and motivation without succumbing to a purely subjectivist perspective (See Bergman, 2004, p. 36). Bergman strives to articulate the moral motivational potential of moral understanding as truly moral even though as a potential it has not been acted upon. He does not assume that moral understanding must have an inevitable expression in action as did Kohlberg. Thus he provides another context for thinking about the problem of the judgment- action gap. His best answer to the question, 'why be moral' is 'because that is who I am' or 'because I can do no other and remain the person I am committed to being' which reflects our inner moral intentions (See Bergman, 2002, p. 123).

Automaticity and the Moral

Narvaez and Lapsley (2005) have argued that John Bargh presents persuasive evidence that much of the activity of our daily lives is governed by cognitive processes that are preconscious and automatic (e.g., Bargh 1989, 1990, 1996, 1997; Uleman & Bargh 1989).

Narvaez and Lapsley (2005) assert that this literature would seem to thoroughly undermine the psychological foundation of Kohlberg's principle of phenomenalism and to challenge the traditions of moral psychology that accept it as a foundational premise. Bargh and Ferguson (2000) note, for example, that "higher mental processes that have traditionally served as quintessential examples of choice and free will—such as goal pursuit, judgment, and interpersonal behavior—have been shown recently to occur in the absence of conscious choice or guidance" (p. 926). Bargh concludes that if automatic cognitive processes govern much of the behavior of everyday life, very little human behavior stems from deliberative thought and even less receives moral deliberation. Behavior driven by moral decision making becomes rare, pushed to the margins of human activity. If moral conduct hinges on conscious, explicit deliberation, then much of human behavior simply does not qualify (see, e.g., Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005, p. 142).

Haidt's (2006) views on the moral take the field in the intuitive direction. He focuses on emotional sentiments, some of which have been seen in the previous arguments of Eisenberg (1986) and Hoffman, (1970) as well as the original thinking of David Hume (1793/1978), who concerned himself with human "sentiments" as sources of moral action. Haidt claims that models based upon intuition as the basis for moral judgment are becoming more prominent especially as "the river of fMRI studies on neuroeconomics and decision making [give empirical evidence that] the mind is driven by constant flashes of affect in response to everything we see and hear" (Haidt, 2008, p. 2). Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model (SIM), has brought a resurgence of interest in the importance of emotion and intuition in determining the moral. He asserts that the moral is found in judgments about social processes, not in private acts of cognition. These judgments are manifest automatically as innate intuitions. He defines moral

intuition as "the sudden appearance in consciousness, or at the fringe of consciousness, of an evaluative feeling (like-dislike, good-bad) about the character or actions of a person, without any conscious awareness of having gone through steps of search, weighing evidence, or inferring a conclusion" (Haidt, 2001, p.818). He asserts that "studies of everyday reasoning show that we usually use reason to search for evidence to support our initial intuitive judgment, which was made in milliseconds" (Haidt, 2008, p. 4). Sometimes we can use controlled processes such as reasoning to override our initial intuitions, but he sees this happening very rarely. He does not like to contrast the terms emotion and cognition because he sees it all as cognition, just different kinds: 1) intuitions that are fast and affectively laden and 2) reasoning which is slow and less motivating.

Haidt focuses on innate intuitions that are linked to the social construction of the ethics of survival. He sees action as moral when it benefits survival (Haidt, 2007; Narvaez, 2008). "Human beings" Haidt argues, "come equipped with an *intuitive ethics*, an innate preparedness to feel flashes of approval or disapproval toward certain patterns of events involving other human beings" (Haidt & Joseph, 2004, p. 56). Haidt asks two main questions that he believes are answered by his Social Intuitionist Model: (1) 'Where do moral beliefs and motivations come from?' and (2) 'How does moral judgment work?' His answer to the first question is that moral beliefs and motivations come from sentiments which give us an immediate feeling of right or wrong and are built into the fabric of human nature. He cites Hume who believed that the general foundation of morals is derived from an "immediate feeling and finer internal sense" (Hume, (1777) cited by Haidt & Bjorklund, 2007, p. 5). Thus, for Haidt, the moral is based on a "small set of innately prepared, affectively valenced moral intuitions" (p. 5).

His answer to the second question, ('How does moral judgment work?') is that brains evaluate and react. They are clumps of neural tissue that "integrate information from the external and internal environments to answer one fundamental question: approach or avoid?" (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2007, p. 6). *Approach* is labeled *good, avoid* is *bad*. The human mind is always evaluating along a good-bad dimension regarding survival. This perspective on the inescapably affective mind is the foundation of the social intuitionist model. The model is composed of six links, or psychological processes, which describe the relationships among an initial intuition of good versus bad. Haidt believes that these links capture the interaction between intuition, judgment, and reasoning, but his most general claim is that the action in morality is in intuition, not in reasoning (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2007). Thus the moral judgment-moral action gap is a result of the slower, deliberative process that follows an initial intuition of what the moral is in a given situation.

Monin, Pizarro and Beer (2007) strive to move beyond the debate that pits emotion or intuition against reason, both vying for primacy as the source for the moral. They assert that the various models that seek to bridge the judgment –action gap are considering two very different proto-typical situations: First, those who seek to solve complex moral dilemmas conclude that morality involves sophisticated reasoning. While those who study reactions to shocking moral violations conclude that moral judgments are quick, affective laden processes. Monin, et al. propose that researchers should not arbitrarily choose between the one or the other but embrace both types of models and determine which model type has the greater applicability in any given setting. They conclude that the moral comes from reasoning or emotion depending upon the setting.

Narvaez (2008a) believes that Haidt overcredits flashes of affect and intuition and undervalues reasoning. In her view, flash affect is but one piece of information that humans use to make decisions about their goals and behaviors. Numerous other elements play a role along with gut feelings, such as "current preferences, mood and energy, environmental affordances, situational press, contextual cues, social influences and coherence with self image" (Narvaez, 2008a p. 2). People wrestle with moral decisions in a more complex fashion than allowed by Haidt.

Narvaez (2008a) contends that Haidt limits his discussion of moral judgment to the cognitive evaluation of the action or character of a person. In other words, his narrow definition of moral reasoning is limited to processing information about others. She wonders about moral decision making involving personal goals and future planning (Narvaez, 2008a).

Evolutionary origins for the moral. Haidt and Narvaez, however, are both of the opinion that ultimately, the moral is derived from evolved brain structures that benefit our social survival, both collectively and individually (Narvaez, 2008). Narvaez asserts that Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model includes the biological and the social, but not the psychological. Narvaez (2008a) on the other hand, finds the moral ultimately in "psychobehavioral potentials that are genetically ingrained in brain development" as "evolutionary operants" (p. 2). To explicate these evolutionary operants, she refers to her own model of psychological *schemas* that humans access to make decisions. She notes that Haidt's proposal of the existence of modules in the human brain is a common practice among evolutionary psychologists, but that there is not solid empirical evidence in neuroscience for such assertions. Indeed, according to Narvaez (2008a). Haidt does not cite physiological evidence for his modularity theory, nor does his theory appear to have roots in what is known about mammalian brain circuitry.

In contrast, Narvaez's schemas are general knowledge structures that organize information, expectations and experience (Narvaez, Lapsley, Hagele & Lasky, 2006). In general, schema learning theory views organized knowledge as an elaborate network of abstract mental structures which represent one's understanding of the world (Frimer & Walker, 2008). Various schemas are accessible for some individuals, but may not be for others. Schemas facilitate the process of appraising one's social landscape. This is how moral identity or moral character is formed. It occurs when moral schemas are accessible for processing information. Narvaez terms this "moral chronicity" and claims that it accounts for the fact that many moral decisions are made automatically. Individuals "just knew" what was required of them without engaging in an elaborate decision-making process. It is in this process that we see the moral revealed in the automaticity of Narvaez's model. Neither the intuition nor the activation of the schemas is a conscious, deliberative process. Schema activation, though mostly shaped by experience (thus the social aspect) are ultimately rooted in what she refers to as "evolved unconscious emotional systems" that predispose one to react to and act on events in particular ways.

Narvaez's "triune ethics theory" (2008b) explains what she means by unconscious emotional systems. She embraces research in affective neuroscience, neurobiology and cognitive science. This research proposes that these emotional systems derive from three basic formations in the human brain that reflect ancestral relations to lower-order species. Her theory is modeled after MacLean's (1990) Triune Brain theory which proposed three formations in the human brain that reflect evolution of reptiles and mammals. Each of these three areas has a "footprint" that marks moral behavioral tendencies. As Narvaez (2008b) states, they each have a "biological propensity to produce an ethical motive" (p. 2). Since animals have evolved brain functions that have "psychobehavioral potentials that are genetically ingrained in brain development" as

"evolutionary operants" (p. 2), they have been able to behave adaptively in the face of life challenges. This same pattern is reflected in the structure of the human brain. Emotional systems are centrally located in the brain and thus can interact with more evolved cognitive structures. Thus there is no emotion without a thought and thoughts evoke emotion. It follows then that there is no emotion without a behavioral outcome. Narvaez's model is a complex system in which moral behavior (though influenced by social events) is determined almost completely, it seems, from the structures of the brain.

Some researchers (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Gigerenzer, 2008; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2008; Sunstein, 2005) assert that intuition and its consequent behavior are constructed almost completely through environmental stimuli. Bargh & Chartrand (1999) assert that "most of a person's everyday life is determined not by their conscious intentions and deliberate choices but by mental processes that are put into motion by features of the environment and that operate outside of conscious awareness and guidance" (p. 462). Perception is the route by which the environment directly causes mental activity. The automatic perception of another person's behavior introduces the idea of action. Bargh and Chartrand (1999) observe that the idea that social perception is a largely automated psychological phenomenon is widely accepted among researchers. Thus the external environment can direct behavior through automatic perceptual activity that then creates behavioral tendencies. The entire environment-perception-behavior link is automatic with no role played by conscious choice (see, e.g., Bargh & Chartrand, 1999, p.466). Their research adds additional weight to the intuitive side of the debate over where moral action originates.

Frimer and Walker's original question, described in chapter one, concerning whether moral judgment is better understood as deliberative or intuitive is addressed by Lapsley & Hill

(2008). They include Bargh and Chartrand in their list of intuitive models of moral behavior which they label "System 1" models because they describe processing which is "associative, implicit, intuitive, experiential, automatic and tacit" as opposed to "System 2" models where the mental processing is "rule based, explicit, analytical, 'rational', conscious and controlled" (p. 4). They categorize Haidt's and Narvaez's models as System 1 models because they are intuitive, experiential, and automatic.

They also categorize the theories of Sunstein (2005) and Gigerenzer (2008) as System 1 models because the behavior they describe appears to be implicit, automatic and intuitive. These models emphasize the automaticity of moral judgments that come from social situations. A person with a moral personality cues to the moral undertones in a given context and intuitively formulates a moral judgment" (Lapsley & Hill, 2009). This person has already been deeply socialized into a richly moral path. However, Sunstein and Gigerenzer disagree whether their intuitive models cause moral gaps in behavior.

Gigerenzer (2008) believes that intuitions are generated by moral heuristics. Moral heuristics are the simple, highly intuitive rules of thumb that are used to negotiate everyday morality. They are shortcuts that are easier and quicker to process than deliberative conscious reasoning, thus they are automatic in their presentation. They are "fast and frugal." They are fast in that they lead to quick decisions and frugal because the information searched to reach the decision is limited. Heuristics are embodied and situated and so are deeply context sensitive. The science of heuristics wants to know which "rules of thumb" people have in their "adaptive toolbox" (Gigerenzer & Selten, 2001). Gigerenzer wants to know which heuristics succeed or fail. He rejects the notion of moral functioning as either rational or intuitive as a false distinction. Heuristics can rely on reasons, and the proper opposition is actually between unconscious

reasons underlying intuition and the conscious reasons that we generate after the fact (see Lapsley & Hill, 2008, p. 11). In general Gigerenzer asserts that moral heuristics are accurate in negotiating everyday moral behavior.

Sunstein's (2005) model also claims that intuitions are generated by 'moral heuristics.' However, in contrast to Gigerenzer, he notes that though rules-of-thumb propose swift answers to problems of judgment, they can lead to moral errors or gaps between good judgment and appropriate behavior when these rules of thumb are undisciplined and decontextualised. This occurs mostly because heuristics can be mistaken for universal truths and misapplied to situations or problems that are better left to slower deliberative reasoning. Sunstein supports the view that moral heuristics arise in a person's cognitive repertoire through possible evolutionary preparedness and social learning.

Though Lapsley & Hill categorize this model the same as Haidt's, that is, as automatic and intuitive, it should be observed that Sunstein's "intuition" in this sense means something very different than Haidt's. In the Social Intuitionist model, the social intuitions that give rise to automatic moral judgments are the result of the evolutionary preparation of innate learning models, Whereas, Sunstein's (2005) intuitions are generated by 'moral heuristics' which are quick moral rules of thumb that pop into our heads. Moreover, there is a different kind of automaticity as well. "Quicker and easier" are aspects of a different kind of automaticity than one rooted in biological structures and predispositions.

The models of moral functioning just described fall into the "intuitive" category, though they are competing descriptions of how to meaningfully connect judgment and action. Frimer and Walker (2008) assert that the "primary point of contention between the deliberative and the intuitive models of moral judgment lies in the nature of "operative moral cognition" (p. 339),

meaning the when, where and how of the moral judgment or understanding. They observe that on the one hand, models based on deliberative reasoning may be the most explanatory in that they require the individual to engage in and be aware of their own moral processing. The intuitive account, in contrast "requires a modicum of moral cognition but grants it permission to fly below the radar" (p. 339). Thus, it partially removes the "self" or consciousness from the story of moral functioning, though it does seem better able to account for the role of implicit processing in moral behavior.

Summary

This chapter has presented an analysis of how the underlying assumptions of moral psychology were originally based in Greek thought and Kantian ethics, as well as how the moral is currently presented in the various contemporary moral psychology research literatures.

Whether focused on deliberative reasoning or the automaticity of pre-reason intuitions, the specific research and theory highlighted is that which addresses how the moral is presented in human judgment and behavior. This survey certainly does not include every model or theory found in the discipline, but only those receiving substantial recent discussion in the field. This research illustrates how the various models and families of models have grown quite diverse since Kohlberg's original findings fifty years ago, both in how they conceptualize the moral and in how they address the moral judgment-moral action gap. Chapter three will argue that the theories cited in this chapter present the moral as epiphenomenal, meaning it is a secondary phenomenon, a creation of other psychological functions or underlying substrates of the prevailing moral psychology models.

The Moral as Epiphenomenal

This chapter will argue that the research cited in chapter two presents the moral as epiphenomenal, meaning it is a secondary phenomenon, a creation of other psychological functions and not fundamental to what it means to be human. In other words, moral action is a product of underlying components or substrates such as the cognitions – the practical reason – of the rational mind (Kant, 1785/1993; Kohlberg, 1981; Rest, 1984), emotions or intuitions (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2007), a social construct (Turiel, 1983), a certain type of behavior, personality, or identity (Blasi, 1983), an evolved emotional system, psychological schemas or a biological propensity of the brain (Haidt, 2001; Narvaez, 2007).

The moral in the prevailing models is understood to be a naturally occurring phenomenon. Thus, researchers attempt to understand moral action in terms of evolutionary structures or natural processes that occur in an individual's being, presupposing that he or she is fundamentally a natural object. Williams and Gantt (2009) note that in psychology, researchers study beings for whom all rational thinking, all sentiments, including moral ones, and all behavioral processes are, at the end of the day nothing more than natural processes of the 'nature-nurture' sort" (see also, Binmore, 2005). Accordingly, the researchers cited here are enabled by carefully thought-out models to make sense of moral behavior by virtue of natural and evolutionary structures and processes, including social conditioning. This chapter will propose that what is lost in these models of moral action is the morality of the moral action—in other words, the moral qua moral. The action in question then, is only incidentally moral—moral by virtue of the context in which it occurs. Indeed, the moral in these models is a secondary morality, ultimately derived from substrates that involve the integration or interplay of internal or external forces. Some of these causal forces invoked in the research reviewed in chapter two will

be discussed in this chapter. This chapter will pose some basic questions about how the moral is dealt with in these models, and whether it survives in the model *as* moral, though space limitations prohibit a complete discussion of the implications of these questions.

Fundamental Questions for Researchers

It appears that in moral psychology research, "the moral" is attached in particular models of moral behavior to "smaller," more deep-seated substrates or fundamental constructs from which judgment or action spring. For example, in the research by Kohlberg, reasoning about the moral and ethical is the basis for moral behavior (Kohlberg, 1969). Moral action springs from moral understanding which understanding changes as a person reforms his reasoning process and progresses through to higher stages of rational thinking as laid out in the structure of the stages of moral development. However, what is the source for this increase in understanding? Is it reason alone? Is there anything innately "moral" in the source of the understanding and thus in the understanding itself? Kohlberg embraces 'reason' as the basis for apprehending the moral. In other words, for Kohlberg, reasoning creates the moral as it evaluates and defines the nature of circumstances in which people find themselves. It creates and somehow attaches morality to its own rational understanding. There is a long history (at least since Socrates) in Western thought that privileges such theoretical reasoning and the knowledge it produces. Knowledge acquired through rational thought processes is considered truer and better than other types of merely contingent, empirically derived knowledge.

Kohlberg claimed that a particular behavior had no moral status unless it was motivated by a moral judgment that could be identified as a conscious process or cognition (Kohlberg, Levine & Hewer, 1983). Another question, then, for Kohlberg might be, where and how does this conscious process of judgment originate, and, in the process of reasoning, where does 'the moral' enter in? In other words, how does moral understanding arise out of reason? Is it a logical process? If it

comes from cognitively learning to act responsibly and with integrity through stages of development as indicated in his research models (Kohlberg, 1969), the questions of who decides which behavior has integrity and how stages of moral development are manifested and identified become paramount. We see also that it is necessary to identify when a person is reasoning about a genuinely moral issue and when one is not. Thus the morality of the substance of reason seems to be the prior question for all moral reasoning. On both of these lines of analysis it becomes clear that one cannot start the understanding of moral reasoning in moral reasoning itself.

Kant, Piaget and Kohlberg subscribed to the notion that ethics and virtues or moral conceptions occur when they are first manifested through reasoning processes. Kant based morality first, and foremost on what he described as the self-existent (ie., existing without being derived from more basic premises) categorical imperative to perform one's duty. Thus, for Kohlberg, who espoused Kant's views, those who progress to the sixth stage of moral development in reasoning about justice (Kohlberg, 1971) understand self-existent, abstract universal ethical principles. Kohlberg claimed that universal moral principles could be discovered empirically. How do these universal ethical principles exist and where do they come from? Do they exist in nature and are they ascertained only by the human mind? Kohlberg and others are unable to embrace the moral as essentially fundamental to humanity because they see it, instead, as springing from other causal roots (such as rationally occurring cognitions, categorical imperatives, or self existent universal principles).

For James Rest (1984), cognitive developmental explanations of moral action became a more multifaceted enterprise than for Kohlberg. Foreshadowing the complex models of moral judgment, motivation and action that have since followed, Rest went beyond Kohlberg's focus on moral judgment to formulate the Defining Issues Test (DIT) which tested Rest's four

component model (moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation and moral character). This model encompassed diverse psychological functions such as interpreting situations, formulating courses of action, selecting among alternative values that bear on a given circumstance, and executing courses of action (Cervone & Tripathi, 2009). Cervone and Tripathi (2009) rightly wonder about a moral psychology that encompasses such a multiplicity of psychological systems (interpreting situations, formulating action, selecting values, executing action) by asking, "What's the difference between moral psychology and psychology in general?" (p. 30). In other words, they recognize that Rest and others attach the moral to psychological functions such as judgments, sensibilities, motives and actions, in short, to whole personalities. What criteria are used to attach moral meaning to these psychological functions? What makes a motive or sensibility moral? Rest went further than Kohlberg (who was primarily concerned with moral justice and duty) in claiming that the other components in his model also produce moral action, meaning that universal moral standards could be ascertained by examining an individual's internal sensibilities (feelings), motives and character traits (Rest, 1984).

Questions for moral identity theorists. Building on Kohlberg's and Rest's findings, Blasi (1995) felt the focus of the moral should be primarily on motivation. He was the pioneer in the formulation of models of moral identity and saw 'the self' as the key to moral motivation. Without moral motivation there is no moral action. He locates motivation in what he terms "the moral self" and thereby uses this moral self to bridge the moral judgment-action gap. When the moral self (which can vary in content) has a high degree of moral centrality, this is what brings moral judgment and action together. Moral centrality, as explained in chapter two, is the degree to which a person is consistent or has integrity about being a good or moral person (acting on characteristics such as compassion, honesty, and generosity). Blasi (1984) says, "the

motivational basis for moral action lies in the internal demand for psychological self-consistency" (p. 129). Blasi (1983) describes his Self Model as a set of "empirically testable propositions. Its major theoretical characteristics are: it is cognitive, recognizing as the central function of human cognition the appraisal of truth [in other words, humans have the cognitive ability to arrive at universal truths]; it acknowledges a basic duality of motivation, but stresses the normative pull of cognitive motivation; it is developmental; it uses the self as the central explanatory concept, establishing both the sense of personal responsibility and the dynamism of self-consistency" (p. 178).

For Blasi, and most other moral identity researchers cited in chapter two, acting with moral responsibility and integrity are the criteria that establish that some moral stance is central to the self. The moral self incorporates a feeling of responsibility to act with integrity in moral judgments. This is how motivation to act is created. Researchers who studied moral exemplars emphasized that the moral is manifest when the goals of 'the self' are aligned with moral goals such as being honest and helpful (Colby & Damon, 1995; Hart & Fegley, 1995). However, here again, one wonders, from where does this feeling of responsibility and integrity arise?

The primary problem with Blasi's approach is that it appears to be a circular argument. The very qualities that would move Blasi's self to act with integrity are essentially the marks of integrity itself. Thus, this approach is ultimately a descriptive one in the sense that there are some individuals who do have integrity to act upon their moral self and some who do not have integrity to act. Those who have an integrated moral identity act in a morally integrated fashion. If Blasi's theories are to make a contribution, they must go deeper into the origins of integrity. Blasi says integrity comes from the identity of the moral self. How then, does integrity get into

the moral identity? If it is by acting morally, then how does one act morally in the original sense without the integrity to do so?

It seems that Blasi's description of moral action and its arising from a self for whom such morality is central cannot help but beg the question. If the source of moral action is the moral purpose of the self, and, at the same time, the primary evidence for the existence and the make-up of the moral self is derived from the fact of moral action, then we have a classic case of invoking in explanation the very thing that was to be explained in the first place. Such "explanation' is forgivable in mere "description' of moral action, but cannot provide much illumination on the roots of the moral self or moral action. The only non-circular aspect of Blasi's model seems to be the role of moral norms and customs.

Perhaps part of the problem is the fact that Blasi, similar to Kohlberg and Rest, rely on the abilities of human self-reflection to ascertain universal moral truths which for him includes integrity. However there is still a question concerning just how these universals are incorporated into the self to produce a moral identity. Thus we are left with a question of why some people adopt and act on moral norms while others don't-which is the same as Blasi's original question. Or, we move to a rather simple behaviorism—with social conditioning as the explanation of both self and moral action.

Questions for domain theorists. Further questions for domain theorists involve how to define the moral domain. Here, the moral is connected to concern for the intrinsic effects of human actions that harm, or actions that inhibit fairness including actions that lead to injustice, or the violation of rights. Questions of what is fair, what is harmful, which human rights must be violated to qualify as a moral injustice, become the issues in any discussion of such an approach. In other words, this analysis shows itself to be problematic because what is or is not just and fair,

what does or does not harm someone is a matter of judgment. Examples such as slavery, pornography, and abortion, among others, illustrate changing notions of justice and harm in society.

However, Turiel (1998) claims that the moral domain does consist of universal concepts of justice and rights that, similar to Aristotle's virtues, were not determined by consensus or existing social arrangements. Still, it is one thing to say, as Aristotle did, that welfare, justice and rights must be universal (not mere contrivances or habits) in order to be the foundation for the moral, but it is quite another thing to say that welfare, justice and rights are the exclusive dimensions of human endeavor that define what is moral. In other words, if these things are moral, they must be universal, but not everything concerning welfare, justice and rights is universal in the sense of Aristotle's meaning (leading to the Good, a good in itself, or productive of happiness or eudaimonia). For Aristotle, justice, welfare and rights were fundamental because they led to happiness and the positive development of our nature. Turiel and Nucci seem to be wanting to skip this very important step of the analysis.

Additionally, Nucci (2000) asks how we know moral behavior, such as working for the poor, is motivated by compassion or merely by a desire to pad a resume. Nucci, and Turiel see both motives equally valid as long as the individual deems them to be so. Unlike much moral psychology, Turiel and Nucci's work does not accept the premise that a moral judgment-action gap exists. Whatever precedes action is in actuality a judgment about which of three judgment domains (moral, personal or social) to prioritize. Thus, when a moral judgment is made and not acted upon, it is merely a situation in which concerns of a personal or social domain take precedence in a particular situation. Put tendentiously, whether a person behaves morally depends on whether he behaves morally.

It appears that the failure to act upon a moral judgment may be explained away post hoc as not requiring moral action after all. For this particular perspective, the question arises, how can any situation calling for action be judged as absolutely moral when it can always be dismissed later as not having enough meaning to merit action? Is this not an example of a gap when one must decide whether to act within the personal domain, rather than the moral domain? However, this approach sees no gaps in behavior of any kind. Moral behavior becomes a question of personal priorities. Thus, there is an unacknowledged gap between personal and moral priorities. The question is why the person did not act out of the moral domain, but stayed in the personal one. To explain that the moral situation was not strong enough is simply to say that they did not act on it.

Bergman's model seeks to ameliorate the subjectiveness, and thus the moral relativity of Turiel and Nucci's models. For Bergman, moral judgments remain moral and take precedence over personal and social preferences, even though they often cannot be acted upon. However, there are very few moral judgments that cannot be acted upon at all—for example at the ballot box, or how and where we endorse moral issues in our conversation, monetary spending, etc.

Further questions for research on intuition, emotion and physiological research. Bargh (1997), Narvaez (2008), Haidt and Bjorklund (2007), as well as Monin, Pizarro and Beer (2007), take the field of moral psychology in different directions, moral development and identity questioning the fundamental definitions of the moral and where it originates. Bargh presents evidence that much of our everyday moral activity is governed by cognitive processes that are preconscious and automatic which would seem to thoroughly undermine the notion of the deliberative "moral judgment" which was a foundational premise of Kohlberg's project.

Both Narvaez (2008) and Haidt & Bjorklund (2007) are of the opinion that ultimately, the moral is derived from evolved brain structures that benefit our social survival. Narvaez' Triune Ethics theory focuses on motivational orientations that are rooted in evolved unconscious emotional systems. Narvaez contends that three formations in the human brain reflect the evolution of reptiles and mammals. Each of these three formations has a "footprint" that marks moral behavioral tendencies. We might raise the question for Narvaez: 'Where does a biological propensity to produce an ethical motive (see Narvaez, 2008, p. 95) originate and how did the ethical motive get into an individual's biology, and how did the ethical get into the motive?' Furthermore, approached from a slightly different angle, in reference to her research on psychological schemas, when the chronic accessibility of psychological schemas creates moral thinking and behavior, the question arises as to how do the behavior and the thinking change from being just regular behavior and thinking to being moral behavior and moral thinking?

Monin, Pizarro and Beer (2007) propose that researchers need not choose between emotion or reason as sources for moral behavior. They conclude that the moral may be derived from both, depending upon the setting. Some settings call for sophisticated reasoning while others call for emotion laden reactions. This model illustrates what comes when theorists emphasize the *process* of moral behavior independent of, or without regard to the *content* of moral behavior—which is where the real morality resides.

Theories that label innate flashes of approval or disapproval (intuitions) along a good/bad dimension as moral (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2007) must respond to the issue of just who it is that decides that the sentiments a person is experiencing are right or wrong, good or bad, or how it is decided. It seems clear that such flashes could be arrayed along a very selfish, hedonic dimension as well as along a moral dimension. How do such flashes and their products become

distinctly moral rather than merely affective, aesthetic, or self-serving? Whether it is the person or the surrounding group that brings about the transition from the affective to the moral, the question remains how did they learn to make such a transfer in the nature of this feeling?

All of these questions cannot be addressed within the parameters of this paper. Still, they imply that there is an "ought-ness" to the moral that is felt or discerned on an individual level, and even by the researchers themselves, but is not easily defined, and disappears if reduced to other non-moral originative sources. A feeling of ought-ness implies the existence of a discernible and intrinsically moral process at work in moral thinking and action. A feeling of ought-ness pervades all of the moral psychology research which is an indicator that this feeling is fundamental—and, it appears, more fundamental than is being portrayed in the models.

If researchers consistently reduce the moral to evolutionary substrates, there still remains a question of why one would or should label the phenomena these substrates produce, whatever they may be, "moral phenomena" rather than just "phenomena." Is the moral, *as moral*, always referring to events that enhance individual or collective survivability? Is the *ought-ness* we are seeking to understand simply referring to "what we *ought* to do to survive?" If so, morality becomes simply an instrumental ethic to increase our propensity for survival and propagation. Some researchers seem to be making this argument (see, e.g., Haidt & Joseph, 2004; Narvaez, 2008).

Mechanistic Explanations

The central problem encountered in models of moral action is that by attributing behavior to a mechanistic or some other type of structure or process to which human beings themselves do not actively contribute, psychologists are unable to account for human action in a manner that preserves its essentially meaningful, moral character (Williams & Gantt, 2002). Instead,

morality becomes simply a component of a personality, emotive intuitions or brain functions, at a level too primitive to find the person's active contribution, and certainly too primitive to be moral in any important sense. According to the models, such primitive intuitions and their resultant emotions rather smoothly become the preferences of individuals, and then through various social processes rather smoothly transform into the preferences of the entire group. As MacIntyre (1984) and Oderberg (2000) have argued, deriving the moral from preferences means that whatever behavior is preferred by those who have power in the group becomes the moral norm and shapes the moral principles of the group. Moral behavior therefore becomes relativistic—relative to the norms and preferences of the local group. And one wonders if such a phenomenon deserves to be called "moral" in any important sense since it is distinguishable in no important way from any number of other habitual behavioral phenomena—except in a post hoc fashion. In other words, the morality is in the contextual circumstances and not in the behavior itself or in the person him or herself. Thus, in regards to the current models of moral action, we can conclude that either the behavior and processes being described are not really moral, or somewhere in these processes the moral appears as a result of preferences.

Frimer and Walker (2008) assert that in any model of moral personhood, the feeling of ought-ness must be addressed. They urge moral psychologists to articulate a non-neutral account of *which* values are preferable in defining good moral behavior. They argue that theories of moral personhood must endorse goals not only for how individuals should reason right from wrong, but also what they should value as being good. "The new challenge becomes the highly controversial task of articulating and defending an account of *which values* are preferable in sufficiently broad terms to avoid ethnocentrism. To be clear, our point is that this task is categorically unavoidable for any theory of moral psychology . . . Just which non-neutral

conception of the good is most appropriate remains important conceptual work for the field"
(Frimer & Walker, 2008, p. 337-338, italics added). In taking up this challenge, this paper offers
a non-neutral conception of moral judgment and moral behavior and offers a new approach to
understanding moral personhood. It requires a philosophical shift in how we characterize moral
persons and their relationships to others.

Models predict behavior. If moral action is epiphenomenal (that is, secondary to some
other phenomenon) then empirically validating any of the theories and models of moral
judgment is ultimately mere "window dressing." This is so in the sense that, because the status of
the moral qua moral is unclear in the model, empirical "validation" shows the efficacy of the
model in predicting patterns of behavior as behavior in general, but does not necessarily show
anything about moral behavior in particular. In other words, models of moral functioning,
whether centered around human rationality, or intuition, or an integration of complex
psychological and neurological processes (each of which is ultimately the result of humans
evolving toward survivability), all retain the problem of striving to get the moral dimension out
of a non-moral substrate, what some have termed, striving to get "meaning out of meat," or
"meaning out of mechanisms" (Williams & Gantt, 2009; Flanagan, 2007; Glannon, 2007;
Stanovich, 2004). Is it feasible to find the moral in a theory of moral action when, in that theory,
all behavior is motivated by brain structures? In such a theory, morality must be seen as a merely
contingent and coincidental characteristic of the particular behavior of interest, and, likewise,
merely a contingent and coincidental characteristic of the particular causal factors at work in
producing the behavior. The "morality" is attached only to a categorical referent, based on
culturally bound decisions of the researchers, and the research is not really about morality at all,

but—as many suggest all social science should be—about the prediction of behavior regardless of moral content.

The Ontological Gap

One might say that when the kind of research on moral judgment and action that is described above concerns itself with the "ought" directly, it strives to get *ought* out of *is* by attaching (somehow), "the moral" to "the non-moral"—specifically preferred neurological, psychological or behavioral occurrences. Simply put, the gap between the moral and the non-moral is an "ontological gap." It is called an ontological gap because it refers to a long standing and persistent problem in psychological explanation concerning two very separate ontological realms: the physical, material world of neural tissue, genes, chemicals and hormones in the body's physical structures, and the nonphysical, nonmaterial world of sentiment and meaning (Williams & Gantt, 2009). How can the physical realm play a causal role in the nonphysical realm? Most theorists who explore these kinds of questions agree that there is no credible nor verifiable explanatory account of how the material/physical substance of one ontological realm (what "is") has a causal relationship to the nonphysical/nonmaterial ontological realm of morality and meaning (what "ought" to be) (see, e.g., Bennett & Hacker, 2003; Robinson, 2008; Rowlands, 2001; Slife & Hopkins, 2005). Though Kohlberg sought to address this dilemma early in his program of research (e.g., Kohlberg, 1971) the ontological gap remains, and current research in moral psychology does not sufficiently address the issue (Slife & Hopkins, 2005). In fact, psychology in general has long neglected metaphysical questions concerning the fundamental nature of human beings. Williams and Gantt (2009) observe that "The metaphysical project of psychology, or, more accurately, psychology as a metaphysical project, is virtually never acknowledged in the discipline, probably owing largely to some felt allegiance to a strictly

experimental or positivist model of scientific psychology, coupled, no doubt with a lack of training and interest in metaphysics and philosophy, on the part of most psychologists" (p. 3).

Careful reading of the literature on moral psychology reveals that, in the minds of most researchers it seems, this ontological gap can be bridged almost magically, by the assumptions, constructs and, in some cases, the faith of the researchers. It is bridged when morality is attached to brain functions or to cognitive processes by fiat or by consensus. It is bridged when morality is attached to emotions and intuitions. Many assume that the ontological gap between the physiological and the moral is bridged with societal inclinations (norms, cultural practices) with no way of attaching to those norms anything more meaningful or moral than mere preference. In fact, introducing cultural norms and preferences to bridge the physiological and the moral, rather than solving the problem inherent in the ontological gap, creates two other gaps in the attempt— how does the cultural become related meaningfully to the physiological, and how does the cultural become the moral rather than remaining merely preferential? In the contemporary project, then, researchers determine when and where "the moral" is attached to the constructs of interest in a particular research model or socio/cultural condition, but with no compelling account of just how this comes to pass.

Morality and meaning. Attaching the moral in this way (to what are essentially physiological phenomena and cultural processes), disregards the role that meaning plays in moral behavior. The moral consists in the recognition that some things make a difference important enough to care about, and the difference they make can, and indeed, must be evaluated along a dimension that reflects good and bad, worthy or unworthy, right or wrong. Morality seen in this light thus consists of meaningful differences. That is, there is a difference between kinds of moral choices that individuals face each day and this difference gives meaning or value to the

choice that is made. For example if I choose to help the drowning man, the value and meaning of my action is very different than if I ignore the drowning man. If I choose to help the man, I make a difference in the man's life and in my own life. Making this difference gives my life meaning. Thus, my moral choice inhabits a "region of difference." There is a difference between the consequences of my choice to help the man, and my choice to ignore the man. There are differences as well in the meaningfulness and value the choice brings to my existence. This meaningfulness does not originate in the natural processes of my body, or the rational processes of my mind, it originates in the holistic nature of the moral act and in the fact that it is I, the agent who performs the act in the midst of other possible acts that I purposefully do not perform. The moral quality of the act cannot be fragmented into components without losing the meaningful quality of the act. Thus, there is a gap between the physical (or merely necessary), and the morally meaningful. This ontological gap persists in the mainstream approaches to moral psychology because causes for meaning and morality are sought in ways and in places where they cannot be found, that is, in merely rational processes and purely biological functioning (or in some interaction between these two things).

Williams and Gantt (2002) articulate for us this concept that meaning and morality inhabit a region of difference and this region is grounds for moral behavior when they state, "meaning and morality instantiate meaningful differences, and as meaningful difference, they constitute the grounds for evaluation and assessment" (p. 15). That is, meaning and morality are *the basis* for our choices, and our behaviors and actions reflect the meaning and morality inherent in our being human. We do not derive meaning and morality from the facts of our actions. Thus, meaning and morality cannot be the *products* of cognitive assessments nor emotive experience. "Because contemporary psychological theories have tended to try and

ground meaning and morality in cognitive processes or private emotive experience, they have not successfully accounted for meaning and morality in human action" (p. 15). Instead, current theories of cognition and emotion continue to make meaning and morality (and thus, moral action) into products of simpler determining processes.

Moral psychology explanations and agency. An insurmountable difficulty in bringing the moral into psychology arises from the doctrines of determinism and mechanism that make it impossible to account for human action in agentive terms. This means that for individuals making moral judgments, agency, or what Williams (2002) defines as "having the world truthfully,"[6] is negated by types of determinism that hold that events cannot be otherwise than they are. Determinism is the doctrine that every event, act, and decision is the inevitable consequence of antecedents that are independent of considerations of human will. Any deterministic viewpoint that implies that moral behaviors are caused by hereditary predispositions and environmental or physiological effects and events leaves out, and obviates, human agency. In psychology the determining antecedents usually are biological or environmental.

Mechanism, another viewpoint held, in one form or another, by many psychologists, holds that everything about human beings can be completely explained in loosely mechanical terms that reflect realities analogous to the workings of a clock or an automobile engine. This is illustrated most commonly in the models of moral action that break down the moral act into causal (largely physiological) components, each doing its part either consecutively or

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[6] Agency defined as "having the world truthfully," rather than merely making free choices from among alternatives is to say that "living truthfully" is the proper, effective, appropriate recognition of the differences inherent in an act or situation. Agents participate in the world in a way that truthfully articulates the differences something makes, or rather, the morality of the activity (Williams, 2002).

concurrently to bring about the moral event. Though some in moral psychology adopt a free will viewpoint, they often endorse agency while simultaneously employing deterministic constructs and models in their research and explanations (see, e.g., Blasi, 2009; Narvaez, 2008).

The deterministic nature of cognitive reasoning, emotion, intuition, or the rational and biological substrates that cause them, ultimately destroy possibility. This is so because in the face of deterministic and mechanistic processes, differences are destroyed. When a behavioral act is considered to be a product of determining biological and rational processes, then the act cannot be other than it is. The act is determined beforehand to be what it is. Thus, these processes destroy agency and thus difference. When difference disappears, meaning and morality goes with it. Differences are what bring about meaning in experience. Perhaps the most important result in this state of affairs is that when deterministic and mechanistic explanations eliminate possibilities, this can lead to nihilism—the meaninglessness of human existence. We might say that reducing morality to "smaller causal substrates," eliminates the meaning inherent within morality. Nihilism is the antithesis of the moral.

Another difficulty in bringing the moral into psychology stems from contemporary approaches to morality that are purely 'principle-based.' They ground the moral in principles derived from 'reason.' The ethical power of principle based morality is coincidental with its rational persuasive power (see, e.g., Williams, 2005, p. 8). In other words, the power of rationally derived principles lies in their power to persuade, not in their being, per se, the right thing to do. While rationally derived moral principles are often consistent with and accompany moral action, and can play an important part in motivating and reinforcing moral action, the rationality qua rationality is not enough to guarantee that the act is moral. Rationality reflects morality at least as often as morality reflects rationality. But in neither case are principled

rationality and morality exactly equivalent. It is not difficult to imagine a scenario in which the logical, rational thing to do in a particular situation is not always the 'right' thing to do. Williams (2005) notes that while there is merit in bringing reason and the moral together, in doing so a crucial element of the moral is lost:

> When ethics and reason are conflated, reason overpowers the essence of the ethical—partly because the ethical speaks initially and most authentically in a 'still small voice' [or what is explained later in this paper as "felt moral obligation"] . . . When ethics is rooted in reason, the fundamental question of reason—the question of certainty—overshadows the fundamental question of the ethical – the question of right" (p. 8)

Correcting the misconception of moral personhood as reducible to components, substrates and categories or principles or rationality requires grounding the moral in something else.

Alternative Understandings of Moral Judgment

Inadequate Conceptions of Morality

To briefly summarize, in the research surveyed in this paper, the moral takes the form of judgments and behaviors of individuals in environmental settings that can be considered to be "moral," or morally relevant, or, in regards to cognitive content or issues that can be seen to be "morally charged." Often the theories and models go on to reduce these judgments and behaviors to simpler or more basic components such as perceptions, rational cognitions, emotions, intuitions or deliberations. Further research seeks to clarify how these components combine, influence and interact with one another (Bargh & Pratto, 1986; Bergman, 2002; Blasi,1983; Haidt & Bjorklund, 2007; Monin, Pizarro & Beer, 2007; Rest, 1984). Some of these combinations and interactions are reduced further to so-called unconscious emotional systems, psychological schemas or brain modules (Haidt, 2001, Narvaez, et al, 2006). In one model, these components have been further reduced to actual places in the brain having a genetic origin in the history of mammalian species (Narvaez, 2008). It is apparent that these more basic constructs are not moral in any direct or innate sense. Thus the moral is, at most, a derivative of some interactions of primitive processes and social contexts. The moral *qua* moral is not attached in any direct and fundamental way to human persons or their acts.

This chapter makes and defends the claim that these reductions result in a fundamentally inadequate misconception of moral personhood, and that moral action must be grounded in some other understanding of moral personhood than the one operative in the mainstream models of moral psychology. In the alternative presented in this thesis, the core manifestation of moral personhood is felt moral obligation. The alternative is sketched out from the perspective of a new starting point for understanding moral behavior. This starting point is Emmanuel Levinas's understanding of what is termed the "call to the Other."

Some moral theorists have recently made the supposition that moral psychologists do not need any more new philosophical starting points:

> In our view, moral psychology is better served by jettisoning starting points that are motivated more by philosophical than by psychological considerations . . . Rather than a 'moralized psychology' whose parameters and terms of reference are set by certain philosophical goals (e.g., defeating ethical relativism), we opt instead for a 'psychologized morality' that attempts to study moral functioning within the framework of contemporary psychological theories and methods" (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005, p.142).

Narvaez and Lapsley (2005) contend that relying too heavily on the "principle of phenomenalism"—which means that an action is not moral unless an explicitly moral judgment is made by the agent beforehand—has had untoward effects on moral psychology. First, the principle narrows the range of behavior that can legitimately be studied because decisions made and actions taken without conscious deliberation are disqualified. Thus, the principle of phenomenalism isolates moral psychology from other fruitful fields of study such as social cognition and personality. This a priori constraint cuts off moral psychology from possibilities of integration with these other literatures and encourages theoretical isolation (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005).

Narvaez cites the evidence contributed by John Bargh (e.g., Bargh 1989, 1990, 1996, 1997; Uleman & Bargh, 1989) that much of our daily activity is governed by preconscious, automatic processes. This seems to undermine moral psychology's defining principle of phenomenalism. However, what some current moral psychologists seem not to understand is that jettisoning phenomenalism merely rids them of one philosophical assumption for another. All

psychological science makes "philosophical" assumptions whether researchers are aware of them or not (Slife & Williams, 1995).

Moreover, it is one thing to say that much of our daily activity—including moral activity—is preconscious and largely automatic, and quite another to say that this daily activity is best understood as "governed by automatic processes." This type of behavior may be non-deliberative, and "preconscious," but it may, nonetheless still be agentic and holistic. This paper argues that since most of what we do is like this, then it reflects what we truly are. What we do automatically can be seen as how we respond to our fundamental primordial status as moral beings. It can be argued that if there are no identifiable processes of which we are aware in our "automatic" preconscious actions, on what basis do we assume there are unconscious or other kinds of processes going on at all? In other words, how can preconscious, automatic behaviors need no explanatory cognitive components, while deliberative behaviors require cognitive explanations? This type of argument betrays a theoretical bias and an inability to resist mechanical metaphors and evolutionary models. So, though we would agree that moral action is largely not deliberative, we don't need to enshrine deliberate moral judgment as the defining feature of all moral action or moral judgment. However, this does not necessarily draw us into explanations based solely on primitive processes either.

As moral psychology stands at this time, moral judgment is still considered the core phenomenon leading to moral action, and jettisoning moral judgment comes at a price. If there is no moral judgment at the heart of the behaviors that moral psychologists study, then, the field would be left with researching the "is" of moral behavior, while the "ought" slips away. But if the "ought" is missing from moral phenomena, then we are back to the problem of what makes moral psychology "moral" in any important sense. The interest and efforts of the entire field

shift to the kind of ethical or moral behavior that is observed, but not necessarily distinguished as the moral thing to do. If there is no phenomenon of an a priori implicit moral judgment made by the individual, then there is no "ought" or "should" of morality to be addressed in the science. There are only observations of types of behavior in which cognitive behaviorists and personality theorists have long been engaged without any moral elements in their science. The literature of Narvaez and Lapsley (2006) and Haidt and Joseph (2004) seems to have been heading this direction for a while. If this is so, they are not really addressing "moral" behavior, but just behavior in general.

This is not to say, however that deliberative moral judgments are the only, or even the primary manifestation of moral sensitivity and capacity that make moral behavior an interesting and legitimate topic for psychological study. As Bargh and Chartrand (1999) assert, it may be that most of our most important human activities—including moral behaviors—are not deliberative; however it does not follow that they are simply produced by morally neutral processes of the same sort that produce other behaviors. This paper will argue, in fact, that the proper grounding for moral behavior is a moral sensitivity that is not deliberative in the sense that explicit cognitive judgments are. However, this sensitivity is, nonetheless, a moral act of a moral agent, and not the product of generic processes or evolutionary structures. Furthermore, it is innately and primordially moral. This thesis will be developed as the primary focus of this dissertation.

Reducing moral behavior. When contemporary psychology's tendency to reduce moral behavior is more carefully examined, what actually takes place when identifying sources of the moral, is that which appears initially to be ethical or moral, upon closer examination, is actually an overlay of sterile constructs that can be shown not to be really ethical or moral after all, and to

be *covering up* genuine moral human phenomena. In other words, a reductive explanatory tack in models of moral judgment has us focus on the mechanisms that determine behavior so that an act is determined by whichever mechanical, causal forces happen to be operating at a particular time, in a particular situation, in which case the act can hardly be said to be genuinely moral (Williams, 2005). As was argued in chapter three, this explanatory configuration disallows individual agency because the act follows from causal, antecedent conditions. It cannot be otherwise than it is—things cannot be different. Without agency, differences cannot exist and thus morality and meaning are lost.

Grounding moral action in an alternative. In order to understand moral judgment and action in a way that avoids reductive strategies based either on psychological processes or purely rational judgment, leading to a loss of meaning, and agency, the moral must be grounded in an ontology that establishes the primacy of the moral, and the moral will always be tied to other persons. In other words, the moral must be grounded in an understanding of what human beings are capable of and how they work. Underlying all moral judgment-action explanations is a set of metaphysical assumptions about the nature of human beings and the functions of which they are capable (Slife, Reber, & Richardson, 2005; Williams & Gantt, 2009). The current experimental or positivist bent of moral psychology that seeks verification of particular models of moral judgment and action is almost always grounded in some materialistic and naturalistic assumptions, meaning that biological, neural, and rational processes produce moral action (see, e.g., Haidt & Bjorklund, 2006; Lapsley & Hill, 2009). Moral knowledge and learning can be traced to slow cognitions, or fast intuitions and emotions that are founded in these biological, neural and rational processes (see, e.g., Frank, 1988; Kagan, 1984; Haidt, 2001; Shweder &

Haidt, 1993; Wilson, 1993). This paper proposes that analysis of moral action must be grounded in an alternative understanding of personhood, one that is fundamentally, already moral.

The fundamental character of human beings must be understood as being an array of attributes and abilities to perceive, understand, intend, comprehend and being a moral agent. Unless one supposes human beings to be capable of understanding, interpreting, creating meaning and symbolic expression, and being sensitive to distinctions between various types of beings and things, then no real explanation of the moral and ethical is possible. Put another way, unless we are fundamentally capable and predisposed to discerning others and responding ethically to them as opposed to simply "hosting" cognitive, emotive, or biological responses to them, we will always be only secondarily moral, "caught in the throes of ultimately groundless, although often handy, ethical theories, and forever alienated from others" (Williams, 2005, p. 10). This means that most moral psychology research will remain superficial unless humans are judged to be more than mere organisms or "hosts" that function mechanistically through material operations or cognitive processes. It means that meaning and morality must be at the core of the analysis of human moral judgments and actions.

The judgment-action gap as evidence of the moral. It is in this sense that, ultimately, moral personhood refers to individuals in relation with one another. It refers to an essential way of being toward others. When we conceive of moral personhood as fundamentally capable and predisposed to responding ethically to others, then our human emotional intuitions and the moral judgment-action gap reflect the acts of fundamentally moral agents, rather than the products of evolutionarily derived primitive mechanisms or failures of rationality. They become *indicators* of the moral states of persons, and not *precursors* to the moral, nor simply cognitive-behavioral disconnects.

Some researchers speak of emotions and intuitions themselves as capable of producing moral behavior (Haidt, 2001; Haidt & Joseph, 2004; Narvaez, 2008). In contrast, this paper argues that neither emotions nor intuitions nor even cognitions produce moral behaviors; they *are* moral behaviors. For example, Haidt (2008) claims that moral beliefs and motivations come from sentiments which give us an immediate feeling of right or wrong and are built into the fabric of human nature. Thus, a moral sense is based on a "small set of innately prepared, affectively valenced moral intuitions" (p. 5). His answer to the question 'How does moral judgment work?' is that brains evaluate and react. They are clumps of neural tissue that "integrate information from the external and internal environments to answer one fundamental question: approach or avoid?" (Haidt, 2008, p. 6). However, as previously argued in this dissertation, since Haidt indicates that these intuitions arise out of substrates (such as sensibilities based in neurological tissue and innate emotional systems), which are ultimately products of evolutionary natural selection adapted to solve problems, the moral in Haidt's model becomes epiphenomenal rather than fundamental. The moral arises out of tissue, unconscious systems, and natural selection. It also seems unlikely that the rich array of the moral in human life and human history can be shown to derive from simple "approach/avoidance" tropisms that are given in Haidt's models. It is also unlikely that any credible account of the richly moral can be derived from the simply affective.

The Moral as Fundamental

When the moral is fundamental, it entails a sensitivity to, and a discerning of, others, self, and circumstance which *comprises* at once, moral life itself. Such sensitivity and discernment are not derived from non-moral things. Our moral condition is rather like an act of "perceiving" (in a very radical sense of that term), a *modus operandi* of being, rather than a product of states

and processes. This is the crux of the argument made here, that the moral in our humanity is holistic and agentic, and, fundamental such that there is nothing "below, behind, or before" from which it can be derived. It manifests those core and innate faculties and activities by virtue of which we are human, but it does not derive from them any more than seeing derives from eyes or walking derives from legs.

This primacy of the moral is here termed "metaphysical" which is a term not often employed in psychology (Slife & Williams, 1995; Williams & Gantt, 2009). In short, metaphysics ("beyond" or "above" the physical) is concerned with the fundamental nature of reality. In terms of scholarly discourse it is the question of "what really is." This primacy of the moral is referred to as metaphysical because it is basic, and not reducible to mere biology, neurology, rationality, sensibility (meaning an acute perception or responsiveness), or evolution which are often the essential fundamentals at play when moral behavior is (reductively) explained by current moral psychology researchers.

In this paper, the moral is taken to be fundamental based on an account of "the self" that is wholly unlike the modern self accepted by Blasi and most psychologists. The account is based in an ontology of the self in which it is fundamentally and originatively obligated toward others. Ontology is concerned with the study of the nature of existence or being. In the ontology discussed here, what is most real in terms of being the human beings we are is the obligation toward and the desire for the Other.[7] It is a view in which the self has an obligation toward others that precedes and supersedes other obligations—such as those to self or to principles. Thus, for Turiel (1983), in light of this alternative account of the moral as

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[7] In continental philosophy, the *Constitutive Other* often denotes persons identified as "different" and in Levinas's case as "infinite." It denotes "alterity" or "otherness" in general, not specifically. Thus, the term "other" often is capitalized to signify this representation of difference, of alterity, of infiniteness.

fundamental, choosing to act within the moral domain of behavior as opposed to the personal and social domains would reflect one way of responding to this prior obligation. The argument is made here that only within such a metaphysical understanding can morality retain its morality, and thus its ability to give our behaviors moral meaning.

Felt moral obligation. Williams and Olson (2008) introduce the concept of "felt moral obligation" as grounding for moral life and action. The obligation to the Other cannot be reduced to any other antecedent except the appearance of the Other to a morally sentient self. Note here that the morality comes out of the call of the Other, not out of any special structures or generators within the self. With this concept, Williams and Olson challenge the view that the moral is essentially in principles or in specific rationales such as are found in some contemporary models of moral behavior: Their notion of a felt ethical obligation is as a (holistic) behavioral intention that is experienced not as an obligation to have, hold, or act on a principle that can explain the Other. It is not an intention to gather facts about the Other or a principle that can be applied in regards to the Other or an other's situation, but is *inherently* an obligation to *act* in regards to the Other *whatever* the other's situation. The obligation is not based upon a principle and might even be non-rational. The felt ethical obligation is prior to rational principle. In other words, felt moral obligation engenders principles—and reasoning about them—rather than vice versa (Williams & Olson, 2008).

The fundamental nature of felt moral obligation means that our moral obligations do not derive from things other than moral sensitivity itself and the presence of the other. In other words, for humans, to feel morally obligated is a fundamental way of being, primordial, non-derived. As a fundamental concept, it might be compared to the concept of rationality. Rationality as a method for obtaining knowledge is an underlying seedbed for much of Western

thought. However, very few ancient or modern philosophers strive to justify from where rationality arises. They see the ability to reason as needing no explanation beyond it being innate to the human condition. Rationality is seen as a way to elicit optimal behavior. When one acts optimally in pursuit of goals, one is seen as rational.

In comparison, as explicated earlier in this paper, morality and meaning and thus felt moral obligation can also be seen as fundamental to the human condition and needing no explanation beyond their essential nature. Levinas also finds moral obligation to the Other at the level of metaphysics prior to rationality. In fact, for Levinas, the appearance of the Other and ethical obligation provide the occasion for the development of rationality (Levinas, 1969, 1987).

Felt moral obligation provides occasion to develop identity. Seen as a way of being, it might be the key concept linking moral reasoning and moral action. Thus, the part deliberative reasoning, intuitions or emotions may play in felt ethical obligations or in our acting on them, will be manifest as a symptom of how we have experienced felt moral obligation, and not as the source for that obligation itself (Williams & Olson, 2008). It follows then that felt moral obligations inform the way we go about linking moral reasoning and moral action—in explaining the moral judgment-action gap.

Some might wonder in the explanations of moral judgment presented here— especially of the concept of the primacy and holism of felt moral obligation—if there is any genuine difference between this felt moral obligation, and such things as a basic flash of intuition or emotion described by Haidt (2001), or moral motives which arise out of the identity of the self, described in Blasi's (1984) and others' research, or affective reactions that are guided by schemas (described as organized knowledge structures that are cognitive carriers of dispositions) explained in Narvaez's research (Narvaez, 2008; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Even Kohlberg

(1969) describes moral reasoning as a phenomenal event, dependent on the individual's subjectivity and employing ordinary moral language. The difference here lies in the nature of the event. Felt moral obligation is seen as undetermined, irreducible, and central to our way of being. It is experienced holistically and continues to remain a holistic event, resisting fragmentation into component parts. It does not derive from anything other than moral sensitivity itself in the presence of the Other. In other words it is the moral qua moral.

It should be noted that Kohlberg and his followers sought a way to defeat moral relativism on psychological grounds (Frimer & Walker, 2008). Grounding the moral in a fundamental phenomenology of felt moral obligation does just this. It allows morality and meaning to be anchored in something other than reason and rationality, evolutionary biology or social discourse where it may be judged to be relative to a particular cultural context, logical argument or biological status, and thus ultimately lost. How well it does this depends on whether it is in fact universal and ubiquitous, i.e., whether it is metaphysical. This precisely is Levinas's claim.

An Alternative Starting Point

If, as Williams and Olson (2008) claim, moral personhood is infused with a personal sense of moral obligation and this Felt Moral Obligation (FMO) does not arise out of any other substrate, but is a fundamental and engendering facet of identity, then it follows in turn that emotion, cognition or judgment are better understood as actions in regards to those felt moral obligations, rather than as motivators for action. Furthermore, such actions are necessarily the acts of agents, not mere behaviors of organisms. The important issue then becomes how we as agents respond to felt moral obligation. Do our intuitive judgments consist of a fundamental 'call of the Other?'

Some theorists (Gantt, 2002; Faulconer, 2002; Harrington, 2002; Kugelman, 2002; Williams & Gantt, 1998; Williams & Olson, 2008) have presented a shift in philosophical worldview which allows us to more fruitfully address this question. This shift is essential to understand moral personhood and, thereby, the moral judgment-action gap in a new way. These theorists direct us to an alternative starting point. The philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas provides that starting point explicitly. His philosophy offers a promising re-understanding of the grounds from which the phenomenon of the moral judgment-action gap arises. His philosophy posits that the wholeness of human being and thus its moral nature is not reducible to components or structures, and "that [felt] moral obligation is the fundamental occasion or seedbed for identity itself . . . For Levinas, there are no reasons or understanding of why we experience ethical obligation; rather, ethical obligation is the originative motivation for moral reasons and understanding" (Williams & Olson, 2008, p. 4-5).

Emmanuel Levinas and Moral Psychology

Ethics as first philosophy. In philosophy there have been a variety of ways that thinkers have sought to ground the ethical dimension. On the basis of his phenomenological project, Levinas finds ethics at the core of philosophy—and more importantly at the core of identity and our experience of ourselves as ourselves. He uses the term ethics to mean "the relation to the Other" rather than "rules or procedures for behaving well" (Faulconer, 2002). Levinas sees his questions about the moral and ethical as more basic than ontology, that is, not having to do with the nature of being, but having to do with the nature of philosophy (Levinas, 1987). For Levinas, ethics is "first philosophy." He uses the term "first philosophy" so that we may know that he puts ethics as the beginning of metaphysical concern. Williams (2005) notes that the idea of the ethical as properly situated in "first philosophy" or metaphysics is not new but is rooted in the

earliest thought of the ancient Greeks. Aristotle and Descartes referred to 'first philosophy' when they devised their accounts for what is real. Their metaphysical assumptions about the "real" are what most psychologists accept today—that which is universal, necessary, unchanging, unembodied and atemporal; that is, laws, principles, concepts, ideas, theories and abstractions are what constitute the real. However, what is fairly recent in modern philosophy is the movement of moral questions from first philosophy into questions of epistemology. In other words, instead of asking what is real about morality and ethics, psychologists are asking what method or model best explains moral behavior (implicitly assuming that the moral is understood).

Moral psychology's epistemological assumptions. To cite an example of grounding the moral in epistemology, one need look no further than Kohlberg's project. Kohlberg along with most modern psychologists sought to ground his research in rationality and empiricism. Empirical observation of human reasoning abilities was the center of Kohlberg's structural development model. Indeed, Kohlberg sought to demonstrate empirically that reasoning ability can account for difference in forms of moral thought and that such thought is related to what might be understood as a type of moral maturity (Kohlberg, 1971; Frimer & Walker, 2008). Kohlberg was seeking the necessary connection between reasoning about morality and moral action, and he held that some forms of moral reasoning are to be preferred over others.

Psychologists continue today to seek the moral through the epistemological. For example, Turiel (2001) claims that for many moral judgment researchers, the epistemological grounding for the realm of morality is provided by philosophical traditions that presume that human beings are reasoning beings. For other theorists, empirical methods are used to reveal mechanisms and

physical structures from which moral phenomena arise (see, e.g., Haidt, 2006; Moll, Oliveira-Souza, & Zahn, 2009; Narvaez, 2006).

In contrast to contemporary psychological approaches, Levinas understands metaphysics in a way that brings the ethical into the heart of it. His philosophy speaks of the metaphysical in terms of the otherness of the Other (termed "alterity"). Otherness—alterity—can emerge when we avoid "totalization." On the other hand, if we emphasize traditional epistemology as the foundation of ethics, we will almost certainly overlook otherness, and look past the concrete others that we come into contact with, because we will be drawn into a strategy of understanding them and our stance toward them in terms of rationality and rules—or, what might be called 'fact gathering"—which fact gathering is at the heart of rationalism and empiricism. Totalization occurs when the 'otherness' of the Other is reduced to a mere event or category. It limits the Other to prescribed understandings and expectations. Totalizing is the experience that the Other is "nothing more than . . ." It restricts, narrows and reduces the possibilities of the Other. When I totalize" the other person, I am experiencing the Other as nothing more than a category for my understanding and efficient use. In this setting, the ethical or the moral, can only be understood in terms of a rational strategy for dealing with my own concepts vis a vis a rationally derived sense of obligation. In contrast, Levinas refers to "infinity," in relation to experiencing the Other. When I avoid totalizing the Other, I experience them as "always more than . . .,"— more than my acquaintance, more than my colleague, more than my friend—and as overflowing whatever category I find useful for my conceptual purposes. The idea of infinity is thrust upon me by the radical otherness of the Other that resists my attempts at totalizing (Kunz, 2002).

This approach preserves the radical otherness of the Other. "Because it preserves alterity, ultimately, the metaphysics Levinas wishes to rescue is an ethical one" (Williams & Gantt, 1998,

p. 259). In other words, it is the otherness of the Other that underlies and comes before any conceptualization of the Other—and that must ground any response to the Other. Because it comes before all attempts to know, and constitutes the irreducible reality of the Other, otherness is a metaphysical ground. Because otherness always arises in particular others and because my fundamental way of experiencing the otherness of the Other is ethical, we find, at the heart of Levinas's thought, an ethical metaphysic, or metaphysic of the ethical. And, it must be remembered that the only way ethics can be positioned as "first philosophy" is to preserve the integrity of otherness, or what Levinas might call the infinity of otherness that is constantly overflowing and disrupting the I. His philosophy of the ethical does not derive from principles of rational or empirical science. It can however, be understood through a fundamental phenomenology of felt moral obligation toward the Other.

Williams (2005) notes that "psychology can never become fully relevant to human life until it takes seriously certain metaphysical questions [such as] . . . the essential moral character of human life [and] the reality of human agency" (p. 9). If these are not ontologically fundamental, that is, constitutive of human nature itself, then they have no real existence, being merely epiphenomenal to some more fundamental reality. Because Levinas locates ethics in the metaphysical, he allows psychology to take up the study of morality in a way that preserves the ethical relationship to the other and examines morality at a level "commensurate with its importance in human life and its ubiquity in human experience" (p. 10).

The primary call of the Other. Phenomenology as an alternative approach to the behavioral sciences has as a primary interest the study of the meaning in concrete human experiences (Slife & Williams, 1995). To understand Levinas (1969), it must be remembered that he is a phenomenologist (though certainly not of the traditional Husserlian or Heideggerian sort).

Phenomenology grounds itself in the given-ness of experience. Levinas grounds understanding, including the understanding of the coming to be of the experiencing subject—as the "I"—in the experience of the Other and otherness. It is the encounter with the face of the Other that ruptures experience and calls us into ethical obligation even before reason comes into the picture. In fact, it is the confrontation with the Other that provides the occasion for reasoning in the first place; absent others, there is little need to reason, and certainly no reason to reason about ethics or morality. Thus, the ethics of responsibility toward others precedes any objective searching after truth. In other words, the experience of the encounter with the Other has primacy over all other experiences of the self. This primary position affects how 'the self' experiences the world.

The primacy of the ethical relationship means that ethics precedes truth, or that truth arises only in the context of the ethical. Kugelmann (2002) observes that this position turns psychology (along with moral psychology) upside down, because usually ethics is seen as grounded in a view of rules and behaviors concerning persons or nature. However, for Levinas (1987), the primacy of the ethical replaces the primacy of the ontological, or the question of the nature of beings and "things." And it is this ontology of beings and things that undergirds contemporary psychology. Thus, pursuing the implication of Levinas's work on the primacy of the ethical, we are led to the thesis that any adequate account of human morality must begin in ethical relation to the Other rather than in interest in the ontology of beings and their capacity for reasoning. That means that felt moral obligation is more fundamental in explanation of the moral than reasoning about facts or knowledge of principles. When ontology is primary, the quest for knowledge is primary. In this sense, ontology is really a philosophy of power, because, when the focus of research, is on the self or subject, everything is defined and viewed through that subject.

Hence, in the ascertaining of an obligation to the Other, the subject or self dominates and controls how the Other is viewed and defined (Kugelmann, 2002; Manning 1993).

      The 'face to face.' Levinas refers to the actual encounter with another in terms of the "face to face." The Other (as otherness) is revealed in the face to face encounter with this other person. This face to face encounter establishes a responsibility for the other. It is the phenomenological event that illustrates the principle of exchanging one's own needs for those of the Other—substitution (Levinas, 1969). Levinas (1969) describes this occurrence as a phenomenon of gentleness as one "instantly recognizes the transcendence and heteronomy (being under the sway of another) of the Other" (p. 150). He refers to this encounter as an epiphany and sees it as a privileged phenomenon.

      There is also asymmetry in this encounter, meaning that the face of the other reveals a certain poverty of the self which forbids reducing the other and self to the same status. In other words, Levinas (1969) grounds his analysis in "the radical asymmetry between myself and the other, [meaning that] what I permit myself to demand of myself is not compatible with what I have the right to demand of the other" (p. 53). However, it is not the personhood of the other, but the otherness of the other that provides the occasion for the ethical epiphany. This is in direct contrast with most approaches that say we are moved to ethical treatment of the other because of his or her personhood—that is, they are just like us. Levinas suggests that it is because they are not us—or like us—that we are able to be taken up by the obligation. Levinas does not simply remind us of the Golden Rule or introduce yet another view of the self, but challenges the grounds of the discipline of moral psychology. Ethics or morality as "first psychology" (Kugelmann's term) means to call into question the discipline's fundamental commitments to the self. This does not mean that a Levinasian perspective is a matter of simply replacing psychology

with a better or more humane science; it means that the claims of the ethical call of the other have greater weight than the claims of moral personhood in psychology (Kugelmann, 2002).

Thus, Levinas's notion of "ethics as first philosophy," means that the traditional philosophical pursuit of knowledge is inferior to the more basic ethical duty to the other. The same would apply to psychology. This does not mean that Levinas sees no value in psychology. He would likely grant that there is value and purpose in ontology, not in order to account for the origins of ethics per se, but in order to understand the other, and our mode of relatedness to the other. He implicitly grants that the relationship to other persons as a phenomenological perspective describes it, is possible only if our being is such that we are innately sensitive to differences between beings and things and given to "care" (Williams, 2005). However, his philosophy preserves the otherness of the Other as much as it preserves the sameness of the self.

Preserving alterity. The philosophy of Levinas opens the possibility in moral psychology of arguing that felt moral obligation (the non-reductive obligation of the subject to the Other) is the foundation for both cognition and behavior (Faulconer, 2002).This is so because Levinas does not ground felt moral obligation in any sophisticated cognitive or neurological functioning that would allow us to empathize with the other and thereby "see" and "understand" or "internalize" our obligations to them. Doing so would ultimately make morality derivative of whatever structures are in place to produce such cognitions in the first place and would thereby, destroy any of the real moral force that such a sense of obligation might have. In other words, the moral force active in our life and sensitivities would be replaced by some "rational force" which does not necessarily map neatly on to moral action (Williams & Gantt, 2009) as attested to by the existence of the moral judgment-moral action gap.

In fact, Levinas sensitizes us to a genuine conceptual problem that follows naturally for thinking of ourselves as generally described by our intellectual tradition, in which the self is (a) primary, but (b) primarily self-focused and fundamentally alienated from the Other. If we generally think of an individual as a modern self, solitary, closed in on itself, we have a genuine problem as we also observe and understand this 'self' existing and being enmeshed within a social and material world. His or her cognitions and behaviors consist of intentions. And although they appear to have their origins within the individual (or, worse in an individual's body), an individual's intentions (to eat, to speak, to act) are always "ex-perienced" as an encounter with something that is outside or transcends the self (Faulconer, 2002). When eating, when speaking, when acting toward or having intentions toward something or someone, one is always concerned with something outside oneself (the food, the one spoken to, the object of action). Even a hermit remembers and references things and people outside himself if only in his mind.

Faulconer (2002) refers to this kind of closed self described above, which 'intends' outward but does so in terms of the self, as solipsistic (solipsism is the philosophical idea that one's own mind is all that exists). He explains that an adequate account of human existence must get beyond concern for mere self and its cognitions and behaviors or else explanations become the kind where the isolated individual is enmeshed in his or her world only. If an account of human morality does not move beyond an account of the modern self (that is, his or her emotions, intuitions, cognitions, deliberations, etc), then this account of the moral will always explain everything in terms of how it relates to the self. Though the objects (including others as objects) of everyday living transcend the self, because they remain objects of intention, they are insufficient as the basis for an account of human moral action. Since an object is by definition,

an object for a perceiving 'self,' the self or the "I" remain at the center of everyday experience and transcendence. "Nourishment is my nourishment, pleasure is my pleasure, knowledge belongs to me" (Faulconer, 2002, p. 103). Thus, only what is other than the self, something beyond the *horizon* of everyday transcendence could truly be the "grounds" for a non-solipsistic account of human morality.

The Other as grounds for a 'nonsolipsistic' account of human morality. Levinas presents 'the Other" as this grounds. The Other is sometimes referred to as "the personal Other" (Faulconer, 2002). This personal Other cannot be conceived merely as an object and remain a personal Other. Thus the relation to the personal Other— this asymmetric relation of obligation—makes a non-solipsistic account of human morality possible. The alterity of the Other remains intact in no other approach in explaining moral behavior.

It is tempting to explain Levinas by offering up the simple adage, "remember that others are not objects"—but even that short explanation still takes a view that the Other must be explained in terms of the memory and behavior of the self. Not only is the Other not a simple object, but the Other overflows any possible understanding we might have of them. The Other disrupts our understanding and demands that we continue to adjust ourselves to it precisely because of its otherness. For Levinas, the personal Other cannot be brought into psychological understanding in any way that approaches adequate explanation. Otherness by its very nature can never be completely comprehended or subsumed within a theoretical system, no matter how sophisticated. The very excess of otherness, will always overflow the arbitrary boundaries of whatever conceptual categories we might design for others as groups or individuals. It is precisely for this reason that reason and rationality fail as grounds for morality and moral action. The relation to the Other can never be fully grasped by any philosophy or theoretical model. In

other words, the quintessentially human part of human beings cannot be brought into psychological understanding in any adequate way. However, we continue to make the attempt to do just that, because as psychologists, we are taught to assess the world scientifically, including human morality and bring it into subjection to a set of laws constructs, or structures. We continue to strive to explain something that resists explanation because of its primary and essential nature (Kugelmann, 2002).

The wholeness of obligation to the Other. As we strive to explain this call to the Other that tends to resist explanation (although it may yield understanding), it is important to emphasize the radical holism of moral action. Relatedness to others takes place in acts of wholeness that refute fragmenting the moral quality of the act. Levinas (1969) implicitly accepts the holism of human behavior, and the contextual nature of human existence. He seems to acknowledge the phenomenological ontology that has been useful in freeing psychology from the mechanism and determinism that has been unproductive in the past. He advocates resisting assuming that all human behavior rests on cognition. In other words, the dividing of consciousness from the rest of human being by making it a foundation separates it from the body, resulting in mere physical states or conditions (see, e.g., p. 29) which become the reductions discussed earlier in this paper.

The wholeness of human behavior is illustrated by Faulconer (2002) in his example of eating an apple. If I see an apple in the kitchen and desire to eat it, what I desire is straightforward: I want to eat the apple. However, there are ways not to describe this behavior because they describe something else that is not part of this behavior. For example, eating the apple is correlated with sensations in my mouth, nose and stomach. It is correlated with my ability to continue to live. Nevertheless, the pleasure of eating the apple is not identical to that set

of sensations or the fact that I want to continue to live. To reduce my desire for the apple to a set of physical facts, such as to satisfy my hunger or to continue to live is to change the meaning of my desire. Saying "I want to eat that apple" is different from saying "I wish to have a sensation of apple-taste in my mouth, the fragrance in my nose and the fullness in my stomach." Neither is it the same as saying "I want to continue living by eating this apple." When speaking of intentional behaviors, one cannot substitute expressions that identify the same desire and still retain the truth-value of the original claim (Faulconer, 2002, p. 108). Likewise, in assessing felt moral obligation, the original "urge" toward the Other must be considered holistically. In the next chapter, this holistic urge toward the Other will be considered in light of differing views of the moral judgment action gap.

Two Views of the Moral Judgment-Moral Action Gap

This chapter will examine two alternative views of the so-called moral judgment-moral action gap. This gap refers to a phenomenon which suggests that Socrates's famous adage "To know the good is to do the good" seems not to hold in every case. The first view of the gap is that which is described in much of the moral psychology "gap" research. These studies and theoretical models they support have sought to explain why "knowing the good" does not always result in "doing the good." Researchers currently disagree about what causes the judgment-action gap though they mostly concur that it needs to be breached through the most well thought out and validated explanatory models (Frimer & Walker, 2008; Lapsley & Hill, 2009; Walker, 2004). These models, in general, demonstrate that moral judgment and action can be broken "down" into components of intuition, cognition, emotion, deliberation as well as neurological activity, some of which interact with notions of integrity, identity, and responsibility depending on the explanatory tack of any particular model[8].

The other view of the moral judgment- action gap is based upon Levinasian philosophy which promotes a very different and more holistic perspective of our moral experiences. This view proposes that the judgment action gap is in fact, not a gap at all, but what Williams and Gantt (2009) call a "strategic fiction." Their view is based on the belief that thought, feeling and action are not fundamentally separate and separable activities arising from distinct and separable

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[8] As noted in chapter two, one branch of moral psychology research influenced by Kohlberg does not subscribe to the judgment-action gap paradigm. Turiel (1990, 1998), Nucci (2001) and others emphasize the role that distinctions in judgment play in moral action. In other words, individuals make nuanced judgments which prioritize acting within what is termed the social, personal or moral domains of behavior. These researchers de-emphasize identity components such as integrity and responsibility which other scholars see as central regulating mechanisms within the moral self. Thus, the "gap" is explained away in a post hoc fashion as judgments that arise from competing domains.

sources, especially sources that are a mix of components with differing ontological statuses such as neurons, brain tissue and chemicals alongside psychic notions such as integrity or identity. This view perceives no gap between an initial judgment and a failure to act on that judgment, but concentrates on a holistic moral event and the "style" or "content" of the moral action, or the "way" in which an individual experiences and acts upon a moral prompting. A moral act does not arise from a moral judgment, but rather each moral act constitutes and creates the way in which a person either rejects or accepts felt moral obligation.

Additionally, this chapter will further explore moral experience in light of C. Terry Warner's philosophical work concerning resistance to felt moral obligation. Along with a Levinasian-based account of moral obligation, Warner's alternative conceptual tools allow an examination of moral behavior as a holistic phenomenon.

The Moral Judgment-Moral Action Gap in the Research

The usual models of the moral judgment-action gap suggest that in a particular "moral situation," even though a person may make a judgment about what is to be done, the person does not always take the moral action to which the moral judgment would commit him or her. This scenario is explored through postulating various interactions of hypothetical components of proposed models, or domains of behavior. From this perspective, conclusions about the moral and moral action will always be at the mercy of empirical investigation or epistemology (explaining how, how well, or how strongly the person knows the moral situation and/or the moral thing to do). In other words by seeking to understand morality in terms of the operations of non-moral biological processes or the complex working of cognitive systems of judgment requiring some manner of causal linkage to emotion and action, psychological theorists have lost sight of the fundamentally ethical foundations of human social life. As was discussed in chapter

three, in doing this, they have created problems and paradoxes which naturalistic approaches lack the tools to address (Williams & Gantt, 2009).

An Alternative View

An alternative view of the gap is radically holistic. It involves construing the failure to act on felt moral obligation very differently. Rather than searching for a gap or even many gaps between thought and action, emotions and actions, or intuitions and emotions, or even between different types of domains of behavior or identities (moral and non-moral), the idea of a holistic moral act recognizes that the failure to act is built into the moral judgment at the moment and in the way that the moral judgment is formed and implemented. Likewise, the emotion attending this act, whether it facilitates or inhibits the moral action, is, in the same instant, built into the act—and the emotion although it often justifies or amplifies the act or the failure to act—is inherently part of the one whole moral act.

The "how-ness" of moral experience. Williams and Gantt (2009) explain this alternative perspective as follows: "From within a perspective of radical holism, the central question is not why certain moral actions do or do not follow directly on the heels of certain moral judgments—or what can be done to bring consistency to the judgment-action process. Rather, the key issues revolve around *how* a moral situation is experienced" (p. 16). The point is not that different types of persons experience moral situations in different ways—some consistently and some inconsistently or some fast and frugally or some slow and deliberatively— because of various constitutional or environmental factors that may be at play, or because it was assessed post hoc that a person's social or personal domain of behavior took prominence over acting within their moral domain. Rather, it is that any person can experience a moral situation straightforwardly and in such a way that their moral judgment already contains sustaining and

motivating moral passion with the obligatory moral action already unfolding in the "how-ness," the very nature – of the passionate judgment itself. And conversely, anyone may experience a moral situation in a disintegrated way, their moral judgment already embodying the germinating seed of the subsequent failure to act in a particular way. Moreover, the accompanying sentiments and emotions provide, within the act, the very justification that keeps the judgment and the action linked as they are in the mind and heart of the person (Williams & Gantt, 2009)

What is the difference in these two views of moral behavior? In the first, researchers assess moral judgments to determine if they result in complementary moral action. They look for ways within their models and theories to make the judgment and the act consistent with one another by breaking down the judgment into smaller components and substrates, or into complementary domains of behavior within which the person is continuously navigating, thus illustrating how gaps or inconsistencies could be created. In the alternative perspective, there is no real inconsistency between the moral judgment and the act, and so there is no real gap. This is because, as Willliams and Gantt (2009) argue, though the act may not be consistent with the affirmed judgment, it "really is consistent with the judgment in the *way* the person makes and holds—and defends—the judgment" (p. 16). In other words, instead of concentrating on why a person's actions are not consistent with his moral judgments, the focus should be upon the nature of the entire act as a holistic event, including the judgment, the action and any accompanying emotions that are present. Like the experience of desiring to eat the apple (explained in chapter four) which cannot be described as desiring to have a sensation of a full stomach, or a desire to have nourishment in order to continue to live, this event is radically holistic and resists definition as an event of a wholly different kind or nature because such re-definition results in its losing its moral meaning.

Williams and Gantt (2009) illustrate this new perspective on moral action with the example of "Smith" who abuses his wife. Smith may believe that if one really loves his wife, he would not abuse her. Smith truly believes that he loves his wife and yet he still abuses her. Here is an unconscionable moral gap between Smith's judgment and action. Instead of concentrating on Smith's inconsistency, we should focus on Smith's belief, his love, his action, his abuse and all the emotions that go along as a single act—as Smith's moral act. From this perspective, it is the *way* that Smith loves his wife that is the real problem. He loves in a way that excuses abuse of the one he loves. He loves in a way that might be different than the way others love. In this sense, then, there is no moral judgment-action gap. Smith is consistent in his "loving" behavior. "The problem is both the content and the style of his whole experience of the moral situation that envelops him in love, relationship, several emotions, and ethical and moral obligations" (p. 17). In other words, the failure or non-failure to act in a socially approved manner is built into the moral judgment at the moment and in the way that the moral judgment is formed by Smith. It is at this holistic level of experience of the moral in real situations that Smith can make any real change in the way he loves his wife. If we approach moral action at the level where judgments have been abstracted from actions, and emotions, and perhaps moral agency has been set aside, the meaning of the experience has been lost. If we seek to explain and thereby remedy Smith's actions by focusing on particular isolated components that interact and determine the behavior, it is more difficult to have a direct and dramatic impact on Smith's moral life.

Smith's moral experience. If to be human means having a moral sense, then for our purposes here, the act of experiencing moral judgment in the holistic way that Smith does is still considered a moral event. Even though the experience involves rejecting a felt moral obligation, it is performed by a fundamentally moral and agentic being. We take this event to be moral

whether the person chooses to act on the felt obligation or resist it. Either way, his choice has moral implications and thus a moral essence.

If we accept Levinas's grounding of moral personhood in a particular human metaphysic in which sensitivity to others and to the moral, *comprise,* rather than *derive from*, our very existence, then a person's choice to reject moral obligation for another is a moral choice, fraught with meaning and consequences, cognitive, emotive, and interpersonal. It cannot be accounted for in any other way.

This perspective is also based on the claim that moral action is not a product of determined causal forces, flawed structures or malfunctioning processes. It does not arise out of biological, psychological or behavior substrates, thus being only secondarily moral. Rather, as Levinas has articulated, moral action is created by individuals in whom (and within whom) moral character and moral agency are metaphysically primary. They just are the sort of beings who are fundamentally responsible to and for the other. It is this very responsibility that makes us uniquely human in the first place being essential to our existence as the sort of beings we are. The analysis developed in this thesis finds the cause for rejecting FMO in the individuals who create the cause in the very moment and in the way they form their judgments in such a holistic moral event.

Moreover, it is significant that Levinas does not ground felt moral obligation in any cognitive or neurological functioning that would allow Smith to empathize, see, understand or internalize his obligations to others. Doing so would make morality derivative of whatever structures of cognition might be in place and would therefore destroy the real moral force that such a sense of obligation might have. Such a moral force would be replaced by a sort of "rational force," which does not map neatly onto moral action (Williams & Gantt, 2009).

Moreover, Levinas would view empathizing with or internalizing the obligation to another as defining the Other in terms of the self, making the self the center of the moral event. He would see this as totalizing the Other into understood categories, instead of seeing the Other as an infinity of overflowing possibility (Levinas,1987).

This thesis has made an effort thus far to more fully understand human moral experience by looking at what it means to be human. Only when we have a clearer understanding of what is involved in experiencing a moral choice in what we have termed, "a holistic way" can researchers react properly and formulate a psychology equipped to deal seriously with such phenomena. Levinasian philosophy has given us the foundation from which we can explore an alternative account of moral behavior. Grounding moral action in a philosophy of ethical obligation toward others found at the metaphysical level allows us to see that the so-called moral judgment-moral action gap is actually a holistic event of experiencing this obligation.

Eliminating the gap. The grounding of moral action in a fundamental obligation toward others eliminates the ontological gap described earlier in this paper. To review, the ontological gap is most problematic and seemingly very complex when moral meanings and sentiments that pervade our human experience are explained as though persons were natural objects, controlled by natural and evolutionary structures and processes. Alternatively, this thesis suggests that morality is best understood as inherent in our distinctly human nature characterized by meaningful action and concern. In models that invoke biological, neurological, and rational processes as the foundation for moral action, meaning and morality must be somehow attached to the action—in a seemingly arbitrary way. In other words, this ontological gap is manifested in attempts to account for non-physical, historical, contextual, meaningful phenomena, such as moral sentiments, in terms of physical, non-contextual, non-meaningful phenomena, such as

neural tissue, chemicals and logical structures and processes (Williams & Gantt, 2009). In this sense, psychological theorists have lost sight of the fundamentally ethical foundations of human social life. What is presented here is an alternative perspective which reduces this ontological gap because it sees that fundamental human moral obligation is not derivative, but at the heart of our being who we are, thus allowing morality to remain in the realm of sentiment and meaning occasioned in us by others.

Warner's Understanding of the Gap

Levinas' perspective allows us to further examine the phenomenon of experiencing the moral in a holistic way—that is, of rejecting FMO. Warner (1997) provides a relevant phenomenon for Levinas' basic philosophy. Warner would assert that Smith's phenomenal event of abusing his wife is not a gap in which nothing happens, but is filled with willful, moral responses leading to further acts of moral failure if left unchecked by the individual. Along with Levinas, Warner's views of moral experience shed light on what kind of beings we are and why we act as we do. He examines our "way of being" (Olson, 2009) and agrees with the Levinasian premise that our relationships are immediately and primordially relationships of responsibility. The catch is, he claims, that often humans do not understand their moral nature. They do not understand that they have the ability to deceive themselves into believing falsehoods.

Rejecting felt moral obligation. Warner (1997) calls the phenomenon of rejecting felt moral obligation a form of "Self-betrayal." His work attempts to overcome the paradox of self-deception in which a person can both know and not know the same thing—essentially the same paradox at the heart of the so-called moral judgment-moral action gap. Warner's work is an alternative to the knowing and not knowing conception of self deception. He addresses the same issues explored by moral psychologists—that is, why humans do not act on their moral

commitments. He speaks of these kind of self-deceptions not as merely false beliefs, but as falsifications—distortions of our experiences for which we ourselves are responsible (Boyce, 1997). We keep ourselves from understanding ourselves, not deliberately, but by going against our feelings of what is right and wrong for us to do in regards to our moral obligations toward other people (Warner, 1986), thus mis-construing those feelings. This section of chapter five will argue that rejection of FMO is not a gap in which nothing happens, but is what we have termed being in a state of self-betrayal in experiencing the moral. It is self-betrayal because the person is betraying his closely held moral commitments just like individuals who experience what researchers term a moral judgment-action gap. This is the very same phenomenon. It is a phenomenon that is filled with moral responses creating a state of personal moral failure if left unchecked by the individual. Self betrayal involves self-justification, rationalization and sometimes offense-taking and accusation. Rejection FMO involves ignoring an initial prompting and acting otherwise which creates a need in persons to justify their actions

Warner uses the example of Marty who is awakened in the night by his young baby's cries. His (and *not* his brain's) initial (even primordial) response is to get up and take care of the needs of the baby so that his wife, lying beside him, may sleep and receive the rest she needs. Marty's fleeting response is immediately followed by accusing, self justifying, concocting a framework revealing to his own satisfaction his victimization at the hands of his wife. 'Why doesn't my wife wake up and take care of the baby, it is her job. I have my own work that starts early and I can't sleep in like she can. Besides, I can't handle the baby as well as she can. Maybe she heard the baby and is awake and expects me to handle it. Why do I have to feel guilty when I'm only trying to get some sleep so I can do well on the job? She was the one who wanted to have this kid in the first place' (Warner, 1986).

This is a fairly commonplace description of normal tensions in human relationships. However, there is something deeper happening in this story. The key is in the first moments when Marty felt a moral obligation to help his wife by handling the baby himself. He knew this was the right thing to do. But, he apparently knew it in a way that did not require of him simple compliance with the obligation. In his resistance to living truthfully regarding the moment of obligation, he experienced feelings of frustration, resentment, self-pity, and even anger while rejecting his original feeling of moral obligation; the feelings themselves, all the while, taking their strength from the very obligation they negated. Marty did not perceive that these emotions function to justify his thoughts and action. He truly came to believe that his wife was responsible for the emotions he felt. He once knew what was morally right, yet, in his resistance, he no longer knew it in a way that resulted in concordant moral action. As he rejected his initial feeling of moral obligation, he distorted this decision with enough self-justifying thoughts until he blamed his wife for his uncomfortable feelings that resulted from his rejection of his own feeling. Marty experienced what some current moral psychology researchers call a gap between his moral judgment and his moral action, but what this thesis has termed "experiencing the moral in an inconsistent way." This moral disintegration was created by Marty himself. The brief fleeting moment of moral clarity that Marty experienced was his chance to behave, think, and feel in a whole and consistent way—consistent with his very real original feeling of felt moral obligation (Williams & Gantt, 2009). But in the next moment, the way Marty made, held and defended his response to FMO are symptoms of his self-betrayal.

Agency and closing gaps. While researchers seek more and more empirical information about "the gap" to understand why it is there—"The breach between judgement and action in moral life represents a fundamental conundrum for psychological theories of moral functioning,"

(Frimer & Walker, 2008, p. 335; see also Blasi, 1993, 1995; Colby & Damon, 1992, 1993)—Warner contends that individuals have power to act on felt moral obligation. Warner relies on the view that humans reject feelings of moral obligation as beings "possessed of powers" (Warner, 1997, p. 76). He contends that as moral agentic beings, not determined by evolution, biology or upbringing, we respond to felt moral obligation in a way in which the processes of moral judgment, intuition, reason and action are not experienced separately but together, at once, in a radical holistic encounter. He asserts that we are not passive in the feelings and emotions we have. Feelings and emotions (even so-called automatic or "flash" emotions) are initiatives that we take. To consider individuals responsible in the midst of felt moral obligation goes against most conventional and scientific views that we are not responsible for our emotions[9] (intuitions, feelings, felt obligations, etc.), but rather that emotions and intuitions are caused in us by events outside of our control. Warner asserts that this is a false dogma of our age. He claims that emotions and intuitive responses are performances in which we engage as agents (Warner, 1986). The question of agency is a controversial one in psychology, but it addresses the fundamental nature of our humanity. Unless we are agents, which means having the capacity for self-direction and genuine possibilities, it is impossible to attribute real meaning to our actions, or to maintain a sense of purpose for life itself (Williams, 2005).

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[9] Since the time of the prominent Greek philosophical traditions, emotions have generally been seen as irrational. The Hellenistic schools of stoics, epicureans and skeptics all stressed the value of "ataraxia," defined as the absence of disturbance in the soul caused by emotion. These philosophies were viewed as therapeutic in their function to purge emotions from the character (de Sousa, 2008). Today, "emotions as irrational" is still the dominant viewpoint though there are some reassessments of assumptions about emotion. The active, purposive and strategic aspects regarding emotions have been surveyed by Harre (1983). In addition, Solomon (2004) asserts emotions are at least sometimes chosen and voluntary. He sees emotions as "judgments." Macmurray (1992) believes emotions and reason are partakers of one another and can both be *willfully* tempered thereby.

Self-created moral responses. Since the time of Plato, it has been unclear how one could be morally committed to some course of action and yet go against that commitment. In other words, how is it possible for one to pledge to oneself to follow a moral imperative and, at the same time, refuse to follow it? Warner believes there is only one way to account for this and that is for the individual to make it seem that failing to respond to felt moral obligation is an act not created by him or her, but is the responsibility of someone else.

As humans, we often reject feelings of moral obligation. In doing so, we tell ourselves that we are compelled to take this particular action because the behavior of another individual(s) (or the circumstances created by them) gives us no reasonable choice to act otherwise. In other words, another individual's behavior causes the repudiation of our initial moral judgment. We put ourselves in an emotional state which we believe is caused or produced by another person. When we experience emotions such as anger or frustration in such a state, we are certain that we are being caused to have them by another individual who has created the circumstance. We regard the emotions as provoked in us. In a sense, Warner claims, our emotions reveal whether we are in self-betrayal. To be in self-betrayal is to deceive ourselves into thinking that rejecting feelings of obligation toward others is the only course of action we can reasonably take under the circumstances. We justify our behavior and accuse something outside of ourselves for leaving us only this option. Thus, the fundamental manner in which we regard ourselves and others is a systemic and deep-seated betrayal of ourselves and others (Warner, 1997).

One more narrative example of this moral self-betrayal illustrates how we act in direct opposition to our deeply held beliefs:

Smitty, the fellow next door was moving. He was loading his furniture into a rented truck. I was working in my rose garden and asked if he need help as he staggered

under an upholstered chair. "I think I can make it," he said. Relieved, I watched him from the corner of my eye as I concentrated on my rose bushes. I thought, 'I'm a busy man and this is the only time to do the rose bushes. I wish I had time to help Smitty. I feel awful, but I have a ton of other stuff to get done as well. Besides, I helped him before with his heavy washer. That night I thought some more about Smitty. He should not have tried to move himself. He may have saved some money, but it wasn't worth it. I would have helped him if he had notified me in time. Why did he have to lay his problems in my lap by parading under his load of furniture right in front of my eyes? Smitty's problem of having to move all by himself was his fault because he wasn't smart enough either to get a mover or to ask me in advance (Warner, 1990).

The narrator of this account makes a great effort to appear innocent by blaming Smitty and exaggerating the importance of his own needs over Smitty's. This is evidence that he was committed to following the very course of action he was refusing to follow. If he had not committed himself to follow it, he would not have a reason to make a show of innocence. He would have continued with his gardening without having to cover his tracks by making elaborate justifications to himself (Warner, 1990).

  Self-deception. This account illustrates how our living in self-betrayal is the foundation of a great deal of dishonesty with and within ourselves. "The presentation of ourselves is necessarily false because our attitude is a self-presentation, it is not what it presents itself to be. It is intrinsically dishonest" (Warner, 1997, p. 5). Disturbed feelings are symptoms of this dishonesty with ourselves, with this betrayal of felt moral obligation. Once an individual's outlook on life in general takes on the characteristic of self-betrayal, new moral situations are interpreted accusingly and defensively and the experience and process of moral decision making

is distorted. Individuals see the world in an accusing, victimized, self-protective manner, with options laid out in very limited patterns. Restricted to these options, there is no way to deal with unwanted negative emotions (that are seen as arising unbidden)—except, "tragically," to "cope" (Warner, 1986, p. 11).

Thus, if we accept the premise that humans are moral agents, then individuals are responsible for the disturbed feelings that flow from betrayal of felt moral obligation—though often the immediate culture or certain therapeutic strategies seek to relieve the individual of this responsibility (Ellis, 1960; Tangney, Flicker, Miller & Barlow, 1997). When self-betrayal in the face of FMO results in disturbed feelings, over time these feelings lead to a form of psychological bondage. Individuals are often unaware that they are living in a state of self-betrayal and deny their responsibility for the emotions that result. Individuals may become obsessed with themselves and have very little sensitivity for others. They become too insecure to love freely. However, Warner argues that individuals do have the ability to give up the self-victimizing, accusing emotions that seem to bind them. Others can help individuals see the bondage caused by self-betrayal. Warner claims accepting and responding to FMO can result in freedom from psychological bondage.

Summary and Conclusion

To summarize what has been presented in this dissertation, it might be asked, 'What would moral psychology be like if one were to take Levinas's and Warner's insights seriously?' What would psychology look like from the perspective of their view of our fundamental humanity, and the origins of ethical concern?

Levinas and Warner both resist the conception that the human person consists essentially of mechanical or material components. The study of morality would not begin with a being who may possess or acquire certain "moral" inclinations. It would originate with the experience of ethical obligation. For Levinas, the meaningful existence of the self originates in being called into being, called into existence, by the face of the Other, and the obligation it affords. Humans are called into meaningful being in and through felt moral obligation. This is the foundation of their humanity. In other words, questions of self, questions of being, occur only as the Other in the face to face relationship calls the self into meaningful existence. Thus, the study of morality cannot be addressed in psychology without addressing the phenomenon of fundamental meaningful ethical obligation.

The difference between this view and that of contemporary moral psychology is that most of the prevailing models derive the moral from the non-moral, from reason itself, or substances and mechanisms. Virtue is located in the organism (Haidt & Joseph, 2004), rather than in the person. Morality is located in "identity" (Blasi, 1993), which is an attribute of the self, but not the self per se. The Ethical is located in a preferred behavioral domain (Nucci, 1997; Turiel, 1998) but not in the holistic acts that constitute the lives of whole-self moral agents. There is a superficial tendency in this research to derive morality out of something that at its core is not moral, to arrive at what we "ought" to do because of what "is" in our reasoning, our brains and

biology or experience. This capacity to move almost by magic from the non-moral to the moral has never been sufficiently addressed in any of the prevailing models.

For Levinas and Warner, there is no need to move from the non-moral to the moral because they begin with the moral. By virtue of the fundamentally obligated beings we are, we have a moral sensitivity that is non-derived. It does not derive from substance, reasoning, experience, or material. In other words, the moral is metaphysical. It is "first philosophy." Descartes and Aristotle articulated their "first philosophy" as the cause of all things, but Levinas suggests that, in a sense, the ethical is the first cause in regards to understanding the nature and action of the self. By doing so he allows psychology to take up the study of morality in a way that preserves ethical obligation toward others at a level corresponding to its importance in human life and its ubiquity in human experience.

Warner's view of human agents struggling with self-betraying emotions gives us a psychological framework within which to address the moral judgment-action gap without reducing these moral "gaps" to underlying material substrates or mechanistic explanations, which inevitably give rise to unbridgeable "ontological gaps." Warner allows us to consider felt moral obligation and the emotions that betray this obligation in a radically holistic way that involves being moral agents. He allows us to evaluate the experience of FMO as a radically holistic event.

While it is reasonable to say that certain emotions have a biological component such as the unambiguous rush of adrenalin in "fight or flight" reactions, self-betraying emotion as articulated by Warner is not traceable to a biological foundation, nor to a precipitating emotion. Biological mechanisms have not been shown to possess the power to produce something so intricate and motivated and particular to a context. Thus, the most straightforward explanation

would seem to be that such emotive acts are the intentional (although not intended) acts of moral agents.

Haidt (2001) conceives of emotions and intuitions as signs of primitive assessments of good and bad related to equally primitive approach-avoidance responses. However, Haidt has no plausible explanation for why a person may not respond consistent with these "paleo-moral" assessments, other than to suggest that, somehow, the deliberative reflection that occurs after the intuition may divert the person from his or her original paleo-moral intent. How could this happen if emotion and intuitions really are brought about by antecedent evolutionary brain modules that contain innate knowledge of good and bad? It would seem that rationality could overcome more primitive biologically rooted responses only if they are not as deeply rooted as the model might suggest, and if persons have the capacity for moral self-direction.

For some, the moral reflects, largely if not exclusively, the deployment of mostly cognitive rational principles (Blasi, 2009; Kolberg, 1969; Rest, 1999; Turiel,1983), and the moral judgment-moral action gap as the result of faulty or immature reasoning or weakness of the will. However, as argued above, these attempts at explanation consist more in naming the phenomenon than in elucidating or illuminating it. Turiel's approach to the judgment action gap is to consider moral failure as ultimately needing no special explanation, with moral obligation being just part of the everyday buzz of cognitive experience that people act on or not. But even in domain theory, there will always be gaps between some cognitions and others. The principles that determine or regulate our moving among the personal, the social and the moral domains, and the means by which one domain predominates in any particular situation are not easily delineated. Thus, distinctions among the domains and their functions seem prone to slip away until we are left with no explanation of moral actions at all—except to say that they happen.

In all the explanatory tacks derived from the predominant models employed in moral psychology, the focus is on the constructs and relations among constructs – out of which the models are built. The focus of explanation is on the constructs and not on the phenomena. Attempts at validation are focused on the models and their constructs – at how well they might predict if properly applied, not on the real moral experience of persons in moral contexts. Through all of the discussion of theories and models of moral action and moral action gaps, it must be remembered that Marty with his crying baby and his sleeping wife did not experience a principle, a structure, or a system. He experienced obligation at a deep level. Smitty's neighbor experienced tortuous self-betrayal as a result of ignoring that obligation.

Warner's view of moral judgment and behavior is not a two or three or even four step process in which, biological and identity components interact at a level in which the individual plays no conscious active part, after which the deliberative takes over, and a judgment is made and then is either acted or not acted upon. Levinas's and Warner's views suggest to us that the self exists already in obligation. There is no underlying process to bring this about. There is only occasion, one event that takes place, the individual taking on his or her felt moral obligation, straightforwardly or self-betrayingly, via a holistic behavioral event. The moral agent (not the evolved brain that provides four kinds of innate intuitive flashes) acts. Without this moral agentic action taken in the face of obligation, the event is often interpreted by researchers and more and more our general culture as just a natural event, similar to a plant growing or a rock falling down a hill, something caused by natural events, in a natural world. It just happens and does not mean anything (Slife & Williams, 1995), and it is not moral in any fundamental way. Meaning and morality are separated from action and from our nature, and the study of the moral

becomes sterile. Such meaninglessness in the psychology of morality can be ameliorated by the alternative philosophical starting points of Levinas and Warner.

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