Wesleyan University The Honors College

The Intimate and the Invisible: A Theory of Moral Engagement

by

Nomi Teutsch
Class of 2011

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in Philosophy

Middletown, Connecticut April, 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS **2**

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION **3**

CHAPTER 2 - LEVINAS AND NODDINGS: THE FACE-TO-FACE **12**

ASSESSING THE ARGUMENTS 20
COUNTLESS OTHER OTHERS 23
TWO VISIONS OF OBLIGATION 28
THE LIMITS OF INTUITION AND THE NEED FOR JUSTICE 31

CHAPTER 3 – KANT AND SINGER: THE UNIVERSAL **34**

A SHARED METHOD 35
CRITICISMS OF IMPARTIALISM 38
EVALUATING EACH STANCE 42
WHERE THIS LEAVES US 50

CHAPTER 4 – A THEORY OF MORAL ENGAGEMENT **52**

ARGUMENT 52
CHOOSING WHICH CALLS TO ANSWER 63
APPLYING THE THEORY 66
CASE 1: ATTICUS FINCH 68
CASE 2: JACK REED AND LOUISE BRYANT 74
CLOSING THOUGHTS 81

CONCLUSION: BACK TO THE BASICS **84**

WORKS CITED **88**

BIBLIOGRAPHY **90**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The process of producing this thesis has been deeply meaningful for me, in large part because I have been able to share it with so many wonderful people in my life. Thank you to everyone who has been sincerely interested in the questions I have been asking, and who has helped me to think them through in new and exciting ways.

First and foremost, thank you to Professors Elise Springer and Mary-Jane Rubenstein, who not only introduced me to the scholars whose work I consider in this thesis, but also served as my mentors throughout my time at Wesleyan. I am humbled to have gotten the chance to learn from both of you, as women and as scholars. Elise, thank you for agreeing to advise me on this project and for being so generous with your time and your insights. It was truly a pleasure to meet with you each week and dig into ideas. MJR, a profound thank you for bringing so many of my now-favorite texts alive for me. Your wise, witty, caring, and effective guidance has been endlessly meaningful to me since my first year here.

This thesis has passed through many hands in the last few months. A hearty and much-deserved thank you to Ali Burstein and Seth Neill for your spot-on and helpful criticisms. To Becca, Lizzie, and Anna, thank you for being so consistently supportive that I didn't even feel bad asking for your help. I value each of you so very much, and hope that this is just one of a lifetime of projects that we can collaborate on. Zohar, I am honored to call you my chevruta. Abba, of all the red pens out there, yours is the one whose ink I treasure most. Thank you for taking me so seriously that you force me to believe it is warranted, and for loving me.

To 72B Home, I feel unbelievably lucky to share a home with you. I am so proud of and excited by what we have built this year. Thanks for caring so sincerely about how this process has unfolded for me. To the rest of the Folly crew who I don't live with (but may as well), I'm blessed that you are my friends. Thanks for being so good at having fun. To Ima and Zach, thank you for so many calming phone calls and pep talks, and for what feels like real, live, unconditional love. And to Buddhist House and those with whom I shared that space, thank you for teaching me so very much about creativity and silence and holding even as we laugh.

I am grateful for the ways that each of those mentioned here, as well as all of the teachers and friends from whom I've had the opportunity to learn, are present in this work.

INTRODUCTION

"In order to develop, a child needs the enduring, irrational involvement of one or more adults in care…Somebody has to be crazy about that kid."

- Urie Bronfenbrenner[1]

"Of a global population of more than 6 billion, about one-fifth, or 1.2 billion, live on less than $2 a day…It is not surprising that of these 1.2 billion, about 826 million lack adequate nutrition, more than 850 million are illiterate, and almost all lack access to even the most basic sanitation. In rich countries, less than one child in a hundred dies before the age of five; in the poorest countries, one in five does."

- Peter Singer[2]

These quotations stand for two kinds of needs: the need of each specific child to be loved, and the basic survival needs of the world's poor. From the perspective of an individual person, these needs represent two different types of ethical obligations: those arising in specific, close, personal relationships, and those arising from an impartial, universalistic dedication to certain principles of justice. In the past, these two spheres of ethical concern have been treated as distinct and separate. In this thesis, I argue that as moral agents,[3] we regularly engage with both types of ethical obligations, and that there is much to be gained by integrating them into one comprehensive theory of moral engagement.

---

[1] Quoted in Nel Noddings, *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy* (California: University of California Press, 2002), 25.
[2] Peter Singer, *One World (*New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 79-81.
[3] I use the phrase "moral agent" throughout this work because it has come to be the standard way to refer to a person reflecting on or taking moral action in the world. I do not use it to refer to any specific metaphysical stance about selfhood or agency.

As a way into the issues at the heart of this work, I will begin by discussing the controversy over Carol Gilligan's criticism of Lawrence Kohlberg's famous research in moral development. In Kohlberg's model, mature moral reasoning is "based on impartiality, impersonality, justice, formal rationality, and universal principles."[4] This outlook is not unique to Kohlberg, but rather "has been the dominant conception of morality in contemporary Anglo-American moral philosophy, forming the core of both a Kantian conception of morality and important strands in utilitarian (and, more generally, consequentialists) thinking as well."[5] According to Kohlberg, the more impartial and principle-based a person's reasoning is, the more mature she is as a moral reasoner.

Carol Gilligan, a former student of Kohlberg's, noticed a troubling trend in Kohlberg's research findings: women were consistently scoring lower than their male peers on Kohlberg's moral reasoning tests.[6] As she explored this discrepancy, she discovered a distinct moral orientation found among women, one that differed significantly from Kohlberg's.

> Gilligan argues – drawing on the conception of morality held by many of her largely (but by no means exclusively) female respondents – that care and responsibility within personal relationships constitute an important element of morality itself, genuinely distinct from impartiality. For Gilligan each person is embedded within a web of ongoing relationships, and morality importantly if not exclusively consists in attention to, understanding of, and emotional responsiveness toward the individuals with whom one stands in these relationships.[7]

---

[4] Lawrence A. Blum, "Gilligan and Kohlberg: Implications for Moral Theory." *Ethics,* 98.3 (1988), 472, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.wesleyan.edu:7790/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IACDocuments&type=retrieve&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&docId=A6921339&source=gale&srcprod=AONE&userGroupName=31841&version=1.0 (accessed 15 Feb. 2011).
[5] Blum, 472-3.
[6] Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 149.
[7] Blum, 473.

Gilligan's recognition of personal relationships as a venue for moral reasoning changes the landscape of moral theory. Opening up the definition of mature moral reasoning changes not only the goal of moral education, but also the whole account of what morality is, can be, and ought to be. Suddenly "the contextuality, narrativity and specificity of women's moral judgment is not a sign of weakness or deficiency, but a manifestation of a vision of moral maturity that views the self as a being immersed in a network of relationships with others."[8]

Kohlberg did eventually come to agree with Gilligan that "the acknowledgement of an orientation of care and response usefully enlarges the moral domain,"[9] but he considered it to be relevant only to the sphere of personal decision-making, not to universal or global ethics.[10] In her analysis of the debate between Kohlberg and Gilligan, Seyla Benhabib is highly critical of Kohlberg's willingness to relegate the care orientation to the realm of the personal, and puts his dismissal of it in the context of a larger tradition of treating the home and women's lives within it as outside the realm of morality.

> The sphere of justice from Hobbes through Locke and Kant is regarded as the domain where independent, male heads of household transact with one another, while the domestic-intimate sphere is put beyond the pale of justice and restricted to the reproductive and affective needs of the bourgeois paterfamilias…An entire domain of human activity, namely, nurture, reproduction, love and care, which becomes the woman's lot in the course of the development of modern, bourgeois society, is excluded from moral and political considerations.[11]

---

[8] Benhabib, 149.
[9] Lawrence Kohlberg, quoted in Benhabib, 150.
[10] Benhabib, pp. 153-4.
[11] Benhabib, p. 155.

Even as women's lives are less and less restricted to the home, feminist theorists seek to bring the rich moral life of care and emotional responsiveness into the fold of ethics and show what the care orientation has to contribute. For some, such as Nel Noddings, on whose work I focus in Chapter 2, this means approaching ethics solely from the perspective of care. For others, including Gilligan and Benhabib, it means adding partial, concrete ethics in with impartial theories and seeking the appropriate interplay between them.

As Benhabib works to integrate Gilligan's finding into conventional moral theory, she makes a useful distinction between the "generalized other" and the "concrete other." She delineates them as follows:

> The standpoint of the **generalized other** requires us to view each and every individual as a rational being entitled to the same rights and duties we would want to ascribe to ourselves. In assuming the standpoint, we abstract from the individuality and concrete identity of the other…Our relation to the other is governed by the norms of *formal equality* and *reciprocity*...The norms of our interactions are primarily public and institutional ones…The moral categories that accompany such corresponding moral feelings are those of respect, duty, worthiness and dignity.[12]

And in contrast,

> The standpoint of the **concrete other**…requires us to view each and every rational being as an individual with a concrete history, identity and affective-emotional constitution. In assuming this standpoint, we abstract from what constitutes our commonality, and focus on individuality. We seek to comprehend the needs of the other, his or her motivations, what she searches for, and what s/he desires. Our relation to the other is governed by norms of *equity* and *complementary reciprocity*; each is entitled to expect and to assume from the other forms of behavior through which the other feels recognized and confirmed as a concrete, individual being with specific needs, talents and capacities…The norms of our interactions are usually, although not exclusively, private, non-institutional ones. They are norms of friendship, love, and care. These norms require in various ways that I exhibit more than the simple assertion of my rights and duties in the face of your needs. In treating you in accordance with the norms of friendship, love and care, I confirm not only your *humanity* but your human

[12] Benhabib, 158-9 *bolded emphasis added*.

> *individuality*. The moral categories that accompany such interactions are those of responsibility, bonding and sharing. The corresponding moral feelings are those of love, care, sympathy and solidarity.[13]

Benhabib points out that these two conceptions of self-other relations tend to be viewed as incompatible, as antagonistic to one another.[14] Rather than mapping them onto public and private spheres, though, she shows that these are two fully developed, important alternatives, and that each contributes something important to ethics.

Like Benhabib, I argue that both the generalized moral orientation and the concrete one are extremely important, because they are useful tools for moral reasoning and because only together can they account for the complexities and richness of lived moral life. Without the generalized other, one loses the ability to make a rights-based or policy-oriented argument, or to emphasize the importance of principles of justice. Without the concrete other, one loses "everyday, interactional morality"[15] and undermines the importance of close, responsive relationships for ethical decision-making.

I came to this project because I saw a problematic gap in ethical discourse: On the one hand, there are principle-based, systematic approaches to ethics that emphasize the universal and make cogent arguments for global action. On the other, there are more intuitive, fluid approaches that meaningfully account for the ethics of close relationships. It is clear to me that both our responsiveness to global need and our responsiveness to those we love are urgently important. Neither approach can provide a comprehensive account of a morally engaged life without the other. My project fits into a larger discourse taking place among those who are trying to weave

---

[13] Benhabib, 158-9 *bolded emphasis added*.
[14] Benhabib, 158.
[15] Benhabib, 163.

feminist contributions to ethics in with more traditional, analytic ethical arguments and perspectives, and my hope is to contribute something worthwhile to that conversation.

In this paper I consider the work of four scholars: Nel Noddings, Emmanuel Levinas, Immanuel Kant and Peter Singer. Noddings and Levinas focus on the face-to-face, while Kant and Singer emphasize the universal. Through analysis of these four authors' work, I aim to make a more general argument about why the conceptions of the generalized and concrete other need each other, and ultimately how they can fit together.

I call the theory that I develop in this paper a "theory of moral engagement" because I look at the questions involved from the perspective of an individual agent striving to live an ethical[16] life in the contemporary world. The goal of my project is to have a comprehensible answer to the question, "How do I go about leading a morally engaged life in the world?" My emphasis is on developing a framework for determining how to respond to the myriad calls for help that we encounter in our daily lives, how to fulfill our various obligations on the personal and global levels. I see these diverse obligations as continuous, as interrelated, and as similarly pressing. This provides plenty of challenges for decision-making, many of which I address.

It is important to note that the "others" whom we encounter and respond to need not be human. All sentient beings should be taken into account when making moral decisions; animals, too, require response. With the exception of Peter Singer,

[16] Because "moral" and "ethical" have been defined in such a wide variety of ways over time and the distinction between them is not standardized, I will use the two words interchangeably in this work.

the scholars I work with focus exclusively on humans, but I aim for the theory developed in this work to encompass non-human animals as well.

I evaluate the moral theories that I explore in this work according to two major criteria: first, whether each theory is appropriately demanding of moral agents. I explain how I determine the right level of demand in Chapter 4. Second, I ask whether each moral theory is grounded in the situated nature of moral agents, which results in treating their relationships and distinctive moral personalities and passions as ethically relevant. I will discuss why I adopt these two criteria throughout the work, but in essence my hope is that a theory that is both adequately demanding and grounded in the situated life of the moral agent allows for a balance in which moral agents are constantly working to better the quality of lives of others without sacrificing meaning or self-care.

My evaluation of existing moral theories according to these two criteria involves a blend of deontological reasoning, consequentialist reasoning, and moral psychology. I treat notions of obligation and moral motivation as centrally important to understanding a given action. Much of the discussion within this thesis revolves around the "whys" of moral responsiveness. For example, it matters deeply whether actions are motivated by care for a specific other or by duty. Though obligation and intention are important, I am also concerned with arriving at a theory that is livable for the agent and results in good outcomes for the world. I seek a framework that is specific in its guidance without being alienating, and that asks enough of the moral agent without overwhelming her. These are central concerns because a theory of moral engagement is not particularly worthwhile if its application would not result in

moral agents successfully using the theory to make sense of how to respond to the others whom they encounter in their lives. In my reasoning I am consistently concerned with obligation, with moral motivation and with outcomes. For reasons that I outline in Chapters 2 and 3, I do not consider any one of these lenses to be sufficient for a theory of moral engagement without the others.

I make my argument over the course of three chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on two scholars of the face-to-face whose work I greatly admire: Nel Noddings, a feminist philosopher of care, and Emmanuel Levinas, a student of Heidegger who rejected ontology and proposed ethics as first philosophy. Noddings' focus is on "natural caring," that type of caring that flows out of the carer without ethical effort, and is motivated by love of a specific other. She explores how the care that we give in particular, loving relationships is important in and of itself, and also its implications beyond the one-on-one. Levinas' vision is one of a profound, transcendent encounter with the face of the Other that awakens me to the infinite responsibility I have to respond to that Other's needs. I look at Noddings' and Levinas' work individually, but I also suggest that there is an important overlap between them, and analyze the strengths and drawbacks of their shared approach.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to Immanuel Kant and Peter Singer, two systematic, principle-based philosophers. Again, I will look at them each individually, but also group them together as representatives of a shared, impartial approach. Immanuel Kant's ethics revolve around the categorical imperative, the idea that one should act in such a way that one would will one's principles of action to be universalized. Kant heavily emphasizes human dignity and respect for all people. As opposed to Kant,

who focuses on the intentions behind an action, Peter Singer analyzes the ethical status of a given action based on its outcomes. Thus, he is associated with a utilitarian lineage and identified as a consequentialist. He makes an impassioned argument for actively pursuing justice on the global level. By looking at Kant and Singer together I hope to make a larger statement about impartial ethics.

In Chapter 4 I present my own normative theory of moral engagement that weaves together the work of Noddings, Levinas, Singer, and Kant. With this theory, I try to make one complete story about how to function morally. Although the four scholars whose work I use have exceedingly different accounts of morality from one another, in this thesis I aim to show how rather than talking past each other, all four of these authors are in fact talking to me and to each of us.

2

LEVINAS AND NODDINGS: THE FACE-TO-FACE

In *Totality and Infinity,* Emmanuel Levinas writes that "meaning is the face[17] of the Other, and all recourse to words takes place already within the primordial face-to-face of language."[18] Unlike spoken language, which requires specific, shared knowledge in order to be effective as a communication tool, the language of the face is universally accessible. Although I do not speak Mandarin or Farsi, the face of a Chinese or Iranian person still calls out to me just as clearly. A Holocaust survivor, Levinas had been a long-time student of Martin Heidegger before the war. But in the face of the violence in Europe and Heidegger's own Nazism, Levinas was left disillusioned with ontology as first philosophy. As Chloe Taylor succinctly describes,

> Levinas argues against the Western philosophic tradition, and against Heidegger in particular, that ontology is not fundamental. Rather, for Levinas, ethics, a relation to and for an other, is prior to being, *grounding* human existence. Before we 'are,' we are already in a relation to others, whatever the order of the verb in this sentence. It is therefore a mistake to begin by theorizing what the being of the self is, independent of its relations of vulnerability and responsiveness to others, because the self never *is*

[17] The face for Levinas represents "The way in which the other presents himself, exceeding *the idea of the other* in me." As stated in Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 50.
[18] Levinas, 206.

> independent of or prior to these ethical terms. Ethics is the fundamental human experience, and is grounded in relations to others.[19]

Before I am, I am in relation to others. Levinas therefore taught and wrote that we must begin from ethics, and that ethics begins from encountering radical alterity.

For Levinas, our ethical lives start when we truly encounter the Other, a specific Other, and experience the infinite call of responsibility that comes with every such encounter. Rather than starting from a definition of ideal justice, Levinas starts from the face of the Other. When we fully see the face of the Other and realize that the Other is completely, radically other, and not just another version of ourselves (what Levinas calls "the same"),[20] we begin to realize our responsibility. Rather than duty arising from similarity—from the idea that another person is the same as you and therefore deserves to be responded to—Levinas suggests the opposite. My own worth is not the source of my responsibility to the other. Rather, it is in the moment of recognizing the absolute difference between me and the Other, in the form of the face, that I realize my responsibility. This "epiphany of the face is ethical."[21] We cannot encounter the Other's other-ness without being immediately aware of her needs and our responsibility to respond to her.

The response required of me is asymmetrical; I do not expect anything in return.[22] Levinas often quoted Dostoyevsky's statement that, "We are all responsible for everyone else – but I am more responsible than all the others."[23] [24] I can only

---

[19] Chloe Taylor, "Levinasian Ethics and Feminist Ethics of Care," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 9.2 (October 2005): 218.
[20] Levinas, 26.
[21] Levinas, 199.
[22] Sean Hand, *The Levinas Reader* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1989), 5.
[23] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov quoted in Hand, 1.

focus on my own responsibility to all others and never on the way that others may share that burden of responsibility or be responsible toward me. It is solely my responsibility to respond to the Other.

When I encounter the Other and my responsibility to respond to her needs, I quickly find that her infinite needs require an infinite response. Truly responding to the Other requires me to dedicate myself to the Other, pour myself out for her. I must give more than I have, never stop dispossessing myself. My duty to the other is never done. In Levinas' words, "When I see the Other, I cannot desert him… Nothing is more immediate than the face of the Other. It...confronts me continuously with the question: 'Must I not help him, be with him when he dies?'"[25] The answer is always yes. I must never set aside the calls of the Other. I must always respond, infinitely.

The infinite nature of my responsibility is related to the presence of the infinite in the other. When I awaken to the absoluteness of the Other's alterity, I am awakened to the infinite, the absolute in her. As Levinas states,

> The dimension of the divine opens forth from the human face…There can be no knowledge of God separated from the relationship with men. The Other is the very locus of metaphysical truth, and is indispensable for my relation with God.[26]

In my response to the Other, and only through that response, I am in relationship to God. Though the epiphany begins in a one-on-one encounter, it explodes into an even vaster event because when I see the infinite in the face of the other, I am eventually

---

[24] It is because of the asymmetrical nature of Levinasian ethics that I use first person singular pronouns when discussing his work.
[25] Stated by Emmanuel Levinas in Johan F. Goud, "What one asks of oneself, one asks of a saint: A Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas." *Levinas Studies: An Annual Review* Vol. 3 (2008): 24.
[26] Levinas, 78.

called not only to that specific Other, but also to the infinite in every other Other. Encountering one face awakens me to each other face.

Nel Noddings is similarly focused on the face-to-face, though she approaches it from a different angle. For Noddings, ethics starts from "caring-for," which she defines as "the face-to-face occasions in which one person, as carer, cares directly for another, the cared-for."[27] Coming from the Care tradition of ethics, Noddings is a feminist philosopher who brings to light an outlook that is lacking in other historical ethical traditions. From Kantianism to utilitarianism and just about everywhere in between, the central ethical question tends to focus only around what we "ought" to do. Care philosophers like Noddings point out that if all the people in our lives paid attention to us strictly out of obligation, we would not be happy or fulfilled. We need people who love us, who go beyond the minimum requirements of care for us specifically because that is what they *want* to do. Care philosophers point out that these specific, caring relationships should not be sidelined or ignored in ethics. Noddings uses these relationships as the very basis of her ethical system.

Noddings' approach can be explained by looking at one's life chronologically in terms of care. Because we each begin our lives as completely dependent creatures, our basic survival requires that we be cared for early on. We therefore "learn first what it means to be cared for,"[28] and from this we learn to care for others. In our behavior towards those we love, we imitate those who have cared for us, and slowly take on more and more responsibility for the wellbeing of those specific others. Although the relationship of a parent to a child is distinct from other relationships, the

[27] Noddings, 21-22.
[28] Noddings, 22.

parental model of trust, love, and responsiveness that the child ideally experiences forms the foundation for the child's participation in other caring relationships, such as friendship and erotic love, as the child matures.

Caring-for is based in responsiveness, in the refrain "I am here."[29] Noddings writes that "that constant response, 'I am here,' is the foundation of a relation of care and trust."[30] Her choice of words in "I am here" is rich with significance, though she uses it chiefly to differentiate herself from traditional exegetes. The Hebrew translation of the phrase, הנני (*hineini*), shows up repeatedly in the Hebrew Bible as a human response to the Divine. Most notably, Abraham says it in the story of the binding of Isaac. Levinas also dwells on הנני because that phrase illustrates the way in which each of us should constantly be responding to the other. Inspired by the Levinasian interpretation, Jacques Derrida calls הנני, which he translates as "here I am," "the first and only possible response to the call by the other, the originary moment of responsibility such as it exposes me to the singular other, the one who appeals to me… I reply that I am ready to respond."[31] In this sense, הנני is a statement of recognition of absolute duty.

---

[29] The bottomless, unconditional, generous love that Noddings discusses is only positive and productive in cases where that caring-for relationship nourishes and sustains the carer as well as the recipient of care. Close, loving relationships and the work done in them are generally a good thing, and are incredibly important for quality of life. However, relationships as such are not always positive. There are many ways in which a loving relationship can become abusive. In those cases, the presence of love does not dictate that the carer should continue to participate in a caring-for relationship. Throughout this work I will emphasize the importance of honoring moral and emotional inclinations; in the case of abusive relationships, it is often necessary to do just the opposite. When I discuss relationships, I mean to refer to those relationships that are not abusive, but rather enrich the lives of all the parties involved.
[30] Noddings, 129.
[31] Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death,* trans. David Willis *(*Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 71.

Noddings, in contrast, translates הִנֵּנִי as "I am here." She explains, "The 'here I am' of the prophets was uttered in obedience to a higher power. 'I am here,' said by a parent to a child, is an offering of love that flows downward from those with greater power to those with less."[32]

At first, Noddings' care theory may appear to be a form of virtue ethics. While she is certainly influenced by virtue ethics, there is a very clear and straightforward distinction between her work and virtue ethics. She explains that in virtue ethics, caring would be an attribute only of the individual moral agent. In her theory, however, caring is an attribute of a relation. A caring interaction is always between two or more people, and focusing on this relational aspect maintains a constant awareness of the specific needs of the cared-for as opposed to focusing solely on the intention of the carer.[33]

The high level of attention and love that Noddings calls for is clearly partial, specific and concrete. Out of love, the parent is endlessly accessible and responsive to the child. In *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy,* Noddings sketches how we can extrapolate this caring-for relation to inform our conduct with those for whom we are not direct carers, and even more radically, local and global social policy.

It is important to note the way that Noddings moves from a descriptive stance about the importance of caring to a normative one. There seem to be three different mechanisms at play for Noddings here. First, she relies on a commonsense notion of humanity to argue that not only do we care for others, but we ought to do so. She writes,

---

[32] Noddings, 129.
[33] Noddings, 19-20.

> Most of us…feel that in the name of common humanity one should respond to cries for help, warn people of impending danger, or restrain a toddler who is about to run into a busy street. Our natural reaction underscores a point made by John Caputo about obligation: obligation happens. Normal people who have been well cared for themselves will respond to those who cry out for care. From the perspective taken here, something is wrong with people who do not.[34]

Just as obligation happens in our daily encounters, it happens all the more so in deep, loving relationships. As far as Noddings is concerned, when obligation happens we ought to honor it, and if we do not that is problematic. Although she does make a normative statement, this argument is unsatisfying on its own, as it is naturalistic and descriptive in nature. It is supplemented by two other arguments that have more normative force.

The second and most fully developed of the three mechanisms is Noddings' notion that "we respond as carers because we want to uphold our ideal of ourselves as carers."[35] In order to develop and maintain an appropriate self-understanding, one must participate in caring relations. This is not a matter of concern for the self or one's reputation, but rather a result of valuing the quality of caring for people in general. The notion that people should be caring moves me to want to understand myself as caring, which leads me to embody those characteristics.

The final way that Noddings moves from a descriptive claim about care to a normative one is through her analysis of the history of care as women's work. She writes that although some shifts have taken place recently, "the expectation that women will do direct care when it is necessary remains strong."[36] This statement gestures towards Annette Baier's argument that the exclusion of care from definitions

---

[34] Noddings, 34.
[35] Noddings, 30.
[36] Noddings, 28.

of morality in patriarchal philosophic traditions has allowed males to opt out of sharing in the work of care. In these male-dominated traditions the attentive work done in relationships is considered to be a good thing, but not a question of morality, and therefore not necessary for all people to participate in.[37] The only way to redistribute this burden is for all people to be obliged to participate in caring relations and share the work that takes place within them. Since in Noddings' view our moral selves are bound up in attention to the good, descriptive and normative claims are less distinct from one another than is the in case in a more principle-based approach. But in these three ways she does push in the direction of a normative account.

While Noddings and Levinas are very different thinkers, I have chosen to group them together because they both focus on the moral demand that specific others have on us. Rather than approaching ethics from a contemplative perch and asking what the ideal ethical principles would be if imagined from scratch, both Noddings and Levinas describe how ethics unfolds as people live life. They view the ethical subject primarily as a responder, and look seriously at the sources of the calls to which agents differentially respond. As Taylor points out, "both feminist care theorists and Levinas have understood the receptivity towards others of ethics, the prioritization of responsibility over freedom."[38] Although their focuses undoubtedly differ, by considering these two philosophers together I hope to call attention to the important overlap between them: a focus on the specific, partial, concrete nature of ethics. If we are to live morally engaged lives, our conduct in relationships with specific others ought not to be determined solely by impartial theoretical systems.

---

[37] To explore Baier's work on this subject, see Annette Baier, *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
[38] Taylor, 220.

Each face-to-face encounter requires something particular of us, and Noddings and Levinas each help us to figure out what that something is, and how we come to feel that requirement. While I will argue both here and in Chapter 4 that this shared orientation is hugely important, the comparison between Noddings and Levinas also sheds light on what is lacking in this personal, fluid approach, and why a more systematic, principled justice orientation has a highly significant role for a theory of moral engagement.

Assessing the Arguments

The ethical arguments offered by Levinas and Noddings both make exciting and important contributions to discourse on ethics and moral engagement. Each also has significant limitations. In this section I will identify the strengths and weaknesses of each argument as a theory of moral engagement.

For my purposes, the most relevant theme in Levinas' work is the vastness and urgency of our responsibility to the other. He describes an attitude of restlessness, of never letting oneself stop responding to the other. He describes how such a way of being grows organically out of one's own personal feelings and experiences in reaction to the other rather than being externally prescribed.

Although it is the immensity and open-ended nature of the demands on the moral agent that makes Levinas' ethics so striking, those qualities also mark the weakness of Levinas' approach as a roadmap to living a morally engaged life. There are two major drawbacks. The first is that the demands apply in the same way to all others, which undermines the distinctive, special nature of the demands that arise in

the context of an intimate relationship. If my goal as a moral agent is to respond to every other Other, there is not much room reserved for the extensive and dedicated work that takes place in close relationships. This is no accident. In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas expresses a fairly explicit aversion to the role that love tends to play in ethical life. In his view love, especially erotic love but also platonic, is most often a distraction, an obstacle before ethics.[39] While I agree with Levinas that love can be consuming, I depart from him in my consideration of love a force that primarily pushes us to be generous and open, responsive and attentive to other people. Mutual love generally brings satisfaction and meaning to both parties. Deep feeling for specific others motivates us to give to them joyfully, and to take pleasure in their victories. Rather than a distraction, I consider love to be central to living a morally engaged life.

The second problem is that the huge size of one's task as a Levinasian agent means that one is, in essence, always failing. As Levinas notes, "The infinity of responsibility denotes not its actual immensity, but a responsibility increasing in the measure that it is assumed; duties become greater in the measure that they are accomplished. …The more I am just the more guilty I am."[40] There is no guidebook that if followed perfectly correctly would ensure that one has completely fulfilled one's duty. Rather, one must navigate the terrain of the demands on oneself with almost no structure or guidance, and confront the fact that one is falling short in every moment. This lifestyle strikes me as exhausting, overwhelming, and likely

[39] Levinas, 34.
[40] Levinas, 244.

unsustainable. This critique is not meant to suggest that Levinas' ethics are conceptually flawed, but rather would be flawed in practice.

Let us now turn to Noddings. Noddings' most valuable contribution to the conversation is her fervent focus on caring relationships. Not only does she take relationships and the ethical work we do in them deeply seriously, but she also wisely emphasizes the fact that special skills yield special responsibilities. She considers love and knowledge of an other to be a skill that qualifies the carer to provide care for that other in a way that strangers just cannot do, and in turn points out that the carer's special skill set gives the carer a distinctive set of duties. Rather than viewing loving care as outside the domain of one's ethical obligations, Noddings holds that natural caring constitutes the main substance of one's ethical obligations.

However, this focus on the local and on natural caring comes at a cost. Noddings does not seem to push us very hard to extend our ethical labors beyond our comfort zone. While she does encourage some amount of concern in the form of caring-about, which I will discuss shortly, such concern is, by her own admission, cursory.[41] Because of her commitment to prioritizing those proximate to us, she does not focus on the obligation to actively pursue justice in a universal or global sense. This is a cause for concern because "our 'natural' feelings of care may not always extend across continents or even across social, racial, or ethnic barriers in our own communities."[42] Because resources are not distributed equally throughout the world and there is an immense amount of suffering taking place in impoverished, oppressed,

[41] Noddings, 22-23.
[42] Taylor, 223.

or otherwise marginalized communities, agents acting only locally and for those who are in some way like them leaves many of the neediest without sufficient help.

I will show in the rest of this chapter how these two arguments complement one another's strengths and weaknesses, but also why, even so, there is still a piece missing.

Countless Other Others

The bottomless, open-ended nature of both Levinas' and Noddings' ethics is at once what makes each so compelling, and in practice, a source of concern. Although both philosophers' approaches emphasize the face-to-face, they each confront the problem of the existence of vast numbers of people in the world whose needs require response. As Chloe Taylor writes, "Levinas and care theorists recognize conflicting and ambivalent ethical experiences, the anguish of (in)decisions, and the impossibility of ever doing enough, the feeling of guilt for what one could not do, and even for what others do."[43]

Jacques Derrida helps to voice Levinas' despair at the conflicts that arise from the constant, colossal responsibility that we have to all others. Noddings is less interested in engaging with this anguish, and takes a more matter-of-fact approach. I will set up the problem through Derrida's reading of Levinas and then use Noddings' distinction between caring-for and caring-about to begin to navigate out of the deep, pervasive darkness of our inability to answer all the ethical demands that are constantly calling out to us.

[43] Taylor, 218.

Derrida lays out the problem clearly in Part 3 of *The Gift of Death*, in which he reads Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* through a Levinasian lens, with a focus on the competing layers of responsibility that Abraham encounters in the story of the binding of Isaac.

> …Duty or responsibility binds me to the other, to the other as other, and ties me in my absolute singularity to the other as other...I am responsible to the other as other, I answer to him and I answer for what I do before him. But of course, what binds me thus in my singularity to the absolute singularity of the other, immediately propels me into the space or risk of absolute sacrifice. There are also others, an infinite number of them, the innumerable generality of others to whom I should be bound by the same responsibility, a general and universal responsibility (what Kierkegaard calls the ethical order). I cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation, or even the love of another without sacrificing the other other, the other others. *Every other (one) is every (bit) other,* every one else is completely or wholly other. …As soon as I enter into a relation with the other, with the gaze, look, request, love command, or call of the other, I know that I can respond only by sacrificing ethics, that is by sacrificing whatever obliges me to also respond, in the same way, in the same instant, to all the others.[44]

The picture Derrida paints here is a harsh and heartbreaking reality for anyone who acknowledges Levinas' basic description of my responsibility to and for the others whom I encounter in my life, that I am responsible for the other because I exist only through the other. If I am fully responsible to a seemingly infinite number of others, I am failing all but one in each moment. In the very moment that I help an elderly person across the street, I am failing the homeless person I left behind me on the sidewalk, I am failing my own mother whose needs I am not meeting, and I am even failing the millions of children starving all over the world. To make matters worse, I have not even met all the needs of the elderly person whom I did in fact help; I did not take her to the doctor, help fill her prescriptions, or assist with the myriad other tasks she needs help to achieve. My duty is never done anywhere.

[44] Derrida, 68.

But the conflict goes beyond limits on my time and money. In order to be a self, I must have commitments. Although I am fully responsible to all others, my own identity hinges on making decisions and taking stands. If I am indiscriminate in my responsiveness, I lose myself. To illustrate this, let us consider the case of eyesight. In order for the visual field to function, some objects are necessarily in focus while others are necessarily blurry. Without prioritizing some objects, all are lost, and the visual field is no longer functional. The same goes for responsiveness to all others. At the same time as I acknowledge the responsibility I have, I must also recognize that I am unable to answer every call both because of my limited resources and because of the structural problem of the necessity of having commitments, or else I will cease to function. As Derrida explains, "I am responsible to any one (this is to say any other) only by failing in my responsibilities to all others"[45]; it is only by being irresponsible that I can be responsible at all.

Even if I constantly pour myself out in response to the needs of others whom I encounter, I will never be able to respond to them all. This reality does not negate or lessen my responsibility. I am endlessly responsible, even though this condition as such is at best inconvenient and at worst, devastating. I must always sacrifice the needs of many to the needs of the other to whom I am responding, "and I can never justify this sacrifice, I must always hold my peace about it. Whether I want to or not, I can never justify the fact that I prefer or sacrifice any one (any other) to the other."[46] "Holding my peace" about this condition of endless responsibility and endless

[45] Derrida, 70.
[46] Derrida, 70.

sacrifice means maintaining a restlessness, a constant stirring that keeps me moving and responding.

Noddings takes this limit on our ability to respond to others as a given, and not one particularly worth crying over. She writes,

> Those involved in direct care for even a few people know that there are limits to what one carer can do. …We cannot care for everyone, if by 'we' the speaker refers to some finite group. To suppose that we can or that we ought to is a lovely but wild dream. The best we can do is to care directly for those who address us – those we actually encounter (notice that this includes strangers) and indirectly for others by working to establish social conditions in which care can flourish. To suppose that these tasks are identical is the great liberal error. We do not care, in the direct sense, through welfare grants, coercive schooling, or military action. We have to work toward a world in which 'it is possible to be good' – one in which carers are enabled to care without sacrificing their own lives and in which caring goes beyond politically correct rhetoric. Recognizing the necessity of such work is the reason for rehabilitating *caring about* and giving it the place it deserves.[47]

Here she states unapologetically that any given person can only care for so many others. I think that there is an important power in facing the tragedy of our limited means for taking care of others. But at the same time, dwelling on a sense of failure can paralyze us. Noddings seems to nudge us out of our dejected posture here, saying, "*Of course* we can't respond to everyone! Now what?" And her answer comes through the concept of "caring-about." Her "caring-for" relation has a similarly unrestricted, infinite quality to Levinas' idea of responsibility to the other, but Noddings introduces a second, less demanding responsible relation. Caring-about is more removed, and provides "the link between caring and justice."[48] She explains,

> If we have been well cared for and have learned to care for a few intimate others, we move into the public world with fellow-feeling for others. We are moved by compassion for their suffering, we regret it when they do not experience the fruits of care, and we feel outrage when they are exploited.

[47] Noddings, 48.
[48] Noddings, 22.

> Often we wish that we could care directly, but because that is impossible, we express our care in charitable gifts, in the social groups we support, and in our voting….[49]

All these are examples of caring-about, of ways that we can work towards the betterment of others' lives even when the individuals are beyond our reach. It is a watered-down manifestation of the same set of feelings that compels us to care-for. In this case, rather than a deep love of a specific other, it takes the form of a more distant sense of connection and responsibility for all people. Noddings acknowledges that there are many people who (completely on the other side of the spectrum from Derrida's and Levinas' endless pouring out) will be tempted only to care-about and become "self-righteous and politically correct"[50] without doing much of anything for others. This is why even as she highlights the importance of caring-about, she is careful to always put caring-for first.

> The key, central to care theory, is this: caring-about (or perhaps, a sense of justice) must be seen as instrumental in establishing the conditions under which caring-for can flourish. Although the preferred form of caring is caring-for, caring-about can help in establishing, maintaining, and enhancing it.[51]

Caring-about is not enough, but in Noddings' view, it is all we can do for most of the people in the world. We must always remember the relationship between caring-for and caring-about, or we will go astray.

Noddings and Levinas leave us with a difficult choice here. Either we consider ourselves infinitely responsible to all others and constantly both push ourselves and grapple with failure, or we limit our responsibilities primarily to those with whom we have caring relationships, and respond only superficially to the rest.

---

[49] Noddings, 22.
[50] Noddings, 22.
[51] Noddings, 23.

Levinas' approach avoids complacency, but leaves the ethical subject at a complete loss for how to proceed. Noddings, conversely, avoids the risk of paralysis and self-effacement but does not necessarily require us to extend ourselves beyond what is intuitive and comfortable.

Two Visions of Obligation

Noddings' and Levinas' utterly different responses to the problem of the large number of others and their needs make it apparent that they have differing pictures of obligation. I see two major differences between them. First, while both agree that "obligation happens,"[52] Levinas focuses primarily on discovering and deeply feeling the infinite nature of the call, while Noddings focuses first and foremost on the implementation of the response: care. Second, Noddings emphasizes that the sphere in which "obligation happens" is made up mostly of those with whom we have close, loving relationships. Levinas does not.

Perhaps these two differences are connected. It makes sense that focusing on the need to respond (Levinas) vs. focusing on the response itself (Noddings) would lead to differing pictures of obligation. For Levinas, the emphasis is on the constant feeling of awareness of our obligation. Although that awareness is awakened by specific Others and has everything to do with them, the point is to exist in a state of relentless responding. It is about me and my obligations, and my attempt to meet them (although of course the obligations go beyond me).

For Noddings, however, there is no way to separate out obligation from relationship. Since the focus is the nuts and bolts of our actual response, there is no

[52] Noddings, 52.

way to talk about it without also talking about the particular persons to whom we are responding and their specific needs. My ability to respond to you is completely tied up in my understanding of you, my knowing you, my loving you. The point is our particular relationship, my specific care for you. With these varying foci in mind, it is not surprising that Levinas' obligation must be to all others, while Noddings' must be to particular others.

Both of these lenses are important. They cast light on two different types of commitment, both of which are important parts of the fabric of our daily lives. Noddings' version of obligation is about the special set of responsibilities that we have to those whom we love. Although often we don't think of this set of obligations as responsibilities since we *want* to perform them, in the difficult moments we often still make ourselves available out of duty, which reveals the obligatory side of that care.

On the other hand, Levinas' version of obligation is about the responsibility we have to each other person. This is harder for an individual to discover and accept, and as a result requires some sort of "aha!" moment, like the encountering of the face that Levinas discusses. Levinas' definition of obligation points to the notion that beyond those we love or like, we must be responsive to all people's needs. Although this may sound Kantian and duty-based, it has a very different flavor. It does not start from an "ought," but rather from the experience of being called, the feeling of this responsibility and the way that that feeling consumes and propels us. While Kant emphasizes personal autonomy and the choice one makes to adhere to moral law, in Levinas' view the other subjects me to the law, interrupting all autonomy. Before I

am even an "I," I am called. This call to serve the other precedes the foundation of myself as a subject.

Separating out Noddings' "obligation" from that of Levinas raises an obvious question: Do these two lenses work together or conflict with one another? Does being called by all people take away from how much I can respond to my loved ones? Does the special weight and volume of my loved ones' calls take away from my ability to be constantly aware of my responsibility to all people? My answer is no. Although it might seem that these demands would compete to the point of being mutually exclusive, I argue that they call out to different parts of us.[53] We respond to calls from our loved ones out of natural caring, and to the rest of the calls with Levinasian responsiveness. Our responsiveness to our loved ones may still be Levinasian in flavor, but it is motivated primarily by care for those specific others.

Noddings' theory is based on an idea of the existence of "natural" care, that "form of caring that does not require an ethical effort to motivate it."[54] This caring, such as we feel for those we love, "arises more or less spontaneously out of affection or inclination."[55] That sort of care and responsiveness comes from a fundamentally different place in us than does responsiveness to anyone else. The place of natural caring for those we sincerely love is its own bottomless chamber. For this reason, Levinas' and Noddings' visions of obligation need not interfere with one another. Even those who experience life in a Levinasian state of responsiveness and called-ness will hear the call of someone they love with different ears than the ones with which they hear all other calls. This is not to say that they will necessarily consider

[53] Levinas, 26.
[54] Noddings, 2.
[55] Noddings, 29.

that call important to the exclusions of others, but that they will respond to it out of love.

The addition of Levinasian responsiveness to Noddings' natural caring just means that in addition to the spontaneous, affectionate attention I give to my loved ones, I am also constantly pushing myself to discover and heed the needs of all those whom I encounter. It is a different mechanism, but it has a similar level of intensity to caring-for. In this integrated model, rather than keeping Noddings' intimate caring-for and remote caring-about, we fill in caring-about with Levinasian urgency. This way of relating to all but our loved ones is still completely different from caring-for in that it is not based in relationship, but it is not comfortable or easy in the way that caring-about is. Surely maintaining this level of responsiveness beyond our caring-for relationships requires effort. It requires that the moral agent stay in constant touch with both kinds of call and work to maintain a healthy balance. The agent must push herself to both act out her natural caring and seek to encounter the face of the other beyond her sphere of affection.

The Limits of Intuition and the Need for Justice

I have so far focused on the positive importance of situated, face-to-face ethics by first showing Noddings' and Levinas' contributions to ethics and arguing that each of their philosophies, though different from one another, fits into this category. I then showed that certain elements of Noddings' and Levinas' approaches are compatible, and in fact respond to one another's weaknesses. But let us consider where this combination of ideas from Levinas and Noddings leaves us. What would it

look like for a moral agent to subscribe to this integration of elements from the thought of Levinas and Noddings, in which one adopts a Levinasian sense of urgency and responsiveness to all people, and also distinctively pours oneself out in caring-for relationships with loved ones?

Maintaining both caring-for relations and Levinasian responsiveness to all others requires a serious balancing act. If a moral agent truly embraces the Levinasian posture of restless responsiveness, the needs of people all over the world would be relevant to her, and yet impossible to meet. And if she fully embraces Noddings, she must be ever present with her loved ones; ever responding "I am here."[56] How can she ever know that she is distributing her time and resources correctly? What criteria ought she to use in making these choices? How ought she cope with the exhausting, enervating, endless nature of the demands on her?

Both Levinas' and Noddings' approaches to ethics are open-ended, fluid, and intuitive. They give us much of the raw material we need in order to theorize moral engagement by providing a much-needed focus on the personal, flowing, and organic aspect of ethical behavior. But it seems that any moral agent needs some mechanism by which to make these difficult decisions about ethical behavior. There is not enough structure or guidance in the work of Noddings and Levinas, and without such direction, what is to stop moral agents from using their limited resources only to help those toward whom they feel an affinity? As Chloe Taylor describes,

> …Both Levinas and feminist theorists of care have discussed concerns of responsibility, intimate relations of love and care, charity, and the demands of dependence at length, while sometimes saying little about justice and its relation to care. They have been concerned with bringing the attention of ethics towards relations with proximate dependents and have said less about

[56] Noddings, 129.

> our responsibilities towards those who are not proximate to us, and whom we may never meet, but who are nevertheless in need.[57]

While Levinas' ethics would ideally push us beyond the locality of Noddings', if there is no articulated vision of justice or guidance for how to seek it, I am not convinced that this hybrid form of Levinas' and Noddings' arguments will necessarily lead to a fully morally engaged life, in which the agent acts ethically both through her personal conduct and relationships and by seeking to make the world more just on a global scale. "There must always be a simultaneity of ethics and justice, of respecting general rights and responding to particular needs. While we separate these demands conceptually, they are always co-presenting."[58] An ethics of care and response to the needs of others begs for a framework of justice with which to operate, so as to guide decision-making.

[57] Taylor, 223.
[58] Taylor, 224.

3

KANT AND SINGER: THE UNIVERSAL

In contrast to the fluid, face-to-face approach taken by Levinas and Noddings, in this chapter I will focus on philosophers who are more justice-oriented and aim for a more systematic and universalistic ethics. I will draw from two major traditions of ethical thought: deontological ethics and consequentialist ethics. The major difference between these two traditions is that deontologists emphasize the intentions and motives of the moral agent in order to assess an action's moral worth, while consequentialists evaluate based on the outcomes of the specific act. Because of this divergence, the two schools of ethics are often thought of in opposition to one another. In this chapter, however, I will group Kantian ethics, which is deontological, and Peter Singer's ethics, which is consequentialist, under the larger heading of systematic, justice-oriented, and universalistic approaches to ethics. In this chapter, I use the term "universalistic" in two senses: that of dismissing concern for specific situational and personal matters, and that of being global, applying to all.

My goal in examining Kantian ethics together with Singer's is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their shared approach and to see how it relates to the more intuitive, emotional ethics explored in the previous chapter.

A Shared Approach

Although consequentialists and Kantians address the question of how we ought to behave in radically different ways, they share an impartial, cosmopolitan perspective. While authors like Nel Noddings and Emmanuel Levinas take the situated nature of specific relationships and face-to-face encounters as their respective starting points, Kantians and utilitarians (like Peter Singer) strive to operate from an abstract "view from nowhere." For the Kantian tradition, this impartialism takes the form of universalizable duties for all humans, while for Singer it means working to maximize preferences being met, regardless of whose preferences they are. For Singer, this applies to all sentient beings, including those who are non-rational.

These impartialist perspectives are compelling in that they push us to take a global view of ethics. If we focus solely on relationships and on Noddings' "natural" form of caring, our concern tends to be limited to the local. If resources were distributed equally around the world, caring only locally could potentially be defensible. However, in our current state of affairs in which some countries are quite affluent and others are desperately poor, even the most basic concern for human dignity requires a global view. While I have so far focused on the importance of specific, intuitive, partial caring, this is not sufficient. My intuition is that there must be a larger, livable framework that urges us to be responsive to anyone in need, whether we know them personally or not. Just as relationships to others are important for our well-being, so is holding ourselves to coherent, principled ethical standards that we can justify and of which we can feel proud.[59]

[59] Theme in Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 13.2 (Spring 1984): 134-171.

Both the deontological Kantian tradition and Peter Singer's consequentialist approach provide strong, cohesive arguments for why we should pay attention to suffering strangers. From the Kantian perspective, all human beings deserve respect by virtue of being human. Kant argues that when we use our moral reason we discover that "we all possess equal and unqualified value, a moral fact that entails, in turn, that we must act for the sake of that equal value."[60] This duty to act out of respect for all people leads our moral reason to the categorical imperative. There are two major formulations of the categorical imperative: "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law,"[61] and "Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only."[62] The demand of the categorical imperative is, by definition, universal and impartial. Just as I must not treat my own father merely as a means, I must not treat the bus driver who took me downtown or the child who made my clothing in a sweatshop merely as a means. The duty to see each person as an end applies to all three cases in exactly the same way.

Although he does not focus on duty, Peter Singer starts from a similarly abstract, aerial view. His general orientation as a consequentialist is that "the right act in any given situation is the one that will produce the best overall outcome, as judged from an impersonal standpoint which gives equal weight to the interest of

---

[60] Thomas Donaldson, "Kant's Global Rationalism," *Traditions of International Ethics,* ed. David Mapel and Terry Nardin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 138.
[61] From Immanuel Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* quoted in Christine Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 14.
[62] From Immanuel Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* quoted in Korsgaard, 17.

everyone."[63] As Lori Gruen explains in *Singer and His Critics*, this utilitarian approach is impartial because

> …It claims not only that the right action is that which promotes the greatest good for the greatest number of beings affected by the action, but that the one individual's pain or pleasure is not to count any more or less than any other individual's equal pain or pleasure. That the first person happens to be you or someone close to you does not figure in an impartial utilitarian calculation. This is because, for utilitarians, under all conditions, the right thing to do is that which brings about the best overall consequences from an impersonal perspective, which, of course, may result in a state of affairs in which the overall consequences for you or your nearest are not best.[64]

Singer's specific approach within consequentialism is called "preference utilitarianism," which identifies the good that ought to be maximized as the meeting of individuals' preferences.[65] It is important to specify that although selecting the meeting of individual preferences as the utility to maximize does emphasize the individual more than other utilities might, it remains thoroughly impartial. Equal consideration of interests is central to this approach: "An interest is an interest, whoever's interest it may be."[66]

In his book *One World,* Singer uses strictly consequentialist reasoning to argue that it is morally compulsory for those who have superfluous wealth to assist those in extreme poverty and hunger, regardless of their national affiliation. Based on his analysis that more will be gained than lost in redistributing wealthy people's surplus so that others' basic needs can be met, he ultimately concludes that:

---

[63] Samuel Scheffler, *Consequentialism and Its Critics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) quoted in Carlos R. Cordourier-Real, *Transnational Social Justice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 46.
[64] Lori Gruen, "Must Utilitarians Be Impartial?" *Singer and His Critics*, ed. Dale Jamieson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000),134.
[65] Cordourier-Real, 47.
[66] Peter Singer*, Practical Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 21, quoted Cordourier-Real, 48.

> We could therefore propose, as a public policy likely to produce good consequences, that anyone who has enough money to spend on luxuries and frivolities so common in affluent societies should give at least 1 cent in every dollar of their income to those who have trouble getting enough to eat, clean water to drink, shelter from the elements, and basic health care. Those who do not meet this standard should be seen as failing to meet their fair share of a global responsibility, and therefore as doing something that is seriously morally wrong.[67]

Although Singer would ideally like to demand vastly more of people than the requested 1 percent, he is dedicated to analyzing what policy will practically create the best outcomes, and he wants to set the highest target-figure with which people are still likely to comply.

Criticisms of Impartialism

The common strength of both the Kantian and utilitarian arguments that I have briefly outlined is that they each give a coherent, compelling account for why we must push ourselves to think beyond the appeal of the faces we know in order to look at global need. That being said, there are two major criticisms of these systematic approaches. The first is that any moral theory that ignores the importance of relationships for their own sake seems to leave out a large, important, morally relevant component of lived experience. The second is that overly impartial, principle-based approaches risk alienating us from the world and from ourselves.

Singer discusses the first problem, that of partial relationships, at length in *One World,* and offers up a variety of impartial arguments in favor of maintaining specific relationships. By evaluating what is gained and lost by partiality in the cases of parenting and friendship, Singer argues that

[67] Singer, 193.

> If loving relationships…are necessarily partial, they are also, for most people, at the core of anything that can approximate a good life. Very few human beings can live happy and fulfilled lives without being attached to particular other human beings. To suppress these partial affections would destroy something of great value, and therefore cannot be justified from an impartial perspective.[68]

According to Singer, investing in loving relationships is justified because an impartial examination of them reveals their importance for happiness. While this may appear to be an easy, effective way of defending relationships, Singer also entertains Bernard Williams' critique that

> This defense of love and friendship demands 'one thought too many.' We should, he says, visit our sick friend in the hospital because he is our friend and is in the hospital, not because we have calculated that visiting sick friends is a more efficient way of maximizing utility than anything else we could do with our time.[69]

As Williams points out, maintaining partial relationships because of an impartial argument in favor of doing so rather than out of specific affection or care seems stilted and cold. Singer responds to this critique with an explanation of a two-level system of utilitarianism, in which there is a distinction between moral calculation done critically in reflective moments, and everyday moral decision-making.[70] He argues that settling on a larger policy of caring for friends because it maximizes utility does not mean that in the moment of hearing that a friend is sick one goes to the hospital to visit him/her because one calculates that it is the ideal action. Rather,

---

[68] Singer, 162.
[69] Singer, 162-3.
[70] It is worth noting that Singer's attempt to respond to the relationship-based critique has been controversial. For example, in her article "Must Utilitarians Be Impartial?" in *Singer and His Critics,* Lori Gruen argues that Singer's two-level approach contradicts his principle of equal consideration of interests, and that the only way for his system to remain coherent and avoid sanctioning prejudice is for him to stick to a strictly impartialist position. Article found in Dale Jamieson ed., *Singer and His Critics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) 142.

in the moment, the decision to go to the hospital can come from a place of partial, sincere care for a friend.[71]

While Singer's rebuttal responds to the aspect of William's concern that relates to the quality of care the friend receives, there is another level to the original critique. This other level connects to the second major challenge leveled at systematic approaches to ethics: alienation. The alienation critique has to do with the relationship between the agent and her set of ethical principles as opposed to the relationship between the agent and other people. In "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality," Peter Railton defines alienation as "the experience (conscious or unconscious) of morality as an external set of demands not rooted in our lives or accommodating to our perspectives."[72] Overly systematic approaches can have the problematic upshot of removing the "I" from the process of moral decision-making. When a person's moral code is divorced from her moral personality and the larger context within which she is situated, it can result in a fragmented and unsatisfying existence for her. In addition, the separation between moral code and moral personality can handicap the moral agent because her special gifts and natural inclinations do not inform or shape her moral code or conduct. This separation can undermine moral commitment.

While both the relationship-based critiques and the alienation ones are important, Singer warns us not to go too far in the direction of partiality by likening the appeal of being partial to those with whom we have relationships to the appeal of being partial to those who are racially, ethnically, or nationally similar to us. He

---

[71] Singer, 162-3.
[72] Railton, 164.

makes very clear that his defense of the importance of specific relationships should not be misinterpreted as an argument for partiality in general. He argues that making a constant habit of stepping outside of our daily routines and looking at our ethical choices impartially and critically will save us from being partial in harmful ways. For example: "Taking an impartial perspective shows that partialism along racial lines is something that we can and should oppose, because our opposition can be effective in preventing great harm to innocent people."[73]

While Bernard Williams chose utilitarian decision-making as his target, it is worth noting that the accusation of requiring "one thought too many" has also been aimed at deontological or Kantian decision-making. What might a Kantian response to the relationship-based and alienation critiques look like? One possible response is to emphasize the important role of duties of virtue, or imperfect duties, in the Kantian system. A duty is imperfect "when there is a positive end to promote, but the law does not say exactly how."[74] A perfect duty, by comparison, is much more clear-cut and therefore more strictly binding. Many Kantian scholars assert that perfect duties are always negative. Christine Korsgaard helpfully distinguishes the two:

> Perfect duties require definite actions or omissions, while in the case of imperfect duties inclination is allowed to play a role in determining exactly what and how much we will do to carry them out.[75]

The moral agent has far more agency when it comes to acting on an imperfect duty than a perfect one. This flexibility leaves space for preferences on the part of the agent, which is relevant in response to both critiques.

---

[73] Singer, 163.
[74] Korsgaard, 20.
[75] Korsgaard, 20.

To illustrate how imperfect duties can create space for relationships, Korsgaard offers the helpful example of the imperfect duty "to promote the happiness of others."[76] Acting on this duty simply means working to promote someone's, anyone's happiness. The agent can comfortably and legitimately choose to act on this by promoting the happiness of loved ones rather than strangers. At best, the flexibility of imperfect duties allows for specific relationships to play an important role in our lives. But this is still a far cry from a system that gives relationships a necessarily central role.

The realm of imperfect duty is also relevant to the alienation critique. Kant argues that the duties he sets down could and should be arrived at by any individual using her moral reason. However, realistically, Kantian duties do not come solely from a brainstorming session on the part of the agent, and are at least partially external to her insofar as she is guided by Kant's thought and writing. They are universal and impartial. That being said, the fact that there is room for the agent to decide how best to act on the duties built into the system does connect her moral behavior and decision-making to her personality and priorities more broadly. A Kantian agent's ethical approach is not wholly self-generated, but this bit of extra agency certainly makes for a less alienating arrangement.

Evaluating Each Stance

In addition to the alienation and relationship-based critiques that apply to both the Kantian and consequentialist lines of reasoning, each of these philosophies has specific strengths and weaknesses as a theory of moral engagement. I will first

[76] Korsgaard, 21.

examine Kantian ethics and then turn to Singer's work. The Kantian approach offers two major, valuable contributions for thinking about moral engagement: its emphasis on universality and its rigorous rule-based, principled method. It also has two major shortcomings: First, the Kantian notion that an act is moral only if it is performed *solely* out of duty and not out of natural inclination[77] is both wrong-headed and limiting for reasons that I will discuss shortly. Second, the fact that positive duties can only be imperfect does not set out a sufficiently strict framework for ensuring that those in privileged positions actively battle global injustice.

Universality, as distinct from impartiality, is centrally important for a theory of moral engagement. The universality of Kant's morality provides a crucial set of arguments for equality of human value, without which it could be deemed acceptable to privilege some groups or types of people as worthy of respect while ignoring others. In the *Groundwork*, Kant writes, "Man, and, in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself."[78] Although it controversially excludes non-rational animals, this most basic Kantian premise is hugely important. It provides a justification for concern for the dignity and well-being of all humans, regardless of whether they are pretty or ugly, nearby or far away. Once I acknowledge that someone is human, I acknowledge that she is an end in herself, and therefore that she deserves respect. As long as a human is rational, one person cannot have "more" or "less" moral status than another. The categorical imperative is based on this assumption, and it is inherently all-encompassing; it by definition applies to everyone.

---

[77] Rae Langton, "Duty and Desolation," *Philosophy* 67.262 (October 1992): 495.
[78] From Immanuel Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* quoted in Korsgaard, 17.

It is important to note, though, that definitions of rationality have historically relegated to a lesser class not only non-human animals but also many humans, including women, people of color, slaves, and others. Kant's use of the word universal applies only to rational beings, beings that can "set ends according to reason."[79] It remains ambiguous whom this definition does and does not include for Kant. For the purposes of this work, I will use the word universal to include all humans. Recognizing that this definition appears quite anthropocentric, I must emphasize that non-human animals remain deeply relevant to all the ethical reasoning in this work.

Universality is fundamental for establishing the equal importance of human value around the world, and the rigorous and principled nature of Kant's system is important for guiding how we should relate to that universality. While it is true that we have some choice about how to work to meet imperfect duties, perfect duties are straightforwardly required of us. There is no wiggle room. Korsgaard explains, "duties of justice [perfect duties] require particular actions or omissions, and the obligation is strict because it can be discharged. If you perform a just action it is not creditable, it is just what you owe. If you do not, you have done something bad."[80] An example of such a perfect duty is the requirement not to make a deceptive promise, such as borrowing money from a lender with the hidden intention not to pay it back. This is problematic for a number of reasons, but classically the main issue is that the liar has removed agency from the lender because she is unaware of the agreement she

---

[79] Allen Wood, "Kant on Duties Regarding Nonrational Nature," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supplement, 72.1 (1998): 189.
[80] Korsgaard, 20.

is really making. Therefore the liar has violated the maxim of respecting other people's agency.

I am impressed by the perfectly binding nature of duties of justice. One can't set them aside because one feels capricious, or because it is raining, or out of anger. This rigor is important for a theory of moral engagement, because one ought to be thoroughly obligated to make good on one's duties to bring about and maintain a socially just world. Working towards respect for all people is not an activity just for those who feel like participating, it is required of everyone.

I will now turn to the weaknesses of the Kantian approach. Rae Langton helpfully explains the first of my two criticisms: that Kant's assertion that actions done out of inclination have no moral worth is problematic.

> An action has moral worth when it is done of the sake of duty; it is not sufficient that the action conforms with duty. Now, inclinations are often sufficient to make us perform actions that conform with our duty. To preserve one's life is a duty; and most of us have strong inclinations to preserve our lives. To help others where one can is a duty; and most of us are sympathetic enough and amiable enough to be inclined to help others, at least some of the time. But—if we take Kant at his word here—actions thus motivated have no moral worth.[81]

Once she introduces Kant's hard stance, that actions done out of inclination do not have moral worth, she goes on to show why Kant holds this position:

> Inclinations are *passions* in the sense that they *just happen to us*. And in so far as we let our actions be driven by them we allow ourselves to be puppets, not persons. We allow ourselves, to use Kant's own metaphors, to become marionettes or automata, which may appear to be initiators of action, but whose freedom is illusory… The inclinations are effects on us…and for that reason pathological….Kant goes so far as to say we have a duty of…moral apathy.[82]

---

[81] Langton, 495.
[82] Langton, 496-7, drawing from Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, ed. L.W. Beck, (New York: Macmillan, 1956) 97, 101.

Kant considers inclinations to be wild impulses that we are subject to, and sees the moral law as a way of asserting control over them. However, the fact that our inclinations are typically out of our control need not translate to a need to overcome them or ignore them.

Having lauded Kant for both the universal and the rigorously principled nature of his approach, one must confront that his stringent rejection of our natural moral inclinations as morally relevant is the other side of the same coin. In order to maintain the purity of his duty and rule-based system and to ensure that reason is always exercised rather than emotions, Kant seems to do all he can to stamp out any other motivation for good action. However, our natural moral inclinations need not pose such a threat to his principled system. Rather, I argue that it is possible to conceive of a moral theory that includes both the obeying of duty and the honoring of inclinations.

If we accept perfect duties as a bottom line moral requirement that we must meet, I cannot see the harm in laying our natural inclinations on top of that. If Tasha feeds her child because she loves him and also would never *not* feed him because it would be violating her duty, the duty is not threatened. However, Kant's rejection of inclination as morally relevant does threaten other aspects of moral life. In one fell swoop, he has placed relationships outside the domain of ethics. What I do for a friend out of care for him specifically as a friend now has no moral worth. Only what I do for a friend begrudgingly, strictly out of duty, is relevant. This has gone far beyond universality and the importance of principle into the realm of dogma about freedom and duty. From my perspective, the role of duty should be to ensure that we

meet our fundamental obligations, not to discount all other forms of moral action and isolate relationships as outside the domain of morality.

My second worry about Kantian ethics as a sufficient basis for a comprehensive theory of moral engagement is that there are no positive perfect duties. This is problematic because, as Kok-Chor Tan articulates, any comprehensive theory of global justice must "take into account not just negative duties (for example, those of noninterference, nonaggression, and non-coercion) but also positive duties (to provide relief, to provide development, to redistribute sources of wealth and so forth) between different communities and countries of the world."[83]

Tan recognizes that on most readings Kant cannot provide these crucial positive duties on the scale needed for global justice, since perfect duties are usually understood to be strictly negative and imperfect duties "cannot be externally demanded of an agent."[84] Still, she finds a way to argue for a positive, perfect duty to "promote, protect, and provide for the well-being of others."[85] Her argument proceeds as follows: within Kant's system there is a perfect duty to right a wrong that one commits to another, to make up for the harm one has directly caused.[86] She then expands the meaning of direct harm:

> Given the socioeconomic interdependencies between us and others, the fact that some are in need of positive assistance is often the result of injustices done unto them, injustices that we have a part in perpetrating or perpetuating given the prevailing 'social system.' Assisting the less well-off participants in our socioeconomic arrangement is in fact a duty of justice, a 'debt of honor,' and not merely an act of benevolence or charity; it is a matter of justice rather

---

[83] Kok-Chor Tan, "Kantian Ethics and Global Justice," *Social Theory and Practice* 23.1 (Spring 1997): 53.
[84] Kok-Chor Tan, p. 53.
[85] Kok-Chor Tan, p. 64.
[86] Kok-Chor Tan, p. 58.

> than of virtue. It is therefore a duty that is perfect, and as such demandable and enforceable.[87]

According to Tan, anyone who is privileged in an unjust world order is directly responsible for the status of those in dire need, and therefore has a perfect duty to right the wrong. This is the origin of the perfect duties she posits to "promote, protect, and provide for the well-being of others."[88] This only applies in the case of harm caused by injustice, not by natural disasters.

While I wish it worked, I am critical of this reading of Kant. Once Tan has expanded out the perfect duty to correct a specific harm one has committed to the point of applying it to our whole social order, it is too big to ever be discharged. When a duty cannot be completely fulfilled, it becomes a broad requirement rather than a strict requirement, making it an imperfect duty. My original worry, then, still stands—there is no room in Kantian ethics for a positive, perfect duty to fight injustice on the global scale.

This weakness in Kantian theory is precisely Peter Singer's strength as a social justice theorist. Because of his consequentialist lens, he is able to provide a positive requirement for the redistribution of wealth. When comparing the extent to which a dollar is beneficial for someone with a vast amount of superfluous wealth and for someone who cannot afford food, one must recognize that it will have greater impact in the hands of the person who needs it to meet her basic needs. Singer takes a global view and argues that as a global community we *must* work to maximize good, which requires those who have more than enough to give to those who are struggling for survival.

---

[87] Kok-Chor Tan, p. 59.
[88] Kok-Chor Tan, p. 59.

This has obvious implications for poverty and hunger. But does it apply to the other myriad injustices around the world? Do we, say, have any sort of positive requirement to right the wrong of sex trafficking? This is not a question of redistribution of wealth per se, so we must look at Singer's larger framework. The good he wants to maximize is that of individuals' preferences being met. In the case of sex trafficking, upon first glance it seems that to intervene would be to ignore the preferences of the traffickers, while to let it continue would be to ignore the preferences of the victims. In a consequentialist framework "there are not intrinsically right or wrong actions,"[89] thus we cannot simply say "but the traffickers are wrong, and the victims are right!" Instead, we must examine the consequences in order to determine the appropriate set of actions.

In this case, the main interest of the traffickers is profit, while the main interest of the victims is their own safety and freedom. If the trafficking continues, the traffickers' interest is met and the victims' interest is ignored. In this case, there is no way for the victims to go about meeting their interests. If the trafficking is stopped, the situation is quite different. The traffickers' interest in earning a profit is not being met. However, there are other ways of making a profit. In this situation the victims' interest in preserving their own safety and freedom may be met, and the traffickers' interest in profit may be met too, as soon as they secure another source of income. So it seems that in this scenario, I as a moral agent ought to intervene.[90]

The strength of this "ought" is highly debatable. Singer provides some answers when the question concerns money, but it remains fuzzy to what extent I am required

[89] Cordourier-Real, 46.
[90] This is, of course, a vastly oversimplified version of this case, but it is meant to serve as a basic illustration of the framework of preference utilitarianism.

to take action to maximize utility in other circumstances. Clearly I am encouraged to do what is right, but must I? In addition to this weakness, the second problematic aspect of Singer's ethics is that our instinctive and heartfelt inclinations (e.g. "the traffickers are wrong and the victims are right!") are considered irrelevant. These are two major obstacles in using Singer's thought as a basis for a theory of moral engagement.

Where This Leaves Us

We have seen in this chapter that systematic, justice-oriented arguments provide a crucial perspective for ethical decision-making. Kantian duties provide a demanding, specific, universally applicable ethical framework. The combination of perfect and imperfect duties ensures that the duties in sum are quite rigorous without being overly alienating, since the moral agent does have some agency in deciding how to act on the imperfect duties. The main worries with the Kantian duties are first, that they undermine rather than celebrate the importance of relationships and our ethical inclinations, and second, that they do not necessarily require us to actively seek justice on the global scale. Singer's arguments are exciting in that they do push us to take an active role in seeking justice globally, but also fall short in that they are quite open-ended and not adequately stringent.

Levinas and Noddings, scholars of the face-to-face, take our nature as situated moral agents and the importance of our ethical inclinations sufficiently seriously, but do not offer us frameworks for making decisions about how our ethical work on the local and global scale should relate, or in Noddings' case, do not strongly advocate

the pursuit of the global at all. Kant and Singer, on the other hand, urge us to be universalistic in our ethics and provide a useful perspective from which to examine and make choices about our ethical behavior, but in so doing they neglect the importance of our relationships and inclinations. In order to form one cohesive theory of moral engagement that integrates all these concerns, in the next chapter I will braid together these various traditions, aiming to maintain the strengths of each while accounting for their weaknesses.

4

A THEORY OF MORAL ENGAGEMENT

In Chapter 2 I established the importance of the face-to-face. Through my discussion of Levinas I explored the power of encountering the face of an Other and hearing the infinite call of responsibility. Noddings' work in care philosophy gave us a strong discussion of why relationships matter, and how they ought to shape our ethical lives. I argued that aspects of these philosophies can fit together beautifully; Noddings' caring-for relation provides guidelines for action in relationships with those we care about, and Levinas provides a general attitude of called-ness that applies both to those we love and those we do not know. Together, Levinas' and Noddings' personal, bottom-up approaches provide much of the material one would need for living an ethical life. Within a framework informed by both of their ideas, each moral agent truly cares about and is rooted in the work she is doing even as she is constantly aware of the infinite nature of the task. However, such a framework still leaves much unclear. What if I feel the Levinasian call but don't *do* anything about it? What if I only do things for those I like or toward whom I feel an affinity, and only in the most convenient instances?

By the end of chapter 2 it was clear that an ethical system must take relationships seriously and recognize the importance of ethics being connected to who one is and what one loves. But that being said, there is a necessity for measuring sticks for our ethical efforts, lest we justify doing too little to create a more just world. Noddings might respond to this suggestion of the necessity of measuring sticks with the argument that in a true caring-for relationship, there is no need or place for such external regulations since the carer is always responding to the specific needs of the recipient of care, and her motivation is one of love as opposed to one of duty. However, I argue that even if the main motivation for ethical behavior in caring relationships is love, we all need some measures against which to gauge our individual ethical actions. Without any external measures, we risk feeling lost or confused. How do we know whether we are succeeding in our ethical efforts? I will show later in this chapter how this need for a measure for our actions applies both to loving relationships and to interactions with those toward whom we don't have any natural affinity.

I turned to Immanuel Kant and Peter Singer for some options as to what those measuring sticks could look like. Kant advocates for universal duties to which we must hold ourselves, while Singer provides a compelling argument for doing as much as we can to combat injustices and inequalities of welfare on the global scale. But neither of these systems assigns direct moral import to relationships or the distinctive contributions and personalities of situated moral agents.

Each of these four authors has brought important ingredients and instructions to the table for a recipe for a theory of moral engagement that gives adequate

attention to both the face-to-face and the global. At this stage I have shown what is missing from these various authors' systems, and I am now ready to suggest criteria for a comprehensive theory of moral engagement that takes both relationships and global need seriously.

I believe in two major criteria for such a theory: first, it ought to be adequately demanding of moral agents. Second, it ought to be grounded in the situated nature of moral agents, and it ought to treat their relationships and distinctive moral personalities and passions as ethically relevant. It is worth noting here that these criteria, as well as my method of assessing whether a theory meets them, blend reasoning based on principle, consequence, and concern over moral motivation.

The first criterion requires that we explore how demanding is "adequately demanding." My answer is that a theory of social justice is demanding enough if it pushes us both to be ethically accountable for all our actions (including those that take place in the context of loving relationships) and to continually work to make manifest a more just world. Levinas' approach of constantly pouring ourselves out in response to the Other meets this criterion, but gives no instruction for how to act at any given moment, making it a model for a general attitude toward ethics but not a comprehensive theory of social justice. Singer's "famine relief argument" that instructs us to do all we can to fight injustice without damaging our own status is a slightly more defined version of this, but not specific enough to live by. Kant's carefully laid out system of rigorous duties, though less sweeping than the answers proposed by Levinas and Singer, counter-intuitively provides the most demanding answer of all *because* of its restricted, explicit nature. There is a very specific

framework provided for moral reasoning, as well as a clear-cut set of both perfect and imperfect duties. Kantian duties provide helpful guidelines for living and assessing our moral lives. We cannot opt out of or finagle the duties. The insistence and seriousness of this approach is crucial.

For the second criterion, a recognition of the fact that we are situated, relational beings who have relationships and passions, I turn to Noddings to teach the first three authors about the importance of partiality. She writes,

> The preferred way of relating to one another morally can be called *natural caring*. By 'natural' I mean a form of caring that arises more or less spontaneously out of affection or inclination. In natural caring…no mediating ethical-logical deliberation is required. That is not to say, of course, that no effort is needed in deciding on a carrying out a physical response. The effort expended in the 'act' part of caring may range from minimal to heroic, but receptivity and motivational displacement occur in direct response to the cared-for. …Natural caring is the sort of caring usually identified with care in intimate circles—in parting and friendship. …We receive 'what is there' in the other person and want to respond positively.[91]

Secondary to this ideal form of natural caring, which is spontaneous and motivated by love for a specific other, is "ethical caring—a dutiful form of caring that resembles a Kantian ethical attitude."[92] Her approach to ethics honors relationships and the work we do for others that comes from specific, intuitive devotion to another person. She privileges those parts of our ethical lives that grow organically out of our situated life. And why is it important to do so? One vivid illustration, which also opened this paper, makes it quite clear:

> To survive a child needs at least minimal physical care. To grow, to become an acceptable person, a child needs more. Urie Bronfenbrenner says, "In order to develop, a child needs the enduring, irrational involvement of one or more adults in care and joint activity with the child. Somebody has to be crazy about that kid."

---

[91] Noddings, 29.
[92] Noddings, 30.

We all need this type of uncalculated, loving care in our lives. Certainly as children, but also as adults, we long to be liked and adored, and we need to feel such caring from at least one person, or better, a few people. Since this is something we all need, how can providing it for others be frowned upon or set aside as ethically irrelevant?

According to Noddings, any worthwhile system of ethics should grow out of our deep, personal concerns and feelings. Her work does assert the importance of ethical caring in addition to natural caring, but the hierarchy is clear: natural caring is primary.

So, how do all the pieces fit together? Clearly, a comprehensive theory of moral engagement must include both partial obligations—those that are not simply the application of impartial duties, such as following through on voluntary commitments—and impartial obligations. While I have until this point been setting up oppositions among these authors, I will now argue that it is possible to create a harmonious composition based on their work.

I will begin by identifying an unexpected overlap between the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas and Peter Singer. At first the relationship between these two authors appears to be distant. Levinas operates in a mystically theological language of alterity, infinity, and encounter. In contrast, Singer writes about calculating moral action in a strategic, consequentialist way. However, I see an important commonality between them. They both strongly, passionately urge us to pour ourselves out in response to the needs of others. For Levinas this is a matter of constantly answering the infinite call of responsibility to all others that we are awakened to through encountering the face of the Other. For Singer, this means a consequentialist

argument for redistribution of resources that asks those with more than they need to make radical sacrifices for the sake of meeting others' basic needs.

What the two share is a general attitude of restless urgency and constant responsiveness to others. It is this attitude that I find so compelling in both authors. And in both cases, there is a lack of clarity or guidance on how to act on that attitude. I will take this attitude, which I will refer to as the mode of Urgent Responsiveness, as the appropriate attitude for a moral agent to hold. To be urgently responsive is to live your life with your ears open to the call to action, to be willing to make sacrifices in order to answer the call. In order to successfully be Urgently Responsive, one must maintain awareness not only of the existence of others and their needs, but also of how to meet them successfully. In this sense, Singer's eye towards outcomes shines through in Urgent Responsiveness, bringing a concern for consequences to the theory of moral engagement.

Since Urgent Responsiveness is a mindset for a moral agent rather than a prescription for action, I seek to build on that foundation by proposing the acceptance of Kant's universal duties and also the importance of our natural inclinations (rather than rejecting the value of natural inclinations as Kant does). Accepting both universal duties and the value of inclinations can provide a theoretical framework that brings together the best of both Kant and Noddings, and is at once adequately demanding and adequately grounded in the specifics of moral agents' lives. This hybrid of Kant's and Noddings' work, which I will refer to as Situated Dutifulness,[93] will provide the much needed structure that the attitude of Urgent Responsiveness

[93] In naming this hybrid between Kant and Noddings "situated dutifulness" I aim to emphasize that the theory maintains Kantian duty while taking seriously agents' situated lives in the form of their relationships, moral personalities, and inclinations.

requires. Together, the attitude of Urgent Responsiveness and the content of Situated Dutifulness make up my theory of moral engagement.

I have argued that the strength of Kantian ethics is its universalism and rigor. I aim to keep these aspects in play in Situated Dutifulness. The weaknesses in Kantian ethics that I identified were first, the lack of positive, perfect duties that demand us to take positive action to better the world, and second, the denial of the importance of relationships, and denial of our ethical life as an outgrowth of our situated experience. While Kant does make an impartial argument for the importance of certain partial obligations, he does not recognize relationships as important in and of themselves. I believe that laying the Kantian system over the foundation of Urgent Responsiveness makes strides toward addressing the first problem, and that replacing Kant's attitude toward inclinations with Noddings' while still taking duty seriously responds to the second.

The first major question to address in order to put this puzzle together is how exactly to bring Noddings' and Kant's work together without undermining the strength of Kant's concept of duty. Let us begin there. Noddings states very clearly that her work "inverts Kantian priorities,"[94] but also that her work to some extent resembles Kantian theory because Kant's work has "contributed enormously to metaethical thought."[95] While Kant's and Noddings' bodies of thought may at first appear at odds, I argue that there is enough in common to combine them productively while maintaining the integrity of what each contributes.

---

[94] Noddings, 24.
[95] Noddings, 30.

Noddings' straightforward inversion of the Kantian priority of duty over inclination results in an opportunity for someone looking at the two authors' work to choose one hierarchy or the other: is duty primary, or is natural caring? Rather than choosing either of these options, I suggest a flattening of the hierarchy, putting the two on equal footing. Both are to be valued, and which of the two is "primary" depends on the situation. There is never a situation in which duty can be set aside, but in many situations natural caring is the more relevant set of motivations. Action motivated by love of a specific other typically takes the moral agent far beyond the proverbial "call of duty," since the agent often goes to great lengths to meet the particular needs of the recipient of care. For example, pet owners have the duty to meet their pets' basic needs. But out of love for their pets, most owners give more to their pets than just food, shelter, and minimal exercise. They buy them their favorite foods, play with them for many hours, and often give them special toys and accessories. In this way, Kantian duties fall to the background when natural caring is involved, since the norms they provide will not be violated anyway. Their role is as a guidepost against which a caring person can check herself, but if she is truly engaged in a "caring-for" relationship, she will far exceed the demands of those duties, and those duties will not be the motivation for her actions.

If the moral action taken in situations in which natural caring is involved is not motivated by duty and the caring person typically goes beyond the delineated duties, why and how are Kantian duties relevant as a guidepost? Take the case of a parent who is crazy about her child and who perceives that her child is unusually sensitive. As many parents do, this parent has the natural instinct to protect her child

from upsetting information because hearing it might hurt the child. Does this mean that when the child directly asks the parent about disturbing aspects of the world, the parent ought to lie? Although the ethics of natural caring are certainly relevant here and the motivation for responding to the child in one way or another will come largely from an intuitive appreciation of what is best for the child, this is a moment in which, even in the context of a caring-for relationship, the parent ought to reflect on her conduct in light of what is required by Kantian duty. A maxim of lying to shield a child from unpleasant information violates the categorical imperative. It is both undesirable and illogical for the practice of lying in this way to be universalized, because if everybody did so children would be taught deceit and would be denied vital tools for understanding the realities of the world. Using the categorical imperative as a guide in this ethically confusing situation helps the parent to proceed in a caring, responsive and also universally ethical way rather than falling prey to the understandable but problematic desire to shield her child through utter deceit.

In situations in which caring relationships are not at issue, Kantian duties are better suited to the task of ethical reasoning. But similarly to the case above, Noddings' care theory is a useful reference point. For example, let us look at the case of a CEO who is deciding upon labor practices for his international company. He must hold any proposal up against both formulations of the categorical imperative. Can such a policy towards laborers be universalized and still be both logical and desirable? Does this policy treat every person as an end in herself, not merely as a means?[96] This form of consideration could get the CEO quite far. But there may be multiple policies that satisfy these challenges. The CEO then ought to look at his web

[96] Korsgaard, 14-16.

of values, his own larger moral life, and his ethical intuitions in order to make his decision among the various policies that satisfy the Kantian test. His decision in any given case is an outgrowth of his situated life, and should be treated as such.

The examples given throughout this work have dealt with human needs and conflicts. How do the calls of non-human sentient beings map onto the framework I have established? Similarly to other calls, some needs expressed by non-human animals come in the context of loving relationships, while others are more distant and abstract. For example, one may very well participate in a caring-for relationship with a pet, and one's motivation for caring for that animal is love. Doing advocacy on behalf of endangered species in general, however, would be motivated by a more generalized set of principles. Although Kant himself considered his duties applicable strictly to "rational beings,"[97] which by his definition excludes non-human animals, I depart from Kant by advocating use of the categorical imperative and Kantian duties to guide us toward fair treatment of non-human animals as well as people. For those animals toward whom one feels a natural affinity (perhaps those who happen to be cute and cuddly), there may be little ethical effort involved in providing care. In those cases, natural caring is better suited to guiding decision-making, but Kantian duty should be used as a guidepost. For other calls of non-human animals and the environment, one ought to use a Kantian framework to determine responsible action but use the care framework and one's larger web of values as a guidepost.

Kant's and Noddings' diverse sets of concerns reinforce one another in practice. Taking inclinations and care seriously does not have to impinge on obeying one's duties steadfastly. Nor does taking duties seriously have to excise natural

[97] Korsgaard,16.

caring. Why, then, is Situated Dutifulness not enough without the attitude of Urgent Responsiveness? Without something urging us to reach past our immediate surroundings in order to better the world, we could easily become complacent, merely meeting the challenges that arrive at our doorsteps and dealing with them ethically through the framework of Situated Dutifulness. But we must push ourselves beyond a passive role, and take responsibility for creating the sort of world we would like to live in. We must not only have respect for all human beings as Kant suggests, but also work tirelessly to act on that respect. This is where the mode of Urgent Responsiveness becomes crucial. It provides the engine that propels us forward as moral agents in the world, with an eye towards good outcomes.

In order to be a viable part of a theory of social justice, this mode of Urgent Responsiveness must have other layers built on top of it. By itself, it leaves us without guidance and asks so much of us that we may feel that we are moral failures even as we doggedly work and sacrifice for the sake of bettering the world, or we may feel paralyzed at the size of the task and become complacent. Situated Dutifulness, which combines Kantian duty with Noddings' valuing of our natural inclinations, provides enough guidance that there will be periods of moral clarity, of feeling that we are in fact succeeding morally in relation to these guideposts. This is crucial for having satisfying, happy lives and for staying motivated on the moral level. At the same time, we must maintain the mode of Urgent Responsiveness so that we can appreciate those periods and value our moral selves without ever becoming complacent.

Choosing Which Calls to Answer

By treating the attitude of Urgent Responsiveness as a basis for my theory of moral engagement, I risk overwhelming the moral agent, even with Noddings and Kant providing content and structure to the theory. As has been discussed, we as individuals have a limited ability to respond to every call for help that comes our way, both because of limited resources and because of the structural reality of the necessity of defining our identities through making choices.[98] So in order to maintain that Urgent Responsiveness is the appropriate attitude for a moral agent to adopt, I must include two important accounts: first, some framework for how the urgently responsive moral agent ought to make choices about which calls to respond to, and second, how the agent should factor self-care in to her larger set of commitments.

The question of how to delineate appropriate limits to responsiveness is an intensely thorny one, considering that most such decisions involve prioritizing some people's dire needs over others'. An appropriate approach to drawing limits ought not to consist of comparing the worth of the people involved or the extent of their suffering, because all people are of equal value, and comparing pain is nearly impossible. Each circumstance is different, and even if one chose only to be responsive in life-or-death scenarios, there would still be too many of those to respond to all of them. Of course, it is sometimes clear that one call is more dire than another; responding to a child asking for a third afternoon snack is not at the same level of urgency as responding to a violent crime taking place outside of one's window. But for calls that are vaguely analogous, one ought not get caught up in the business of comparing anguishes. It is worth noting that we are never aware of all the

[98] For this discussion, turn to pages 24-25.

potential calls that could compete for our time and energy. In practice, we only decide among those calls that are on our radar, that are in some way audible to us. This is because of both epistemic and practical limits.

Among those calls that we are in fact aware of, there are decisions to make. I suggest that one ought to answer those calls to which one is most qualified to respond. In order to assess how qualified one is to respond to a given call, one should look at three criteria: one's relevant skills, relevant resources, and level of passion and/or interest in the given cause. The first two are self-explanatory, but the third one requires a bit of explication. I include level of passion and/or interest in the given cause first, because doing work that one is passionate about is more satisfying than doing work that one has no personal investment in. It feels better. This is a good in and of itself, but it is also important for a second reason. Looking through a consequentialist lens one sees that doing work that one is excited about also makes one a better worker, because one gladly and voluntarily gives more of oneself to the work if one feels invested in it. There is greater motivation and less chance of burnout, and overall there is likely to be more impact.

With regard to all three criteria, one should analyze one's qualifications differentially. If one has a rare skill that is useful, that skill takes on more weight than one that many or most people have. Similarly, one should try to be aware of which of one's passions are common, and which are uncommon. This extra analysis will help to ensure that when people follow their inclinations, causes that demand uncommon traits and/or interests will not be neglected.

This means that in a given situation, if two somewhat analogous causes call out to person X, and X only has the capacity to respond to one of them, X ought to ask herself, "Which of these two calls am I more qualified to respond to?" and respond to that one.

This leads to the next question, that of self-care, because one must somehow determine what one's capacity is in the first place. The question of how much should be asked of a moral agent has recently become a political one, as feminist ethicists have sought to alleviate some of the burden that has traditionally been placed on women by redistributing it to specific others.[99] By embracing Urgent Responsiveness as the appropriate attitude for moral agents, I in no way intend to take steps backwards in this feminist project or delegitimize it. Rather, I hope to provide a thoughtful framework in which all moral agents, women and men alike, can be active seekers of justice and also carefully tend to their own needs.

Before I address self-care directly, it is important to note that my emphasis on Urgent Responsiveness is certainly not proposed in opposition to sharing burdens in a communal context. While each member of a community ought to be Urgently Responsive, this in no way opposes groups of people coming together to address problems as teams. Sharing responsibilities in the context of a family, community, or group of friends is not only compatible with the mode of Urgent Responsiveness, but encourages it. Close friendships and communal structures often strengthen and nourish our ability to be attentive to the calls of those around the world who need our help. Together, a collective of Urgently Responsive people can often have greater impact and vision than a lone individual.

[99] Taylor, 225.

In terms of self-care, Levinas beautifully states the question: In the midst of the work of responding to others, "How can I appear to myself as a face?"[100] How can I encounter myself and respond to my own needs? The goal of being responsive to one's own needs is two-fold, and follows a similar logic to that outlined above. First of all, one's own happiness and well-being is a good in and of itself, and I will depart from Levinas by saying that one's own individual contentment is just as important as every other individual's contentment. Second of all, preserving oneself and being attentive to one's own needs makes one better able to serve others. If one is healthy and happy, one has much more to give to loved ones and those in need than if one is rundown and depressed.

One should attempt to be constantly in touch with and responsive to one's own needs even as one pours oneself out for others. Caring for oneself is a good and important practice, not a guilty pleasure. That being said, one should not become so caught up in tending to one's every whim that one is no longer engaging in Urgent Responsiveness. In conclusion, the appropriate approach to deciding which calls to respond to is to take on those causes that one is most qualified to work on, and to take on as many of them as one can without losing the ability to respond to oneself as well.

Applying the Theory

Now that I have introduced all of the components of this theory of moral engagement, illustrating exactly how it works requires stepping down from my theoretical perch and looking at how people actually live their lives. Amartya Sen argues that any theory of justice must "examine what emerges…including the kind of

[100] Taylor, 11.

lives that people can actually lead, given the institutions and rules, but also other influences, including actual behaviour, that would inescapably affect human lives."[101] The lives we lead are not as neat as the basic examples I have so far explored. Taking a page out of Sen's book, I will explore two realistically complicated moral conflicts to demonstrate exactly how the framework I have set out should be employed. In these examples, caring-for relationships appear to be in direct conflict with abstract duties of justice, and the moral agent is uniquely qualified for both of the conflicting tasks. I have already laid out how to utilize the theory in cases that fall exclusively into one category, and I have set up a hierarchy for prioritizing some projects over others. But what about those truly agonizing situations in which we must prioritize either our abstract principles of justice or our commitments to our loved ones? There is, of course, no single answer, but I hope to demonstrate a method for engaging difficult moral conflicts with integrity and clarity.

[101] Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009) 10.

Case 1: Atticus, Jem and Scout Finch, 1934

Harper Lee's iconic book *To Kill a Mockingbird* takes place in a small town in Alabama. A young black man named Tom Robinson has been accused of raping a white woman. A white lawyer, Atticus Finch, has agreed to defend him and attempt to save him from the death penalty. As a result, his daughter, Scout, quickly becomes a target at school.

> Cecil Jacobs…had announced in the schoolyard the day before that Scout Finch's daddy defended niggers. I denied it, but told Jem.
>
> "What'd he mean sayin' that?' I asked.
>
> "Nothing," Jem said. "Ask Atticus, he'll tell you."
>
> "Do you defend niggers, Atticus?' I asked him that evening.
>
> "Of course I do. Don't say nigger, Scout. That's common."
>
> "'s what everybody at school says."
>
> "From now on it'll be everybody less one—"…
>
> "Do all lawyers defend n-Negroes, Atticus?"
>
> "Of course they do, Scout."
>
> "Then why did Cecil say you defended niggers? He made it sounds like you were runnin' a still."
>
> Atticus sighed. 'I'm simply defending a Negro—his name's Tom Robinson. He lives in that little settlement beyond the town dump. He's a member of Calpurnia's church, and Cal knows his family well. She says they're clean-living folks. Scout, you aren't old enough to understand some things yet, but there's been some high talk around town to the effect that I shouldn't do much about defending this man." …
>
> "If you shouldn't be defendin' him, then why are you doin' it?"
>
> "For a number of reasons," said Atticus. "The main one is, if I didn't I couldn't hold up my head in town, I couldn't represent this county in the legislature, I couldn't even tell you or Jem not to do something again…Scout, simply by the nature of the work, every lawyer gets at least one case in his lifetime that affects him personally. This one's mine, I guess. You might hear some ugly talk about it at school, but do one thing for me if you will: you just hold your head high and keep those fists down. No matter what anybody says to you, don't you let 'me get your goat…
>
> "Come here Scout," said Atticus. I crawled into his lap and tucked my head under his chin. He put his arms around me and rocked me gently. "It's different this time," he said. "This time we aren't fighting the Yankees, we're fighting our friends. But remember this, no matter how bitter things get, they're still our friends and this is still our home."

> With this in mind, I faced Cecil Jacobs in the schoolyard next day: "You gonna take that back, boy?"
>
> "You gotta make me first!" he yelled. "My folks said your daddy was a disgrace an' that nigger oughta hang from the water-tank!"[102]

Thus begins a many-month ordeal in which the children continue to be taunted by schoolmates and adults alike, and eventually undergo a physical attack. I am interested in the moral position of Atticus Finch at this moment in the novel. In the book, Atticus' dilemma is presented as having primarily to do with the risk of damaging his reputation if he defends a black man against the wishes of his racist colleagues and friends. However, as this conversation with Scout reveals, the decision has another layer. Atticus is also aware of the implications for his children. He knows that they will experience antagonism and perhaps even trauma as a result of his decision.

I have always held up Atticus Finch as a hero and admired him for his courage and moral clarity. That being said, the decision to imperil one's children by putting them in a situation where they will be alienated, ridiculed, and physically imperiled seems less obviously ethical to me than it did upon first reading. Since I have embraced the work we do in caring-for relationships as ethical in nature, I now see Atticus' debate of whether or not to defend Tom Robinson as a genuine moral conflict regardless of the question of his professional reputation.

Atticus' own moral reasoning is largely omitted from the book aside from the excerpt above because the story is told from the point of view of Scout, who is only in second grade. But I will take the point of view of Atticus, and attempt to reason through the decision he has to make by applying my theory of moral engagement. To

[102] Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999) 85-87.

begin with, let us note that Atticus clearly displays an attitude of Urgent Responsiveness. He displays this in his roles as parent, community member, and professional. He cares deeply about what sort of father he is, and he makes an active effort to be the best parent he can be. In terms of his community, he strives to contribute as much as he can. As a lawyer, he works hard and dedicates himself to each case with integrity and skill.

With this attitude as a base, Atticus must somehow make a concrete decision. This is a case in which it is unclear whether to apply Situated Dutifulness primarily through the framework of caring or duty, since on the face of it, loving relationships are in direct conflict with principles of justice here. I will apply each framework in turn, using the secondary framework as a guidepost. I will begin, as Atticus seems to, from an abstract idea of justice. I will then apply the second approach by starting from an emphasis on his relationship to his children. I will then consider how differentially qualified Atticus is to answer the calls in question.

The decision of whether or not to defend Tom Robinson is a matter of life and death since it is a capital trial. The maxim of a given action is determined by identifying both the action taken and the motivation for it.[103] The value that Atticus places on human dignity regardless of race and his confidence in Tom Robinson's innocence are his primary motivations for accepting the job. So the maxim here would be preserving an innocent life in spite of the fact that one's family may suffer as a result. Could this maxim be universalized and still logically be willed?[104] It

---

[103] Korsgaard,13.

[104] Aside from the universalizability test, the other question that may be asked here is whether the given maxim results in all persons being treated as ends and never merely as means. I have chosen to use the universalizability test in these examples because it is better suited to

seems to me that it could, as long as the suffering of one's family is not also life-threatening, in which case the value of preserving innocent life would apply to them as well. At the point at which he chooses to defend Tom Robinson, Atticus has no reason to think that the children's lives will be endangered.

Having passed the universalizability test, Atticus should now reflect on his maxim in the context of his caring-for relationships. What would be best for the children? On the one hand, they would certainly have an easier time and be safer if he turns down the case. But on the other, in not defending Robinson he would be setting a bad example for them by not living up to his own standard of defending human dignity. As a parent, he wants to protect his children, but he also wants to raise them to be good people. It is common wisdom that children internalize their parents' actions and imitate them. The children would see Atticus' actions, and because of his commitment to honesty, he would not even feel comfortable preaching values of equality and dignity of human life to the children if he turned down the case. So from the perspective of the children's well-being, the option here is to be an exemplary moral educator but also make them vulnerable to public ridicule, or to deny them a moral education but keep them safe. Considering that their lives are not in danger, from the perspective of the carer in a caring-for relationship, I would argue that as long as Atticus is as supportive and protective as possible throughout the ordeal, the children benefit more from having a moral education than they do merely from being protected from derision.

---

the particular situations, but using only the humanity test or both together would be acceptable as well.

By applying the first approach, the answer is clear: Atticus ought to take the case. Now let us turn to the second approach of beginning from a care orientation and only then turning to the Kantian framework. From a caring-for perspective, the primary emphasis is on the impact that Atticus' decision would have on his children rather than an abstract idea of duty. Either he chooses to defend Tom Robinson for the sake of being a moral role model for his children, or he does not defend him for the sake of their safety. In order to consider these new maxims within a Kantian framework, let us test the universalizability of each.

If everyone exposed their children to a modest amount of risk for the sake of providing them with a moral role model (when the situation presented itself), that maxim could still be desirable. In fact, in a world in which all parents were so rigorously dedicated to moral education, one might even expect that the extent to which children would be imperiled in this situation would lessen. On the other hand, if everyone turned down pressing appeals to act on their values in order to maintain their children's safety, the outcome would not be desirable. Looking at it from a consequentialist perspective, one becomes concerned that moral norms would erode as they ceased to be passed from generation to generation, and eventually children would be less safe in general than if they were in an environment in which people were held to a high moral standard. Ultimately, the next generation would be imperiled even as the parent strove to protect them.

Although this case is complicated in that it involves an apparent clash between caring-for relationships and more abstract principles of justice, here both frameworks resulted in the same answer. Now Atticus ought to ask himself about his

qualifications. As a single parent, he is clearly the most qualified to protect his children. As a lawyer, is he in fact the most qualified to defend Tom Robinson well? Is he well suited to the case and is he likely to have an influence on the outcome? Is there another lawyer available who would do a better job, or who would do an equally good job but doesn't have a family? If the answer is that he is in fact the most qualified for the task, or perhaps the only lawyer willing to take it on, then he should proceed with the answer he has already arrived at. If not, he ought to err on the side of protecting his children. In the book, it seems that he is in fact the most qualified lawyer in the region. Having deeply engaged with the issues at stake, Atticus could proceed to defend Tom Robinson in good conscience as a parent as well as a lawyer, as long as he maintained a caring attitude towards Scout and Jem and protected them to the best of his ability under the circumstances.

Case 2: Jack Reed and Louise Bryant, 1919

The film *Reds*, which came out in 1981, tells the true story of Jack Reed and Louise Bryant, a pair of radical Communist activists and journalists. The two were famous lovers, and eventually became husband and wife. An ongoing theme of *Reds* is the conflict that Jack and Louise constantly face between their global, political work and their relationship with one another. Although they love each other deeply, they seem to constantly be separated and to prioritize the call for Revolution over the call to be together. They turn a new leaf in their relationship, though, when they witness the unfolding of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia together. Following that dramatic and life-changing experience, Jack and Louise vow to be a team, to stay together and support one another's work. Upon their return to America, Louise works to keep them afloat financially so that Jack can write *Ten Days that Shook the World,* a wonderfully successful book that makes a huge splash and becomes the definitive report of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Following the publishing of *Ten Days That Shook the World* in 1919,[105] Jack becomes an increasingly prominent voice in the American radical political scene. His activism escalates, and he eventually takes a leading role in establishing the Communist Labor Party of America (CLP). Up to this point Jack and Louise have been making decisions together and prioritizing their partnership. Upon formation, though, the CLP immediately decides that Jack should go to Russia to represent their

[105] Paul Reuben, "Chapter 7: John Reed (1887-1920)," *Perspectives in American Literature – A Research and Reference Guide* http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap7/reed.html (accessed February 7, 2011).

group. He is uniquely qualified for the task, and feels a strong, undeniable pull to go. As a friend says in the movie, "He was one of the rare persons who could do a thing like that, and he knew it."[106] Upon returning home to Louise, though, he is reminded of a different set of commitments that he is also uniquely suited for: those he has made to the woman he loves.

> *Louise*: Let me make this easy for you Jack. I'm not going with you. And if you go, I'm not sure I'll be here when you come back.
> *Jack*: (Visibly shaken, trying to convince her) The Comintern doesn't know Edmond or Alfred from the New York Yankees. They know me. Someone's gotta go over there that's got a background.
> *Jack:* I have to go.
> *Louise:* You don't have to go. You want to go. You want to go all over the world ranting and raving and making resolutions and organizing caucuses.
> *Jack*: I've made a commitment.
> *Louise:* You're a writer, not a politician. Don't leave behind what you do best. Don't go. [107]

Jack has an incredibly difficult decision to make. In his view, the cause he is fighting for is deeply pressing. Working towards equality in the form of increasing the power of the working class is his life's mission. This is a pivotal moment, and there are many people depending on him to take the next necessary political step, which involves going to Russia illegally—no small risk. A fellow revolutionary urges him, "Comrade Reed, you can always go back to your private responsibilities, so can I. You can never, NEVER go back to this moment in history."[108]

This last comment is representative of what I take to be a traditional conception of how one ought to think through a conflict like this. On the one hand Jack has a moral obligation to seek justice, and on the other he has a mere personal desire to be with his wife. In this view, the conflict is between doing what he ought to

---

[106] *Reds*. Directed by Warren Beatty. 1981; USA.
[107] *Reds,* Warren Beatty.
[108] *Reds*, Warren Beatty.

do and doing what he wants. Kant would, of course, say he must do what he ought. However, in the framework in which I am operating, both obligations are on the same plane in terms of their moral weight, which makes this decision very different.

Stepping into Jack's position, let us begin to tease out how to think through this dilemma. Jack's life and moral personality exhibit Urgent Responsiveness. Although both he and Louise are very dedicated to maintaining independent identities, he has consistently displayed that he cares for her deeply. Similarly, he has dedicated his life to activism, always determined to actualize his radical ideals to the best of his ability. Both in his pursuit of an abstract idea of justice and in his caring-for relationship with Louise he is urgently responsive.

Assuming that attitude and taking it as a base, there is an extremely tough and complicated decision to make here. In light of his Urgent Responsiveness, it seems clear that he will rue whichever call he does not answer. And in this scenario, the calls are mutually exclusive. As I have already stated, he is uniquely suited to each, and so has a special set of responsibilities in both directions. Since this is clearly a situation in which there is both a Caring-for relationship and a universalistic, principle-based set of duties in play, let us again apply Situated Dutifulness by applying Noddings' and Kant's frameworks in turn, taking the other as a guidepost in each case.

Looking through the lens of Noddings' work, Jack's primary motivation is to be responsive to Louise and do what is best for her. Since she has made her desire for him to stay in America quite clear, this seems straightforward. But there is more analysis to be done, for a few reasons. First of all, she wants him to stay so that they

can continue to lead a shared, happy life. Jack must reflect on whether he would be able to do that with and for her, or if he would be so preoccupied with his neglected duty to the Party that he would be a poor partner in any case. If he would primarily feel resentment or anger towards Louise and towards his decision to stay, he is not necessarily doing the best thing for her by staying even though it is what she has specifically requested. Even if his sole motivation is to do what is best for her, he must do some soul-searching to determine his capacity to stay and be a good partner.

If he decides that he would successfully be able to prioritize his relationship to Louise and continue to be a caring partner, he must then reflect upon his universal duties to ensure that he is not neglecting to see the whole picture of his decision. Let us determine Jack's maxim. Since Louise has sacrificed in order to help Jack promote his career in the past, part of Jack's obligation to his wife comes from the importance of reciprocity in loving relationships. In this case the action taken would be honoring one's commitment to support one's spouse emotionally and professionally, and by so doing refusing to honor one's commitment to represent one's political movement. The motivation would primarily be love for one's spouse, and secondarily recognition of one's special moral obligation to care for those one specially qualified to care for. The maxim would then be: prioritizing one's spouse over one's political movement out of love and recognition of spousal obligation.

The next step is to assess whether this maxim can be universally applied. Logically could Jack will a situation in which everyone were to adopt this maxim? Jack must recognize that if relationship-based bonds were to eclipse universal responsibilities to political movements, political movements would become merely

symbolic and therefore defunct. Political movements run on passion and sacrifice, at least among their leadership. If *no one* prioritized the movement, there would be no movement. Jack's decision to stay at home has failed the Kantian test. Notably, if Jack decides to go to Russia because he knows that if he stays he will be a poor partner, he is still adopting this same maxim of prioritizing family over political movement because of his motivation.

We began from Noddings and treated Kantian duties as a guidepost. Now let us began from a Kantian framework, keeping Noddings' in mind as a guidepost. In this case, it is important to acknowledge that both of the duties in play here, to Louise and to the CLP, are imperfect. While Jack is deluding himself into thinking that the task he has been assigned is quickly realizable ("We'll be home by Christmas" he argues), the fact is that he will never be done serving the party or pursuing his radical ideals. His spousal duty to Louise is also imperfect in nature. The fact that each duty is imperfect means that each has broad application, and Jack has some discretion in determining how to act on each duty. He must think through the various maxims that he has the option of adopting in his situation. While in some sense the possibilities are infinite, I will suggest two likely options.

A) If Jack chooses to honor his commitment to his spouse over his political party because he has vowed to be a certain kind of partner and feels committed to following through on his vow, he is adopting the more general maxim of prioritizing familial commitments over political commitments for the sake of loyalty.

B) If Jack chooses to honor his political party over his spouse for the sake of workers everywhere being treated as ends in themselves rather than as means, he is adopting the more general maxim of prioritizing political commitments over familial commitments for the sake of freedom and equality.

Can either or both of these be universalized? Option A is only subtly different from the maxim that we derive from applying Noddings' model as primary. The primary motivation here is loyalty to a stated commitment rather than love. Could the maxim of prioritizing loyalty to familial commitments over political commitments be universalized and still make sense? One could argue that the same incoherence applies here, in that if familial loyalty always trumps political loyalty, political movements would lose power. However, if the motivation is loyalty to explicitly stated commitments rather than care, this is not *necessarily* the case. Plenty of spousal relationships leave room for political action within their stated commitments. It would be possible for everyone to remain loyal to their stated familial commitments and also for enough people be active members of political movements that the movements could continue to have an impact. I would argue that this maxim does pass the universality test.

Can maxim B be universalized? Could all people prioritize political commitments over familial commitments in order to promote freedom and equality? No. This maxim is not logically coherent, because there are those whose freedom and equality will be hindered rather than promoted through this maxim. For example, a spouse who is left to raise children singlehandedly so that her partner can pursue "freedom and equality" has become significantly more restricted and burdened than

she would have been had her partner valued her freedom and equality enough to participate in child-rearing.

In order for this maxim to be universalizable, it would have to apply only in those situations in which all people involved in the scenario, including the family of the agent, would have their freedom and equality promoted. One could argue that Jack and Louise's relationship is such a case. They do not have children, and Louise is an active feminist who takes her own work very seriously. While she would prefer that Jack stay, it is true that in his absence she would be more independent. So in this specific case, the maxim of prioritizing political commitments in order to promote freedom and equality would in fact be permissible.

So now it seems that there are two acceptable maxims, but that they each lead to a different outcome. In order to choose between them, Jack must check himself against Noddings' framework and take a look at his larger moral personality and value system, as well as his gut-level instinct. Historically, he has prioritized his capacity for responding to global need over his relationship with Louise. But he has recently entered a new era of their relationship in which he values the two equally.

In the first scenario, in which he looks at the decision primarily in terms of his relationship with Louise, the outcome was counter-intuitively that he ought to go to Russia. In this second scenario, in which he adopts a primarily principle-based approach, he can take either path in good conscience, and must ultimately decide between the two maxims based on his own moral intuition. As the movie reveals, that intuition sends him to Russia with the hope that he will soon return to Louise.

This method, of starting from Noddings and checking against Kant and then starting from Kant and checking against Noddings, provides much clarity and rigor for making this ethical decision and taking seriously the values involved in these dilemma-like cases.

Closing Thoughts

The theory of moral engagement presented in this chapter is a normative account of how to analyze and respond to one's ethical obligations. With this theory I aim to incorporate both global and personal obligations into one continuous conversation, without prioritizing one type of obligation over the other as such. I have combined an attitude of Urgent Responsiveness taken from Emmanuel Levinas and Peter Singer with Situated Dutifulness, a combination of the intuitive, fluid, relationship-based work of Nel Noddings and the systematic, principle-based work of Kant. My hope in doing so is that when applied, this theory can first, be an organic outgrowth of the moral agent's situated life, and second, push the moral agent to be as responsive to others as she can while still responding to her own needs.

Because of the deeply personal nature of this theory, examples in which I as an author try to inhabit another person's decision-making can only take us so far. But my hope is that the examples given here, though they do not always result in straightforward answers, provide the flavor of the framework for ethical reasoning that I am suggesting so that it can in fact be applied by individuals using their own self-knowledge and moral intuition.

When applying Situated Dutifulness, the ethical decision-maker must participate in a back-and-forth between Noddings' and Kant's approaches. In order to appropriately determine one's maxim, one must be very sensitive to the details of the specific situation in question. It is worth noting that Noddings herself would be very skeptical of my adding a principle-based theory to her own. She is critical of rule-based ethics, and would likely argue that the role that Kant's ethical system plays in this theory is superfluous, since it is really one's analysis of the particulars of the given scenario that guide one's ethical choice.

The main question that Noddings' skepticism raises for me is whether principles as such are in fact an important part of ethical reasoning. If general principles apply to every scenario differently, how much power and utility do they really have? While I do value and appreciate the importance of taking the details of a situation into account when making ethical choices, I still maintain that finding relevant principles to guide one's decision-making is an important practice. Living according to principles allows one to have continuity in one's ethical life, and to see patterns in one's ethical decision-making. My appreciation of principles as a valuable tool in ethical life does not lead me to suggest that we necessarily to ought take on sets of principles that are external to us. I take the concerns about ethical alienation raised in Chapter 3 seriously. As a result, I advocate for principles to be an outgrowth of one's own life. Forming and embracing principles should be an ongoing, organic process that puts the particulars of one's life in perspective with regard to one's values and one's intended impact on the world.

Although I am concerned about alienation, I have argued that the main contribution of Kant's approach to this theory is that it provides the moral agent with a way to measure her potential actions against something external. Though the extent to which Kant's system attempts to adopt a "view from nowhere" is a serious limitation on his ethics, when paired with Noddings' approach it helps the moral agent who is otherwise immersed in her own particulars to see her action in a detached way, and to assess its impacts on the larger world. Kantian ethics provide straightforward, clear ways of analyzing the moral status of a given action, and I argue that this clarity is critically important for the ethical decision-maker. It is important to emphasize that these Kantian tests do not, by virtue of being more straightforward, override more intuitive, fluid analysis. Rather, the two are equally weighted and have a dialectical relationship. The ethical decision-maker ought constantly to negotiate between these two poles while maintaining an attitude of Urgent Responsiveness.

CONCLUSION: BACK TO THE BASICS

I came to this thesis with the question: "How should a person respond to the many, diverse moral demands that she constantly encounters, directly or indirectly, from both loved ones and strangers?" Part of the challenge in answering this question comes from the fact that demands based in relationships have historically been placed in a different category from impartial demands, and as a result the two have been treated as separate questions. From the perspective of an individual person seeking to live ethically in the world, though, the two sets of demands are continuous, and they often compete for the moral agent's attention and resources. Since lived experience puts these two types of demands in relationship to one another, in this thesis I aimed to develop a theory that would help guide the moral agent in thinking about both in an integrated way.

Because the theory of moral engagement that I present in Chapter 4 is based directly on the work of Nel Noddings, Emmanuel Levinas, Peter Singer and Immanuel Kant, it uses their intricate language and systems. Stepping outside of the technical language of the argument, though, in this last section I would like to highlight the more general themes present in the theory.

At its core, this theory is about how to live a life that is structured around a constant effort to enhance the quality of other peoples' lives, and that is at the same

meaningful and rich. In order to maintain such a life, a person needs enough guidance for her ethical efforts that she has clarity about how to act, but also enough flexibility that she can always feel personally invested in and nourished by her work. She must have guiding principles by which to live, but at the same time do much of her work from a motivation that goes beyond duty. This can be the case only if she is encouraged to pick those causes about which she truly cares, and to treat her work in the context of loving relationships as ethical in nature.

This basic description comes to life in my theory through the attitude of Urgent Responsiveness, based on Levinas' and Singer's work, and the guiding structures of Situated Dutifulness, based on Noddings' and Kant's work. Situated Dutifulness at once provides the moral agent with a clear-cut set of commitments and encourages her to take the details of her life seriously in determining how exactly to go about fulfilling her duties. She views her life and decision-making through both the universalistic Kantian lens and Noddings' relationship-based lens. And since she has adopted an attitude of Urgent Responsiveness, she is constantly taking an active role to seek justice and live responsibly even as she cares for her own needs.

While the process of applying Situated Dutifulness is rigorous and complex, as was clear in the case studies at the end of Chapter 4, the general framework is simple. The moral agent must only ask herself in any given situation, "What are my partial and impartial duties in this situation? How can I meet those duties while at the same time caring for myself?" And if it is a situation in which the agent can only meet some and not all of the competing calls for help, she must ask herself "Which of these calls am I most qualified to answer?"

I recognize that asking these questions only gets one so far; at the end of the day the agent must do the work of balancing the various demands on her. In this work I have not addressed in any depth how the balance between competing demands ought to be found, or what exactly defines such balance. Since I have suggested that the moral agent must find balance in multiple ways (between impartial and partial demands as well as between responsiveness to others and responsiveness to the self), it is certainly important to explicate how the agent ought to do that negotiating.

Though such an exploration of this question of balance falls outside of the scope of this work, it is a central and fascinating topic. Does the nature of such balance necessarily vary agent to agent, or is there a correct division of time and resources for everyone? According to the frameworks established in this theory, the first is far more feasible, though it would require deeper analysis in order to make such an argument.

This topic of balance is just one example of the many ways in which the theory presented in this thesis remains a sketch. To fully develop the theory would require a much lengthier explication, and many more case studies. However, the bare bones of the system I am suggesting are here. While numerous open questions remain, my hope is that the argument in this paper stands on its own.

I hope that the process of applying the theory presented in this work, made up of Urgent Responsiveness and Situated Dutifulness, will result over time in the sort of life that is meaningful and beneficial for both the moral agent and for the world. Ideally, this theory provides enough guidance to be useful without eliminating the crucial role that the moral agent plays in assessing her own values, qualifications, and

priorities; it pushes the moral agent to pursue justice and goodness by being urgently responsive to the needs of others without neglecting her own needs; it puts the moral agent's personal and political lives in direct conversation; and it guides the moral agent in thinking through how to engage with the world morally.

WORKS CITED

Allen Wood, “Kant on Duties Regarding Nonrational Nature,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supplement, 72.1 (1998): 189-210.

Baier, Annette. *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Benhabib, Seyla. *Situating the Self.* New York: Routledge, 1992.

Blum, Lawrence A. "Gilligan and Kohlberg: Implications for Moral Theory." *Ethics* 98.3 (1988): 472-491, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.wesleyan.edu:7790/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IACDocuments&type=retrieve&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&docId=A6921339&source=gale&srcprod=AONE&userGroupName=31841&version=1.0 (accessed 15 Feb. 2011).

Cordourier-Real, Carlos R. *Transnational Social Justice.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death.* Translated by David Willis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Donaldson, Thomas. “Kant’s Global Rationalism,” *Traditions of International Ethics,* ed**.** David Mapel and Terry Nardin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Goud, Johan F. “What one asks of oneself, one asks of a saint: A Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas.” *Levinas Studies: An Annual Review* Vol. 3 (2008): 1-34.

Hand, Sean. *The Levinas Reader.* Cambridge: Blackwell Inc., 1989.

Korsgaard, Christine. *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Lee, Harper, *To Kill a Mockingbird.* New York: HarperCollins, 1999.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity.* Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969.

Gruen, Lori. "Must Utilitarians Be Impartial?" *Singer and His Critics*, ed. Dale Jamieson, 129-149. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

Noddings, Nel. *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy.* California: University of California Press, 2002.

Rae Langton, "Duty and Desolation," *Philosophy* 67.262 (October 1992): 481-505.

Railton, Peter. "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 13.2 (Spring 1984): 134-171.

Reds. Directed by Warren Beatty. 1981; USA.

Reuben, Paul. "Chapter 7: John Reed (1887-1920)," *Perspectives in American Literature – A Research and Reference Guide* http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap7/reed.html (accessed February 7, 2011).

Sen, Amartya. *The Idea of Justice.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009.

Singer, Peter. *One World.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Tan, Kok-Chor. "Kantian Ethics and Global Justice." *Social Theory and Practice* 23.1 (Spring 1997): 53-73.

Taylor, Chloe "Levinasian Ethics and Feminist Ethics of Care." *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 9.2 (October 2005): 217-239.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen Wood, "Kant on Duties Regarding Nonrational Nature," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supplement, 72.1 (1998): 189-210.

Baier, Annette. *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Benhabib, Seyla. *Situating the Self.* New York: Routledge, 1992.

Bloechl, Jeffrey and Jeffrey L. Kosky ed. *Levinas Studies: An Annual Review.* Vol. 1. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2005.

Bloechl, Jeffrey ed. *Levinas Studies: An Annual Review.* Vol. 2. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2007.

Bloechl, Jeffrey ed. *Levinas Studies: An Annual Review.* Vol. 3. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2008.

Blum, Lawrence A. "Gilligan and Kohlberg: Implications for Moral Theory." *Ethics* 98.3 (1988): 472-491, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.wesleyan.edu:7790/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IACDocuments&type=retrieve&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&docId=A6921339&source=gale&srcprod=AONE&userGroupName=31841&version=1.0 (accessed 15 Feb. 2011).

Bookman, Myra and Mitchell Aboulafia. "Ethics of Care Revisited: Gilligan and Levinas." *Philosophy Today* (January 2000): 169-174.

Chanter, Tina ed. *Feminist Interpretations of Emmanuel Levinas.* University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.

Cordourier-Real, Carlos R. *Transnational Social Justice.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death.* Translated by David Willis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Donaldson, Thomas. "Kant's Global Rationalism," *Traditions of International Ethics,* ed**.** David Mapel and Terry Nardin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Critchley, Simon and Robert Bernasconi. *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Hand, Sean. *Facing the Other: The Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas*. Richmond Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996.

Hand, Sean. *The Levinas Reader.* Cambridge: Blackwell Inc., 1989.

Harding, Carol ed. *Moral Dilemmas: Philosophical and Psychological Issues in the Development of Moral Reasoning.* Chicago, IL: Precedent Publishing, 1985.

Kant, Immanuel. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*: *With on a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns, Third Edition."* Translated by James W. Ellington. Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981.

Kant, Immanuel. *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone.* Translated by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.

Korsgaard, Christine. *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Lee, Harper, *To Kill a Mockingbird.* New York: HarperCollins, 1999.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism.* Translated by Sean Hand. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 1997.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Nine Talmudic Readings*. Translated by Annette Aronowicz. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity.* Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969.

Jamieson, Dale ed. *Singer and His Critics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism and the 1868 Speech on Capital Punishment, Second Edition*. Ed. George Sher. Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001.

Noddings, Nel. *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy.* California: University of California Press, 2002.

O'Neil, O'Nora. *Bounds of Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Rae Langton, "Duty and Desolation," *Philosophy* 67.262 (October 1992): 481-505.

Railton, Peter. "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 13.2 (Spring 1984): 134-171.

Reds. Directed by Warren Beatty. 1981; USA.

Reuben, Paul. "Chapter 7: John Reed (1887-1920)," *Perspectives in American Literature – A Research and Reference Guide* http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap7/reed.html (accessed February 7, 2011).

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom.* New York: Anchor Books, 2000.

Sen, Amartya. *The Idea of Justice.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009.

Singer, Peter. *Animal Liberation*, *Second Edition.* New York: Random House, 1990.

Singer, Peter. *One World.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Tan, Kok-Chor. "Kantian Ethics and Global Justice." *Social Theory and Practice* 23.1 (Spring 1997): 53-73.

Taylor, Chloe "Levinasian Ethics and Feminist Ethics of Care." *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 9.2 (October 2005): 217-239.