A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS: FROM BIOLOGY TO SOCIETY

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS: FROM BIOLOGY TO SOCIETY

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In this thesis I analyze the evolutionary ethics and propose a new perspective that develops on the notion of altruism. The view of evolutionary ethics, especially the sociobiological account, has some problems. The most important philosophical problem is the "is-ought" problem which refers to the question as to whether moral propositions can be inferred from factual statements. In order to overcome this problem I suggest a different reading of the notion of altruism namely "altruistic behavior practice" that refers to norms, habits and repeated actions that provide the sustainability of society. The notion of altruistic behavior practice is presented and evaluated with the help of Alasdair MacIntyre's and John Dewey's moral philosophy. The moral views of these two philosophers are based on human practices and habitual formations in society. In this respect, evolutionary ethics and the notion of altruism are re-established on the basis of human practices and habitual modes of socialization.

Keywords: Evolution, Sociobiology, "Is-Ought" Distinction, Altruism, Virtue, Habit, Practice.

ÖZ

EVRİMSEL ETİĞE FARKLI BİR YAKLAŞIM: BİYOLOJİDEN TOPLUMA

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Bu çalışma evrimsel etiği incelemekte ve özgecilik kavramına dayanarak evrimsel etiğe yeni bir perspektif önermektedir. Evrimsel etik, özellikle sosyobiyolojik yaklaşım, bazı problemlere sahiptir. En önemli ve felsefi problem, ahlaki önermelerin olgulara dayanan ifadelerden türetilip türetilemeyeceği sorusuna göndermede bulunan "olan-olmalı" problemidir. Bu problemi aşabilmek için, özgecilik kavramının farklı bir okuması; "özgeci davranış pratiği" kavramı önerilmektedir. Bu kavram, toplumun sürdürülebilirliğini sağlayan normlara, alışkanlıklara ve tekrarlanan eylemlere gönderme yapmaktadır. Özgeci davranış pratiği kavramı Alasdair MacIntyre'ın ve John Dewey'in ahlak felsefelerine dayanarak değerlendirilmekte ve sunulmaktadır. Bu iki filozofun ahlaki yaklaşımları, toplum içindeki insan pratiklerine ve insanın alışkanlık haline gelmiş biçimlendirmelerine dayanmaktadır. Bu açıdan, evrimsel etik ve özgecilik kavramı, insan pratikleri ve sosyalleşmenin alışkanlık haline gelmiş tarzları temelinde yeniden kurulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evrim, Sosyobiyoloji, "Olan-Olmalı" Ayrımı, Özgecilik, Erdem, Alışkanlık, Pratik.

To My Mother and Father

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The idea of evolution in general, and evolutionary ethics in particular are very important for philosophical inquiry about ethics; however, it is imprudent to apply this theory to human affairs carelessly. Evolutionary ethics, to put it in general terms, is the idea that tells us that there is a relationship between the biological background of human beings and their social and moral tendencies. In other words, the social and moral dispositions of human beings have a strong biogenetic component.

Evolution is perhaps the broadest and the most comprehensive course of process that excludes almost nothing, whether it can be a human or nonhuman aspect. That is to say that, everything can equally be an outcome of long and complex evolutionary processes. However, there are serious drawbacks of this idea, especially the reduction of moral acts to biological facts. The first and perhaps the most philosophically relevant difficulty is the "is-ought" problem that is discussed in Section 2.2. The distinction between "is" and "ought" refers basically to the question as to whether moral propositions can be derived from factual statements. This distinction was first noticed by David Hume and then developed and baptized as the Naturalistic Fallacy by G. E. Moore. According to these philosophers, disregarding the distinction between the fact and value is one of the most frequently committed fallacies in moral thinking.

Sociobiological account presents the most well known view on the relationship between evolution and ethics. Since they try to establish a necessary connection

between ethics and evolution they cannot be successful against the strictures of naturalistic fallacy. Sociobiological accounts have problems not only in the "is-ought" distinction but also in their ethical perspective. They seem to ignore some social notions such as altruism, cooperation and sympathy while they argue that there is a direct relation between moral action and biological impulses. The idea that there is a biological-egoistic mechanism behind all these social notions is unpersuasive, considering its results. These arguments are analyzed in detail in Section 2.3.

In this study, I present a new approach to evolutionary ethics that avoids naturalistic fallacy and unpersuasive results of sociobiological view. For this purpose, I reconsider evolutionary ethics based on a critical reading of such accounts as sociobiological view. Then I try to develop an evolutionary ethics that is related with John Dewey's moral concepts. Dewey is one of the most popular pragmatist philosophers and his ethics is based on the concepts of habit, custom, repetition and emotion. On the other hand, I take from evolutionary ethics the concept of altruism as the main concept. I think that the concept of altruism and Dewey's moral concepts are reminiscent concepts that help me to develop a synthesis of these ethical views by using the parallelism of these concepts. In order to realize this aim I follow the following strategy:

In Chapter 3, I give a summary of classical definition of the concept of altruism and then in Section 3.2 I propose "altruistic behavior practice" which refers to norms, habits and repeated actions that provide the sustainability of society.

The concept of "altruistic behavior practice" can be read on the basis of the Aristotelian view of the society and virtues, rather than rational moral views of Kantian or Utilitarian accounts of morality. MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian idea of "virtues" constitutes the central body of this chapter. As part of this strategy, I replace the concepts of good and bad by "social encouragement" and "social avoidance.

Finally, I suggest reading Dewey's concept of "habit" as "tendency", which creates and maintains social dynamics of human beings, and I attempt to re-establish "is" as an evolutionary ground that produces several different forms of "ought" through this habitual mode of socialization.

CHAPTER 2

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS

Charles Darwin developed the theory of evolution by natural selection and presented it in his major work *The Origin of Species* in 1859. According to Darwin, all organisms descend by modification from earlier forms and this process is conducted by a mechanism that he called natural selection that selects those with greater ability to survive and reproduce (i.e. with higher fitness).

Darwinian evolutionary theory is accepted by biologists and is the paradigm of biology at the present time. On the other hand, some evolutionists and social scientists apply Darwinian Theory not only to biological processes as such but also to human social affairs that have been a major controversy. Although Darwin avoided any explicit reference to human evolution in *The Origin of Species* he presented the implications of his theory regarding human evolution and especially the evolution of human morality in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* in 1871. However, the idea of evolutionary ethics had been suggested and popularized before 1871 by Herbert Spencer, who had defended the idea of evolution even before Darwin, became an advocate of Darwin's theory after 1859, and even coined the term 'struggle for existence'. Spencer and his evolutionary ideas are also responsible for the notion of Social Darwinism that has "earned" the Darwinian Theory the bad reputation that it has, at least among social scientists. According to Social Darwinists, competition, struggle, success, and failure are the same in society just as in nature (Ruse, 1998, pp. 67-68). In Section 2.1, I summarize the historical development of the views of evolutionary ethics to figure out to what extent these views are reliable.

Some evolutionists use the idea of evolution, in order to explain human moral behavior, and even try to give a natural justification to existing moral norms. They argue that morality is not just a matter of personal believes and opinions, it is based on "laws" applying to all people. So, morality goes beyond permissions, obligations and prohibitions that are created by humans (Ibid., p. 68). As Michael Ruse states;

> Evolution is still going on, and may be expected to continue. Presumably, therefore, what we should do, as moral beings, is aid the process of evolution. It is our moral task to see that evolution does indeed continue. The standards of right action are set by the causal laws of evolution. … Evolution in itself in general and the paths of evolution in themselves in particular, are the sources of all that is right and good… [E]volutionary ethics is thus a naturalistic philosophy. (Ibid., p. 72)

The view of evolutionary ethics, encounters with many objections from both philosophical and political perspectives. Paul Thompson describes the fundamental problems of evolutionary ethics as follows.

> First, evolutionary ethical explanations were dependent on group-selection accounts of social behavior (especially the explanation of altruism). Second, they seem to violate the philosophical principle that "ought" statements cannot be derived from "is" statements alone (values cannot be derived from facts alone). Third, evolutionary ethics appeared to be biologically deterministic, deemed incompatible with the free will required for ethics to be possible. Fourth, social policies based on evolutionary theory (for example, eugenics in the early part of this century) seem patently unethical. (Thompson, 1999, p. 473)

Thompson presents two problems as enduring in evolutionary accounts of ethics: the philosophical "is-ought" barrier and biological determinism. I share his idea and present these two problems in the following sections. From the philosophical perspective, evolution in itself and the paths of evolution are not sufficient to account for moral normativity, for they only tell us what has happened biologically, while morality is about what subjects ought or not to do. So deriving moral obligations from non-moral facts is an important problem, and this problem

is known as the "is-ought" problem in philosophy. In Section 2.2, I describe philosophical problems of evolutionary ethics. Furthermore, especially sociobiological accounts of ethics have gained bad political reputation and been accused of favoring biological or genetic determinism. Some sociologists argue that this type of determinism can lead to political and social problems, such as racism, discrimination, escaping from social and individual responsibility etc. In Section 2.3, I criticize sociobiological accounts and conventionally unacceptable results to which these views lead.

Furthermore, it should be said that new developments in evolutionary biology, especially those related with human social behavior and the arguments proposed to overcome the "is-ought" problem have important role for establishing more plausible accounts of evolutionary ethics.

2.1 Historical Background

As I indicated before, Charles Darwin presented his evolutionary ideas on morality in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* in 1871. Before focusing on Darwin's moral theory, I should mention his grandfather Erasmus Darwin's view about the relationship between evolution and ethics. "For Erasmus Darwin evolution and ethics were a seamless whole. At once one was given ethical directions, and it is obvious that conversely his ethical imperatives in some sense informed his thinking about evolution" (Ruse, 1999, p. 437). From one point of view, Charles Darwin is in agreement with his grandfather. According to Ruse, in *Descent of Man* there are some arguments about humankind. In his later writings, Darwin used the moral concept "progressivist sentiments" (Ibid., p. 438). On the other hand, Thompson (1999) formulates Darwin's moral theory as follows; "Darwin's moral theory is based on conscience. For him the evolution of morality is the evolution of conscience. Conscience is based on social instinct (an instinctive way of behaving for the benefit of the group to which one belongs)"

(pp. 475-476). Darwin (1871, p. 319) defines social instinct as "the prime principle of man's moral constitution" and says,

> [S]ocial instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would acquire a moral sense or conscience, [and] social instincts lead an animal to take pleasure in the society of its fellows, to feel a certain amount of sympathy with them, and to perform various services for them. The services may be of a definite and evidently instinctive nature; or there are may be only a wish and readiness, as with most of the higher social animals, to aid their fellows in certain general ways. (Ibid., p. 304)

Darwin emphasizes sympathetic feelings of social animals, and according to him these feelings provide a unity in society. The societies whose members have sympathetic feelings have greater chance to sustain. So, "[t]he social and moral qualities would tend slowly to advance and be diffused throughout the world" (Ibid., p. 321).

In addition to Darwin, the most compelling view of evolutionary ethics belongs to Herbert Spencer. Although Spencer's view has problems and agitated many criticisms, his ideas influenced many ethical views in the twentieth century. He defined evolution as a "world picture", "universal process", and believed that evolution is more than a science. "He believed that there is an ongoing struggle for existence in the organic world and that this leads to evolution. Hence, we should promote an ongoing struggle for existence in the social world, and this likewise will lead to evolution" (Ruse, 1999, p. 439). Spencer (1978) explains the relation of ethics and evolution as in the following passage;

> If in common with other things, human feelings and ideas conform to the general law of evolution, the implication is that the set of conceptions constituting ethics, together with the associated sentiments, arise out of a relatively incoherent and indefinite consciousness; and slowly acquire coherence and definiteness at the same time that the aggregate of them differentiates from the larger aggregate with which it is originally mingled. Long remaining undistinguished, and then but vaguely discernible as something independent, ethics must be expected to acquire a distinct embodiment only when mental evolution has reached a high stage. (p. 339)

According to him, human moral behavior must be coherent with natural process of evolution. This natural process has a progressive feature. Thus humans must help and cooperate. If they did not cooperate they would fall back in this process. Ruse (1998) states Spencer's argument as follow:

> He finds the ultimate source of value in the progressive upward climb of the course of evolution. As we go higher and higher, things get better and better. The ultimate culmination is humankind, the very apex of the evolutionary process. It is the existence of humans which makes all worthwhile. Thus it follows naturally that, at the substantive level, morality must be directed towards the production and cherishing of these, the highest kind of beings. It is progress which make all possible, and it is progress which confers all value. (p. 75)

Many philosophers argue that Spencer's ethical theory is not a correct representation of evolution. They allege that Spencer's ethical theory is not in coherence with evolutionary theory. According to Ruse (1999), from the biological point of view, Spencer's views do not cohere with evolutionary mechanism and even with the Lamarckian notion of inheritance of acquired characters (p. 440). Spencer's conception of evolutionary ethics is based on the principle of "greatest happiness". He distinguishes his principle from the utilitarian principle because the utilitarian greatest happiness principle is the greatest happiness for the greatest number that does not follow from Spencer's principle. According to Spencer, his principle of "greatest happiness" is a product of evolution and this principle refers to individual's happiness. He says that "[i]t must be admitted that, conceived in its fully developed form, ethics has judgments to give upon all actions which affect individual welfare" (Spencer, 1978, p. 586). However, Kate Gordon (1902) presents the disagreement between Spencer's ethical theory and evolutionary theory as follows.

> Conduct, according to his theory, is directed towards a fixed end. He describes activities as developing, but he points to an ethical goal which is absolute; thus he gets an evolutionary process with a non-evolutionary result. His principle is used to explain only half of the situation; it applies to acts, but not to ends. His ethics is, therefore, only half-way evolutionary. (p. 592)

Spencer is criticized by many philosophers for failing to derive morality from evolution. Spencer's ethical view has both philosophical and biological problems. His interpretation of evolutionary theory can be interpreted as wrong or deficient for justification of a substantive ethical theory. However, his arguments make way for a new approach in morality, especially in relation to evolutionary theory. In addition, G. E. Moore criticized Spencer's "naturalization" of ethics and argued that he committed the naturalistic fallacy. (I review Moore's notion of naturalistic fallacy and its relation to evolutionary ethics in the next section.)

Another evolutionist who points to the relation of evolution to ethics in the late nineteenth century is Thomas Henry Huxley. T.H. Huxley was against Spencer's progressivist doctrine and was also against the idea that morality can be derived directly from evolutionary propositions and that its justification depends on evolutionary progress. T.H. Huxley did not disregard the importance of evolution about human moral understanding; on the contrary, he believed that humans are the product of evolution. However, he thought that there is a problem in justification of evolutionary ethics from the progressivist perspective.

> [According to T.H. Huxley,] true moral directives often lie in combating and fighting evolution rather than going smoothly with it. The way in which morality functions is in some sense a product of or related to the way in which evolution functions. It is simply that one should not automatically assume that the ways of evolution are the ways of morality. (Ruse, 1999, p. 442)

In the twentieth century, Julian Sorell Huxley, the grandson of T.H. Huxley, presented a new evolutionism called Neo-Darwinism. In this century, many biologists propounded new developments on selection and evolutionary theory. One of the most important events is the rediscovery of the Mendelian genetics from which Julian Huxley benefited, in order to promote his Darwinian-Mendelian synthesis. Julian Huxley was a progressionist as Herbert Spencer and adopted a progressive view of evolution. According to him, we must adopt

evolutionary perspective, in order to understand ethics and we find ethical norms that result in the ultimate benefits of humankind. It can be said that Julian Huxley has been a leader of the extreme side of the view of evolutionary ethics, because in 1930s he defended eugenics and central planning (Ibid., p. 443). Julian Huxley explains his conception of evolution and ethics as follows.

> When we look at evolution as a whole, we find, among the many directions which it has taken, one which is characterized by introducing the evolving world-stuff to progressively higher levels of organization and so to new possibilities of being, action and experience. This direction has culminated in the attainment of a state where the world-stuff finds that it experiences some of the new possibilities as having value in or for themselves… [W]e can say that this is the *most desirable* direction of evolution, and accordingly that our ethical standards must fit into its dynamic framework. In other words, it is ethically right to aim at whatever will promote the increasingly full realization of increasingly higher values. (Huxley, 1969, p. 137)

The most famous follower of Julian Huxley is Edward O. Wilson who is known as the most famous sociobiologists. Wilson advocates Spencer's and Julian Huxley's theories. Ruse states Wilson's arguments as follows:

> The evolution is a progressivist rise upward from the primitive to the most complex and most sophisticated…. Evolution must serve as a foundation of moral actions…. We humans have evolved in symbiotic relationship with the rest of the living world and that without this world we would die literally. (Ruse, 1999, p. 444)

The sociobiological account of evolutionary ethics can be evaluated as a second wave of evolutionary ethics. This account has arisen with Wilson's major work *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* in 1975, which is based on individual selection and the concept of inclusive fitness. The concept of inclusive fitness, introduced by biologists W.D.Hamilton, provides an evolutionary explanation of the concept of altruism, which is the main problem of evolutionary ethics.

In this century, one objection to these claims about the relation between evolution and ethics comes from the paleontologist George Gaylord Simpson. Simpson pays

attentions to the gap between biological facts and moral sentiments and problems with progressivist perspective. Although he believed in evolutionary progressionism, he advised caution in deriving moral norms from evolution. Simpson's argument may be considered as a revision of T. H. Huxley's argument. Ruse states Simpson's thoughts approvingly as follows:

> At times he suggests that there can be no foundations at all. "The evolutionary process in itself is nonethical – there simply is no point in considering whether it is good, bad, a mixture of the two, or neither." At other times, Simpson suggests that the foundations are what we ourselves make of them. Indeed, Simpson sounded almost like an existentialist in his thinking. "Ethical standards are relative, not absolute. They are relative to man as he now exists on the earth. They are based on man's place in nature, his evolution, and the evolution of life, but they do not arise automatically from these facts or stand as an inevitable and eternal guide for human-or any other-existence. (Ibid., p. 446)

Simpson's arguments on evolutionary ethics are very important and very effective with regard to modern view of evolutionary ethics. In his century, he could not be more effective because of the dominance of sociobiological accounts among biologists and the widespread belief that there must be a foundation of morality that must be discoverable. Simpson's understanding of ethics in general and evolutionary ethics in particular exhibits a compatibility with the ethical perspective and aims of this study.

Thus, I think I need to have a closer look into Wilson's sociobiological account. My treatment of his view on ethics will be detailed in Section 2.3. Yet, before that, I want to proceed with some contemporary views on evolutionary ethics. I think history of evolutionary ethics progresses on the same line (progressivist view), except the views of T. H. Huxley and G. G. Simpson that I evaluate as the most extreme suppositions for morality. Today many biologists and philosophers try to show different perspectives on evolutionary ethics and they try to overcome main problems of these extremities.

One of the most important philosophers whose ideas on evolutionary ethics are important and are adopted by many philosophers is Michael Ruse. Throughout this study, his arguments to which I have referred repeatedly play a constructive role in developing my point of view. Ruse believes that ethics has no foundations, thus he calls himself an ethical skeptic. He argues that morality is just a sentiment or feeling, as David Hume and other emotivists also argued before him. He believes that there can be no justification of ethics within evolutionary theory that overcomes the 'is-ought' barrier. He defines morality as "a collective illusion of human beings, put in place by our genes, to make us efficient social animals" (Ibid., p. 447). Ruse believes that "the mechanisms of evolution (notably natural selection) are relativistic, implying no direction at all, and this is confirmed when one looks at the history of life" (Ibid., p. 449). So he rejects that there is a direction from the simple to the complex in evolution and the idea that evolution is progressive (Ibid., p. 448).

Ruse advocates the tradition of evolutionary ethics that follows T. H. Huxley and G. G. Simpson and says that;

> There is a tradition - Thomas Henry Huxley and George Gaylord Simpson being prominent representatives- that argues that evolution is important, that the ethical faculty has evolved as part of the evolutionary process, and that this must necessarily inform our thinking on ethics, but that one should not look to evolution for justification. It is this tradition that ethical skeptics like myself- and remember the link back to David Hume, whom we count as our founding father- want to pick up and claim as our own… I will say that, if ethical skeptics like myself are not doing the job properly, this is no good reason to embrace at once the traditional position- the Erasmus Darwin to Edward O. Wilson position. I would argue that neo-Spencerianism has problems enough of its own even if its rivals fail. (Ibid., pp. 449-450)

After explaining historical progress of evolutionary ethics and criticizing the Spencerian tradition, Ruse suggests a different understanding about the relationship between evolution and morality. He says that;

> No longer are we using evolutionary theory, as a guide to life. Rather we are turning to the evolution of the moral capacity itself. This seems to me an important move, and one worth exploring. Whether it will lead us to an adequate evolutionary approach to morality remains to be seen… [T]he suggestion was that instead of taking evolution as a guide to the growth of knowledge, we should begin with the evolution of our moral capacity. (Ruse, 1998, p. 101)

I tend to read his view as that we should adopt another way of treating Darwinism and evolutionary progress, if we want to find more useful and appropriate ways to link these two to morality.

Another contemporary philosopher whose views about evolutionary ethics are important is Elliot Sober, whose view of evolutionary ethics is based on the explanation of the concept of altruism and the criticism of sociobiological accounts. It can be said that, on many points of evolutionary ethics, Sober and Ruse share the same ground. As Ruse states, Sober rejects explaining morality from only one aspect or character. According to Sober, it is a mistake to consider morality as altruism. They are not the same thing. He accepts evolutionary explanations of morality, yet he argues that;

> Explaining morality is too crude a specification of the problems. Morality includes a variety of characteristics. We need to say which of these is the object of our inquiries. Evolutionary considerations may have more pertinence to some of these traits than to others. Just as there is more to sex than reproduction and more to food than nutrition, so there is more to morality than altruism. If we can avoid the mistake of thinking we have explained the whole when we have only the part, we may yet be able to advance our understanding of what morality is and where it came from. (Sober, 1993, p. 214)

It should be said that Sober attaches importance to different characters of morality and searches for these characters both from biological and philosophical perspectives. Sober's arguments for evolutionary altruism and his criticism on sociobiological accounts are discussed in following sections.

Today there are different perspectives in evolutionary ethics that criticize the progressivist accounts of evolutionary ethics. I discuss some evolutionary ethical approaches that belong to modern philosophers in Section 2.3. as the critics of sociobilogical account. Especially Edward O.Wilson and Peter Singer have two opposite views that I attach importance. Certainly, new developments in modern biology and new perception of nature and human beings provide contributions to new perspectives about evolutionary ethics.

2.2 Is-Ought Problem

The problem with the deductive relationship between "is" and "ought" statements was first noticed and analyzed in a single long paragraph in the *Treatise*, by Hume and has since then had an important role in drawing attention to the fact-value distinction in modern moral philosophy. This problematic relationship about the validity of the deduction of moral propositions from factual premises also has implications for the justification of moral judgments. The problem is also known as fact-value, descriptive-normative, emotive-descriptive or prescriptive-descriptive distinctions. Briefly, while a descriptive judgment refers to "what is", a normative judgment refers to "what ought to be". Then the question that follows is as to whether "normative judgments [can] be inferred from descriptive judgments" (Walhout, 1957, pp. 42-44). In other words, do "ought" statements follow deductively from "is" statements? Hume's answer was no. We can also look at Hume's argument on the basis of his distinction between reason and sentiment. According to him, moral actions cannot be explained by appealing to reason but only appealing to passions, because although reason cannot lead (i.e. motivate) us into action, passions can. Therefore, passions have priority over reason which is "the slave of passions" (Hume, 2000, 3.1.1, p. 294). In other words, reason by itself is not sufficient to produce any "blame" or "approbation" (Ibid.).

> Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows, that they cannot be derived from reason; and that because reason alone, as we have already provided, can never have any such influence. Morals excite passions and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason. (Ibid.)

Hume rejects rational ethics and claims that reason enters into the realm of action only when the action has a goal. He also claims that reason is not present in our actions as a means. In order to choose the useful instead of the harmful it needs a sentiment. So, reason cannot be the source of a moral principle (Ibid., pp. 293–297).

Furthermore, Hume maintains that, given that moral distinctions cannot be discovered solely by reason, they should be sought in sentiments. Sentiments are some kinds of perceptions or impressions that lead us to blame or approve an action. An action is virtuous when it produces the sentiment of pleasure or satisfaction, and an action is vice when it produces uneasiness and pain (Ibid., 3.1.2, p. 302). In other words "morality… is properly felt than judged of" (Ibid.).

In the afore-mentioned passage in the *Treatise*, Hume presents his arguments as to why "ought" is not derived from "is":

> I am surprised to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is,* and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought,* or an *ought not.* This change is imperceptible; but is, however of the last consequence. For as this *ought*, or *ought not,* expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. [A]nd let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relation of objects, nor is perceived by reason. (Ibid.)

According to W. D. Hudson, in modern moral philosophy there are many interpretations of Hume's "is" and "ought". One interpretation makes Hume a subjectivist: "moral judgments report the occurrence of certain emotions" (Ibid. p.

253). Another interpretation makes Hume an emotivist: “ought judgments are expression of emotions” (Ibid., p. 255). In this respect, Hudson says that it is difficult to explain Hume’s “is-ought” because “Hume seems to have affinities with both subjectivists and emotivists but cannot be said to belong unambiguously to either school” (Hudson, 1969, p. 262).

Another philosopher who examined a problem which is quite similar to the problem of “is-ought” is G. E. Moore. According to Moore, the concept “good” is a simple and non-natural property. He thinks that definition means division into parts, but since the “good” is simple; no definition can be given of it. For him, a naturalistic fallacy is committed whenever a philosopher tries to prove a claim about ethics by appealing to a definition of the “good” in terms of one or more natural properties.

> When a man confuses two natural objects with one another, defining the one by the other, if for instance, he confuses himself, who is one natural object, with “pleased” or with “pleasure” which are others, then there is no reason to call the fallacy naturalistic. but if he confuses “good” which is not in the same sense a natural object, with any natural object whatever, then there is a reason for calling that a naturalistic fallacy; its being made with regard to “good” marks it as something quite specific, and this specific mistake deserves a name because it is so common. (Moore, 1965, p. 13)

It is clearly seen that Moore’s Naturalistic Fallacy can be related to the problem of “is-ought”. In fact, these two notions can be seen as different expressions of the same problem. According to Moore, whenever philosophers try to explain moral concepts in terms of scientific facts, as evolutionary ethicists and metaphycisists do, they commit this fallacy, since they try to deduce ethical propositions from non-ethical ones and define ethical characteristics in terms of non-ethical ones.

The “is-ought” problem is one of the central problems in moral philosophy. Many philosophers interpret this problem in different ways. Some of them argue that there is an impassable gap between “is” and “ought” whereas others say there is not. According to W.D.Hudson, philosophers discuss this problem in two ways;

"(i) "ought" cannot be reduced to "is"; (ii) "ought" cannot be derived from "is"" (Hudson, 1969, p. 13). I think one of the clearest account of Hume's "is-ought" passage is that of Alasdair MacIntyre according to whom this passage has long been treated in a wrong way by contemporary philosophers. The major misinterpretation is about the concept of deduction. MacIntyre (1969) says that "it [deduction] did not mean in Hume's day what it means in ours; in eighteenth-century usage it was a synonym for 'inference', not for 'entailment'" (p. 41). MacIntyre argues that Hume wants to show the "bridge notions" of moral reasoning towards universal moral principles and he does not mean logical connection between "is" and "ought". MacIntyre presents his agreement with Hume as follows;

> To say that we ought to do something is to affirm that there is a commonly accepted rule; and the existence of such a rule presupposed a consensus of opinion as to where our common interests lie. An obligation is constituted in part by such a consensus and the concept of 'ought' is logically dependent on the concept of a common interest and can only be explained in terms of it." (Ibid.)

On the other hand, R.F.Atkinson (1969) and Geoffrey Hunter (1969) argue that Hume intended to show the logical connection between these two types of propositions and he meant 'entailment' by 'deduction' that is a complete disagreement with MacIntyre's points. Furthermore, other philosophers deal with the problem from the "ought" perspective and seek an answer to the question that whether "ought" can be reduced to "is". According to M. Zimmerman (1969), "everything which can be achieved by ought-statements can be achieved equally well by is-statements; and that once we see that this is so, we are released from pointless worries about how to infer to one from to other" (p. 85).

The "is-ought" problem continues today as a major problem of moral philosophy. In this respect, some evolutionary ethicists have stumbled upon this problem and there are also many thinkers who try to overcome this problem.

2.3 Sociobiological Account and Its Criticisms

Sociobiological account of morality presents the most well-known view about the relationship between evolution and ethics. This account seeks answers to the question of whether evolution can explain and perhaps even justify ethics. Sociobiologists argue that moral behavior can be grounded on survival and reproduction (i.e. fitness). Their explanation is based on selective advantages of the individual because "the moral human has more chance of surviving and reproducing than the immoral person. The immoral person fails to help relatives and does not get help from non-relatives, because they, in turn, can expect no help from him or her" (Ruse, 1982, p. 197). However, Ruse suggests that even though sociobiology makes significant contribution to the question "why are we ethical?" it does not tell everything to be said about ethics.

Sociobiologists make a connection between genes and human thoughts and actions by explaining altruism in terms of selfishness or selfish genes. "Altruism, on this account, is entirely consistent with individual selection and is entirely biological in its origins" (Thompson, 1999, p. 480). Thompson states sociobiological definition of altruistic behavior as follows,

> The altruistic behavior is, in the word's normal sense, only superficially "altruistic", because the origin and maintenance of the behavior labeled "altruistic" is really selfishness (or, put more mechanistically and neutrally, is a behavior that is designed by biological evolution to raise the fitness of the individual engaged in the "altruistic" act). (Ibid.)

According to sociobiologists, we have certain dispositions that are based on genes and that lead us to approve or disapprove certain actions. But these dispositions are not just simple feelings of like and dislike, because these dispositions have a deeper cause, namely "struggle for existence" (Ruse, 1998, p. 221).

Ruse states that sociobiologists believe in a common morality because every human shares the same genetic code. "Besides having some differences, people

share all properties that make them human and that is necessary for a common morality. Having a common moral sense is as absolute as our having forty-six chromosomes" (Ibid., p. 255).

Ruse considers some possible counter-examples to this claim. For instance, one may claim that morality is not absolute because it is changeable. However, according to Ruse, morality is not more changeable than science is and science of the day is considered as certain. This indicates the fact that something can be both changeable and certain. Moreover, it can also be argued that morality cannot be so absolute because people may have different conclusions, but according to Ruse this argument would also apply to science that is seen certain.

According to Edward Wilson ethics is an issue that should be studied no longer by philosophy, but by biology. In his major work *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, he states: "Scientists and humanists should consider together the possibility that the time has come for ethics to be removed temporarily from the hands of the philosophers and biologicized" (Wilson, 2000, p. 563).

Wilson also argues that sociobiology can give us a new perspective to look at morality that is reflected very well in the following passage.

> The biologist, who is concerned with questions of physiology and evolutionary history, realizes that self-knowledge is constrained and shape by the emotional control centers in the hypothalamus and limbic system of the brain. These centers flood our consciousness with all the emotions- hate, love, guilt, fear and others- that are consulted by ethical philosophers who wish to intuit the standards of good and evil. What, we are compelled to ask, made the hypothalamus and limbic system? They evolved by natural selection. That simple biological statement must be pursued to explain ethics and ethical philosophers, if not epistemology and epistemologists, at all depths. (Ibid.)

Wilson's ethical approach has two parts: his attack to ethical intuitionism and his view of moral relativism. According to Ruse, Wilson believes that "our genes are deceiving us and filling us full of glow of having achieved absolute truth" (Ruse,

1982, p. 205). Wilson defines ethical intuitionism as "the belief that the mind has a direct awareness of true right and wrong that it can formalize by logic and translate into rules of social action (Wilson, 2000, p. 562). Wilson argues that ethical intuitionism does not take the organ of intuition as a product of evolution. He criticizes this view as follows;

> The Achilles heel of the intuitionist position is that it relies on the emotive judgment of the brain as though that organ must be treated as a black box. While few will disagree that justice as fairness is an ideal state for disembodied spirits, the conception is in no way explanatory or predictive with reference to human beings. Consequently, it does not consider the ultimate ecological or genetic consequences of the rigorous prosecution of its conclusion. Perhaps, explanation and prediction will not be needed for the millennium. But this is unlikely- the human genotype and the ecosystem in which it evolved were fashioned out of extreme unfairness. In either case the full exploration of the neural machinery of ethical judgment is desirable and already in progress. (Ibid.)

Second part of Wilson's ethical view is moral relativism that is based on the idea that "different people have different evolutionary interests" (Ibid., p. 563). However, he says that,

> If there is any truth to this theory of innate moral pluralism, the requirement for an evolutionary approach to ethics is self-evident. It should also be clear that no single set of moral standards can be applied to all human populations, let alone all sex-age classes within each population. To impose a uniform code is therefore to create complex, intractable, moral dilemmas- these, of course, are the current condition of mankind. (Ibid., p. 564)

Ruse's interpretation of this conclusion is that since Wilson "has negated philosophical or other rational justification of ethics, then all we are left with are organism with different, clashing, evolutionary strategies" (Ruse, 1982, p. 207). Wilson states that there are some differences in sociobilogical evolutionary strategy that determines the moral standard. Basing their moral standards on these evolutionary strategies distinguishes humans from animals. But according to Wilson, we cannot talk about essential differences between humans and animals; therefore we cannot claim that there is a real morality. On the other hand, Wilson

argues that since everyone shares the same genetic code, they also share the same moral code. In addition, according to Ruse, Wilson seems to propose a pluralism of desires. Wilson alleges that human beings have different desires that depend on different evolutionary strategy and culture or moral beliefs (Ibid., pp. 207-209). Ruse argues that "Wilson's pluralistic selfish moral relativism fails" (Ibid., p. 207).

Wilson's moral relativism consists of two arguments: first, all human beings who have the same genetic code also have the same moral code; and second, it is possible to want or desire different things for human beings (Ibid., p. 207). As Ruse says, the two arguments of Wilson are inconsistent with each other. While the first argument refers to the moral code that is the same for all human beings, the second one refers to the changeability of human moral sentiments or desires.

Peter Singer, who is one of the critics of the standard sociobiological account of ethics, defines sociobiological approach as "the belief that all social behavior, including that of humans, has a biological basis and is the outcome of an evolutionary process that selects some genes or groups of genes in preference to others (1982, p. 42). Singer says that, sociobiologists' arguments are not clear and especially Wilson's explanations about ethics are very controversial. Singer summarizes the arguments of Wilson's two major works *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* and *On Human Nature* as follows.

> Taken together, the two books by Wilson seem to be saying three things about what sociobiology can do for ethics. First, it can provide information about the ultimate genetic consequences of putting ethical ideas into practice. Second, it can explain why we have certain ethical ideas by relating them to our evolutionary history. And third, it can establish certain moral values. (Ibid., p. 52)

Singer criticizes and presents Wilson's argument, which is important for modern moral philosophy, that "biology can lead us to, in Wilson's phrase, ethical premises inherent in man's biological nature" (Ibid.). According to Singer,

Wilson's ethical approach does not have a systematic argument for both ethical skepticism and ethical naturalism. Singer thinks that sociobiologists must be more systematic and must use arguments of philosophers whose ethical ideas are applicable to the sociobiological account (Ibid., p. 56).

Singer also refers to two main problems of sociobiological account that are the "is-ought" problem and biological determinism. He says that the "is-ought" problem is an important problem in philosophy, and according to him, sociobiology ignores this problem, while they give ethical explanations from our evolutionary history. As for the problem of biological determinism he says that;

> [S]ociobiology does not necessarily lead to biological determinism. On the contrary, because we are being capable of knowing the consequences of our actions and choosing accordingly, we can play tricks on evolution. Sociobiology can contribute to the success of our trickery by telling us more about what evolution is up to; the better we understand evolution, the better we can outfox it. (Ibid., p. 61)

It seems that Singer criticizes the sociobiological account, because of Wilson's robust but hasty and groundless claims about ethics. Today although there are more modest approaches in evolutionary ethics, there are some thinkers and biologists, such as David Barash, Richard Dawkins, and Richard Alexander who seem to follow the Wilsonian legacy. Finally, Singer claims that, sociobiological account assumes hierarchies in all social animals and opposes to the idea of natural equality. According to Singer, such a view can affect political thought and human life quite negatively.

Sociobiology may have a very important role in evolutionary ethics. This account provides different interpretations of the relation between biological evolution and morality. However, as I said before, sociobiology has some problems in presenting and evaluating morality that is related with biological evolution of human beings. I have objections to sociobiology on two accounts. First, I think that sociobiology ignores the "is-ought" gap or naturalistic fallacy. The "is-ought"

gap is one of the most important problems in moral philosophy, and there is an explanatory gap in the transition from biological facts to moral values in sociobiology. I want to argue that this problem cannot be resolved by sociobiology, simply because it neither re-defines what "is" is in sociobiological sense, nor does it attempt to re-conceptualize what else can be understood by "ought". What I suggest for consideration is an attempt to achieve both goals; re-conceptualization of both "is" and "ought" in such a way that the former will no longer be "biologically given" and the latter will no longer be "transcendent ought". Statically given "is" should be replaced with the dynamically shaped and re-shaped "is". In much less the same way, the transcendent ought are to be replaced with socially encouraged practices and approved habits. It is in this sense that I believe in the necessity of a new and more philosophical ethical perspective for evolutionary ethics.

Secondly, sociobiological account leads to some misunderstanding about evolutionary ethics, such as biological determinism. The fact that they are so careless about "is-ought" gap and they construe deterministic relations between biology and morality cause opposition to evolutionary accounts of morality. I think evolutionary ethics does not have to be deterministic and I believe there are other options in addition to sociobiological accounts for explaining and understanding the relationship between evolution and ethics.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONCEPT OF ALTRUISM

Altruism can be said to be the sacrificing of one's benefit for the benefit of other(s). However, defining beneficent behavior changes from society to society in its every day use. In its everyday sense we use this concept to refer to personality traits of benevolent people. Furthermore, although we help our friends in many situations, our behavior in its everyday sense cannot be altruistic simply because of its direct benefit to our friends, for motives and intentions involved in such behavior are also important. The problem with everyday sense of altruism is that since it is not possible to observe motives behind these behaviors, it is difficult to decide whether such behaviors are really altruistic or not. In addition, we cannot always know whether a behavior is altruistic or not in every day life, because behaviors that result in the benefit for others are affected by many factors. Of course, I do not mean that people never act altruistically. Although people behave selfishly or out of their own interests, they exhibit some behaviors, though occasionally, which benefit others and we can still call them altruistic. These altruistic behaviors may be done with selfish intentions but if these behaviors affect benefits for others, we can say, in the sense of the weak definition given at the beginning, these are altruistic behaviors.

In psychology and philosophy, altruism is not only the action and its beneficial consequences for others, but also the motives behind actions. Psychological view of altruism deals with motives behind this beneficial behavior and inferences for behavioral explanation of egoist and altruist individuals. Likewise, philosophical

view of altruism deals with motives behind this beneficial behavior and consequence of this behavior for theories of ethics.[1]

In biology, altruism is defined in terms of survival and reproduction and of the notion of "self sacrifice". Altruism is defined by biologists as "a group phenomena in which some genes or individuals, which must be presumed to be selfish, benefit others at cost to themselves" (Darlington, 1978, p. 385). While biological altruism includes beneficial behaviors of non-human organisms, psychological and philosophical definitions of altruism are restricted only to humans. Although having capacity to reflect seems to be the distinctive character of human beings human altruistic behavior is not discussed in terms of this distinctive character in evolutionary altruism. The human is a biological organism like all other organisms. Therefore, from an evolutionary point of view, actions and motives of behaviors are treated in terms of their value for survival and reproduction, regardless of the existence of a critical mind.

In this chapter, I try to exhibit classical definition of altruism in psychology, philosophy and biology. Since altruism as a subject-matter is one of the main important sources of debates in evolutionary ethics, biological definition of altruism and its possible evolution are very important for this study. After that, I discuss altruism in terms of human practice and try to show it from another perspective in which altruism has more social and moral characteristics, namely altruistic behavior practices.

[1] Altruism can also be considered as a theory which takes into account of the society and social (ethical) behavior for happiness rather than the individual happiness. In this respect the goal of action should be the benefit for others without providing any benefit for the actor. (Güçlü, 2003, pp. 1108-1110)

3.1 Classical Definitions of Altruism

We perform many helpful acts for others in our everyday life. For example, in many situations in a single day, we help our friends, neighbors or in general those strangers who are in need of a hand. In addition, we receive help from others similar to the above situations. Exhibiting helping behavior has an important role in social life, because this role is an effective factor for our approbation or rejection of others in our social relations.

In this respect, I should emphasize the question why we help others, because there is a close connection between common sense altruism and helping others in our every day life. I use "vernacular altruism" (Sober, 1998, p. 460) that refers to common-sense altruism and common sense perception of helping behavior.

Why do we help others? According to Schroder et al. (1995), the answer to this question underlies common sense understanding of prosocial behavior. However, common sense cannot give the correct reason for helping behavior. But it is important that prosocial behavior has a fundamental role in understanding helping behavior in a culture or society. Schroder et al. says that "prosocial behavior may have an adaptive value that will increase the chances of an individual's, group's and culture's survival, it is not surprising that the stories and folklore of many cultures stress the value of helping one another" (p. 4). They emphasize that folktales and parables are vehicles that convey helping behavior through generations with approbation, and major religions also draw attention to benevolence as a universal virtue with abstract ethical rules. These two points show us that there are external factors affecting our helping behavior (Ibid., pp. 7-8).

The term 'vernacular altruism' is used to mean as helping others. In this sense, Schroder et al. defines helping as "an action that has the consequences of providing some benefit to or improving the well-being of another person" (Ibid.,

p. 16). They point to a study on helping which was conducted by McGuire that shows four kinds of helping;

> (1) causal helping- doing some small favor for a causal acquaintance, such as lending the person a pen; (2) substantial personal helping- expending some considerable effort to provide a friend with tangible benefit, such as helping the friend move into an apartment; (3) emotional helping-providing emotional or personal support to a friend, such as listening to a friend's personal problems; and (4) emergency helping- coming to the aid of a stranger with an acute problem, such as helping the victim of an accident. (Ibid., p. 17)

As we see in this study, we cannot say that all kinds of helping are the same. There are many different consequences that we encounter in the helping situations. In this respect, we can say that vernacular altruism and other kinds of altruism may be different. In evolutionary altruism, intention of an actor is not important but we cannot say the same thing for psychological definitions of altruism.

In order to exhibit the primary difference between helping and altruism, Schroder et al. repeat different definitions and views of some theorists,

> [S]ome theorists have reserved the term altruism for cases in which the benefactor provides aid to another *without the anticipation of rewards from external sources for providing assistance* (Macaulay, Berkowitz, 1970). This definition is consistent with a more recent definition of altruism offered by Myers (1993): "concern and help for others that asks nothing in return." Other theorists restricted the use of the altruism label even further and imposed the additional condition that helpers must incur some cost of their action (e.g., Krebs, 1982; Wispe, 1978)… The self-sacrifice criterion does emphasize, however, the generally accepted notion that a true altruist is not providing assistance in order to gain any personal benefits. (Ibid., p. 18)

The main point of the distinction between helping and psychological altruism is the role of motivation, because the motivation of the actor is the distinctive characteristic of psychological altruism. Nevertheless, since we cannot observe the source of the motivation of the actor in every situation, it is difficult to determine whether an act of helping is truly altruistic (Ibid.).

In everyday life, we call helping behavior as altruistic behavior, and helpful people as altruistic people. In other words, without knowing the intention or motivation of an actor, we can say that her behavior is altruistic. On the other hand, in psychological and biological altruism, we can suggest some motives or feelings behind altruistic behavior providing a basis to determine whether a behavior really altruistic or selfish. In this respect, comparing different conceptions of altruism, such as empathy, sympathy, reciprocity is important in explaining evolutionary altruism, which is the main focus of this study.

Motivation behind altruistic or benevolent behavior is a controversial issue in both psychology and philosophy. It can be associated with the discussion of human nature that continues to be an important issue in philosophy today. Before giving philosophical interpretations of altruism, I want to examine the psychological notion of altruism, in order to understand motivations that cause benevolent behavior.

In general, altruism is seen as the opposite of egoism in psychology. However, we cannot say that all kinds of motivation in altruistic behavior are opposite of motivations in egoistic behavior. Motives for benevolent behavior are very complex, and in many circumstances even the actor of benevolent behavior may not know what motives operate behind his/her actions. In this respect many factors affect individual's psychology to act altruistically or egoistically (Milo, 1973, pp. 4-5).

Elliot Sober and David Sloan Wilson mention three different psychological theories of motivation in *Unto Others*: hedonism, egoism and altruism. Although I am interested primarily in altruistic motivations, such as empathy and sympathy in my thesis, the definitions of hedonism and egoism are also important for understanding altruistic motivations. "Hedonism says that the only ultimate desires that people have are the desires to obtain pleasure and avoid pain. All

other desires are purely instrumental with respect to these two ends" (Sober and Wilson, 1999, p. 224). On the other hand, "egoism maintains that the only ultimate goals an individual has are *self-directed*; people desire their own well-being, and nothing else, as an end in itself. If you care about the well-being of others, this is only because you think the well-being of others is instrumentally related to benefiting yourself" (Ibid.). As we see in these definitions, both hedonism and egoism accept *self-directed* desire as ultimate and *other-directed* desire as instrumental, but altruism sees *other-directed* desire as ultimate.

From altruistic point of view, well-being of others is an end in itself, thus altruistic action has *other-directed* ends. On the other hand, since egoism and hedonism consider all ultimate desires of individuals as egoistic, these theories should be seen as monistic rather than pluralistic. However, "altruism as part of a pluralistic theory of motivation… maintains that people have ultimate desires about others as well as about themselves" (Ibid., p. 228). In this respect, while egoism implies that all ultimate desires of people are self-directed, altruism does not necessarily mean that all ultimate desires of people are other-directed, it rather means that people also have other-directed ultimate desires (Ibid., p. 229). We can then say that since hedonism is a type of egoism, egoism and altruism can be seen as two opposite theories of motivation. However, unlike egoism, altruism is not so pretentious in its ultimate desire argument, because it is possible that one action includes both egoistic and altruistic motivations, and it is difficult to determine the real motivation of an action. In the following paragraphs I examine possible sources of altruistic motivations.

According to psychologists, there are three possible explanations of the motive behind benevolent behavior: "(1) learning, (2) arousal and emotion (affect) and (3) social and personal standard" (Schroder, 1995, p. 60). First, some psychologists argue that helping others is something that is acquired in society. They explain the basic principle of learning theory as "law of effect". According to this principle, people aim to do actions that are rewarded and do not aim to do

actions that are punished in social life. In order to sustain its continuity, society needs helpful (or cooperative) members and it protects helpful behavior giving to people positive and negative feedbacks. This social learning occurs and improves with observing other individuals' behavior and consequences of one's own actions. So, people gain a social motive for concern about the needs of others and helping them (Ibid., p. 62).

Secondly the most important explanation of psychological motives of altruism is related with feelings and emotions of the actor. Some thinkers argue that the source of relation between emotions and altruistic behavior may be biological and evolutionary. "People may be inherently empathic. The role of empathic emotions in prosocial motivation is the focus of several arousal and affect models of helping… and empathic arousal may produce different emotions" (Ibid., p. 64). Empathy is defined by Schroder et al. as an emotional reaction to the needs of others. Therefore we can say that people are emotionally disposed to behave helpfully, and this emotion is inherent in them. From this point on, I want to introduce two important concepts, namely empathy and sympathy that are closely related with psychological and philosophical definitions of altruism (Ibid.).

Empathy and sympathy are the major emotions that support altruistic desire and behavior. Empathy can be defined as sharing the feelings or emotions of other people. The most important aspect of empathy is that it is explained by the concept of "identify with". When people empathize with their family, ethnic group or religion, it can be said that they identify with them. The feeling of empathy requires identifying with others, perceiving the world from others' perspective and emotion matching. The main difference between empathy and sympathy is explained by the concept of experience. Feeling sympathy does not require identification and experience. People can feel sympathy without identifying with others and without having experience on a situation. Imaginative practice may be sufficient for feeling sympathy and also, unlike empathy, it does not require feeling the same emotions (emotion matching) with another. In

addition, while empathy focuses on personal distress and sadness, feeling sympathy is possible for all emotions of others (Sober and Wilson, 1999, pp. 234-236).

According to Schroder et al., empathy is defined as "another-oriented emotional response and emotional reaction to another person's problem so, empathic concern produces an altruistic motivation to reduce the other person's distress" (p. 75). If one person perceives other's needs, emotional reaction of empathy invokes altruistic motivation and then, if it is possible, he/she wants to help the other person. As mentioned above, recognizing whether the motivation of an action is really altruistic or egoistic is a problem, because we cannot observe the motives. Nevertheless, Schroder et al. argues that we can find evidence for true altruistic motivation. For example, the expressions of an actor who is altruistically motivated for helping another are reliable in some situations. Furthermore, if the actor does not abandon the person who is in need of help or does not need an excuse or does not act to avoid punishment, we can say she behaves altruistically (Ibid., pp. 77-78).

In psychological view of altruism, empathy is an important concept for explaining true altruistic motivation. The significance of this concept is based on its difference from other motivations, because other motivations, namely social learning and social responsibility are interpreted as egoistic motivations of altruistic behavior. Therefore it can be said that sharing others' emotions, perceiving their needs, and then trying to help them with the feeling of empathy produces true altruistic behavior.

Third motivation of psychological altruism is explained in terms of social norms, personal norms and the concepts of reciprocity – equity – justice. In social life, many norms influence our behaviors. However, these norms can arise and develop spontaneously with emotions rather than with oppressive rules (Ibid., p. 84). Social norms are defined as "rules for accepted and expected behavior" (Ibid.). In

this sense, helping other people is approved by social norms, and it is the correct response for the sustainability of the society. On the other hand, people pay attention to others' opinions about themselves and others' expectations from them. Psychological Researches, in general, assign two types of social norms which include helping another. The first type is reciprocity and justice, and the second is social responsibility (Ibid.).

Reciprocal relationships with other people are those that are learnt in society. According to Schroder et al., "[t]he norm of reciprocity refers to a type of turn taking with regard to helping. According to this norm, people should help those who have helped them, and they should not help those who have denied them help for no legitimate reason" (Ibid., p. 85). In many situations, reciprocity can be interpreted as an unwritten social norm. In addition, this motive is very effective and prevalent and is one of the fundamental principles in our social relations. Many researches submit that reciprocity has a biological basis, and so it has an important role in our relations (Ibid., p. 86).

Reciprocity is related with two basic social needs; equity and justice. Equity is based on the belief that there must be "fairness or balance" (Ibid.) between *donor and donee*. Because of this belief, people form their social relations in terms of reciprocal norms. Another social need that supports reciprocal relation is justice. People believe and need to see that the world must be just and social relations between people must be based on this principle. In this sense, reciprocal norms have social basis, and it is a fundamental motive that produces altruistic behavior (Ibid., pp. 86-87)

After presenting basic lines of the psychological view, I now want to discuss philosophical perspective on certain notions of altruism. In history of philosophy, the stoics are perhaps the first thinking about the concept of "helping another". Their doctrine is important in showing that the predisposition to care for others might not result from a detailed and selfish calculus at all. Their idea of the

"agreement with Nature" is in this sense vital in thinking further about the place of "sympathy" in human beings, and the possibility of sympathy independent from selfish reasoning. "[T]he mere fact of common humanity requires that one man should feel another man to be akin to him… The ant, the bee, the stork, does certain actions for the sake of others besides themselves. With human beings this bond of mutual aid is far more intimate. It follows that we are by nature fitted to form union" (Kelly, 1997, p. 41).

In the entire history of philosophy, perhaps the strongest emphasis on the priority and vitality of "self-interest" is found in Hobbes' political philosophy. Hobbes explains this emphasis on the basis of, what he himself calls, "State of Nature". This understanding of the original situation brings Hobbes to argue that in the state of nature there is nothing except for the self-regarding motion of man. This situation is neither good in terms of any account of good, nor is it evil in any sense. The state of nature rather denotes a factual status of how man exists. Hobbes tries to explain how man behaves in terms of "desire". All desires of man rely on a pure self-interest. Although Hobbes himself observes certain kind of "others regarding" choices in human life, he judges all these as a mere indication of seeking of the appropriate instruments for one's own interest. Hobbes is one of the most pessimistic philosophers regarding altruism or helping others. His pre-philosophical understanding of the world and nature leads him to provide a safe place for human political affairs. This safe place, which becomes possible only as a result of a struggle against "self-regarding orientation" of man, is a necessity of a social contract (Ibid., pp. 85-89)

Hume, another philosopher from a more optimistic side, gives us good reasons for altruism on the basis of which we can argue against those strong claims for the inevitability of self-love. Hume states that human beings are naturally concerned with others' interests. He explains this naturalness in terms of the notion of sympathy. He argues that human beings behave in accordance with their sentiments. From this point of view, altruistic feelings can be interpreted as

natural sentiments. Additionally, according to Hume, benevolence is not a kind of self-interest (Ibid., pp. 141-143).

In the second chapter in *Enquiries* there is a passage against egoism. According to Hume, those strict defenders of human egoism fail to appreciate what empirical knowledge asks us to see. What empirical world reveals us is quite the opposite of what those self-love theorists claim, namely a natural tendency to form a unity of interests. Hume criticizes them for taking all moral evidence as outputs of culture and education. Baillie (2000) clarifies this point:

> Hume concluded that the entire natural basis of our approval of the 'social virtues' lies in their public utility, egoists take a more jaundiced view of the matter, holding 'that all moral distinctions arise from education, and were, at first, invented, and afterwards encouraged, by the art of politicians, in order to render men tractable, and subdue their natural ferocity and selfishness, which incapacitated them for society (p. 148)

Hume, in fact, does not ignore the importance of societal or educational influence on the development of one's moral inclinations. However, he also wants to add into this picture the notion of sympathy as the more prior mechanism than other constructs. As Bailley suggests, "he insists that the ultimate basis of moral distinctions lies in our natural tendencies for the well-being of both ourselves and family, and others whom sympathy puts within our reach" (Ibid.).

In philosophy, philosophers treat altruism and egoism from the perspective of their ethical theories. They also treat these notions as a starting point of their theory or part of their understanding of human nature. Especially Hume's view and his notion of sympathy are important for this study. Hume's view also influenced Darwin's moral view, and Darwin refers to his notion of sympathy in the *Descent of Man*. In the following chapter, I present this influences and the importance of Hume's ethical view.

In everyday language, altruistic behavior is explained in terms of action and its motive. However, biologists define altruistic behavior in terms of its consequences in survival and reproduction. According to this definition, in order for one behavior to be accepted as altruistic, the individual's fitness must decrease while the fitness of the population of which the individual is a part must increase. The main problem about altruism in evolutionary biology is to show how altruistic behavior can evolve. It is important that in order to unify biological, psychological and philosophical definitions, altruistic behavior should be seen as the unity of act and motive. Although it may not be so easy to explain the evolution of altruistic behavior from the orthodox Darwinian perspective, because this perspective is rigidly individualistic, altruistic behavior deserves an explanation.

The Darwinian Theory is based on individual selection. All organisms struggle for their own survival and reproduction. If they have sufficient fitness in a particular environment, they will be selected and will be able to continue to live. Selection and fitness are the main forces of evolution. Selection is the causal explanation of population's evolution. The fittest beings have greater chance to survive and reproduce than others, so they have greater chance to be selected than others. According to Darwinian natural selection, animals struggle in order to increase their own chances of survival and reproduction not others'. Since behaving altruistically reduces their fitness, altruism and evolution seem to be contradictory. However, as Darwin realized, altruistic behavior seems to have evolved and was not eliminated by natural selection.

> In evolutionary biology, an organism is said to behave altruistically when its behavior benefits other organisms, at a cost to itself. The costs or benefits are measured in terms of reproductive fitness, or expected number of offspring. So by behaving altruistically, an organism reduces the number of offspring….. This biological notion of altruism is not identical to the everyday concept. In everyday parlance, an action would only be called 'altruistic' if it was done with the conscious intention of helping another. But in the biological sense there is no such requirement. (Okasha, 2006)

M. L. Hoffman suggests the concept of empathy, in order to clarify the idea that humans may have a built-in predisposition for purely altruistic behavior. According to him, the notion of emphatic response to another gives an altruistic motive that is independent of self-interested motivation. This altruistic motive that may connect biological and psychological definitions of altruism can explain moral behavior in non-human beings (Hoffman, 1975**,** p. 137).

> The definition of altruism implicitly accepted by the researchers includes any purposive act on behalf of someone else that involves a net cost to the actor; the types of altruism studied include helping another in distress and sharing or making donation to someone in need. The main focus has been on factors in the situation or in the person that momentarily govern the altruistic response.....what appears to be altruism can always be explained ultimately in terms of the actor's self- serving egoistic needs. It seems just as reasonable to suppose, however that in the course of human evolution there must have been selection for altruistic as well as selfish predisposition, because from the beginning group life has been necessary for survival. (Ibid., p. 138)

According to Janet Richards, Darwinian selection and self interest are connected notions, because self interest is seen as an inevitable result of natural selection. However, she thinks that altruism exists and is necessary for moral action. She describes two views about the existence of altruistic behavior as follows;

> There are two difficult kind of response. Some people think that because such genuine altruism obviously does exist, the idea that human beings originated entirely by material Darwinian process must be false, we need the divine spark to account for unselfish behavior. Others work the argument the other way round. Because they accept that we arose entirely by natural processes, without skyhooks, they conclude that what appears to be altruism must really be well-disguised selfishness. (Richards, 2000, p. 156)

It is essential that altruistic behaviors of organisms are not denied by Darwin. However, evolution of this type of behavior cannot be explained by natural selection, for, according to Darwin, although altruistic behavior appears its evolution by individual selection is not possible. Nevertheless Darwin seems to offer a solution in terms of group selection in that group selection may explain social feelings and behaviors of organisms. He suggests that colonies are super

organisms and altruistic behaviors increase the fitness of these populations. In *Decent of Man* he states his explanation of group selection in his interpretation of human morality, as follows,

> It is extremely doubtful whether the offspring of the more sympathetic and benevolent parents, or of those which were the most faithful to their comrades, would be reared in greater numbers than the children of selfish and treacherous parents of the same tribe. He who was ready to sacrifice his life, as many a savage has been, rather than betray his comrades, would often leave no offspring to inherit his noble nature. The bravest men, who were always willing to come to the front in war, and who freely risked their lives for others would on average perish in larger numbers than other men. (Darwin, 1871, p. 321)

Moreover, he explains the evolution of altruistic behavior as follows,

> It must not be forgotten that although a high standard of morality gives but a slight or no advantage to each individual man and his children over the other men of the same tribe, yet that an advancement in the standard of morality and an increase in the number of well-endowed men will certainly give an immense advantage to one tribe over another. (Ibid., p. 322)

After Darwin, the concept of inclusive fitness clarified the evolution of altruistic behaviors in these colonies. Thompson (1999) describes inclusive fitness as follows,

> [I]nclusive fitness [was] allowed an evolutionary explanation of previously inexplicable phenomena such as altruism. Fitness is about genes and their transmission into the next generation. Inclusive fitness captures all of the physical and behavioral characteristics of genetically related individuals that result in the transmission of genes into the next generation. Inclusive fitness recognizes that if the behavior of one individual A assists in the transmission of the genes of a closely related individual B, then the behavior of A is actually part of the fitness of B. Further, if A and B share a large number of genes, A's behavior, which raises B's fitness, actually raises A's fitness as well. This concept allows an explanation of altruism based on individual selection. (p. 479)

How altruistic behavior evolves and cannot be eliminated by natural selection can be explained by appealing to different levels of selection. Although altruistic

behavior is disadvantageous for the individual organism itself at the individual level of selection, it is advantageous for the group to which altruist individuals belong, at the group level of selection: in group selection altruistic behavior increases the fitness of population, so if one population has lots of altruists, they will have a survival advantage over selfish populations. However, if the population is very large, altruists cannot survive because of their distribution in the population, but if such a large population is separated into smaller subgroups at the right time, altruists can survive and reproduce, so there will be altruists in every generation and they will be preserved in populations (Sober, 2000, pp. 96-99). Therefore it seems that group selection can explain how we can explain the evolution of altruistic behavior by natural selection.

Many biologists use kin selection and inclusive fitness, in order to explain the evolution of altruism as an alternative to group selection. Kin-directed altruism is based on the argument that the organism behaves altruistically towards only its relatives. The result of this behavior is explained as gene transmission or carrying copies of yourself. The organism helps its relatives and increases the fitness of them even though this behavior reduces its own fitness. “So the overall effect of the behavior may be to increase the number of copies of the altruistic gene found in the next generation, and thus the incidence of the altruistic behavior itself” (Okasha, 2006).

Kin selection spreads the altruistic behavior and it is explained in terms of inclusive fitness. A gene “wants” to transmit its copies to next generation, this is called gene’s-eye view of evolution. However, although the organism reduces its personal fitness by behaving altruistically towards its relatives, it increases its inclusive fitness in the population. This is called organism’s point of view. The understanding of inclusive fitness of organisms should include the effect of other organism’s fitness in a population. Some biologists suggest that kin selection should be explained by inclusive fitness rather than gen’s- eye view because “kin selection theory does not deny the truism that all traits are affected by both genes

and environment. Nor does it deny that many interesting animal behaviors are transmitted through non-genetical means, such as imitation and social learning" (Llyod, 2006).

On the other hand, kin selection, as helping only relatives, is not adequate for explaining altruism, because it is observed that animals are behaving altruistically to non-relatives as well. The reciprocal altruism theory tries to overcome the problem of evolutionary altruism by explaining this kind of altruistic behavior. According to this theory, organisms help each other mutually, if they encounter each other repeatedly. The notion of reciprocal altruism is connected with the Tit-for-Tat's strategy.

> Tit – for-Tat is very simple and only a first approximation to an idea that might work; real life and real creatures are much more complicated than that. But it does illustrate the possibility that what biologists call an evolutionarily stable strategy might result from the development of complex emotions that included unselfish ones. Altruism, a real concern for the feelings of others, could prompt the initial niceness, as long as other feelings would prevent the continuing of these feelings if the other organism responded badly. (Richards, 2000, p. 164)

These two concepts, kin altruism and reciprocal altruism, are interpreted as evidence for evolutionary altruism. Although they are seen as special conditions of organism, it is obvious that altruistic behavior is not removed by natural selection and they illustrate that natural selection allows the evolution of unselfish behavior.

3.2. Proposed Notion of Altruism: As Habitual Presupposition

In this section I aim to read the concept of altruism from a different perspective, one that is, I think, promising to remove many difficulties we have seen so far as regards the notion of altruism. This perspective is based on two main motivations of altruism; empathy and sympathy that provide social relation and true

perception of other people. According to the proposed perspective, our altruistic behavior can be seen as norms, habits and repeated actions that provide the sustainability of society. Altruistic motivations change into altruistic behavior and then if that behavior is accepted in the society, it can be circulated as a habitual practice in this society. I call this practice "altruistic behavior practice" and will endeavor to show how altruistic motivations of human beings turn into practices in social life. I think I should remind here Alasdair Macintyre's concept 'social practice' (Section 4.1.), which is the central idea in his ethical view, and John Dewey's concept 'habit' (Section 4.2.) in explaining and developing the idea of altruistic behavior practice. I also argue that there may be some affinity among these two notions in explaining altruistic behavior. However, before that, I want to show how altruistic motivation and behavior can be seen as habitual practice**.**

As I said in section 3.1, the definition of altruism is a controversial issue. Especially psychologists do not come to an agreement about the definition of altruism or altruistic behavior. The main reason for this disagreement is the uncertainty about the knowledge of the source of the motivation of behavior. However, altruistic behavior is called "intentional positive behavior" (Eisenberg, 1982, p. 6) and sometimes it can be used interchangeably with the notion of prosocial behavior. In general prosocial behavior is defined as "helping, sharing, and other seemingly intentional and voluntary positive behaviors for which the motive is unspecified, unknown, or not altruistic" (Ibid., p. 6). The differences between the definitions of altruism and its relation to prosocial behavior originate from different theoretical perspectives. For example, according to social learning theory, altruism should be understood on the basis of observable behavior rather than motives, intentions or rational process. On the other hand, according to rational perspective, altruism should be defined in terms of "cognitive-motivational elements of an individual's behavior" (Ibid., pp. 6-7).

I treat altruistic behavior as a positive social behavior and do not consider this notion as a rational process or relating with cognitive components of the human

behavior. Altruistic behavior as a positive prosocial behavior can be seen as socialization and is an important component of human morality. The important point here is that altruistic behavior should be considered as a biological drive for socialization and cooperation, as a set of biologically driven behaviors that are also encouraged by society, a unity of genetically and historically connected individual organisms.

Let me draw attention to the point concerning "biological disposition" to eliminate some possible misunderstandings; saying this does not mean that altruism is innate. I presented the biological definition of altruism before; I see this biological root as a *disposition or tendency for living together with others* and as a motivation that provide this togetherness. I do not want to argue that altruism is innate because I believe this argument might lead us to another variant of biological determinism. J. Philippe Rushton (1991) argues that altruism is innate, and genetic similarity theory shows this innateness. He says that "social assortment in humans follows lines of genetic similarity" (p. 142). Rusthon's claim is based on genetic roots of empathy and the idea that genetic factors have greater influence on our social behavior and choices than other factors. In order to justify his argument, he says that "altruism is found in many animal species, and the origin lies deep in evolutionary history" (Ibid., p. 141). I agree with this view but do not agree with considering a direct relation between genetic codes or factors and social behavior, as I mentioned earlier. I think that there is altruistic disposition in humans but its appearance depends on social and environmental factors, social encouragement or avoidance. If it did not so, we would not observe different ethical standards or different social behavior. Thinking this connection as tight as Rutshon thinks might bring further difficulties. What is innate, if any, is not that of 'altruism', but rather a drive for togetherness. Out of this predisposition and certainly under relevant and appropriate social-historical conditions certain effects as altruistic behaviors might spring.

In this respect, altruistic behavior is a basic prosocial behavior corresponding to individual's disposition to behave socially. I think Justin Aronfreed's arguments on the socialization of altruism and sympathy support my notion of altruism. Aronfreed considers altruism and sympathy as dispositions to behave socially, and he explains the socialization of altruistic and sympathetic behaviors with experimental analyses. According to Aronfreed (1970), "certain forms of human social behavior are widely interpreted as the expression of altruistic and sympathetic dispositions. … [P]sychological conception of altruism and sympathy cannot be mounted without a developmental perspective into the process of socialization" (p. 103). Aronfreed predicates his arguments on the experimental studies on children behaviors. According to him;

> [T]here is an internalized control of the child's behavior … in the absence of control by actual or anticipated external outcomes which have immediate consequences for themselves. [A] broad conception of the mechanisms of the internalization is required for an understanding of the specific character of altruistic and sympathetic actions. [T]he inference of empathic or vicarious mediation of affectivity is the central criterion for the identification of altruism and sympathy. (Ibid., p. 104)

Aronfreed emphasizes the important role of empathy or empathic experience in social relation. According to him, emphatic experience is the precondition of altruistic and sympathetic behavior. He defines empathy as "to denote an individual's affective experience when it is elicited by social cues which transmit information about the corresponding affective experience of another person" (Ibid., p. 107).

In this respect, as Aronfreed says, the altruistic behavior can be seen as the basic component of social behavior. At this point, I want to say that this type of altruistic behavior that I call *habitual behavior* coheres with positive social behavior and can be called the basic norm of society which, according to John Darley and Bibb Latane (1970), means "help other individuals in distress" (p. 83). I do not mean the concept of moral norms when I use the notion of basic norms

for altruism. I just want to show the role of altruistic behavior in social relations. So, I do not want to charge normative explanation to altruism.

I now want to explain altruistic behavior as an unreflective, repeated and habitual action that can lead us to an alternative ethical perspective in evolutionary ethics. I propose an ethical perspective that is represented by altruistic behaviors. I believe that a different reading of the notion of altruism provides us critical reflections for evolutionary ethics. Nevertheless, this ethical perspective should not be associated with normative accounts and normative notions 'moral good' and 'moral bad'. I think human social and moral behaviors are not determined by norms, but they rather arise spontaneously in the social environment in which individuals exist. Thus, I treat altruism as the basic component of this ethical perspective.

I argue that normative accounts do not explain human's unreflective behaviors. I think that humans do not consider suitability of norms when behave in some situations. Darley and Latane explain this claim as fallow:

> A … difficulty with normative accounts of variations in helping in specific situations is that there is a little evidence that people actually think about norms when choosing a course of action. In a series of studies in which we have staged realistic emergencies and then observed people's reaction to them, we have found that subjects typically intervene, if they intervene at all, in a matter of seconds. They seem to be guided by their first reactions, and not by a complicated choice among a variety of norms. (Ibid., p. 86)

In our social life, we exhibit many unreflective social behaviors. We react the needs and distress of others with an unreflective or perhaps instinctive behavior. We cannot explain these types of behaviors by certain norms. Some of these behaviors are learned in family, some of them are learned or approved in society and some of them exist as good or bad dispositions in us. At this point, I think the disposition of behaving altruistically as a basic prosocial behavior can be interpreted as the main source of our unreflective helping behaviors that cannot be determined by ethical norms.

An answer to the question "what is behavior?" is not easy either in biology or in psychology. Especially human social behaviors require more analysis, because there are many physical and social factors influencing them. G.A. Tawney (1915) explains two main traits of behavior as follows;

> For the science of biology, accommodation and habit are fundamental traits of behavior, and to the present writer they once appeared to be sufficiently simple and definite to satisfy to needs of psychology also. [] Habit is the tendency of living things to get again a good that has once been achieved; accommodation, the tendency to prefer more adequate procedures, the tendency of living things to pursue a larger good. In the great majority of organisms both processes are unreflective, and among reflective beings both become less reflective as they become more habitual. Reflection appears when habit and accommodation prove to be inadequate ways of meeting the conditions of life. (p. 29)

It can be clearly said that many social relations in our life improve in habitual repetitions. Social science explains many human behaviors with the notion of habit and empirical evidence. In the following chapter, I visit the definition and philosophical interpretations of this notion, especially when I discuss John Dewey's ethical view, but at this point I want to suggest that the disposition of behaving altruistically can be considered as habitual output. Altruistic behavior whose biological and psychological roots I have sketched so far can change into habitual behavior by continuous repetition and insisting practices. Of course, any behavior of this kind must be approved, encouraged or at least allowed by the society, if it is to be observed in repeating and sustainable fashion.

I argue that our moral behaviors consist of different variations of these repeated habitual behaviors. Positive habits are approved, and these approvals are displayed in society by means of consistent encouragement to be resulted in frequent occurrence while negative habits are condemned by consistent discouragement. The social encouragement and social avoidance, in this sense, appear in fairly long course of time as moral norms. We should note that the norms that appear in this vein are not in any sense "good" or "bad" as moral reflective judgments. Perhaps, quite the opposite what we call good or bad are

derivations of this appearances. The notions of social encouragement and social avoidance are different from strict moral norms of normative ethical theories. These two notions are based on social changeability, sustainability of society, and altruistic and habitual tendencies of humans rather than reason or the God.

Two motivations for altruistic behavior, namely empathy and sympathy, cause altruistic behavior practice to permeate through all members of society. Thus a man, who has empathic response to other people, would want to behave in accordance with social approval and try to avoid social condemnation.

I have tried so far to envisage a morality that depends on practical, repeated or habitual circles. These social notions are treated as expressions of altruistic behavior. I have also attempted to show that there is a kind of parallelism between altruistic tendency and habitual formation. This morality presupposes only social relation and its influences on human social behavior with the norms of social encouragement and social avoidance. This type of moral perspective is important for two reasons. First, altruism is the main concept of evolutionary ethics, but it is considered as a biological fact and evidence for morality. This consideration causes some problems such as the “is-ought” gap or biological determinism, as I told above. However, I think if altruism can be interpreted as habitual tendency, we can avoid these problems.

I use MacIntyre’s and Dewey’s ethical views to show how this avoiding of these problems is possible in the next chapter. Secondly, this ethical perspective shows a new philosophical synthesis for evolutionary ethics. In this respect, the notion of altruism has a critical and very important role in this study, like a bridge between the theory of evolution and ethics.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIETY, CONVENTION, AND EVOLUTION

In this chapter, I focus on reconsidering altruistic behavior practice, which I have endorsed so far, in terms of virtue ethics and based on the notions of social practice and habit. These concepts are in a sense indicators of a vocabulary shift from morality to moral of society. Virtue ethics, a neo-Aristotelian line of thought, defines ethics in general and human moral behavior in particular in terms of motives and dispositions of human action rather than moral laws and principles imported from any transcendent source. I think that altruistic behavior, as a biological disposition to behave socially, can be best imagined through vocabulary of this ethical view.

Virtue ethics has many different variants today. In classical approach, virtue is defined as "an attribute the possession of which fulfills the individual's nature as a human being [and] [p]racticing virtue is what makes human lives good lives" (Caws, 1996, p. 21). Then, some ethicists define virtue ethics as "one or… set of moral principles supplemented or complemented by an account of virtuous traits and actions" (Slote, 2001, p. 3). Others define as "free-standing ethics of virtue" (Ibid.) and some even call it as a radical approach. However, it is clearly seen that virtue ethics is considered as an ethical approach that is different and also is independent from other well-known traditions of moral philosophy (Ibid.).

In *Morals From Motives,* Michael Slote offers an "agent-based" account of virtue ethics and draws attention to the main contradiction between virtue ethics and other major traditions. This contradiction "is with forms of ethics based in moral

laws, rules and principles" (Ibid., p. 4). In this respect, he defines and explains virtue ethics as follows;

> In virtue ethics, the focus is on the virtuous individual and on those inner traits, dispositions, and motives that qualify her as being virtuous… Many modern philosophers think of the moral life as a matter of relating properly to moral rules, but in the virtue ethics… the understanding of the moral or ethical life primarily requires us to understand what it is to be a virtuous individual and/or what it is to have one or another particular virtue, conceived as an inner trait or disposition of the individual. So the first thing we can say about virtue ethics in an attempt to distinguish it from other approaches is that it is *agent-focused*. (Ibid.)

He distinguishes agent-based and agent-prior accounts of virtue ethics and critically locates many philosophers within the framework of this distinction. However, I do not think this distinction is necessary for the present discussion. The importance of virtue ethics for my purpose lies in its general orientation against major traditions of moral philosophy and in its giving priority to motives, dispositions and inner traits of individuals. Since I treat altruism in this sense I believe ethics that arises from altruistic behavior practices can be constituted as virtue ethics. Therefore, the explanations and definitions of virtue ethics in society, social and moral relationships are very important to show that what we call altruistic is part of virtuously living in society.

Slote argues that morality can be interpreted as an inner strength. He argues that many philosophers such as, Plato, Spinoza, Nietzsche and Stoicism and also virtue-ethical view regard inner strength as a foundation for understanding of human moral action (Ibid., p. 21). Slote claims that,

> Nietzsche has given us an example of genuine altruism based in the ideal of strength. I believe we could find other examples of altruism based on (other forms of), inner strength, but even so, there is a general problem with this whole approach that has let me to think there are probably more promising ways to develop and agent-based virtue ethics. The problem, in a nutshell, is what morality as strength treats sentiments or motives like benevolence, compassion, kindness, and the like as only derivatively admirable and

> morally good. And this seems highly implausible to the modern moral consciousness. (Ibid., pp. 22-23)

In this respect, from the point of view of altruism, which is based on inner strength, virtue ethics emphasizes "a person's overall morally relevant motivation" (Ibid., p. 38). "[A]n act is morally acceptable if and only if it comes from good or virtuous motivation involving benevolence or caring (about the well-being of others) or… it does not come from bad or inferior motivation involving malice or indifference to humanity" (Ibid.). Therefore, moral life of a good person contains practical concerns that are based on the well-being of the individual rather than obligations (Ibid., p. 42).

In addition, some philosophers such as, Jonathan Dancy and Richard Rorty define this type of ethical view as "ethics without principles". As I said before, I treat ethical view independent of moral norms, rules or principles. Of course there are some principles that "keep society together" (Dancy, 2004, p. 133) but these principles are not determinative or do not show what is right or wrong to people. Dancy says that "we can perfectly well rely on people by and large to do what is right in the circumstances. We do not need principles to tell them what to do, or to determine what is right, or to tell us what they are likely to do" (Ibid.).

Richard Rorty is another thinker who has strong objections to the presuppositions of the tradition. It is, I think, important to remember that Rorty's strong admiration of Dewey mostly derives from Deweyian-pragmatic understanding of morality. According to Dewey-and to Baier as well- "tradition assumes that behind every moral intuition lies a universal rule… But… there is nothing to account for: moral obligation does not have a nature, or a source, different from habit and custom. Morality is simply a new and controversial custom (Rorty, 1999, p. 76).

At this point, I suggest that altruistic behavior can be considered as a disposition or motivation, in order to define and explain morality. Altruistic behavior can be

considered as virtuous motivation which involves benevolence and caring about the goodness of others. Altruistic behavior is a character that refers to positive social behavior and improves with social practices in society. In this respect, the view of virtue ethics can provide a place in which altruism can provide a new perspective to moral inquiry.

In this study, MacIntyre's and Dewey's views of virtue ethics and their notions; virtue, human practice and habit are the key elements in understanding altruistic behavior in moral sense. These two philosophers share a common ground in framing ideas about virtues and their development as primary moral character. There are many ideas that "are found in the work of both philosophers: the significance of goods internal to human practices, the teleological nature of human conduct, the notion of virtues as habits constituting an integrated character, the importance of inquiry and practical intelligence, the social nature of morality, and a conception of the good focused on relations with others" (Carden, 2006, p. 1).

Except some slight differences, I think these two philosophers have more less the same conviction also about ethics. It is especially important for my purpose that both philosophers constitute their ethics in human social practices and both recognize the importance of biological dimensions of human social life. Dewey's view of virtue was influenced by evolutionary biology, and he uses Darwinian Theory, especially such lines as "description of human conduct as involving habit, impulse and intelligence" (Ibid., p. 3) imply Darwinian notions of morality. On the other hand, MacIntyre avoids treating biological dimensions of life and he calls Aristotelian biology as "metaphysical biology" in *After Virtue*. However, in his last book *Dependent Rational Animals*, he admits that "an understanding of virtues must include the biological dimension of human life" (Ibid., p. 2). This point is important for our present focus. In the following section, I present MacIntyre's virtue ethics and the notion of practices. In the subsequent section, I present Dewey's ethical view and its comparison with MacIntyre's. In these

sections I also present and evaluate altruistic behavior practice in terms of MacIntyre's and Dewey's views. These two philosophers have very important role, I think, in reconsidering altruism as immanent to social practices.

4.1 An Analysis of Altruistic Behavior Practices in Terms of MacIntyre's View of Virtue and Practice

MacIntyre's moral philosophy is based on a Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics and a critical reading of the moral philosophy of Enlightenment. In *After Virtue*, he argues that the problem of the moral philosophy of Enlightenment is to try to establish rational foundations for morality. This effort removes morality from society. However, according to him, moral theory and its concepts should not be considered independently of social life. According to him, the Enlightenment project of justifying morality failed and such a project always have to fail; since it excludes teleology, an inseparable component of Aristotle's ethics. In order to understand our current moral notions, one has to trace them historically. Therefore he critically examines the Enlightenment project of justifying morality. His claim is that this project not only failed but it had to fail. MacIntyre not only criticizes the Enlightenment project of defining universal standards for morality but also offers his own alternative.

According to MacIntyre teleology is an important part of Aristotle's entire system of ethics. Teleology, in this sense, is what enables man to evolve from "the man-as-he-happens-to-be" to "as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature" (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 52). For MacIntyre, the transition between the two is possible only by being organically linked to the cultural-historical narrative of the society. If one ignores the role of virtues that give man a direction, but not necessarily of a metaphysical kind, rather a direction determined in and by society's historical telos, then what he will have is just a set of arguments or rules of morality isolated from where it has originated. Thus, MacIntyre argues,

Enlightment project failed necessarily, for it failed to reconcile “is” with “ought”, once they reject any telos embedded within society.

As I said before, MacIntyre’s overall attempt is to establish a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. He considers Aristotle as the representative of a tradition that is very important for the history of moral philosophy. In this respect, he presents Aristotle’s ethics and Aristotle’s definition of virtue, before he proceeds with his own vocabulary.

According to Aristotle, every activity of human beings aims at a “good”, and human beings and other species have a specific nature that has a *telos* which includes the individual’s specific aims. Therefore, a “good” is defined in terms of these specific natures and aims. For human beings, Aristotle named “good” as *eudaimonia. Eudaimonia* is defined as “blessedness, happiness, prosperity. It is the state of being well and doing well in being well, of a man’s being well-favored himself and in relation to the divine” (Ibid., p. 148).

Virtues are qualities and the experiences of them provide the way of achieving *eudaimonia.* However, virtues are not considered as an instrument to achieve a good for humans. MacIntyre interprets the exercise of the virtues in human life as follows.

> [T]he exercise of the virtues is not in this sense a means to the end of the good for man. For what constitutes the good for man is a complete human life lived at its best, and the exercise of the virtues is a necessary and central part of such a life, not a mere preparatory exercise to secure such a life. We thus cannot characterize the good for man adequately without already having made reference to the virtues. (Ibid., p. 149)

According to MacIntyre, Aristotle’s view is teleological but not consequentialist. In Aristotle’s view virtues depend on each other tightly. Having one virtue requires having other main virtues to achieve the good. On the other hand, Aristotle distinguishes two types of virtues. The first type is called intellectual

virtues that represent rational thinking. Intellectual virtues are wisdom, intelligence and prudence that are the consequences of instruction. The second type of virtues is moral virtues, like liberality and temperance. Moral virtues are consequence of habit. Virtues are not inborn, but they are consequences of habitual exercises (MacIntyre, 1966, p. 64). "The contrast with our natural capacities is plain: first we have the natural capacity, and then we exercise it; whereas with virtues we acquire the habit by first performing the acts. We become just man by performing just actions, courageous by performing courageous actions and so on" (Ibid.).

From this point onward, MacIntyre begins with suggesting his own conception of virtue that is related with notions of internal goods and practice. He defines virtue as "an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such good" (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 184). Without virtues "human beings cannot achieve the goods internal to the practices" (Knight, 1998, p. 71). According to MacIntyre, virtues are born and can only be recognized in historically and culturally bound moral narrative. In addition virtues require practices and its standards (Ibid., p. 186). The relationship between virtue and practice is very important for the definition of exercises of virtues in human life. "A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods" (Ibid., p. 191). By 'practice' he means,

> [A]ny coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (Ibid., p. 187)

Many activities of humans, such as playing game, fishing, science, arts, are practices. For him, virtues must be considered and characterized in terms of practices. He distinguishes between internal and external goods, and human achieve both of them in many activities. However, while achieving external goods, such as "fame, wealth, social status, even a measure of power" (Ibid., p. 189) does not require practices, achieving internal goods requires practices and experiences on an activity. A man has a relevant experience and practice to achieve internal goods. In addition, internal goods are only defined in terms of these practices and having an experience in practices (Ibid.).

A practice involves standards and rules which depend on historical and social background of man. A practice has a history and must be interpreted in terms of authority of standards at that time. In this respect, while external goods can belong to the individual and sometimes refer to an object of the individual's competition, internal goods "are indeed the outcome of competition to excel, but it is characteristic of them that their achievement is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice" (Ibid., p. 190).

> Every practice requires a certain kind of relationship between those who participate in it. Now the virtues are those goods by reference to which, whether we like it or not, we define our relationship to those other people with whom we share the kind of purposes and standards which inform practices. (Ibid., p. 191)

MacIntyre defines and explains virtues in community life. He defines some virtues in terms of their relationship to other people with whom we share the standards and purposes of the same practices. For example, the virtues of truthfulness, justice and courage are important to preserve the sustainability of communities and social aims in practice. "If someone says that he cares for some individual, community or cause, but is unwilling to risk harm or danger on his, her or its own behalf, he puts in question the genuineness of his care and concern" (Ibid., p. 192). According to him, without standards of these three virtues, social relationship and its practices cannot be sustained, so he states that these virtues

must exist for our social practices, whatever our moral belief or social code may be (Ibid.). At this point, practices can improve in different communities as different social code but virtues must be valued in the community as preconditions of practices. “Practices never have a goal or goals fixed for all time, but the goals themselves are transmuted by the history of activity” (Ibid., p. 194). Therefore, we can see different codes of truthfulness, justice and courage in different communities. The exercise of virtues can be learnt in society that has its own specific structure (Ibid., pp. 192-196).

MacIntyre defines virtues in terms of their role or place in practices. Nevertheless, there may be some practices in human life that are evil. According to him, it is possible that evil practices can exist.

> It certainly is not the case that my account entails either that we ought to excuse or condone such evils or that whatever flows from a virtue is right. [T]he virtues need initially to be defined and explained with reference to the notion of a practice thus in no way entails approval of all practices in all circumstance. That the virtues are defined not in terms of good and right practices, but of practices, does not entail or imply that practices as actually carried through at particular times and places do not stand in need of moral criticism. (Ibid., p. 200)

He explains person’s behavior as “narrative of his life’s story from birth to death… [I]n order to understand anyone’s behavior it must be placed within some socially recognized form of activity” (Carden, 2006, p. 15). Moreover he emphasizes the intentions of person’s behavior. According to him, “[u]nderstanding the person’s intentions involves placing his activity in a setting” (Ibid.), and he says that “we cannot… characterize behavior independently of intentions, and we cannot characterize intentions independently of the settings which make those intentions intelligible both to agents themselves and to others” (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 206).

After this general review of MacIntyre’s view and his definition of practice, I want to continue with the importance of his view and definition for our current

purpose. I think that a similarity exists between the exercise of virtues and the appearance of altruistic behavior. Practices are those social possibilities in which altruistic intentions find appropriate conditions to flourish. And, in the same vein, virtues are socially recognized codes that one put in work when these kinds of approved behavior –such as altruism- are observed. Like Aristotelian definition of moral virtues, altruistic behavior can also be interpreted as something that can be improved and sustained through habitual practices.

At this point, I want to refer to MacIntyre's view on the relationship between biology and ethics. He uses the notion of "metaphysical biology" that refers to Aristotelian biology, but he constitutes his account independently of this notion. In his last book *Dependent Rational Animals; Why Human Beings Need the Virtues,* MacIntyre points to his discovery on the relationship between biology and ethics and he thinks biological concepts are important to a moral theory. He says,

> I now judge that I was in error in supposing an ethics independent of biology to be possible. … [N]o accounts of the goods, rules and virtues that are definitive of our moral life can be adequate that does not explain how that form of life is possible for beings who are biologically constituted as we are, by providing us with an account of our development towards and into that form of life. (MacIntyre, 1999, p. x)

In this work, he points out that there is not a sharp contrast between prelinguistic human behavior and animal behavior and he rejects the idea that accepts language as a radical difference between human and animal. He presents similarities between behavior of human and animal, especially behavior of dolphins and chimpanzees. Carden (2006) interprets human action depending on MacIntyre's examples on similarities. Carden says "[p]eople often act without thinking, but prove able later to state reasons which led them to act in that way. The fact that they do not formulate a statement of intention before they act does not make their action unintelligible." (p. 17)

For MacIntyre, even non-human conditions for growth and well-being can be imagined. He suggests "a universal conception of flourishing" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 64) to explain biological basis of virtues that is the same for all species. He applies one and the same concept of flourishing for all species as follows.

> What it is to flourish is not of course the same for dolphins as it is for gorillas or for humans but it is one and the same concept of flourishing that finds application to members of different animal and plant species. And correspondingly it is one and the same concept of needs that finds similar broad application. What a plant or an animal needs is what it needs to flourish *qua* member of its particular species. And what it needs to flourish is to develop the distinctive powers that it possesses *qua* member of that species. (Ibid., p. 64)

According to him, "humans flourish as independent practical reasoners… [H]uman beings need to learn to understand themselves as practical reasoners about goods, about what on particular occasions it is best for them to do and about how it is best for them to live out their lives" (Ibid., p. 67). However, on the other hand, human beings depend on others. The relationship between human and others is necessary for human's flourishing. He presents this dependency on others as follows;

> Independent practical reasoners contribute to the formation and sustaining of their social relationships, as infants do not, and to learn how to become an independent practical reasoner is to learn how to cooperate with others in forming and sustaining those same relationship that make possible the achievement of common goods by independent practical reasoners. (Ibid., p. 74)

We need others to acquire virtues and self-knowledge and good life. Being independent practical reasoners and having a good life cannot be considered independently of others. According to MacIntyre, "we continue to the end of our lives to need others to sustain us in our practical reasoning" (Ibid., p. 96). In addition, he says that,

> So the practical learning needed, if one is to become a practical reasoner is the same learning needed, if one is to find one's place within a network of givers and receivers in which achievement of one's individual good is understood to be inseparable from the achievement of the common good. Yet this conception of the relationship of the common good to individual goods and of the place of both in practical reasoning is of course very much at odds with some widely influential conceptions of practical reasoning. (Ibid., p. 113)

According to Carden (2006), " MacIntyre's conception of the virtues has then expanded to embrace those traits of character that promote human flourishing in the growth of our rational nature from our animal nature and in our dependency on the acts of giving and receiving that constitute our relations with others" (p. 18). Furthermore, the recognizing of dependency on others produces a central virtue that is called "generosity" by MacIntyre (Ibid., p. 19). And then " the virtues of giving- industriousness in getting, thrift in saving, and discrimination in giving- arise as well as the virtues of receiving- gratitude, courtesy, forbearance- and truthful acknowledgement of dependence" (Ibid.).

It can be clearly seen that, in this latest work, MacIntyre tends to think our relations to others on the basis of our biological existence. His treatment of virtues does also employ some non-human aspects of togetherness and dependence on others. Our good life or well-being is explained by notion of being independent practical reasoner, and common good by engagement with others. In this respect, one might argue that the shift in MacIntyre's exposition of virtues is an apparent indicator of his discovery that altruism is just a necessary end-product of biological history for all species. Especially his notions, "virtues of giving" and "virtues of receiving", can be considered as conditions for altruistic behavior. Although he does not use the term altruism explicitly, I think this interpretation would not contradict his definitions. From this point, virtues can embody with practices and practices require others, in other words, society. One can think the same for altruistic behavior; altruistic behavior can be embodied with practices and the practices always require others to improve and achieve their ultimate end. As I presented in Section 3.1, all definitions of altruism in human behaviors or

animal behaviors depend on the relation of others. In addition, as in the tit-for-tat strategy, altruism involves giving and receiving to others.

All this shows that, altruistic behavior practice, as a disposition, habit or inner strength, can find its moral connotations in virtue ethics. Furthermore, altruistic behavior seems to evolve and establishes itself as virtues serving to well-being of person and common good. In the following section, I want to enrich trajectories of virtue ethics with Dewey's perspective, which is in accord with Aristotelian view of virtue and more comprehensive than MacInytyre's. Considering altruistic behavior practice as outcome of "habitual presupposition" does not only make best sense in Deweyian vocabulary, but also this pragmatic turn is quite inspiring to resist such objections as "is-ought" discrepancy.

4.2 An Analysis of Altruistic Behavior Practices in Terms of Dewey's Moral Philosophy and His Notion of Habit

In this section, I briefly review Dewey's moral philosophy that is closely related with evolutionary ideas of morality and the notion of altruistic behavior practice. Since Dewey accepts Darwinian Theory as the biological background for morality he constructs his ethics in relation to evolutionary biology. Thus, I begin with morality in Darwinian Theory and Dewey's interpretations of it. I then examine Dewey's view of human conduct that is related with the notion of habit and I present altruistic behavior practice in terms of Dewey's moral philosophy. Dewey's moral view is important in two respects for my purpose. First, his treatment of biology as a background of human moral behavior and second, his resolution of the "is-ought" problem in his society centered moral philosophy.

4.2.1 Darwinian Evolutionary Theory and Dewey's Moral Philosophy

As presented in Section 2.1, in *Descent of Man,* Darwin defines morality in terms of the notion of social instincts. He explains his moral view in four steps; first, the social instincts provide moral relations by feelings of sympathy towards the members of the community. Second, when mental faculties of individual develop, some instinctive desires, such as hunger, arise. These desires are short in duration and "after being satisfied, are not readily or vividly recalled" (Darwin, 1952, p. 304) Third, by acquiring language, the ideas of common opinion and the public good arise, and humans begin to behave in accordance with the public good and their regard for the approbation and disapprobation of the members of community depends on sympathy. Finally, habit plays an important role for the strengthening of social instincts with sympathy in the community (Ibid., pp. 304-305).

According to Darwin, many animal species are social and have sympathetic feelings towards other members of their community, especially when in distress or danger. He argues that "certain social instincts have been acquired through natural selection or… are the indirect result of long-continued habit" (Ibid., p. 309). Yet, Darwin maintains later on that there are some kinds of certain social instincts, which can best be understood in terms of direct-natural selection. Since habits "have originated from mutual sympathy" and sympathy is one of the indirectly acquired faculties, Darwin suggests natural selection rather than habits for the cause of acquiring certain social instincts (Ibid.). On the other hand, some social instincts can originate from habits or can be indirect results of faculties "such as sympathy, reason, experience and a tendency to imitation" (Ibid.). This uncertainty about the origin of social instincts is the result of the strength of instincts. For example, "the males of some social animals of defending the community and of attacking their enemies or their prey in concert" act as a result of habit but courage is stronger as a social instinct and has been acquired through natural selection (Ibid.). Darwin says that "we are ourselves conscious that some habits are much more difficult to cure or change than others. Hence, a struggle

may often be observed in animals between different instincts, or between an instinct and some habitual disposition" (Ibid.). In addition, according to him, "morality tells us what we ought to do [and] virtues must be practices" for the welfare of community (Ibid., p. 314). Furthermore, Social virtues improve with sympathy and habitually.

As a result, for Darwin "people act impulsively that is from instinct or long habit" (Ibid., p. 316). Especially beneficial actions are defined as "instinctive impulses" (Ibid., p. 310). We can say this for Dewey's view. According to him, the nature of actions has a habitual disposition that has biological impulses. This may suggest that both Darwin's and Dewey's ethical views are closely related. Especially their basic concepts and their views on the origin and nature of morality are almost identical. Furthermore, the notion of altruistic behavior practice seems to find a place in Darwin's moral view. I think that Darwin presents altruism or behaving altruistically in terms of the notion of social instincts. And also he argues that some social instincts are indirect results of habits. In this respect, altruistic behavior practice can be seen as Darwinian social instincts that are the result of habit. As I propose for altruistic behavior practice, Darwin also recognizes the habitual domain for social instincts. Moreover, Dewey also relates habitual domain to our sphere of moral activities. Dewey argues that habitual disposition dominate all human practices. In this respect, it can be said that altruistic behavior practice represent both social instincts that are acquired habitually and human practices that are improved and embodied by habitual repetitions. Darwinian view of morality, in this sense, is the biological background that lies behind my reading of Dewey's moral theory.

As I said before, Dewey's moral theory is influenced by the Darwinian Theory, for he conceives morality as closely linked with biological phenomena. According to him, neither ethical life nor ethical concepts can be considered separately from natural process and evolutionary concepts, respectively. The cosmic processes, the principles of which are struggle and strive, and the ethical process, the principles

of which are sympathy and co-operation, are not in opposition, rather the ethical process is a part of the cosmic process (Dewey, 1993, pp. 96-97). Nature "includes the organism interacting with its environment, which means that each affects and is affected by the other… [T]he human organism is not separate from the natural world, but included within the natural processes of life" (Carden, 2006, p. 29). In addition, "the natural process, the so-called inherited animal instincts and promptings, are not only the stimuli, but also the materials, of moral conduct" (Dewey, 1993, p. 103).

Dewey argues that the notion of the struggle for existence should not be considered as opposite to the ethical process, since, "the nature of struggle for existence is constantly modifying itself… because as the conditions of life change, the modes of living must change also" (Ibid., p. 101). In this sense, the struggle for existence and self-assertion does not have negative meanings for ethics (Ibid.). He explains the place of self-assertion in ethical process as follows,

> It [self-assertion] is not an enemy to the moral life… that self- assertion which we may call life is not only negatively, but positively a factor in the ethical process. What are courage, persistence, patience, enterprise, initiation, but forms of the self-assertion of those impulses which make up the life process? So much, I suppose, all would grant; but are temperance, chastity, benevolence, self-sacrifice itself, any less forms of self-assertion? (Ibid.)

He seems to object to the classical view regarding the relationship between evolution and ethics. He argues that the struggle for existence does not necessarily imply selfish behavior as an extremity in which there is no place for others at all. Since he does not conceive ethics independently of natural processes he does not consider evolutionary ethics as derived from biology. For Dewey, experience is the key concept in the talk of ethics, and ethics and all human experience cannot be considered apart from nature and natural processes. His other objection is to the idea that separates experience and nature and also the organism and the environment. Since "they are never wholly distinct… experience is experience of

nature [and] there is one world, one nature and one experience in the process" (Carden, 2006, p. 29).

The further resemblance between Darwin and Dewey and the conceptual influence of the former on the latter's moral philosophy is what I will be bringing in focus in the next section. However, it is important to remember at the moment that Dewey's moral philosophy is based particularly on Darwinian notions of social instinct and habit. But Dewey does not name his moral view as evolutionary ethics. I think, in order to provide a unity of nature and human experience, he wants to develop a morality that conserves the biological background of human behavior. He also tries to avoid classical interpretations of evolutionary ethics that treat biology as a fact and derive morality out of it. That's why, I suspect, he does not present his moral view in direct relation with biological findings, he rather attempts to read human morality as an expressions or modification of natural process.

4.2.2 Dewey's Moral Philosophy: Human Conduct in Terms of Habits

The main vocabulary of Dewey's moral philosophy contains habits, emotions, experiences of virtues and human practices. At the beginning of his examination of the notion of habit, he defines needs satisfaction as the primary activity of human life in natural process. Satisfying the needs is maintained by habitual activity so that in similar situations people act with a small effort in new situations. Moreover, habits involve all natural or environmental conditions for satisfying needs. "Habitual activity can be seen to dominate all life process, from the simple to complex, including human behavior" (Carden, 2006, p. 30). Carden also interprets Dewey in the following way,

> [N]ature is constituted by events and for living organisms the events are the efforts the satisfy needs. All life forms have fundamental requirements which they must fulfill in order to survive; thus human conduct also begins

> from needs which are to be met through interaction with the environment, because according to Dewey, such a state of needs is not subjective but an objective and natural condition. (Ibid.)

In *Human Nature and Conduct* and *The Nature of Moral Theory*, Dewey defines habit as an acquired human character. All human moral actions and "all virtues and vices are habits" (Dewey, 1957, p. 16). "Habit covers in other words the very make-up of desire, intent, choice, disposition which gives an act its voluntary quality" (Dewey, 1960, p. 13). According to him, habits are, as functions, acquired in the process of socialization from the earliest age and involve physical, natural and social human environment. So people also learn habits from other people in their society. "Dewey argues that the main source of our habits is other people. We learn them through imitation and repetition of the actions of those closest to us" (Carden, 2006, p. 31). Habits are represented by both possessions of organisms and products of social relations of organisms. He presents habits in terms of these two implications;

> The social environment acts through native impulses and speech and moral habitudes manifest themselves. There are specific good reasons for the usual attribution of acts to the person from whom they immediately proceed. But to convert this special reference into a belief of exclusive ownership is as misleading as to suppose that breathing and digesting are complete within the human body. To get a rational basis for moral discussion we must begin with recognizing that functions and habits are ways of using and incorporating the environment in which the latter has its say as surely as the former. (Dewey, 1957, p. 15)

If the conditions of organism or its environment change, habits lose their functions and organism begins to act with their impulse, until they improve new habits. Dewey presents this situation and appearance of intelligence,

> As organized habits are definitely deployed and focused, the confused situation takes on from, it is "cleared up"- the essential function of intelligence. Processes become object. Without habit there is only irritation and confused hesitation. With habit alone there is a machine-like repetition, a duplicating recurrence of old acts. With conflict of habits and release of impulse there is conscious search. (Ibid., p. 126)

Our moral and social actions embody themselves as habits, and society conserves these habits by the mechanism of approval or disapproval. Society is a condition that determines survival of a habitual action and reminds social responsibility to humans. “Liability is the beginning of responsibility. We are held accountable by others for the consequences of our acts. They visit their like and dislike of these consequences upon us” (Ibid., p. 217). The individual and his social environment interact with each other. There is a transformation between them continuously and moral goods are the result of this interaction. Both environment and organism are active, and habits are the product of their interaction. “According to Dewey, the self is constituted by habits, which are given a biological foundation as the function between organism and environment by means of which needs are satisfied and life is furthered” (Carden, 2006, p. 72).

In addition, values of the individual cannot be considered apart from values of society or nature because values are produced by “local conditions of the natural world” (Ibid., p. 41). The individual, social and natural forces create values together, and they conduct human activity toward a greater well-being (Ibid.).

According to Dewey, certain habits are characterized as virtues that constitute human well-being. These are experienced continuously, approved by society and are also effective in satisfying needs in different conditions of natural and social environment. These habits that are virtues are stronger than other habits in human practices.

> Honesty, chastity, malice, peevishness, courage, triviality, industry, irresponsibility are not private possessions of a person. They are working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces. All virtues and vices are habits which incorporate objective forces. They are interactions of elements contributed by the make-up of an individual with elements supplied by the outdoor world. They can be studied as objectively as physiological functions, and they can be modified by change of either personal or social elements. (Ibid., p. 16)

Although Dewey's interpretation of virtue as a habit resembles with that of MacIntyre and also Aristotle, his understanding of natural teleology is different from the traditional conception of "ends". He uses the concept of "means" that "signify and culminate in their ends" (Carden, 2006, p. 36).

> Because nature is constitute by events or histories, ends can be distinguished from means, even though they remain aspects of the one process of the satisfaction of need through effort. Habitual activity is formed in response to such natural processes. When there is uncertainty about which good to pursue, or when there is an intervening obstruction to satisfaction, the organism seeks the means to its resolution so as to release activity. When humans are faced with such conflict, the means to its resolution becomes the "end-in-view" which when attained, releases activity, resulting in what Dewey calls the consummation of experience- a primary value in the moral life. (Ibid.)

Dewey criticizes modern moral philosophy for that they assume that there are universal and absolute moral rules and unchanging goods. However, he says that morality has changeable and dynamic character depending on social environment of the individuals and their interaction. So moral goods arise as results of these interactions. In addition, Dewey says that Darwinian Theory shows us the changing biological nature of human life and this is an evidence for us to free morality from unchangeable rules and goods.

MacIntyre and Dewey have something common in their attempts: they like to reshape morality on the basis of human practices, and emphasize social nature of morality. Their moral views are focused on common activity and they find common good in human practices that is the basic ground for understanding morality. Human practices as socially constituted activities provide experiences of virtues and habits and they also change society and nature in order to achieve moral goods.

> Dewey builds his conception of human practices on an acceptance of evolutionary biology from the first. That background allows one to understand the character and habits of the moral agent as implicating the natural and social environment in complex but particular situations, whereas

> MacIntyre still assumes a bifurcation between man and nature. For Dewey, man and nature are bound by their interaction, so it is as necessary to effect change in the environment as it is to effect change in humans in order to improve the welfare of all. (Ibid., p. 78)

It seems that Dewey does not distinguish moral behavior from all other human activities. He considers all human activities that include moral activity in terms of habits. Humans form their moral actions on the basis of their habitual disposition like their other activities. Morally relevant actions are those that, most of the time, derive from those habits that are what society calls good practice. People learn moral action in society with interacting and communicating with other people and then they transform this action to habitual activity. If this habitual activity is approved by society, it is improved by practice. Socially approved and encouraged actions represent good habits and good practices. Since behaving habitually is considered as a biological disposition for all organisms, this habitual disposition provides satisfaction of needs for all organisms. Human practice and exercises of virtues and habits are basic activities of humans who live in interaction with their natural and social environment.

Neither MacIntyre nor Dewey directly mentions altruism. In other words, they do not use the notion of altruism, as the central problematic as it appears in modern debates on ethics. However, I think altruistic behavior or what I call altruistic behavior practice can be found in their views by a deeper reading. I argue that altruistic behavior practice is presented as a biological disposition or as a virtue in the ethical views of these two philosophers. In a broad sense altruistic behavior practices are some of the most important ingredients of or building blocks for many virtues. And habits, in the same broad sense, are no less than necessary and sufficient condition for these virtues to be exercised recognized and memorized in society. Both philosophers are consistent in their approach to biology, obviously not to justify our social-moral values by relying on biological facts, but rather to help us see how these two can never come apart.

Altruistic behavior practice or being habitually altruistic should be considered as a moral character. Altruistic behavior as a prosocial behavior cannot be seen without other people. In other words, altruistic behavior is possible only in a society. In addition, the emergence, growth and sustainability of altruistic behavior depend on somehow ritualistic practices. In this respect, the ethical views of MacIntyre and Dewey, who constitute morality in social life and practices, are in accordance with moral view in which altruistic behavior practice can flourish as a moral character.

Altruistic behavior practice as habit in Dewey's view cannot be considered independently of social and natural environment of the individual, and they exist in society or nature as habitual disposition of the individuals. Altruistic behavior practice should be considered for all species, since in general definition "concern for others" is valid for all species. In this respect, like definition of habitual activity for all species and all human activities in Dewey and MacIntyre, altruistic behavior practice should be considered for all species and all activities that represent helping and caring for others.

Furthermore, we can interpret altruistic behavior practice as satisfying a need of the individual, as Dewey says for habit. I tempt to read this need or desire or biological impulse as "being social". If we consider altruistic behavior as the Darwinian social instinct, or inner strength as suggested by Michael Slote, or the virtues of giving and receiving as in MacIntyre or biological disposition to behave socially in general, we can say that altruistic behavior is a biological impulse that provide the individual to being social.

Against this background, I want to argue that the notion of altruistic behavior practice can best be understood when we bring it back to society, a realm which is not only "given as such" but where ethical thinking is shaped and reshaped –in and by- for both MacIntyre and Dewey. I think that these two views are sufficient in giving us an ethical framework in order to explain altruistic behavior as a moral

character. This moral character is important for evolutionary ethics and I argue that with the ethical framework that is proposed by MacIntyre and Dewey, evolutionary ethics can be given a different agenda that is less problematic and clearer.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this final section of my thesis, I like to summarize what, I hope, I have accomplished in the previous chapters.

There is, in fact, one ultimate concern underlying this piece of work: It is about evolutionary ethics, an interdisciplinary field of study, which has been at the center of recent philosophical debates and around which important biological and philosophical controversies exist. One of the philosophical controversies lies in the question "what does evolution tell us, if it tells us anything at all, about human beings and their moral expectations?" From one perspective, the debate is established, in fact, between two sides. On one hand, there are those who argue that biological evolution supports or is even responsible for our moral norms. On the other hand, there are others who maintain that our moral norms exist simply because we are more than what biology "determines" us to be.

However, from another point of view, one that I want to argue for, the real tension is not between those believers who think evolution is the source of morality and others who think it is barrier to morality, because of their believe on morality that is more than evolution. A real tension exists between the view that "nature" and "human moral systems" are two separate things, the "fact-world" and the "value-world", and others who conceive these as that which can be distinguished, but cannot and should not be separated. What I have tried to show in this work is that sociobiological reading in evolutionary ethics seems to represent the first manner in which biological "grammar" of human life is different and separate from

cultural “grammar” of human moral life. Thus, I think they commit a naturalistic fallacy. If we want to find good reasons why we follow certain moral norms but not others then we should look for them in the laboratories of evolution.

I think there is another approach for which biological evolution and human moral norms are no longer two separate things, isolated from each other. As I referred frequently there are other philosophical reserves by means of which we can think what is morally possible is one and the same with what is evolutionarily given. In other words, morality is in accord with evolution as any other thing regardless of whether they emerge in human or non-human societies. Altruistic behavior as experienced in human societies, for instance, is not more than selected habitual practices occurred in the long history of evolution of human societies. There is no real gap between “is” in the sense of biologically given and “ought” in the sense of socially favored norm embodied in the repetitive practices of society. Therefore, it no longer makes sense to ask if our altruistic behaviors are compatible with our biological make up or if such altruistic expressions are really altruistic or just disguised selfish actions. Simply because, altruism, in this Deweyian sense, is not a cause in itself, but rather an effect of our habitual nature that persisted, being selected and identified in the long run of human bio-cultural history.

In order to locate the discussion, Chapter II presents a review of the literature on “evolutionary ethics” and different approaches taking sides around these controversial issues. The concept of evolution and its different receptions as associated with human values are studied in this part. As part of this discussion, one of the most popular philosophical reactions against the possibility of deriving moral “ought” from biological “is” is brought in focus. In dealing with this reaction, a sociobiological response to this “is-ought” gap is critically examined. It is argued that the sociobiological account of evolutionary ethics has failed to handle the “is-ought” objection for being theoretically impotent, that is, once it presupposed “is” and “ought” as two separate issues, one being the cause and the

other the result, it was impossible to meet this difficulty. Another shortcoming of sociobiological account is about biological determinism that has ethical, political and sociological problems and some possible drawbacks for society.

I reserve Chapter III to a detailed exposition of the concept of altruism. I surveyed different approaches to the concept and tried to figure out in what sense we can come to a common understanding about altruistic behavior. Having examined psychological and biological assumptions I also tried to develop my own notion of "being altruistic" and propose that the concept makes sense only when we think of it within the context of social practices.

Chapter IV focuses on the possibilities of finding a way out from the difficulties arising from debates on evolutionary ethics. The basic lines of my argument in this part are that virtues, in the sense of Aristotle and MacIntyre, have central place in human social life, and altruistic behavior practices are among main ingredients of some of the cardinal virtues. What we call "virtues" is in fact not different from habits of participating in socially approved, encouraged, and rewarded practices. And whenever we come across with such social practices we can rightly assume that there are biological and evolutionary pre-conditions of this possibility. The concept of habit in Deweyian sense denotes this biological pre-condition. All human actions are formed in and by habits and human beings interact with surrounding environment again through habitual engagement. The fact that our habits are biologically driven does not exclude the possibility for shaping and being shaped within a habitually driven society, and most of our moral norms are the result of this possibility.

My argument, I think, succeeds to overcome two difficulties arising from the issues revolving around the idea of evolutionary ethics. The first is the difficulty of avoiding from falling in the "is-ought" gap. And the other is the difficulty of saving evolutionary ethics from biological determinism.

Biology in my entire treatment of the problem is not a foundation on which we should justify our true moral nature. Biology in this sense is only responsible for the first drive, the drive to be in groups or live as members of society. Biology is "is" or "given" only in this narrow sense. Once we accept that we are determined biologically at this level, then we can also accept that our biological disposition to be within groups go hand in hand with our being habitual creatures. We are equally, in the same biological sense, habitually interacting creatures. Our habitual engagements with others bring further repetitive circles that will emerge in the long run as social practices. Human societies, as with all other biologically and genetically formed groups, are inclined to select, prefer or approve certain practices, while dismissing others. Virtues are no more than habits of participating in what we select as socially approved practices, and altruistic tendencies are example to these constructive habits.

In conclusion, I suggest a reading to evolutionary ethics in terms of altruism as a practice and Deweyian moral philosophy. From this view, I think that if we have habits of expressing some of our social approvals in the form of moral obligations, the reason is no more biological than our being biologically habitual creatures. There is no transition from "is" to "ought" here, since there is no identification of such separate two things at all. So that evolutionary ethics needs such interpretation or vision in order to overcome current problems and to be an alternative to modern moral philosophical views.

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